

The Commoner.

doubt to the corporation, and nowhere expresses as much solicitude for the rights of the masses of the people as he does for the interests of the great combinations of capital which in his opinion "will take the lead in the strife for commercial supremacy among the nations of the world." To embarrass them would be, in his opinion, to "cramp and fetter the youthful strength of the nation." The only remedy suggested by him is publicity, and in discussing the subject he uses illustrations which convince one that he has no objections to private monopolies. He puts them upon the same footing as a national bank, and simply insists that they shall inform the public as to their business methods. He refers to the evils of over-capitalization, but does not suggest any specific remedy therefor. We are to have publicity first, and investigation afterward. It will take some time to get the idea into operation, then the constitutionality of the law will be attacked and prosecution will have to be suspended a few years until the case is reached in the supreme court, and that will tide the party over another presidential election. If the president is in earnest in his desire to shackle cunning, let him recommend the passage of a bill which will compel the supreme court to give immediate consideration to questions arising under laws which, like an anti-trust law, affect the entire people. The president intimates that a constitutional amendment may be necessary to authorize congress to take comprehensive action against the trusts. It is to be hoped that this suggestion will not be made an excuse for delay. The American people are losing millions of dollars every week because of the extortion of trusts, and there is no time for delay in dealing with this question.

The fatal mistake made by the president is that he fails to recognize that a private monopoly is always, and under every circumstance, a menace to the public. There can be no sufficient or satisfactory regulation of a private monopoly. It is essentially and eternally wrong. It has always been regarded as an outlaw against society; it has never been defended until recently, and it is lamentable to learn from the president's message that he has been constrained by the trust magnates to withhold his positive and emphatic condemnation of the monopoly principle. There is nothing in his message to indicate that he has any fear of the effect of a private monopoly. When he declares "that combination and concentration should be not prohibited, but supervised, and within reasonable limits controlled," he ignores entirely the vicious principle of monopoly. No extension of foreign commerce, no development of domestic industry could for a moment justify a private monopoly, even though such monopoly could be shown to be advantageous in both respects.

On the subject of imperialism the president, without attempting to defend the principles involved, shields himself behind the force of circumstances. He assumes the patronizing air of the advocates of "destiny" and "duty" and insists that "our earnest effort is to help these people upward along the stony and difficult path that leads to self-government." And again he says: "We hope to do for them what has never before been done for any people in the tropics—to make them fit for self-government after the fashion of the really free nations." He thinks any attempt to give them independence now "such a desertion of duty on our part as would be a crime against humanity." He seems to regard a government based upon force as the best government for certain classes, and free government as only possible under certain circumstances, for he says "it is no light task for a nation to achieve the temperamental qualities without which the institutions of free government are but empty mockery," and he adds that "our people are now successfully governing themselves because for more than a thousand years they have been fitting themselves, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, toward this end." He declares that large portions of the Fil-

pino race are starting "very far behind the point which our ancestors had reached even thirty generations ago." The question irresistibly rises in one's mind, if the Filipinos are a thousand years behind our people and must be governed by us because of that fact, how can they ever catch up with us unless they develop more rapidly than we do? Capacity for self-government is a relative term, that is to say, some people are capable of governing themselves better than others. We have not reached perfection in this respect and the Filipinos certainly have some capacity. If we are all making progress it will evidently be necessary for the Filipinos to improve more rapidly than we do in order to narrow the gap between us. This doctrine is a dangerous one, because it justifies the pretensions of an imperial government wherever people can be found rich enough to invite exploitation and weak enough to be conquered.

Conscious that "destiny" and "duty" would not appeal to the commercial element of the republican party, the president proceeds to recommend legislation that will give American citizens a chance to garner up the undeveloped wealth of the Philippine islands. He says: "Of course no business man will go into the Philippines unless it is to his interest to do so, and it is immensely to the interest of the islands that he should go in." That is the argument always made in behalf of capital. It is assumed that the "inferior race" is longing to be developed by foreign speculators, and it is admitted that the speculator will not go unless it can be made profitable to him, therefore, laws must hold out inducements. Congress must take possession of the resources of the Philippine islands and offer them as a reward to Americans who will go there and develop them. The American people will furnish an army to hold the Filipinos in subjection, while the syndicates and corporations will gather all the wealth in sight. This is the Philippine question in a nutshell: Hold the islands; providence gave them to us and we must make all the money out of them we can. Show the taxpayer that it is his duty to bear the burden, and you will have no difficulty in showing the exploiter that it is his duty to reap the reward.

If the republicans in the senate and house attempt to carry out the president's recommendations on the Philippine question, the opposition will have a splendid opportunity to manufacture material for the next campaign.

An Honest Imperialist.

Imperialism would be more easily overthrown if all of its advocates would express themselves with the honest frankness that characterizes an article which recently appeared in a Texas paper. Mr. Scudday Richardson describes himself as one whose people are democrats, but it is evident from his article that he has wandered away from his early training. The following extract from his article is reproduced that the readers of The Commoner may see the imperialistic idea as it really is when its possessors have the courage to make their innermost thoughts known:

A student who has communed deeply with the muse of history and been enlightened as to the constant mutations of human institutions, particularly those of a political nature, may readily observe, from a contemplation of all the nations of the present day, a decided movement away from the ideals which have pervaded the world more or less since the days of the French revolution. The dream that a number of men may govern is passing away; gradually it is becoming apparent, even to the people at large, that it is a contradiction to suppose that government means anything but somebody in control and little by little the illusionary idea of the consent of the governed is dying from the earth. Not a long while ago this was tested in the United States. Our new imperialistic policy was overwhelmingly upheld, despite the protestations and affrighted cries of journals whose editors became almost hysterical in their warnings.

Edward of England has taken a dominant attitude. Everyone remembers what was said shortly before Queen Victoria died—that Ed-

ward would never be allowed to come to the throne by the English people, because the people presumably had drunk too deeply of liberty. As a matter of fact, it is not surprising that the prerogative of the crown should have decayed under the sway of a woman. Instead of manifesting her power, she was ruled by her ministers.

Germany has never been stronger than under the empire, and while a good deal of foolish stuff is written about military rule, yet that rule is necessary to a nation surrounded by enemies. In this world, despite the vaporings of theorists, neither a nation, nor an individual, retains anything long unless the ability to protect is present. It is not from any benevolent lenity or moderation that we do not force our young men to undergo a military service, nor keep so powerful an army as the European nations. It is because we do not yet require such systems. In time of necessity, we force men into the army just the same as is done by other nations.

Imperialism means an abandonment of our ideas of government; it means apostacy from the doctrines that have controlled the nation in the past. Mr. Richardson is in error in pointing to the last election as an evidence that our people are overwhelmingly imperialistic. The fact is that the republicans denied their imperialistic tendencies until after the campaign was over, and ever since the election congress has refused to declare itself in favor of imperialism. What it has done can only be construed as imperialism, but it is difficult to persuade republicans that their party really means anything antagonistic to our ideas of government. It is only a question of time when the real intent of the republican leaders will be made known. Then and not until then will the people sit in judgment upon that issue. In the meantime, there is an occasional republican who admits his conversion to the European ideas of government. When one departs from government by the consent of the governed he must advocate a government based upon force, for all forms of government except free government derive their authority from superior force.

Imperialism is the polite term used to describe wholesale killing and grand larceny. The people who advocate it would not think of applying its principles to every-day life. They think, if they stop to think at all, that theft is purged of its immoral character if islands instead of pocketbooks are taken, and they see less criminality in the killing of thousands of people who desire self-government than they do in a single homicide. Strange that any human mind can be deluded into countenancing imperialism; strange that any human heart can consider without horror the results of imperialism and the means employed.

Scaring the Republicans.

Now that the republicans are about to have an opportunity to do something on the trust question, it is only fair that they should be warned against reading those papers that are likely to deter them from an effective effort against the trusts. The Commoner, therefore, suggests that republican leaders should boycott the New York Sun until after they have entirely annihilated the trusts, for the Sun is not only in favor of the trusts, but it is perfectly certain that any interference with them would bring upon the country a terrible calamity. Not many weeks ago it referred to a demand for "the suppression of trusts," and said:

There is a monstrous proposition. Were there any way of carrying it into effect industrial disaster more widespread and ruinous than has ever fallen upon the country would be the result. There would be a commercial cataclysm. The amount of capital and of labor dependent upon these combinations is so vast that to crush them would be to bring on unparalleled economic calamity compared with which the free coinage of silver would have been a fly bite.

The republicans, of course, do not want to bring on a "commercial cataclysm;" they do not want to become responsible for an "economic calamity, compared with which the free coinage of silver would have been a fly bite." If the republi-