

Citizens Union committee is unanswerable. It notes this difference:

Suppose a man now finds that his property is assessed at 90 per cent. of its value, and he objects that it ought to be assessed at 60 per cent., and brings the matter before the court; the answer of the assessors is that the law says 100 per cent., and that the land-owner cannot object to 90 per cent., and they refuse to admit that there is any general rate of 60 per cent., and the land-owner is thrown back on that provision of the statute which gives him a remedy in case his property is assessed at a proportionally higher rate than other property. But the difficulty with this proposition is a difficulty of proof. He must engage experts to make a re-assessment almost of the whole city before he can establish what percentage the assessed valuation is really based on, whereas if the assessors assessed property at what they thought was 100 per cent., and really got it at 120 per cent. in a given instance, the owner could get it reduced to 100 per cent. upon proving the actual value of his own property, without going into the question of values of all the other property within a radius of a mile or so.

A question has been asked by the Chicago Record-Herald (December 26), an independent Republican paper, which must have occurred more or less definitely to every man who hears of prosperity all about him and gets none of it—and these men are a host. The question is asked apropos of the boast of another paper that “we” are doing this, and “we” are getting that, and “we” are flourishing thus, etc., etc. “The thought is uplifting,” writes the editor of the Record-Herald, “but who are ‘we’?” Sure enough, who are “we”? That little question lets the gas out of all boasting about national prosperity. When a Rockefeller can give away millions without reducing his living expenses, it is certain that he is prosperous. And when all incomes are lumped together and averaged, “we” may appear to be prosperous, too. But when asked to define “we” in that connection, we are likely to be startled into a realization of the fact that “our” prosperity is after all only the prosperity of men like Rockefeller, and that much of it is secured at “our” expense.

A particularly gratifying thing about the Record-Herald’s question is its cavalier treatment of the “favorable balance of trade” theory. The paper it criticizes had paraded in slightly new form the old Republican “gag” that when you buy of foreigners the foreign country has the money and you have the goods; but when you buy at home, your country has both money and goods and is therefore so much the richer. The new form in which this old “gag” appeared was expressed in these words, the territories referred to being the Philippines, Hawaii and Porto Rico:

These territories produce necessities and luxuries for which we now pay out over \$400,000,000 yearly to foreigners. When the time comes, as it will, that these territories succeed in producing in sufficient quantities we shall simply take \$400,000,000 out of one national pocket and put it in the other national pocket, instead of losing the money, nationally speaking, in the capacious pocket of the foreigner.

This is justly described by the Record-Herald as “a curiosity in muddled economics, which has the virtue of being amusing if nothing more;” and in the comment it says:

The addition of the Philippines to our national wealth leaves the Philippines just where they were, leaves the Filipinos in possession and adds nothing to the wealth of any Americans except a few officeholders. We, the people of Chicago and New York, get none of the imaginary swag, neither are we saved any portion of the imaginary saving of \$400,000,000.

It is getting to be a cold day for protectionism when independent Republican papers unravel and make fun of the notion that domestic trading is best because it keeps both money and goods at home; especially if they also note the fact that such advantages as there may be in having colonies is attributable not to colonialism itself, but to the free trade which colonialism allows and which could be secured without colonialism by simply abolishing protective tariffs.

It is some comfort to reflect that Father Time is far more likely to cut himself than anybody else, if he holds his scythe as shown in the conventional New Year’s pictures.—Puck.

DEMOCRACY.

It has always been the misfortune of the great principle of democracy to be confounded in common thought with matters of personal intercourse, with questions of manners and etiquette, and to be lost to sight in these comparatively trivial things. An illustration of our meaning may be found in a recent Washington letter to the Chicago Tribune from “Raymond,” that extraordinarily observant and interesting newspaper correspondent whose letters are attracting general attention. We quote the pertinent part of this letter in full:

President Roosevelt’s democratic ways are daily manifest to the Washington public, but his democracy is carried to a still greater extent in his family. It has always been a custom, since the days of George Washington, for the attache in waiting on the President to open the door as he approached, stand to one side, and bow as he passed out. This same courtesy was shown President Roosevelt’s children, and the head usher stood respectfully by, ready to open the door for them. The President watched for several days the wondering air of the children as they went to and fro through the house, and also observed that they even unnecessarily passed in and out at doors. Finally he approached this attache and said, frankly: “I suppose it is the custom here to open and close the door for the President and his family, and you are attending to your duty in doing so, but while I live here I want to open and close the door for myself, and I want my children to enjoy the same freedom. If Mrs. Roosevelt wishes you to open the door for her I shall appreciate the courtesy, but for the rest it is not necessary.”

Both the late President McKinley and Mrs. McKinley accepted this and other attentions with smiles and a thank you. Aside from the actual duties attended to by domestics and maids, Mrs. Roosevelt waits upon herself, and not only that but she performs dozens of tasks daily for her children, always keeping a little sewing near at hand for a chance idle moment.

President Roosevelt was asked by an old friend whom he invited to the White House to dine with the family whether he should wear a dress suit at dinner or not, to which the President replied: “By George, if you think it will add any to your comfort to wear it, do so, but I shall probably dine in my riding boots, as we won’t get in until late.”

All that is, indeed, consistent with the genuine principle of democracy: