

# The Public

Third Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1900.

Number 140.

**LOUIS F. POST, Editor.**

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

Truth loses her battles but wins her wars.

A "Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln league" has been formed at Columbus, O. It is composed of democratic democrats and is intended to enable them to gain control of the local machinery of the democratic party for the purpose of holding it to democratic principles. This is a movement that should be taken up throughout the country. By such means alone can the efforts of reactionary reorganizers be frustrated.

One of the sweet morsels with which the anti-Bryan press of both parties have regaled their readers since election has been the assertion that Bryan ran behind his ticket in his own state. But such satisfaction as they may have derived from their inference that he is unpopular at home they must henceforth forego. The official vote of Nebraska gives Bryan 114,013 and the candidate for governor 113,018. Instead, therefore, of running behind his ticket in Nebraska, Bryan ran ahead of it by 995 votes.

Dun's Review reports 850 failures for November, with liabilities aggregating \$12,300,316. This is 36 less than were reported for November of last year, when, however, liabilities were only \$8,046,848; but it is 68 more, and the liabilities are \$4,253,468 greater, than for October of the present year. That does not look like increasing prosperity. But there is a brighter side to the picture. Standard Oil stock has risen during the

year from \$475 a share to \$810, thus adding to the wealth of John D. Rockefeller, in this item alone, \$144,050,000.

When the "white earth" lands, of Minnesota, recently acquired by the government from the Indians, were opened for settlement at Crookston on the 4th, there was a pell mell rush of applicants—one of those disgraceful scrambles which occur at every opening for settlement of public lands. On the first day 160 persons filed applications. These exhibitions indicate an intense land hunger. They also indicate a great land scarcity. Yet it is notorious that unused land in the United States is abundant. Is not the anomaly worthy of conscientious consideration? Why this ravenous land hunger when there is so much unused land?

Great Britain is beginning to gather the fruit of her rashly unrighteous war in South Africa. It is of many kinds, but the most unpalatable must be the realization that her military prestige is gone. Gen. Mercier would not have said prior to the Transvaal war what he said this week in the French senate. He would not have contemplated the possibility of invading England with a French army. But that possibility he dared defend without reserve when able to say as he did that "the Transvaal war has shown that the British army, although brave, is not equal to the task which England expected it to perform."

The French chamber of deputies threw aside a great opportunity when in expressing sympathy for the Transvaal it rejected the resolution proposed by the socialist deputy Fourniere and adopted that of Cochin. The Cochin resolution has created

an impression that the animus of the chamber was not so much friendliness toward the Transvaal as hostility to England. Fourniere's would have left no such impression. It was directed not against Englishmen indiscriminately, but against those anti-democratic Englishmen who have driven England headlong into her career of conquest and subjugation. This resolution, while applauding "the brave defenders of the South African republics," expressed "sympathy for the English democracy." That is the true attitude. The English democracy have exhibited a moral courage in this crisis of British history which is not even second to the physical courage displayed by the Boers.

President McKinley's message to the expiring congress, which is to see the old century out and the new one in, is characteristic in all respects but one. Its story of the Chinese complications is clear and concise, orderly in arrangement, forcible in expression, and polished in form. No more direct and interesting account of the matter has appeared in print. But the remainder of the message, like all preceding state papers from Mr. McKinley's pen, is a jumble of unarranged material. If any art at all has been used in massing this material, it is the art of minimizing important things and emphasizing trifles so as to confuse and mislead.

In respect to its recommendations, the message throughout has the peculiar quality of seeming upon cursory reading to be positive but of proving upon examination to be ambiguous and slippery. An example of this characteristic quality is furnished in that part of the message which deals with lynching. Here is a strong denunciation of lynching,

in general terms, to which Mr. McKinley's negro supporters may point with satisfaction, as if it were written in behalf of their race. But as its context is an international matter growing out of the lynching of Italian subjects, those of Mr. McKinley's white supporters who believe in lynching negroes may reasonably assume that the president's condemnation of lynching has only a remote and altogether academic bearing upon negro lynchings. If they do, they cannot be confronted with any more pointed passage. Except for this ambiguous allusion there is not in the whole message the slightest recognition of the appeals of American negroes to the president to exert a moral influence in their behalf by condemning in his message the horrible lynchings of negroes accused of crime. The subject has been so deftly arranged in the message as to make it appear to careless readers that the president boldly condemns negro lynchings, when in fact he does not touch that question at all. A similar instance of slipperiness is afforded by the passage on trusts. His friends who are opposed to trusts may be comforted by it. Those who favor them will certainly not be disturbed. He is on both sides or either, according to the point of view. But bolder than these instances is his solemn indorsement of both bimetalism and the gold standard. "It will be the duty," he says, "as I am sure it will be the disposition of the congress, to provide whatever further legislation is needed to insure the continued parity, under all conditions, between our two forms of metallic money, silver and gold." This solicitude for "two forms of metallic money" is calculated to commend Mr. McKinley to the Rocky mountain miners as a possible friend, while the reference to further legislation in support of the "parity under all conditions" is enough under the circumstances to retain the confidence of gold standard men. Yet the paragraph affords no basis whatever for

the confidence of either. Like so much else in Mr. McKinley's message, it seems, upon cursory reading, to have a meaning one way or another according to the reader's predilection, but upon careful reading in connection with the context and circumstances, it has no meaning at all. To believe that it was intended to have puts a strain upon credulity.

It has been suggested that the message might be summarized as a proposition, with reference to China, "to fall in with the wishes of the European powers and hope for the best," and with reference to the Philippines, "to establish between this country and them the relation that exists between Great Britain and India." That summary would not be quite comprehensive, but allowance being made for the fact that the Chinese question is still involved in diplomacy, neither would it be far out of the way. Mr. McKinley may have been constrained for diplomatic reasons to assume a willingness to defer to the other powers. This would justify the spirit of the message, which is certainly one of deference to them. But no question of diplomacy has constrained him in his attitude toward the Philippine situation, and it is a perfectly fair interpretation of his message to say that he wants this country to be to the Philippines what Great Britain is to India. It is true that he gives to his message an air of deference to the wishes of congress, as if the Philippine matter were their affair and he only their agent, but the history of the negotiation of the Philippine treaty makes that air appear like an absurd affectation. It was Mr. McKinley who negotiated the treaty. It was he who insisted upon purchasing the Philippines. It was he who required that they should be not "relinquished" like Cuba, but "ceded" as property. It was he who used all the power and influence of his office to secure the ratification of the treaty as he had made it. Congress has been subject to him, not he to congress, through-

out the whole affair. The Philippine policy is his policy. And more plainly than ever before does it appear from this message that his policy is being modeled upon the colonial policy of Great Britain. He would make of the Philippines an India for the United States.

In calling the Filipinos "wards of the nation," Mr. McKinley drops into one of those striking phrases of which a considerable collection are now unpleasantly associated with the history of his administration. To "criminal aggression," "plain duty," and "benevolent assimilation," is now to be added "wards of the nation." The phrase does not recall happy recollections. It was applied originally to the Indian tribes. They were the first wards of our nation, and in consequence they are now almost extinct. Is that to be the fate of our new wards? Or have we gained experience in guardianship, from which the Filipinos are to profit?

What is of most serious concern in this connection, however, is the assurance with which Mr. McKinley proclaims that some of the great principles which we have found essential to liberty are to be transplanted to the Philippines. He quotes them from our constitution. But he does not quote all, nor does he apply them to the Philippines because they are in the constitution. He quotes and applies at his own discretion. He expects congress to quote and apply at its discretion. He acknowledges no binding law in the matter. But if he can do this, if the present congress or the next can do it, if they can at their discretion pick and choose from the constitution, utterly ignoring its authority as the organic law, then another president and another congress can pick and choose in their discretion. And if they choose to put aside as fantastic the principles of liberty which Mr. McKinley thinks essential, they will have as much right to their view

in the matter as he has to his. If the constitution does not bind him and this congress with reference to the Philippines, it cannot bind his successors and subsequent congresses. And there is the danger. Imperialism does not consist in tyranny. It consists in unrestrained power. And unrestrained power, for congress and the president in the Philippines, is what the McKinley policy represents, according to Mr. McKinley himself. He asserts his intention to use it benevolently. But despotism is none the less despotic for being benevolent; and it is in benevolent despotism that malignant tyranny always takes root. If this policy be maintained, we depart from the safe theory of our government that none of its departments can legally pursue any policy or do any act, good or bad, without the authority of the written constitution.

It is only within a few days that the American public has been informed of the barbarous conduct of the British government in South Africa. Even now the information is general and vague. But of the diabolical character of this conduct there is no longer room for question. The cruel treatment of the American patriots by George III. in the last century was almost benevolent in comparison with the treatment of the Boers by the tory government of Great Britain to-day.

It began with the demand of Lord Salisbury for unconditional surrender. Not willing to make terms of peace when the Boers offered the olive branch, he insisted upon the extinction of their republics. And when they refused submission to this imperious demand, declaring that they would fight till the last man had gone down, he copied the methods of Spain in Cuba and turned the war into one of extermination. In February Lord Roberts, commanding in South Africa, had issued a proclamation announcing the entry of the British into the Orange Free State, warning the inhabitants to desist from further

hostility towards Great Britain, promising immunity to those who had taken up arms pursuant to the orders of their government, provided they resumed their ordinary occupations, and threatening all who might oppose his command or give aid or encouragement to their own people with military punishment. His next step was to offer to all who had not taken a prominent part against the British, safe conduct to their homes provided they would lay down their arms and take the British oath of allegiance. That was in March. Thus far Lord Roberts had done no more, possibly, than by a stretch of military authority he might have done in any country he had invaded; though it is safe to assume that if he had invaded France or Germany he would not have intimated a purpose to punish Frenchmen or Germans for having fought under their own flag or for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to Great Britain. But in May he took a long stride in the direction of that policy which justifies President Kruger in describing the British as barbarians. Under orders from the home government he proclaimed to the inhabitants of the Transvaal that if wanton damage were done to property, not only would the actual perpetrators of such acts, and all directly or indirectly implicated in them, be liable to the most severe punishment in person and property, but—

the property of all persons, whether in authority or otherwise, who have permitted, or who have not done their utmost to prevent, such wanton damage, will be liable to be confiscated and destroyed.

In June still more drastic measures were taken. Lord Roberts then issued a proclamation making what he called "principal residents" personally liable for all damage to railways, telegraphs and public buildings in their respective towns and districts. He also authorized the selection from time to time from each district of a "principal resident" to ride upon railroad trains through districts where attacks were anticipated upon the

railroad by Boer raiders, thus compelling unoffending noncombatants to expose themselves to death. Moreover, wherever Boer raiders did damage, the houses and farms in the vicinity were to be destroyed and neighboring residents to be dealt with under martial law. Pursuant to those proclamations business men who have never taken part in the war, directly or indirectly, have been forced by British military officers to ride back and forth upon endangered railway trains, and the families of farmers in the region of De Wet's attacks upon British lines of communication—people who were not responsible for his raids and could not have stopped them if they would—have been driven off their farms, their homes being given to the flames.

This cruel policy became more cruel still as the hope of conquering the Boers died down; and for months the floodgates of British barbarity have been opened wide. On the 9th of July a British army captain, acting as district superintendent of police for the district of Krugersdorp, gave official notice that unless the men then serving in the Boer ranks, who belonged to families in that district, would "surrender themselves and hand in their arms to the imperial authorities by the 20th of July, the whole of their property will be confiscated and their families turned out destitute and homeless." A week later this notice was so far modified as to make the penalty confiscation of stock and supplies instead of destitution and homelessness, words which had too ugly a sound. That was followed on the 11th of August by a proclamation revoking previous promises of protection to noncombatants and declaring that—  
all burghers in districts occupied by British forces, except those who have sworn the oath, will be regarded as prisoners of war and transported; and all buildings, structures, and farms where the enemy's scouts are harbored will be liable to be razed to the ground.

Then we have a letter of September 2 from Lord Roberts to the Boer Gen.