

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 8, NO. 1

Lincoln, Nebraska, January 17, 1908

Whole Number 365

CONTENTS

PREVENTION MORE THAN PENALTY
PROTECTING DEPOSITORS
TAFT ON INJUNCTIONS
THE REPUBLICAN MASTER
NOT ALL IGNORANCE
SPECIAL INTERESTS AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
MR. BRYAN AT THE JEFFERSON CLUB
TREASON!
WHO WILL BUY?
WASHINGTON LETTER
COMMENT ON CURRENT TOPICS
HOME DEPARTMENT
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
NEWS OF THE WEEK

THE COMMONER

With this number the Commoner begins its eighth year. In its initial number the Commoner said that it would be satisfied if by fidelity to the common people it proved its right to the name which had been chosen. It is not for the Commoner to say whether this right has been established. Yet it will not be denied the privilege of saying that if mistakes have been made they were mistakes of the head rather than of the heart, and that the efforts of the Commoner have been to hew close to the line of what its editor believes to be in the public interests and to faithfully champion those principles which give the highest promise of providing "the greatest good to the greatest number."

The increasing number of subscribers and the cheerfulness with which men in all sections of the country give their aid to the effort to widen the Commoner's sphere of influence, provide reason for believing that the great work to which the Commoner has been dedicated is appreciated at least by those who sympathize with the principles advocated by Mr. Bryan.

In the future, as in the past, the Commoner will exert itself in behalf of democratic principles to the end "that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

FIVE TO FOUR

The shades of night were falling free
When up from Washington, D. C.,
There come decrees, all handed down
By judges wrapped in black silk gown—
"Five to four."

The income tax? They pondered late
And argued with learning great;
They seized their pens and gravely wrote
Opinions—then they took the vote—
"Five to four."

The Merger? 'Twas a famous case.
Each judge sat there with solemn face,
And heard the argument so keen,
When the decision came 'twas seen—
"Five to four."

Our wards beyond the deep blue sea?
Ah, surely here they will agree!
But after rods of legal lore
Behold the spectacle once more—
"Five to four."

A law to safeguard human life,
To care for orphans and for wife;
Ah, judges on that will agree!
But there's the record—look and see—
"Five to four."

—W. M. M.

CAESAR AND BRUTUS



THE IDES OF FEBRUARY—BUT WHICH IS CAESAR AND WHICH BRUTUS?

Prevention More Than Penalty

President Roosevelt deserves credit for having focussed public attention upon unearned wealth. Others have striven to awaken the people to the menace of the vast accumulations which have been gathered together by questionable, if not by immoral, methods, but it has required a louder note than the unofficial were able to sound to reach the ears of the busy multitude.

The phrase "swollen fortunes" is a happy one, for "swollen" means something unnatural or abnormal, and suggests disease. No objection is raised to natural fortunes; normal wealth is healthy and wholesome. There is every reason to encourage the amassing of money by legitimate means; those who grow rich in honest ways are to be commended rather than censured, but it is high time that it should be known that there are unearned fortunes, for until the fact of their existence is known no inquiry will be made into the source of such fortunes; and until the source is known no remedy can be applied.

In order to distinguish the swollen fortunes from the natural ones we must adopt some rule or standard. How may a man honestly accumulate a fortune? By giving to society a service commensurate with the reward which he draws from society. It is not possible to define with mathematical accuracy just how much a man's services are worth, for there is no tribunal which is vested with power to weigh the facts and determine the question. And if the question were submitted to any human tribunal it is not at all certain that the decision would be in accord with justice, for often the greatest services are not appreciated at the time.

By common consent it has been left to society at large to determine what a man shall receive for his work, and competition is the word which we use to describe the method by which the value is fixed. As long as competition is left free each person receives from society the price which society fixes upon his work, as compared with the work of others.

This rule, that each should draw from society in proportion as he contributes to the welfare of society, is in harmony with the divine law of rewards, insofar as that law can be gathered from nature. When God gave us the earth with its fertile soil, the sunshine with its warmth and the showers with their moisture, He proclaimed as clearly as if His voice had thundered from the clouds, "Go, work, and in proportion to your industry and your intelligence, so shall be your reward."

The earth yields her treasures to those who labor, and she rewards intelligent labor more liberally than ignorant labor. Two men, living side by side, may cultivate farms of equal area and fertility, and yet one grows rich while the other grows poor. If they are equally intelligent the more industrious one will surpass the less industrious; if they are equally industrious the more intelligent one will forge ahead. Industry and intelligence are both necessary; either is fruitless without the other. (We are not speaking now of economy in the expenditure of the income, or of the use made of the money earned; we shall refer to this later.) Other things being equal, the farmer who puts the most intelligence into his work will secure the best results. He will examine the soil, so as to plant the crops to which the soil is suited;