

The Public

Dr. HJ Woodhouse
Nov 3-00 Box 541

Third Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1900.

Number 114.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

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.

Shall we infer from the Cuban postal fraud exposures that in his repeated promises of stable government for Cuba Mr. McKinley has meant Augean stable government?

The investigation into the New York ice trust, which promises to uncover a scandal rivaling that of the Tweed regime, is especially valuable for its pronounced revelation of the real source of trust powers. Not from organization did this power come in the case of the ice trust, but from a monopoly of the docks. Had the docks been free to all shippers and deliverers of ice, the trust would have been beaten out by competition. But by controlling these docks it controlled the trade. So it is with all the trusts. If the laws that foster monopoly of trade, transportation and land were abolished, no trust could flourish. Any business organization then that was not generally beneficial would collapse. Of course all these monopoly-fostering laws cannot be abolished at once. But the tariff laws that promote trade monopolies could be repealed at the very next session of congress if the people demanded it; and that alone would undermine some of the worst trusts.

The story attributed to Senator Carter, of Montana, who was overheard telling it to a friend on a Washington sleeping car, that Mr. Hanna's "piece de resistance" for the presidential campaign is to be the purchase or bribery of every democratic and doubtful republican paper in the country districts where the vote is

close, possesses several elements of probability. Not the least among these is the fact that the plutocratic ring of which Mr. Hanna is political master of ceremonies has for some time been trying to secure control of the principal metropolitan papers, with so much success that Harper's Weekly, the New York Times and the New York Sun, are already well known to be included in Pierpont Morgan's schedule of assets. There are signs, besides, that if that schedule were open for inspection the name of many another pretentious "journal of civilization" would be discovered there. It is a shrewd scheme, this of gaining control of the press and directing its power to the upbuilding and perpetuation of plutocracy; and Mr. Hanna, by planning to include the country papers in the scheme, shows that he has lost none of his cunning.

"There is nothing to fear," says the complacent Robert Collyer, "from the multimillionaire." The reason for Mr. Collyer's confidence is his assumption that "few fortunes survive three generations." This assumption is a pleasant tradition, formerly phrased as "three generations from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves;" but it has long since ceased to express a fact. Since John Jacob Astor showed Americans how to establish fortunes they have become as stable in America as in England. But even if the tradition were as true to-day as it was in the earlier periods of the settlement of this new country, what satisfaction could a thoughtful man draw from it? The social evil is not great fortunes. It is great poverty among those who earn so much wealth that they do not get. To them it can make no difference whether fortunes are stable or not. The great, obtrusive, undeniable and invariable

fact is that no matter who may be rich nor how long his fortune may remain intact, the mass of those who do the work of the world, and without whose work there would be fortunes for nobody, are permanently poor and dependent. To borrow a suggestive illustration from the gambling table, what matters it to the many who never win if the few who do soon lose their winnings again?

In his speech of welcome to the Boer envoys at the Chicago Auditorium on the 5th, Mr. Altgeld asked the audience to remember that there are two Englands—an England to be proud of for its devotion to liberty, and an England to despise for its greed of empire and gold. Mr. Fischer, one of the envoys, made the same distinction. It is a distinction that should never be overlooked. The England of a Chamberlain is something very different from the England of a Morley. And when we condemn this Chamberlain England for its villainous assault upon the independence of the South African republics, let us not forget the truly noble England of the Morleys which beholds the outrage with righteous indignation and patriotic shame. Never has the difference between these two Englands been more clearly displayed than in this war for the subjugation of the Boers. The England that Morley represents has been self-possessed and dignified, urging the nation to be calm and just, to avoid conquest and to seek honorable peace. But the England that Chamberlain represents has from the first been hot for war regardless of right, and crazy over inglorious victories. This is the England that has gone wild to imbecility and drunk to ruffianism, because an invading army of 300,000 British has apparently defeated and

driven from their homes a defending army of 35,000 Boers.

It is not so certain, however, that the little army of Boers has been defeated. To capture a people's capital may be very far from subduing the people. The Boers surrendered Johannesburg without a fight, after getting their guns and munitions and supplies safely away. They surrendered Pretoria after withdrawing as safely from that city their equipment, their army and their government, and not improbably their large "catch" of British prisoners as well. These places could not be defended against Lord Roberts's "enveloping" army; the Boer force was too small. But it could and did elude him, and now he must "trek" on to another Boer stronghold, lengthening and attenuating his line and exposing his isolated detachments to raids like those which resulted this week in the capture of a whole British regiment in the "pacified" Orange Free State.

The Boers say the war is not over and that the British troops have not yet encountered their worst experiences in South Africa. There is reason to believe that they are making no empty boast. The military situation is unchanged except that Lydenburg takes the place of Pretoria as the republican capital. Lord Roberts's objective stretches aggravatingly out ahead of him. Even if Lydenburg were taken that would not necessarily end the war. Independence would not yet be reduced to an impossible dream. The Boers justly point to Washington's apparently hopeless condition before the French intervened, to the utter subjugation of Mexico by the French in the sixties, and to their own Netherlands under the Spanish, as instances warranting their confidence that even though they be scattered into small bands by the overwhelming might of the invader they will be able nevertheless to wear the invader out and achieve anew for their country a place in the sisterhood of independent nations.

That was a very transparent political trick which the republicans played in congress with their trust amendment to the constitution. Their purpose was to put the democrats in the position of appearing to vote against trusts, when in fact they were voting against a proposition to give to congress general jurisdiction over business partnerships and corporations. It was precisely the amendment which the trust magnates have been clamoring for. So far from checking trusts, it would have served the purposes of trusts. It was really not a trust amendment, but an imperial amendment, under which the central government would have been strengthened and local government weakened. The most appropriate title for that amendment would have been "an amendment to confirm the jurisdiction of trust magnates over the federal government." If the republicans were sincere about suppressing trusts they could prove their sincerity much more easily and conclusively than by amending the constitution. All they need do is to repeal the tariff they themselves have imposed upon trustified goods. But that they have refused to do; and they will continue to refuse, for the very simple reason that it would disturb the trust schemes of their most prolific campaign contributors.

The only thing that gives any force whatever to the republican campaign trick described above is the fact that Mr. Bryan himself is demanding federal regulation of trusts. In an otherwise able and sound democratic article in the North American Review for June he deliberately repeats his proposition for an act of congress "making it necessary for a corporation organized in any state to take out a license from the federal government before doing business outside of that state," a plan which would no more check the development of evil trusts than a sparrow could check the progress of a locomotive. It is a mere makeshift, which is undemocratic in political principle, unsound in economics, of disputed con-

stitutionality, and unwise in practical politics, and which can serve only to divert attention from the conditions that alone make trusts possible.

But Mr. Bryan, notwithstanding his weakness on the trust question, defines with absolute precision the essential issue of the approaching campaign. He says it is "between plutocracy and democracy," adding in explanation what is clearly true, that "all the questions under discussion will, in their last analysis, disclose the conflict between the dollar and the man." That is indeed the issue that underlies everything else. It is the real issue that divides the two great parties. No sincere and intelligent democrat seeks a political home any longer in the republican party; nor does any intelligent plutocrat, unless he intends to be treacherous, ally himself with the democratic party. And in these circumstances it would be impossible, all things considered, to choose better leaders than those who are acknowledged to be the leaders of either side—Hanna of the republicans and Bryan of the democrats.

In the contest now in progress in North Carolina between the populists and the republicans on one side and a party labeling itself "democratic" on the other, the sympathy of all true democrats of whatever party must be with the populists and republicans. The so-called democrats of North Carolina are only a survival of the slave-holding oligarchy of the era before the civil war. That is the real explanation of the effort they are now making to evade the fifteenth amendment and disfranchise negro voters. Their plan is to amend the state constitution so as to make education the nominal but race the real test of voting rights.

An astounding defense of this North Carolina plan for evading the fifteenth amendment and trampling upon democratic principles is made by the "democratic" candidate for governor. He says that the proposed