

The tories of Great Britain, driven to desperation by the need for revenue caused by the enormous expenses of their indefensible war in South Africa, are turning for relief to the great American bunco game of a protective tariff. To sweeten the pill they advise the working classes that by this means cheap Yankee goods can be kept out of the English market. Their scheme, like the common law, is the perfection of reason. The Yankee is to be made to pay the expenses of the South African war, through so high a tariff upon his goods as they come into England that he will keep his goods out rather than pay it and so leave the British market to the British workingman! How a tariff which yields revenue can protect the workingman, or one which protects him can yield revenue, the tory claquers do not venture to explain. What they want is to get revenue by making the common people pay it in higher prices on the imports they buy, thereby relieving the income tax payer and saving the great landlords; and if by constant repetition they can make the British consumer believe that the Yankee will pay the tax, and the British workingman that this will protect him, the job is done. Let the British "beggars" who have fought, fought, fought, also pay, pay, pay, is the motto of tory statesmanship.

Two weeks ago (page 705) we called attention to newspaper reports which quoted Prof. Jenks, of Cornell university, as saying at a Chicago banquet that Providence intended the many to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. In commenting upon this we refrained from characterizing the sentiment as Prof. Jenks's, for the expressed reason that his language might have been misreported. So we made the report an occasion for pointing out what is undoubtedly true, that the comfortable classes do very largely entertain the notion that the "inferior" classes have been providentially provided for them as hewers of wood and drawers of water. We

are glad now to be able authoritatively to state that our suspicion of bad reporting was correct. Prof. Jenks writes us, under date of February 25, that the report was—mistaken with reference to my opinion regarding the "hewers of wood and drawers of water." I said that that had been the opinion of very many people in different periods of the world's history. I myself was inclined to combat that opinion, and to show how our public schools could prevent that being the case. Modern inventions have done much to prevent it.

We do not agree, and in support of our objection we might cite authority, that modern inventions have done much to raise the working classes above the necessity of being "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the privileged. But that is another story.

A published interview with Mr. Roosevelt's guide upon his strenuous lion-hunting expedition in Colorado, gives some suggestive indications of Mr. Roosevelt's notions of fun. Every lion the party killed was first treed. After being hit he fell off his perch, and "then the fun began." Here is the guide's description of it:

The lion, mind you, is handicapped. He is fatally wounded and he is stunned by his fall. But the dogs are on him as soon as he reaches the ground, and I must say I have some of the best fighting dogs in the lion hunting business. Often a lively fight followed, for, under the circumstances, the lion will fight and he generally sells his life for all it is worth. Into this fight Roosevelt entered, and ended the fight by locating the lion's heart with his hunting knife. Dangerous? Well, not very. This is the way it is done. Any hunter knows it is safe. I should not have permitted Roosevelt to expose himself to danger had he been so disposed, which he was not.

One would suppose there might be as much strenuous fun in knocking down and stabbing a stuffed cat. But there would be nothing bloody about that.

ON OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM.

"Pessimism is a vulgar form of atheism." In this epigram a popular clergyman has expressed an undeniable truth. But there is a species of optimism, which, worse than vulgar atheism, would justify the retort

in paraphrase that optimism is a refined form of devil worship.

Optimism, as commonly understood, is a spurious thing. So far from being a living protest against atheism, it is nothing better than mental and spiritual indolence. "Things always have come out right, and they always will," laughs your contented optimist, as he turns his back upon the task the Lord offers him.

He thinks of God as a miracle worker, who makes brick without straw, and improves the condition of mankind by means of omnipotent fiat instead of human cooperation. Said the lazy farmer one beautiful May day, standing upon his front stoop and looking out over a fallow field: "If God wants a crop of corn in that field, he will grow one; if he doesn't, he won't; whatever is to be will be, and where's the use of my plowing and planting? Nay, I believe in the goodness of God, and will go to the circus and enjoy myself, while he makes a corn crop for me." The lazy farmer was a true type of your everyday optimist.

It did not occur to him that God is rational, and works in human affairs through human channels. He did not realize that although God giveth the increase, some Paul must plant and some Apollos must water. Instead of resting his faith in God, as he in his pagan ignorance supposed, he was resting it upon an irrational fetish.

Precisely so with most of the optimists who joyously proclaim their faith to-day. In their philosophy everything is for the best, and will come out all right in the end. God in his goodness will bring the increase, whether a Paul and an Apollos plant and water or not. Too lazy mentally to think, too lazy spiritually to act, they make contentment a virtue and denounce as pessimists all who disturb their serenity by preaching against injustice. It is not for your spurious optimist to consider indications of social decadence, nor to work for social improvement. Leave all that to God. To doubt the certainty of progress is to doubt him.

Are we as a nation breaking away from our democratic moorings and

drifting as the republic of Rome did into the whirlpool of imperialism? Never fear. God will take care of us. Don't blaspheme him by urging that the prow of the ship of state be turned in another direction. He will do that if it is for the best. Let us enjoy the exciting voyage. Don't be a pessimist!

Are our institutions making classes of very rich and very poor, of luxurious idlers and impoverished and degraded workers? Impossible. God is too good to allow that, and he is too wise and powerful to need help from us. Let us laugh at these idle fears, let us throw our hats into the air in joyful frenzy as we see the greatness of God's work in raising up a pious Rockefeller, a generous Carnegie, a masterful Morgan, and in providing millions of inferior mortals for them to pillage and coddle. Don't be a pessimist!

That is the optimism of the child in a boat gliding swiftly down the Niagara river, which claps its hands in baby glee at the flowers on the banks as they rush by, until the boat is upon the very edge of the abyss. To shift the metaphor, it is the optimism of the thoughtless housewife, who is so happy over the beauty of her garden that she pleasantly rebukes her "pessimistic" friend for warning her that weeds are growing there, which will soon choke the plants.

At all manifestations of this most popular kind of optimism, we may well imagine that the devil kicks up his hind legs in wicked glee.

What commonly passes for optimism is really not optimism at all. It is as we have said, nothing better than an expression of mental and spiritual indolence. Those who affect it do so because it is easier to trust in God than to help him. On the other hand, much that passes for pessimism, even with the so-called pessimists, is genuine optimism.

There are times when the best expression of optimism is an aggressive pessimism, vitalized with a sense of outraged justice. And these are such times. The man who is hopeless of the triumph of justice over injustice, of right over wrong, yet fights for justice, dies for justice,

lives, or pleads or suffers for justice—that man, though he deny God with his lips, proclaims him from his heart. Though he professes to be hopeless, his work asserts his confidence. In comparison with this kind of pessimism, your lotus-eating optimist, whom we find so numerous now, is a sorry creature.

To warn the people that they must amend their ways or perish, is not atheistic pessimism. The frivolous who heard Jonah foretell the overthrow of Nineveh doubtless thought him a pessimist. But he was certainly not an atheist, and his pessimism saved the city. In our own time as in Jonah's, God speaks through so-called pessimists. "If ye keep on denying in your lives this truth and that," say they, "ye are doomed! Unless ye mend your ways, ye shall surely perish!" That has been the cry of the pessimism that in reality is optimism, all down the ages. It is the cry to-day of the prophets whom spurious optimists call pessimists. It is the cry that has made the world advance.

For the world has advanced, and does advance, not only in victories over external nature, but also along the lines of righteousness. He must be blind who cannot perceive it. There are fluctuations, now up and now down, but the trend is upward and onward. This progress is the stock in trade of the lazy optimist. But to it none of his kind have contributed. They have done less to promote it than the optimistic fly did to turn the cart wheel. They have had no more to do with it than to sing about progress accomplished, and good naturedly to obstruct further progress. They neither give warning like Jonah, nor mend their ways like the people of Nineveh.

The essence of optimism is not the state of the mind. If it were, the mother weeping for her first born would be a pessimist, while the laughing fool at the funeral would be an optimist. A gloomy outlook is not necessarily inconsistent with optimism, nor a smiling face with the lowest depths of atheistic pessimism.

Optimism or pessimism depends upon the direction of the life. To live towards the development of

righteousness is to be an optimist; to live indifferent to righteousness is to be a pessimist. The selfish man is no optimist, however contented and happy and hopeful he may be. The happier he is in his selfishness and the more hopeful about it, the less right has he to rank as an optimist. Nor is the unselfish man necessarily a pessimist, though his outlook be gloomy. No man can be inwardly hopeless of ultimate righteous adjustments who gives the first place in his life to the cause of justice, of that comprehensive justice which means equality of rights. But he who does not give that cause a high place in his life is a pessimist, and his pessimism is indeed a form of atheism. If it assumes an optimistic garb, his optimism is worse than atheistic; it is 'devilish.'

All agree that in individual life God helps them who help themselves. In other words, in working for the individual he works with the individual. To deny this is atheistic pessimism; but the only effectual way of denying it is to withhold one's own contribution to the partnership. The idea holds good with society. God helps the society that helps itself—whose members, that is, justly help one another. It is not mere verbal denials of this that constitute atheistic pessimism. Neither is it gloomy forebodings and ominous prophecies. Atheistic pessimism in this connection consists in disregarding unjust conditions and tendencies. And tried by that test, the dearest pessimists of our day and generation are to be found among our most cheerful "optimists."

NEWS

American imperialism has now boldly come to the fore at Washington. On the 25th, the senate committee on relations with Cuba, of which Senator Platt, of Connecticut, is chairman, recommended the following provisions regarding Cuban independence, as an amendment to the army appropriation bill:

That in fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April 20, 1898, entitled "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the