

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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Why Not More Light?

The Baltimore Sun is right on some questions but it seems to be a little muddled on Mr. Bryan's suggestion that the public ought to know upon what recommendations the judges are appointed. Mr. Bryan has answered Mr. Taft's challenge by naming three corporations which are declared guilty of violating the law but against which Mr. Taft fails to bring a criminal prosecution. In the case of the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases the supreme court has already declared the defendants guilty. Why not prosecute the officials? The administration has recently commenced an equity suit against the Steel trust, accusing it of violating the law. Why not bring criminal prosecution? But the president's attention is called to two other cases—the Trans-Mississippi case of thirteen years ago and the Merger case of more recent date. According to the reasoning of the court in the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases, the Merger case and the Traffic case would now be decided in favor of the defendants, whereas, both of these cases were under a former interpretation of the law decided against the defendants. The trouble about President Taft's challenge is that it would be impossible to determine his proposition by suit before the next election. He is therefore in a position to run a bluff upon the public.

But the Baltimore Sun does not seem to understand the importance of publicity as to the appointment of judges. Will it give its readers any good reason why the public should not know upon what recommendations the president appoints? How can the public know that he selected the best men brought before him without knowing something about the recommendations? And how can the public be sure that the great corporate interests have not dictated appointments so long as the recommendations are kept secret? We are now to have publicity as to campaign contributions, and we are to have that publicity before the election—the president has signed the bill. If it is desirable to know before the election what financial influences are at work to select congressmen, senators and presidents, what harm can there be in knowing what influences operate in the selection of judges.

It is no indictment of the president to urge him to make the recommendations known but a refusal to make them known when there is no good reason for refusing, can not but excite suspicion. The Baltimore Sun is respectfully invited to treat this question with the candor and frankness which characterizes its treatment of other questions. It is no longer sufficient

to demand proof of a corrupt motive. Publicity serves a double purpose. It not only furnishes proof of a corrupt motive if such motive exists, but it also tends to prevent action from a corrupt motive. The day is past when the predatory interests can put our courts into a glass case and then command people not to throw stones. The day of publicity is at hand, and we need it not only in regard to recommendations for the bench but in regard to the ownership of our metropolitan papers and in regard to the campaign funds employed to nominate presidential candidates.

MORE WIRELESS OPERATORS

Mr. Bryan learned a lesson from the wreck of the "Joachim." He believes this lesson ought to be utilized for the protection of the public. The passengers on the vessel owe their rescue to the wireless. Without it they would now be on Atwoods' Key, the little island near which their ship went upon the rocks; and as the island is about thirty-three miles off the line of travel they might have been there for some time. But while the wireless brought a ship they learned that the smaller ships have BUT ONE OPERATOR and, as he must have time for sleep, there is a part of the time—approximately one-third—when a distress signal can not be heard, no matter how near a ship may be to the scene of the accident.

Take this particular case, for instance; the ship went upon the rocks at 3:45 a. m. The wireless operator at once signalled for help. He received an answer from New York and from six other stations scattered along the coast between New York and western Cuba, but could not get into connection with any ship, for the reason that the operators rest from 1:30 to 6 a. m. In this case the danger was not immediate and a few hours did not make any difference, but an hour might mean life or death to all on board. It is the opinion of all the passengers on the "Joachim" and officers as well as passengers share the opinion, that provision should be made for at least two operators on each ship so that signals of distress could be heard at all hours.

This matter should be brought to the attention of the appropriate committees of the senate and house.

The hours that passed between 3:45 and the answer from the relief ship were anxious ones for the "Joachim" passengers, and it is easy to imagine the greater anxiety that would have been felt if the ship had been sinking.

IT OUGHT TO PASS

Representative Cyrus Cline of Indiana, introduced in the house of representatives a joint resolution having the following title:

"To declare the purpose of the United States to relinquish control over the Philippines, establish an independent government for them, and protect the same by a general treaty of neutrality."

The resolution follows:

"Resolved by the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled,

"First. That it is the ultimate purpose of the United States to cease exercising sovereignty over the Philippine Islands as a dependency of the United States.

"Second. That the United States declares its purpose and settled policy to be to establish and grant a stable and independent government for the Philippine Islands as soon as conditions necessary for such government shall exist.

"Third. That the president of the United States be respectfully requested to consider the expediency of opening negotiations with the great powers of the world with a view of establishing, by joint treaty, the neutrality of the Philippine Islands and the protection of their independence."

It will be the duty of democrats in congress to declare themselves on this subject and Mr. Cline's resolution conforms to the position taken by the democratic party in at least three national conventions.

"The Salt of the Earth"

The New York Journal takes Mr. Bryan to task for a speech made by him recently at Lincoln, Neb., and not correctly reported. The speech from which the Journal quotes was a short extemporaneous address at a Y. M. C. A. breakfast. It was not reported with absolute accuracy, but reproduces SUBSTANTIALLY what he said, although some qualifying words are omitted. Mr. Bryan took "Salt" as his subject and after pointing out the necessity for it and its value as a preservative he quoted Christ's striking use of salt as an illustration of the influence which his followers would exert upon the world. The application, of which the Journal complains, was then made and Mr. Bryan cited his own community as proof. He said that among those who openly declare allegiance to the Christian church would be found, not all, but practically all, who are a force in the community's progress and he added that among the others would be found, not all, but practically all, who are worthless, criminal, degenerate and a burden to society. He concluded with the generalization that the Christian group comprises the salt of the earth, the salt of the nation and the salt of the community.

The statement in regard to Lincoln might not be true of all communities, but speaking generally, Mr. Bryan has not claimed more than other Christians claim, or more than the facts justify when he quotes with approval Christ's description of those who would accept him. If the Journal complains that Christians do not live up to the Christian standard it will be within the truth but that is because the Christian standard is so much higher than any other. But if it denies that the Christians, even though they but imperfectly reflect the light from the cross, are the salt of the earth, its dispute is not with Mr. Bryan but with the Bible and with history.

It is hardly to be expected that those who reject Christianity will admit that Christ is the light of the world; but it is not the fault of the light if the darkness does not comprehend it. Possibly the editor of the Journal does not look at Christianity from the standpoint of one who accepts it; he says, in the criticism above referred to:

"Mr. Bryan may believe that Christianity is the religion of good men, that other religions are the religions of the worthless, the criminal and the degenerate. That belief is not unusual in deeply religious minds—especially among those of simple hearts and childish ignorance. Every Buddhist, of course, supposing him to have grown up in ignorance and egotism in a small corner of the world, believes that his religion contains all that is worth while. And the dancing dervish believes it of his religion. And the fire worshipper believes it and the poor African, hammering his head on the ground in front of a painted idol, believes it also."

The above language may give us the point of view from which the Journal's editor looks at Christianity, and it may reveal the answers of his criticism. It is not worth while to expect justice to Christianity from one who puts it in a class with the religion of the Buddhist, the dervish and the African worshipper of idols. Mr. Bryan has no apology to make to the editor of the New York Journal for believing that Christianity is the salt of the earth.

Christians would not build churches in every community, establish colleges throughout the world and spend twenty-five millions a year to carry the gospel to heathen lands if they thought Christianity was on a par with Buddhism, dervishism and African idolatry. Many who are not personally connected with any branch of the Christian church openly acknowledge allegiance to the church by contributions—thus admitting that the church exerts an influence for good. It is unfair to count against the church those who, though not members are indebted to a Christian home for their moral character and who are under the continuing restraint of a Christian environment.

The Atheist and the materialist of today can

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