

ways toward advancing the political interests of the people. The one argument that is now made in favor of the holding of the Philippine islands by the United States is that the Filipinos are incapable of self-government. While such an objection is inconsistent with our Declaration of Independence and our ideas of government, it is the only objection that is being seriously urged against Philippine independence, and the Filipinos have it in their power to meet this objection and to establish even in the minds of the most doubtful their claim to self-government.

The insurrection in Cuba has been used by the skeptical as an argument against Philippine independence, but it is absurd for any citizen of the United States to make an insurrection the basis of an argument against self-government. We had in this country the greatest civil war known to history, but yet no one would think of urging that fact as an argument against the capacity of the people of the north or south for self-government. Both the Cubans and the Filipinos will govern themselves better than we would be able to govern them through carpet-bag officials, just as Mexico has governed herself better than we could have governed her had we held her under our flag as the result of the Mexican war. Besides having governed herself better than we could have governed her, the people of Mexico have had the benefit of development which participation in government brings. Every democrat will wish the Filipinos success in this step toward independence, and an increasing number of republicans will rejoice if their fears are removed by the wisdom and discretion of the Filipinos who are chosen to the new assembly.

"A MORAL ISSUE"

Mr. Stuyvesant Fish, late president of the Illinois Central railroad, is reported to have said some very good things in a speech recently made at a banquet at Orange, N. J. Mr. Fish said:

"The contest is no longer between those who have and those who have not, but between those on the one hand who have moderately, sufficiently and even abundantly, and on the other those who, through the use of trust funds and the power incident thereto, seek by questionable practices to have excessively. This is the issue which is daily brought into every home in America. Like taxation without representation, it involves moral and ethical questions, and also strikes at the pocket book, which has been called the sure road to the Anglo-Saxon's heart. It will not down. Great and repeated efforts have been made to quiet and hush the clamor which is rising on this subject. Such efforts may succeed for a time, but not in the end. It is not for me to say, in the words of Patrick Henry, 'Gentlemen may cry peace, peace, but there is no peace,' nor yet, 'Shall we lie supinely on our backs until the enemy shall have bound us hand and foot?' No, a thousand times no! I can not and will not stir your minds up to a sense of wrong. Such is not my purpose, nor is this the forum for an appeal against unjust wealth. You and I have too large a stake in it to risk adding to the danger into which it has been brought by the malfeasance of some of our agents. What I do want is to bring to your attention the fact that no apparently effective thing has been done to right the wrongs which are known to exist, and that it rests with us, the great middle class, to meet this issue as our fathers met those which confronted them, soberly, advisedly and in fear of God. Let us do and say nothing rash, but, relying upon past experiences, move forward as people who 'know their rights, and knowing dare maintain.'"

Mr. Fish declares that a moral issue is involved, and he waxes eloquent and quotes from Patrick Henry. It is a noble speech. Mr. Fish is one of the rich men of the country—at least he would have been considered rich a few years ago, although he may not be rich when his wealth is measured against the wealth of some of our trust magnates. He has recently had some experience with the manipulators of the railroads and he was worsted in the contest. His defeat seems to have opened his eyes as to what is going on in this country, and he sounds a note of warning. The fact that he makes this protest is one of the signs of the times. The distinction which he draws is a very proper one. There is no antagonism in this country to honest wealth no matter how much a man makes if he makes it honestly and gives to society an equivalent service. He will be protected in the enjoyment of his wealth. There is a sense of justice among the American people to which the successful man can appeal if his success is merited, but it is time that a distinction was made between money honestly accumulated and money which has been stolen. It is time that the honest men

who have made fortunes in legitimate business separate themselves from the predatory classes and join with the masses in putting an end to exploitation. A few years ago many of the small business men felt that they must take the side of the big financiers. They are learning that the big financiers are a class by themselves and that their schemes contemplate the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many.

Mr. Fish probably regards his expulsion from the Illinois Central directorate as a misfortune, but if that misfortune makes him an apostle of reform, the public may well rejoice over the misfortune. Mr. Fish has been on the inside, and he knows something of the methods of these men who have been syndicating a nation's prosperity and monopolizing the opportunities of the country. May his conscience prompt him to speak and to speak often if he has any more messages like the one recently delivered.

MONEY IN BLOCKS

John Pierpont Morgan is quoted in Town Topics as saying: "There is plenty of money, but it is in blocks—not scattered about as it once was." And this seems very satisfactory to the people who own the "blocks." But how about the people among whom it was once scattered? He also says that there is nothing to prevent a continuance of prosperity "unless the agitators are successful in arousing public passion and clamor against our property interests." Is it possible that he wants the money "scattered about as it once was?"

A WORD OF WARNING

The Commoner has called attention to the Hamiltonian tendency on the part of some republican leaders to obliterate state lines. This tendency must be guarded against, for the state is the best protector of the rights and the best guardian of the interests of the citizen in local affairs. It is necessary, however, that democrats shall be on their guard against the effort made by the monopolists to use the state as a bulwark when attacked by the federal government. In our zeal for the protection of the rights of the states we must not allow wrongs to go unremedied. We must not allow the federal government to remain inactive where action is necessary. In domestic affairs the state is supreme; in interstate commerce congress is supreme. There is no neutral zone between these two spheres of action. When commerce crosses the line of a state it becomes subject to the control of congress, and congress must act in such matters or the people are without redress.

There ought to be no conflict between the state and the nation in the attack upon predatory wealth. The state should do all within its power to protect the public, and congress should exercise its power to the same end. The remedies should be concurrent. It is more than likely that the advocates of centralization will seek to substitute a national remedy for the remedies which are within the power of the state. The democrats should see to it that the national remedies are simply supplemental and do not disable the state. Congress is entirely within its sphere when it attempts to fix the terms upon which a state corporation can engage in interstate commerce. A state has a right to create corporations, and it has a right to control the corporations which it creates, and it ought to have the right to fix the terms upon which an outside corporation does business within its borders, but no state can object to conditions imposed by the federal government for the protection of interstate commerce.

Let the democrats be on their guard, therefore, first, to see that the powers of the general government are employed to the full in the protection of the public, and second, that the rights of the states in local affairs are not interfered with.

WORK FOR PRIMARY PLEDGE SIGNERS

In its issue of March 17, 1905, The Commoner presented the primary pledge plan for the organization of the rank and file of the democratic party. Since then thousands of democrats of every state in the union have attached their names to pledges, promising to participate in every primary election of their party. The signers of the primary pledge now comprise such a large number in every section of the country that they may be of material assistance in an organized effort for democratic victory and for the vindication of popular government.

There is a great work for primary pledge

signers. Let these take the initiative in their respective cities, towns or precincts, and organize clubs for the purpose of extending the primary pledge plan, and of awakening thoughtless voters of other parties to the importance of re-establishing democratic doctrines. Members of such clubs could study and discuss the issues as they force themselves to the front. Through the club, democratic literature could be circulated and systematic effort could be made to the end that every democratic voter attends the primary on primary day and goes to the polls on election day.

The members of these clubs will have great influence in making an intelligent scrutiny of the characteristics of men who aspire to be delegates to democratic conventions, city, county, state or national. It goes without saying that such delegates should be in full sympathy with democratic doctrine and may be depended upon to support the now well understood democratic rule: "A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable."

Such clubs should be organized without delay in every precinct in the United States. Immediately upon the organization of a club it should be reported to The Commoner for publication; the name of the club organized, the names of the officers and the number of members are important facts that should be set forth in this report.

The publication of such facts will encourage other democrats to organize for the great work that is to be done for the democratic party. Upon application The Commoner will supply primary pledge blanks and also membership blanks for organizing such clubs. Let this good work be taken up in every precinct in the United States.

What precinct will be the first to report to The Commoner the organization of a club, whose members are pledged to wage faithful battle for democratic principles?

THE POSTOFFICE IN PRIVATE HANDS

W. D. Boyce, a business man of Chicago, has made, on behalf of a syndicate, a proposition to take over the postoffice department and operate the same as "a private affair for public benefit." Boyce agrees to pay the government rental for the postoffice buildings and to pay to the government, also, all of the profits above seven per cent on the investment. He guarantees that he will reduce the present rate of postage by one-half; that he will extend the rural free delivery so that every farmer in the land will have the advantages of that service, and that he will add a postal express department so that packages may be distributed by the rural carriers outside the mail.

Here is an opportunity for those republican leaders who insist that the government should "keep out of business." Under present conditions there is a deficit in the postal department. The two-cent postal rate is regarded by many as excessive, and it is not possible to respond to the requests for extension of the rural free delivery. But here is a man who proposes to cut the postal rates in two and then pay the government all net profits above seven per cent on his investment, after paying rental on postoffice buildings!

If the republican leaders' hostility toward public utilities is well grounded, why not give serious consideration to this Chicago proposition? This hostility is not, however, well grounded. Men know that with all of its present day shortcomings the postal department, in the hands of the government, gives to public affairs better service than it would in private hands. When any one proposes to place under private control a public department so near and dear to the people as the postoffice, there is no difficulty in convincing even thoughtless republicans that the suggestion is "indefensible and intolerable." As this is true with respect to a monopoly in the postoffice, so it is true with respect to a monopoly in any of the necessities of life. "A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable."

It is safe to say, however, that the Boyce syndicate could make material reduction in the expense of conducting the postoffice department. Mr. Boyce says that the men whom he represents have had experts investigating the proposition for a period of seven years. If Mr. Boyce and his associates can count upon making the postoffice department an income producing business, why may not the authorities at Washington make it at least self-supporting? While the authorities are waiting for Mr. Boyce to give them some money-saving hints, it might be well for them to use the pruning knife upon the enormous sums paid to the railroads for the carrying of the mails.