

he continues to serve it as a thoughtful and watchful citizen who peculiarly deserves the title of "Man-not-afraid." In his Yale address he disclosed a good deal of social philosophy that would be distinguished for "scatter," were that vice distinctive in these days of induction worship; and he was not as careful as he might have been, and as we are sure he would wish to be, about some of his facts. His "scatter" was quite altruistic, however, and by no means wholly devoid of good sense; for he urged his youthful hearers to find the good in such discordant things as socialism, anarchism, the single tax idea, etc., and advised them "at any rate to go at them all open-mindedly and work with the good they found in each."

It would be interesting to know why Mr. Kent clings to the perverted meaning of "laissez faire," which implies that legal privilege must be let alone. Manifestly the true meaning of the principle is to abolish legal privilege and then let things alone—in other words, to remove artificial economic obstructions and let nature take her course. Even more interesting would it be to know what Mr. Kent alluded to when he said that in parts of Russia land tenures are adjusted on the single tax basis. Probably this allusion was to some of the Russian communes where a primitive land communism persists. But primitive land communism is no more like the single tax than a locomotive is like a baby's go-cart. Locomotives and go-carts move upon wheels, but there the resemblance ends; primitive communism and the single tax recognize equality of right to the soil, but there their resemblance ends. Evidently Mr. Kent has not thought enough of the single tax, of anarchism, or of socialism to warrant his talking out in meeting very often about any of them. But he does aim to be fair, and that is much. His admonition to the students to avoid fear of names, was excellent; and there was courage as well as wisdom and fairness in

his condemnation of the current ignorant and malevolent attacks upon anarchism as a propaganda of high crimes. Crude, also, as is his conception of the single tax idea, he nevertheless exhibited a tolerant disposition by acknowledging that equal rights to the earth are inherent rights, even though he did tack on the questioning proviso of the University cult, "if there are any such things as inherent rights."

But there are worse failings in the active public men of our time than crudity of thought, and Mr. Kent is singularly free from most of them. However crude and superficial he may in some respects have been in his somewhat immature Yale address to minds not altogether mature nor exactly well informed, his face is turned in the right direction. He looks toward the rising sun of democracy, and for that attitude much of defective-detail may be forgiven. It is with great satisfaction that we quote his opening sentence:

There is no more tiresome platitude urged by those who expound government than that democracy is on trial. Besides being a platitude, it is a falsehood. For democracy is no more on trial than the law of gravitation. It is the ultimate truth. And just as the child may come to grief in his experiments with the law of gravitation, so we may come to grief in trying, in our unripeness, to practice democracy. It is we who are on trial, and not the only theory of government that can long subsist.

There is more sound social philosophy in that compact paragraph of Mr. Kent's than in a whole college course of what sometimes passes for sociology.

THE NEW YORK PLATFORM.

Judge Parker's platform, adopted by the New York convention this week, is a marvel; it says so little in such few words. Bourke Cockran calls it "a string of platitudes." But that is not wholly just, for each platitude is a gem after its own kind. Not a solitary one could excite hostility in the most discordant company. Abounding in generalities and abhorring specifications, its im-

portant words are weasel words which may mean anything you want or nothing at all, as you please. One writer describes its brevity well as the brevity not of wit but of dodge.

Nothing is so significant of poverty as to policies of the Democratic party in New York, as Judge Parker's teeter-totter platform. Its true inwardness is more than hinted at by Mr. Bryan when he refers to it as an attempt to work "a confidence game upon the public."

Perhaps a brief consideration of the planks seriatim of this "razzle-dazzle" platform may be worth while.

The first plank is refreshingly brave in stating what nobody denies:

1. This is a government of laws, not of men; one law for Presidents, cabinets, and people; no usurpation; no executive encroachment upon the legislative or judicial departments.

Excellent. But with whom will that declaration raise a political issue? Who has usurped, and how? Who has encroached, and when? While men of all parties agree to the principle, all might not agree as to the application of the principle to specific controversies. But no specific controversies are named.

Next.

2. We must keep inviolate the pledges of our treaties; we must renew and reinvigorate within ourselves that respect for law and that love of liberty and of peace which the spirit of military domination tends inevitably to weaken and destroy.

Precisely. Likewise we must be good and true and beautiful in our lives. But who denies any of it? Where is the issue?

Next.

3. Unsteady national policies and a restless spirit of adventure engender alarms that check our commercial growth. Let us have peace, to the end that business confidence may be restored, and that our people may again in tranquillity enjoy the gains of their toil.

"Restless spirit of adventure" is probably a veiled allusion to Roosevelt; but you can't make an issue of that. Roosevelt's own party would agree to the sentiment; but they would see nothing in it condemnatory either of them-

selves, of their candidate or of their policies.

Next.

4. Corporations chartered by the State must be subject to just regulation by the State in the interest of the people; taxation for public purposes only; no government partnership with protected monopolies.

But what would be "just regulation"? What are the non-public purposes for which taxation is objected to? What is meant by government partnership with protected monopolies? Anybody may have his own opinion about it, but how can he tell from this vague general declaration that Judge Parker's opinion is the same as his?

Next.

5. Opposition to trusts and combinations that oppress the people and stifle healthy industrial competition.

That plank reads as if it had been written by one of Hearst's editors and revised by one of Rockefeller's lawyers. But what does it mean? Opposition to an evil without method of opposition, amounts to nothing even when sincere. When insincere it is bunco.

Next.

6. A check upon extravagance in public expenditures, that the burden of the people's taxes may be lightened.

What is meant by extravagance? Who has been extravagant and how? Is it, for instance, the Republican party? The platform does not say so. Does it consist, for instance, of collusive transactions with railroad monopolies, of river and harbor appropriations, or of army and navy and pension expenditures? The platform does not say so.

Next.

7. Reasonable revision of the tariff; needless duties upon imported raw materials weigh heavily upon the manufacturer, are a menace to the American wage earner, and by increasing the cost of production shut out our products from the foreign markets.

What is "reasonable" revision of the tariff? What are "needless" duties? Why confine the abolition of needless duties to raw materials? Is it the McKinley and Dingley idea of reasonable revision and of what is needless in the way of duties? Or is it Henry George's? If it is Judge

Parker's, pray what may be his idea of a "needless" duty and a "reasonable" revision?

Next.

8. The maintenance of State rights and home rule; no centralization.

State rights! Home rule! About what? Everyone favors State rights and home rule, except in so far as they are inconsistent with his own idea of the sphere of national rights and the scope of central authority. Where do these office-hungry platform builders draw the line?

Next.

9. Honesty in the public service, vigilance in the prevention of fraud; firmness in the punishment of guilt when detected.

Why not continue with "love of the neighbor, obedience to God and abhorrence of the devil and all his works"? When platform-makers are generalizing with a view to avoiding friction, they ought to take advantage of the opportunity to make their creed as comprehensive as is consistent with the greatest harmony.

Next.

10. The impartial maintenance of the rights of labor and of capital; no unequal discrimination; no abuse of the powers of law for favoritism or oppression.

That word "unequal" appears to have the lonesome merit of really meaning something. It must mean something, or it wouldn't have been used to qualify "discrimination." We are unable, however, to guess what it does mean unless it implies that Judge Parker stands for "equal discrimination," which is all the more commendable for being difficult. But with that flash of meaning the platform is enveloped again in the darkness of undisputed and indisputable generalities. Who is there that does not favor "impartial maintenance of the rights of labor and of capital"? Who that does favor "abuse of the powers of law for favoritism or oppression"? On that plank all the hostile industrial forces might indeed gather in perfect harmony, but only to begin quarrelling at the first inquiry as to what are the rights of labor and of capital and what is abuse of law in labor matters.

All things in general to all men

and nothing in particular to anybody, those declarations are what Bryan intimates, an alluring "ad." for a confidence game. Under the circumstances of the great issues that confront the American people, it is an insult to the most ordinary intelligence of citizenship to offer them as a political platform. The man who, under those circumstances, could stand upon such a platform without uneasiness and loss of self-respect, must be as little in moral dignity as the men who could be fooled into supporting him with their votes must be lacking in common sense.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

AUSTRALIA.

Melbourne, Victoria, March 3.—We have passed through the throes of our Commonwealth election and are now just approaching the State elections. Our leader in Victoria, Mr. Max Hirsch, was defeated, as you know, for the Federal House of Representatives, though he did remarkably well against a fairly strong local opponent and sitting member, and we think would have been returned but for the fact of it's being harvest time—and this a very heavy one. That prevented the farmers from voting, as they would have done at any other time of the year. It was, of course, foreseen by our Protectionist ministry and arranged accordingly. Mr. Hirsch depended to a great extent upon this vote, and it failed him for the reason stated.

Many single-taxers here (myself among the number) were sorry that he should deem it necessary in the interest of the Free Trade party to throw up his State representative and seek the suffrages for the Federal House, especially so as the State House is the body which will have to bring in land values taxation if it is to come.

I say "if it is to come," for we have many times thought it must, but still it has not. For the first time it is now placed in the programme of one of the parties—the Opposition. When it passed the House under Sir George Turner's premiership it was not a Government proposition until forced on in the House, and of course our upper (or landlord's) House threw it out. It is now undoubtedly ripe for the position it holds in the platform of the Opposition, as there is scarcely any one except the large landed proprietary who does not advocate or agree that it should be given a trial. But of course the aforesaid landlords' House stands in the way, and we yet lack a majority willing to fight for right against might.

Qualifications for the lower House have been lowered, and this renders the