

Letters from the People

L. E. Perkins, Denver, Colo.—I read in the April number of the World's Work the following: "We are entering a period like that which, under President Monroe, was known as the era of good feeling. Now, as then, the views of both parties have come together. There is little difference between the tenets of a Cleveland democrat and a Taft republican. Mr. Franklin McVeagh, the new secretary of the treasury, was one and is the other and has never changed his beliefs." This, at any rate, confirms the belief expressed in former correspondence, that neither Mr. Stephens nor myself were the only ones who thought dropping the money question simply meant the absorption of the great democratic party by the party of the "predatory rich" and the "wealthy malefactor" who have, like the Kilkenny cats, devoured both.

Robert Schilling, Milwaukee, Wis.—Lincoln's epigram about fooling the people should be changed somewhat. They may not be able to fool all the people all the time, but they do seem to be able to fool the majority of the people all the time. I know sensible, intelligent men—not one, but many—who voted the republican ticket in the last election, in spite of the fact that they were even more radical than the democratic party, solely because they were afraid that the election of Bryan would induce the Wall Street thugs to precipitate another panic. And this while we were in the midst of one caused by these selfish and heartless financial buccaneers. Will these people never learn that under our present barbarous financial system panics are absolutely inevitable? If they once realize this indisputable fact, they would vote for a change, even if it caused temporary trouble. If a body suffers with a foul ulcer, little plasters and lotions may give temporary relief, but no remedy. What is needed is some radical remedy in order to effect a thorough and permanent cure. The ulcer must be removed, no matter how heroic the means of relief may be. The entire silly and disreputable financial system must be changed, even though we be compelled to pass through a period of serious depression, and then we will have safety ever after.

George Strelitz, Milwaukee, Wis.—May I presume to submit to you the following ideas: Our political leaders should by no means be leaders in the strictest sense of the word, but rather followers of developments in thought and knowledge, which must to a large degree become diffused amongst the people, before a statesman can profit effectively by any intellectual progress that may have been made. Bearing this cardinal principle in mind, it will be rather easy to trace the reason of Mr. Bryan's defeat in the last presidential campaign. First, Our political problems have become more difficult of comprehension. Second, The intellectual progress of the masses has not kept up with these larger requirements. Third, The soil in which our democratic institutions have been planted, which was so well fitted to nourish the qualities of independence, has been gradually undergoing a change. This is a rather dark statement and ought to be explained at greater length, however I do not wish to make this letter longer than absolutely necessary. One suggestion would follow from these remarks, which may be useful, should the democratic party once more espouse the cause of reform. Limit the platform, so as to concentrate the power of attack upon practically one issue. Namely this can be easily grasped by the public mind: The senators shall be elected by popular

"vote." Any representative, senator or president shall be recalled and replaced if he violates the platform promises, and the legislative acts he participated in, shall have no legal force." Any corrupt practices or lavish expenditure of money used in elections, will make another election necessary, which will have to take place within ten days after the first election. The candidate having used corruptive methods is not eligible in that election. I think the public can be made to see that the purpose of such laws would be to secure the democratic institutions of this country against their being abused by corporate wealth. They furnish no grounds upon which a threat can be based to the effect, that the prosperity of the nation would be impaired should such legislation be carried out. Having placed the elections in the hands of the people, all other issues will settle themselves.

Thomas R. Stevenson, Oakland, Cal.—Anent the unbroken series of successes of the opponents of our republican ideals of government since the close of the civil war, it would seem that even Commoner readers overlook the steady, menacing growth of the prerogative and powers of the federal judiciary. We know the supreme court was remodeled for the purpose of reversing the greenback decision. So far as my knowledge extends backward, that was the first direct use of the courts to nullify a law of congress. It was not the last, nor by any means the only time the federal courts have been successfully used to thwart the will, as well as the rights of the people. We all remember the use made of the supreme court in the Tilden-Hayes presidential contest; the reversal of the income tax law; the setting aside of the employers' liability act; their sustaining of injunctions in criminal cases—in violation of all precedent and existing law. It has actually come to pass in our time that we no longer possess a representative government. In place of the government established by the revolutionary fathers we now have an oligarchy of wealth ruling us despotically through the supreme court. Few people seem to realize how complete the power of the court has really become. Our house of representatives have only one function left—the power to tax the poor. Through the treaty making function the president "by and with the consent of the senate" can and does, set aside, not only state laws, according to the decisions of the supreme court, but the acts of congress itself. Mr. Jefferson in 1823 wrote these words anent the veto power of the supreme court: "No veto power, ancient or modern, ever existed so formidable as this American irresponsible judicial veto." During the last presidential canvass democrats were everywhere confronted with the question of "How can Mr. Bryan do anything while the supreme court is in the control of great wealth?" Every one realized that no reform was possible so long as big capitalists were entrenched behind that all-powerful court. If W. T. Stead is to be trusted, this American idea of government by a supreme court is now receiving the earnest consideration of European capitalists. Speaking about the recent opening of the international parliament of agriculture in Rome, which he says the king hopes may develop into a universal parliament of the world, Mr. Stead uses these words: "Behind them all, invisible as the atmosphere, whose pressure all men feel, is the great American idea of a free confederation of independent states living together in parental equality and settling all disputes and differences by the judgment of an impartial supreme court." It is plain, then, that European rulers understand that American liberty has

been undermined by capitalism through the instrumentality of the judiciary, if we do not. The last republican platform promised to "uphold and strengthen the power of the courts." Mr. Taft in his inaugural address straddled almost every other question except court injunctions. He

insists that the courts must not only retain all their power, but that the idea of state laws standing in the way of federal courts must be suppressed. Are democrats too cowardly to attack this monster of despotism? If so, then they must and should be always beaten.



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