

# The Public

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In the estimation of the republicans four years ago, Bryan was a dishonest fool. Now, upon the same authority, he is a man of sterling integrity and exceptional ability who for that reason would make a dangerous president!

The conviction this week at Chicago of a little combination of photo-engravers for violating the anti-trust law of Illinois has its comic side, when one notes the fact that the conviction was secured within sight of the smoke from steel trust chimneys.

The steel trust in Chicago is trying again to coerce its employes for election purposes. McKinley clubs, marching clubs, "rough rider" companies, and so on, are being formed at the works directly under the eye of the trust. All good workmen are expected to join. Those who refuse will surely cast doubts upon their good workmanship.

It was a humiliating rebuke to the kind of Americanism that has latterly come to the front, which, according to Associated Press dispatches of the 25th, the Puerto Ricans administered last week at San Juan. They had almost ignored the Fourth of July. But when the day came for honoring the patron saint of Spain, they made a grand demonstration. It was all Spanish. Not more than half a dozen native houses displayed the American flag, while from 2,000 to 3,000 Spanish flags were unfurled. This pro-Spanish demonstration is made doubly significant by the fact that it occurred on the second anniversary of

the landing of American troops. Between the hostile spirit of to-day and the friendly one which then welcomed the Americans, a wide gulf has been made by the imperial policy of the McKinley administration—made in the face of what McKinley himself declared to be a "plain duty."

Dispatches from Berlin state that the McKinley government has communicated by circular note to the European powers its willingness to cooperate fully in the allied movement for the restoration of peace in China and the establishment of a responsible government at Peking. Notwithstanding the reliable sources from which this information is said to emanate, judgment as to its veracity ought to be suspended. Mr. McKinley has no constitutional right to make an alliance with foreign powers for any such purpose. He may cooperate to save the ministers from a mob. He may cooperate in an emergency to save the lives of other Americans from a mob. But he cannot cooperate to restore peace and establish a responsible government, without cooperating to levy war. And Mr. McKinley has no constitutional authority to levy war. That function is reserved to congress. While the administration has gone far toward ignoring the constitution and centralizing military power in the commander-in-chief, we are not yet prepared to believe that it has reached the point of confederating, without congressional authority, with the military powers of Europe for an invasive war in China.

One of the assistant directors of the federal census, Mr. Wines, in explaining why the census statistics for 1900 are likely to be late, incidentally explains something of more importance. He explains why they are likely to be

false. "A man gives the enumerator certain figures," says Mr. Wines, "as to the cost of running his establishment a year. We find that according to his own figures he has run his business at a dead loss of several thousand dollars." So it is assumed that the man has made an error, and, at the cost of delaying publication, the figures are returned to him for correction. He is expected to show that his business has been run at a profit. If his figures had shown a gain of several thousand dollars, instead of a loss, they would evidently not have been returned for correction. It would then have been assumed that there was no error. Here we have another impressive illustration of the great truth that "statistics, like sausages, depend for their value upon who makes them."

The assassination of King Humbert is not a difficult thing to explain. There is no need for weaving fantastic stories about anarchistic conspiracies, in which lots are drawn to designate the assassin who shall remove this crowned head and the assassin who shall remove that one. Stories of that kind are interesting in novels; but in newspapers they are out of place. No such conspiracy exists. If there were one, one that "meant business," the earth would soon be depopulated of its monarchs. One hundred determined men, willing to die themselves provided that in dying they could make some throne vacant, and ready to draw lots for orders, would be as deadly as Death himself and as difficult to deal with as a ghost. They might stimulate the adoption of drastic laws against men who seek to reform political and social evils by legitimate methods; they might bring down the vengeance of the powers upon such men as these; they might put back the advance of

democracy a century or more—but they themselves would be irresistible. No government could cope with a suicides' club bent on regicide, so long as one member lived. But there is no such club. The assassination of King Humbert by an Italian peasant is as logical as his death of a plague would have been had he exposed himself to its ravages. He died of a social disease.

We are told that Humbert was loved by his subjects. How does anyone know that? When popular love has to find expression through censored newspapers, in a country where free speech if critical is suppressed, its genuineness may be fairly doubted. But that by the way. The question of affection is wholly aside from the case. Humbert expressed in his person a phase of deadly social disease. Though personally of simple tastes, he lived, nevertheless, in great luxury. His splendid palaces were numerous in Italy. He had a fabulous income. And all his magnificence was maintained from taxes drained out of the ceaseless toil of a peasantry who are seldom above the verge of starvation. The relation between this terrible poverty on the one hand and Humbert's magnificence on the other is not direct. He could not have changed the condition. He was not personally to blame. Few victims of disease of any kind are themselves to blame. It only happens that they are in the path of its movement. So with him. Though no more to blame than any other among the thousands of his kingdom, perhaps less to blame than many of his less conspicuous subjects, Humbert stood out as the great personification of that subtle power of plunder to which the starving peasantry were victims. Just as a dying child at the milkless breast of a famished peasant mother would typify one extreme of this Godless social life, so King Humbert in his magnificent luxury typified the other. And so surely as the thought of that disinherited babe might stir up peasant sympathy to the point of passion

for vengeance, just so surely would reflections upon the luxury of the king suggest him as its object. It is disparities like these that generate the social disease of which King Humbert died. As swamps breed malaria, so do such conditions breed assassins. Newspaper hysterics over mythical anarchists' clubs are useless. Worse than useless is it to threaten dire vengeance. It is disease, not crime, with which governments have here to deal. And it can be stamped out only by removing its cause. The indictment for Humbert's death lies against unjust and unnecessary social conditions. It lies against the maladjustments of society which yield luxury to such as him, at the expense of disinheritance and debasing poverty to millions of his subjects.

It must be admitted that the trustees of Wellesley college were in close quarters when the question of accepting a money gift from John D. Rockefeller arose. They were in a sense in the position of Stephen A. Douglas as a candidate for president, of whom a campaign rhymester of the period wrote:

Our poor little Doug will be sadly affected,

Whate'er his political lot.

He'll be S. A. D. if elected;

He'll be S. A. D. if he's not.

Mr. Rockefeller had been approached for a gift. He replied in substance that he thought a college ought to demonstrate its ability to live within its income before he could assist it to get an income. This was an allusion to a debt, which the alumnae undertook to pay off, upon Mr. Rockefeller's promise to contribute, after the debt should have been paid, \$100,000. The debt was paid off and Mr. Rockefeller made his promise good. Then it was that the trustees realized that they would be S. A. D. if they took his gift, and S. A. D. if they refused it. On one hand, to take the gift was to condone the wickedness of the Standard Oil company; on the other, to decline it, was to lose a grip upon the main chance. In this dilemma the trustees did what any

well-informed trustees who preferred being S. A. D. with the money to being S. A. D. without it, would do. They called in as an expert on economic morality the distinguished Prof. Jeremiah Whipple Jenks, of Cornell, and made him umpire. Prof. Jenks decided that an individual and a college are different. An individual may be governed in accepting or rejecting gifts, by his personal tastes. But a college is a public institution, maintained for public ends. In a sense it holds its resources in trust for the public. Consequently, it may in honor and credit accept any money from any source. So Wellesley gets Mr. Rockefeller's \$100,000.

We are of those who approve Prof. Jenks's decision. It is in our judgment true that a college may with honor and credit—at any rate without dishonor—accept money from any source. If Capt. Kidd had left a legacy to Wellesley, supposing he had foreseen the existence and the needs of that latest Rockefellerian beneficiary, there is no good reason why Wellesley should not accept it. So with the Rockefeller gift. But as there are abundant reasons why Wellesley, in acknowledgment of Kidd's philanthropy, should not turn its professor of moral philosophy into a special pleader for piracy upon the high seas, so there are abundant reasons why, in acknowledgment of Rockefeller's, it should not turn its professor of political economy into an apologist for piracy upon the dry land. In other words, the real question is not whether a college ought or ought not to receive gifts of Rockefeller money. It is whether it ought or ought not to become a grateful advocate of the Rockefeller system of getting money. The Wellesley chair of political economy is now a proper object of surveillance.

J. Pierpont Morgan's plutocratic "Journal of Civilization"—better known as Harper's Weekly—has amended the Declaration of Independence. Instead of repealing the clause about life, liberty and the pur-