

The Commoner

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A False Cry

Evidence accumulates that the predatory interests are preparing to wage the next national campaign under false pretenses. Recalling the success which they have achieved in past years by deception and misrepresentation they have evidently determined to repeat their efforts to obliterate in the public mind the line between honest business and the favor-seeking corporation; the "plunder bund," seeking to hide behind legitimate enterprises and claiming for itself the immunity that, by common consent, is granted to corporations properly organized and honestly conducted, and the subsidized newspapers, whose support the privileged interests are always able to command,—these are clamoring for a return to the days when business "will be free from attack; when enterprise will be encouraged and thrift appreciated." For a generation the beneficiaries of special legislation—the corporations which, either because of unfair laws or in the absence of laws that should be enacted, have collected tribute upon the public—all are in full cry for a return of "the good old days" when officials were lifted into place and power by corruption funds, when the republican party sold legislation at public auction and gave immunity in return for contributions.

What has the democratic party done to disturb any HONEST business man? To say that the cure of recognized and admitted abuses is an attack on business is like calling a physician a murderer when, in the patient's interest, he lances a boil. The democratic party has been lancing boils—only a few, to be sure, but they were boils that had come to a head and were ready to open.

What business interest has been injured by democratic legislation? To what business has injustice been done? The new tariff law is the most equitable that we have had in a generation. Insofar as it has reduced the profits of protected interests, it has simply taken from them the power that they have heretofore employed to tax the multitude. It is true that we now collect through an income tax part of the revenue that was formerly collected through import duties,—and there's the rub. Men who would be ashamed to openly condemn the income tax are seeking to find some excuse for returning to power the party that tried to prevent the adoption of the income tax. Surely the consumers will be lacking in appreciation of the service rendered them if they permit the election of a president, a senate, or a house hostile to the income tax.

What is there in the new currency law to which any legitimate enterprise can take exception? Every business man should raise his voice in thanksgiving for the benefits which it confers; every small banker should appreciate the aid extended to him, and that, too, largely without any effort on his part. One can hardly find it in his heart to blame the small bankers for having joined in the protest against the currency

bill BEFORE it was passed, for they acted under coercion—they were in danger of being crushed in the folds of the financial serpent and were not in a position to protect themselves. Only the big financiers have reason to complain of the currency law and their only complaint is that their grip upon the nation's throat has been broken.

What fair-dealing corporation has been injured by the anti-trust legislation? The Clayton law and the law providing for a trade commission have brought a boon to the ninety-nine worthy corporations by restraining the one-hundredth corporation which sought to eliminate competition. No corporation need be afraid of the anti-trust laws, new or old, so long as it respects the law of competition and endeavors to furnish good quality at a fair price. Corporations engaged in legitimate business—and they constitute the vast majority—may be compared to those engaged in the industry of horse raising,—while the comparatively few predatory corporations may be likened to those who make horse stealing their occupation. To accuse the democratic party of attacking business merely because it has declared war on methods which violate the moral law, as well as the statutes, is as senseless as it would be to condemn the law against horse stealing on the ground that it was an interference with the horse industry of the country.

It is a reflection upon the intelligence of the masses to assume that they can be deceived by the hue and cry which is now being raised by industrial pirates under the plea of "protecting business." The selfishness and sordidness of this attempt to deceive the public ought to have been apparent even before the democratic party had an opportunity to put its principles and policies into practice; surely deception ought to be impossible now when the people not only see, but enjoy the benefits of the legislation framed on the theory that this, being a government of the people, and by the people, should also be FOR the people—administered according to the maxim "equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

W. J. BRYAN.

"The Wages of Sin Is Death"

Last fall Mr. Roger Sullivan gave the state of Illinois to the republican party; this spring he turned over the city of Chicago to the republicans. Having control of the state organization he gave the democrats of the state their choice between himself and defeat—when confronted with this alternative they decided that defeat was to be preferred to a democracy personified by Mr. Sullivan and the kind of politics for which he stands. In the city of Chicago he also dominated the organization and gave the democrats of that city their choice between a Sullivan-controlled city and defeat—they, too, chose the latter. Is his revenge against progressive democracy satisfied or does he contemplate still further assaults?

Governor Dunne, a progressive democrat, presides over the great commonwealth of Illinois, and Mayor Harrison, a progressive democrat, presides as chief executive of the city of Chicago, but Sullivan, an enemy of both, deliberately plotted to deliver the party in both city and state to the reactionaries. It was "rule or ruin" and, not being able to rule, he proving again the old truth—"THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH."

How long will it take the rank and file of the party in Chicago and Illinois to learn the folly of following such leadership? The only hope of success—the only hope of good government—lies in a constructive policy along progressive lines, and in the entrusting of the management of the party to those who work for the advancement of the public weal. The democratic party has put its hand to the plow of reform and will not turn back. Under the guidance of our splendid progressive president it is entering upon a new era and it is entering that new era with confidence; its aims are lofty, its standards are high; it is time for the Illinois division of the army to change its organization and get in step with the democracy of the nation. Its experiment with Sullivanism is too costly to be repeated; the opportunities to render service are too great to be thrown away; the issues are too important to be trifled with.

W. J. BRYAN.

DELIBERATE DISTURBANCE OF BUSINESS

On another page will be found an editorial which recently appeared in the New York World entitled "AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE." The editorial quotes a few sentences from the utterances of President Thomas, of the Lehigh Valley railroad. The World is none too severe in its denunciation of the plainly stated purpose of Mr. Thomas and those for whom he speaks to prevent the return of prosperity, with a view to coercing the public into the adoption of his political views. Mr. Thomas, though conspicuous, is merely the representative of a certain class of corporation officials, who, presuming upon their business importance, attempt to intimidate the voters. It

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