

this country within a year, she could make as strong an indictment against the United States, and one as true, as she does make against the Boers. But we doubt if Mr. Spragg and his fellow reformers in Australia would therefore favor the prosecution of a war against the United States by the British ministry, nor yet by our outraged Canadian neighbors, even though he had personal knowledge of the truth of the indictment. The question of the justice of the British war in South Africa turns not upon the goodness or badness of the Boers in their internal government. Great Britain has no more right to regulate that than she would have to make war upon Russia to abolish knouting. It depends entirely upon whether it was wantonly made by either party.

That question must be decided, and in history it will be decided, against the British. They seized the Transvaal in 1877, making an unwarranted though bloodless conquest. The Jameson raiders, officered by British army officers, manned by a British police force and carrying the British flag, with the connivance of Rhodes and in all probability of Chamberlain, tried in 1895-96 to seize and subjugate it a second time. And in September-October, 1899, the British ministry threatened its extinction as a government, by force of arms, at the same time placing their active troops in strategic positions and calling out their reserves to make the threat good. It was not until after this that the Boers issued what Mrs. Lewis calls their "unparalleled act of defiance"—the ultimatum. Unparalleled! A powerful nation would not have waited so long. And even that ultimatum, as Mrs. Lewis and all the apologists for the British ministry always conveniently omit to state, was accompanied with an offer to peaceably submit all differences to arbitration. This rejected offer would put Great Britain in the wrong even if she had been in the right before. Lest Mr.

Spragg and our other friends in Australia may still think we are writing under the influence of "imperfect information," let us add the assurance that every word we have here uttered can be verified by reference to British histories and British blue books.

A movement has been started in Chicago to abolish special assessments for street improvement and to put the cost of such improvement upon the general tax levy. The principle urged in support of this change is that street improvements confer benefits upon the whole public. This is true only in one sense, a sense that is moreover irrelevant. Street improvements benefit the whole public only by affording accommodations to the whole public. But they benefit adjacent lot owners in another and very direct and substantial way. They increase the value of their lots. A good sidewalk, for instance, is beneficial to a tenant who must use it in going to and from his residence daily. It accommodates him. But it benefits his landlord financially. His landlord's property is increased in value by it. And the tenant has to pay a higher rent in consequence. In other words, he pays the landlord for his sidewalk accommodation. And that is the rule. Such benefit as the public generally may get from street improvements, they have to pay for to their landlords in increased rents. To make them pay also for the improvements is therefore double taxation. Though special assessments have been much abused in their application, the principle is sound and should not be lightly relinquished.

It is no longer possible to conceal the fictitious character of the "prosperity" of which so much has been heard by the masses during the past two years, and so little seen. The whole flimsy fabric is flapping and fluttering, and a collapse is apparently not far off. That business did experience an improvement, no one disputes; but the activity was due to the

necessity for somewhat replenishing empty shelves. There had been such a long period of starvation that some revival of demand was inevitable. This temporary spurt, when it came, was mistaken for prosperity. But it is over now. We are on the down grade, and shall go on down until the shelves get so bare again that replenishment again becomes a necessity. It would be only human if the bi-metallists attributed the approaching depression to the new gold standard law. They would be reasoning as their adversaries have done. The truth is, however, that the new period of adversity we are entering is not a new one at all, but a fluctuation in the depression that has been with us since 1890. The gold standard law has neither lifted us out of it nor put us into it. It has had no more to do with it, one way or the other, than the color of the chips in a gambling game has to do with the fall of the cards.

Our usually phlegmatic British brethren must henceforth modestly refrain from poking fun at the hysterical French for their unbridled emotions. Irrationally excitable as Frenchmen are, they could hardly have experienced a more severe attack of hysterics if they had conquered Germany than that which overwhelmed the English when Mafeking was relieved. Yet how small the matter that occasioned that display of British weakness. It was but the relief of a British garrison at a point which it had long been conceded ought not to have been garrisoned, and this in a wantonly aggressive war for the subjugation of two little republics with a population less than that of St. Louis. The English will always have many reasons for pride in their traditions, but this outbreak of super-French hysterics over Mafeking will not be accounted among them.

There is now pending before congress a bill, introduced in the senate by McMillan and in the house by Lentz, which should be passed with-