

"the God given privilege of local option in taxation, favoring a system of taxation based on land values." In testimony of good faith the convention which adopted this platform nominated single tax men for assessors.

Treasury statistics show that in the beer tax the beer consumers of the country are contributing most heavily to the support of the war. Beer consumers are on the whole the poorer classes—not the poorest, but the poorer; and it is because they consume beer that beer is taxed. If they were not beer consumers, a tax on beer would yield but little revenue. What, then, would the government do if the poorer classes stopped drinking beer? Would it tax the rich? By no means. That would be confiscation. If the poorer classes stopped drinking beer, the plutocratic advocates of beer taxes would propose a bread tax. That is the way the poor are made to bear public burdens in those countries of Europe where the poor are too poor to drink beer. Though they can't afford beer, they must either starve or eat bread; so their pockets are reached by taxes on bread. As there are more ways than one of cooking an oyster, so there are more ways than one of taxing the poor and letting the rich escape.

#### AN HISTORICAL PARALLEL.

American experience in the Spanish war, down to the appeal of Spain for peace, almost parallels the experience of England in the war of the Crimea. There is, at any rate, a most astonishing resemblance in some of the principal features of these two wars.

For nearly 40 years before the Crimean war, England had been at peace; and that generation of Englishmen was wholly without military experience in conflicts with civilized nations. The only fighting with which they were at all familiar—their familiarity with that being confined to a small professional class—was in campaigns against weak barbarians. The veterans of Waterloo were either

dead or aged. Precisely so was it with us when our war with Spain broke out. Thirty-three years had passed since the final shot was fired in the civil war, the last of our wars with an equal antagonist. Our military experience meanwhile had been confined to Indian fighting on the western frontier by professional soldiers, and a new generation had grown up which knew nothing of war except from history and tradition.

This parallel as to the duration of peace produced in each case the same hunger for war, and the same vain-glorious confidence. Just as we felt before hostilities opened, that we could sweep the earth with any enemy who would give us a chance to fight him, so England expected, with France for an ally, to overwhelm the Russians. War was welcomed by peace-wearied Englishmen, nearly 40 years after Waterloo, as it was by the personally and nationally ambitious among us, 33 years after Appomattox.

And the opening campaign of the Crimean war was singularly like our Santiago campaign. The allies invaded the Crimea as we invaded Santiago province, carrying troops in transports across the Black sea as we carried them into the Caribbean. But the allies were not under the same compulsion to go to sea to attack a point of no importance. Our invasion of Santiago was forced upon us by Cervera's running his fleet into Santiago harbor; but the allies deliberately chose the Crimea as the vital spot of the Russian military system. The parallel renews itself, however, after this break. As the Spanish withdrew from the shore upon the arrival of our troops, when by making a stand in their strong position on the hills they might have effectually prevented a landing, so did the Russians allow the allies to get a foothold unopposed in the Crimea. The Russians retired to the heights beyond the Alma, as the Spanish did to the heights beyond the San Juan, there to await the attack of the invading force. And the attack itself was so nearly the same in general character, in the one war as in the other, that, with but slight verbal alteration, Justin McCarthy's summary of the European battle might pass for a sum-

mary of that in the West Indies. Hear him:

The attack was made with desperate courage on the part of the allies, but without any great skill of leadership or tenacity of discipline. It was rather a pell mell sort of fight, in which the headlong courage and the indomitable obstinacy of the English and French troops carried all before them at last. A study of the battle is of little profit to the ordinary reader. It was an heroic scramble. But there was happily an almost total absence of generalship on the part of the Russians. The soldiers of the czar fought stoutly and stubbornly, as they have always done; but they could not stand up against the blended vehemence and obstinacy of the English and French. . . . On all sides the battle was fought without generalship. On all sides the bravery of the officers and men was worthy of any general. Our men were the luckiest. They saw the heights; they saw the enemy there; they made for him; they got at him; they would not go back; and so he had to give way. That was the history of the day. The big scramble was all over in a few hours. The first field was fought and we had won.

Substitute in that account of the battle of the Alma, "American" for "English" and "French," and "Spain" for "Russia" and "the czar," and you have a fairly good description in outline of the battle of Santiago.

The blunder of not following up the routed and demoralized Russians, of which the allies of Alma were guilty, came near being matched at Santiago by the withdrawal of our troops from the ground they had won. Gen. Wheeler appears to have saved us that humiliation.

But if so striking a parallel be lacking, its absence is quite offset by the similarity of important events which followed. While England was insane with delight over the victory at Alma, news of another kind came to chill the popular enthusiasm. It was learned that cholera had begun to fight for the Russians, and was thinning the ranks of the allies. At Santiago, it was yellow fever instead of cholera. What was worse in the Crimea than the appearance of cholera, evidence accumulated of the inefficiency of the provision the English had made to meet that scourge. Here again McCarthy's account of the plight in which the English government had put the English soldiery in the Crimea, is almost prophetic of

the plight in which the government at Washington put the American troops in Cuba. He says:

The hospitals were in a wretchedly disorganized condition. Stores of medicines and strengthening food were decaying in places where no one wanted them or could get at them, while men were dying in hundreds among our tents in the Crimea for lack of them. The system of clothing, of transports, of feeding, of nursing — everything, had broken down. Ample provisions had been got together and paid for; and when they came to be needed no one knew where to get at them. . . . Exultation began to give way to a feeling of dismay. The patriotic anger against the Russians was changed for a mood of deep indignation against our own authorities and our own war administration.

What with a rendezvous in Florida selected by our secretary of war, with reference not to military convenience, to which it was not at all adapted, but to the interests of a millionaire partner in monopolistic schemes, to which it seems to have been admirably adapted; what with northern clothing furnished for a southern campaign; what with food for a polar expedition provided for sick and wounded soldiers in the tropics; what with artillery taken apart and shipped piecemeal, so that when needed at the San Juan some pieces were still on transports, different parts of the same field piece being on different ships, while some were on the beach at Baiquiri and some at Tampa; what with such management of the medical stores that when they were needed it was found that they had been left on board the transports—what with this and much other inexcusable department blundering of like character, McCarthy's account of the management of affairs in the Crimea under the coalition ministry only mildly describes the management of affairs before Santiago under the McKinley administration.

One event of importance before Santiago had no parallel in the Crimea. The English did not insult their allies. And a highly important event in connection with the Crimean war has yet to find its parallel in connection with our Spanish war. The coalition ministry of Great Britain, under which the blunders of the Crimea were perpetrated, was ignominiously turned out of power.

### THE ETHICS OF REPUDIATION.

Repudiation of public contracts is so persistently associated with the idea of dishonesty that the subject calls for unprejudiced consideration, for which there could be no better time than now. When the public mind is excited with burning political issues, which directly or indirectly, actually or possibly, involve the principle of repudiation, demagogues distract attention from vital points by indiscriminately denouncing all such repudiation as dishonest. But in the absence or temporary subsidence of public excitement over those issues, which is the condition at present, the subject may lend itself to calm and unprejudiced discussion.

To identify repudiation absolutely with dishonesty, two wide chasms in thought must be bridged. It must be assumed, in the first place, that government has the moral right to bind future generations by contract; and, in the second, that all contracts are morally inviolable. If the government has not the right to bind future generations by contract, then future generations have the moral right, when they come upon the stage of action, to repudiate ancient government contracts which do assume to bind them; and if all contracts are not morally inviolable, then, even though government might morally bind future generations by contract, it could not do so by all kinds of contracts, and illegitimate government contracts might be repudiated without dishonesty. It is incumbent, therefore, upon those who undertake to argue that the principle of repudiation is dishonest, to prove, first, that government can morally bind future generations by contract; and, second, that repudiation of contracts is necessarily dishonest. But so far from being able to prove both these propositions, they can prove neither.

Government cannot morally bind future generations. To permit it to do so would contravene the root principle of self-government: This principle that it is the right of every people to govern themselves, has for a corollary the principle that it is the right of every generation to govern itself. In principle, it is as intolerable that dead and gone generations

should govern living generations, as that one nation should govern another. In degree it is worse. Government by generations that have passed away is that most oppressive of all tyrannies—the tyranny of “the dead hand.”

To no function of government is this observation so pertinent as to taxation. It is by means of taxation that peoples are most effectually enslaved. Whoever controls the purse strings of a nation, governs the nation. To a keen appreciation of that truth by the pioneers of English freedom, we are indebted for the familiar constitutional principle that revenue bills must originate in the popular branch of the legislature. It was early seen that if the people would govern themselves, they must tax themselves.

And it is the taxing function that is operated when one generation assumes to bind future generations by contract. The right of government to deal with funds in its own hands, funds and other property which belong to it, is not denied. Neither is it denied that government may make contracts to be fully executed, performed, completed and done within such reasonable time in the future as to make it clear that they do not constitute evasive attempts to govern future generations. What is denied is that government has the right to give morally binding force to contracts requiring future generations to submit to taxation, either in character or amount, without their own consent. Such contracts are in their essence legislative, not contractual; and it is a clear principle, not only of political philosophy but of jurisprudence, that any exercise of legislative functions is at all times, so far as relates to its future operations, subject to repudiation.

This alone is sufficient to dispose of the notion that repudiation is necessarily dishonest. But even if the point that government cannot contract away the rights of future generations were waived, and it were assumed that government has that right, the point would still remain that contracts, though authoritatively made, are not necessarily inviolable.

While it is indubitably true that repudiation of public contracts may