

ple need is more room at the bottom, not at the top. What they have a right to expect, in view of our enormous natural progress, is better room at the bottom and not more luxurious room at the top.

Mr. J. B. Johnston, a Chicago gentleman, has written to the Conservative a thoughtful essay on privileged classes. Mr. Morton publishes it with the editorial announcement that "it demonstrates thoroughly well the fact that there is a privileged class in this country." But he adds that "there always will be a privileged class, so long as some men have better intellectual ability by inheritance and better development thereof by schooling and discipline than other men." Inasmuch as Mr. Johnston "demonstrates," to use Mr. Morton's language, "that there is a privileged class," by showing that the law creates these privileges, through the establishment and maintenance of monopolies of national resources, Mr. Morton's comment leads to a queer conclusion. For if Mr. Johnston has demonstrated his proposition, as Mr. Morton admits, and it is true, as Mr. Morton explains, that the privileged get their privileges through superior intellectual ability, then their intellectual ability must be superior in the direction of securing legislation for selfish ends. In other words, it must be sly predatory ability that the privileged class inherits and develops? Now, pray, what is the moral difference between predatory ability of the intellectual order and predatory ability of the physical sort? If systematic robbery by law is commendable, why not sporadic robbery with a club?

The plutocratic press of the country made itself merry a few weeks ago, both in news and editorial columns, over a newspaper interview attributed to ex-Senator Charles A. Towne, in which Mr. Towne was credited with saying in substance that the bottom had fallen out of the silver issue, that Bryanism had collapsed, and that Hill,

of New York, would probably be the next democratic candidate for president. Mr. Towne has in a most public and emphatic manner denied the authenticity of this interview, denouncing it as a fabrication from beginning to end. We have consequently watched for corrections in the plutocratic papers that were presumably misled by the faked interview, but thus far we have watched in vain. The confiding readers of those papers are allowed still to suppose that Mr. Towne said what the interview attributed to him. If grocers were to deceive their customers in a similar manner about the genuineness of butter, the grocers would be accounted swindlers. But is it not a worse swindle to sell false news at full price than to sell oleomargarine for the price of butter?

AUSTRALASIAN TAXATION IN COLORADO.

A political campaign is now beginning in the state of Colorado which will last 14 months and culminate in a momentous decision—momentous not alone to the people of Colorado, but, only in lesser degree, to the people also of all the other states. It is a campaign to determine by popular vote whether Colorado shall introduce the Australasian system of taxation.

I.

Like every other American community, Colorado is cursed with great inequalities of taxation, imposed by burdensome methods and producing inadequate public incomes. After some experience with the usual variety of familiar "remedies" for curing this revenue disease without disturbing its cause, the state senate adopted a resolution on the 27th of March, 1899, providing for a senate committee to investigate the "state and local revenue laws, and, so far as possible, discover their defects and a just, wise and complete remedy therefor." The resolution particularly instructed the committee "to investigate the tax laws of New Zealand and the Australian colonies and the effect of such laws."

Credit for securing the adoption of

this resolution is due especially to James W. Bucklin, of Grand Junction, one of the most prominent lawyers of western Colorado. Some 15 or 18 years ago Mr. Bucklin was a republican member of the lower house of the Colorado legislature. About that time he came across Henry George's great work, "Progress and Poverty," which made him a thorough convert to its doctrines. His political sympathies thereby revolutionized, he withdrew from his party and for a long time afterwards had no party affiliations. But with unflinching enthusiasm, yet patiently and by common sense methods, Mr. Bucklin impregnated his community with the doctrines that meant so much to him; and when the wave of populism swept the state it carried him back to a seat in the lower house. That was in 1896. While in the house at this time Mr. Bucklin procured the passage of a measure for local option in taxation, but it was defeated in the senate. At the end of his term he was nominated for the senatorship jointly by the populist and the democratic parties, and elected in 1898 by an extraordinary vote. Though opposed by a regular republican and a silver republican, he carried every voting precinct of his own county, every voting precinct of the adjoining county, and 19 out of the 26 voting precincts of the third county of his senatorial district. Even the voting precincts where his adversaries lived gave him a majority. Upon coming into the senate Mr. Bucklin renewed his efforts to establish local option in taxation in Colorado, meantime securing the enactment of a very important franchise law which recognizes the fundamental distinction between property in personalty or improvements and property in mere legal privileges. The result of his efforts to advance the local option movement was the adoption of the resolution quoted from above.

Senator Bucklin was, of course, appointed chairman of the committee called for by that resolution, and with him upon the committee were named Senators William A. Hill, silver republican, and Thomas J. Ehrhart, democrat. As there was no appro-