

THE AMERICAN SITUATION.

[Translated from The Berlin Nation of May 27.]

The chief difficulty under which the democratic party at the presidential election of next year must labor will be to frame a platform on which its discordant elements may be united. A majority being opposed to trusts and high tariff it is expected that the real and imaginary evils which are attributed to them will be exhibited to public opprobrium. Although more evenly divided on the question, democrats will consider it politic to oppose expansion.

Since money began to accumulate and interest rates to decline, one industry after another has been absorbed by combinations until competition has well-nigh ceased to be an element of trade. Efficiency of individual skill finds now no better recompense than the wages it can earn in serving some gigantic corporation. The fact that in certain instances necessities have been actually cheapened by combinations will be disregarded. Being generally able to demonstrate that stockholders continue to receive liberal dividends, a claim that it is one of the duties of the state to place within reach of the people what they mostly need at actual cost of production, will be embraced. To deal with this burning question the civic federation of Chicago has recently issued a call for a national conference.

The expansion policy of our government will continue to be criticised as long as it remains an experiment. It necessitates a large increase of our navy and army, a corresponding increase of our budget, and invests in the executive a power which our constitution did not contemplate. When permanently established it may easily involve us into complications with some European power.

It is evident that duties which intended to protect wool and woollens have blighted and partially ruined these industries; that duties on iron, steel, copper and other articles too numerous to mention, which we now can furnish in open competition on better terms than any other nation, are simply retained to give their producers a whip-hand over American consumers.

With the currency question democrats will probably deal in terms so ambiguous that they may satisfy the friendly disposed goldbug without giving too much offence to the silverite. Stress may be laid on recent concentration of bank capital, the establishment of branches and the discrimination by Eastern banks against Western and Southern checks. These movements can easily be interpreted to mean Wall street conspirations to draw capital from distant points where it is needed to the East, where it is superabundant. Depreciated money will look less attractive to the mass of voters, as their weal progresses, but silver dollars in value

equal to gold may continue to find favor with many friends of the white metal. If Wm. J. Bryan appreciates the trend of public opinion he will be the most popular man of the democratic party and may again be nominated.

In republican ranks there is no stronger man than Wm. McKinley. The platform of that party will probably rest:

1. On confidence of the people that they will permanently establish the currency on a gold basis and by its unchangeable value maintain the credit of the nation.

2. They will claim that the prosperity of the country resulting from abundant crops and favorable circumstances is due to their wise administration.

3. The glory of our recent war and the prestige we gained by its successful issue.

4. The advantages which industry and commerce will derive from our newly acquired territory; if we administer as well as Great Britain, these expectations may be realized.

5. They will attribute the large and continuously growing export of manufactures to their high tariff policy; appreciating that some taxes are unjust and unequal, while others favor hated trusts to the detriment of individuals, they may promise some adjustment by equalization in terms as ambiguous as the democrats will use in their currency platform.

Even if shedding of human blood should extend in far-away Asia, as long as money remains easy, speculation active and products of the farm bring remunerative prices, so long will the administration be upheld; these conditions being likely to continue the chances are decidedly in favor of the republicans.

Our misunderstanding with the Germans originated in a tariff policy which their manufacturers considered inimical; while we differ among ourselves about the wisdom of closing our markets to them they feel aggrieved although all nations are treated by us fairly alike.

Their agrarians complain because we furnish food at prices lower than they can produce it. Under the pretense that it is unwholesome they foolishly attempt to exclude it by legislation. If they are successful they may discover that such prohibition will inflict greater injury on their own than upon our country. We need not beg customers to buy our cheap food, but by trying to protect agriculture to the detriment of their home industry, the Germans may injure both of them. What would have become of the fair fields of England if Peel had not abolished the corn laws?

The German government, prematurely frightened by our aggressive warfare, evidently thought that, together with Great Britain, we might control supremacy of the Pacific ocean.

A large portion of the American people may favor annexation of the contig-

uous West India islands. There is a widespread opposition, however, to our colonization of the Philippines. No longer tolerated in any neutral port, Dewey was compelled, on May 1, 1898, to seek shelter at Pasig and coal in Manila. How he annihilated the Spanish fleet, how by treaty of peace we acquired title to the islands from Spain and how war with the Filipinos was forced upon us by themselves is well understood. But the future will depend on circumstances which time only can develop. When we finally succeed in overpowering the islanders their country may seem less attractive than it did when we so fondly believed that we had acquired it by purchase; should we actually become the undisputed masters of Luzon, Germany need not yet be envious. There are other desirable colonies obtainable along the broad expanse of the Pacific, the possession of which, if Germany wants them, no American will ever dream of disputing.

A better understanding is foreshadowed by various signs; sentiments of German animosity which found expression during the war in the German press and were echoed here by mischievous writers, who foolishly believed they could inveigle Americans, accidentally born in Germany, against the country of their deliberate choice, have disappeared.

A teapot tempest created in Manila harbor by bickerings of irritable naval officers of both nations fortunately has ended in the deserved reprimand of one of our own captains for his foolish escapades.

The ridiculous quarrel about the choice of a nominal ruler for Samoa temporarily continues, but the arrival of commissioners from Germany to study the status of our life insurance promises to result in a recession from measures of German retaliation.

The "entente cordiale" between the Anglo-Saxons and their German cousins, so desirable for their mutual interests, will doubtless soon be reestablished.

LOUIS WINDMULLER.

After reading R. P. Porter's declaration that the annexation of Cuba is sure to come, The Boston Record (rep.) asks that he be muzzled. "It is inconceivable that we are going to do as he says," it adds, "but if we are, let us keep still about it, and have it come, as Napoleon III got the Frenchmen to vote him emperor, by a popular 'call' from the Cubans, under the thoughtful direction of our army of occupation."

"We want Mr. Bryan renominated and the Chicago platform reiterated," says the Mobile (Ala.) Register (dem.), "for we want the question brought to a plain, square, unembarrassed issue, and decided once for all. The sooner we know for good and all whether we are to have free silver or are not to have it, the better for the country, and surely the better for the democratic party."