

If necessary, we will have a law strong enough so it can not but be effective. I am not satisfied to have the law provide for publication by the committee alone; I believe a man when he contributes should be compelled to give notice, so you can have him to check against the committee. And I would go further, and would make it a penal offense, for if there is anything that offends one's sense of justice it is to send a man to the penitentiary for stealing a horse and not send a man to the penitentiary for stealing an election.

But, my friends, I was only calling attention to a few evidences of growth that encourage me to believe that better times are coming for those who want purity in politics and a government responsive to the will of the people.

And now let me give you what I regard as even a more encouraging sign; that is, the activity of the well-to-do men on the people's side of these questions, for these reforms have generally heretofore found their advocacy among the poor people. I regard it as a splendid sign that men of independent means, men who have no fear for themselves or for their own positions, are beginning to recognize that there is something in this world more important than the making of money, and that these men are beginning to give to these questions the benefit of their business experience and of their brain. In the last few years I have been gratified beyond measure to have men of means come to me and tell me of their interest in these reforms, altruistic interest, if you please, unselfish interest; men not seeking public office; men asking for nothing in the way of favors from the government, but men who recognize that this government must be better than it has been if we are to leave the legacy we ought to leave to our children.

I am glad, my friends, to find this increasing number, and I want to look upon these questions as these men do, for I am in an independent position. My poverty was overestimated when they called me poor just as my wealth is overestimated now, when they call me rich. I was never so poor that I could not have everything I needed, and my wants are as simple now, and my tastes as modest as when I was a struggling young lawyer and my wife and I were doing our work together. I have no fear about my income, no doubt that I can take care of myself, no doubt that I can leave my children as much as I think I ought to leave them. I do not believe in leaving children much. I am glad my father did not leave me much, for if I had grown up in anticipation of a fortune I would not have developed the industry that I did develop when I found that I had to make my own living. I do not want my children to be spoiled by the expectation of a great deal of money; I shall be able to leave them enough.

Why should a man want to leave only money to his children? If you leave money it may take the wings of the morning and fly away. You must leave your children something better than money. There is a growing class in this country, an increasing number of our citizens who recognize that the best legacy a father can leave to his children, is not fortune, but a government that will protect his children in their enjoyment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and guarantee to them a fair share of the proceeds of their own toil.

I welcome, therefore, as allies in the great fight that we have before us, not only the poor who have felt the pressure of bad laws, also those well-to-do people whose hearts beat in sympathy with the hearts of the struggling masses; and I am glad to have these two classes stand side by side and fight shoulder to shoulder. The fact that they are doing it in increasing number is evidence of the truth of what Dumas wrote thirteen years ago and Tolstoy ten years ago. They declared the coming of an era of brotherhood.

I rejoice that I have lived to see this day when men of means are recognizing that the poor man is made in the image of the same God whose image the well-to-do man wears; that these men are recognizing that the poor man loves his children as much as the rich man loves his children. This recognition of kinship will enable us to solve these questions in the spirit of brotherly love and, solving them, give an impetus to progress and civilization.

OPPOSING OKLAHOMA STATEHOOD

Those who believe in the right of the people to govern themselves may well be astonished at the dispatches from Washington. It is stated with circumstantial detail that pressure is being brought to bear upon the president to persuade him to veto the constitution of the new state of Oklahoma. Three reasons are assigned: First, that the constitution contains a provision

for the initiative and referendum; second, that the districting of the state is not fair; and third, that the constitution contains more strict regulation of corporations than is to be found in most constitutions. The second and third objections would hardly be regarded by the president as sufficient to justify the denial of statehood to Oklahoma. While the constitution attempts to protect the people from injustice at the hands of corporations, none of the provisions are confiscatory or subject to serious objection. The corporations are allowed to ride roughshod over the people of so many states that the president would hardly dare to deny statehood to Oklahoma merely because the representatives of the people have attempted to protect themselves against corporate greed. The fact that the fight against the adoption of the constitution is being led by Mr. Asp, the Oklahoma attorney for the Santa Fe System, would embarrass the republicans, for they presented the railroad provisions of the constitution as a reason for rejecting a constitution which the representatives of the people prepared and which the people themselves endorsed.

The second objection is not likely to have much weight, because the districting under which the delegates to the constitutional convention were elected was more partisan and unfair than the present districting. It is to be regretted that any party will take advantage of its majority to district a state unfairly, (as the editor of The Commoner has not seen a map of the state as districted, he does not know whether the state has been gerrymandered or not) but surely, when the president has before him the map of the territory as it was gerrymandered by republican officials in the hope of capturing the constitutional convention, he will hardly feel like criticising anything that the democrats may have done.

According to the press dispatches the most violent objection is made to the provision for the initiative and referendum, but can the president give that as a reason for excluding Oklahoma from a part in the next presidential election? Oregon has been giving her vote to the republican ticket. Will he be in favor of excluding the electors of Oregon on the ground that it has the initiative and referendum? South Dakota gave her electoral vote to the president two years ago, and she has adopted the initiative and referendum. Is this a reason for excluding her? Maine is going to vote on the question next year. Shall the rule be applied to Maine in case the people adopt the initiative and referendum?

It is asserted by some that the initiative and referendum destroys the representative character of the government, but such an argument will surely have no weight with a thoughtful person. We have always had the referendum in regard to constitutions, and there is a constantly increasing tendency to use the referendum in the government of cities. The law which called Oklahoma's constitutional convention together provided for a referendum vote on the constitution. Who will draw a line between the right of the people to veto a constitution and their right to veto a law enacted by a legislature?

It is not likely that the president will be undemocratic enough to interfere or to oppose any constitution which the people of Oklahoma deliberately endorse at the polls, but if he should venture to do so, the few electoral votes of Oklahoma kept out of the democratic column would be insignificant compared with the number of democratic votes which would be added to the democratic column from other states if the issue is directly presented, whether the people have a right to govern themselves. A rejection of Oklahoma's constitution might delay Oklahoma's statehood for a few months but it would prove a blow to republican prospects that no republican in official life would dare to strike.

ADVERTISING CONFIDENCE GAMES

Public attention is just now being directed to the advertising of certain speculative enterprises which are nothing less than confidence games. These advertisements are to be found in nearly all the papers and the promises held out are so obviously deceptive that the business managers of the papers can not be held guiltless.

Take, for instance, an advertisement which appeared in the New York Sun recently in which a trust company offered for sale a "limited" block of stock in an Alaskan gold mine. "Dividends of twenty-five per cent are assured from the first year's operation on the company's entire capitalization and thereafter as high as, and possibly more than, fifty per cent per annum."

If a paper published personal notices in-

forming would-be confidence men where they could obtain counterfeit money it would scarcely participate more fully in a purpose to defraud. Mining is a legitimate industry even though the element of chance enters into it, but if it is advertised at all the advertisement ought to state the facts. A company which can assure twenty-five per cent dividends from the first year does not have to buy newspaper space to secure stockholders. It does not have to dispose of its stock at half price to people so far away from the mine that they can not investigate. The same is true of stock in oil wells and gas wells. Stock which is advertised with great promises and sold remote from the place where the field of operation is—especially when "the price is to be advanced in the near future"—usually partakes of the nature of a lottery and should be so advertised. Such advertisements should read: "The Grand Digging in the Slim Chance Mine will take place soon and a few more tickets can be secured at ten dollars each. If paying ore is struck the purchasers may get their money back with interest—if not they will receive a large return in experience." Or "The Great Hopes Oil Well will be sunk shortly. Persons desiring tickets in this lottery can apply to ——— agents, who will receive their commission on sales whether oil is struck or not."

Such advertisements might not draw as many flies into the spider's web but they would be more honest than the advertisements which do appear in reputable papers.

The Commoner refuses to advertise STOCK IN ANY CORPORATION, first, because, as a rule, only speculative stock is advertised and, second, because the value of stock depends upon the management and the management may change any day. A few have discontinued their subscriptions because their stock advertisements have been declined, but the readers have been protected. The Commoner has made its advertising pages valuable by guarding against fraud and misrepresentation. It invites its readers to report promptly any advertiser who does not live up to the strict letter of his advertisement. This ought to be expected of any paper, for no honest newspaper proprietor can afford to make money by deceiving confiding patrons. But The Commoner goes further; it will not knowingly assist a trust to drive its weaker rivals into bankruptcy, and it therefore refuses advertising from any corporation which controls more than fifty per cent of the product of any article which it offers for sale. This, of course, does not apply to articles protected by patents or copyright, for the law grants a monopoly for a limited time as a compensation for a new idea, or invention, but these are few in number. The numerous and hurtful monopolies are not founded upon patents—they are founded upon the power of large corporations to control the market and drive out competitors. As The Commoner opposes the principle of private monopoly and fights that principle whenever it appears, it will neither put itself under obligation to the trusts or assist them to crush out the struggling industries which are menaced by the great monopolies.

In thus discriminating against trusts The Commoner is not only protecting itself and the small business man, but it is protecting all of its readers, for the natural, if not the inevitable, result of monopoly is an increase in price after competition has been eliminated.

THE NEW DISPENSATION

The Lincoln Daily Star, republican, defends President Roosevelt's letter to Honore Jaxon on the ground that the president, in referring to Moyer and Haywood as "undesirable citizens," referred only to men "whose innocence has not been established." This seems to be another one of the fruits of the new dispensation. In the old days when the constitution and the flag went side by side, and this was a representative government instead of a colonial government, the rule was that men charged with crime should be deemed innocent until proved guilty. In other words it was up to the prosecution to prove guilt. Now, according to this Lincoln newspaper, a man must prove his innocence or go to the cell or the noose.

ANOTHER PROBLEM

"The Word and Way," a Baptist publication, says that "one of the problems of society is what to do with ex-convicts." Quite true, but it is not the only convict question. Another one deals with those who ought to be convicts but are not likely to be, owing to political pulls and the failure of the courts to enforce the criminal clause of the Sherman anti-trust law.