

The Public

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Nov 3-00 Box 541

Third Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1900.

Number 123.

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Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

When President McKinley, in the face of his responsibility for the presence of 65,000 troops in the Philippines, and of his unconcealed hostility to the principles of the declaration of independence, together with his record for having settled the money question, tries to make the silver issue paramount in the presidential campaign, he is, in the shrewd estimation of the Verdict, "talking through his crown."

An assistant attorney general of Illinois has just rendered an opinion holding that natives of Puerto Rico are foreigners for all purposes of voting in the United States. To acquire the voting right they must secure naturalization, the same as any other alien. This opinion is in harmony with the McKinley doctrine of imperialism. Puerto Ricans must submit to American sovereignty, but they are not invested with American citizenship. They are subjects of the empire.

It is not a bad sign to see the political jackals who were for McKinley four years ago coming over to Bryan this year. As they are accustomed to sniffing victory in the distance their friendliness is reassuring; not because it is welcome in itself, but because it is prophetic. Happily they are not the only deserters from McKinley's to Bryan's side. If they were they wouldn't have deserted, as Sir Boyle Roche might have put it.

A good deal of McKinley boasting may be expected as a result of the placing in this country of \$25,000,-

000 of British bonds. That is an explanation, we shall be told, of what becomes of our enormous export balance of a billion and a half. Upon \$25,000,000 of it we are drawing interest from British tax payers! See? But \$25,000,000 is a very small proportion of \$1,550,000,000, which is the amount in round numbers of our export balance during McKinley's administration down to the 31st of May. Besides, our excessive exports for June alone amount to double all these British bonds. Yet we are shipping gold to pay for the bonds. Why do we ship gold if the foreigner already owes us a billion and a half? Isn't it because in fact he doesn't owe us anything? Isn't that boasted excess of exports after all a good deal of a bunco?

Gen. Otis's literary style is as blunt as his conscience. Explaining the necessity for retaining the Philippines, he sums up his answer in Leslie's Weekly in this sentence:

If we ask a reason for their retention we have only to refer to the great richness of the islands.

"If you didn't mean to steal the gold you took," asked the judge of an unfortunate, "why did you keep it?" The prisoner replied: "Because, sir, gold is valuable."

Albert L. Johnson, the well-known street railroad projector, is quoted by the American press as having called the attention of the London newspapers to a significant juxtaposition of facts. It was apropos of the success of the new electric line in London, which carries 80,000 passengers a day and has taught our cockney friends that they need no longer waste two hours on an omnibus in order to reside five miles away from their places of business. He said that while "the London public are rid-

ing in cars well lighted and well ventilated for the first time in history," "house rents at the termini of the lines are increasing." The moral is obvious.

Because savings bank deposits in Greater New York have increased during the year by nearly \$32,000,000, Mr. McKinley's prosperity touters are humming the old tune about "thrifty wage workers." As the increase is hardly more than \$1 per capita, it wouldn't make a very imposing figure, even if it were true that savings bank deposits testify to the prosperity of the wage working class. But they testify to nothing of the sort. That old superstition has long since been exposed. Savings bank accounts are the favorite investments of the comparatively well to do.

To say that Mr. Bryan's speech of acceptance is one of those great efforts to which great men rise upon occasion, is to pay him no empty partisan compliment. It is a tribute which even his adversaries cannot withhold. In conceptions of statesmanship, in clearness of thought, in preciseness and richness of diction, in manifest integrity of purpose, it is the landmark of an epoch. Whosoever has really accepted the absurd notion that Mr. Bryan grasped the presidential nomination four years ago with a catchy phrase, may undeceive himself by reading this speech. Mere phrase makers do not construct such speeches. We could wish the republican party no worse luck than that every voter might read this speech and Mr. McKinley's acceptance speech together.

In all respects an admirable production, Mr. Bryan's speech is especially notable for two things. One is the elemental democracy that breathes

through every sentence. The man who could create that speech is no mere traditional democrat, but a democrat whose democracy is vital. And be Bryan elected or defeated, that quality in his speech will make it a classic in American politics. The other notable thing about it, notable chiefly because it is in such striking contrast with the timidity that distinguishes Mr. Bryan's adversary, is the clear-cut definiteness of its Philippine policy. He makes no "ifs" nor "ands." He leaves no loophole. But he promises to call congress together at once upon his inauguration, and to submit his policy, the approved democratic policy, for final settlement of the question. And without reserve he describes precisely the policy he will recommend. It is a policy to which no objection can be raised on the score of international responsibilities, and yet one which reaches out to a speedy and righteous conclusion. The opportunity to support for president a man of the intellectual and moral vigor, the patriotic stamina, the statesmanlike grasp, and the profound democratic purpose, which Mr. Bryan displayed in his Indianapolis speech, does not come to the American voter every four years.

No genuine democrat can rejoice over the result of the election last week in North Carolina. It was not a democratic victory. Most explicitly it was a victory the other way. Gen. O. O. Howard is quoted upon the subject as saying that "those who voted to disfranchise the negroes in North Carolina are all democrats." He added: "If that does not smack of imperialism, I should like to know what the word means." In saying that it smacks of imperialism he is right. This disfranchisement of the black working class of the south will eventually be followed, if imperialism goes on developing, by disfranchisement of the white working class everywhere. But Gen. Howard is mistaken when he says that "those who voted for the negro disfranchisement in North Carolina are all democrats." None of

them are democrats, except some of the dupes. The white men who voted that way intelligently are natural born imperialists of the Hanna-McKinley-Roosevelt pattern.

That this is so, is evident from the fact that North Carolina is regarded now as a doubtful state. The so-called democrats who voted for disfranchisement were kept in the democratic ranks because they feared that if they joined the republican party the white and black vote would so split up as to give the negro a hearing and put him in the saddle in state politics. But now that they think this danger past they are coming out in their true colors and openly advocating McKinleyism. This view of the matter is accepted at national republican headquarters, as appears by the following extract from headquarters news, published in the Chicago Tribune this week:

Senator Marion Butler's prediction that the result of the recent election in North Carolina will make that a doubtful state at the coming presidential election is thoroughly indorsed at the republican national headquarters. The belief is also shared at the democratic headquarters, but the men in authority there are not so willing to talk about it. The reason given for the confidence of the republican managers is this: In North Carolina, as in many other southern states, the majority of the substantial business men and the financial and social leaders are at heart republicans, and desire the election of a republican president. One thing and one thing only has kept them in the democratic ranks, and that is the fear of negro domination if the negroes are allowed to exercise their rights at the ballot box.

Two instances of lawless interference by officers of the law with the right of free speech are reported this week—one in Ohio and one in Chicago. The former relates to the Dowie missionaries, whose case we referred to last week, the men who were first mobbed at Mansfield, O., and then, instead of being protected by the local authorities, were driven by them out of the town. There is no pretense that they committed any crime. Nothing whatever is charged against them, except that in a perfect-

ly lawful and peaceable manner they preached religious doctrines which their persecutors do not accept. Yet, when, in the exercise of their unquestioned rights, they returned to Mansfield this week, the authorities used the power of their position to prevent their stopping there.

With reference to the other instance, that of the suppression of an "anarchist" meeting in Chicago, let us premise by saying that we have no sympathy with assassination, and that we are sticklers for law and order. We do not believe in violent revolution; we do believe in freedom for peaceable agitation. And because we believe in law and order and peaceable agitation, we conceive freedom of speech and of the press to be one of the most sacred charges the law imposes upon officers of the law. Let that right be invaded, and no rights are secure. Let the law for the protection of freedom of speech and of the press be arbitrarily set at naught, and "law and order" is a by-word. There can be neither law nor order, where speaking and printing, either or both, are dependent upon the irresponsible whims of policemen. And if it is thus dependent in any case, it may easily become so in all. If without legal warrant, based upon due legal proceedings, policemen may suppress free speech in an unpopular or even dangerous instance, they can suppress it whenever they please; and as it is the nature of power to breed power, they will not be slow in doing so. The danger point, therefore, is at the initial step. Not in any wise, then, as a special plea for the so-called "anarchists," but in the name and for the sake of law and order, we beg all who are not themselves "anarchists" at heart, to consider the ominous nature of the arbitrary and unwarranted act of the Chicago police last Sunday in suppressing the public meeting just referred to.

The call for the meeting in question was in these terms:

Liberty lovers, attention: Mass meeting Sunday afternoon, August 5, at two