

FROM THE PEOPLE

C. A. Wickless, Frederick, Md.—I am proud to say that I have been a Commoner reader since its first issue and have supported its noble principles in every available way. I shall continue to do so in deeds as well as in words and am confident that in a little time will be brought about the awakening that we have long hoped for. I have always been a steadfast supporter of Mr. Bryan's principles as set forth in the Chicago platform and in the Kansas City platform and am only too glad to lend that same support to the principles he declared for in Madison Square Garden. We are not alone in this effort by any means, as republicans as well as democrats are with us on these issues. Government ownership of railroads may seem to be a great proposition to some people, just as we expect. Government ownership of coal mines would stun some of them harder yet. But would it not be better for the masses than to have a few barons decide if we shall or shall not have coal at a fair price? We need not go far back to recall the extreme conditions brought about by the strike at the coal mines and the effect it had on business everywhere. These things are all so true that no wonder they bring about this great howl from the defenders of the national honor who did the people so much service in 1896 and 1900. We American citizens would hardly care to have their invaluable services thrust upon us again. It is the same story all along the line as regards the working people. They are obliged to work a long day at a low wage and to pay it back with good interest for the needs of life. Where does the interest money come from? And why all this? Just because it is lawful for conspiring corporations to control the different products of trade and to set the price at any figure they may choose. Of course we must have these necessities of life and must pay the price if we have it. Where there is no competition there should be public ownership, be it railroads, coal mines or any other thing that concerns the general interests of the people. This seems to be the only remedy for this growing evil. A few pilfering villains under the cloak of existing laws and special favors can amass millions of dollars which belong to the laboring classes, who alone produce that wealth. American citizens, let us put a stop to it. It is for us to decide. We have the ballot.

Lloyd T. Everett, Washington, D. C.—In the course of the article, "A Word of Encouragement," in your issue of December 14, The Commoner says: "The democratic party declared for the principle (of an income tax) in 1896, and the democratic candidate advocated it in 1900 and the party was defeated both times." Is the latter part of this statement made advisedly? Is it certain that a free vote and a fair count in 1896 would have placed the republican party in power? For a long time I, for one, have doubted it, and as time goes on and new facts come to light, this doubt grows. A short while after that election a former democrat, who had voted the Palmer and Buckner ticket, made the remark to me that there was no doubt of the actual election of Mr. Bryan. Of like opinion are other and more prominent observers of American political affairs, as witness the quotations made in the following letter of mine which appeared in the Baltimore Sun of August 21, last:

"Messrs Editors: In the very interesting letter of William L. Cook in your issue of the 18th inst., 'The Coming of Mr. Bryan,' is found this statement: 'The odds against Bryan (in 1896) were most formidable, and it was hardly a surprise that he went down in defeat.' The odds against us were indeed great—odds of power, of patronage, of money, of a biased if not subsidized metropolitan press, of intimidation; but are we so sure that Bryan went down in actual bona fide defeat? Says Alfred Henry Lewis (not particularly a Bryan partisan), in Human Life of last January: 'In 1884 the election was stolen from Mr. Blaine, just as in 1896 the election was stolen from Mr. Bryan; only the latter larceny was extended over the states of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia. * * * You

do not think, oh, reader, that the presidency was stolen in 1896? You should read the figures. They alone will suffice to prove the case. What do you say to the returns in that election from my old home state of Ohio? Mr. Bryan received 48,000 more votes than the largest Ohio vote—being the vote cast for Mr. Bushnell a year prior—ever given to any man. And yet his opponent out-topped it by, roundly, 50,000. The aggregate Buckeye vote mounted by the hundreds of thousands above any previous vote. It was larger than has been any subsequent vote. It ran the voting percentage of the state up to one in every three and three-fourths of population—a population streaked by a foreign-born element of 27 per cent of the whole. Ohio's voting strength was not, never was and isn't now an honest one in six of the population. Frauds in registration and at the ballot box defeated Mr. Bryan in 1896.' Of like tenor is an editorial in Collier's Weekly of June 9, in part as follows: 'His (Bryan's) defeats in his campaigns, and especially in the buncoed convention of 1904, have left him stronger with the middle western voters, who have always been the basis of his strength. Feeling that he has never had a fair opportunity, that he had more votes than McKinley in one election,' etc. And we are all familiar with the statement of Thomas Lawson, a republican, that it was Mark Hanna's hurry-up call for \$5,000,000 corruption money near the end of the campaign of 1896 that overturned the popular will in five pivotal states. In the true sense of the term, was Bryan defeated in 1896? Or was the story of 1876 repeated, with variations?"

As opportunity offers, I am gathering data on this matter, with a view to possible future use. Any information bearing on same which Commoner readers may be able to furnish me, either as regards that election in general, or pertaining to their own particular locality, will be much appreciated.

O. H. Schreiner, 51 Cambridge Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.—I noticed the publication in your issue of July 27 of the greater portion of my article on the wrongful use of "National Bank Reserves," and I herewith enclose a copy, asking you to note figures of late reports on pages 5 and 6, showing increased depletion of the reserves. I am a native citizen in my 75th year. Was many years bank cashier and president in New York City. Being practically cognizant of the great wrong, I have during many years endeavored to impress national legislators and officials, including the president, with its enormity in the hope of correction. There seems, however, no hope under existing political control. Republicans are indisposed to retard or check the Wall Street "prosperity" which results from this unnatural advantage. The greatest beneficiaries thereby are mainly beneficiaries of the high protective tariff. The two great wrongs work together and are complementary of each other. It would have been quite impossible to float the inflated capitalizations of railroads and industrial trusts, without national aid, not from the tariff alone, but combined with unnatural concentration of money from bank reserves. I am very sure the latter is as potent a cause of unjust distribution of property and wealth as is the former. This is illustrated in the case of the tariff's greatest beneficiary, whose fortune was doubtless trebled by organization and flotation of the United States steel corporation. Liberty and righteousness demand correction of such favoritism. Wall Street would doubtless suffer because of the unnatural advantage it has long enjoyed. But the way would be opened for the people as a whole to regain possession of their own. Let me add that I believe the loan or use of any portion of the national bank reserves, a practice grown through many years from small beginnings to be in violation of the law, and that the United States supreme court would so decide. To compel lawful money to be everywhere withheld by national banks, expressly for reserves, thereby denies loan or use of such money everywhere. To permit a great portion of same to be disbursed mainly at New York where, being bank reserves subject to quick recall, it can only be used as a basis for Wall Street loans, turns the law into false pretense and national favoritism. This it is, which has enabled incorporated beneficiaries to float false capitalizations, throttle and control leading industries, destroy equal opportunities under law, and more and more to subject the people at large as tributaries to unlimited predaceous wealth, and Wall Street domination.

FOR THE SCRAP-BOOK

"It Don't Hurt Much"

What, ho! little fellow upon my knee,
Telling your story of trouble to me—
A finger swollen, a cut and a bruise,
You wonder what mother will say to your shoes;
A brave, bright purpose to hold the tears
'Mid all the pain and the doubt and fears;
Though lips may quiver and sobs may rise,
No telltale drops in those brave, bright eyes,
As, tender with valor of childhood's touch,
He whispers: "It don't hurt very much."

There, little lad, with the wounds of fray,
Scarred and stained in the light-heart play,
A kiss will heal—with a kind word blent—
Far better than all of the liniment.
I used to come for a bandage, too,
When I built castles of life like you;
I used to fall and I used to know
The stinging pain of the bruise and blow.
The terrible gulping of doubts and fears,
And the brave, bright battle to hold the tears.

What, ho! little fellow, just wait a while,
Till the years of care and the years of trial
Carry you ever so far away
From the golden valleys of dream and play.
Please God, the wounds and the bruises then,
In the hard, cruel battle of men with men
Will find you stalwart and stanch and fine
To fight back sorrow with faith divine;
To hold the tears with a brave, tight clutch
And echo: "It don't hurt very much!"

—Baltimore Sun.

"Down to Sleep"

November woods are bare and still;
November days are clear and bright;
Each noon burns up the morning's chill;
The morning's snow is gone by night;
Each day my steps grow slow, grow light,
As through the woods I reverent creep,
Watching all things lie "down to sleep."

I never knew before what beds,
Fragrant to smell, and soft to touch,
The forest sifts and shapes and spreads;
I never knew before how much
Of human sound there is in such
Low tones as through the forest sweep
When all wild things lie "down to sleep."

Each day I find new coverlids
Tucked in and the viewless mother bids
Her ferns kneel down full in my sight;
I hear their chorus of "good-night;"
And half I smile and half I weep,
Listening while they lie "down to sleep."

November woods are bare and still;
November days are bright and good;
Life's noon burns up life's morning chill;
Life's night rest feet that long have stood;
Some warm, soft bed, in field or wood
The mother will not fail to keep,
Where we can "lay me down to sleep."
—Helen Hunt Jackson.

Ghosts

The whole house is full of shadows
And when the daylight fades and dies,
And from every nook and corner
Peeps a pair of laughing eyes,
And I seem to hear wee footsteps
Creeping down the stairway, too,
And instinctively I listen
For a cry of "Peek-a-boo!"

And instinctively I always
Peek behind each open door,
And instinctively I always—
As I used to do of yore—
Each day coming home at even,
Look expectant down the street
For my baby's windblown tresses
And her eager flying feet.

I'll be glad when summer's colors
Blend in autumn's umber-brown,
And my laughing wife and babies
Come a-tripping back to town;
When the shadows in the corners
Hide two laughing eyes for true,
And from unexpected places
I will hear a "Peek-a-boo!"

—J. M. Lewis in Houston Post.