

A Far-reaching Idea

The New York World is the first of the big papers to grasp the importance of the idea presented by Mr. Bryan in regard to the peaceful acquisition of territory needed by growing nations. The World says:

"Mr. Bryan makes a suggestion in regard to the league of nations which eventually may have to be debated. The covenant prohibits conquest. Some nations grow, while others decline. He would make it possible for expanding peoples to acquire lands unused or misused, not by war but by the assent of the league. While this policy might work against the self-determination of small nations in some cases, it would provide an alternative for forcible aggression that would go far to discourage militarism."

The cause of war which comes nearest to being legitimate is the necessity for land for a growing nation. The world belongs to the living. It is God's gift to his creatures. It is needless to say that the gift is to all of his creatures and not to a few. As long as there is plenty of land, the people are indifferent to the efforts of a few individuals to fence in that which they cannot use, but paper titles give way before necessity. If, for instance, there are many springs or water from which the people can drink they make no objection to the monopolizing of some of these by a few of the people, but let all of the other springs dry up and only one gushing fountain be left. Woe to the man who would attempt to build a fence around it and shut out the famishing crowd.

Our forefathers found a new continent occupied by a few wandering tribes. The tribes claimed it by right of occupancy, but they were not using it. They satisfied their simple wants by hunting game, scarcely disturbing the fertile soil that now feeds an hundred million. By what right could a few savages warn the white man to starve across the sea while this virgin soil lay unused. We have, for the most part, dealt generously with the Indian, paying him for his land more than it was worth to him, but nothing in comparison with what it is worth to us. Of course there were cases of injustice. Selfishness and greed of individuals sometimes blotted the fair name of our nation. But who would now deny the justice of the demand that has peopled this continent and given to the world the richest and most civilized of all the nations of history? There are other wildernesses that must some day blossom as the rose. Other jungles that must be cleared and other expanses that must furnish food for man. Shall these become the spoil of war? Shall no means be found whereby the needy can supply their wants by peaceful means. The league of nations furnishes the tribunal and when the world comes to understand how much better it is to settle these questions by reason than by force, it will hail this new tribunal as a God given means of solving the mighty problem without bloodshed.

W. J. BRYAN.

WHICH IS MORE PRECIOUS?

The plea that FAIRNESS requires the repeal of war prohibition will not have influence with those who favor prohibition. If the sale of liquor disrupts homes, wrecks men and ruins women—as the opponents of the saloon contend—who will assume responsibility for the evil wine and beer saloons can do between July 1st and the day when demobilization is completed? Is the money invested in vice more precious than the welfare of the victims?

UP TO THE REPUBLICANS

If the nation is to surrender to the liquor interests, let the republicans assume responsibility for the surrender. The saloon is an outlaw and a fugitive from justice, and the democrats had control of both houses when the fight for prohibition was won. If a retreat is sounded the republican party must give the signal.

"A DRY SOLDIER"

Elder York's speeches indicate that he not only trusts God but keeps "dry." A "rum nation" does not give the cool head and steady nerve that enabled York to become the "greatest soldier in the world."

A GOOD SUGGESTION

The following extracts are taken from a letter signed by Frank V. Dilatush and C. E. Moffitt, two Illinois subscribers of The Commoner:

"Your circular letter, together with your 'Constructive Program' received, and we are most heartily in accord with you on the issues therein as set forth, and are ready at all times to lend our assistance in furthering their advancement. We believe, however, in the absence of a good thorough-going dependable daily newspaper published in our larger cities, which seems almost impossible to secure, The Commoner should be made a weekly again. It would be read more thoroughly, and be much more influential, in our opinion.

"All the people need to keep right is to have the facts presented clearly to them. They have become so dependent for their information upon the daily press that comparatively little else is read. Hence the need of papers like The Commoner as often as once a week anyhow. If the democrats of the country who believe in the principles being and to be advocated by The Commoner, would get together and select from ten to forty of the most thoughtful, independent reading citizens in each voting precinct, and arrange for The Commoner to be sent to them regularly for the next two years, there would be quite a different verdict from that of last fall, and especially if they were to receive it every week.

"With the splendid achievements of the party already attained, and the position it would be able to take on the issues of the next campaign, the opposition would have but little chance of success. Some plan must be devised by the genuine democracy to get the facts and arguments before the people.

"With confidence established by twenty-five years or more of observation and co-operation, we unhesitatingly pledge our best efforts and assistance to the program outlined by you. We are strong in the belief that The Commoner should be a weekly and the cause further fortified by as many dependable dailies as can be had."

AN OBJECT LESSON

After twelve years of litigation the federal supreme court has affirmed the validity and fair character of the dollar gas rate ordinance enacted by the city of Lincoln. During two of these years the city had dollar gas, during the administration of Mayor C. W. Bryan. When he was conducting a campaign for the office Mr. Bryan said that there was no reason why vigorous action on the part of the city's executive would not force the gas company to obey the law. He pledged himself to see that this was done. The gas company's president conferred with Mr. Bryan and hurriedly announced, before Mr. Bryan as mayor took his seat, that the rate would be reduced to a dollar. Immediately after his two year term ended the former high rate was again put into effect. This is an object lesson in what may be accomplished in the regulation of public utilities by city authorities.

WORLD PROHIBITION COMING

The following is taken from the Nogales, Arizona, Herald of May 16, 1919:

"Sonora has rejoined the ranks of the 'wets'. By a vote of eleven to three taken in the state legislature at Nermosillo Wednesday, the country to the south of us opened her arms to the thirsty. The sale of liquor was limited to light wines and beer and the traffic in liquor is to be well regulated. It is understood that five 'cantina' licenses will be granted for wet goods emporiums in Nogales, Sonora."

Prohibition in the United States will give a temporary advantage to saloons across the border in Mexico, but the very character of the trade drawn from this country will awaken sentiment against the traffic and hasten the day of world prohibition.

The signing of the treaty of peace by Germany will be equivalent to the formal announcement of the withdrawal from business of the firm of Hohenzollern, Hapsburg & Co., map-makers of Mittel-Europa.

The republicans are trying to separate the league of nations from the rest of the treaty. They ought not to succeed, but it will not change the situation if they do. The people are in favor of the league of nations and it will be ratified.

Clemenceau, the Reactionary

If the press dispatches correctly report the situation at Paris, Clemenceau is the prince of reactionaries. His latest triumph, if we can trust the Associated Press, was in securing the elimination of a provision requiring Germany to abandon compulsory military service. He feared it would "precipitate the same question in France". He ought to publish a list of the things he has contended for and against, so that the world can see whether he differs in spirit from the kaiser who dictated the peace with France fifty years ago. His career has been a great disappointment to those who desire an enduring peace. It is fortunate that we have had the President and Lloyd George to oppose him. We do not want any alliance with the Clemenceau program.

W. J. BRYAN.

ENGLAND OFF THE GOLD BASIS

Mr. Vanderlip has brought back from Europe the observation that "England is off the gold basis", and, in his judgment, "for a good while to come". Bank balances are payable in bank or in currency notes, but these, as a matter of fact, are not freely redeemable in gold.

England, in other words, has become a paper-money country. It is less hopelessly so, no doubt, than either Germany or France, but here is the fact the nation which was the first to adopt the single gold standard, and which above any other nation for a century has exemplified the financial virtues of that standard, has fallen from that proud estate, with no present prospect of recovering it.

The similarity of this position with that of the United States after the Civil war is striking. We lost our gold chiefly to England during that struggle, as England in the great war has lost her gold chiefly to us. But while our specie or gold resumption effort, lasting fifteen years after the Civil war, had to deal with a fiat paper currency amounting to only about \$350,000,000, England's corresponding currency at present is of a volume comparatively prodigious.

Will this similitude in positions be extended into the politics of Great Britain during years to come? Will the deflation process there now, as here in the seventies, produce its greenback and its silver parties, and its 16 to 1 without the aid or consent of any other nation, and its portraiture of England as the gentleman from the rural district, with Uncle Sam as the bunco-steerer and American gold as behind every wicked scheme which British politics can imagine?

It may be so. The war has been turning the world upside down.—New York World.

SUGGESTING CANDIDATES

Newport, Oregon, April 24, 1919.

Editor The Commoner: Mr. H. A. Rodee, Mitchell, S. D., says: "I propose the name of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, for the democratic nomination for the presidency." As a regular reader of and subscriber to The Commoner, I very heartily indorse Mr. Rodee's proposition, provided: That the national democratic party comes out fairly and squarely on an uncompromising anti-liquor platform with a stringent declaration of law enforcement, and that the Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer is willing to stand on such a platform. Such a move by the democratic party would be an exchange of beer for the water-wagon; rottenness for true democracy.

E. W. DURKEE.

LET THEM DIE TOGETHER

The fight against prohibition is financed, not by those who drink, but by those who make the stuff. That is one reason why the brewery will be closed: it has been a corrupting influence for a generation. The brewery and the distillery have been partners in crime; they have been co-conspirators against everything high and holy. They are now approaching the end of their criminal careers—it would be cruel to separate them. Let them die together and be buried in the same grave.

The republican congress has time for partisan attacks, but it is not protecting the country from the profiteers. It had better get down to work.