

# The Commoner.

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### "IF UNCHECKED AND UNPUNISHED"

In its issue of February 26, the Washington, D. C., Evening Star printed under the headline "Harriman," this editorial:

"Some men think in millions, and some men act in millions. Mr. Harriman does both. His deliverances as a witness before the interstate commerce commission are worthy of study even in this day of big things and this country of captains who run them. His manner on the stand may be described in the lingo of the prize ring as smiling and confident. That he is proud of his performances is easily gathered. That he resents the official inquiry into them is more than suggested. And there you are. The Wall street philosophy to which Mr. Harriman subscribes, is, may a man not do as he pleases with his own and anybody's else which in the course of manipulation he acquires? The answer is coming, and the country awaits it with more than ordinary interest. MEANWHILE IT MAY BE MENTIONED THAT THE HARRIMAN METHODS, IF UNCHECKED AND UNPUNISHED, WOULD MAKE EXCEEDINGLY PERSUASIVE MR. BRYAN'S PROPOSITION FOR NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE GREAT TRUNK LINES OF RAILROADS."

"If unchecked and unpunished" government ownership will come! Thus saith the Washington Evening Star which, if memory is not at fault, criticised Mr. Bryan for expressing a similar opinion in his Madison Square speech.

### JOHN P. ALTGELD

The fifth anniversary of the death of John P. Altgeld occurs March 12. Memorial services will be held at the Garrick theatre Sunday, March 10, 2 o'clock p. m., under the auspices of the John P. Altgeld Memorial association, whose purpose, it is proudly asserted, is "to keep alive the inspiring memory of John P. Altgeld, volunteer soldier, jurist, statesman, publicist and humanitarian, and to inculcate the principles of free government to which he heroically dedicated his life."

At the memorial services Daniel L. Cruice will preside. There will be an appropriate musical program, addresses will be delivered by Samuel Aischuler and Mayor Dunne, while Charles A. Towne will deliver the oration.

John P. Altgeld was at once one of the strongest and one of the gentlest of men. It is fitting that tributes should be paid to his memory not only in Chicago but in every section of his adopted country for whose welfare he was so solicitous. Governor Altgeld will be remembered, not for what others did for him, but for what he did for others. He was stricken while concluding an eloquent plea for the Boers in a speech delivered at Joliet, Ill., March 11, 1902. He died as he lived—pleading the cause of the oppressed.

## THE LOGIC OF A RAILROAD MAGNATE



As long as a road is properly conducted and gives proper facilities and at no higher rate than is charged by any other road it is entitled to its earnings, no matter what they are.—E. H. Harriman before the Interstate Commerce Commission.

## THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Democrats often complain of lack of representation among the dailies of the large cities, and they frequently make an effort to raise money by subscription to assist in starting a daily. It is becoming more and more evident that much better results can be obtained from the starting of state weeklies.

A daily in a large city is a business venture until it succeeds, and it becomes a great business enterprise if it does succeed. It requires a large plant and necessitates a large daily pay roll. As a rule, a daily paper does not succeed until some one person has secured enough stock to make it worth his while to devote his entire energy to the paper, and a man who makes a business success of a large newspaper must give his whole time and attention to it. As soon as a daily is on a paying basis it tends to become of less and less value as a party organ and as a vehicle for the spread of party doctrines. As a rule, it is edited in the counting-room rather than in the editorial department, and in most cases the owner of the paper is not the editor. A man who has the business ability to build up a great newspaper plant generally has not the training necessary for the writing of editorials. We find, therefore, that our great dailies are becoming more and more impersonal; they have no individuality behind them—no conscience which speaks through them. The editorial writers come and go and while they stay their editorials are shaped to meet the wishes of the man or group of men in control. Some of the large dailies are owned by corporate interests that need newspaper defenders and many of the dailies are so connected with exploiting enterprises as to be worse than useless as exponents of public opinion. It is not unusual for all of the news-

papers of a city to rally about some franchise holding company when it seeks further privileges, and yet the corporation candidate may be defeated in an election by one who has no newspaper support.

So much for the daily. Because of the waning influence of its editorial page it is likely to become more and more a mere newspaper, appealing for patronage to the members of all parties and relying upon its advertising for its profits.

If the democrats of a state need an organ, let them establish a weekly at the capital of the state or at some other distributing center. If there is already established a newspaper which is ably edited and which devotes its attention to state and national politics, it may be easier to convert this paper into a state organ than to establish a new one. Let the paper be known as the state organ of the party and let the state committee use it for the spread of such information as needs to be presented to the voters. Money put into a weekly will enable the party leaders to reach a great many more voters than could be reached by the same amount invested in a daily, and the weekly is read more carefully than the daily.

The editor of a weekly is known; his character stands back of his writings and is a pledge for the truth of what he says. The weekly is likely to grow in political influence for it is the only paper that can be owned and edited by the same man. The editor is close to the people and not only knows their necessities, but cannot afford to betray his readers into the hands of predatory wealth. His advertisers, too, are not of the kind that attempt to control the policy of the paper.

We ought to have a democratic weekly of state circulation in every state. The state weekly will