

the disadvantage is more serious than the malevolent tone of the instructions to the court of inquiry would alone imply. A prejudice against Schley prevails in the official and society circles of the navy which may not improbably make a more or less unconscious impression upon the court. This prejudice is very generally known or suspected, yet hardly anyone outside of the naval world understands it. The explanation is nevertheless very simple. It was indicated by Sampson when he objected to the promotion of young Morgan, one of "the men behind the guns," solely because social duties of naval officers require certain polite qualifications which common seamen cannot be presumed either to possess or to be capable of acquiring. Sampson spoke for the aristocratic ideal. As that ideal is dominant in the American navy, an officer who repudiates it cannot be expected to rank high in popularity with his professional associates. This seems to have been Schley's real offense. He was tacitly condemned for it long before the maneuvers off the coast of Cuba in the Spanish war, culminating in the sensational victory at Santiago, had brought on the wrangle for honors between him and Sampson. Common seamen and petty officers who have served under Schley testify to his uniform democracy. While relaxing nothing in legitimate discipline, he has, nevertheless, acted toward the "inferior" naval caste as if they were no less human than graduates from Annapolis. In that respect he differed notably from the great majority of officers, so seamen who have served under him say, and thereby excited the prejudice and incurred the contempt of their "superior" caste. It is not improbable, although the reason assigned was Sampson's technical acquirements, which were alleged to be superior to Schley's, that the real reason for arbitrarily raising Sampson above Schley at the beginning of the war, or at any rate the reason which gave the initial impulse to it, was this ob-

jection to Schley's democratic disposition.

When that aristocratic prejudice in the navy against Schley is considered and the hostile tone of the department's instructions to the court of inquiry is taken into account, it must be conceded that Schley enters upon the investigation he has solicited under threatening disadvantages. Yet the questions involved admit of no other mode of solution short of the dilatory verdict of history. They are largely technical and can be determined only by expert investigation. Presumably the court is impartial, notwithstanding the prejudice that affects the naval caste from which it is drawn and from which alone it could be drawn. And the instructions, hostile to Schley as they are in tone, nevertheless do open up to searching inquiry the whole subject in controversy, in all its ramifications. To the verdict of this court, therefore, the public must turn, out of the necessities of the case; and upon it they will doubtless rely, unless the court exhibits partisanship in the admission of testimony or unmistakable bad faith in reaching conclusions. In the absence of those vitiating elements, the verdict not only will be but should be conclusive, subject only to the judgment of history.

Our system of distributing public lands, which began in profligacy and corruption, culminates in petty infamy. Millions upon millions of acres have been given away to speculators, jobbers and corporations. Even when some attempt was made to provide land for the landless, the crudest methods were adopted. Later the distribution became even more primitive. The lands were opened at an advertised hour and thousands of land-hungry bipeds rushed in pell-mell to grab what they could. All this would have been unworthy the intelligence of a people still in the lower stages of barbarism. But the latest method of distribution, that

in progress now in Oklahoma, is more repulsive, even if no worse, than its predecessors. It is a union of primitive crudeness with a form of civilized vice. A lottery regulates the rush. No one is allowed to draw in this lottery unless he first goes to Oklahoma and makes an entry as a homesteader. Having done that he may take his chance of winning a piece of land worth from \$40,000 for a quarter section down to a dollar or two an acre. Two of the prizes drawn on the 29th—"capital prizes," these, in the lingo of lotteries—were actually worth \$40,000. Yet the winners had only \$1.25 an acre to pay for them, the price exacted by the government of everyone who drew a right to any land, however valueless. But there were only 13,000 prizes—"capital," "common" and "consolation"—in this whole lottery scheme, though 165,000 people had taken chances. That was rather worse, on the whole, than the "layout" of the old Louisiana lottery, which the government broke up by excluding its correspondence from the mails. It is a shameful thing that the American government should have lured 165,000 people into this wretched lottery drawing. The more especially is that so when it would be an easy matter to distribute public lands without inviting a rush, without resorting to a lottery, and without exciting speculative manias. Were the government to offer allotments of public land at the usual nominal price, but upon conditions that the appropriator, his heirs and assigns, shall forever be liable to a tax to be collected by the local government, not to exceed in any one year the unimproved rental value of the allotment for the previous year, the problem of distributing public lands would be justly solved. Upon these conditions speculators would not grab allotments; but land-users would hunt them out, appropriate and cultivate them. Perhaps this method is too highly civilized for a people whose national government is still barbaric enough to set up and

directly manage a disgraceful lottery enterprise.

There is wholesome food for thought in the parallel which a Chicago clergyman draws between prize fighters and nations. As Sullivan found his Corbett, and Corbett yielded to Fitzsimmons, who in turn was knocked out by Jeffries, so, says this clergyman, "one nation holds sway for a time, but it soon gives way to a more progressive people; they in turn are overcome by still another, and so the merry game goes on." He accordingly predicts the downfall of the United States as inevitable. In considering this parallel it should never be forgotten that prize fighters are the very types of physical force as a human ideal. So long as nations take their ideals from the prize ring it therefore follows that they will, as the Chicago preacher says, have the careers of prize fighters. But what if they were to make the golden rule their ideal?

The Dubuque Telegraph is authority for the statement that the interview with ex-Senator Charles A. Towne, recently published broadcast, in which he was made to throw over Bryan and free silver and come out for Hill and reaction, is a "fake," utterly without basis in fact. Mr. Towne has wired Mr. Bryan, says the Telegraph, "denouncing the interview as a 'fake,' and declaring that he has not spoken to a reporter in three months." The Telegraph's comment upon this episode fits the case perfectly. It says:

It is incredible that any newspaper man conceived and wrote the imaginary interview merely to gratify his taste for the sensational. The political motive behind the lie is easily discernible. Evidently the interview was carefully and purposely prepared to discredit the democratic national platform and leader and thus promote the scheme of the eastern "reorganizers" to regain control of the party and convert it from an opponent into an instrument of privileged interests.

Not alone in politics is the "fine

Italian hand" of the trusts discernible, making the press of the country an agency for deliberately misleading public opinion. The same kind of work, bearing similar birthmarks, is evident in connection with the steel strike. There is a persistent effort to deceive the public into believing that the strikers made the unionization of all the mills of the trust a sine qua non, and that they are fighting for that point. This is false upon the face of the facts, reported even in the very papers that insist upon putting that construction on the demands of the strikers. Henry George, Jr., who, as a newspaper man especially expert in labor controversies, is familiar with the whole situation, makes the true issue of this strike clear, and he is borne out by the strike news as it has appeared day by day during several weeks past. Mr. George says that President Shaffer, of the strikers, has flatly denied, over his signature, that the strikers insisted on unionizing the nonunion mills and specifically stated that—

all that was asked was a uniform scale for union and nonunion mills, so that the nonunion men should get as good wages and other working conditions as the union men, and that, furthermore, all contracts prohibiting men from joining the union be canceled.

Mr. George does not stop with quoting Mr. Shaffer. He goes on to show why this demand in behalf of nonunionists was made by the strikers, and why the trust organs torture it into a demand for general unionization. Here also Mr. George is borne out by the current reports. He says:

But what is the significance of the matter anyhow? some one may ask. The significance so far as the men are concerned is that they have hoped by forcing a uniform scale to deprive the trust of the possibility of working the low-pay against the high-pay mills. They have also reasoned, with plausibility, that if the union can compel the trust to pay the nonunion men better wages than the latter are now getting, then the nonunion men will join the union,

thereby uniting the workmen for any offensive or defensive operation against the trust. The significance of the trust's contradictory statement is that the trust desires to avoid the real issue to find in the public mind some justification for its engaging in a contest with its men, seeking to effect this end not by a positive declaration of high principles and correct conduct for itself, but rather by a negative course of misrepresenting the men's utterances and motives.

Several weeks ago the supreme court of New Jersey rendered a decision on street car franchises which attracted attention because it was understood to threaten vested interests in that kind of property, but the exact point of the decision was not very clearly defined in the press reports. It now appears from the official opinions of the judges to have been decisive of the question of the right of a city to tax street franchise values as real estate. Substantially the same question is involved in the efforts of the authorities of Cleveland to make the market value of street car stock the measure of taxable liability. The New Jersey case arose over an assessment by the city of Newark of \$3,100,000 on the property of a local street car company. This assessment was made under the authority of a statute providing that all real estate, whether owned by individuals or corporations, shall be liable to taxation at its full value. But the state board of taxation reduced the city assessment to \$2,265,000, holding that the value of the street franchise of the company could not be taxed as real estate, because the street car company had no greater right in the streets than the public generally. One of the supreme court judges adopted this preposterous contention, and sought to relieve the street car company. But the other two very crisply rejected it. "If the right is no greater," asked Justice Van Syckel, writing the opinion of the court, "why may not every individual exercise and enjoy it?" To answer that question was to decide against the company. But not only is the contention that