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Editorials From Commoner Readers

W. H. Tisch, Grass Lake, Mich.—
I enclose two dollars and forty cents (\$2.40) for which please send The Commoner one year to the four persons' names and addresses enclosed. I am very sorry that I had but two cards left, and as I did not wish to keep two subscribers until I received more cards I trust that they will be accepted anyhow without being sent in on subscription cards. I sold them all at 60 cents each. I feel well paid without money, knowing that I am doing something for the great democratic cause. These four subscribers are true Jefferson, Jackson and Bryan democrats and can always be trusted in their party. I also enclose list of forty-six primary pledges. I sent my own pledge with another one sometime ago, making forty-eight in all. Among the pledge signers are Hon. W. W. Todd, present mayor of Jackson, also city attorney and city recorder, also Alderman James J. Keeley, president of the common council of Jackson. Mr. Keeley was delegate to the Chicago national convention in 1896 and helped with all his power to nominate Mr. Bryan. Among the signers are all the best lawyers that can be found in this part of the state, also newspaper reporters and editors and best of all these are nearly all members of the Andrew Jackson club of Jackson county. It took me only a few minutes to get the subscribers and signers. I appeal to every democrat in this country to get his neighborhood to sign the pledge and, if possible, to subscribe for that great and glorious paper, The Commoner. I will do all that is in my power to do for The Commoner, its editor and the democratic cause, and if more will do as I do, the democratic party will be crowned with the laurels of an overwhelming victory in 1906-1908.

S. Misner, Ogilby, Calif.—I noticed in The Commoner of December 29, on page 15, that a majority of the senate committee are in favor of removing Reed Smoot from the senate because he is a member of a criminal organization, but you do not say whether the criminal organization is the United States senate or the Mormon church. I think the senate as it stands now is the greater evil of the two. A majority of the members of the senate are guilty of all kinds of crimes against God and man and the laws of the land.

C. C. Obenchain, Greenville, Tex.—Your reference, in reply to Mr. C. E. Mead's suggestion, to your denunciation of the so-called Osler theory, in The Commoner of August 11, reminds me that at the time I was strongly tempted to suggest what I will now give and think is overlooked by both you and Mr. Mead.

I am far from assuming that Dr. Osler intended his remarks to be taken seriously as to the chloroforming suggestion. Certainly he nor nobody else expected it would be done. And there is no danger that it ever will be done out of respect for the doctor's say so. Where a suicide has attributed his rash act to the wisdom of the doctor it has only been after he had exhausted every means at his command to maintain an existence, and when this was done without success the irony of Dr. Osler's theory very naturally came to him, and he was quite willing to concede from his own experience, at least, that the doctor was right. That there was any reason for

a man to keep on living without anything to eat or without being able to find work to get anything to eat, seems to have been as foreign to his mind as it is to yours or Mr. Mead's. In fact it seems to have been an hallucination of these suicides that without something to eat they could not live. In vindication of this idea, you say: "It is difficult to imagine anything more pathetic than the death of this St. Louis man. According to his own statement, he was old and poor, and he imagined that he had no business on earth."

He "imagined" he had no business on earth. "Imagined!" According to the old man's own story (and everybody credits that part of it that lays his act to the Osler theory) he made a strenuous effort to find "business" on earth, "but everybody smiled at him and said, 'we've got a man.'" The old man's failure to find that he longer "had business on earth," I take it, was the true cause of his act, especially as he was laboring under the delusion that without something to eat he could not live. Therefore at best he felt that his time was limited, and he put an end to it, incidentally with a tribute to the wisdom of Doctor Osler.

Now, not to make this letter too long, my idea, briefly, is that Doctor Osler is a scapegoat of no utility in our appalling dilemma. There is no danger that his twaddle will hurry anyone out of this life surrounded with the comforts to make life endurable in this existence. When the struggle for men, even in middle life, for existence is a contest in which only the strongest and most alert succeed, what chance is there for the old and decrepit? When because of the usurpation by machinery of the field of production, human labor is a growing surplus? A half century's age of machinery has dispossessed labor of five-sixths of the productive field and robbed it of four-fifths of its reward. In fact as this condition continues to grow, as grow it must with every improvement and invention, the labor or usefulness of men must grow in superfluity; and our economic environment not having changed, Doctor Osler's theory, by the mere force of conditions may become practical. It is up to the defenders of the competitive system to analyze its principles and take heed of its results.

Anti-Santa Claus, Cleveland, Ohio—I am delighted with your comments on my communications over the nom de plume of "Anti-Santa Claus." Especially am I glad that you understand me so well and enter so heartily into the spirit of my suggestions. I sincerely hope our little correspondence on this subject will lead to a healthy reform movement and that the press, as you suggest, will take it up, to which, as a working force, should be added the clergy. If these two powers will work together, the desired result will soon be obtained. The battle cry needs but few words: No more gifts of intrinsic value between adults except to the needy and the abolition of the street show-window display of holiday toy goods by the stores. Upon this latter practice, volumes could be written on the distress forced on the children by the sights of these things tempting them to hope and prayers that will not be answered, thus serving only to plant the seed of skepticism in their innocent little hearts. Now, I notice that you object to my nom de plume as being out of harmony with my expressed sentiments, yet I mean just what I said: I would rather retire the Good Old Man (Santa Claus) than have him any longer figure as the scapegoat of the outrageous wrongs complained of. But to modify the apparent conflict I will now subscribe myself conditionally "Anti-Santa Claus."

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