

The Commoner

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VOL. 15, NO. 7

Lincoln, Nebraska, July, 1915

Whole Number 675

TO THE READERS OF THE COMMONER:

A little more than two years ago, fate and circumstance brought upon me official tasks which made it impossible for me to speak as frequently or as fully to the readers of *The Commoner* as it had been my pleasure to do for the preceding 12 years, and *The Commoner* was changed from a weekly to a monthly. A few of the readers complained, but the great majority of them recognized the necessity for the change and continued their loyal support. In time many of them expressed the belief that the disadvantage arising from the longer intervals between issues was more than offset by the fact that matters could be treated more at length and with more completeness. I am grateful to the readers for the consideration which they have shown and for the loyalty which they have manifested.

Fate and circumstance have now relieved me of official cares and made it possible for me to devote a larger share of my time to editorial work, and I hope to make *The Commoner* a more acceptable visitor to the homes of its friends than it ever has been before.

Great progress has been made since March 4th, 1913; many economic problems have been solved or are in the process of solution. The Democratic party has made a record of which it has reason to be proud, but its work is not yet done. It will be my pleasure, as I deem it my duty, to discuss the subjects yet to be dealt with and to present them from the standpoint of the whole people with the hope of contributing toward solutions which will be consistent with the Jeffersonian maxim, "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none." I shall not attempt to deal with all of the reforms needed; to do so would be to impair energy and weaken effort along practical lines. There is no advantage to be gained by distracting attention from the things immediately in front of us to the things that are afar off; it is better to invite co-operation in the taking of the steps immediately before us. The securing of a desirable thing today does not interfere with the securing of another desirable thing tomorrow; no future good is menaced by the securing of a reform which is now possible.

The Commoner has in the past relied for an extension of its influence upon the zeal of its readers and upon this zeal it still relies. If you believe that *The Commoner* is helpful, tell your neighbors so, and you will thus materially aid it in the work undertaken.

W. J. BRYAN.

Making the Issue Clear

It is strange how difficult it is for some well-intentioned citizens to understand the real issue raised by Ex-President Taft's "League to Enforce Peace." When Mr. Bryan called attention to the fact that the plan adopted by the league necessarily contemplates a surrender of the Monroe Doctrine, one of the advocates of the plan immediately rushed to the conclusion that Mr. Bryan was opposed to the use of force under any circumstances. He was accused of being visionary and his views were scouted as impracticable. Behold how easily the objectors can be put to confusion! The Monroe Doctrine is not the doctrine of the non-resistant; it contemplates the use of force whenever force is necessary to protect the western hemisphere from the greed and ambition of the Old World. This has been the attitude of our nation for a century and this is still its attitude.

But why should we add to our responsibilities by undertaking to police Europe? Have we not quite enough to do to stand sponsor for the in-

dependence of our sister republics? Our nation is the dominant political influence in the western hemisphere; this is a fact which does not need to be asserted. But this nation does not covet its neighbors' lands or its neighbors' prosperity or anything else that is its neighbors'. The Latin-American republics are not only self-governing but they recognize the foundation principles of

republican institutions and they would assist the United States in repelling a trans-Atlantic foe.

Mr. Taft's organization—"The League to Enforce Peace"—advocates entrance into the politics of Europe. It does not, it is true, demand participation in the present war, although even this, according to the press, was advocated by some of those present at the organization of the league. But who, with the present war in mind, can view with composure the suggestion that we should become a party to future European wrangles? The present war is apparently causeless; so far as discernible at this distance, there existed no adequate surface cause for this unprecedented struggle. It is traceable to the false philosophy upon which the European nations have acted, and, so far as is known, now act. They are believers in the doctrine that might makes right and that fear is the only basis upon which peace can rest. This is not the doctrine that prevails in the New World and our country can not afford to tie itself to the nations that believe in this doctrine and are now acting according to it. "Be ye not unequally yoked together" is an admonition that may well be heeded in international affairs. If we adhere to the ideals of the past and to the traditions of our nation, we will seek to make the world better through the in-

CONTENTS

MAKING THE ISSUE CLEAR
FORCE ONLY A LAST RESORT
DODGING AS USUAL
AGAIN OR YET?
TWO LETTERS
REPUBLICAN SOLICITUDE UNNECESSARY
MR. BRYAN'S CAMPAIGN FOR PEACE
"THE CAUSELESS WAR" AND ITS
LESSONS FOR US—A SERIES OF
THREE STATEMENTS
LABOR'S INTEREST IN PEACE
NATIONAL HONOR
THE FARMER'S INTEREST IN PEACE
THE MEANING OF THE FLAG
JOURNALISM
WOMAN'S INTEREST IN PEACE