

law seems to be true. So, being ineffective, it is harmless. But labor organizations will find it to their interest to go slowly along this line of statutory prohibition of labor disputes. From arbitration laws which cannot be enforced the step may be short to those which can be; and when arbitration laws which can be enforced once get upon the statute books, on that day will labor organizations be doomed, and workingmen be more completely than ever at the mercy of powerful employers.

About the worst thing that those people can do who wish to keep up the impression that the Chicago anarchists were fairly convicted and justly hanged, is to talk about the case. Judge Gary, who presided at the trial, demonstrated this when he undertook to defend the conviction in an article over his signature in the Century. More than one reader of the Century who until then had supposed the conviction to have been just, was awakened by Judge Gary's article to a realization of its wickedness. That the conviction was wicked was the only possible inference, so utterly weak was that article in its attempt to make out a case. The same weakness appears in the anniversary accounts which some of the Chicago papers are now giving of the Haymarket tragedy. The more that is said about that tragedy by those who procured the conviction of the anarchists, the more clearly does it appear that Gov. Altgeld was right when he gave as his reason for pardoning the anarchists—those of them who, instead of having been hanged had been sent to Joliet—that their guilt was unproved and their conviction had been secured by fraud.

Ever since the first brief reports of the victory at Manila bay, the sensational newspapers have irritated the public with trifling and sometimes deliberately false news, purporting to have come from Manila. It remained for the Chicago Record.

through its capable staff correspondent, John T. McCutcheon, who accompanied the American fleet, to give not only a graphic but the first full and trustworthy description of the battle and what immediately preceded and followed it. To have read about the battle of Manila bay in the faked extras of other papers and then in the calm but interesting dispatch evidently from an intelligent eye witness, which the Chicago Record published on the 9th, was to appreciate one of the differences between hustling sensationalism and dignified journalism.

COULD WAR HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

As we tried to explain two weeks ago, when considering the justifiableness of the war, its righteousness cannot be discussed with absolute peace men, nor with ideal anarchists, nor with mere "patriots," for the reason that the first are opposed to all war, the second are opposed to all war which is not both in substance and form strictly defensive, and the third are hot for war whenever the flag flies. But apart from men of this type are many who, though open to conviction as to the righteousness of particular wars, are yet not satisfied that the present war might not, with justice, have been avoided. They doubt if all peaceable means were exhausted before the gauntlet of battle was thrown down.

It is probable that those who entertain this doubt, look upon the destruction of the Maine in Havana harbor as the cause of the war. If that had been its cause they would be right. The question raised by that catastrophe was one of fact: Was Spain responsible for the explosion? If she was not, then the Maine episode gave us no cause for complaint; if she was, then the only possible remedy would have been such as arbitrators might have awarded. War would have been no remedy. It could not have restored a single life, and in its event would have left the question of fact still an open one. Distinctly, the question of the destruction of the Maine was a question for arbitration; and as Spain offered to submit it to arbitration, this war, if its cause were the destruc-

tion of the Maine, would be on our part as unholy a war as ever one nation waged against another.

But the Maine episode was not the cause of the war. It was simply an irritating incident in a situation already strained nearly to the bursting point. If "patriotic" fools cry: "Remember the Maine!" that proves nothing but their own folly. Their cry bears no more relation to the cause of the war than the "rebel yell" bore to the abolition agitation which precipitated our civil conflict. Sensible folks should distinguish between a battle cry and a casus belli. Back of the dramatic Maine incident was a condition from which there was no escape save through war. The explosion of the Maine, if it had any effect at all, had the effect of delaying rather than hurrying on hostilities.

Consider the situation.

Cuba, lying at our very doors, nearer to us than some of our own territory, had been outraged by Spain for a period which, without going farther back, was coincident with the close of our civil war—a period at the least of more than a generation. Against these outrages the Cuban people had rebelled 30 years ago; and after a war lasting nearly 12 years had forced from Spain a treaty which recognized the justice of their rebellion.

But Spain proved treacherous. Instead of observing the treaty in good faith, she totally disregarded it in its spirit, and soon allowed even its letter to be ignored. True, she abolished slavery, as the treaty required; but that was inevitable. Slavery had been doomed by the rebellion itself. Conditions were so changed by that struggle, that slavery could not persist, and in formally abolishing it two years before the time fixed by the treaty, Spain simply made a virtue of necessity. In other respects, however, the Cubans soon found themselves no better treated by Spain than they had been before the rebellion.

At last, three years ago, they rebelled again, and Spain, relentless as ever, poured 200,000 troops into the island to subdue it, meantime resorting to a barbarism which the English crown had neither dared nor wished to resort to under similar circumstances when her American colonies revolted a century before, that of

shooting in cold blood the rebels whom she captured in battle.

Failing by this bloody method and by the overwhelming numbers of her troops, to put down the rebellion, Spain then drove non-combatants into the towns, like cattle to the slaughter pen, and left them there to starve, as they did to the appalling number of two hundred thousand! In a word, for savage and wholesale cruelty the behavior of Spain to our neighbors across the Florida strait is unparalleled in modern times. Yet this barbarism continued until the year of grace, 1898, with the permission, to its dishonor, of the government of the United States.

Thus far the facts are familiar to everybody.

Now, what were the possibilities of bringing about a change for the better in this intolerable state of affairs by means of negotiation? Negotiation had begun under Cleveland's administration. Over and over again was Spain admonished that the island must be pacified, and over and over again did Spain assure our government that peace would be speedily restored. Each campaign was to put an end to the rebellion. But at the close of each campaign the Spanish were weaker and the revolutionists apparently stronger than ever, while the medieval cruelty on the part of the Spanish did not abate.

At last, more than a year ago, the Cleveland administration had by diplomacy brought Spain to the point of conceding to Cuba an autonomous government, like that of Canada. But this concession looked at the time like another piece of Spanish treachery, and subsequent events have proved it to be such. Though offered more than a year ago to pacify the Cleveland administration, autonomy was not formally decreed from the throne until last November, and the cortes, without whose approval the decree is so much waste paper, has not approved it yet. All the fuss and feathers connected with the organization of an autonomous government in Havana is for foreign consumption. That government has, and all the circumstances indicate that it was intended to have, no legal validity. But by appearing to concede it in Feb-

ruary, 1897, Spain satisfied the Cleveland administration, and by promulgating the decree in November, 1897, she diplomatically entertained the McKinley administration. So our negotiation for a period of more than two years resulted in tying our government up, while the Spaniards went on shooting captured rebels and starving reconcentrados.

It was obvious long before this that the only possible settlement of the Cuban difficulties, which could insure peace in the island and relieve this country from perennial disturbance, was the independence of Cuba. As soon as the Cubans had demonstrated their power to hold 200,000 Spaniards in check, every other basis of settlement was by the conditions themselves absolutely thrust aside; and all our negotiations for the pacification of the island, which did not contemplate its independence, were wasted. Nor would even a bona fide offer of mere autonomy have been sufficient. Independence, and nothing short of independence, was the condition of pacification. But Spain would not listen to any proposition looking to independence. Her reply to this government upon that point was emphatic.

Not only did Spain refuse to listen to propositions looking to independence, and warn us that rather than consider them she would welcome a declaration of war, but while negotiations were in progress, and as an evident menace to this country, she started a war fleet across the Atlantic. That the fleet was forced into the Cape Verdes by stress of weather makes no difference; its departure from the Canaries under the circumstances was in fact, and was intended to be, a hostile demonstration toward what was then regarded by Spain as an inferior naval power.

This was the culmination. We were forced to act. And in acting we were forced either to make an ultimatum upon the basis of Cuban independence, or, under the threat of Spanish invasion to suffer an indefinite continuance of Spanish sovereignty and inhumanity in Cuba. Congress decided upon the former. It declared the independence of the people of Cuba, and demanded the relinquishment by Spain of her authori-

ty in the island. Congress could have done nothing short of this without yielding the point of Cuban independence altogether. The declaration was not an act of war, except as all declarations of liberty are acts of war against tyrants. But Spain, treating it as at least an invitation to war, peremptorily withdrew her minister from this country, abruptly dismissed our minister from that country, and insolently notified us that her fleet was on its way across the Atlantic to meet ours.

How much further could negotiations on our part have been carried?

THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX.

In these bellicose days, with "patriotism" at white heat, it is hard to fix the mind upon such tame subjects as local taxation; yet these are no less important than the more exciting subject of war, and in the long run will be found to be more so. War is worse than useless if the only benefits it may confer are to be frittered away in methods of taxation which are as destructive to liberty as the oppressive governments that war is waged to overthrow. If men are to be deprived of their rights, what difference can it make to them whether this is done through political bondage to foreign powers, or tax bondage to domestic financial interests? The foregoing observation is not preliminary to a warning to the people of this country to be on their guard against the further bondage of bonds which threatens them, though that warning is sadly needed, but as an admonition to keep up their interest, even in war times, in the subject of local taxes, those taxes which are infinitely more prejudicial to popular rights than are the burdens of a national debt.

In this connection Lawson Purdy, of 111 Broadway, New York, has issued a pamphlet on recent results of the property tax, which is full of information and intensely interesting. From the experience of New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri and West Virginia he shows with great clearness how effective the so-called "general property" tax is in shifting the burden of taxation from those who