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The least destructive of all the elements of our war with Spain proves to have been the Spanish army and navy, and the most destructive our own war department.

The plea that we were unprepared for war might, in a measure, excuse the bungling at Tampa last spring, but it cannot excuse the murderous management at Chickamauga throughout the war, and at Montauk Point after the war was over. Regiments that were never within a thousand miles of the enemy's fire, have come home in a worse condition than if they had passed through a long and arduous campaign, some of them with ranks depleted as if they had carried a forlorn hope. Soldiers who survived shot and shell, and even the fever scourge at Santiago, have languished and many have died of fever and starvation in a camp designed especially for their reception and comfort within 50 miles of the metropolis. Starvation, needless exposure, and epidemics of typhoid fever are not to be excused by the plea that the nation was unprepared for war. An administration which could not at least furnish returning soldiers with wholesome food, after four months of war and when peace had come, could not do it with a thousand years of preparation. Something more vital than preparation was lacking.

Nor is the unnecessary suffering of our troops to be palliated by the successful outcome of the war. Success could be no palliation for murderous mismanagement under any circum-

stances. But our success, as is every day more evident, was a bit of unadulterated good luck. It can now be plainly seen that if Cervera had not abandoned Santiago at a critical moment and rushed to his destruction upon the guns of our fleet, Shafter's army would have had the alternative of leaving Cuba or dying by regiments. Good luck, not good management, won the war for us. Good luck might also have saved our soldiers from unnecessary disease and starvation. But it had already been overworked. Good luck cannot hold out forever against the incompetency of presidential favorites and the indifference of self-seeking politicians.

Russia's sudden anxiety to have all Europe disarm, should be welcomed with enthusiasm if Russia were not visibly winking as she makes the proposal. Those fabled peace plans of the wolves, whereby the sheep were to get rid of the dangerous dogs that guarded them, were not altogether unlike the peace proposition of Russia. Disarmament in Europe is a consummation devoutly to be wished. In itself it would be most excellent. But coming from Russia as the proposition does, and at such a time as this, it suggests the story of the egg, which, though perfectly good itself, was condemned because the hen that laid it was sick.

At this distance from California, we are in the dark regarding Congressman Maguire's possibilities of election as governor; but the way in which DeYoung's San Francisco Chronicle howls and spits at him, indicates that he has much more than a fighting chance.

Demands for direct legislation—the initiative and referendum—have been made this year by five democratic state conventions, those of

Illinois, Oregon, North Dakota, Minnesota and Michigan. The democratic party in Nebraska, Massachusetts, Kansas, Washington, South Dakota and Montana, besides the five states named above, is now committed to the initiative and referendum. This reform aims to secure upon the direct demand of the people the adoption of such laws as the people want, and the rejection by the people direct of those they do not want. It would require the submission to popular vote of any bill for which a specified proportion of voters petitioned, and the reference to popular vote of every important bill as a condition of its becoming law. The initiative and referendum would not necessarily give good government; but they would give the government the people really desire, which is after all the best government they can possibly have.

One Francis D. Carley, the head member and confidential correspondent of a Wall street brokerage firm, has achieved a splendid verbal invention. It is a new name for that something which figures in great modern businesses as "water," "privilege," "monopoly," and so on—that something which, by whatever name known, is at bottom nothing but legalized theft. Mr. Carley euphemistically calls it "invisible construction." In advising his customers as to what stocks to invest in for a rise, he says he has not backed Brooklyn Rapid Transit merely because it owns tracks and rails. Its value lies not in that kind of property, but "in its comprehensive invisible construction." Then, to avoid misunderstanding, he explains luminously that "Standard Oil stock is not worth 400 because of its pipes and machinery; it is the invisible construction which makes it great." So with Brooklyn Rapid Transit, the great expectations