

The Commoner.

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Pushing the Commoner

The Fort Worth Record devotes a considerable share of its editorial page in its issue of October 2 to a discussion which it entitles, "Publisher Bryan's Bad Break." It quotes a letter written by the publisher of The Commoner to a number of Texas democrats. It complains because the publisher of The Commoner asks those democrats who agree with Mr. Bryan to assist in the circulation of The Commoner. The Record is shocked that Mr. Bryan should attempt to reach a larger number of readers. It refuses to accept the "harsh view" which it quotes one Texan as expressing, namely, that he, Mr. Bryan, has "started out on a money-making scheme as well as to endeavor to raise his political declining star." It points out that Mr. Bryan has been three times the presidential nominee of a great party; that he has for twelve years enjoyed the trusted leadership of millions of democrats; that to be so honored and esteemed "is so rare a distinction as to lift even the most callous and most selfish man above material considerations and to consecrate him to the most devoted and sacrificial service." Not only that, but the Record adds, "To exploit such a trust for gain and to make it the convenient instrument of a cold-blooded business venture is revolting to the most obvious considerations of propriety."

It is true that Mr. Bryan has been three times the candidate of his party, and he knows of no honorable occupation in which he could be engaged where he would not be benefited pecuniarily by the acquaintance and fame that the nominations bestowed; but must a man who has been the candidate of his party be retired from all occupations, from labor of every kind and from remunerative employment merely because some enemy will accuse him of using his position for gain?

If Mr. Bryan is not debarred from active work because of his having been a candidate, the next question is, is the newspaper business a legitimate field? He assumes that it is not only legitimate but that it is the most appropriate field in which he could work because it enables him to take part in the discussion of public questions and to assist those who have been his co-laborers in the long campaign which has been waged for the restoration of the government to the hands of the whole people.

Mr. Bryan has been publishing The Commoner for nearly nine years, and the editor of the Record has known this. When did it before raise a question as to the propriety of his editing the paper? Did the Record oppose Mr.

Bryan's re-nomination on the ground that he had made an improper use of his prominence in publishing The Commoner?

If it is proper for Mr. Bryan to publish The Commoner, the next question arises, is it proper for him to extend its circulation in Texas? If not, why not? If the editor of the Record has been a reader of The Commoner, he must know that Mr. Bryan made no departure in his speech in Texas. The platform which he read at Dallas was embodied in an editorial which he wrote for The Commoner before he went to Texas, and it was published for the benefit of the readers of the whole country. The editor of the Record is in error if he assumes that The Commoner's course has been or is based upon anything that has been said or will be said in Texas. The Commoner reaches every state in the union, and, according to the newspaper estimate, is read by something like seven hundred thousand democrats each week. Its policies are national. It is an incident merely that the policy of The Commoner aroused opposition in Texas, and it has aroused opposition merely because there are a few democrats in Texas who deny the binding force of a platform and a few more who think that protection should be spread out so as to include the sheep growers of Texas and the lumber producers of that state. Mr. Bryan regards it as entirely proper to increase The Commoner's circulation in Texas as he thinks it proper to increase its circulation in other states.

The special reason for appealing to those democrats in Texas who support Mr. Bryan's position is that the papers that are advocating a tax on raw material do not fairly present the issue. This is not very surprising, however, because the advocates of special interests never present the issue fairly. To do so would be to answer their own arguments. The success of error depends largely upon misrepresentation and upon the concealing of the real issue. The Record is as guilty as any other paper in so doing. If it would be fair, let it take the platform read by Mr. Bryan at Dallas and quote it plank by plank and give its reason for opposing that platform, but instead of doing that, it attempts to misrepresent Mr. Bryan and put him in the attitude of favoring a tariff for the benefit of manufacturers. It is to expose the unfairness of such papers that The Commoner was started, and it will continue to expose this unfairness while it is published.

The Commoner is being offered to its readers at as near the actual cost of publication as can be safely estimated. In fact, the clubbing rates made by The Commoner for the purpose of extending its circulation have enabled the democrats of the entire country to get the paper at the lowest possible cost. It is probably safe to say that no other paper in the United States having an equal circulation is published upon a closer margin than The Commoner.

The readers of The Commoner know that while The Commoner has been self-supporting from the beginning and could not be continued unless it was self-supporting, the chief object of its publication is not pecuniary profit but the propagation of democratic principles, and it is for that reason that The Commoner has been enabled to rely upon its readers to extend its circulation and influence.

The Record complains that Mr. Bryan "appeals to prejudice against the 'misrepresentations of the corporation press,' as if the newspapers of this state were the hirelings of selfish interests." The Record is welcome to interpret the language as it pleases, but the newspaper which will defend a tariff on lumber for the benefit of a few lumber companies ought not to take offense at anything said to a corporation press. A paper that will defend a tariff on iron ore which the steel trust asks for, and by which it largely profits, ought not to be sensitive about reference to the influence of corporation papers.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the republican party has had in recent years a great advantage in having the support of the corporation press and that the effort to advance democratic doctrine has been handicapped by the lack of newspapers having large and general circulation. The Commoner has sought to en-

courage the establishment of democratic papers in all sections of the country. The Commoner itself fills a field that has heretofore been unoccupied, and democratic workers everywhere have borne testimony to the good results of the campaign work done in their community through the columns of The Commoner.

Mr. Bryan would like to place a copy of The Commoner in every Texas home, and not only in every Texas home but in every home in every state of the union. The fact that those who fight for special interests object to any plan for the enlargement of The Commoner's circulation is not because the objectors are fearful lest Mr. Bryan might profit pecuniarily from the increased circulation but rather that they know that the efforts of The Commoner have been dedicated to the cause of popular government and that the mission of this paper is to fight for truth as its editor sees the truth.

In its initial number it was said: "The Commoner will be satisfied if, by fidelity to the common people, it proves its right to the name which has been chosen." Mr. Bryan is willing to leave it to the readers of his paper whether it has redeemed this implied pledge. It is, however, with bad grace that criticism comes from those who employ the arguments of republican tariff makers, who use the phrases of republican tariff defenders, and who win the favor of republican tariff barons.

AN EPOCH-MAKING SENTENCE

Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer, has coined an epoch-making sentence in his denunciation of the House of Lords for their opposition to the budget. He asks:

"Why make ten thousand owners of the soil and all the rest trespassers in the land of their birth?"

The speech is said to have made a tremendous sensation and well it might! No wonder it was telegraphed all over England and caused the papers to issue extra editions. It sounds like the warnings uttered by the Gracchi, when in the declining days of Rome they were pleading eloquently for their disinherited countrymen. Let us hope that the plea of Lloyd George may not be in vain.

In every country the same issue presents itself in some form. In this country a few monopolists are collecting forced tribute from the people; a small fraction of the people use the protective tariff to lay a burdensome tax upon the rest of the population; and just now a water power trust is reaching out after the mountain streams with the intention of collecting a perpetual toll from industry.

It is the duty of every citizen to study these questions and use his influence to prevent the absorption of the productive machinery of the country by a favored few. The question asked by Lloyd George is a pertinent one everywhere.

"WHY MAKE TEN THOUSAND OWNERS OF THE SOIL AND ALL THE REST TRESPASSERS IN THE LAND OF THEIR BIRTH?"

THE MARTYRDOM OF FERRER

Francisco Ferrer, leader of the Spanish revolution, died with the cry "Long live the modern schools," and the king and the ministers of the king appear to have been surprised. They were also surprised by the commotion created throughout the world by the martyrdom of Ferrer. They will probably be surprised when they find that Ferrer's tragic death has only given new impetus to the cause for which he fought. Will kings never learn the lessons of history.

MEN

Not gold, but only men, can make
A people great and strong;
Men who, for truth and honor's sake,
Stand fast and suffer long.
Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly—
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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