

beer I want to know whether you are going to drink like gentlemen or like hogs?"

"Oh, that's all right, Bill," answered one of the party, "we'll drink like gentlemen fast enough." The others joined in the assurance.

"Well, if you're going to drink like gentlemen," the host replied, "I'll have to get more beer. Hogs know when they've had enough."

These New York gentlemen, whose behavior recalls Tweed's famous query: "What are you going to do about it?" are some of them members and some of them advisers and influencers of the rapid transit board. That board is empowered to construct and regulate the use of a municipal rapid transit system—the great underground system now in course of construction. This was authorized by a popular vote. The ballot read simply, "for (or against) municipal construction of the rapid transit road." But the statute authorizing the vote empowered the board, in its own discretion, to do the work by contract. It did not require the board to do that. It merely trusted its judgment and honor.

The board decided to resort to contract. That decision might very well have been in good faith. But for bidding on the contract, the board adopted conditions which effectually discouraged every bidder but one; and after accepting his bid, it modified these conditions so as to relieve him of obligations that other bidders had been unwilling to assume. Not only did it thus give out the contract at a price several millions in advance of what the work, under sub-contract, is being actually done for, but it arranged to have the city lend the favored contractor the necessary capital for construction at the low interest rate of four per cent.

In other words, the city itself is constructing the system. It provides the capital, and at high wages it hires the chief constructor. But it does so in a form which gives to him all the benefits of contractorship without any of its risks.

The board then provides that the contractor shall have a lease of the road for operation for 50 years, with privilege of renewal for 25 years more, for a certain rental, upon condition of charging not more than a certain fare. Some idea of its fidelity may be got from the fact that the rental it demands is the lowest and the fare it allows is the highest that he law permits. Besides this, it is suspected, with reasonable shrewdness, that the

board itself is actually, though of course not nominally, responsible for certain convenient vagaries of the laws under which it acts, and behind which it hides when criticised.

The contractor to whom the rapid transit board has been so generously considerate is, of course, only a middleman, the real party in interest being the Metropolitan Traction company. This powerful monopoly, assisted by its highly respectable republican, democratic and non-partisan coadjutors, is acquiring as complete control of Greater New York as the robber barons had of the Rhine; and the rapid transit board appears to be its very obedient servant. Corruption on the part of the board cannot be proved. Indeed, in the vulgar sense of corruption, there probably is none. That kind went out with Tweed. But there is not much room to doubt that financial, professional and property interests are being played upon, to the destruction of public rights, with the same effect, to the same end, and with more real turpitude than would be involved in coarse corruption of the Tweed type. It is as probable as Tweed's venality before his spectacular exposure. This opinion has at any rate taken root in the public mind of New York, and not a few immaculate reputations are likely to suffer thereby. Already some very available mayoral material, of altitudinous respectability, has been counted out on grave suspicion. L. F. P.

NEWS

Our latest report on the steel strike (p. 264) closed with the 31st, when the compromise terms proposed by the executive committee of the strikers had been rejected by the trust. After an all-day session on the 1st the committee decided to go to New York in a body for a further personal interview with Morgan. They had been invited to do this by President Schwab, of the steel trust. On the 3d, accordingly, the committee, consisting of 15 officials of the Amalgamated association, met Mr. Morgan and eight other representatives of the steel trust in secret conference at New York. At this meeting the steel trust officials offered the following terms of settlement as their ultimatum:

Preamble. Conditions under which we are willing to advise a settlement of the labor difficulties:

Tin Plate Company—Should proceed

under the contract signed with the Amalgamated association as of July 1, 1901.

American Steel Hoop Company—Company should sign the scale for all the mills owned by the American Steel Hoop company that were signed for last year.

American Sheet Steel Company—Company should sign the scale for all the mills of this company that were signed for last year except the old Meadow mill and the Saltsburgh mills.

The strikers' committee responded with the following:

We, the members of the executive board of the Amalgamated association, hereby present the following proposition as a reply to that received from the United States Steel corporation:

Sheet Mills—All mills signed for last year, with the exception of Saltsburgh and Scottdale and with the addition of McKeesport and Wellsville.

Hoop Mills—All mills now known to be organized, viz., Youngstown, Girard, Greenville, Pomeroy, Warren, Lindsay, McCutcheon, Clarke, Bar Mill, Monessen, Mingo, 12-inch, nine-inch and hoop mills of the Cleveland Rolling Mill company, tin mills—all mills except Monessen.

Note—All other matters of detail to be left for settlement by conference.

In making public this proposition and that of the trust representatives, the strikers' committee explained that at the last conference, as at those preceding it, they had required the signing of the wages scales for all the mills owned and operated by the United States Steel corporation, while in the proposition given above they asked that "the scales be signed for none but those mills which are organized and where the men ceasing to work have signified their desire to be connected with the Amalgamated association." This modification had been made, they further explained, because the trust officials declared that the strikers wished to force men into the organization against their will and desire. The strikers therefore asked that the scale be signed for only those men who desired it. Each party rejected the ultimatum of the other, and the conference abruptly adjourned. Soon afterward Mr. Shaffer, president of the Amalgamated association, authorized this announcement:

Within a week every union man and every union man at heart in the employ of the United States Steel corporation will be asked to join in the strike now being waged by the Amalgamated association. We must set-

tle whether unionism is to stand or fall.

It was nearly a week, however, before the call for a general strike appeared. On the 8th it was sent to the Amalgamated association's vice presidents of all the districts in which there are mills owned and operated by the steel trust, and to the officials of the constituent organizations in the mills. Following is the text of the strike call:

Brethren: The officials of the United States steel trust have refused to recognize as union men those who are now striking for the right to organize. The executive board has authorized me to issue a call upon all Amalgamated and other union men in name and heart to join in the movement to fight for labor's rights. We must fight or give up forever our personal liberties. You will be told that you have signed contracts, but you never agreed to surrender those contracts to the United States Steel corporation. Its officers think you were sold to them just as the mills were, contracts and all. Remember, before you agreed to any contract you took an obligation to the Amalgamated association. It now calls you to help in this hour of need. Unless the trouble is settled on or before Saturday, August 10, 1901, the mills will close when the last turn is made on that day. Brethren, this is the call to preserve our organization. We trust you and need you. Come and help us, and may right come to a just cause. Fraternalty yours.

The call bears the simple signature of T. J. Shaffer, without other official designation than the word "president." Unless, therefore, a settlement is made during the present week, which is not at all probable, the strike now estimated to comprise 50,000 men, will extend to over 200,000 after the 10th.

The industrial war in the United States has a sanguinary counterpart in two civil wars in South America—one in Venezuela and the other in Colombia. Our last report of these wars (vol. iii. p. 682) was made last winter. They appear to be raging still. The Venezuelan president, Castro, has caused a disruption in his cabinet by insisting upon recognizing the Colombian rebels as belligerents, and sending home the Colombian minister. The reason he urges is that the government in power in Colombia is responsible for irregular invasions from Colombia over the Venezuelan frontier. But Castro's secretary of

war, Senor Pulido, resisting Castro's policy on the ground that the invasions are not encouraged by the Colombian government but are carried on in defiance of it by Colombian rebels, has resigned. His successor is Senor Guerra, a well-known military leader of Venezuela. There is no further definite information, but it is inferred that the two countries are upon the eve of international war. Meanwhile, not only is the rebellion in Colombia still in progress, but that in Venezuela has revived. Its leader now is Gen. Carlos Rangel Garbiras, at one time president of the Venezuelan senate. But he raises the banner of Gen. Hernandez, under whom the rebellion against Castro was begun at the time of Castro's accession to the presidency upon the success of the rebellion of 1899, which was led by Castro and Hernandez against President Andrade (see The Public, No. 85, page 8, and vol. iii., p. 153). Gen. Garbiras having crossed the frontier from Colombia, a battle occurred on the 4th between his force (said by President Castro to be supported by 22 battalions of Colombian troops), and the Venezuelan army. President Castro claims a victory. About the same time a series of engagements was reported to have taken place in May between the Colombian rebels and Colombian troops. All the reports on this entire subject are vague, and until further news is received no clear explanation of the situation is possible. The indefinite news is due in part to a Venezuelan censorship, Castro having proclaimed military law throughout Venezuela.

No news of permanent value, other than the foregoing, is reported through the regular news channels; but the socialist papers give extended reports of the socialist convention at Indianapolis, which closed its sessions on the 1st. These reports do not differ materially from the one appearing in these columns last week, which closed with the proceedings of the 31st. On the 1st the unification resolution was adopted. It is as follows:

Resolved, That the social democratic party, with headquarters at Springfield, Mass.; the social democratic party, with headquarters at Chicago; the socialist party of the state of Texas; the socialist parties of the states of Kentucky, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska, hereby surrender their separate and independent existence and

merge and amalgamate into one organization.

The name of the unified party is the "Socialist Party." It amalgamates all the socialist parties of the country except the Socialist Labor party, which is the original organization.

NEWS NOTES.

—Rear Admiral Henry L. Howison has been appointed to the place on the Schley court of inquiry made vacant by the request (p. 265) of Rear Admiral Kimberly to be excused.

—Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany, eldest child of Queen Victoria of England, and mother of the emperor of Germany, died at Cronberg on the 5th, at the age of 60 years.

—The Iowa republican convention, held at Cedar Rapids on the 7th, nominated A. B. Cummins, of Des Moines, for governor—860 to 780. His nomination was a defeat for the faction hitherto dominating the party.

—The British house of lords decided on the 5th, in a case on appeal before it, that a boycott by a labor organization against an employer to compel the dismissal of a nonunion employe is actionable because its object is not to benefit organized workmen, but to injure a nonunionist.

—Admirers of Herbert S. Bigelow, pastor of the Vine Street Congregational church, Cincinnati, and a lecturer and orator of distinguished ability and national reputation, are organizing a fund to place his services more freely at the disposal of the radical democracy. A pledge of \$100 for every additional \$100 raised has been secured to start with.

MISCELLANY

ABOLISH MONOPOLY.

Why hesitate? Ye are full-bearded men.
With God-implanted will, and courage, if
Ye dare but show it. Never yet was will
But found some way or means to work it
out,
Nor e'er did fortune frown on him who
dared.

Shall we in presence of this grievous
wrong,
In this supremest moment of all time,
Stand trembling, cowering, when with one
bold stroke
These groaning millions might be ever
free?
And that one stroke, so just, so greatly
good,
So level with the happiness of man,
That all the angels will applaud the deed.
—E. R. Taylor.

THE LARGEST SHIP IN THE WORLD.

To say that she is 700 feet long, with a beam of 75 feet