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How true it is of many people who say they want good government, especially the self-styled "better element," that what they really want is their own instead of the other fellow's favorite brand of bad government.

Surely no one has forgotten the agitation for tariff protection on tin plate. It was to be for the benefit of the workingmen, you understand. Keep out foreign tin, build up American plants, give work to American workmen, pay good wages. That was the altruistic scheme. The tin men got their tariff and formed their trust—the latter outcome was not mentioned when they were prospecting for protection—and now behold! The tin plate trust demands, under threats of closing down, that the labor union accept a reduction of 25 per cent. in wages so as to enable this trust to meet the terms which the Standard Oil trust offers for a large order of tin plate. One would suppose that the workingmen might have got the cut in wages without going to the trouble of voting for a tariff on tin plate.

It is announced from Washington that President Roosevelt has ordered his cabinet to follow his example and take the stump this fall. Even poor Attorney General Knox, who has never made a political speech in his life, out of court, is required to "select some appropriate occasion for his debut, and will talk about the trusts." Imagine Knox making a public speech on trusts, and being asked questions! This is a commendable departure on Mr. Roose-

velt's part. It is candid. Heretofore, in recent years, when the President and members of his cabinet have made party speeches they have done so under cover of some reception or other, nominally as public officials and not as partisans. Mr. Roosevelt and his cabinet are to be credited with throwing off this mask and appearing without pretense as party spellbinders upon the party stump. But hold a minute. Since the foregoing lines were put in type Mr. Roosevelt has expressed his displeasure at the announcement. According to the Associated Press, these speeches will only be made upon non-partisan invitations, and while they "will be along Republican lines, so far as they may relate to politics, they will not be political speeches." Same old mask.

There is a striking fact about the call which the Russian czar makes for an anti-trust conference in Europe. The complaint is the low prices at which the American trusts sell goods in Russia. This exposes the animus of the Russian anti-trust movement. The object is to exclude American trusts from the European market. It is in line with legislation against "bounty-fed" sugar. America feeds her trusts, not with bounties, but with a protective tariff, so that they can sell dear at home and cheap abroad. This they do. Home consumers pay high prices for protected American goods, while foreigners get them for low prices. But Russia, with the common but mysterious objection to getting dear things cheap, will have none of this. Hence the European anti-trust conference.

Senator McLaurin, of South Carolina, is to be credited with unexpected sensitiveness. He declines the office which President Roosevelt of-

fers him as a reward for party treachery. It is to be regretted, however, that he declines it not because he shrinks from accepting a political reward for political treachery but because he shrinks from being criticized for doing so. When the reward was offered him, he announced his intention of accepting it. Not until criticism set in did he decline. Unfortunately for Mr. McLaurin he had already allowed the matter to go too far for his own reputation. He might have voted against his party in the Senate, as he almost habitually did on vital questions, without incurring moral censure, had he given reasons for his change of faith. But he gave no reasons. He supported the administration with votes that counted, not with speeches that explained. It was rumored at the time that President McKinley would reward him by an appointment to the bench of the Court of Claims. Senator Tillman distinctly charged it. And now President Roosevelt, who is carrying out his predecessor's bargains, has offered that very appointment. McLaurin himself told about it and said he intended to accept. But the circumstantial evidence of a bargain was too plain. He dared not face the criticism when it opened. Criticism he could stand, if it were unfounded. Guilt he could stand if it were not criticized. But the two together were more than he could bear. So he calls off the bargain after having performed his part of it.

According to the financial reports of the current month—

for some time England, Germany, and to some extent Paris, have been lending money in the American markets. Nobody can tell how much. It would require the authority of all these governments and a very microscopic examination under oath before it could be learned whether the amount is

fifty millions, as some assert, or one hundred millions, as others claim.

It is now in order for Mr. Austin, of the statistical bureau in the treasury department at Washington, to explain why the United States becomes a borrower if its excessive exports are to be accounted for by regarding it as a lender. When a nation's merchandise exports are in perennial excess of its merchandise imports, when its exports of silver also largely exceed its imports of silver, when its gold imports are but slightly in excess of its gold exports—not nearly enough to make up for the excessive exports of silver alone,—and when on top of all this it is a large borrower in the world's money markets where it ought to have an abundance of drafts for sale if excessive exporting is indeed profitable, what are we to think about our much vaunted "export trade" and our enormous "favorable balance"? It begins to look more than ever as if the "favorable balance" were an "unfavorable drain."

Mr. Cleveland's secretary of the interior, Wm. F. Vilas, of Wisconsin, sends out a clarion call to the Democratic party to make hostility to protection the national political issue. Mr. Vilas says many good things on this question. He tells us, for instance, that if we would strike down the trusts, we must aim our "stroke at the root of the poisonous tree," and that Democracy offers "the highest uplifting of individuality and of every right of the individual man, peculiarly his right to hold and enjoy all the honest fruits of his industry, brains and personal achievements;" and then he declares:

The victory to be won which alone is worth winning is the overthrow of the grand central, governing conspiracy of protection. When that "crowning mercy" shall be vouchsafed, the very purification of the nation's soul by the fires of the strife will easily enable it to subdue the lesser forms in which Satan is embodied in our national life.

All this is excellent. So is much more of the same tenor. There is no

fault to find with what Mr. Vilas says. The weakness of his clarion call is in what he doesn't say. He doesn't say what he means by this thing called "protection," which he describes as "the grand, central governing conspiracy" that gives vicious vitality to the trusts. Does he mean to kill the trusts by reducing the tariff 20 per cent. or thereabouts? If that is what he means by fighting protection, it is not strange he doesn't specify. Mr. Vilas has no ambition to shine as a comedian. Does he mean to kill the trusts by abolishing the protective tariff on trust-made goods? That would truly be a good starting point for popular education on the subject of protection; but as a legislative measure wouldn't it be like taming birds by putting salt on their tails? You must first catch your trust-made goods. Or does he mean to kill the trusts by coming down to tariffs for revenue only? Surely Mr. Vilas is hardly so simple as to suppose that the trusts would not be able to distribute such a tariff so as to make it incidentally protective, and at the first favorable opportunity to get men into Congress who would restore the protective feature in its fullness. With a tariff for revenue only, protection would never cease to be an issue.

Even if the tariff were wholly abolished and we had free trade, the trust question would not be disposed of. While protection plays a large part in making the monopolies upon which trusts rest and thrive, it is not the only factor and is very far from being the central one. What about the monopolies of terminal facilities? What about the monopolies of transportation? What about the natural monopolies, such as the Mesaba iron mines and the Connellsville coal deposits? What about the almost countless acres of land of all kinds, mining land and building land and forest land as well as farming land, which are monopolized but held idle, where by labor is made a drug in the mar-

ket? Here are obstructions to free trade which count infinitely more than tariff protection, obstructive as that is. Here are basic monopolies for trusts with which tariff protection cannot compare. Does Mr. Vilas propose an assault upon these evils when he summons the Democratic hosts to attack protection? If he does, let him say so. The Democrats have had enough of party policies expressed in weasel words and phrases.

The Richmond Times, a Democratic paper of the plutocratic breed, asks a question. We quote it:

Now, suppose in the convention of 1904 a good democratic platform is formulated and adopted in which the party commits itself to sound money, or, if you please, to the gold standard, and nominates David B. Hill or Grover Cleveland for the presidency. Under these conditions will Mr. Bryan support the ticket?

Everybody ought to be well enough acquainted with Mr. Bryan's character by this time to know that he would not remain as Hill said he did—"a Democrat still—very still,"—and that if he bolted, as Cleveland did boldly and Hill otherwise, he would not afterwards want to come back and boss the party he had helped defeat, as both Hill and Cleveland do. Should Bryan follow the example set by Hill and Cleveland, and abandon the Democratic party, he would have followers enough to be under no temptation to try to get back into it again.

Senator Hanna and his political and monopoly satellites have managed to get his home city of Cleveland into a picturesque tangle. He began by backing legal proceedings to declare unconstitutional the charter of the city which his own party had framed and under which his own party had flourished. Not until a Democratic mayor with democratic principles had got into office and proceeded to administer the law equitably against Mr. Hanna's special privileges, did that distinguished senator find it convenient to attack the constitutionality of the Republican charter of Cleveland. When