

OUR TIRED IMPERIALISM.

Chancellor Von Buelow alluded deprecatingly the other day to what he called the "China-fatigue" (Chinamuedigkeit) which he said had become almost epidemic in Germany. There are signs that our own imperialistic Titans are in like manner growing weary. They are "tired" of the Philippines. To talk to them about Cuba makes them look around for a spring tonic. Ask them how their permanent army of 200,000 men is getting along, where their big navy is that was going to be able to whip Germany with one hand, just how much of the Nicaragua canal is dug, in what seas are the subsidized American steamers that were to invade all markets with American goods and bring back the spoils of the ends of the earth through the open doors of our custom houses—and "that tired feeling" is painfully visible on their faces. They may be a world-power, but they look uncommonly like a world-weariness.

Such reaction and disappointment, after a gorgeous paper programme of imperialism, were inevitable. The dreams which our old men dreamed, and the visions of our young men, immediately at the close and in consequence of the Spanish war, were truly grandiose, but to translate them into reality—there was the rub. We have now been more than three years about it, and what have we to show? We think that an honest and observant foreigner, taking a survey of the United States now, and comparing it with his estimate of five years ago, would say that the more we had changed, the more we had remained the same old thing. We talked, indeed, he would say, of having entered upon a "new era," and cast off our "swaddling clothes," but there we were, in fact, just the busy and argumentative democracy we ever had been; disputing over every new step; standing up vehemently for local against imperialistic interests; and offering a dead weight of inertia in the shape of long and jealous discussion and infinite delays, for an impetuous imperialism to dash itself against vainly and in despair.

There is nothing strange or vexing about this except to those who did not foresee that it would be impossible to commit the American democracy to the new policy in a year. In reality, a decade will not suffice, nor a lifetime. Some philosopher has said that it is the common "solecism of power" to think to attain an end without employing the necessary means. Exact-

ly that was the blunder of the creators of our new world of imperialism. They had magnificent conceptions. Did not their stump-orators and their editors and platform designers construct for us a splendid course of empire? Why, we could already see the Oregon bursting through the isthmus, Manila an entrepot greater than Liverpool, and our happy colonies sending their products into the wide and free market of the United States! But they reckoned ill who left out the conflicting interests, the many congressmen of many minds, only by whose appeasing and harmonizing could the star of empire move at all. Schiller said that he could write a drama in five acts more easily than he could keep house for one day; and our imperial playwrights have found out that it is easy to sketch the plot and plan the scenario of a grand production of "Uncle Sam Emperor," but that the drudgery of the necessary governmental housekeeping is far harder.

No one need regret that the wheels of the imperial chariot have thus driven heavily. We speak not as anti-imperialists, but as plain American citizens. No matter what the sweeping new policy proposed to our people, it is a good thing to know that it takes a long time to instruct and persuade them; that they are very inquisitive, and will insist upon having their questions answered; are very cautious, and will desire to wait to see whereto this thing may grow; yes, and are very selfish, too, and will want to know where John Smith out in Ashtabula is going to be advantaged by a splendid scheme of world-empire at Washington. While we have only condemnation for the obstinate attitude of the beet sugar representatives to-day, we cannot fail to see in it a wholesome reminder to our empire mongers. Their large and easy plans of greatness have got to satisfy the vast mass of the people, the veriest "country wittlings and chaw-bacons," before they can come to enactment. It is all very well for the American orator or statesman to urge the launching of our ship of state upon proud new seas, but there will always come to him the troublesome inquiry from each of a hundred exigent local interests, in the words of the tailor to Cowper:

Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale?

It is not surprising that our extemporized imperialists are growing weary of this continued rising of

the petty interests of locality to thwart their noble schemes for the nation. Their chosen instrument, the republican party, has been for many months little more than an organization to show how not to do it, "doing nothing reduced to a system." One reason for this cooling after the first flush, this stagnation after the early energy bent on doing all in a day, is that the whole imperialistic policy now suffers from the misfortune—it has been said to be one of the greatest misfortunes of a statesman—of having appeared only "temporarily magnetic." If an orator makes only a first pleasing impression, but cannot command a long hearing, nor endure the test of meditation on his words, he can never be a leader of men. For a few months imperialism seemed to cast a glamour over the minds of Americans, but its charm diminished on examination, and its feeble and discredited operation has now well-nigh completed the disillusionment. From being weary of it, the people will soon come to think the best thing to do will be simply to "write off" the losses incurred by that folly, and begin a fresh account.—New York Evening Post, of March 17.

MAYOR JOHNSON'S WAY.

A RAILROAD BROUGHT TO TIME.

Mayor Johnson stated yesterday that he had received a communication from the Erie railroad to the effect that the Union street grade crossing matter had been brought to the attention of the directors, and that some action would be taken in the near future.

All former attempts of the mayor and the grade crossing commission to obtain any answer from the railroad company have been entirely futile. The matter was entirely disregarded. Recently the Erie has applied for the right to lay a switch track over old River and Seneca streets. Monday night this ordinance passed the council, but Mr. Johnson announced his intention of refusing to sign it until the Erie took some steps or made some reply in the Union street matter.

It seems that Mr. Johnson has carried his point.—Cleveland Plain Dealer of Apr. 16.

MR. JOHNSON ON MR. HILL'S HARMONY SPEECH.

David B. Hill's harmony speech at the Jefferson dinner in New York does not meet with the approval of Mayor Johnson. The ideas of har-

mony entertained by the two Democratic leaders are greatly at variance, and when questioned upon the subject yesterday Mr. Johnson did not hesitate to state his objections to Mr. Hill's views. Mr. Johnson further stated that he considered Henry Watterson's attempt to make President Roosevelt a personal issue in the next presidential campaign to be ill advised.

"Mr. Hill's remarks in reference to limiting the capitalization and dividends of corporations is absolute folly," said Mayor Johnson. "No such method as this could be made effective in handling the great corporations. The best way to get at them is to compel them to pay their just share of the taxes, in proportion to the special privileges which they enjoy.

"In addition to this no more special privileges of any kind should be granted by the people to these corporations, unless the people can be adequately protected, and the privileges already granted should be properly regulated. Nearly all these privileges are enjoyed merely by the tacit consent of the people, and they should certainly look out carefully for their own interests in any bargains with the corporations. Mr. Hill is not favorable to these methods, and his dismissal of them as 'mere factional controversies over details,' show his hostility.

"No plans for tariff reform can be successful. The Democrats must stand for the abolishment of the tariff altogether, or else must take no steps whatever in the matter. Mr. Hill will be unable to dismiss the differences within the party as 'mere factional controversies over details.' They are grave questions of policy, and must be satisfactorily settled before there can be anything like unity.

"The real issues of the next campaign will be internal issues. We are not so much interested in the Philippines as we are in the regulation of special privileges and of reform in taxation. I am opposed to imperialism, but I am not favorable to any plan to divert the attention of citizens to outside issues when the real issues are to be found right here at home.

"This seems to be the plan of Henry Watterson in his recent statements. I think he mistakes the real issue of the time. An attempt to make one man the issue of a campaign seems to me to be unworthy, when there is so much that is more important. Mr. Watterson's

designation of President Roosevelt as the 'man on horseback' seems to me to be not entirely inapt, but it is not just now the matter of the most vital importance. It would be a small campaign which would have a man for its main issue."—Plain Dealer of Apr. 16.

THE WATERWORKS A PAYING INVESTMENT.

Superintendent Bemis' annual report, which will go to the printers in a few days, contains much interesting information in regard to the success of municipal ownership as exemplified by the Cleveland waterworks department. The superintendent has gone at length into the statistics to prove that the waterworks department has been a paying investment for the city, in spite of oft-repeated statements to the contrary.

Mr. Bemis set out to ascertain just how much the department has cost the city since it has been in operation, and to what extent its expenses have been paid through taxation. He finds that during the 40 years of the life of the department the city had to pay all interests on the bonds up to the year 1891, exclusive only of \$298,950.04, which was paid from the earnings of the department. The amount paid by the city prior to 1891 was \$3,940,000.

This amount practically represents the entire cost to the city of the waterworks department. As an offset to this sum Prof. Bemis shows that the money value of the water received free of charge by the city since the establishment of the department more than counterbalances this expense.

In making this calculation, Mr. Bemis lays great stress upon the water furnished for fire protection. Water used in public buildings and in schools also forms a small item.

There are a number of cities, including San Francisco, Memphis, New Orleans, Indianapolis, and Omaha, where the waterworks are not controlled by the city, but are owned by private corporations, as commercial ventures. In Indianapolis the water company charges the city \$45 for each fire hydrant per year, and in Memphis, New Orleans and Omaha, the municipality is charged \$60 for each hydrant. From all information that he could obtain, Mr. Bemis came to the conclusion that \$45 per year would be a very moderate charge in Cleveland for each hydrant.

At present there are 6,462 fire hydrants in the city. Counting up the number of hydrants the city has had yearly in operation since the establishment of the department, the superintendent estimates the number as very

close to 88,000 for one year. Multiplying this number of hydrants supplied with free water by \$45, the fair charge which would have been allowed to a private company, Mr. Bemis obtains as a result \$3,960,000, which the city has been saved in fire protection by the municipal waterworks.

During the entire 45 years the department has cost the city only \$3,940,000, so that the city, according to these figures, has been benefited directly to the extent of \$20,000 by the department. This makes no account of the free water used in public buildings and schools, which would bring the total much higher. Mr. Bemis makes the unequivocal statement that the free water used by the city is more than the equivalent of the amount paid by the taxpayers as interest on bonds. The entire maintenance of the department is always paid from its earnings.

In Detroit, where there is a municipal waterworks department, the city pays the department a fixed sum for its fire protection and other water used by the city. This enables the department to fix lower rates for private consumers. Mr. Bemis is in favor of the Detroit plan, and believes that the city should pay the waterworks department for water used for public purposes. He also advocates the placing of meters in school buildings in order to put a stop to the waste now prevalent from this source.

The superintendent estimates that the waterworks plant of Cleveland is, at the lowest calculation, worth something over \$5,000,000. There are outstanding bonds to the extent of \$2,687,000. This would reduce the total value of the plant to the neighborhood of \$5,313,000. Yet another subtraction would be for bonds to the extent of \$925,000 cancelled by the city in the years 1878-1881. Calculating the interest on this amount up to the present day, makes the amount come to \$1,739,000. Subtracting this from the \$5,313,000 total value of the plant, leaves \$3,574,000 as the absolute minimum for the present market value of the waterworks.

In making this estimate Mr. Bemis has not allowed for the taxes which would have been paid to the city by a private corporation, but, he says, judging from the amounts paid by the street railways and the gas companies this would form a very inconsiderable item.

Mr. Bemis concludes that the great advantages of municipal ownership of the waterworks are two in number:

First—It enables the city to furnish