

cans, and had learned to love and admire them. We knew that in this nation all men are free and equal, and we had read the American constitution, that sublime document, and therefore we hoped that the blessings of liberty would be extended to us. Have our hopes been realized? Nay, they have been hopelessly blasted. The supreme court has held that Porto Rico is not a part of the United States, that her citizens are not citizens of the United States, and that therefore the American constitution, which we had learned to love and revere, does not protect our island. Instead of autonomy, which had been conceded to us by Spain, we now have a government which gives the governor more despotic powers than any Spanish military governor ever had, and he exercises them to the detriment of the people. In order that his will may be done and that his power may be absolute Governor Hunt supports the party of the minority, composed of American adventurers and native renegades, who have no regard for the welfare of the country and are ready to applaud as long as they enjoy official protection. The election of November last was the greatest political crime of the century. All means were used from fraud to murder to give the victory to the governmental party, which won, although far in the minority. It fills my heart with anger and indignation when I think of the number of crimes which have been committed to carry such elections. But the murderers will remain unpunished because the ministers in the temple of justice are politicians. We have gone back to those dark days of the Spanish administration of 1887, when our mothers and sisters were in constant fear that their sons and brothers might be arrested by the Spanish soldiers to be thrown into a dungeon and suffer torture for the crime of being patriots. To-day under the present government our mothers and sisters have the same fear that they may be brought back murdered because they do not belong to the party protected by the government. Life for honest people is becoming impossible in Porto Rico, because they see that the government protects the criminal and punishes the law-abiding citizen. The government there has tainted the flag with dishonor. I am sure that if the true facts were known the honest-hearted Americans would be filled with indignation. But only the official reports reach American ears, and in them Porto Rico is represented as a happy and prosperous country. These reports are basely false. Porto Rico is going through a great crisis; the island is prostrated. I make this appeal to you as true American citizens, because I believe

that my country is entitled to have a government founded upon those principles that have made this nation the greatest, the freest and the noblest among the nations of the world, and because I believe we are at least entitled as civilized and Christian people to have our national rights guaranteed by the government to which we owe our allegiance. In heaven's name we want instead of profligacy, honesty; instead of extravagance, economy; instead of rioting, peace.

To northwestern Africa is a long way from Porto Rico, but news of the march of empire carries us there, for out of an insurrection in Morocco may not improbably arise another imperial question in world politics.

Morocco is an absolute despotism, ruled by a sultan who is unrestrained by any laws, civil or religious. He is chief of the state and head of the religion, which is Mohammedan. The reigning sultan now is Mulai-Abd-el-Aziz, who was born in 1878, and on the death of his father, Mulai-Hasan, succeeded to the sultanate by proclamation of June 7, 1894, having then been elected from the eligible family. He is the fifteenth of his dynasty and the thirty-sixth in lineal descent from Ali, uncle and son-in-law of Mahomet, the Prophet. His father having left other sons, they have plotted against him since the beginning of his reign; and in doing this they have had much popular support because the sultan has not only encouraged progressive ideas, introducing telephones, etc., and building railroads, but in that connection has abandoned Morocco's traditional policy of isolation and admitted French and British embassies, and immigrants, a courtesy of which Great Britain and France have taken advantage to secure franchise rights and set up claims to "spheres of influence" in the "hinterland" or unsettled parts of the country.

The plotting against the sultan has now culminated in a stupendous rebellion. On the 26th the London Times reported the situation at Fez, the Morocco capital, as serious, a pretender to the sultanate having secured followers in numbers too great for the government troops to cope with, and having some days earlier utterly routed the government army in a battle at Taza. The rebels were reported soon after as marching upon Fez, and on the 30th dispatches by way of London told of the investment

of that city. The sultan, with the few troops left him after the disaster at Taza and subsequent desertions, had barricaded himself in the royal palace and was preparing for a desperate resistance. According to dispatches of the 30th the rebels had cut off the aqueduct which supplies Fez with water and it was considered probable that the city would have to capitulate within three days.

As France and Great Britain claim interests in the Morocco country, and the rebellion against the sultan offers a conventional pretext for their intervention to "restore peace and protect foreign rights," Spain, lying, as she does across the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco, manifests great concern lest this pretext may be utilized to secure a foothold which would be a perpetual menace to her. Reason for this concern was found in the departure on the 29th of four British war ships from Malta to Gibraltar, in connection, as it was believed, with the Morocco situation. Steps to guard against prejudicial results from intervention were taken by the Spanish government, which instructed its ambassadors in London and Paris to ascertain the views on the Morocco situation of the British and French governments. Reassuring replies were announced at Madrid on the 30th, it being stated that Great Britain and France had notified Spain that they had no intention of taking any advantage of the situation in Morocco, and that they desired the maintenance of the status quo even in the event of the sultan's being dethroned and his place taken by the pretender.

Japan is facing a ministerial crisis over a question of taxation, the house of representatives having been dissolved on the 28th by imperial order, and elections fixed for February. The dissolution was brought about by the opposition of party leaders to ministerial plans for increasing the public revenues, which are deficient. Those plans comprehended an increase in the land tax. To that the opposition leaders objected, and no compromise was possible.

The land tax of Japan is not what is known in English speaking countries as the "single tax," as advocated by Henry George, nor does it bear any essential resemblance to it. On the contrary, it is an awkwardly devised tax, falling chiefly on agricultural production. It was estab-

lished concurrently with the Japanese land reform which changed old feudal tenures into absolute ownership by occupiers. This took place in 1869, when the feudal clans surrendered their "domains and people" to the imperial or central government. In 1871 that government was invested with direct control of the administration of the whole country, and it forthwith made the modern distinction between sovereignty over land and property in land, by granting proprietary landed rights to private persons while retaining the sovereign administrative power over their holdings. As part of this whole scheme, the present land tax was proposed in 1869; the fundamental laws relating to it were promulgated in 1873; and in 1881 it was completely established. Having recognized all occupiers of land, by general administrative act and not through personal transactions, as absolute owners of the lands actually held by them, the central government proceeded by official assessment to ascertain for taxing purposes the value of each holding. But in doing so it made the past actual produce of the land, and not transactions in land titles nor potential productiveness, the basis of taxation. This was done by ascertaining the average value of the net produce of each piece over a period of five years, and then considering the average so ascertained as interest upon a capitalization necessary to yield it, such capitalization being taken as the capital value of the land and made the tax basis. Thus: A plot having yielded an average of \$100 worth of rice for five years, and interest being six per cent., that plot would be valued for taxation at \$1,667. A land tax so levied would of course fall chiefly upon the use of land instead of falling upon its ownership; and, affecting agricultural land almost if not quite exclusively, any increase of the tax would rest heavily as a burden upon agricultural production.

Whether or not this explains the opposition in the Japanese diet to increasing the land tax, it at any rate explains the inequality and injustice of one of the largest sources of Japanese revenue. The income from that source for 1901-02 was nearly \$23,000,000, while the income from all other sources was only about \$113,000,000. Thus the Japanese agricultural land tax amounted for that fiscal year to fully one-sixth of the

entire revenues of the empire. The largest other item, somewhat larger than the revenue from the land tax, came from the tax on intoxicants, particularly a rice brew which is the common drink of the Japanese.

NEWS NOTES.

—The American Association for the Advancement of Science met at Washington on the 29th.

—As the result of scientific experiments it is announced that lemon juice destroys typhoid fever germs.

—A convention of the provincial governors of the Philippines concluded its sessions at Manila on the 25th.

—An 8 per cent. increase of wages was allowed its employes on the 24th by the Frick Coke Co. of Pennsylvania.

—A 10 per cent. increase of pay was allowed on the 24th by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, to its engineers and firemen.

—The New Zealand parliament just elected (p. 570) gives Premier Seddon a majority of 2 to 1. Mr. Seddon has been premier continuously since 1891.

—Wm. J. Bryan is making a tour of Mexico with a view especially to studying the silver coinage question as exemplified in the financial system of that country.

—The American Historical Society and the American Economic Association opened their annual sessions by holding a joint meeting at Philadelphia on the 26th.

—Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, announces over his signature that he has solved the problem of aerial navigation by inventing a navigable kite.

—Secretary Chamberlain of the British ministry, who sailed for South Africa on the 25th of November (p. 539) arrived at Durban, Natal, on the 26th of December.

—The first convict in the prosecutions for aldermanic corruption in St. Louis (p. 424) has been discharged, the Supreme Court holding that his conviction was unwarranted.

—Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont, a daughter of the great leader of his day, Senator Benton, and widow of John C. Fremont, the first presidential candidate of the Republican party, died at Los Angeles, Cal., on the 27th at the age of 79.

—The official *tegluning* of the "durbar," held at Delhi to celebrate the accession of Edward VII. as emperor of India, took place on the 29th. It consisted in the state entry by Lord Curzon, the British viceroy, into the capital of the Moguls.

—The Illinois State Teachers' asso-

ciation, in session at Springfield, on the 30th, voted to adopt in its official documents the following changes in spelling: Altho, catalog, decalog, demagog, pedagog, prolog, program, tho, thoro, thorofare, thru, and thru-out.

—Senator Hanna held a secret conference at Cleveland on the 29th with several prominent local labor leaders for the purpose of forming a Cleveland branch of the National Civic Federation, to be composed of leading capitalists, manufacturers, and labor union representatives of that city.

PRESS OPINIONS.

THE WAR UPON VENEZUELA.

New Church Messenger (St. Louis), Dec. 24.—Whatever grievances Great Britain and Germany may have against this South American country, they are not of such a character or of so great magnitude as to warrant such a display of international brutality as we have witnessed within the last few days. The inventive triumphs of modern times have far outdistanced the social intelligence of the nations. To-day, owing to the advanced knowledge of nature and to the development of manufacturing and engineering skill, armies and navies have a power absolutely immeasurable by any of the standards of the past. But statecraft has not kept pace with military science or with inventive skill. It is preposterous to think of two great nations breaking the peace over matters which any board of trade could adjust with intelligence, equity and dispatch. Undoubtedly the mistakes of the governments are providentially necessary in order to set the people to thinking and to awaken them to the fact that mediæval diplomacy and devices are not adequate to the needs of an enlightened twentieth century. This is the remnant of satisfaction that the intelligent and peace-loving student may gather as the lesson of the unhappy wars that have entered into recent history.

PESSIMISM.

Chicago Record-Herald (Ind. Rep.), Dec. 28.—People who talk aggressively of trusts and the new feudalism are not necessarily pessimists. If they are, all criticism and censure is pessimistic. No one can escape suspicion who does not proclaim his belief from the houstop every day that things are exactly right and glorious as they are, and that they never should be changed in the slightest particular. But there would be no social progress if comment of another sort were taboo. For every great reform that the race has known has been the result of indignant protest against and vigorous warfare upon existing conditions. The masses of humanity might still be living like pigs in a sty if there had been no censure of the present.

NONPARTISAN PRESS PARTISANSHIP.

The Commoner (Dem.), Dec. 26.—The daily papers are quite independent when it comes to supporting a party policy, but they are not at all independent when it comes to attacking any wrong that is backed by capital. Aggregated wealth cannot demand anything so unjust or oppressive that it will not be supported by most of the great *dallies*, especially by those that claim to hold themselves aloof from party politics. The so-called independent papers are, if possible, more virulent and vicious than the straight-out Republican papers in the denunciation of all who dare to array themselves against corporate greed and corporate domination.