

ence to a complete change of administration. President McKinley is now surrounded by cabinet officers of capacity and experience; and he has put good men at the head of affairs in Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines; while in case of a change in the presidency nobody can tell to what sort of persons the great offices of the government would be intrusted."

A DEFINITION OF IMPERIALISM.

EDITOR CONSERVATIVE:

Let us first consider what it is not. Imperialism is not necessarily the maintaining of an emperor or of imperial forms. Those who suggest this are trying to throw political dust into the eyes of the people.

Nor does imperialism necessarily involve an abridgment of the citizen's rights. The Englishman possesses as much freedom as the American, and, with the sole limitation in the choice of his ruler, enjoys an equal share of constitutional rights. But his queen is an empress, his country arbitrarily rules subject-races without their consent, and he is consequently living under the reign of imperialism.

The century dictionary gives as one definition of imperialism: "The principle or spirit of empire." In other words, any government conducted according to the principles or spirit of an empire is a government of imperialism. Let me illustrate: President McKinley's message to congress (Dec. 6, 1897,) contained the oft-quoted paragraph:

"I speak not of forcible annexation, for that cannot be thought of. That, by our code of morals, would be criminal aggression."

What did that mean? It clearly meant that forcible annexation might be right according to the moral code of monarchies or empires, but that it is a crime according to the code of morals which should govern a republic. In other words, forcible annexation is not republicanism; it is imperialism.

Still another illustration: Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, in his "Life of Benton," (page 266) says:

"No one would wish to see any other settled communities now added to our domain by force; we want no unwilling citizens to enter our union; the time to have taken the lands was before settlers came into them. European nations war for the possession of thickly-settled districts, which, if conquered, will for centuries remain alien and hostile to the conquerors. We, wiser in our generation, have seized the waste solitudes that lay near us, the limitless forests and never-ending plains, and the valleys of the great, lonely rivers, and have thrust our own sons into them to take possession; and a score of years after each conquest we see the conquered land teeming with a people that is one with ourselves."

What does Mr. Roosevelt mean?

Evidently, that the peopling of unoccupied or sparsely-settled territory is American expansion; but that the arbitrary seizure of thickly-populated lands against the consent of the conquered race is European imperialism.

An early American poet, in an ode to Columbia, brings out the same contrast:

"To conquest and slaughter let Europe aspire;
'Whelm nations in blood and wrap cities in fire;
Thy heroes the rights of mankind shall defend,
And triumph pursue thee, and glory attend."

The arbitrary imposition of external laws on a people sufficiently numerous to constitute a nation is imperialism. The assumption by any nation of the right of adjudging the measure of self-government sufficient for any other nation is imperialism. The clause in the republican platform referring to the Filipinos: "The largest measure of self-government consistent with their welfare and our duties shall be secured to them by the law" breathes the very essence of imperialism.

The government of men without their rightful participation in the governing legislative body,—the enforcement of taxation without representation—the coercive imposition on a governed race of less favorable laws than those enjoyed by the governing race,—this, or what we are now doing to the people of Porto Rico, is imperialism.

The claim that one people can sell another people without their consent,—the arbitrary seizure of thickly-populated lands for professed selfish or unselfish purposes,—the attempt to enforce unfounded sovereignty by military power,—the murdering of thousands of human beings because they are inspired with the republican virtue of desiring their independence,—all this, or what we are now doing in the Philippines, is imperialism.

The spirit of true republicanism should engender a deep realization of the destined equality of all men in their rights and privileges,—a passion of freedom for ourselves and for the whole human race as well,—a conviction that men and nations of men belong to themselves and are entitled to their own untrammelled pursuit of happiness,—and an eagerness to start other races on their national course with the rich blessings of full emancipation and independence.

The theory that one man, because he is whiter or stronger, has title to greater rights than another—the willingness, for glory or for profit, to hold another race in subjugation,—the readiness by force to exploit foreign lands and foreign peoples,—the relegation of sovereignty and of government to the arbitrament of might instead of the forum of right,—this is imperialism.

LOUIS R. EHRICH.

Colorado Springs, Colo., Oct. 11, 1900.

LIFE OF BRYAN. Some one has said that the story of a man's life can be better told and more faithfully portrayed by his own letters than by the words of a friendly biographer. The letters depict the man as he is and not as the world conceives him to be. There is a marked difference between what men are and what people think they are. A truer character sketch of the real Bryan cannot be found than that contained in his personal correspondence. To give the people of the country a better and more correct insight into who Bryan is and what he is, THE CONSERVATIVE publishes a few of the letters written by Mr. Croker's protege, those which relate to his political life.

Mr. Bryan is now bitterly and apparently uncompromisingly denouncing trusts and by trusts he means all large aggregations of capital in corporate form. In 1889 he sought a position in which he would have had a part in the control of the largest corporations in the state of Nebraska. He aspired to be a member of the railway commission, a state board, created by act of the legislature of the state of Nebraska, to regulate and control the railways of the state. This was the first public position sought by Mr. Bryan. It marked his entrance into political life, as a candidate for office.

It is quite interesting to know the controlling motive, the original ambition of Mr. Bryan

Why?

in desiring to serve the people of his state in a public capacity. Why did he wish to become a member of the railway commission? No doubt, those who have been deluded into believing what Mr. Bryan is saying now, would reply that he wanted the office that he might better promote the interests of the "downtrodden masses" and protect the "farmers" of the state from the "greed" and "extortion" of the "railway octopus." But Mr. Bryan gives quite a different answer. In a letter under date of January 11, 1889, he thus stated his reason:

"I assure you that it is the money that is in the office and not the honor that attracts me. Yours very truly,

"W. J. BRYAN."

So it was only a pecuniary reason, a mere financial consideration, a cold-

Principle.

blooded dollars and cents proposition, that impelled the peerless, the "unselfish" Bryan to become an aspirant for the public service. This was eleven years ago. In the meantime has his sordid nature changed? Has he been an advocate of principle or a mere child of expediency? The following letter indicates his position on the question of prohibition, and shows whether his stand upon this question was determined by principle or expediency:

"LINCOLN, Neb., Oct. 11, 1890.—Dear Sir and Friend: Your favor just re-