

## "THE OPEN DOOR."

[The New York Evening Post of November 23.]

Since the news came from Paris that our commissioners have agreed to the principle of the "open door" in the Philippines, a debate has sprung up in both hemispheres on the question, What is the meaning of those words? The phrase had its origin in England. There it means that the markets of the country which has the open door shall be free to the commerce of all other countries without discriminating duties or regulations. That this is the understanding of our state department also is affirmed by The Philadelphia Press of this morning in its Washington despatches. According to that paper, Secretary Hay said yesterday that the understanding of the term was that a tariff system would be put in force in the Philippines which would operate equally against the products of all nations. No nation was to have any advantage whatever, not excepting the United States itself. The products from this country are to pay the same rates of duty as similar products from Spain, England, Germany or any other country in the world. This is the secretary's interpretation of the term "open door," and not that it means free trade or an abolition of all duties, as some critics have asserted.

Of course, this is the only possible meaning of the phrase, and the policy which it implies is the only one we can adopt unless we elect to step into Spain's shoes and tax the colonies we have taken from her—tax them in order to get a net profit out of them over and above the cost of governing them. There is a class in this country to whom Philippine annexation means exactly that. It means profit to private persons of the same kind that London merchants insisted upon gaining from the American colonies before the Revolution. This is what was meant in the last century by the phrase "trade follows the flag." This is what is meant by it now. And it may be assumed in nine cases out of ten when men talk about the trade advantages to follow the annexation of foreign territory, that they mean discriminating duties whereby the natives shall be compelled to buy goods from us and pay a little more for them than they might get them for in a free market. This, as the end of a war for humanity, would be disgraceful beyond the power of words to express. If there is any foundation for the saying that we cannot turn the Filipinos back to the vampire policy of Spain, there is none whatever for the claim that we may put our own vampire policy in place of it.

The question arises, however, how are we to administer those islands without extending over them the Constitution of the United States? And if we do extend it over them, how can we avoid establishing the same duties, imposts, and excises that we maintain at home? The

Philadelphia Press correspondent suggests an amendment of the constitution. But amending the constitution is a slow process. It is a doubtful one. All those who expect to make money by taxing the islanders would oppose the amendment, and they would advance so many plausible arguments against it that the necessary majority (two-thirds of congress and three-fourths of the states) could hardly be obtained for it. The way to the open door is not along that road. The open door is wholly inconsistent with annexation. It can be put in force and maintained under a protectorate, but under no closer relationship.

A protectorate is a hard word to use in a republic. It means the exercise of force over distant and helpless peoples. It means government without the consent of the governed. It is at war with the fundamental principles of our system. It implies the appointment of governors and other officials, to serve far away from the scrutiny of the American people and beyond the restraint of public opinion. It means the Spanish system over again, to be administered, as likely as not, by our Crokers and our Quays. The appointing power which sent an exposed rascal to be consul at a Cuban port, against the protest of the best citizens of Philadelphia, could hardly be relied upon to do better for the Filipinos. Yet the alternative is the bringing in of those millions of barbarians to be a part of the American republic and to help govern us, to bring their cheap labor and their diseases and their votes into our territory.

Our first and foremost duty, as we have maintained from the outset, is to ourselves. We have achieved a free government, we have become a prosperous nation, we have a promising career before us, if we can keep clear of foreign complications, distant responsibilities, and new social problems. If we abandon our high prerogatives, the "open door" will soon have a different meaning from any now attached to it. It will mean a door open to Malays, Kanakas, Chinese, and West Indian negroes *ad libitum*, for with annexation there will be no way to keep them out. Now we prefer anything else to that. The proconsular system which a protectorate implies will be bad, but the other alternative will be worse. It may be possible to train those peoples into some kind of self-government so that they can go fairly well alone, as the Hawaiian islands did until our minister upset them by force and usurpation, but when they become a part of this nation, they can never be gotten rid of unless wrested from us by a successful rebellion or by a foreign enemy.

In the week ending November 11, the average daily deposits in the banks reporting to the New York clearing-house, as well as the average daily loans, were the largest on record.

## MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

Now that the election has passed and the short days and the long nights of winter are with us, it is a good time for farmers, merchants, mechanics, millers, manufacturers and railroad men to do a little practical thinking. After due reflection and a general review of economic and industrial conditions, by all classes, the old maxim, "mind your own business," will loom up as a splendid prescription for success in life.

The farmers who farm, who study agriculture, who personally look after plowing, planting and cultivating their fields and who take judicious and intelligent care of their live stock and with persistent and well-directed industry keep their buildings in good repair are "minding their own business." And as a rule they are successful, satisfied and contented.

The merchants who have studied markets, selected goods suitable to the tastes, purposes and purses of their customers, and with integrity and politeness served the trading public without denouncing any and all citizens who may have differed from them either religiously, politically or in any other way, have generally achieved gratifying results. They have minded their own business.

The mechanics who have stuck industriously and intelligently to their vocations, not squandered their time in debating monetary vagaries, have, by minding their own business, pretty generally acquired a fair compensation.

And the millers and manufacturers who have depended self-reliantly upon themselves and not upon enactments for profitable operations of their concerns have nothing to complain about.

The railroad men who have attended strictly to railroads and not to the business of common councils, state legislatures and congress, seem eminently illustrative of the value of minding one's own business.

And now at the close of a year—upon the threshold of a new era in American affairs—it is intensely useful that all men, women and children now solemnly resolve to mind their own business for at least the remainder of this century.

Thus legislators may make laws and lobbyists let them alone. Thus farmers may individualize themselves and use plows and harness and planting machines, instead of preambles and resolutions by gregarious granges. So railroads may cease crowding with their emissaries the corridors of state capitols and the recesses of the national statute incubator at Washington.

And if all classes of Americans will study their own business and attend to their own business during the year 1899, prosperity will perpetuate itself.

There are 30,000 Indians who have the full privileges of American citizenship.