

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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Ratification

The greatest moral reform of the generation has been accomplished. Prohibition is here, and under conditions as favorable as could have been asked. The victory is more complete than the most sanguine expected. Forty-four states have ratified when only thirty-six were needed, and the few remaining ones will ratify when the people have another opportunity to express themselves. The wets said they feared lest the little states might force prohibition on the big states, but the big states did not wait to be forced—they joined in the movement and helped to ratify.

And it was not sectional. It began in the south and west, but it swept northward and eastward until it won the support of every state that touched the Canadian border and lacks but two of including in its list all the commonwealths that border on the Atlantic. In the final struggle the cities joined the country to make it unanimous.

Neither was it a victory for any party. The democratic party was the rival of its ancient enemy, the republican party, in the friendly contest for leadership in the reform—the two fought side by side and share equally in the glory. It was a democratic congress that gave us a dry District of Columbia, submission of the national amendment and war prohibition, and a democratic president whose signature fixed July 1st as the date for the closing of the saloons forever in the United States, but a republican congress and a republican president would have done the same. There is glory enough for all.

The power that for so long has paralyzed efficiency, pauperized communities, poisoned society and polluted politics is overthrown. The shadow is lifted from the home. Let the world rejoice—"They are dead that sought the young child's life."
W. J. BRYAN.

DELAYED, NOT DEFEATED

Woman suffrage failed by one vote on last Monday, and goes over to the next congress. The democrats turn over to the republicans the honor of submitting the nineteenth amendment. An examination of the vote will show a divided responsibility for the failure of the suffrage resolution in the present congress. While two-thirds of the southern senators voted no, they could not have defeated it alone; they had the aid of eleven northern republicans and four northern democrats—two of the democrats, Hitchcock and Pomorenne, voting against the instructions of their legislatures as did two republicans, Wadsworth and Borah, the latter a progressive. As one more vote would have carried it, several senators will spend the rest of their lives explaining why they did not furnish that vote. But this is the last defeat for the resolution—it will pass as soon as the next congress convenes and woman's conscience will unite with man's judgment to hasten victory for every righteous cause.
W. J. BRYAN.

WHAT'S HIS PLATFORM?

Occasional mention is made of possible candidates for the Presidency—and it is time, for in a little more than a year the parties must choose, but none of the men mentioned have announced a platform. "What's his platform?" is the important question. The people cannot weigh candidates until they know what they stand for.

A HIGHER REWARD

The Buffalo Courier ventures the following:

"It must be conceded that Mr. Bryan's prohibition campaign has given him the only real big victory he ever enjoyed, but it would be rash to predict that it will ever make him president."

The paragraph is reproduced because it suggests two thoughts. First, it is not the ONLY big victory in which Mr. Bryan has had a part. Several others are referred to in another column of this issue. Second, the presidency is not the only, or even the highest, reward that one can win in politics. A great many people render valuable public service without receiving any official reward whatever, and only a very few can hope to reach the White House. It is much more important that the citizen shall do something for his country than that his country shall do something for him. The public man is known in history, not by the offices he held, but by the contribution he made to the nation's welfare. It is what he gives—not what he gets—that measures his greatness and his claim to everlasting fame.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy is growing throughout the world, and as it better understood the citizen opposes government by any one class and turns with increasing confidence to a "government of the people, by the people and for the people"—a government administered upon the principle, "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

CONTENTS

- RATIFICATION
- A HIGHER REWARD
- DELAYED, NOT DEFEATED
- MR BRYAN'S RECORD
- THE PROFITEER
- GROUNDLESS OBJECTION
- INDEPENDENCE FOR ARMENIA
- NEBRASKA 36
- SHAME ON NEW YORK DEMOCRACY
- GUARANTEES OF PEACE
- DRY NATION OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMED
- LUNCHEON TO MR. BRYAN
- HITCHCOCK REFUSES SUFFRAGE VOTE

Mr. Bryan's Record

The Boston Herald finds room in a recent issue for the following editorial under the caption, "William J. Bryan Wins":

"One of the least intelligent leaders of American opinion has long been Mr. William Jennings Bryan, the Boy Orator of the Platte. Candor compels the acknowledgment, however, that many of the issues with which he identified himself long ago, have found acceptance as national policies. Let us see:

"When free silver flagged as a battle cry, Mr. Bryan came out with the demand that the popular election of United States senators should be made a democratic issue, and acceptance of it a test of party standing. Before that, while most democrats had favored the change, no party lines were drawn over it. He drew them. Some of the eastern newspapers declared that he could never carry his party over to such a proposal. But he—or somebody else—has carried not only the party, but the country, and it fell to Massachusetts to be the first state to ratify that particular amendment.

"Bryan's entertainment of our diplomats with grape juice provoked much merriment. But grape juice, or some other non-alcoholic equivalent, has now become the necessary national beverage, and we must prepare to adjust our laws and customs, and even our municipal taxation to a grape juice basis.

"Bryan further urged the federal income tax, making peculiarly bitter drives against Mr. Justice Shiras, whose changed vote had thrown out the legislation along this line of the Wilson bill in the Cleveland administration.

"What else has Bryan stood for?"

The first sentence is not flattering, but the Herald is doing so much better than it used to that one is inclined to be charitable. If it cannot refrain from being complimentary when it thinks of THREE reforms, what eulogies may one expect when it reviews the entire record.

The readers of The Commoner will pardon it for referring to some of the public questions in the settlement of which Mr. Bryan has taken a somewhat prominent part.

1st. The election of United States senators by direct vote. He began advocating it in 1890 (before he entered upon the discussion of the money question) and in 1913—twenty-three years afterward—signed the proclamation that made it a part of the constitution.

2nd. He helped to write the income tax law of 1894 and when, a year afterward, it was declared unconstitutional, he led the fight for the constitutional amendment which was adopted in 1913 (and how could we have raised money to carry on the war without an income tax?).

3rd. He rendered such aid as he could in the fight for prohibition, and it is the greatest reform with which he has had the honor to be connected.

Here are three far-reaching constitutional amendments which he has actively supported.

4th. He helped to create a cabinet position for a secretary of labor, to abolish government by injunction, to prohibit child-labor and to secure an eight-hour day.

5th. He wrote into four democratic national platforms (after using it in a speech in 1899)