

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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HELP FOR THE EARTHQUAKE SUFFERERS

So widespread is the distress among the earthquake sufferers in Italy that every section of the civilized world is expected to make contribution for the relief of these sorely stricken people. It is needless to say that America will do her part in this great work and to this end every available agency must be utilized.

It is difficult for the human mind to understand the extent of the disaster. Some idea of the great damage done to the living and to property interests may be obtained when it is remembered that careful estimates indicate that at least 200,000 people lost their lives.

Many of the larger papers are calling for subscriptions and The Commoner will join in this effort.

The Commoner starts the fund with \$100 and calls upon its readers everywhere to make such contribution as they can afford.

All drafts or money orders given for this purpose to this office should be made payable to The Commoner. The money thus collected will be paid to the proper authorities in order that this fund may be promptly and effectively used for the benefit of the needy.

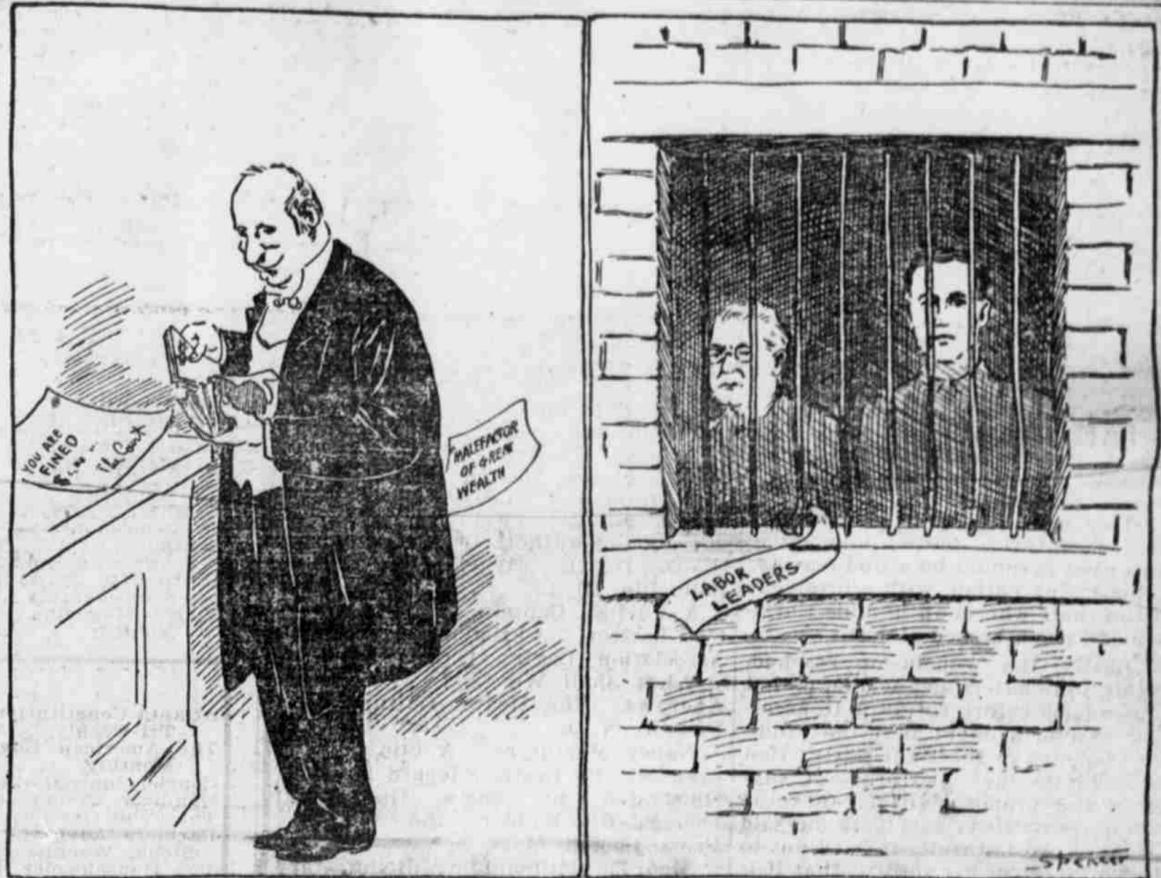
Let every reader of The Commoner make some contribution to the Earthquake Fund.

It is a duty they owe humanity.



PROBABLY AN ERROR

The usually reliable Springfield (Mass.) Republican has a headline to the effect that "Taft led Bryan by \$44,754." If the Republican meant to fix the cost of the republican majority, the estimate is probably too low, but as that is the exact amount of the plurality in Massachusetts, the dollar mark was probably put in by mistake.



"EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW"

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

When it was announced that President Roosevelt would become the associate editor of the Outlook, inquiry was made as to the stockholders. The Outlook company at first resented the inquiry as if it were a matter of no importance. Finally, when it developed that Mr. Stillman, the Standard Oil banker, was one of the stockholders, the representatives of the Outlook condescended to give some attention to the matter and announced that Mr. Stillman's holdings did not amount to one-tenth of the entire stock. When the subject was brought to the attention of Mr. Roosevelt he also scouted the idea that it made any difference who owned the stock of the company. It is not necessary to assume a bad intent upon the part of the president or upon the part of the proprietors of the Outlook. On the contrary it is entirely possible that both he and they honestly believe that President Roosevelt will feel entirely free to express himself on any and all questions. But however immune the president and the managers of the Outlook may be, the principle which they asserted is not a tenable one. It does make a difference who owns a paper; the editor is not always independent of those who employ him. The fact that the men interested in the trusts and combines are reaching out after newspapers and periodicals is sufficient proof that they expect to exert an influence on the editorial policy of the papers which they own and no one can read the editorials in the papers thus owned without recognizing the subserviency of the editorial writers. Even the managers of the Out-

look might be unconsciously influenced by those of their stockholders who have a pecuniary interest in predatory corporations. The fact that the influence may be unconsciously exerted does not make it any the less deadly. Even the president might unintentionally avoid editorial utterances offensive to stockholders, with whom he is supposed to associate with more or less intimacy.

The president doubtless feels that he can make the Outlook a useful medium in reaching the public, but he could have given to his utterances a greater weight had he inquired into the personnel of the stockholders before becoming an employe, for an editor receiving a salary is, after all, only an employe, even though his contract may stipulate that he is to have absolute freedom in his writings. The president might have given more confidence to the friends of reform and emphasized the necessity for independence in journalism by stipulating that during his connection with the paper none of its stock should be owned by law defying corporations or those intimately connected with them.

The president used as an argument against the democratic ticket that it was supported by a St. Louis lawyer who acted as attorney for a trust official. If the president was justified in making the support of this man—one voter in six million and a half—a ground for criticism, he might be justified in inquiring whether an objectionable man owned one-tenth of the stock in the company from which he expects to draw a salary.