

navy. I merely mean to suggest to the department that, unfortunately for them, they have been deprived of certain natural advantages and in consequence their proper place is that of leading men among the crew and not as representatives of the country in the wardroom and steerage.

That letter is a candid expression of wardroom sentiment, and the denunciations it has evoked from naval circles reflect rather upon the writer's sense in thus exposing naval snobbery than upon the fact that he is himself a naval snob.

Nor is that view of the matter confined to naval circles. Sampson has fallen under the animadversions of the press for two reasons. In the first place, the warrant officer whose application for promotion called out the Sampson letter, proves to have superior social connections. It is regarded as especially snobbish for Sampson to embrace such a person in his category of exclusion. The second reason is the discovery that Sampson himself is the son of a common ditch digger. A man with these antecedents presumes too much when he becomes exclusive. But the real significance of this sensational disclosure of snobbishness receives scant attention. At Annapolis, and also at West Point, we are educating a brood of snobs. The air they breathe at those places is tainted with caste distinction. It is more than doubtful if any possible use they can be to the real welfare of the country offsets the injury that their false social standards may yet do to our national ideals. Sampson is a product of one of these institutions, and his letter does credit to his powers of absorbing the aristocratic virus.

It is impossible to read last Sunday's sermon of Rev. R. A. White, of Chicago, without some sense of pain. When atheists propose human breeding schemes, or advocates of special privileges try to confuse the scent by accounting for poverty and crime as hereditary evils, it is to be expected and endured with patience. But

from a man of Mr. White's theistic convictions and profound desire for the establishment of social righteousness, propositions of that kind come with a shock. "When society is wise enough," Mr. White says, "to take as much care in the breeding of human beings as it does in breeding cattle, race-horses, cats and dogs, much of the evil of life will disappear." What could be more repulsive than that? If no one is wise enough and virtuous enough to govern another, assuredly no one is wise enough and virtuous enough to regulate the production of another's children. When the marital and parental instincts fail us, we shall be lost indeed. No impertinent paternalism can then avail. Nor is there any value in this connection to the heredity theory which Mr. White, along with all other stirpiculturists, invokes. Crime has not been scientifically traced to heredity. There is no more reason for believing it to be hereditary than there is for believing language to be hereditary. Mr. White cites a case. It is a familiar one, the only real value of which is the proof it gives of the pigmy premises upon which "scientists" rest gigantic conclusions. This case is to the effect, we quote Mr. White, that—

out of 709 descendants of a criminally inclined ancestress 106 were illegitimate, 162 were beggars, 181 of the women were dissolute, 76 were criminals, seven were condemned for murder, etc. Five hundred and ninety-six out of the 709 were tainted with the criminality of their ancestor.

Suppose we were told that 596 out of 709 descendants of a German woman spoke no other language than German, what should we infer? Would it be that those descendants were born with their ancestor's habit of speech rooted somewhere in their systems? Would it not rather be that they had grown up in the environment of the German tongue? Yet the hereditary "scientists" from whom Mr. White quotes, ignore the simple probability that those criminal descendants of a criminal ancestor had come to maturity in criminal surroundings, and jump to the dubious

conclusion that a spiritual taint of criminality had affected their physical blood.

Two reports on the removal of Prof. Ross from Leland Stanford Junior university, have again brought that case to public notice. One report comes from a committee of the San Francisco alumni, and the other from a voluntary committee of members of the American Economic association, headed by Prof. Seligman, of Columbia. The committee of San Francisco alumni report their inability "to find any evidence that Mrs. Stanford ever took exceptions to Dr. Ross's economic teachings." In their opinion "her ultimate demand for his resignation" was based upon her estimate of his unfitness made in 1896 and confirmed by three years of subsequent trial. It appears from this report that in the presidential campaign of 1896 Dr. Ross issued a pamphlet entitled: "An Honest Dollar," signed by him "as 'Professor of Economics in the Leland Stanford, Jr., university,'" illustrated with political cartoons, and published and circulated by one of the political parties. Though the committee does not say so, this pamphlet was a plea for the free coinage of silver and was published by the democratic party. Mrs. Stanford regarded the pamphlet as "undignified in its form and manner of treatment," and objected to the time and manner of its publication as "jeopardizing the university's right to a reputation for political non-partisanship." That incident, "together with Dr. Ross's general conduct throughout the campaign of 1896," says the alumni report, "was deemed by Mrs. Stanford a symptom of unfitness for the responsible position of head of the economics department of the university." But this was not because her opinions were at variance with Dr. Ross's. "She had at that time no opinion upon either side of the particular financial theories then in issue," and whether her views are hostile now to what his were then is immaterial, since "his views

upon the silver question thereafter radically changed." The want of confidence engendered in Mrs. Stanford's mind by Ross's indiscreet behavior in the campaign of 1896, the committee continue, was never removed, but was "accentuated by other incidents impairing her faith in his good taste and discretion"—such as "the use of slang in his public and class-room lectures" and "reports that his class-room lectures contained references derogatory to her deceased husband." In conclusion the committee finds that "the action of Mrs. Stanford in asking the dismissal of Dr. Ross involved no infringement of the right of free speech." A majority of this committee, when appointed, believed that the right of free speech had been restricted.

If the foregoing report is unsatisfactory it is not more so than that of the committee of economists headed by Prof. Seligman. In fact, the text of the former, and such telegraphic quotations from the latter as have come to our knowledge, raise a strong suspicion that there are back of all the published facts in the Ross case some carefully guarded secrets.

When Dr. Ross was dismissed from his chair in the Stanford university, we supposed from the newspaper reports that the case was a peculiarly flagrant one of plutocratic dictation, and we commented briefly upon it accordingly. Since then we have been assured by persons whose opportunities for knowledge are exceptional and whose integrity and devotion to the principles of freedom are above question, not only that the dismissal of Prof. Ross rests upon just grounds entirely compatible with professorial freedom, but that Mrs. Stanford, so far from being actuated by plutocratic motives, is an uncompromising enemy of the money power—a woman with worthy ideals who is striving, against plutocratic opposition, to have them realized. We have been very much impressed, also, with the attitude of "The Land of Sunshine,"

the California magazine of which Charles F. Lummis is editor and which is one of the few publications in this country that truly stand for freedom. Mr. Lummis and his magazine have defended the cause of Mrs. Stanford in calling for Ross's removal. Nor have we overlooked the fact that David Starr Jordan, the president of the university, has a reputation for courage as an advocate of freedom which commends to public confidence his assurances that the removal of Dr. Ross was no infringement of the right of free speech. For these reasons we adopt the conclusion of the alumni report that the dismissal of Dr. Ross was not made for the purpose of checking free speech. But we cannot overlook the fact that upon the very face of the report Dr. Ross was not dismissed by the university unless the university is Mrs. Stanford. It was "her ultimate demand for his resignation," her want of confidence, etc., that drove him from his chair.

If Mrs. Stanford is, indeed, the Leland Stanford Junior university, if she supports it and for that reason governs it, and in cases of alleged interference with professorial free speech, her motives are the issue, then it is nobody's business whether Prof. Ross was denied free speech or not. Mrs. Stanford has an indisputable right to run her own university in her own way. And that is the light in which the alumni committee puts the matter. Unless their report does her and the institution an injustice, Leland Stanford Junior university is not a university at all, but Mrs. Stanford's private boarding school.

Professorial freedom in a public university is something that cannot properly be left to the discretion of a donor, especially a sole donor, who has no responsibility to anyone. It is a matter that belongs to the faculty, the alumni, the students, the public, and should be under the government of trustees who may be held accountable for abuses. This very Ross

case illustrates the point. While we are inclined from collateral information and the general circumstances that have come to light, to believe that Ross's dismissal may have been justified by his indiscretions, we are nevertheless constrained to say that, upon the basis of the alumni report alone, it appears to have been due to Mrs. Stanford's personal dislike. No sufficient reason for his discharge is given. The one stated in the report is his action in connection with the silver pamphlet. But that was in 1896. He remained in the university four years after that, though in a social science instead of an economic chair; and so frivolous are the later charges against him—the use of slang in his public and class-room lectures, and mere reports, without pretense of verification, that he had spoken in the classroom disrespectfully of the late Senator Stanford—that the alumni committee made the old silver pamphlet and not any recent derelictions the substantive charge. To give new vitality to that they find that his retention was probational and that the objectionable qualities which that episode disclosed were confirmed by his later conduct, referred to above as making the basis for charges frivolous in themselves. The inference that he was dismissed because and only because Mrs. Stanford wished to dismiss him is irresistible. For the sake of the university, and for her own sake as a person who has undertaken to devote her fortune to educational ideals, it is to be hoped that a better explanation of the Ross affair than that of the San Francisco alumni committee may be forthcoming. We might hope for this also for the sake of all university education. For if Mrs. Stanford, however strongly opposed to plutocracy, may regulate the tenure of professorial chairs at Stanford Junior in accordance with her own arbitrary inclinations, Mr. Rockefeller might by the same token regulate the tenure of those at the Chicago in accordance with his own plutocratic interests.