

# SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF 1908

Albert C. Holloway, Akron, Ohio.—We had a large democratic gain in my precinct, city and county. Consequently we have no "mystery of 1908" to solve. We were very well organized during this campaign, having an organization extending to every precinct in the county. We propose to maintain our organization during the coming winter. It is our intention to open up permanent headquarters which will be the home of the Bryan club as well as the various party committees.

I. M. Adams, Ravenwood, W. Va.—Our losses were due to the fact of the failure of the Cleveland administration and to the fact that republican speakers urged strongly that the same result would follow democratic victory this time "Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?" Yes, by reorganizing on a progressive and liberal plan with equal civil rights to all citizens and protective tariff on all competitive goods.

O. H. Reed, Chairman Ingham County Democratic Committee, Lansing, Mich.—You ask, "Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?" Important question, that. Too much guess work for me. I hope, I trust, for the triumph of all measures which will equalize the burdens more justly, and distribute the enjoyments more equitably, that rewards of all will be commensurate with willingness to do and ability to execute, and that these will be unhampered by any of man-made creations. I "never dream though right is worsted, wrong will triumph." As long as democracy believes in the creatures that God made, does it not believe in God himself? Sometimes I think that the salvation from "known abuses" lies in a spiritual or religious movement and not in a political or man-made movement. Jesus Christ did not go after office, but declined all temporal power, but taught the correction of all governmental as well as physical ills by inculcating spiritual knowledge.

W. S. Byram, Harrisonville, Mo.—The democratic party should in the future advocate more strenuously than ever, those policies which will inure to the benefit of the whole people, which are beneficial to the masses and not the classes. One thing which defeats the democratic party is that a large vote which the republican party receives is cast in its favor from ignorance and prejudice, and is not determined really from the policies advocated by either party, but from other causes. The negro vote, which is almost cast entirely for the republican party is drawn to it through ignorance and prejudice and not on account of the policies which divide the parties. There is no doubt but a large number voted with the republicans on account of their fear that the "captains of industry and finance" would cause hard times if the democratic party should win. They give credit to the republican party for the high price of corn, cattle, hogs, etc., and made to believe that if the democrats should win, there would be such a slump in the market as would cause losses to thousands of people all over the country. While this would not have been true, a large number were taught to believe it, and the effect was just the same. I believe the democratic party will eventually win by being aggressive, persistent and contending for those things which are for the best interest of the people as a whole. The republican party is so thoroughly entrenched in power, with a large army of officeholders, backed by the trusts, who have grown rich from special legislation granted to them, makes it a hard fight to win, but by thorough organization, united efforts, the democratic party will win because it is right and ought to win. It may be years, but the democratic party should never give up. The democratic party is more united today than it has been for years, and has no good reason for retracting any policy advocated before the election, nor ever give up the struggle for better government, but should form a solid phalanx and move forward as one man for those principles for which it has been so long contending. "We should not become weary in well doing for in due time we shall reap our reward if we faint not."

W. L. Marley, Bentonville, Ark.—I think the loss entirely due to the influence of the almost universal belief that the moneyed and government favored interests of the country could and would bring about a money stringency and panic if Bryan were elected and seemingly the unwillingness of the people to make the

## THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

In its issue of November 13, The Commoner invited contributions to a symposium, having for its purpose an inquiry into the causes of the results of the 1908 election. The Commoner asked the co-operation of its readers in every section of the country, submitting these questions:

Did the democratic party make losses in your county and precinct?

If so, to what influence were such losses due?

"What course shall reformers adopt for the future?"

Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?

The fourth installment of this symposium is printed in this issue. It should be understood that the publication of any particular opinion does not mean that The Commoner endorses that opinion. In order that the inquiry shall be thorough it will be necessary that wide scope be given the contributors to this symposium, and these opinions are to be printed with the names of the writers.

For the preparation of this symposium The Commoner must lay down certain unalterable rules:

First, replies must be brief and to the point.

Second, the writing must be plain.

Third, the tone must be respectful, the language non-abelous and free from epithet—although the widest possible latitude will be given for the description of the conditions that contributed to the result and the expression of opinion as to the future course of reformers.

The name of the contributor will be used.

The Commoner will continue this symposium from week to week, covering sufficient time and space in which to clear up "The Mystery of 1908."

sacrifice at the present. All democrats and many republicans with whom I am acquainted freely admit that reforms of government are necessary and their execution absolutely imperative to the future well being of the people; all seem to realize it involves a certain personal sacrifice and many shrink from it. I think the democratic party has heretofore made the mistake of incorporating in the platform too many reforms at once notwithstanding many are needed. I believe it more feasible to settle one great question at a time. The greatest question before the people and the one most easily explained is tariff reform. In my judgment the cause democrats should adopt for the future and make their battle cry is "tariff reform." The democratic party will yet gain control of the government if God intends this to remain the land of the free and the home of the brave, which I think He does.

Eva M. Johnson, Fayette City, Pa.—I hope I am not taking too great a liberty in thus writing to you to express my deep regret at your defeat in the recent election. I wished so ardently for your election, indeed your own family could not have desired it more earnestly than I, and the disappointment was heart breaking. But although you were not elected, you have thousands of admirers and supporters all over the country and, in my opinion, more really close friends whom you have never seen than any man in the United States. Last night I read in the paper your article, "A Battle Lost, a War but Begun," in which you call the result of the election "the mystery of 1908." The paper stated that you had started an inquiry among your readers as to the cause of that result. As I am among the number of your readers and a member of that class from whom you expected the greatest support—the laboring class—I venture to send you my opinion in the matter. With the finest platform ever drafted by any party; with a reputation for honesty, integrity, and high moral character that has successfully run the gauntlet of three pres-

dential campaigns; and backed by the support of organized labor leaders as well as of your party, the outlook for you was indeed a bright one, and we may well ask: "How was failure possible?" To me it seems there were several influences at work. In the first place, the democratic party is now the party of reform, while the members of the republican party are conservative. The socialists, our most radical party, and advocating complete reform in government, have made amazing gains in the past four years and these gains have, of course, been made at the sacrifice of the older parties. Which party would naturally suffer the greater loss to socialism; the democratic, made up of those seeking reform and not far removed from the socialists, or the hide-bound, conservative republicans, who are perfectly content with conditions as they exist? It is the laboring classes, those who suffer most from present day oppression and from whom you expected your strongest support, that have swelled the ranks of the socialists. And while I know for a positive fact that many socialists supported the democratic ticket this time simply because you were the candidate (my own father and brother among the number), yet I do not think their number was nearly sufficient to offset the exodus from democracy to socialism. Secondly, the protective tariff is a humbug that continues to fool more people than any other humbug ever conceived. *People with more patriotism than intelligence are caught by the phrase "protection of American industries."* Few people really understand the tariff, and hence follow the line of least resistance in advocating something already established. But the most potent influence in directing the vote of the masses of the American people was fear. They well realize that the republican party is controlled by the corporations and moneyed interests. They also realize that their daily bread is dependent on the will of those interests, and they feared to antagonize those who control the source of their meagre incomes. More than one corporation threatened to shut down the works upon which we are dependent for a living if Mr. Taft was not elected, while threats of "Vote for Bryan and you lose your jobs," turned more votes to the republican party than those people who boast of our freedom and independence would care to admit. For too many workingmen failed to realize that companies run their works, not to give men employment, but for their own profit, and that they would keep them open only as long as it was to their own interest to do so, regardless of who was or was not elected. This fact is demonstrated by the fact that, in spite of the republican victory, three mines in the vicinity of my home town have shut down for an indefinite period for no other reason apparently than to break the spirits of their already destitute employes. I know of one case where a ballot was sent to a mine boss marked to show him how he was to vote and how he was to direct the workmen under his supervision to vote. Needless to say, this ballot was sent by the company that employed him and was marked for a straight republican vote. I have stated facts that have come under my personal observation. They are not speculative, they are positive truths, and I hope may prove of some value to you in clearing up the "mystery of 1908." And now may I conclude my lengthy epistle by again expressing my admiration of your policies and my sorrow at your defeat. I was but a child of seven years of age when you first led the democratic party in its fight for the presidency, but I remember distinctly the excitement of that time and my father's warm partisanship of your cause. He has cast his vote for you each time you have been a candidate, and my brother gave you this time the first presidential vote he ever cast. I am proud to say that our own little town, in republican Pennsylvania, went strongly democratic. Your picture holds an honored place in our home, while our whole family, father, mother, brothers and sisters, continue to say, in spite of the republican victory, with undiminished loyalty to your great cause: "Hurrah for Bryan!"

J. A. McFarland, Rensselaer, Ind.—Here is my explanation: I have it from those who are in a position to know. It is chargeable to the Catholic vote. I think as a proof that this is true we have only to analyze the vote in New York and in the states in which democratic governors were elected while Taft got the electoral vote. This was given me by a Catholic in Lafayette, who claimed to have inside information.