

Lincoln's birthday was dishonored this year by as sordid and bloodthirsty a lot of speeches as were ever delivered outside the cabin of a pirate ship. Aside from his emancipation proclamation, the greatest of Lincoln's titles to the love of mankind was his expression of fidelity to government of the people, by the people and for the people. Yet this principle was scouted, in celebration of his birthday, by mushy elocutionists like Stewart L. Woodford, swashbucklers like Theodore Roosevelt, and ghouls like Whitelaw Reid. They made the great emancipator's birthday an occasion to clamor for the substitution in place of his political principle of self-government, of the imperial policy of British Tories. At the Chicago banquet, where Reid and Woodford spoke, the queen was cheered,—to such a pitch of Toryism had these coveters of other men's countries risen. Only one truly Lincolnian sentiment appears to have found utterance at this year's dishonoring Lincoln celebrations. For that sentiment Rabbi Emil Hirsch, a well-known western republican, was responsible. He described "a nation without an ideal" as "worse than a ship without a compass;" and to the question, What shall be a nation's ideal? he replied: "We should learn from such mentors as was he whose birthday brings back to us the beauty, pathos and strength of his life." Rabbi Hirsch's interrogative replies were still more direct, and they cut into the heart of the question of the hour. "Shall we cooperate," he asked,

to make this nation brutally strong? Shall it become a competitor for booty with dynasties now passing away? Shall the man on horseback be the incarnation of this nation's spirit? God forbid!

A listener unacquainted with Abraham Lincoln's history would have inferred from Hirsch's speech that Lincoln was among the noblest of men, as in truth he was. From Reid's speech, such a listener might have supposed Lincoln to have been a freebooter, or even a common thief.

Miss Estella Mae Davidson has com-

pleted a term of two years as prosecuting attorney of Brown county, Nebraska, and is now fighting for her second term. She claims to have been counted out by one vote last fall, though she was fairly elected. Her first term demonstrated exceptional fitness for the office.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press sums up the "prosperity" of 1898, in this fashion:

1. Largest wheat crop except that of 1891.
2. Highest price recorded for wheat except that of 1888.
3. Largest cotton crop.
4. Largest exports of breadstuffs.
5. Largest exports of manufactured goods.
6. Largest aggregate exports of products and merchandise.
7. Largest production of iron ore.
8. Largest production of pig iron.
9. Largest production of coal.
10. Largest production of copper.
11. Largest production of silver except that of 1892.
12. Largest production of gold.
13. Largest gold holdings.
14. Largest per capita circulation of all forms of money.
15. Largest aggregate bank clearings.
16. Largest aggregate railroad earnings.
17. Largest aggregate sale of bonds.
18. Largest aggregate sales of stocks on New York Stock Exchange since 1882.
19. Smallest number of failures and smallest aggregate liabilities since 1892.

Could there be a more perfect summary for the purpose? Everything that looks prosperous is itemized; everything that doesn't is omitted. So acceptable is this bit of Pioneer Press faking, that the prosperity touters among newspapers all over the country are copying it. The Macon Daily Telegraph has unconsciously offered a question by way of clinching the argument. Says the Telegraph—

If this does not indicate prosperity, and lots of it, it would be hard to say what does.

Hard to say what does? Yes, indeed. But not so hard to say what would. Two lines added to that summary would have indicated "prosperity and lots of it" in higher degree than all the other items together. These two lines should have read:

20. Highest wages ever paid before.

21. Smallest number of unemployed since 1872.

But such lines no man could add without both lying and being caught in the lie. For it is a notorious fact that workmen are losing jobs instead of getting them, and that wages if not falling are certainly not rising.

Prosperity! There is indeed prosperity for trusts and other monopolies; for speculators and bosses and millionaires; but for workers there is no prosperity. Returned soldiers in Chicago are supported by charity because they cannot get work. The same is true of returned soldiers in New York city. The wages of cloak makers in New York are reduced 30 per cent. In the steel mills wages have been reduced, twice in some places, since the presidential election. The papers all over the country are publishing abundant evidence of hard times among the workers in the very issues in which they pretend to be jubilant over prosperity. Money lies idle in banks; and interest which is always high when and where wages are high, and low when and where wages are low, has fallen. Workingmen know full well, if editors do not, that times with them are still hard.

The only pretense anywhere of rising wages is made by President Lambert, of the steel trust. He announces an increase to take effect March 1. And what an increase! It is to vary from 12½ to 15 cents a day—hardly enough to any one workman to buy his employer a cigar. But that might not be so important if the increase were not a mere gratuity but were due to greater demands for workmen. But confessedly this is not the case. According to the president of the steel company himself, the increase he proposes is a voluntary gift—or rather the payment of a promised bribe. He had, so he says, promised his employees that "if McKinley was elected there would be no cut in their wages, and that if times became prosperous they would receive an advance without their asking for it." This advance, he explains, is in redemption of

that promise. It is in payment of the bribe—an honorable thing as honor goes among bribe givers. The payment is purely voluntary. The worker has no say in the matter; the employer is under no pressure in the labor market. Wages raised under such circumstances may indicate an employer's generosity, or, as in this case, his fidelity to a corrupt promise; but it does not indicate that wages generally are rising. The labor market is still glutted, and labor as cheap as before. Moreover, steel workers' wages have been reduced since the presidential election more than the amount of this increase.

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM.

In the face of the fighting near Manila, it cannot any longer be pretended that no one in the United States is seriously proposing for this country a policy of conquest and imperialism. The administration itself is committed to it—committed in blood. Apologists for the foreign policy of the administration may now join the frank advocates of imperialism, and put forth arguments in its behalf; but they cannot continue to claim credit for both intelligence and sincerity while insisting that questions of conquest and imperialism do not confront the nation.

Imperialism has already cost us the lives of scores of our patriot soldiers, whose enlistment against the Spanish monarch, in the cause of humanity, has been taken advantage of to send them to wounds, disease and death against the Philippine republic, in the cause of oppression. It has cost us the blood-guiltiness of slaughtering by machinery thousands of Filipinos—women and children as well as men—whose sole crime against us is resentment at our crime against them. It has placed upon us the shame of sweeping away with fire and shell the unfortified villages of a people whom our own investigators describe as peaceable and amiable when not oppressed.

And its advocates are arrogant. The temporary thoughtlessness of the American masses in appearing at first to welcome the glory of imperialism, has emboldened them to the point of denouncing as traitors

those public men who, faithful to the principles of our republic, use their influence against forcing an unwelcome government upon a foreign people. The flag is waved aloft as a fetich, and we are told that we must follow it whether it continue to represent republicanism or be turned into a symbol of piracy. The applause and offers of cooperation of the tory party of England—the same party that sneered at Washington as we are taught to sneer at Aguinaldo, and which is and always has been distinctly imperialistic—are made much of. Imperialism is the new policy that we are invited—no; ordered—to adopt. Having assumed to buy Spain's title to the sovereignty of a distant archipelago, the president issues his proclamation commanding the people to abandon their own republican government and submit to him; and he follows it with a carnival of slaughter and glorification of slaughter so shocking to the moral sense as to awaken the American nation from its hypnotic stupor.

There is no longer any mistaking the direction in which the administration is going. For the sake of opening up new fields of exploitation to American plutocracy, the principle of government by consent of the governed is to be abandoned. We are to file away the declaration of independence as obsolete, and Lincoln's noble ideal of government "of the people, by the people and for the people," is to perish in the flames of Filipino villages.

This policy of ours, we are told, is not new. Imperialism, it is urged, is only a new name for an American policy which is as old as the American government itself. And we are reminded of the Northwest Territory, of the acquisition of the Louisiana country and of Florida, of the annexation of Texas and the conquest of New Mexico and California, of the Oregon treaty, and of the purchase of Alaska, as instances of imperialism in the history of our country. The implication is that these incidents are precedents for the present contemplated conquest of the Philippines.

Even if that were true it would count for nothing. A free people, cherishing their freedom, will not allow themselves to be shackled with

any precedents that are morally bad. The real question is not what our country may have done on occasions in the past, but what it ought to do now. If it be wrong to subjugate the Filipinos, the fact that we have heretofore subjugated other peoples can neither justify nor excuse the wrong. As the Springfield Republican well says, "lapses from the strict rule of government by the people" do not constitute "a reason and argument for general indulgence in further lapses and finally for its abandonment altogether."

But in truth there is no precedent in the history of the American republic for the Philippine policy now being pursued.

Preliminary to an examination of the pretended precedents that are cited, let us briefly outline the Philippine policy which they are held to justify.

We were at war with Spain. Spain claimed sovereignty over the Philippine islands. Repeated rebellions against her authority had occurred, and one had been adjusted by treaty not long before the outbreak of our war. Spain having dishonored that treaty the rebellion broke out afresh. It was in progress when Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila bay. And this rebellion continued until the Spanish were subdued and nearly driven off the archipelago, a regular republican government having meantime been established by the Filipino people.

The latest Filipino victory was at Iloilo, the last point of importance which the Spanish held. This victory left Spain in possession of only about 50,000 square miles of territory, occupied by about 300,000 inhabitants; while the Filipino republic was acknowledged by the inhabitants of 167,000 square miles, numbering more than 9,000,000 souls.

That was the situation in the Philippines when Spain assumed to cede the archipelago to the United States.

The treaty by which the cession was to be made, reserved no rights to the inhabitants. By its terms "the civil rights and political status of the native inhabitants" of the ceded territory were to be determined by congress, and no obligation was to be assumed by the United States either to