

The Public

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A valued correspondent asks us to kindly explain how an honest poor man, of fair average intelligence, can justify himself for intending to vote for Mr. McKinley again.

There is no explanation. The honest poor man himself couldn't furnish one.

It is a noticeable fact that the gold democrats who declare for McKinley, putting forward the danger of free silver at 16 to 1 as their excuse, are unable to quite repress their imperialistic inclinations. They thus unconsciously show that with them as with everybody else, the paramount issue of this campaign is imperialism.

"The wheat crop is unusually bountiful in Kansas and a flat failure in South Dakota," observes the Boulder (Mont.) Sentinel; "but it's dollars to doughnuts that the republican orators will point out that the Kansas crop is due to republican efforts and the South Dakota famine to impending democratic peril." That is precisely the drift of the republican prosperity argument.

It was stated not long ago that Mr. Hanna's best work in the coming campaign would consist in financially strengthening doubtful republican papers and in buying over purchasable democratic papers. Plausibility is given to this story by the action of the Los Angeles Herald, which has recently changed from the democratic to the republican side of the political fence.

In the labor department of the Philadelphia North American, which

is conducted by Henry George, Jr., with excellent judgment and in a manner to attract and hold the interest of readers, Mr. George tells in a recent issue what the truth is about the stripping of women during the recent street car strike in St. Louis. Mr. George personally investigated the strike while it was in progress. Of this stripping of women which plutocratic papers have made much of, he says that it—

was not the work of any of the strikers or any of their immediate friends, so far as I can learn. It was not the work of men at all, but of women, and of those women living in the part of South St. Louis of dense population and various nationalities—in the poorer quarters, where strong feeling produces fierce emotions.

A steady democratic hand is at the editorial helm of the Helena (Mont.) Independent. This is evident from the way the Independent treats the question of negro emancipation—a severe test for the ordinary democratic paper. Replying to the intimation of a contemporary that the American negro owes a debt to his emancipators, the Independent wisely and truly says:

The Afro-American incurred no debt when he was freed from slavery in accordance with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. It was the white man who owed a debt to the negro for having kept him in slavery.

An article descriptive of the home life of the Roosevelts, which has been going the rounds of the press, represents Mrs. Roosevelt as saying:

"I tell my children that they must not maim or kill any living thing, no matter how small, maliciously."

"Snakes?" queried a visitor.
"I can't get my boys to kill a snake, they are so fond of them. The other day they caught a big black one and put him in the croquet box, thinking they would kill him some other time. But the time never came, of course,

and after a week they opened the box and let him go with many regrets."

One cannot help wondering how such humanitarian principles can be reconciled with the "strenuous life" advocated by Mrs. Roosevelt's husband. Surely the life of a Filipino struggling for liberty ought to be as sacred as the life of a snake.

The imperial edicts regarding the present disturbance in China, refer to the attack of the European powers upon the forts at Taku as an act of war. This is a true complaint. Should the present situation develop into a terrible war—and terrible it will be if it comes—that war will date from the attack upon the Taku forts, made on the 16th of last June by the European naval squadrons. The Christian nations and not the heathen empire will be in the position of aggressor. They decided, so our own Rear Admiral Kempff officially reports, that "it was necessary to take possession of the Taku forts," and they served upon the commandant and upon the viceroy of Tientsin a notice, in the nature of an ultimatum, fixing an hour when they would do so. The forts did not wait for the actual attack, for which the squadrons took position early in the evening of June 16, but soon after midnight and one hour before the expiration of the ultimatum, opened fire. That unwarranted ultimatum began the war. It is gratifying in these circumstances to be able to congratulate Rear Admiral Kempff, and the United States which he represented, upon his refusal to act with the other naval commanders. He informed them at the outset that he was not authorized to initiate any act of war with a country with which his country was at peace, and he kept his vessels out of the fight. If, then, there should be a war the United States will be

guiltless at least of having helped start it. And for this they are indebted to Rear Admiral Kempff. He could have involved us as easily as "rolling off a log" and made a glorious jingo reputation by it besides. But he chose, even at the risk of being sneered at as a "little American" by his ambitious and strenuous countrymen, to respect the rights of the nation in whose waters his vessels lay. The true courage and true patriotism of this naval officer are worthy of grateful remembrance.

Mr. Bryan's statement of his views on the Chinese question is a model of statesmanlike exposition. There is great relief in turning to it from the rhetorical trap doors of McKinley's pronouncements on public affairs. Mr. Bryan builds no misleading phrases. There is nothing in his statement to compare with "criminal aggression," or "plain duty," but what he says has in it the ring of sincerity. And not only does it ring true, but it exhibits the insight of a statesman and displays the force of a natural leader. Realizing that the threats of European nations to dismember China would naturally arouse among the Chinese a feeling of hostility to foreigners, Mr. Bryan has no stomach for a policy of vengeance against them, but urges a policy of justice and fair dealing. This he believes will not only set an example to other nations "but will give to our citizens residing in China the best promise of security." He would endeavor, if it appears that the Chinese government is acting in good faith, to secure suitable punishment of the guilty Chinese and reparation and indemnity for Americans who have suffered. Should it appear, however, that the Chinese government has not acted in good faith, he would advise no hasty measures of redress in cooperation with other powers, but would refer the matter to congress, through which alone the American people can speak. With reference to trading and proselyting in China, Mr. Bryan throws out a hint which hon-

est merchants and devoted missionaries will not object to considering. He says:

It will be better for our merchants to have it known that they seek trade only when trade is mutually advantageous. It will be better for our missionaries to have it known that they are preaching the gospel of love and are not the forerunners of fleets and armies.

Admiral Dewey is out in a denial of the interview which one of Aguinaldo's generals, in a letter to Senator Pettigrew, recites as having occurred between him and Dewey at Hong-Kong a few days before the battle of Manila bay, and in which he says Dewey promised the Filipinos independence. Characterizing the interview as a "tissue of falsehoods," the admiral specifically denies that he gave any such promise. Had he stopped here, his word would have been enough, so far as that particular interview is concerned. But Admiral Dewey goes on until he seriously discredits himself as a witness. He says, referring to the time of the battle of Manila bay, that the Filipinos—

had absolutely no thought then of independence. That was an afterthought of their leaders during the interim between the smashing of the Spanish fleet and the arrival of the United States troops.

This assertion is positively contradicted by American official documents, which show that the Filipino leaders were not only thinking about independence but were openly working for it before the smashing of the Spanish fleet. And the circumstances are such as to indicate that Admiral Dewey must know the fact.

In an official dispatch of April 30, 1898, printed on page 342 of "Senate Document 62" of the third session of the Fifty-fifth congress, the American consul at Singapore reported that at his interview with Aguinaldo prior to the latter's arrangement to go with Admiral Dewey to Manila, at Dewey's request, Aguinaldo had—

further stated that he hoped the United States would assume protec-

tion of the Philippines for at least long enough to allow the inhabitants to establish a government of their own.

That was before the smashing of the Spanish fleet. Besides this, there was sent to the Philippines a proclamation by the Filipino leaders in Hong-Kong. It was sent in advance of the sailing of Admiral Dewey's squadron from Hong-Kong to Manila, and of course before the smashing of the Spanish fleet. The purpose was to warn the Filipinos not to oppose the Americans when they should arrive, but to rally to their support as friends and liberators. It was forwarded to the American secretary of state by the American consul at Singapore. It must be well known to Admiral Dewey. It may be found in full at page 346 of "document 62." It began in these words:

Compatriots: Divine providence is about to place independence within our reach, and in a way the most free and independent nation could hardly wish for.

Even if Admiral Dewey was ignorant of these facts at the time, which is unlikely, he must have learned them since from "document 62," which is the president's message transmitting the treaty of peace with Spain to the senate. Yet he dares to say that the idea of independence for the Filipinos was "an afterthought of their leaders during the interim between the smashing of the Spanish fleet and the arrival of the United States troops."

Quite naturally those republicans who really are republicans do not relish the thought of being called imperialists. But what else shall we call them for short if they cling to the imperialized republican party? That party is now devoted to the doctrine that the American government is empowered to rule millions of men in distant lands, without the consent of the ruled and in disregard of constitutional limitations. It demands that the flag shall never be hauled down where it has once been raised, but insists that the constitution does not follow the flag. If this is not im-