

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

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### Charity.

Croesus relieves less human misery in giving, than he creates in getting what he gives.



### The Enemies It Has Made.

The judicial Recall may boast as fine a collection of plutocratic enemies as ever debauched a legislature or owned a judge.



### International Arbitration in Republican Politics

Ex-President Roosevelt has probably done President Taft no great harm politically by thrusting the pending arbitration treaties into the forefront of Republican politics; but wouldn't it be a sight for gods and Nimrods if the progressive movement in the Republican party really were side-tracked by a substitution of that treaty question for the question of People's rule?



### The Public's Annual Confession.

Pointing to its creed on the reverse of its title page for this year, a feature it introduces for the first time with this its Fifteenth Volume, The Public confesses, in all humility and with earnest wishes for a better record in the future, that it has often done what it ought not to have done and left undone what it ought to have done. Not always has it been plain, concise and lucid; not always has its News Narrative been without edi-

torial bias; not always has it been full and free in the expression of opinion, or wholly without favor and completely without prejudice. It may be, too, that fear of consequences, or some subtle itch for reward, has sometimes inspired overprudence; and doubtless its ~~to~~ at times has had about it a suggestion of editorial inerrancy. With its many shortcomings, however, The Public has *tried*, and tried and tried again, all these fourteen years back, to lift itself up to its creed and to stick there.



So far as in practice The Public has fallen short of its creed, it might adapt the Pharisee's prayer, saying: "Thank God, The Public is not as bad as other papers, even if it isn't perfect." But this might not be true. Excepting the papers that don't so much as *try* to be unbiased in news reports and candid in editorial opinions, The Public may be like the others—save their shackles, perhaps. The extenuating plea we really prefer for The Public is that utter fearlessness and absolute impartiality are not human. All that any human paper can accomplish in the direction of the good and the true it aspires to is *approximation*.



That The Public hasn't even approximated the requirements of its creed is no doubt the opinion of a good many who read it. We have occasional epistolary assurances to that effect. Were this confession made for The Public by certain of its critics—those in some partisan leash or such as are perspectiveless faddists—we should behold an interesting variety of offenses. But considered as a whole, those offenses might so completely nullify one another as to leave The Public scatheless; or, if The Public acknowledged them all and reformed itself accordingly, it might have to appear as a series of white-paper pages, totally unlettered. Let no one, then, imagine that in this confession The Public so far humbles itself as to acknowledge its shortcomings to be precisely—whether in character, instance or extent—what its caustic critics see.



Looking back over its own history, The Public may find pretty good reason for disregarding such criticisms, except as, like its junk dealer, it may consider them in the aggregate. Critics who "stop the paper" because, though they regard it as "the best on earth in every other respect," they regret that its prejudices conflict with their own on one point or another, or that their point is too seldom discussed in its columns—the criticisms of

that variety of critics don't have much influence with The Public. Nor ought they to. They mean no more than that the critics have stopped thinking; and not alone on the particular point in which The Public happens to offend them, but on every other point; for don't they think it "the best paper on earth," or words to that effect, in all respects in which it agrees with them?



With such critics The Public has had continuous experience from the beginning. It identifies them with the war with Spain, with the Philippine question, with the British-Boer war, with Governor Altgeld, with the "anarchist" executions in Chicago, with the McNamara case in Los Angeles, with Labor strikes, vaccination, vivisection and medical freedom, with Christian Science, with police lawlessness, with the efforts of Big Business to throttle democracy, with woman suffrage, and with Freetrade, the Singletax, Socialism and direct legislation, with the burning of Negroes by mobs, with the Chinese of California, with Bryan, Roosevelt, McKinley, Taft or Harmon, and all the rest. No concrete question in the past fourteen years, to which The Public has *tried*—in no intentional spirit of inerrancy, yet with some of the force that ought to go with sincere conviction—to apply the principles of fundamental democracy, but has lost The Public indignant subscribers. Inasmuch, however, as these losses have invariably been more than made up with consequent gains (to be lost in their turn, perhaps, at some similar crisis), we have no reason for complaint on that score.



But lest all this may seem to imply that The Public is contemptuous of criticism or indifferent to it, let us hasten to add that nothing is more welcome to it than *thoughtful criticism*. We ought in candor to except *thoughtful praise*, it may be, for praise is naturally more welcome than criticism, other things being equal; but in point of helpfulness the advantage is probably with criticism, provided it be thoughtful and not inerrant—thoughtless or inerrant criticism being as bad as thoughtless or inerrant editorship. Our subscription list bears the names of many critics, we are glad and not a little proud to say, who, quite unknown to themselves no doubt, are held by The Public in affectionate esteem for helpful criticism—names that have staid steadily on the list through numerous vicissitudes of disagreement, names of subscribers in high station and in obscure places too, who have read The Public as it

wishes to be read—not as an oracle, but as a friendly though by no means inerrant monitor.

With reference to the business affairs of The Public old-time readers need not read again what we think it best occasionally (for the information of new readers) to repeat. No reader will be bored, however, as we venture to hope, with another\* brief resume here.

The Public began publication in April, 1898, with the purpose of making a fair and informative review of the democratic movement of the world. In this movement it included the progress of the reform which had already derived a world-wide impetus from Henry George, who had then only recently died with harness on; but we avoided making the paper a distinctive organ of that or any other plan of social salvation. Circumstances forced our hand, however, and in spite of all we could do to prevent it, The Public became generally known as a Singletax paper. This undoubtedly restricted its usefulness, even to the Singletax movement, in the early days of the paper; but it makes no difference any longer, for the Singletax movement has now passed from the harbor of abstract discussion out upon the broad and boisterous ocean of practical politics and statesmanship. He who doesn't know this is uninformed. Singletax progress could not be otherwise, in the nature of things. With the progressive spirit that has come to brood over the waters of that ocean, the Singletax was inevitable because indispensable. Whether Progressivism expresses itself in American "insurgency" or British "radicalism" or world-wide socialism, the Singletax principle is a bulwark of defense and a weapon for advance which every Progressive movement must adopt or go to pieces. When Lloyd George realized this for British radicalism, feudal landlordism saw its doom. Until American progressives realize it, they will fight plutocracy at a fatal disadvantage. As Socialists apprehend it, they lay firm foundations for making general and permanent their sporadic and otherwise but temporary successes; for precisely as the Singletax principle is undermining feudalistic landlordism in Great Britain, so will it undermine capitalistic landlordism everywhere. And it is no longer a novelty, but is fast coming to its own and doing its work. Not, however, of this democratic movement to which The Public is most closely allied,

\*See The Public, volume x, pages 1, 937, 1081, 1225; volume xi, pages 1, 2, 13, 913; and volume xiv, page 1.

or of any other, did we undertake here to speak, but of The Public's own business affairs.

After seven years of varied fortunes in a losing business venture, The Public went into executive session with itself and decided to discontinue publication. It was overruled, and for three more years a special business effort was made in its behalf, which also was a failure. Once more The Public said to itself, "Let's die." That was not yet to be, however, for even as the funeral ceremonies were in process of arrangement, Daniel Kiefer intervened—Daniel Kiefer of Cincinnati. He asked permission to solicit a "sustention fund" for The Public and got the permission. He had great financial expectations. In these he was of course disappointed. But he was not disappointed in his object. Thanks to him, if the result be truly one to be thankful for, The Public has continued under its original editorship for four years more; and under the business management of Stanley Bowmar (begun last September), supplemented by the continued co-operation of Mr. Kiefer, it is assured further life, unlimited in duration as far as editorial eyes can penetrate the future.

Following is a comparison of the finances of The Public for each year of the four years since Mr. Kiefer's intervention:

|                              | 1908.              | 1909.              | 1910.              | 1911.              |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Business Receipts:</b>    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| From previous year .....     |                    | \$ 277.53          | \$ 111.60          | \$ 233.58          |
| Subscriptions ....           | 7,028.00           | 5,875.44           | 8,096.89           | 9,199.14           |
| Advertisements ..            | 1,407.12           | 557.35             | 957.35             | 1,796.40           |
| <b>Total .....</b>           | <b>\$ 8,435.12</b> | <b>\$ 6,710.32</b> | <b>\$ 9,165.84</b> | <b>\$11,229.12</b> |
| <b>Business expenses..</b>   | <b>14,277.59</b>   | <b>13,882.92</b>   | <b>15,464.88</b>   | <b>17,444.79</b>   |
| <b>Business deficits..</b>   | <b>\$ 5,842.47</b> | <b>\$ 7,172.60</b> | <b>\$ 6,299.04</b> | <b>\$ 6,215.67</b> |
| <b>Other Receipts:</b>       |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Daniel Kiefer, trustee ..... | \$ 6,000.00        | \$ 7,250.00        | \$ 6,500.00        | \$ 6,500.00        |
| Donations .....              | 120.00             | 34.20              | 32.62              | 11.00              |
| <b>Total .....</b>           | <b>\$ 6,120.00</b> | <b>\$ 7,284.20</b> | <b>\$ 6,532.62</b> | <b>\$ 6,511.00</b> |
| <b>On hand Dec. 31....</b>   | <b>\$ 277.53</b>   | <b>\$ 111.60</b>   | <b>\$ 233.58</b>   | <b>\$ 295.33</b>   |
|                              | <b>\$ 5,842.47</b> | <b>\$ 7,172.60</b> | <b>\$ 6,299.04</b> | <b>\$ 6,215.67</b> |

The circulation of The Public on the 31st of December for each year of the same period was as follows:

|                            | 1908.        | 1909.        | 1910.         | 1911.         |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Paid mail circulation..... | 6,790        | 6,858        | 9,245         | 10,423        |
| Free mail circulation..... | 895          | 944          | 1,037         | 1,103         |
| Sales, files, etc.....     | 2,115        | 1,598        | 1,518         | 1,674         |
| <b>Total edition.....</b>  | <b>9,800</b> | <b>9,400</b> | <b>11,800</b> | <b>13,200</b> |

With generous wishes to all its good friends and best enemies, for a truly happy New Year, for one which shall be to the holiday season just gone

an exemplification in the daily, weekly, monthly turmoil of life what that holiday season has briefly and vaguely symbolized, The Public has but one further word for this occasion. It is a word of advice to its readers; not oracular but for their intelligent consideration. Most persons *observe* directly, and many observe at second hand through the printed page; be ye of both groups. Many persons *think*, some turning their thought outward upon what they observe and others inward upon what they feel; do ye both. Some people *analyze* when they think, others *ruminate*; when you work at thinking analyze, and when you play at it ruminate. Regarding some subjects of large human interest, The Public will try faithfully to help you *observe* and *think*, and in your thinking will try also to help you *analyze* and *ruminate*. But it cannot do this alone. You yourself must help. You must help by coming to its pages, not as you go to an opposition political or religious or scholastic meeting, ready to dispute every point, or to your doctor or your lawyer, ready to take his advice *ex cathedra*; but as you go to your partner on a business problem or your chum on any question of mutual interest—with an open mind, alert, self-assertive and co-operative. Unless you help The Public in this way, The Public cannot help you. Nor can it help you unless you help in another way. The publication of The Public necessitates the co-operative work of thousands, perhaps scores of thousands of persons. You must give in return for what you get of them. Getting something for nothing is either beggary or theft. Unless you who want The Public pay them, they must turn their work into other channels and they ought to. Speaking in behalf of this host of workers who now make The Public, we again announce that when there are not enough persons who want The Public earnestly enough to pay them for making it, The Public will stop; but while there are enough such persons The Public will go on. "It's up to you."



### Christmas and Beyond.

Christmas is back of us; only its memories survive; and its lesson. Its lesson—ah, and what is that? Henry Van Dyke phrased it when he said that "Christmas-living is the best kind of Christmas-giving." This lesson is not for the day and done with it; it is a lesson for the new-coming year. Christmas is an annual Sunday; it is for the year behind and the year beyond what Sunday is for the fortnight it divides. Sundays and Christmases are *locus poenitentiae*, if you know what that means. If you don't know, ask the Beef-

trustees. They are trying to make a jury believe that although they entered into a criminal conspiracy in 1902, they came soon to a place where they couldn't finance the venture, and made this place their *locus poenitentiae*, a place where they decided to withdraw from their crime. Perhaps they did and perhaps they didn't. The District Attorney says they didn't. But whether they did or didn't is of no importance to our present point, which is that a Christmas or a Sunday is *locus poenitentiae* for us all.



Those days are places between the years or between the weeks when we are expected to make it our business for the day to live up to our ideals and enjoy them. We may fall down again, of course, or climb down—and small blame to us—but if we make Christmases and Sundays what we ought to make them, what we really enjoy making them when we are in the midst of it, we have caught from the elevation of our ideals a bird's eye view of what we ought to be doing every day of the week, every day of the year—not so much in play forms as on those days—but in work forms and in spirit and in truth. We never do it. To be sure we don't; and once more let it be said, small blame to us. In this rough-and-rugged, catch-as-catch-can and devil-take-the-hindmost sort of social life of ours, we can't have Christmases and Sundays every day. It sounds harsh to sneer at the man who *prays* with his fellows all day Sunday and *preys* upon them all the rest of the week; but isn't it better to p-r-a-y once a week than to p-r-e-y all the time? Even if the praying be hypocritical, may not the bare form of it eventually generate a love for genuine praying once a week, and through that of genuine praying all the week through? Anyhow Sunday thoughts and Sunday living, if right and genuine, must influence week day living in wholesome ways. At all events that is what Sunday is for. And so of Christmas. In so far as Christmas-giving truly livens up the spirit of brotherly love on that one day of the year, it must have a beneficent influence throughout the next year. Christmas-giving is symbolic of Christmas-living. It is a *locus poenitentiae* for unbrotherly living against the years to come. If gifts and giving at Christmas have left you sweet memories of glimpses at brotherhood, keep those memories alive and sweet until another Christmas, and let them every day sweeten and purify all your relationships—of family, of friendship, of business and of politics; not with mere personal amiability of the surface sort but with democratic vigor through and through.