

## Everybody Wants Populism

## The Postal Check System.

The demand for reforms long advocated by the people's party is becoming well nigh universal. The merchants, the jobbers, the fruit growers, the cattlemen, and many other classes of average American citizens have been holding conventions lately demanding relief from the exactions of Wall Street money domination and railroad domination. Slowly they are all coming to see that there is no relief outside of the reforms long advocated by populism. They have, on the railroad question, all got far enough along to say that there must be either "effective" government control or government ownership. It will not take long after a earnest effort is made and some study given to the subject, for them to find out that "control" has never been effective and never can be. Then each and all of them will become vehement advocates for government ownership.

The populists have always advocated postal check system in place of the old, cumbersome and costly money order. Now there is a demand coming from all over these United States for its adoption. Those interested in this reform have established at 825 Ver-

mont avenue, Washington, the postal check bureau, and it is engaged in sending out literature advocating the passage of a law giving that relief to people, who are numbered by the millions in this country, who want to send small sums of money through the mails. That bureau undertook to get a bill introduced into the present congress for that purpose, but there was no populist there to introduce it. Not a republican or a democrat would have anything to do with it. No one could expect them to. Such a measure as that would conflict with the banking interests. There is nothing that would be more welcome to the people of the United States than a law creating a postal check system. The farmer in the country could take any one, two or five dollar bill, and by writing in blanks left for the purpose his name as sender and the name of the receiver, and placing a two cent postage stamp on it, make it a check payable to a certain person, which, besides having all the characteristics of a bank check, would also have the government of the United States behind it. When paid, that bill would be returned to Washington and a new one would be printed in place of it. Then besides having a convenient way of sending of the ragged, microbe infested rags

that now pass from hand to hand until they will no longer hold together.

The Sentry after discussing the convenience that result to all classes of people from the adoption of such a system says:

"Thus while the post check would furnish an ideal medium for small remittances, and for that reason aspect of the case, and perhaps an even greater benefit is found in this incidental function of constant renewal of the small bills and clean money kept in circulation throughout the country. Undoubtedly, disease lurks in dirty bills, where tempting nests for microbes are found. A medical journal tells us that the sponge used in a bank was analyzed and found to be swarming with microbes of various deadly diseases. Few of our bundles of bank notes would pass muster at quarantine.

All classes are affected. The surgeon who carefully sterilizes his lancet and uses all manner of antiseptic precaution in performing an operation, takes his pay in filthy paper, which affords an excellent "culture" for deadly germs. The most refined woman who has carried personal cleanliness to the extreme limit, fumbles loathsome bills—even holds them in her teeth!

Thus health and decency combine to

denounce the filth our currency carries. The difference between a crumpled, greasy, dirty bill and a fresh clean one is precisely the difference between soiled and fresh linen. If there were no other reason for the post check, this would suffice, but there are many more. Clean money will be an incidental, but most grateful boon. It can not come too soon to suit a people whose instinct for cleanliness cries out vehemently for this needed reform.

"And the inventor of this many-sided scheme of public utility has not only assigned his patents to the government without asking any recompense, but he has expended many thousands of dollars in legitimate agitation for the adoption of the invention without hope of reward.

The principal enemy to its adoption has been Mr. Ellis H. Roberts of the U. S. treasury, principally on the ground that it would cause considerable change in the rut-like, tiresome and ancient routine work in his office, apparently losing sight of the needs and demands of the people for clean and convenient money, and that the change would effect an annual saving to the government of upwards of \$500,000.00, as reported by the auditor having charge of money order vouchers."

### Undecided

Editor Independent: While I was yet a mere boy in the '70's I listened to Rev. D. P. Mitchell, then candidate for governor on the greenback ticket in Kansas. From him I learned the financial principles that I still hold. In 1890 I joined the Alliance and was one of the delegates to the Cincinnati conference and one of the first to put on the blue ribbon that you doubtless remember was the symbol of a worker for independent political action. From that time on till now, through thick and thin, I have followed the fortunes of that party, sometimes in hope, sometimes in despair, and I was never in more doubt as to what I ought to do or as to what the party ought to do than now, and to this state of mind The Independent has contributed not a little. I consider your paper the ablest the party has ever had and it is now nearly the "only tin can in our alley." Not only so but it is the broadest and most liberal paper with which I am acquainted. Its columns seem to be open to everybody and when I look over the letters of socialists, populists and democrats in its columns all urging fair reasons for their faith and I look also on the political questions with which we are face to face, I find myself wholly undecided of what is duty. Is it wise to be a conservative? Is it duty to be a radical? Is it real policy to be a trimmer? Is it wisdom and is it right to stand on your principles even if alone and make no compromise even if you are by them isolated or so nearly so as to be no factor in governments, or is compromise wisdom and accomplishment in part righteousness as compared with a position where we can do nothing noticeable but affirm our principles?

Was not John Burns right when he gave us that splendid motto, "Progress by installments?" When I read in your issue of Dec. 8 of the results reported by the single taxers at Fairhope, Ala., I have to acknowledge that they have done something while we thousands voted and talked. When I read Mr. Van Vorhis on the money question it made me feel as though it was very imminent. I felt its importance more than I had for the past four years and when I read the reasons presented by Senator Allen I must confess that they seemed to me good reasons for being a democrat of the Bryan type. So I am at sea, for I am an ultimate anarchist, not of the type the big thieves dream of when they fear a just retribution, not of the militant type for they are not anarchists, but of the type that believes we will some day attain that position where every man shall be a law unto himself. I am a socialist, not of the type of "straw man" that you, Mr. Editor, jump onto so vigorously. I am a socialist, and I believe in the

ments. I am a socialist of the type who believe that on the road to real self-government we must pass through an age when government must and will play a far more extensive part in the development of civilization. In fact, I believe that the law in the language of the revised version "is a servant to bring us unto the school master, Christ" and we must have more of it before we are prepared to have less.

I am a populist as it offers a high degree of socialism and a democrat as one who believes that party since its defeat will advocate more socialism than ever before and as the only party in which there is any hope of accomplishing anything beyond carrying on an educational campaign.

And as to an educational campaign the people's party has done its work, not only in its own ranks but in those of both old parties and neither the socialist party nor the people's party as radicals have in my judgment any hope of ever coming to power. No radical party ever did. Can't we as a party lie down and die in the faith of Paul that "That which thou sawest is not quickened except it die," knowing that we shall live in others.

The educational work of our generation is done. The people who want to know the truth know it now so far as the principles are concerned. Education can not reach for political results the negro or the Swede in the republican ranks nor the unlettered whites in the south—in our generation—nor can it reach those who engaged on either side in the civil war nor can it reach the professional officeholder, and of these classes there are enough to form an impassible barrier to the advance of any reform movement and unless we join ourselves to one of these inert masses who "vote 'er straight" and get control of the machinery of the democratic party by helping the Bryan democrats again into power I see no hope for this reform movement in this generation, nationally. It is no use to talk of education. When you, Mr. Editor, spend your life to make a good paper you are almost wasting your labor. The only education that can bring immediate results is not full heads but "empty guts" and the republican policies with the great commercial combinations will do this emptying ere long.

With Senator Allen I see nothing hopeful in Missouri, in Nebraska, in Colorado. It is only an emphasis of the fact that the people will not stand for principles in the abstract nor for a theory, however righteous. They can hardly be brought to stand by the concrete. Hardly be brought to stand by wisdom and goodness when it is "incarnate."

The negro, the foreigner, the officeholder

and no physic can relieve us of the load. We've carried it a log time and we've got to carry it longer. O, Lord, how long?  
V. H. BIDDISON.  
Manhattan, Kan.

### March Straight Ahead

Editor Independent: In case of life and death—as you think—if you call in a good doctor you don't expect him to spend his time entertaining those about with neighborhood gossip or flim-flam party talk, neither to defer action through fear of hurting somebody's feelings. You expect him to lose no time in getting at the truth of your case, as he sees it.

The democratic party is sick unto death. Desperate cases require desperate remedies. Having lost its virtue the party's name has become a badge of unreliability and reproach. It is in a debased situation and there's a taint in the air wherever it goes.

In the party's treatment for a "radical" cure of all this, old friends are "expected to prescribe." I suppose, and in my opinion, a change of name is the first great desideratum. No maudlin sentiment because the party sprung from a "good respectable family" in the past should be considered.

The name must go—to prevent further contagion.

What shall populists do in the case? Why, the populist party having the best up-to-date remedies known to cure the evils and ails of the body politic—should in my humble opinion march straight on and fulfil at the ballot box the call of the populist platform.

Don't be dismayed. We know the people's party, as yet, is small in numbers, but let it be a Spartan band, sound at heart and mighty in principle and 'twill grow! Let it prove to the crafty politicians who ply their trade unrelentingly in both of the old parties, that the populists are in earnest; that their right of suffrage can not be bought and that equal rights before the law as embodied in the Declaration and their own vote at the ballot box means something. Besides an idle tale, as these politicians would have it. Senator Lodge has been quoted as saying that: "As a campaign document before an election, lies about all the real worth to us (well put that, yes, "to us" politicians!) of the Declaration of Independence." And, as things go, he is correct.

If the voters themselves won't wake up and take care of it, they may be sure the crafty politicians will steal it out of the law and gospel of a free people while they are asleep.

Mr. Bryan seems sadly belated in his asking the question: "Are political parties a joke or do they stand for something?" This question, consider-

keep the old thing on the track, causes a faint suspicion of a smile on the faces of populists who saw and warned him beforehand of the wash out he and his Wall street candidate were running into.

A populist from his point of view could answer from experience that question of Mr. Bryan's: "Are political parties a joke?" and reply, indeed they are, to the jokers and jugglers who run them, in the main, for their own purposes at the expense of honest men and as Mr. Bryan can remember of a "good" party also that once accepted foolishly to help him and got misled by the renegades, whose cause he has been since that time upholding.

Reform these jugglers and jokers who make a sport of God's laws and commands? When? "Cast them out of the temple," with the money changers, in whose employment they are, to represent a joke, or stand for something, as the case may be.

Shakespeare over three hundred years ago defined a politician as "one who would circumvent God."

How far has the world progressed on that point since Shakespeare's time? Not much, it can truthfully be said. There are many of these political circumventors abroad in the land today—and in evidence more, probably, because of better facilities, than in Shakespeare's time. Macaulay has remarked that "a reforming age is always fertile of impostors." It behooves populists to be well on their guard.

I enclose referendum ballot as desired—also a good cheer and hearty thanks for the good work in the late campaign by our noble standard bearers, Watson and Tibbles.

FRANCIS KEYES.

Longmeadow, Mass.

### Why Not?

Our language is so plain and clear  
That if we say a smoker smoked,  
When words from human lips we hear  
We ought to say the speaker spoke.

If fast the wind one night did blow  
In truth we say it fiercely blew,  
Then why not say of fallen snow,  
The storm king came and wildly snow.

And as we mention one who ran  
By saying that we saw him run,  
If through a glass the sky we scan  
Of course the sky we then have seen.

So if a bell was heard to ring  
And we should say the bell was rung,  
When to the polls our votes we bring  
We ought to say our votes we bring.

And if we say a boy did slide,  
Or that we know the boy has slid,