

# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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NEWS OF THE WEEK

Here is an interesting letter from a ninety-four-year-old democrat. George Saum of Anamosa, Ia., writes: "Please send me a dozen or fifteen certificates, as I want to do some work for the million army plan. My age—although only ninety-four, does not permit me to get about a great deal, but it does not hinder my talking and reading political issues in which I am greatly interested. I believe in "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." I voted for Jackson and am looking forward to the privilege of voting again for Bryan."

### CAN IT BE?

In its New Year's edition The Commoner printed this: "A Happy New Year"—a twelve-month full of peace and plenty—to every reader of The Commoner; and to every other one throughout the wide, wide world!

Reproducing this sentiment Editor George D. Perkins writing in the Sioux City (Iowa) Journal says: "The sentiment is very pretty. But it is not accompanied by a statement that Mr. Bryan will withdraw his name from further consideration as a candidate."

Can it be possible that the only way to make a republican editor happy is for Mr. Bryan to withdraw from the contest of 1908?

Following is a letter from an eighty-two-year-old democrat: "Enclosed find money order for \$3.00 for the six names mentioned in the four certificates herein. Mr. Helgesen suggested that we get up a club yesterday, and the above is the result so far. Please send fifteen or twenty certificates for further use in our endeavor to increase the list. You may know what kind of a democrat I am by being elected as the first democratic county clerk after the civil war, in this county—1869. I will be eighty-two years old the 3rd of February next. Came to California in 1849, voted for the ratification of the state constitution. I have been as deaf as an oyster for the last twenty years, but thank God I can see to read yet and know the truth when I do read it, and only hope I may be spared long enough to see an honest, sincere president in the White House. Most respectfully yours,  
Washington, Cal. J. J. ROGERS.



A GOOD THING FOR EVERYBODY

## RANK AND FILE WILL CONTROL

The New York World appears to be greatly disturbed lest Mr. Bryan would force himself upon the democratic party as a candidate for president in 1908. This is all pretense, however, unless the World editors are utterly ignorant of the sentiments and purpose of democrats.

It is an insult to the intelligence of the party to say that any man or coterie of men could, for selfish or clique reasons, dictate the course of the party in 1908. Certainly democrats learned something in the experiences of 1904 when the New York World and the special interests it represents had their way, so far as concerns convention results. Democrats know, too, that at this time when the American people are demanding relief from trust imposition the candidate and the platform must be representative of the interests of the masses. They know, too, that the American people could no more depend upon a presidential candidate chosen by the special interests and the representatives of the special interests that seek to control democratic conventions any more than they could depend upon a presidential candidate named by the republican convention at the behest of the great corporations.

No one will contend, publicly, that the public welfare should not be of paramount importance in the framing of a platform and in the naming of a candidate. No one will deny, publicly, that the masses, rather than the classes, should rule. No one will say, publicly, that the party should submit to dictation. But in popular government "skimmed milk sometimes masquerades as cream," and sometimes the most abject tools of monopolies pretend an

anxiety for the public good and hide evil purposes by patriotic pretensions.

While the people have often been deceived, at no time must the people surrender the power of determining their course. In the democratic party particularly the rank and file must be the judges; and this is all the more true in this year when the American people, grown weary of the burdens put upon them by monopolies through the aid and consent of the republican party, are looking to the democratic party for relief; not merely encouragement in finely written platforms, not merely bright promises spoken by eloquent orators, but in the sincere determination on the part of the party leadership, and more than all upon the part of the candidate himself, to faithfully adhere to the promises made. The rank and file of the democratic party must, therefore, write the platform and name the candidate. Mr. Bryan has not sought to influence the choice other than to the extent of saying that the discharge of this important duty shall not be relegated to individuals with power to act to the detriment of the party and the public, and to the advantage of the very elements from whose oppressions the American people are at this very moment turning.

It is the province of every man within the party to aspire to the honors which the party has to bestow, but it is the province of the party—and that means the rank and file—to shape the party's course.

So far as the campaign of 1908 is concerned Mr. Bryan has only said that if democrats wanted him to be the candidate he would accept the nomination and do his duty.

Mr. Bryan has said, however, just as every