

SAVED! SAVED! The intense anxiety of that spartan band of editors that assembled recently at Columbus, Neb., to receive the ministrations and solace of Bishop Bowlby and Doctor Howard, both D. D.'s—Doctors of Democracy—must now give way to tranquil gladness. The Brooklyn Eagle, of December 20th, brings balm to bruised and worried brains. That journal gives to the world an assurance of constant care over wayward and callow congressmen by that unsurpassed economist, matchless financier, stupendous statesman, unerring lawyer and stalwart soldier, who has twice been the nominee of the Populist party for the Presidency of the United States. The consolation is all the more satisfying and soothing because it comes canned in the delicious rhetoric of the aforesaid candidate himself. It is conserved in his own modesty—jellied and sweetened by his own diffidence. Writing from Washington on the 25th of December, 1901, the correspondent of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle says:

"Each Democratic member of the House today received a letter from the former peerless leader stating that the Commoner, 'William J. Bryan, editor and proprietor,' would be sent to him during the balance of the present session of Congress. Mr. Bryan apologizes for forcing his paper on Democratic members who have not cared to subscribe for it, and at the same time adroitly points out the material to be found in the defense of Democratic principles. The following is part of the letter: 'If agreeable to you, I shall be pleased to send you the Commoner during the present session of Congress. I do this without expense to you because I feel an interest in the questions which are likely to come up for discussion. Without assuming that the editorial part of the paper will be of special value to you, it occurs to me that you may find in the quotations that appear from time to time something that you can use in the defense of Democratic principles. Yours truly, W. J. Bryan.'

The Eagle has brought comfort to millions of human beings who had already begun mourning in anguish for fear that the teachings of this venerable, experienced and prophetic populist might not reach the pagan souls who we are now assured have the gospel of Bryanarchy without cost and without price. Could humane charity go further?

The Conservative congratulates the recipients of the weekly counsel of the oracle upon the great possibilities of the campaign of 1904.

The fervent effort, already initiated, to re-affirm the Chicago platform of 1896 and to re-declare the Kansas City creed of 1900 ought to encourage all followers of the money fallacies to hope that sixteen-to-oneism may be resurrected—that denunciation of the federal judiciary may again become a test of patriotism, and that once more the peerless leader,—emerging from "the house that Gab built"—clothed in a presidential nomination, may stand upon rear platforms and exhort the American people to accept rant for reason, fallacy for finance, and words, mere words, for wisdom.

LOWERING THE TARIFF WALL.

[By HARVEY W. SCOTT, Editor of "The Oregonian."]

Least possible legal interference with the course of industry and of

commerce, least possible obstruction by law, is the policy suggested by reason and approved by experience.

Every interference by government is in one way or another an obstruction even when the avowed object is to aid industry and commerce; because such undertaking disturbs the course of things in natural movement, and, while it may give advantage in certain directions, it will interpose check up on the natural movement in other. The freest possible movement on lines naturally offered to production and exchange, is the sound principle. It is not a sound principle to use the power of the government to force one industry or set of industries to carry others or to establish others. All the "protection" that one sort gets another sort must pay for.

It is inevitable that the United States should move in the direction of free trade. Development within, and advancement into the outer world, are making this course a necessity. Hence the call for "reciprocity," which, however, is only a first step. It is a sign of unrest, indeed, rather than a step; for even the proposal to take it precipitates an acute conflict, between protected and unprotected interests; and the question is asked whether cruder products and the materials of manufacture from foreign countries are to be let in free of duty while finished goods are still to have the favor of a protective tariff. Thus reciprocity, so-called, brings up that old burning question of our tariff debates.

What commodities, then, shall be made the subjects of reciprocity? On this point there is no possibility of agreement. Different sections of the country have different interests; but, so long as protection shall be maintained as a principle or policy, there will be powerful protests against even partial infringements through reciprocity agreements.

The citadel of the protectionist position of the west, and especially of the Pacific states, is wool; but a strong outwork is fruit. Large numbers of our people feel that these interests must be "taken care of," and for this reason they will support a general protective policy to a far greater extent than they would be inclined otherwise to do. The sheep and wool interest are of high importance in our arid and mountain regions, where there is little else; and the vastness and variety of our fruit production, and the still greater possibilities of it, up and down our coast states from British Columbia to Mexico, bring this interest into a position of the first rank in the demand for protection. We have to reckon with this condition. We cannot escape it. Few persons concerned with these matters stop to think that the whole subject is larger than the circle of their immediate interests, and to preserve their own, they will vote to uphold a system which they well know runs into many and large abuses.

But the policy of protection will ultimately strangle itself. The domestic market will not suffice; the foreign market must be entered; and yet we shall not be able to get the benefits of the foreign market without free, or freer, exchange. We cannot continue to sell commodities abroad, in large quantities, unless we consent to take commodities from abroad in return.

Here in the Pacific states we want trade with Asia; but we cannot have it on an extensive scale unless we

take Asiatic commodities, nor can we build up a trade with the Philippine Islands, or even keep the Philippine Islands, unless we allow the introduction of their products into the United States on terms free, or substantially free.

How long will it be till these principles shall be demonstrated and accepted, it is useless to predict. But there is increasing pressure that way. Resistance to these principles will, however, be very stubborn. Men never willingly give up a system through which they suppose, however erroneously, that they have an advantage.

CHRISTMAS TREES.

Dr. J. M. Shaffer, of Keokuk, Iowa, writes THE CONSERVATIVE in regard to the Christmas tree trade, taking as his text a clipping from a Pittsburg paper, in which fears are expressed that there may not be trees enough to go around this year. The clipping is in part as follows:

"Along in the latter part of the summer we ordered about 10,000 trees. We always order early, with instructions to ship when we notify them. Our trees will come from Michigan, Christiana, Pa., and Leetonia, Ohio. The latter we expect no trouble from, but it will be more good luck than anything else if those from Michigan and Christiana reach here in time. Of course, they are not due yet, but we have received word that the cars have been side-tracked and that it is not known when they will be moved. Until we find out positively whether our entire consignment will reach us in good season, we cannot tell whether the prices will advance. If only our Leetonia consignment comes there is hardly any doubt but that the market price will take an upward jump, and the supply will be wholly inadequate to meet the demand."

Dr. Shaffer then adds the following comment:

"It is not needed that we weep over this, for they weep because Christmas joys are threatened by tree famine. At that market they dispose of 100,000 trees, and say 'Yuletide would be a tame affair indeed—and the green boughs will be missing in many a home this year. There are trees in plenty but the railroads are not furnishing sufficient cars to ship them.' Not one word about the waste of the trees. Never mind! Don't worry! This great Republic knows you have done more to advance the growing of trees than any other thousand men in it. Keep hammering away. 'Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.' Isaiah XXVIII, 10.

It takes ages to establish a principle or to say of anything—that is truth."

In all of this THE CONSERVATIVE fully concurs.

A RIDDLE.

A noun there is of plural number
A foe to peace and tranquil slumber.
Now any other noun you take,
By adding "s" you plural make.
But if you add an "s" to this
Strange is the metamorphosis
Plural is plural now no more
And sweet what bitter was before.

The readers of The Conservative are invited to attempt the solution of this riddle, which originated with Canning a great many years ago and is a very interesting study. The solutions sent in and the correct one, too, will soon be published in these columns.