

The Commoner

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Prohibition Must Be Enforced

(An answer to an inquiry.)

The prohibition amendment is a permanent part of the federal constitution. No well informed person, whether he be wet or dry, expects it to be repealed. It must, therefore, be enforced. Failure to enforce would invite a reign of lawlessness which would menace orderly government. Respect for law should not depend upon the citizen's opinion of the law; it should rest on loyalty to government. Criminal laws are not intended primarily for those who like them; such do not need them. A criminal law is intended for those who do not like it—"No thief ever felt the halter draw the good opinion of the law." Law is the crystallization of public opinion and public opinion when duly embodied in law must prevail or popular government will become a farce. Turning from a general proposition to a particular question, I answer your inquiry by saying that the opinion rendered by Attorney General Palmer as he was leaving office was most unfortunate; first, because the new administration should not have been embarrassed by an important opinion at such a time, which it must necessarily indorse or repudiate; second, because the opinion is a misinterpretation of the spirit of the law, if not of the letter, and encourages violation. If the opinion stands, medical colleges will soon be established to convert liquor dealers into toxic doctors or general debility physicians. While the prohibition law only applies to beverage liquor, its enforcement cannot be evaded by merely changing the name from drink to dose or by substituting a doctor for a saloon-keeper. If the Palmer opinion results in wholesale evasion of the law, as seems likely, it will have to be modified by the new attorney general or remedied by act of congress. Prohibition was adopted by deliberate act of the American people and it cannot be repealed by official opinion. W. J. BRYAN.

SECRETARY LANSING'S BOOK

Hon. Robert Lansing, ex-Secretary of State has just issued through Houghton, Mifflin Co., a book in which he sets forth the points of difference between President Wilson and himself, at the peace conference, with a defense of his views and course. It is not only interesting reading, but it is a valuable side-light on that very important international gathering. History cannot be written amid the excitement attending great events—either events of war, or peace conferences. The triumphant note of the victors and the dirge of the vanquished drown out the more harmonious notes. It is not until time has sifted out the wheat from the chaff—the true from the false—that history can be written with accuracy. When the time arrives for the chronicling of things as they were, rather than as either side wanted them to be, Mr. Lansing's book will serve a useful purpose. He was in position to

know what was going on, and now that the war is over and the President under whom he served is no longer the head of the nation, Mr. Lansing is in position to render a service not only to his own nation, but to the civilized world. His book will find its way into the public libraries of this and other countries, and into the private libraries of those who desire full information on the great problems with which the world is dealing.

Several other peace delegates have presented the doings of the conference from their point of view and this nation and the world will be glad if ex-President Wilson's health permits him to put on record his own review of that great conference in which he played so conspicuous a part. The desire for the truth and the whole truth is greater than the friendships and the antagonisms, which, for a time, color contemporaneous events. W. J. BRYAN.

THE STRENGTH OF SOCIALISM

On another page will be found a London dispatch quoting from a speech of Lloyd George expressing a fear of socialism. If the British Premier will examine closely he will find that the greatest strength of socialism lies in its opposition to war and to the burden of preparedness. Every million added to the appropriations for army and navy increases the ranks of the socialists. The surest way to weakening the socialist movement is to stop war and remove war burdens.

CARDINAL GIBBONS

The death of Cardinal Gibbons has called forth expressions of sympathy from every class and section. He was much beloved by people of all churches. He was a splendid type of man and citizen. Strong in mind, firm in heart and high in ideals. He was a spiritual force in the nation and active in the larger questions of national and international interest. W. J. BRYAN.

WHY NOT STATE OF JEFFERSON?

In the northwest they are talking of making the state of Lincoln out of parts of Idaho, Montana and Washington. And now comes the suggestion that the name of South Dakota be changed to Roosevelt. Why not a state of Jefferson? Or is the Declaration of Independence forgotten?

AN INTERNATIONAL WRONG

On another page will be found a quotation from the Literary Digest showing that the United States is allowing its territory to be used as a base for a conspiracy against China's anti-opium laws. The Jones-Miller bill should be introduced in the new congress and passed at once.

WHY NOT, ALWAYS?

The railway strikers in the south and the employers in the packing houses are threatening to ask for an investigation into the high salaries of officials? Why not a PROMINENT commission to investigate these things before strike or lockout? W. J. BRYAN.

Thomas Jefferson

April 13th is the day celebrated as the anniversary of the birth of the illustrious commoner, Thomas Jefferson. He was the first great Democrat of our nation and the greatest constructive statesman democracy has produced during all the world's history. At this time, when the entire Federal government is in the hands of the opposing party, the Democrats of the United States may well turn to Jefferson for wisdom and to his political principles for encouragement. On another page will be found a quotation from his first inaugural in which he set forth the principles of government which he deemed essential, and by which he intended to shape his administration. I call special attention to a few of the principles contained in the portion quoted and to be found in other parts of that memorable address.

First, let it be remembered that he expressed his trust in God. On this subject he said, "Acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter—with all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and a prosperous people?"

The Democratic party builds today, as its great leader built, upon a belief in God—in His Justice and in His Love.

Second, Jefferson believed in the republican form of government. There were in his day some—Hamilton who was the most conspicuous of the group—who thought the government was not strong enough and feared that it lacked energy to preserve itself. Jefferson answered these as follows: "I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question."

That was democracy in Jefferson's day; and that is democracy today. No one can be a Democrat who lacks faith in the wisdom, the justice and the strength of popular government.

Let me quote again from Jefferson's inaugural: "Still one thing more, fellow-citizens—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another and shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities."

A great deal of emphasis has been placed upon the middle clause of that passage, namely, "shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement," and the word FREE has been especially