

The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

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The wonder is how the employer of the secret service men kept it quiet as long as he did.

Those "house insurgents" seem to have exhausted all their energies in the prospectus.

Of course it is very reprehensible on the part of California to insist upon the right to manage her own internal affairs.

A Chicago plumber named Lemon has just married a widow who possesses a fortune. This is Lemon aid of the genuine brand.

Merely a word in defense of feminine headgear—thank goodness the price does not necessarily increase with the size of the hat.

It pains us to note that the esteemed New York World is inclined to treat with levity the grave and serious charges of lese majeste.

The republican explanation of the treasury deficit is that the outgo is larger than the income. Some years ago the same republicans explained it on the ground of "democratic extravagance and incompetency."

The battleship fleet was of such good service at Messina that we may now expect an insistent demand for a dozen or more new battleships. Any old excuse is good with the battleship builders and dreamers of empire.

When a federal judge can deprive a man of his liberty by judicial ukase, and a newspaper can be gagged for the offense of criticizing a government official, it will be high time for Russia to send us a few missionaries.

Having been compelled to swallow the bitter pill, and having finished the making of wry faces, the republican machine leaders are now looking sanctimonious and asking to be congratulated because Oregon legislators kept their promise.

The Omaha Bee says "Mr. Bryan was employed as editor of the World-Herald as part of the deal by which the silver millionaires poured their money into that paper in order to convert it to the advocacy of 16 to 1 free coinage." The Omaha Bee has repeated that falsehood until it has come to believe it—which is by no means an isolated instance in the case of the Omaha Bee.

Letters From the People

A. H. Cox, Fairmont, Neb.—I do not think that the democratic party can ever hope to win in this country, if it ever does, it will be too late to render much practical relief to the people. You can count on the fingers of one hand, those who practically control all of the trunk lines of railroads in this country. You can count with the fingers of one hand those men who control the anthracite coal of this country. You can count with the fingers of one hand those men who control the oil of the country, and by the same means count the men who control many of the other leading industries of the nation. What will be the status of the country after eight years of Mr. Taft, eight years of Sherman, eight years of Theodore Roosevelt, eight years of Nicholas Longworth, the Lord only knows.

In the last campaign the democratic party appealed to the reason of the people and the republican party appealed to their selfishness; the democratic party appealed to the laboring people to support their own cause, without success, while the republican party appealed to the "business interests" and the returns indicate that the "business interests" responded to that appeal. This is, however, in line with human experience. My judgment is that the democratic party should be slow to formulate its plans for another campaign. No party slogan will suffice, and time alone will give us a "pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night" that will come any ways near leading us out of the wilderness in 1912.

R. D. Swain, President Star Livestock Commission Company, Kansas City Stock Yards, Mo.—You ask, "How did it happen?" From the fact that more voting "people" walked up and cast their ballots for William H. Taft than they did for William J. Bryan. Taft was stronger than his party, Bryan weaker than his. Why did it happen? Because the "people" think for themselves and do not vote on the sayso of spellbinders whose stock in trade consists of what they call issues. Because they do not believe that the man lives that can do the thinking for eighty million people, especially so when that man insists that each of his issues apply to all the people, not considering that they are scattered over a country reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from Manitoba to the Gulf of Mexico, with its different climates, conditions and varied interests. They believe that an all wise Providence intended that each one should adjust themselves to the conditions that surround them, do so cheerfully, and accept the fact that different people see the same thing in different lights from different view points. There is generally one in a ship's company that knows something about everything, and when he is not sleeping or on duty, he is growling. They make good sailors, but poor officers. They are called "forecastle lawyers." The "people" will not put a forecastle lawyer in the presidential chair. From my view point Johnson or Gray would have won out hands down, as I believe conditions should have made this a democratic year. I may be wrong.

Dr. T. A. Stevens, Caney, Kan.—Some voters willingly believed and some were made to believe that in event of democratic victory, the effects of the present panic would continue longer and possibly the threat that "another panic would ensue" would be made good by the republicans. They believed the republicans had the power to bring about a panic at their will. They believed that the democratic principles were correct and the better for the country in time but felt that the country could not wait and must have the promised immediate relief. The democratic party can hope to gain control of the federal government. I think in four years we can abundantly reap from the seed sown in the 1908 campaign.

Will W. Woodworth, Gowanda, N. Y.—We made gains in our county, reducing the republican majority two-thirds and I attribute the result to these influences: Active executive work; funds raised constantly; good speakers, well posted on conditions in general vicinity; meetings advertised, entertaining as well as instructive; plenty of music; town papers utilized, descriptions of meetings, also (paid) general articles of political interest on home industries; many committees; street banners of merit; orderly meetings, non-abusive speakers; good clean workers on election day. Concerning the course for reformers in the future I would say: The Commoner and others to make open question to their subscribers relative to general conditions over the United States. From every county, a concise statement of agricultural and

manufacturing interests. How tariff effects and what reforms would benefit them, as a community, etc. The wearer knows where the shoe pinches, here the reform begins. To get control of the federal government, democratic societies must be formed over the entire country. Secure democratic literature and get subscribers to democratic newspapers. So that laborers will not read and dream of republican infallibility, for four years. They will talk it over with their fellow workmen, who in turn dream over it. This endless chain of missionary work will continue for four years more. Near the end the democrats get busy, conduct a vigorous campaign and have to physic their patient to death to clear up his system from republican poison. Why not try to keep him healthy all the four years.

Ralph McMurry, Denver, Colo.—The course that reformers should adopt in the future should be the same course Mr. Bryan has already adopted in the past and every democratic publication in the United States should lend aid to the effort. The Commoner sets forth, and every man in favor of those principles should each lend all the influence he may possess, whether great or small. It is best expressed in the language of Jefferson, where he says: "No good measure was ever proposed which, if duly pursued, failed to prevail in the end."

Ben P. Earle, Charleston, Ky.—The democratic party can not hope to win unless the business men, become more patriotic, and less commercial. What I mean is to think more of the perpetuity of our free institutions and less of the dollar, that is to come on the morrow. "What course shall reformers adopt for the future?" Continue the same doctrine already taught, and adopt any course that the exigency of the times offers to forward the same.

J. A. Kinkade, Beloit, Kan.—Keep up the work of education until the people can be made to see wherein their best interests lie.

John A. Myers, Hutchinson, Kan.—Fears of the panic and business stagnation as threatened by the party in power proved to be the paramount question and caused our defeat.

THE COMMONER

(From the New York Sunday Democrat.)

Almost immediately after the defeat of William J. Bryan for the presidency in 1900, he established in the city of Lincoln the paper, The Commoner, a weekly journal appearing on Fridays, sold for a dollar a year, and each of the pages being about two-thirds as large as a page of this paper.

It was the claim of those who saw no merit in this project of Mr. Bryan that "a weekly paper carried no influence, being overshadowed by daily publications; that Lincoln was a city of small importance in the United States, and that a paper emanating from it would carry little weight and, finally, that as an editor Mr. Bryan would carry much less weight in politics than as a campaign orator—a field in which he excelled."

Wiser and more far-sighted persons, realizing the enormous influence of the press in the United States and the extent to which it has superseded all other agencies of appeal for political support, realized that Mr. Bryan was on the right track for continued leadership of the democratic party of the country and that he could be the candidate, or name the candidate, of that party for the presidency so long as he had a newspaper unconditionally under his influence and control.

The Commoner, under Mr. Bryan's editorship, soon acquired a large circulation and an influence even greater in proportion than its circulation, for it furnished watchwords, keynotes and arguments for democratic papers throughout the country and it enabled him to direct, so far as the democratic press was concerned, the views of most of the papers published west of the Mississippi and many of those published to the east of it.

It is the function of a daily paper to print the news and such passing comments upon it as the news of the day may call for. It is the function of a weekly paper to print opinions which have reference to permanent conditions, and not to mere passing events.

Political conditions are not due to minor happenings which are reported in daily newspapers. They are due to deeper considerations of policy and polity, and the influence of a weekly paper was so well shown in the case of The Commoner that Mr. Bryan's leadership since its establishment has been absolutely undisputed, and at the recent Denver convention the "Bryan sentiment," created by eight years of agitation, was unmistakable.