

THE DUTY OF ANTI-IMPERIALISTS.

Mr. Geo. F. Canfield of New York, in a letter to the New York Evening Post, thus points out the duty of anti-imperialists:

How should the anti-imperialists express their opposition to the present foreign policy of the republican party? There are three possible courses. They may nominate a third ticket; they may endorse Bryan and vote directly for him, or, remaining neutral, as between McKinley and Bryan; they may throw their strength into the congressional elections.

The experience of the last quarter of a century furnishes the strongest possible evidence against the advisability of nominating an independent ticket. With the single exception of the year 1892, when the populists, largely on account of the financial distress and discontent in the South and far West, polled more than 1,000,000 votes, third tickets have received only an insignificant fraction of the total vote, running from less than 30,000 in 1872 to about 300,000 in 1880, and receiving since 1880 only about half so much, and in 1896 less than 133,000. Imperialism cannot touch the masses as the poverty and discontent in the agricultural districts in the South and far West touched them in 1892. It is a new issue, and the dangers and evils which it is claimed are involved in it will appear remote, whatever they may in fact be, while the other issues involved in the election of a president this year, directly affect the vital personal interests and welfare of every voter.

Imperialism not Paramount Issue.

Imperialism, therefore, cannot in the presidential contest of this year receive a fair hearing, for it cannot be the paramount issue, whatever platform or politician may say about it, or whatever the sincere enthusiast may desire it to be, and there is no reasonable ground for thinking that an independent ticket representing this issue, could poll more than 100,000 votes. Surely such a vote as this would not be an advantage to the cause. It would not furnish a basis for the growth of a new political party, and so far from arresting any tendency towards imperialism on the part of the republican party, it would quicken and stimulate it. If, however, I am mistaken in this, and it were possible for the anti-imperialists to poll a large vote for an independent ticket, then this plan is objectionable, as it would diminish the chances of an overwhelming defeat for Bryan, and might possibly result in electing him.

If the plan of an independent ticket is rejected, what is to be said in favor of endorsing Bryan and voting directly for him? Consider for a moment what is involved in the election of a president. The duties of the president and his cabinet are principally administrative, a fact which is often lost sight of in the

heat and excitement of our presidential campaigns. They have to conduct the general business of the government, to enforce the laws and to carry into effect the domestic and foreign policy of the country as established by the senate and congress. The president can also by virtue of his veto power prevent legislation, and if the senate or congress are in sympathy with him, he can exert influence in getting affirmative legislation. If, however, the senate or congress are opposed to him, his influence upon legislation is merely negative. The president can also, so far as he has opportunities, make up appointments to the supreme court and affect the character of that supreme tribunal, one of the best safeguards of our rights and liberties. The thing to consider, then, in the choice of president, is his fitness and that of those with whom he is likely to surround himself for these functions and powers, and we should vote primarily with these essential things in view rather than, losing sight of them as so often happens in this country, to rebuke somebody to whom we may be opposed, or to protest against a policy or tendency which we may consider dangerous. Especially should we not vote for purposes of rebuke or protest, if the man for whom we are asked to vote is entirely unfit to be intrusted with the powers and duties of the office, and if there is any other way than by voting for him in which such a rebuke may be administered and such a protest made.

Incompetent Cabinet.

Most of the anti-imperialists would, I suppose, admit that Bryan and his cabinet would in all probability make a fearful mess of it. Substantially all the men of character, experience, and ability have been driven from the Bryanized Democracy, and it is certain that the whole civil service of the country would be demoralized and the general business of the country, the departments at Washington the postoffices, custom houses, and internal revenue offices, would be woefully mismanaged. Bryan's Secretary of the Treasury would, of course, be opposed to the gold standard, and it is now believed by some that he could, unaided, not only without the consent of any foreign country, but also without the consent of our own, force us to a silver basis; and if he could, there is no doubt he would do it, unless, indeed, he should be deterred by the fearful panic which would probably result from the mere threat of such action. The Attorney General would be opposed to government by injunction and would threaten with impotent rage the large industrial enterprises, and under his administration we should have to submit to fire, riot, and a general assault upon the business interests of the country.

Bryan a Menace.

And Bryan himself, what a menace

he would be to our institutions and to everything most valued in our civilization! In speaking before the populists in Nebraska last week, where, by the way, the democrats and populists have become one, the populists being that one, Bryan said: "I thank you for the support which you have given me, and tell you that I do not take it to myself at all. I know that those who have been so loyal, where I have been personally concerned, would turn against me in a moment if I were to abandon those things which have made them have confidence in me." This shows why Bryan was so firm in insisting upon the specific declaration in favor of 16 to 1. He knew that if that specific declaration were not made, he would lose 1,000,000 votes, and it was the fear of the loss of those votes, not his conscientious devotion to his convictions, which made him so firm. The presence of that declaration in the platform is conclusive evidence that the populists have seized control of the machinery of the democratic organization, and Bryan's relentless advocacy of it shows that he wears the yoke of populism. He will never have the courage to resist its demands, for he knows that if he should its followers would turn and rend him in a moment. On the contrary, he would use all the patronage and influence of his office to secure legislation favored by them. The plan of endorsing Bryan, therefore, is to be rejected even more emphatically than that of a third ticket, and this conclusion, it seems to me, must be accepted by everyone having a due sense of the relative value of things, even if there were no other way of expressing one's dissent from the policy of imperialism.

Elect a Congress Opposed to Imperialism.

There is, however, another way of expressing such dissent; in fact, the only proper and logical way for the anti-imperialists to make their influence felt in this campaign is to throw their strength into the congressional elections. The present foreign policy of the republican party is not of McKinley's making. It is not he, but the senate and house of representatives who are responsible for it. It is the senate, which, with Bryan's aid adopted the treaty under which we accepted the sovereignty over the Philippines. It is the senate and the house of representatives which refused to adopt a resolution declaring that the sovereignty was accepted in trust for the Filipinos and to be exercised with a view to their ultimate independence, and it is congress which, after a winter's debate, declined to define our policy in the Philippines, and left the whole matter in the president's hands. Under these circumstances McKinley is doing only what it is his duty to do and what Bryan himself would have to do until the policy of the government had been changed by the action of congress.