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When a man calls himself conservative, he should explain what manner of things he wishes to conserve. If the good that has come down to us from the past, he may be a useful citizen; but if the evil also, then he is a bad citizen.

Much ado has been made by some of the patriotic newspapers over the discovery that several typical American children who were celebrating the Fourth of July in New York with fireworks were unable to tell why the day is celebrated. But the children are wise. Why should American children bother about the original reasons for celebrating the Fourth of July, when a majority of American voters have decided that those reasons are obsolete?

An ex-army officer, a graduate of West Point, who had pleaded guilty to a crime before Recorder Goff, of New York, sued for mercy on the ground that he had acquired the morphine habit, which so affected his brain at times as to make him unable to distinguish right from wrong. Recorder Goff scouted the excuse. But that only shows how unfamiliar—or, maybe, unsympathetic—the recorder is with modern philosophy. Almost any atheistic college professor could inform him that there is no such thing as right and wrong to be distinguished—that ethical questions are questions not of right or wrong, but of better or worse. Perhaps the army officer made a mistake in attributing his obliquity to the morphine habit. He might with greater

effect have referred it to his college education.

If the Massachusetts prosecutors of the Irish World are not supported by law, they must be a set of fools; if they are supported by law, then they are fools none the less, and the law, in the language of Dickens's beadle, "is an ass." Of the propriety of prohibiting desecrating uses of the American flag there should be no question. As the symbol of American ideals it demands this protection. Would that it were possible to protect it from the desecrating usage to which it is subjected in the Philippines as a symbol of foreign conquest and destruction to little republics. But there is no misuse of the flag in printing in a newspaper the cartoon for which the Irish World has been suppressed. That cartoon represented the flag as bearing this inscription: "This flag for liberty, equality, independence, justice and fraternity, if congress or the president so will." To paint that inscription, or, indeed, any other criticism, upon the flag itself, and unfurl it, might warrant a prosecution for desecration; but it is a different matter to make such a newspaper cartoon the excuse for suppressing the newspaper publishing it. Evidently, this action against the Irish World is prompted much less by respect for the flag than by hostility to free newspaper criticism of the imperial policy.

If the action of the Colorado State Medical association in advising the judicial murder of imbecile infants, fairly indicates the degree of sacredness in which Colorado physicians hold human life, it would be only prudent for Colorado invalids to manage in some way to keep out of the doctors' hands. No reason can be given for putting imbecile infants out of the way that would not apply in

principle to imbecile adults, to the hopelessly insane, and to old people in dotage. Having gone that far, the next step would be easy. Dependent incurables of all kinds could then be added to the schedules of persons to be killed for the social good. And as this "scientific" process of elimination went on improving, the Colorado Medical association might reasonably hope to celebrate the day when any man who could not produce a physician's certificate of sound mind and body would be liable to the death penalty. It would then be time for "scientific" clegymen to come forward with a proposition to add to the schedules all who could not produce certificates of church membership. Thus might mankind be redeemed from sickness and sin. With the physically weak and the morally lax eliminated, heredity would be free to build up a race of gigantic saints!

The second step in Mayor Johnson's tax agitation in Ohio has been successfully taken. Every point he had chosen as available for the initial tax fight in the state was accepted by the democratic convention at Columbus on the 10th and inserted in the platform. This triumph, and under the circumstances it was a triumph of no ordinary magnitude, was not achieved easily. The convention was under the domination of McLean, assisted by reactionary leaders who bolted the national ticket in 1896 and are now bent on so reorganizing the democratic party as to make it again an efficient ally of the republicans. McLean's interest in politics is frankly for himself, and his personal supporters opposed the Johnson tax reform with all their might. Kilbourne, the gubernational nominee, was chiefly concerned in reducing friction so as to strengthen himself in the campaign, and he and his support-

ers were hostile in spirit and tactfully indifferent in action, damning the Johnson movement with such faint encouragement as he thought necessary to keep the Johnson men out of bad humor toward himself. Then the gold fanatics, those McKinley democrats like Harmon, a railroad attorney, and Ingalls, a railroad president, were in the convention, by grace of McLean's faction, representing hostility not only to Bryan, but also to the equitable taxation of railroads in Ohio. These elements were thought to be so powerful that the republican press, and that part of the "democratic" press which is owned by republicans, were full of assurances up almost to the assembling of the convention, that Johnson and his tax reforms would be unceremoniously suppressed. But they were mistaken. Shrewd management on the part of Johnson's supporters—he himself being kept away by the recent death of his brother and his own illness—secured the insertion in the platform of a specific demand for the four principal reforms of the Cuyahoga county platform (see pp 137-38), namely: No municipal franchises without a referendum; free passes from railroads to public officers adequate ground for vacating the office; official visitation of public service corporations for the purpose of making public the true value of their franchises; railroads and other corporations possessing public franchises to be assessed for taxation in the same proportion as farms and other real estate. By this success Johnson and his friends scored a complete victory over the reactionaries upon the only points in which he had prepared for any part in this year's campaign in Ohio. His friends had renounced every purpose of seeking nominations for their section or of influencing the convention in any way except upon the subject of state taxation as a sequel to the tax agitation in Cleveland. McLean's faction offered them places on the ticket by way of compromise, but all such offers they refused. They had but one object in view. That was

to secure a thorough agitation of the tax question throughout the state. They held steadily to that purpose, and in spite of the fact that this was a McLean convention, in spite of the reactionaries who sought to conserve railroad interests, in spite of the not unnatural lukewarmness of the gubernational candidate himself, they won their point.

But McLean and his reactionaries scored a success in every other important respect. It is true that Charles P. Salen, who is Johnson's director of public works and his leading political lieutenant, was temporary chairman; but that had been arranged long before as a sort of salve, which the state committee gave to the Johnson people for refusing to hold the convention in Cleveland. It is also true that Salen was made permanent chairman; but that came about through the superior alertness of the Cuyahoga county delegation. It secured action by the committee of permanent organization when only 13 out of the 21 members were present; and the McLean faction dared not invite friction by reversing this action in the committee or overriding the report in the convention. All the important points, we repeat, except the Johnson tax agitation plan, were won by McLean and his associated reactionaries.

They kept out of the platform all mention of the national platform of the party, and they caused the convention to commit the unpardonable rudeness and inconceivable folly of ignoring the national candidate of the party, who, in two campaigns, and in spite of the secret treachery or open opposition of themselves and such as they, proved his popularity beyond reasonable cavil. At the election in 1896, when these reorganizers "bolted," Mr. Bryan polled a larger proportion of the popular vote than President Cleveland had polled when elected four years before, and within a shade of as large a proportion of the Ohio vote. Yet this McLean convention of Ohio ignores him and both the

Chicago and the Kansas City platforms upon which he ran, and the reactionaries boast of it. They thus superciliously challenge every Ohio democrat, who respects Mr. Bryan or sympathizes with his views, to stay away from the polls next fall.

If this unutterable folly, on the part of the anti-Bryan and pro-corporation magnates of the McLean convention, does not defeat Mr. Kilbourne, we miss our guess. In the nature of things human, it must be a heavy handicap. The republican papers see that, and are prompt in their congratulations. They heartily commend the convention for its wisdom in throwing over Bryan and Bryanism. Why? What other reason could there be than that this makes the situation more promising and comfortable for the republican party and its candidates? And they are probably right. In the face of that contemptuous treatment of the national platform and the national candidate, only one or both of two influences can save Mr. Kilbourne from disastrous defeat. Should the McKinley democrats bring to him as much support as their fatuity (which is a milder word than treachery) drives away, then he may win. But no such contingency is probable. Or, he may win if Johnson's support and the popularity of Johnson's tax agitation prove sufficient to hold in line the Bryan men whom McLean's convention has insultingly dismissed. The latter appears now to be the only hope for Kilbourne.

The evident failure of the Detroit social and political conference is not fairly attributable to faulty management. It is due to the faulty nature of the thing itself. When this conference met for the first time, two years ago, it gave some promise of some success. But no success was really in it. The failure of the second meeting, that of this summer, merely signaled the failure, long ago assured, of the whole movement. It be-