

AN ATHEISTIC HYPOTHESIS.

"Republic or empire" is the paramount issue in American politics, according to the democratic platform and speakers. Timid republicans, on the other hand, affect to sneer at this epigrammatic phrasing of the issue, and protest that the McKinley policy is not imperial. But there are republicans who possess the full courage of their convictions, and who, having no purpose to serve in trying to befog the issue, speak out boldly. One of these is Franklin H. Giddings. He is professor of sociology in Columbia college, New York, and he speaks through a book which the Macmillans publish. Prof. Giddings makes no wry faces over the alternative of "republic or empire," but comes out flatly for republic and empire. His book contains an undisguised plea for American imperialism.

In this book, entitled "Democracy and Empire," Prof. Giddings argues that these two antagonistic forms of government are quite compatible. There is no fear on his part that we cannot exist half republic and half empire. Had he written in Lincoln's day it is altogether probable, judging the probabilities by the spirit of his book, that he would have foreseen no dangers to a nation half free and half slave. In fact he regards imperialism for America as inevitable, and opposition to it as "probably as futile as opposition to the trade wind or the storm." It is not with concern that he says this. He puts it forward as a reason for falling into line. His philosophy, in other words, is simply an elaboration of President McKinley's fatalistic epigram. He teaches that destiny determines duty, and he believes that it is our destiny to be an imperial republic.

Prof. Giddings's hypothesis is distinctively atheistic. We do not mean by that that Prof. Giddings is an atheist. For all we know to the contrary he attends church services with the regularity of a deacon, and adores pietistic fetiches with the devotion of a pagan. He may even be profoundly religious in his personal life. But his social philosophy is the philosophy of atheism. The hypothesis we have mentioned assumes that precisely such blind forces

as wind and storm hold sovereign sway in social life. It entirely ignores the moral forces which are as capable of checking or diverting evil tendencies in society as intellectual forces are of avoiding the dangers of the storm and making the wind an agency of service instead of destruction.

That there is a tendency to evil in the social world is true. Consequently there may be the tendency to imperialism that Prof. Giddings points out. But that these evil tendencies in society cannot be resisted or diverted by moral agencies and influences is not true. All evil tendencies in society are results of the influence upon it of evil choices made by individuals; and they may be diverted or subdued by the counteracting influence of righteous choices by individuals. It is thus within the power of every one to affect in some degree the trend of social development. According as he decides for or against the right, whenever his community comes to judgment upon a moral issue, so does he help to make its future. These decisions are the determining factors of history.

It is not a "good God, bad devil" world, this in which we live. There is no duality of person or force—good and bad—in eternal conflict. Neither is there a solitary beneficent person or force that instigates evil in order to produce good. This great conflict between good and evil in which we are floundering, is an unavoidable product of the individual faculty of choosing between good and evil—the moral affirmative and the moral negative, moral harmony and moral discord—with which man is endowed, and without which he could not be man. Out of that struggle so produced comes the great social force or tendency in social life which we recognize as evil and personify as the devil. Its development may be readily observed by following in thought the story of a human life.

Men at birth are wholly selfish. They care for nothing but self-gratification. With advancing maturity, this absorbing self-love gives way in greater or less degree to what in appearance if not in fact is love for others. The grown man, unlike the sucking babe or the toddling child, considers in some measure the com-

fort of his fellows even at the cost of discomfort to himself. He may do so merely because experience has taught him the wisdom, as matter of pure selfishness, of taking others into account; or he may do it because the inspiration of love has touched his heart and opened his understanding to a realization of the beneficent law of moral righteousness, which is so superbly phrased in the golden rule. But whichever may be his motive, selfishness will not be wholly expelled from his nature. In the one case it won't be even modified. Whoever is altruistic merely because experience or observation has taught him that it pays, is essentially as selfish as an Ishmaelite. In the other case, selfishness remains in degree. No man ever becomes so completely at one with justice, so perfectly in harmony with moral law, as to escape a daily battle between his righteous purposes and his selfish inclinations. There are, therefore, innumerable individual decisions against righteousness.

In consequence of these individual decisions against righteousness in social concerns, there is an evil force in the social world. It consists in the spontaneous cooperation of individual selfishnesses. This is the force that makes for imperialism in all its forms. It is the force that supports aristocracy, plutocracy, oligarchies and boss-ships. It is the force that maintains militarism and monopolies, and every other mode of selfish mastery by man over man. It is the force that once degraded Rome from republic to empire and brought on the dark ages, and that threatens now to make history repeat itself with the American republic in the place of the Roman. And this is the force which Prof. Giddings regards as inevitable and irresistible.

It is, indeed, inevitable. But it is not irresistible. In so far as individual men, in their social or public relations, choose the right for its own sake, evil social forces are resisted. When those forces prevail, it is because the social conscience is weak. Slavery cannot live a minute in a community where the dominant sentiment is truly vitalized by the spirit of human liberty. Imperialism could not raise its head if public opinion were inspired by the golden rule.

Militarism would be an abhorrent spectre if the common conscience held human life sacred. Against devotion to the right because it is right, evil tendencies in society are important. And so tremendous is the expansive power of this righteous force that even a little of it accomplishes mighty things. The righteousness of only ten righteous men would have saved Gomorrah from destruction.

NEWS

The situation in China, which at our last report was described as somewhat chaotic, remains virtually unchanged. Military operations have apparently subsided, and there has been an entire absence of any trustworthy news since the 21st or 22d, when Mr. Conger sent the message quoted in the next paragraph.

Preceding Mr. Conger's message various news reports were received confirmatory of our account of last week which described the relief of the legations, the flight of the imperial family, and the subsequent attack of the allies upon the forbidden city in Peking. Mr. Conger's message, although not dated at Peking, left there probably as late as the 22d, but was not received at Washington until the 27th. It is as follows:

No important movements since last dispatch. Military is trying to restore order. No representative of the Chinese government encountered yet. Several ministers of the tsung-li-yamen reported in the city, and are expected to appear soon. Generals decide not to enter into imperial palace, believing it practically vacant. Two thousand Germans arrived to-day.

The proposals for peace, made by Li Hung Chang in behalf of China, immediately after the relief of the Peking legations and reported in last week's issue on page 313, were replied to by the American state department in the following note, published on the 23d:

Memorandum in response to the Chinese minister's communication of cablegrams from Viceroy Earl Li Hung Chang, dated August 19 and 21, proposing the immediate cessation of hostilities and the appointment of an envoy to conduct negotiations, received at the department of state August 20 and 21, 1900. While the condition set forth in the memorandum delivered to the Chinese minister August

12 has not been fulfilled and the powers have been compelled to rescue their ministers by force of arms unaided by the Chinese government, still this government is ready to welcome any overtures for a truce, and invites the other powers to join when security is established in the Chinese capital and the Chinese government shows its ability and willingness to make on its part an effective suspension of hostilities there and elsewhere in China. When this is done, and we hope it will be done promptly, the United States will be prepared to appoint a representative to join with the representatives of other similarly interested powers and of the authoritative and responsible government of the Chinese empire to attain the ends declared in our circular to the powers of July 3, 1900.

The circular referred to in the foregoing communication as having been issued July 3, 1900, was reported in these columns at the time on page 199. Since the publication of the above reply no word has been received from Li Hung Chang.

Of the other powers, Japan has replied to Li Hung Chang in the same vein as the United States, but Germany has refused to recognize his authority to represent China in peace negotiations. Russia, on the other hand, strange as it must appear in the face of previous reports, seems to have taken a stand for immediate peace. She has sent a note to all the powers urging them to withdraw their troops from Peking and to accept Li Hung Chang as the representative of China in peace negotiations. This note was considered at a cabinet meeting at Washington on the 29th. The meeting was secret and its proceedings have not been authoritatively divulged, but the press reports aver that a favorable reply to Russia's note was formulated.

The subsidence of fighting in China has been followed by greater military activity in the Transvaal. By our last week's report (page 313) it will be seen that the Boers then had two armies—one, under DeWet, operating to the west of Pretoria, and the other, under Botha, established in the region of Barberton near the eastern frontier. From DeWet's force there is but little news beyond a dubious rumor that it has dispersed. He seems, however, to have attempted to cross the railroad north of Pretoria with a view to joining Botha, and to have been driven back by Baden-Powell after a day's fighting on the 23d near Pienaar's station. The heavy fight-

ing occurred in the east, where Botha commands the Boers. This is under the immediate direction of Lord Roberts himself, who has established headquarters at Wonderfontein, on the railroad between Pretoria and Lourenso Marques. On the 21st the British general, Buller, had fought his way as far north as Belfast, which is on the railroad a short distance east of Wonderfontein. Two of his companies, drawn into ambush on the 23d, suffered severely. The British advance had extended on the 24th as far as Belfast, in the neighborhood of which it engaged the Boers on the 24th, the 25th, the 26th and the 27th. Lord Roberts reported on the 27th that his movements were "slow on account of the extent and nature of the country." Dalmanutha, the next station east of Belfast, was taken by the British on the 27th, and on the 28th, after heavy fighting at Machadodorp, the next most easterly station, the Boer lines were broken and they fell farther back. Buller entered Machadodorp in the afternoon of the 28th.

It now appears that the Orange Free State has not been freed of Boer forces. A body under Gen. Olivier made an attack on the 26th from three sides upon Winburg, the terminal station of the branch line running east from the main line of railroad at Smal-deel, which is about midway between Bloemfontein and Kronstad. The attack was beaten back by the British, and Gen. Olivier and three of his sons fell into their hands. It was Gen. Olivier who conducted the retreat from Wepener (page 41) along the eastern border of the Orange Free State.

From the Philippines we have nothing to report this week but American casualties. Since July 1, 1898, inclusive of all current official reports given out in detail at Washington to August 30, 1900, these casualties are as follows:

Deaths to May 16, 1900 (see page 91	1,847
Killed reported since May 16, 1900.	48
Deaths from wounds, disease and accidents reported since May 16, 1900	366
Total deaths since July 1, 1898.....	2,261
Wounded	2,220
Captured	10
Total casualties since July 1, 1898..	4,491
Total casualties reported last week	4,458
Total deaths reported last week..	2,228