



DID you ever see Mr. Bryan's paper, "The Commoner"? There is nothing plutocratic about it—not even the paper on which it is printed. Except for Mr. Bryan's own contributions, it is not particularly interesting, and is by no means as impressive as half a dozen Canadian weeklies that I could name. Yet it constitutes the sole public link between the leader of the great Democratic party of the United States and the people of that nation. The position of the American party leader is a most extraordinary one. This case of Mr. Bryan illustrates it very well. He is not in Congress. He has no seat in any national legislative body. He has filled no such position for years. Another man is Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, and still another man Democratic leader in the Senate; and I would like to get up a guessing contest to ascertain how many readers of the Courier could give us the names of these two men off-hand. He has no vehicle of criticism of the Government except through his "Commoner" and his public speeches which he must make by invitation of various organisations. Yet he is the leader of the Democratic party without a shadow of a doubt.

It so happens that President Roosevelt is Republican leader. But he might not be. James G. Blaine was the Republican leader of his day, and he never lived in the White House. Grover Cleveland was only leader of his party spasmodically while he was President. During the last years of McKinley's term, the Republicans did not have an acknowledged leader at all; Mark Hanna coming as near to the seat of honour as anybody. All this is very hard for people brought up under the British system of party government to realise. Our leaders may be temporarily outside of Parliament; but we hop around in a lively manner until we get them seats again. They must be where they have an official right to defend their measures or to criticise those of the "other fellows." That the recognised leader of one of our parties should have no elected position at all, but should depend upon a second-rate weekly paper to get his views before the people would appear to us ridiculous in the extreme. Such a man could never carry an election.

All this goes to create that condition which makes the production of national leaders in the United States so freakish and uncertain a business. A judge has the courage to impose a heavy fine on the Standard Oil Co., and immediately they begin talking of him for President. Why? Chiefly because he has got his name favourably before the whole American people; and that is a task that few Congressmen or Senators have been able to accomplish. Another man displayed courage in probing into the affairs of the insurance companies in New York; and that one act made him Governor of the State and a Presidential possibility. Imagine our thinking seriously of choosing Mr. Shepley for Premier because of his examination of insurance magnates! Another man—a State Governor—dared to tackle a railway corporation, and immediately he is in the running for the first position in the Union. We laugh at it, but it is inevitable under a system which furnishes no means whereby party leaders may earn their spurs through long and faithful services in a national Parliament.

The proper place to make party leaders is in the National Assembly. There they can be seen at work,

day after day, and year after year; and we can get some idea of what is in them. They are "tried out" in the actual business of politics, and any weak spots are certain to be detected. If any method is likely to secure the survival of the fittest, our method of Parliamentary development is, for only the fittest can possibly survive. But the Americans ignore Congress. They never know what it is doing—except in a large sense. They do not listen to its debates, cramped and crippled as they are by the rigid rule of the Speaker. Political reputations are not made in Congress at all. Thomas B. Reed made as big a reputation as Congress could create; but he never got within shouting distance of the leadership of his own party. He was an inconsiderable figure in the national field, dwarfed by such men as Platt, Quay and Hanna. McKinley's reputation looked like a Congress-made article, but it was really made in the tariff committee. If he had not had a tariff named after him, he would never have been heard of.

This is a weakness of their system of government which the shrewd Americans will cure one of these days. They will also find some means of re-marrying the executive with the legislative functions of their government. They will take their Congress more seriously, and make of it a nursery of statesmen. To be at the mercy of some accidental and momentary popularity in so grave a matter as the choice of a President, will not always satisfy one of the brightest business communities in the world when they get time from their private affairs to look a little at public matters. One freak President will be about lesson enough along this line. They had a good system to begin with—the election of a College of Electors who would get together and pick out the best man in the nation for the position of President. But that collapsed utterly. The party system over-rode it. Thus in abandoning their present method, they will not be giving up a chosen plan, but merely escaping from an accident—getting rid of a ruin. After all, constitutions must grow. They cannot be made.

Prince Louis of Battenberg, who is to be second in command of England's Mediterranean fleet, would have lost his life in Bulgaria some years ago but for his coolness. His brother, Prince Alexander, was ruling that turbulent state and Prince Louis happened to be with him when a mob broke into the palace. The ringleader held a revolver at Prince Alexander's head and ordered him to abdicate on the spot. Prince Louis came to the rescue and got the mob in hand. The result was that a few months later they offered him the throne.



There ain't going to be no Korea.—Minneapolis Journal.