

The Public

First Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1898.

Number 12.

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.

American marines have heretofore been considered as a warship police; but their behavior at Guantanamo entitles them to rank well up with the best troops of the regular army. They deserve an American bard to sing for them as did Kipling for the British jolly—"soldier and sailor, too!"

At the first report, ten days ago, of the arrival of German warships in Manila bay, one of our congressmen made a belligerent speech on the floor, with Germany for its objective. Had he waited only a few hours he would have learned that Germany, so far from making hostile demonstrations, had been merely providing for the protection of her own citizens at Manila. American statesmen should realize that they have responsibilities to the whole country, and be a little less eager in their official capacity to knock chips off the shoulders of friendly nations.

It is to be regretted that the republican party is being placed by some of its leaders in a position which favors a policy of conquest. Surely the rank and file of the party cannot believe in this policy. Yet the Illinois republican convention has boldly proposed that we hold as spoil of war all the territory we conquer from Spain; and worse still, President McKinley's own spokesman in the lower house of congress, Gen. Grosvenor, of Ohio, has in an official capacity in the party echoed the same proposition.

Gen. Grosvenor was temporary chairman of the republican convention of Ohio, held at Columbus on the

21st, and in his speech on accepting the chair he said: "I doubt much whether you and I will live to see the day when by the order of a republican administration, and surely not by the order of McKinley's administration, the starry banner of your country's glory shall be pulled down from any flagstaff where conquest of arms has placed it." To the disgrace of the delegates, this sentiment was vociferously applauded.

It would not be fair to hold the republican party as a whole responsible for these utterances, even though adopted in one case by a state convention and made in another by the president's political lieutenant to the applauding delegates of a convention which Senator Hanna absolutely controlled; but it is difficult to escape the conviction that this is the piratical policy toward which the party is being steered by some of its powerful leaders.

Senator Mason, of Illinois, struck the right key when he said that he would rather see some things done at home before we enter upon a career of expansion. What he referred to in particular was the murder of a colored postmaster in South Carolina, and in general the danger which colored men incur when they take office in some parts of the United States. With these applications of his remark we are in full sympathy. So long as the American citizen of any class—red, white, black, yellow, rich, or poor—cannot with safety to his life accept a public office, the American people have something more important to give their attention to than looking out for new countries to conquer.

Disheartening, however, as is the indication which lawless antagonism to the negro gives that the spirit

of democracy is not always vigilant in the land, there are more important considerations—more vital ones. The prejudice against negroes, merely because they are negroes, is fast dying out. It will soon pass away. Even now, and in the South at that, an educated and fairly well-to-do negro might safely take public office. We can hardly suppose that Booker T. Washington would find office holding a dangerous occupation. But there are undemocratic tendencies at work, which, instead of passing away are growing stronger, and which involve both black and white. Through landlordism, that blight upon all democracy, that destructive curse of all civilizations, the independence of the masses is being undermined. A condition of dependent servitude is being established. While this tendency is at work, the American people, as they value their freedom, have no time nor energy to waste in promoting territorial expansion.

It was somewhat in the spirit of Senator Mason that the anti-imperialistic meeting was held in Boston, at Faneuil Hall, about the middle of the month. The resolutions adopted at that meeting declared: "When we have shown that we can protect the rights of men within our own borders, like the colored race at the South and the Indians in the West, and that we can govern great cities like New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, it will be time to consider whether we can wisely invite distant populations of an alien race and language, and of traditions unlike our own, to become our subjects and accept our rule, or our fellow citizens and take part in governing us." This anti-imperialistic meeting evidently had its mind rather upon the lesser evils which characterize our government than upon the

greater one which we have already mentioned. Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that its mind was upon some of the results of the fundamental evil. This is especially evident in connection with the reference to bad government in large cities. It is in the large cities that landlordism has attained its greatest strength and produced its worst effects. There it is that land has risen so in value that only the rich can afford to own it, while the great majority have been turned into a tenant class. Out of this condition bad local government is inevitable, and while the condition lasts will be ineradicable. But notwithstanding that the Boston meeting demanded only that the superficial evils with which the country is afflicted be repented before we extend our territory, it nevertheless spoke the word which ought to be, and we believe will be, echoed from one end of the country to the other as the people awaken to a realization of the meaning and an appreciation of the dreadful possibilities of the imperialistic policy which threatens them.

By way of illustrating what we have said as to the exceptional power of landlordism in large cities, let us direct attention to the price which a few feet of land in Chicago brought last week. Mrs. Harriet Blair Borland bought the southeast corner of LaSalle and Monroe streets. Upon the lot there was a building which had been appraised at \$60,000, but cut no figure in the bargain. The lot has a frontage of 50 feet on Monroe street, and 110 on LaSalle street—a total of 5,500 square feet, or less than one-seventh of an acre. Yet this tiny bit of land, which but for the presence about it of the people of Chicago—a lot to the value of which neither the seller nor those of whom he bought had contributed any more than any other member of the Chicago community—brought him \$550,000 in cash. The ownership of that little piece of mother earth was worth to its owner more than most hard-working men could earn in over a thousand years. When

so much wealth may be got by some without earning it, just that much must be earned by others who don't get it; and in any community where a system of distribution, so inequitable prevails, good government is impossible. Good government cannot be founded upon injustice. Every tree bears fruit after its own kind.

Two men in the state of Washington have been sent to jail for contempt of court, the specific charge against them being that as editors of a newspaper they criticised a decision of the supreme court of the state. We are not fully advised of the circumstances, but it is reported that the criticism was published after the objectionable decision had been made. This being so, the punishment of the editors is not only in defiance of law, but is a most dangerous precedent which should be generally and promptly condemned. The power to punish criticisms of judicial proceedings is conferred upon courts in the interest of justice, and not for the personal protection of judges. They have no right to take advantage of their judicial authority to arbitrarily punish their personal enemies or critics. If a judge be publicly criticised in reference to any judicial action which he is about to take, and the criticism be so published as to tend in any way to affect the due administration of justice respecting that matter, the publication is contempt of court and ought to be punished as such. But criticisms of a decision already made are within the right of every citizen. They cannot influence a pending decision. If libelous, they may be punished in the regular way; but whether libelous or not, the court or judge that undertakes to punish them as a contempt of court, thus depriving the critics of a jury trial, and making their accuser also their judge, jury and executioner, is guilty of contempt of the highest law of the land—the guarantee of free speech and a free press and of security from all penalties except by due process of law.

An anonymous writer in Harper's Magazine describes the situation in China in an interesting and on the whole instructive way, but in considering the relations of other countries to that toppling empire he allows his judgment to be affected by the too common notion that selling alone, instead of both buying and selling, is the great economic object of human existence. Arguing the importance to the United States of securing by force new markets for the disposition of our products, he says that "the powers of production of the civilized world have outstripped its powers of consumption, and congestion is only averted by the continuous opening up of new markets and new fields of enterprise in those portions of the earth where the resources of nature and the energies of man still lie dormant." Suppose we concede that new markets are necessary—and really no one, after thought, will deny that healthy, economic conditions require an equilibrium between buying and selling—it by no means follows that we must hunt for new markets in distant climes. We have to-day, within the boundaries of the United States itself, a larger market than all our vast possibilities of production can oversupply.

Every man who wants to work but begs in vain for work to do, is a possible buyer. Every man who works only part of the time because he cannot get full employment, would buy more if he had full employment. Every business and professional man whose income is narrow, would be a better customer if he himself were more regularly at work. To the extent that business is bad with him, he is connected with the army of the unemployed. This army, already large and constantly growing, would buy goods to the fullest extent of its power to labor. It therefore offers a market for American products which is practically unlimited in capacity. Nor are navies and standing armies necessary to open up this market. It begs to be opened up; every man who so