

position to the American conquest, and potent enough to put an end to the war.

In answer to a criticism by Bolton Hall, the Challenge, of Los Angeles, an aggressive and breezy socialist paper, undertakes to explain the American export balance in harmony with the theory that it is favorable. This export balance is offset, says the Challenge, by a solvent credit. That is, if we understand the assertion, foreign countries owe this country to the amount at least of our export balance. We should be glad to have our California contemporary produce some evidence in support of that assertion. That America has recently bought a few millions of foreign bonds, as the Challenge also asserts, is true; but it has bought nothing like \$486,290,015, the export balance for the first eight months of the present fiscal year, to say nothing of the export balance of some \$3,000,000,000 which has been heaped up since the foundation of the government. Neither is there any evidence that it has a solvent credit of any other kind for anything like either sum. Our stock exchanges are virtually bare of foreign securities, yet American securities are regularly dealt in upon foreign exchanges. Our land is extensively owned abroad, yet but little foreign land is owned here. It would seem, therefore, that a general liquidation of international interests would bring us out not with a credit but heavily in debt, notwithstanding our much-vaunted accumulation of export balances. If this inference is faulty, we shall be obliged to the Challenge, or to anyone else, for a statement of facts or a reference to proof that may reasonably discredit it.

There is a familiar trick of parliamentary tactics which plays upon the disposition of good natured and thoughtless folks—"optimists" they would call themselves—to vote always in the affirmative. Whenever the tricky tactician's side of a question is presented in negative form, he

maneuvers to get it into affirmative form by moving an amendment which presents substantially the same issue. For example: It is moved that ten dollars be appropriated to such and such a purpose. This presents an affirmation to which the tactician is opposed. He knows, however, that there are "optimists" who will vote for it just because they instinctively vote in the affirmative whenever they don't know what else to do. So he moves an amendment that such and such a purpose be excluded from the list of appropriations. As the amendment is voted on before the main question he thereby secures the support of all the "optimists" present. In this there is a moral.

The happy-go-lucky species of "optimist" who falls into that parliamentary trap makes the welkin ring in these days with his admonitions about the president's policy of imperialism. We are warned against the pessimism of opposing that policy. A favorite maxim of these optimists is this: "Affirmation is life; negation is death." That maxim deserves attention. The first important thing about it is the fact that it is true. The second is the fact that happy-go-lucky optimists make this truth their falsehood. They cling to "the letter which killeth," utterly forgetting "the spirit which giveth life."

While it is true that affirmation of essence is life and that negation of essence is death, it is not necessarily true that affirmation in form is life or that negation in form is death. For truth may be stated in negative form and error may be stated in affirmative form. When error is so stated, affirmation of essence is of necessity formally negative. For illustration, the republican party in its origin was in form a party of negation. It had but two doctrines, and both were what would now be slangily called "antis." They were "anti-slavery" and "anti-polygamy." Yet the republican party was then essentially not a party of negation, but a party of

affirmation. It was the party of life though it held the negative side of the issue of the day; and the democratic party, though it held the affirmative side, was then the party of death. This instance should teach happy-go-lucky optimists how important it is to get at the essence of things and not be satisfied with word-juggling. After a little intelligent reflection they might conclude that there is more wholesome affirmation in many negative forms than they had supposed.

By word-juggling, all the opposition to falsity and evil that has given life to the world could be condemned as hopelessly pessimistic—as negations implying death. By this juggling error could always be transformed into truth, if mere verbal affirmation is truth. Suppose one should assert that there is a personal devil superior to God. If that were affirmation, would negation be death? Would it be deadly negation to deny the affirmation that the earth is larger than the sun, or that a dog is a man, or that theft is righteous? Clearly not. What here purport to be affirmations of truth are in fact affirmations of error. For that reason they are in their essence negations. To negative them is, therefore, not negation; in spite of its negative form it is essentially affirmation. This is true of the whole brood of negations in affirmative forms that are generally identified as McKinleyism, or Hannaism, or plutocracy or imperialism. Imperialism is not affirmation because it has an affirmative form. When power goes wrong it always assumes affirmative forms. Neither is anti-imperialism negation because it has a negative form. Resistance to wrong must of necessity be negative in its forms. The question in this as in all issues of affirmation and negation is not what the form may be, but what the essence is. If imperialism is essentially right, then opposition to it is negation and consequently death. But if it is essentially wrong, yet advances in affirmative forms, then opposition to it