

Bryan's candidacy.

At a banquet to William J. Bryan in Madison, Wis., on the 28th, the Democratic national committeeman for Wisconsin named him as the party standard bearer for 1908. In replying, Mr. Bryan alluded to this remark by saying it is too early to discuss Presidential nominations. Mr. Bryan's attitude toward the nomination for 1908 is no secret. He can hardly be insensible to the fact, obvious to all other intelligent observers, that the tide which is running so swiftly and so strongly, both within and without the Democratic party, against the spirit of plutocracy with which this Republic has for a generation been obsessed, is running also just as swiftly and just as strongly in favor of his candidacy and election. Beyond all dispute he is the choice of the democracy of both parties. But Bryan holds his personal ambitions in the leash of his patriotism. He makes his personality secondary to his principles. Notwithstanding his supreme availability now for the Presidential nomination in 1908, he doubtless realizes that men even more available may have come to public notice when that year opens; and he is not the leader to embarrass his friends or his party by political forestalling. Should a more available man have then appeared, Bryan may be depended upon to recognize the fact and make the most of it for the good of the cause which as yet he preeminently represents. Should no such man appear, there is as little reason to look for a weak, false modesty on Bryan's part in that event as for selfish obtrusiveness in the other.

WAGES OF "THE MOST PERFECT OF ALL THE SERVITORS OF THIS EARTH."

When the opponent of trades unions wishes to make a particularly strong argument in support of his position, he appeals to the public's sense of equity by asserting that the union places all its members, good, bad and indifferent, on a level as to wages. This,

he declares, is not fair to the high-grade mechanic. The union keeps his wages down to the level of the wages of less valuable men, whereas, he should be permitted to get as high wages as he can earn; a thing that he would be able to do were it not for the tyranny of his selfish union.

The fact that there is not a grain of truth in this argument makes no difference to the man who uses it. It seems plausible to anyone who gives the matter no critical attention.

As a matter of fact, the union merely seeks to prevent wages from falling below a certain minimum; the employer is at perfect liberty to pay superior mechanics as high wages as he pleases—there is no maximum limit, except that fixed by economic law. Most employers pay a limited number of extra valuable men a moderate advance on the union scale. The number of these fortunates bears absolutely no relation to the number of first-class men in the shop. Every shop must have one or more high grade mechanics, and precisely as many as must be had get the higher wages, and no more, no matter how many first-class men there are in the shop.

Furthermore, the total amount of the higher wage does not depend upon the recipient's value at all. It depends on what happens to be the amount of the minimum wage. The premium for skill is the difference in wages. Manifestly that difference would not be any greater than it now is if the minimum rate should decline. The difference in skill would remain the same, and, as the premium is not paid as a matter of equity, but purely as a matter of business policy, a decline in the general wage rate would be accompanied by an equal fall in exceptionally high wages.

The following press clipping (credited to the Washington Post) is interesting as a side light upon the question of the sincerity of those who profess a desire that the workman should be paid according to his value, yet who denounce the union as a bar to that:

"Chinese house servants are getting scarce and high priced in California," said Mr. R. B. Lester, of San Francisco. "With many of us this is a source of

real grief, for your Chinaman is the most perfect of all the servitors of this earth. He won't make one mistake a year; he carries out his orders with unquestioning obedience, and he never 'sasses' his employer. With their growing scarcity there has been a corresponding increase in the wages until now a good Chinese cook thinks nothing of asking \$50 to \$60 per month."

Fifty or sixty dollars per month ought not to be too much wages for "the most perfect of all the servitors of this earth," but, mind you, the only reason they get it is because "With their growing scarcity there has been a corresponding increase in the wages."

In further evidence that the grief of the California employers arises from the fact that they are obliged to pay as much for "the most perfect of all the servitors of this earth" as an ordinary American mechanic receives, I beg to present the distinguished testimony of "The Poet of the Sierras," Mr. Joaquin Miller, as given over his signature in the Arena, of October, 1904. I quote:

If the doors were opened to-morrow, so that we could get a good domestic, as was the case a few years ago, for one-fifth the price that we now pay for a poor one.

The "most perfect of all the servitors of this earth" working, a few years ago, "for one-fifth the price that we now pay for a poor one"?

Was there a labor union among the Chinamen a few years ago whose tyranny forced the highest grade of labor to accept, not one-fifth of what he now gets, but "one-fifth of what we now pay for a poor one"?

No. The Chinaman was unhampered by the wicked tyranny of trades unions. He was free to accept any price that his employer would pay. And as for the employer, his opportunity to put into practice his economic theory of the value of individual contracts to the laborer was ideal; it could not have been improved upon. He was perfectly free to pay each individual employe according to his value, not according to the arbitrary dictation of a trade union, which selfishly and tyrannically holds the best workman down to the wage level of the less efficient! Did he do it? Did the employers illustrate their economic theory by paying according to value?

According to the employers?

own verdict, the "Chinaman is the most perfect of all the servitors of this earth," and according to Joaquin Miller they paid this highest-class servitor "one-fifth what they now pay for a poor one!"

No doubt the trades unions—like all other human institutions, including the employers' unions—need to be purged of much that is bad in them. Meantime, the trades union has ample cause to survive so long as its enemies, in combating it, contradict history, ignore natural law, and put reason, logic and common sense to shame.

HORACE CLIFTON.

NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, Aug. 3.

Political evolution in Russia.

As a sequel to the session of the Zemstvos congress at Moscow (p. 263), reports are at hand of the permanent suppression of the Novesti (p. 264), the leading Jewish liberal paper of St. Petersburg, and of the seizure by the Russian police of all the documents relative to the proceedings of the congress.

A new congress of Zemstvos is to meet at Moscow in August, in which, in addition to Zemstvos and Dumas representatives, two peasants from each province and delegates from various liberal associations of the Empire are to participate.

While the Zemstvos movement, coming up from the people of Russia, is struggling for a parliamentary system of government, the Czar is planning for the national assembly, under Imperial authority and subject to Imperial control, which he promised (vol. vii, p. 777) five months ago. Pursuant to these plans as made public within the week, this assembly will meet November 14 next, and the elections for delegates will be held one month earlier—October 14. As reported from St. Petersburg on the 30th, the plans aimed to eliminate class representation by allowing all persons to vote except soldiers, persons under 25 years of age, governors and vice-governors of provinces, prefects and other police authorities, convicts divest-

ed of civil rights, tramps, foreigners and women. It appears from this report, however, that the voting is not to be directly for delegates, but is to be for members of electoral colleges, by which the delegates are to be chosen; and that qualifications for voting for members of the electoral college are prescribed in complicated ways with reference to property interests. Under the presidency of the Czar, the council of ministers assembled on the 2d to perfect the plans.

Norway and Sweden.

The plan for dissolving the union between Sweden and Norway (p. 263), heretofore reported to the Swedish Riksdag by its joint committee, was approved on the 27th by both houses of that parliamentary body. In the upper house the committee's report was adopted unanimously and without debate. In the lower house some objection was made to a detail of the report, the Socialist leader in that body having urged that the proposal of the report to borrow \$25,000,000 to meet the new conditions might be regarded in Norway as a threat of war. Other speakers replied that the peaceful intentions of Sweden would be amply shown by a unanimous vote for dissolution of the union in accordance with Norway's wishes. About 20 members voted against the loan, but the report as a whole was adopted unanimously in the lower house as in the upper.

A new ministry for Sweden was formed on the 2d. It is bipartisan in politics and favorable to peace.

Norway has made a prompt response to Sweden's peaceful proposals. In accordance with Sweden's exaction of a referendum in Norway, the Norwegian ministry proposed to the Storting on the 27th that a referendum on the question of dissolution of the union be taken. This proposition was at once referred to a special committee, which reported favorably on the 28th, recommending, however, that the referendum be considered by itself and not as part of the series of conditions of dissolution presented by Sweden. Immediately upon receiving this report the Storting adopted it

and fixed August 13 for submitting the question of dissolution to the people of Norway.

Jewish world's congress at Basel.

In Switzerland on the 30th the Zionist congress was rent by the refusal of the majority to accept an offer of land for settlement in Africa. The movement of which this congress is representative was inspired by the late Dr. Theodor Herzl for the restoration to the Jews of their fatherland. It began with a congress at Basel, Switzerland, in 1899. At its fourth annual meeting, held in 1902 at the same place, the congress resolved (vol. iv, p. 617) to raise by collections from all parts of the world \$1,000,000 for the purchase of land in Palestine for Jewish occupation. The British government, influenced probably by colonizing possibilities, soon became interested in the movement, and at the session of the congress at Basel in 1903 (vol. vi, p. 328) an offer from Great Britain of 5,000 square miles in extent, in Uganda, British East Africa, was considered. No action was taken by the congress at that time, beyond the appointment of an inspection committee to view the land. But at the recent meeting of the congress, on the 30th of July last, the subject was disposed of. This meeting began on the 27th in the grand hall of the Casino at Basel, with over a thousand delegates representing the leading forces of the Zionist movement throughout the world, and including an unusually strong delegation from the United States. Max Nordau pronounced an eloquent eulogy in memory of Dr. Theodor Herzl, founder of the movement, this being the first anniversary of his death, and the session was suspended for an hour as a mark of respect. At the afternoon session of that day Dr. Nordau was elected president. When the British government's offer came up for discussion as a special order on the 28th, Israel Zangwill urged acceptance of the proposition, provided the particular tract offered, which had been found to be unhealthful, were replaced by or extended to a more favorable location. Mr. Cowan of London and Mr. Leon on behalf of the American delegation urged that the offer be declined. After a prolonged debate and acrimoni-