

tion of sympathy. They hooted it down. But there was no difference in spirit. Whether expressed in the derisive yells of a state convention of Mr. McKinley's thick and thin supporters at Peoria, or in his own studied phrases at the white house, the hostile spirit of administration republicans with reference to the South African war is unmistakable. What they call neutrality is British partisanship.

To say that the administration has done all for the Boer republics that it can do, short of going to war with Great Britain, is not true. It could diplomatically indicate to Great Britain in many ways that this country would not regard the destruction of the independence of those republics as a righteous thing. There would be no difficulty, for instance, in conveying to the British ministry, with entire friendliness, an intimation of the indisputable truth that such an act would tend to strengthen American prejudices against England. To be sure, our own bloody experiment of subjugation in the Philippines might cause some sentimental embarrassment, but Mr. McKinley could overcome that. The administration could go further, without giving Great Britain the slightest ground for complaint. There would be no breach of neutrality in officially receiving diplomatic representatives from the republics as from sovereign states. Of the complete sovereignty of the Orange Free State there is no dispute, and a representative from President Steyn could be received with the same unquestioned propriety as one from the queen of England. And though the sovereignty of the South African republic is disputed, it exists clearly enough to warrant the president in officially receiving its representatives without incurring any serious charge of violating neutrality. For the South African republic was a sovereign nation from 1852 until 1877. Great Britain made a conquest in 1877, but she afterward relinquished it. And though it is

true that she then made a treaty which forbade the little republic's entering into treaties without her consent, and thereby forced it technically into the class of states that are not sovereign, yet with the outbreak of the war that treaty lapsed and the republic resumed its full sovereignty. In these circumstances President McKinley could rightfully, even if not without criticism, receive representatives from the South African republic. Neither in the case of that republic nor of the Orange Free State would this be recognizing a new and rebellious government; it would be the recognition of old established independent governments. And if President McKinley so recognized them, or in any other delicate way indicated to the British ministry that the United States is out of sympathy with its declared purpose of destroying the independence of the two South African republics and, in Salisbury's language, "reducing to obedience to the queen the territories which ought never to have been released from it," that aggressive purpose would be abandoned and the war would end.

But the president has from the beginning of the war refused to recognize representatives from the South African republics in any official way. He refused to receive their envoys this very week, except as distinguished private visitors. To justify this refusal as an act of neutrality is transparently evasive. Upon principles of neutrality, representatives of the South African republic and of the Orange Free State are entitled to equal consideration with representatives from Great Britain. This they have not received. The administration has discriminated against them. It has acted in harmony with Chamberlain's theory that Great Britain has suzerainty over the Transvaal. In spirit it echoes the declaration of Lord Salisbury that the British army is "engaged in reducing to obedience to the queen the territories which ought never to have been re-

leased from it." And it thereby exhibits an animus which for domestic political reasons it would fain conceal.

Those administration republicans who complain that the Boer envoys are being entertained exclusively by critics of the administration, have the remedy in their own hands. There has been no exclusive disposition about the matter. People of all races, creeds and parties have been invited to join in welcoming these guests from South Africa, and if administration republicans choose to hold aloof, as they do, critics of the administration must go ahead with the welcome. If they did not, there would be none.

If anything in the way of absurd hysterics could outdo the hypnotic orgies of the London mob over the relief of Mafeking, the poet laureate has accomplished it. His verses on the subject would scandalize English literature if they were taken seriously. Hear what the dispatches characterize as the best stanza:

Long as the waves shall roll,  
Long as fame guards her scroll,  
And men through heart and soul  
Thrill to true glory  
Their tale from age to age  
Shall voice and verse engage,  
Swelling the splendid page  
Of England's story.

Poets might take that for a good stump speech, and spellbinders might take it for good poetry. But neither would like to accept it as an example of their own particular art, though it has some of the qualities of an inferior stump speech. The senseless jingle would pass muster, of course, in a music hall or variety show. Poor England! To think that her poet laureate should sink her so low as to point to anything in the jingo war in South Africa as swelling the page of her splendid story! That really splendid story is tarnished by all that belongs to this Rhodes-Chamberlain war. She can point to nothing in it to be proud of except her brute might. But it is something more glorious than might that gives

to England's story its majestic splendor.

A big fight against certain extortions of the ice trust has been going on in New York, in which the Journal has vigorously taken a leading part. The excitement has, of course, stimulated all sorts of suggestions for relief, and as usual most of them are frivolous propositions intended to regulate the trust by restricting it superficially. It is noticeable, however, that sentiment in favor of public ownership and operation of trusts has been expanded by the agitation. But public ownership and operation would be as undesirable and unscientific—to correctly use a very much abused term—as regulation would be futile. There is a radical difference between supplying ice and supplying water, gas or electricity, etc., to the inhabitants of a city. Water, for instance, can be supplied only through a species of highway, which makes the supplying of water of necessity a monopoly. In that case, no choice remains to the people between monopoly and competition. Their only choice being between monopolists, the common agents of the city government are preferable. These may be bad, but no city government was ever yet as bad in its indifference to public wants as private monopolists. Regarding the delivery of ice, however, the choice is not between monopolists; it is between monopoly and competition. For this business is not a monopoly necessarily. It may be as well controlled automatically by competition as the tailor's trade. What makes it a monopoly now is not the necessity of the case, as with city water supplies, but special privilege. In the case of the New York ice trust, the peculiar special privilege which makes it possible is monopoly of the docks. But for that privilege, there would be no ice trust in New York, and competition or the possibility of competition would secure the best possible and most economical service.

It is evidently intended by the administration republicans to make the

trust issue turn upon the question of a constitutional amendment giving congress full power over trusts. With that object in view the republican majority of the judiciary committee in the lower house of congress has caused the committee to adopt a proposed amendment for submission to congress and the states. Their amendment would give congress—

power to define, regulate, control, prohibit, or dissolve trusts, monopolies or combinations, whether existing in the form of a corporation or otherwise.

If there could be any doubt as to the purpose of this move the Chicago Tribune would dispel it when it comments in this wise:

The report of the judiciary committee deserves consideration from a political rather than a legislative point of view. If the republican national convention inserts in its platform an anti-trust plank which indorses the recommendations of that committee it will be impossible for the democrats when they hold their convention two weeks later to adopt a more radical programme regarding combines. If they are willing to go so far as to amend the constitution to give congress more power their plank will be a mere echo of that of the republicans. If they are not, then their plank will be the weaker one.

With one more "if," the Tribune's comment would be faultless. If, besides the other "ifs," the democrats should decide to follow Mr. Bryan's lead on the trust question, the republicans would, indeed, have a clear advantage. But they would have no advantage, on the contrary they would be put at a great disadvantage, should the democrats decide to fight trusts by attacking their causes.

There are two ways of meeting the trust issue. One is the way to which the republicans are now about to commit themselves. It is to put all power in the hands of congress, and then induce congress to adopt repressive legislation. This policy would yield no beneficial results. It would leave the trust evil worse than it found it. And instead of a benefit such an amendment as that proposed would be an everlasting curse. All the private business of the country

would be at the mercy of congress and under the control of the federal politician. We can think of only two classes of people to whom such an amendment would appeal. One is the republican politician who, without caring whether it passed or not, would find it a ready means of allaying trust agitation. The other is the socialist, who would rightly see in such an amendment the possibilities of an early nationalization of all industries. It is an amendment upon which national socialism as an evolution from trusts, could be established. Should the republicans completely commit themselves to that policy it is quite true that the democrats, if they favored the same policy, would merely echo the republicans. But it is not true that they need take a weaker position. They could adopt the second way of meeting the trust issue, which is to oppose this centralization of power utterly, to oppose all tinkering with trusts, and to demand that the monopolistic laws which make trusts possible be repealed. Let the democrats offer that kind of fight, in terms that leave no room to doubt their sincerity, and they will win the election.

Take the tin trust for an illustration of the fact that trusts rest upon monopoly. According to the staid old Journal of Commerce it controls 35 establishments in this country. There are but five independent manufacturers and 16 independent dippers, and they have to go to the trust to get their untinned plates. For the federal steel trust, the national steel trust and the tin plate trust control the billets from which untinned plates are made. This control is secured by means of the tariff on foreign plates. Precisely in that way—by a tariff to prevent foreign competition,—or by special railroad rates, or by control of natural resources, the trusts maintain their power. To leave them these advantages while trying to curb them by restrictive legislation, is like trying to prevent