

Frank Dillingham, who, in reporting upon taxation in New Zealand, omits all reference to the experiment of local option in local taxation, which has been in operation there for several years, and under the authority of which some 60 municipalities have resorted to the novelty of a single tax on land values for local revenues. Consular reports which don't report are doubtless better than those which report falsely; but when a matter so novel and important is overlooked in such a report, one may be excused for doubting the information which the report seems to supply.

Pursuant to the governor's call (p. 659), the legislature of Colorado met in special session on the 27th. All but one of the objects of the session are only of local and ephemeral interest, and that exception is not specifically distinguished in the call. We refer to the efforts of the speculative real estate interests to cause the repeal of the Bucklin constitutional amendment before the people get a chance to vote upon it. This amendment, if adopted by the people, would empower the voters of any county to stimulate business there, by exempting from taxation for local purposes all investments in productive enterprises and getting local revenues from land value taxes alone. The possibility of an attempt at the special session to gag the popular voice by repealing this measure before the popular vote, set for next fall, has aroused a discussion all over the state which would hardly have arisen had the real estate speculators pursued their original policy of silence; and the probabilities now are not only that the legislature will not vote to repeal the measure, but that it will take no action upon it at all. Still, the repealers are backed by the Denver Real Estate Exchange and some of the strongest financial forces of the state, and no stone will be left unturned—nor bank account either—that may be supposed to have influence with the members of the legislature. A popular vote is to be prevented if possible.

PHASES OF THE IMPERIALISTIC ARGUMENT.

We have invented new doctrines to justify the policy of spoliation. A new and wonderful theory of obligations has suddenly been thrust upon us. It is the man in the street whom this theory is intended to influence. We smashed the fleet of Imperial Spain in the Harbor of Manila, and we became at once endowed—so we are informed—with certain responsibilities to the people of the Philippine Islands. The theory is analogous to this: A child deprived of its natural protector becomes the ward of the state, to whom certain duties and responsibilities are at once owing. Spain was the "natural protector" of the Filipinos; we must protect them in the absence of their cruel step-mother. This we will do if in the meantime we do not exterminate them. But these obligations are all armed with mausers and maxim guns; and they are really ingenious inventions after all. But even under this milder theory of obligations what becomes of the old American faith in the right of peoples to govern themselves; that faith has no place for wardships.

How did the smashing of the Spanish fleet alter our foreign obligations? What do we owe to the Filipinos that we do not owe to the Armenians, for example? The latter, of course, already have a protector, and Turkey is discharging her obligations in a way that is regarded as highly creditable—in those remoter regions where Belzebub records the acts of his earthly agents. But as for our moral obligations, they are the same in Armenia as in the Philippines. The first, however, involves some risk and may therefore be dismissed. But our obligations to the people of the Philippines could have been closed by serving a writ of ejectment on Spain—without the hilariously comical payment of \$20,000,000.

The obligations that we are now assuming are those which some other power must have previously laid down. That power is Spain. To this conclusion we are brought by the acceptance of this theory of obligations. How do you like it? Not that we are not good imitators. Our taxes on the long suffering Filipinos are higher

than Spain's, and we are twice as successful in ridding the islands of their inhabitants; give us time, too, and the "Anglo-Saxon" will demonstrate his superiority as a public plunderer; we have had some experience in the "carpet bag" era of reconstruction. He does nothing on a small scale, this "Anglo-Saxon," and his thefts will be proportionate to his opportunities and his world-girdling arms. When he is through with the Filipinos they will think kindly of Spain.

Organized Protestantism has altered its ethics to suit the changing conditions of time and place. Much of the piety in these days is as brutal and bloodthirsty as Pagan ruffianism. Nothing can exceed the war spirit of many of the clergy—surely not that of the army, which is far less in love with carnage, and infinitely less sordid. Of course there is a prejudice against the introduction of politics in the pulpit, and when murder is suddenly elevated to the dignity of a political principle, the fifth commandment is abrogated by almost unanimous clerical consent. That all questions are at bottom moral questions a few broad minded clerics will admit, but most of them agree that there is no morality save the immorality that is fashionable. If the early Christians had been of this sort, Christ would never have perished on the cross, Paul would never have been summoned before Agrippa, and Peter would have denied his Master to the end. The Christianity of Mars Hill would have seemed as innocuous to the Greeks and Romans of that day as it is to the Romans of this, and it would have occasioned the same boisterous laughter along the docks and quays of Rome, where it first found its lodgment, as most clerical utterances do among the longshoremen of today. It would have been referred to, not as "a dangerous doctrine,"—as Pliny termed it,—but as one very useful to the Roman Senate in its decay; useful to the oppressors of labor, and to the ambitious designs of Tiberius Caesar; and finally Christ and Paul and Peter would have been sent as commissioners into Gaul to advise the foolish barbarians to consent to the benevolent purposes of Roman Assimilation.

The highest aim of the truly "strenuous" nations is to evangelize the people who are unfit for self government, and who at the same time have anything that is worth stealing. If their lands are rich and their harbors inviting, it is only necessary under the plea of "coaling stations" to establish a base for carrying on the policy of spoliation.

Useful as a cloak for such designs is what is called "suzerainty." Nobody, according to a prominent British official, knows precisely what it is; but it is useful. The claim of suzerainty is always put forward where valuable mines or rich territory are in question. It is far better than any philosophy—Darwin's, Nietzsche's or anybody else's—for the purpose of coming into other people's own, for such philosophy is for the sanctum, and is chiefly entertaining as a speculative philosophy which, after all, can interest and influence only a few. Britain's claims to suzerainty over the Transvaal, which had practically expired by "statute of limitation," increased in positiveness and intensity as the resources of the Johannesburg mines became better known. This is the secret of our benevolent interest in Cuba and the Philippines; every member of the Philippine Land and Lumber Company is a fiery patriot, to whom any proposition to haul down the flag is rank treason. Our desire to help these people is in direct ratio to our inclination to help ourselves to something they have and we want. If they do not "administer their estate" in a way that seems best to us, we will administer it for them; if they object—

By Jingo, if they do,
We have the men, we have the guns
We have the money, too.

And if we can provoke them into firing on our "brave boys"—(we always say "our own brave boys" with a snivel for the public ear and a wink for the private eye)—whom we engage for \$16.50 per month to fight our battles for us (us meaning the Philippine Land and Lumber Company and all similar companies hereafter to be formed), we will arouse the nation to the patriotic pitch of wiping out the "rebels;" we will always be careful to call them rebels, because what are dictionaries for, if not for exact defi-

nition? To rebel is to be a rebel. And for the philosophically inclined we will urge the necessity of the "survival of the fittest," which every house-breaker with a club and a dark lantern will be glad to quote against us when we interrupt his incursions in search of the family plate.

But why should the highest missionary endeavors be inconsistent with the policy of national and other aggrandizement? We can Christianize and subjugate at the same time, and land grants and franchises combine very nicely with the establishment of Sunday schools for inferior peoples. But we ought not to forget the demands of Christianity, the duty of properly evangelizing our weaker brethren. For adequate popular support of the new policy, to which manifest destiny is so plainly urging us, we must not fail, however, to make our appeal to glory and the flag, for like Charity the flag covers and successfully conceals a multitude of sins.

There is no smoother path to commercial exploitation than the appeal to the imaginations of men. It is for this reason that phrases designed to dazzle and capture the fancy go to form so large a part of the audible philosophy of conquest. Of course it is a more or less open secret that imperial expansion offers inviting opportunities to capitalists for investment, but this is not the side that constitutes the strength with the common people. The appeals made behind closed doors, to railroad magnates, to great financial operators and others, when transferred to the broader fields where the support of the great army that uphold by its votes the policy and prestige of the marauders must be enlisted, changes its battle cry to conceal its purpose. It would be folly to appeal to the voters to uphold a railroad franchise or land grant, for these are not the symbols of emotion or sentiment; there is no power in them to make the blood flow quicker, and to render the imagination dizzy. But the flag—the flag's the thing! We are assured that it is infamous to haul it down where once it has been raised, though it should have been planted by the greatest of undelegated scoun-

drels. We are asked to stand by the country, to support the government, though the government be in the hands of rascals who deserve hanging. Every crime is possible and its perpetration may be entered upon without compunction, if under all circumstances and everywhere, we are to stand by the government. "Our country right or wrong" sums up this spurious philosophy—but as nearly all countries have usually been wrong—which every man of any nationality will cheerfully admit to be true of all the others—we are thus asked to choose as a settled policy for each individual an almost unailing course of moral turpitude.

Among the phrases that help to dazzle and capture the fancy is that "we are now a world power." It has been our boast hitherto that we had no "entangling alliances." Now in strange and unfamiliar phrase 'we are boasting that we have them. We have indeed entered strange and untried paths. We have come to the parting of the ways; we have actually taken the first steps in the new paths of another destiny, and we must now retrace them, or continue on until our whole national policy is changed, and we have become, in effect, a different people.

We are to be no longer a "hermit nation," forsooth! Is there not a concealed humor of a fine quality in a people secreting themselves from human observation by spreading over an entire hemisphere! a policy of isolation that takes as its habitat half the rolling globe! To alter those lines of Addison's Cato:

A pent up Utica contracts our powers,
For only one whole continent is ours.

Is not the pretense of territorial expansion, appealing to national vain-glory, merely a cloak for ambitious designs entirely unconnected with the thought of national greatness even in the sense of national bigness? If we could go behind the scenes where the national sentiment is manufactured, we could perhaps see the ingredients that compose the brew, and it would be a very witch's cauldron indeed!

JOSEPH DANA MILLER.

If possible let no wealth be got through oppression; but if it must be got through oppression, by all means let it be got by consecrated men.—Life.