

DEMOCRATIC EDITORS AND THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

Democratic editors are doing splendid work in favor of the primary pledge plan.

A. J. Harder, publisher of the *Cunningham* (Wash.) *Gazette*, and the *Paha* (Wash.) *Hub*, writes: Your crusade for the primary pledge should attain success for the people's interests that have been filched by dishonest party leaders. I shall very soon take it up in both of my papers and push it hard. Will send you clippings and also intend to run the pledge. Yours for success.

Sam C. Carroll, editor of the *Stockton* (Kans.) *Post*, writes: Gentlemen: Enclosed find two primary pledges, one signed by myself and the other by another democrat in this county. Best wishes.

The *Hardy* (Ark.) *Herald*, edited by Boen Phillips, says: We desire to call the attention of the democrats to the primary pledge, sent out by W. J. Bryan and advocated by him through *The Commoner*. It is easy to understand and contains nothing to bind a democrat to do what he should not do. It is a plain and simple promise to attend all primary elections of the democratic party unless unavoidably prevented. This every democrat should do without a pledge, and for that reason it does no harm, and does not bind any one signing it to do any rash or inconsiderate act. The *Herald* heartily endorses, and recommends the plan sent on foot by Mr. Bryan. The main trouble with us in this country is the fact that we are inactive in organization. Each one feels that he is already as good a democrat as he can be, and that organization will not make him any better. But this is not the view to take of such matters. A man may be a good democrat, but unless he does something, he does not help the cause any. The active democrats are the ones who establish and maintain the principles of the party. The organization of democrats is not so much to make them better democrats, but to bring about action in a united effort to maintain and carry out the principles of the party and signing of the primary pledge is one step in the direction of united action at the polls. It is by action largely that we become interested and each step leads on to greater interest until we become thoroughly aroused in the cause. Hence let's take the first step in the campaign of 1908, by signing the primary pledge, and from that work up a lively interest in the party that we may be ready to do battle for equal rights and government by the consent of the governed. Sign the primary pledge and forward it to *The Commoner*, or leave it at the *Herald* office whence it will be forwarded to *The Commoner*.

T. W. Hunter, editor *Sun*, Hartshorn, I. T.—Enclosed herewith I hand you pledge duly signed, and want to add it is my opinion that this plan will prove the most effective means of uniting the democratic hosts of anything that could be suggested. I believe it will cause people to think as they have never thought before, and when fully awakened to the situation I have abundant confidence in the hope that the "mud-sillers"—the common people—will rally as one man to the support of democratic principles as proclaimed by the illustrious Jefferson, when we shall then witness the dawn of a new era—a government of, for and by the people as against the present order of things with a growing tendency to the bad, of a government of, for and by the grafters. We, of this, the Indian Territory, political orphanage, of all people feel most the blight of republican carpet bag misrule, and the longer it remains this the more converts are made to democracy. But just wait till the democrats gain a chance to vote and if they don't send the last mother's son of these carpet baggers home to stay, we shall lose our bet.

The *Rochester* (Pa.) *Commoner*, edited by Charles R. Eckhart, says: We call the attention of our readers to an article by W. J. Bryan published in this issue. Mr. Bryan pictures present conditions in vivid terms, but not the least exaggerated. Those who have stopped to study present conditions and present tendencies, will realize at once the perfection of the Nebraskan's pen picture. It is a matter of congratulation, however, that the insane rush to absoluteism

has about run its course, and that the pendulum of public opinion is beginning to recede back into a saner and safer realm. All the signs of the times indicated that there is an awakening among the masses, and that the era of frenzied finance, franchise grabbing and public plundering is to pass into history.

Mr. Bryan is in his happiest vein, and strikes a sublime note in his appeal to the people. The era of graft and corruption will come to a sudden end the moment the moral sense of the masses will be outraged at the ravages of the special privilege seekers and their hired attorneys and well trained handy-men. And only when the moral nature of the masses becomes sensitive enough to be shocked at the public wrongs perpetrated in the name of law, can we hope for the permanent and eternal passing of the era of graft. As long as the citizen-voter regards the public service as a legitimate field for grafting and plundering, little need we expect in the line of reform. True and lasting reforms begins with the individual.

"The heart, ay's the part ay, That makes us right or wrong," says Burns. And he is right. The heart is the seat and center of that reform that means something for a higher and better life. All else will fail. No matter how great or rich or wise we may become, unless we cultivate the graces of the heart all will be in vain. It is good to do good, it is right to do right, because that alone satisfies the longings of the moral law within—the seat of all power and happiness. In this connection we also wish to remind our readers that the work of restoring the nation to its former position of honor and moral power is a patriotic task, from which none should shrink. Mr. Bryan is leading the movement for higher and better things bravely and well. He needs your sympathy, your help, your aid. You can help him, yourself and the movement by signing the primary pledge, published elsewhere in this issue and forwarding it to *The Commoner*, Lincoln, Neb.

Join the army of the men who are making for righteousness.

Sign the primary pledge.

In a letter addressed to *The Commoner*, Mr. Eckhart says: "The enclosed editorial was published in the *Rochester* (Pa.) *Commoner* in its issue of June 9, 1905. We are battling for the cause of righteousness as best we can, knowing that an effort for good is never in vain. We wish you abundant success and are always ready to aid you in your battle for truth."

The *Western News*, published at Hamilton, Montana, and edited by Miles Romney says: Mr. Bryan is actively engaged in a work of vital importance to the democratic party and that is its reorganization—by the rank and file.

The plan is simple. It recognizes the right of the democratic voters to control the policy and determine its position upon public questions of the democratic party. Under this plan it will be utterly impossible for a syndicate again to perpetrate such a fiasco as the Parker campaign of last year.

Let each democrat pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use his influence to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak.

Sign the pledge that will be found elsewhere in this issue and forward either to the *Western News* or direct to *The Commoner* at Lincoln, Neb., and your name will be enrolled among the democratic hosts who are determined that in 1908 the democratic party shall go before the people with a democratic candidate standing squarely for democratic principles.

The *Clinton county* (Ohio) *Democrat*, published at Wilmington and edited by J. S. Hummel, says: The work of organizing the "rank and file" of the democratic party for the campaign of 1908, which William J. Bryan is conducting through the columns of *The Commoner*, by the "primary pledge" system, printed in the *Democrat* several months ago, is proving fruitful of the most gratifying results. What is meant by the "primary pledge" is an agreement on the part of the person signing the pledge to attend all primaries and conventions of the party within the precinct and

county, when possible, until the campaign of 1908. This is in line with the broad democratic faith in the masses and of the right of majority rule. By this means selfish and unscrupulous manipulators can be prevented from falsifying party sentiment, and men direct from the people and honestly reflecting the sentiments of the men behind the ballots will be sent as delegates to the next national convention, and the will of the majority will prevail in the making of a platform and the nomination of the presidential candidate. The plan has met with hearty responses from all parts of the country. The mass of democrats give assurances of co-operation. For a number of weeks past several pages of *The Commoner* have been occupied each week with brief extracts from the letters of prominent and active democrats who are co-operating with Mr. Bryan in this movement.

In a letter to *The Commoner* Editor Hummel writes: "I herewith enclose a clipping from the *Democrat* touching the progress of the "primary pledge" movement and the enthusiastic response it is meeting from leading democrats in all parts of the country. The great mass of the democrats in this part of the country are in hearty sympathy with the plan and have every faith in it working out to the best interests of the country and the party in the next presidential campaign. There is no danger of the democratic party going wrong if the will of the majority prevails in the next national convention."

The *Lexington* (Ky.) *Gazette*, edited by E. S. Kinkead, reproduces the form of the primary pledge, and says: In another part of the *Gazette* we have published, since its inception in the latter part of March, an editorial taken from *The Commoner*, Mr. Bryan's paper, together with a blank entitled "The Primary Pledge." While the editorial fully indicates the occasion that called it forth, and emphasizes the object intended to be accomplished, yet, we deem the matter of such importance that we again call the attention of our readers especially to it. As all power emanates from the people in our republican form of government, it is absolutely essential that the source from which that power springs, shall reflect the correct sentiment of an enlightened sovereignty. If the democratic party desires to be successful or deserves to succeed, it can be accomplished alone through the instrumentality of an untrammeled expression of the rank and file of the party. *The Commoner* has published from week to week a voluminous number of responses from democrats and from many who have not heretofore affiliated with the party from every section of the union, which is indicative of the conclusion that the people are aroused to the seriousness of the situation, and are prepared to co-operate in perfecting an organization that will meet the full expectation of the rank and file of the party. In no other way can remedial legislation be hoped for except through the instrumentalities of applied democratic principles. The republican party has long since indicated its intention of perpetuating itself even to the point of making "the millions slaves, hewers of wood, drawers of water, heavers of coal, beggars, starvelings, lunatics and highway-men." It is therefore important, beyond compare, that the democratic party should arouse itself to a full realization of the present situation, and lend its united force toward the suppression of the evils that have emanated from long republican license. We cannot have two republican parties in this country. And it is worthy of consideration, that the democratic principles are so entirely antithetical with the doctrines advocated and applied by the republican party, that if success alone was the measure of enjoyment, it could never be obtained by an attempt to infringe upon the unlawful and destructive ground which has long been under the pre-emption of that party, assisted by its allies, which it has nurtured and sustained. We again urge upon you to co-operate in this great movement. Its success and the success of the democratic party and the hope of the country, is involved in your determined action. The rank and file of the democratic party can always be trusted. And this plan that has been suggested "should appeal to all who believe in the rule of the people," and that through their instrumentality the final triumph of justice and of righteousness must come. Buckle therefore, on your armor for the battle has already begun! Thousands of your brothers are already in the field.