

shooting in cold blood the rebels whom she captured in battle.

Failing by this bloody method and by the overwhelming numbers of her troops, to put down the rebellion, Spain then drove non-combatants into the towns, like cattle to the slaughter pen, and left them there to starve, as they did to the appalling number of two hundred thousand! In a word, for savage and wholesale cruelty the behavior of Spain to our neighbors across the Florida strait is unparalleled in modern times. Yet this barbarism continued until the year of grace, 1898, with the permission, to its dishonor, of the government of the United States.

Thus far the facts are familiar to everybody.

Now, what were the possibilities of bringing about a change for the better in this intolerable state of affairs by means of negotiation? Negotiation had begun under Cleveland's administration. Over and over again was Spain admonished that the island must be pacified, and over and over again did Spain assure our government that peace would be speedily restored. Each campaign was to put an end to the rebellion. But at the close of each campaign the Spanish were weaker and the revolutionists apparently stronger than ever, while the medieval cruelty on the part of the Spanish did not abate.

At last, more than a year ago, the Cleveland administration had by diplomacy brought Spain to the point of conceding to Cuba an autonomous government, like that of Canada. But this concession looked at the time like another piece of Spanish treachery, and subsequent events have proved it to be such. Though offered more than a year ago to pacify the Cleveland administration, autonomy was not formally decreed from the throne until last November, and the cortes, without whose approval the decree is so much waste paper, has not approved it yet. All the fuss and feathers connected with the organization of an autonomous government in Havana is for foreign consumption. That government has, and all the circumstances indicate that it was intended to have, no legal validity. But by appearing to concede it in Feb-

ruary, 1897, Spain satisfied the Cleveland administration, and by promulgating the decree in November, 1897, she diplomatically entertained the McKinley administration. So our negotiation for a period of more than two years resulted in tying our government up, while the Spaniards went on shooting captured rebels and starving reconcentrados.

It was obvious long before this that the only possible settlement of the Cuban difficulties, which could insure peace in the island and relieve this country from perennial disturbance, was the independence of Cuba. As soon as the Cubans had demonstrated their power to hold 200,000 Spaniards in check, every other basis of settlement was by the conditions themselves absolutely thrust aside; and all our negotiations for the pacification of the island, which did not contemplate its independence, were wasted. Nor would even a bona fide offer of mere autonomy have been sufficient. Independence, and nothing short of independence, was the condition of pacification. But Spain would not listen to any proposition looking to independence. Her reply to this government upon that point was emphatic.

Not only did Spain refuse to listen to propositions looking to independence, and warn us that rather than consider them she would welcome a declaration of war, but while negotiations were in progress, and as an evident menace to this country, she started a war fleet across the Atlantic. That the fleet was forced into the Cape Verdes by stress of weather makes no difference; its departure from the Canaries under the circumstances was in fact, and was intended to be, a hostile demonstration toward what was then regarded by Spain as an inferior naval power.

This was the culmination. We were forced to act. And in acting we were forced either to make an ultimatum upon the basis of Cuban independence, or, under the threat of Spanish invasion to suffer an indefinite continuance of Spanish sovereignty and inhumanity in Cuba. Congress decided upon the former. It declared the independence of the people of Cuba, and demanded the relinquishment by Spain of her authori-

ty in the island. Congress could have done nothing short of this without yielding the point of Cuban independence altogether. The declaration was not an act of war, except as all declarations of liberty are acts of war against tyrants. But Spain, treating it as at least an invitation to war, peremptorily withdrew her minister from this country, abruptly dismissed our minister from that country, and insolently notified us that her fleet was on its way across the Atlantic to meet ours.

How much further could negotiations on our part have been carried?

THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX.

In these bellicose days, with "patriotism" at white heat, it is hard to fix the mind upon such tame subjects as local taxation; yet these are no less important than the more exciting subject of war, and in the long run will be found to be more so. War is worse than useless if the only benefits it may confer are to be frittered away in methods of taxation which are as destructive to liberty as the oppressive governments that war is waged to overthrow. If men are to be deprived of their rights, what difference can it make to them whether this is done through political bondage to foreign powers, or tax bondage to domestic financial interests? The foregoing observation is not preliminary to a warning to the people of this country to be on their guard against the further bondage of bonds which threatens them, though that warning is sadly needed, but as an admonition to keep up their interest, even in war times, in the subject of local taxes, those taxes which are infinitely more prejudicial to popular rights than are the burdens of a national debt.

In this connection Lawson Purdy, of 111 Broadway, New York, has issued a pamphlet on recent results of the property tax, which is full of information and intensely interesting. From the experience of New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri and West Virginia he shows with great clearness how effective the so-called "general property" tax is in shifting the burden of taxation from those who

ought to bear it to those who ought not—from the rich monopoly classes to the middle classes and the poor. The "general property tax" is a system which professedly aims at equality of taxation through the taxation of all kinds of property. In New York, where it is in vogue, and has been made increasingly stringent with a view to reaching intangible personal property, there appears upon the tax returns to have been an enormous falling off since 1870 in the value of personal property, especially in cities. It is absurd of course to suppose that there has in reality been such a falling off. Personal property has in fact increased. The apparent falling off means that intangible personal property is escaping taxation, with the effect of throwing heavier burdens upon the owners of personalty of the tangible sort. The owners of stocks and bonds escape, because they can hide that kind of property; but the owners of horses, cows and the like must pay, because such property cannot be hidden. The same condition that obtains in New York is shown by Mr. Purdy to prevail in the other states named. It is universal and should long before this have taught honest advocates of the general property tax that they are on the wrong scent.

If it is desired to put the burden of taxation upon the classes that profit especially by such property as stocks and bonds—and that certainly is the object of stringent personal property taxation—the way to do it is to abandon personal property taxation altogether, and levy all our taxes exclusively upon monopoly privileges. Taxes upon these privileges, if properly laid, cannot be escaped; and they fall upon the stock and bond classes. The interests of those classes are buttressed by monopoly.

That such taxes can be properly laid is evident. By laying them upon the fundamental monopoly—upon the monopoly of land, which is the monopoly that would absorb all the pecuniary benefits of the abolition of other monopolies—the pecuniary advantages of every kind of monopoly would be subjected to taxation. And this is Mr. Purdy's view, for he advocates the home rule prin-

ciple of taxation lately indorsed by the Ohio senate, under which every county would be allowed if it chose to confine taxation to land values.

STREET CAR MONOPOLY.

Excitement over war questions may have the unfortunate effect of diverting attention from important municipal problems. This must be avoided if possible. It is of vital concern to the American people that they do not allow the present war, as they allowed that of '61, to be made the opportunity of monopoly sharks to secure liens upon public rights.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance in all directions; and in no direction is vigilance more urgently demanded at this time than in the direction of guarding street franchises. For more than a generation these franchises have been squandered; and now that the public mind has been awakened to the evil, it must be prevented from going to sleep again.

But we should not be content with exacting compensation. That would be merely to shift the advantages of street franchises from one class of monopolists to another. So long as street car companies get street franchises for nothing, they feed upon the public. Through the value of their privileges they then suck the life blood of our communities. But if they were required to pay for their franchises the public as a whole would be no better off. What street car monopolists pocket for nothing when no compensation for franchises is required would be pocketed by real estate interests if cities exacted compensation.

Upon the principle of dividing to conquer, it may possibly be advisable to attack street monopolies first and real estate monopolies afterwards. But even upon that principle, the true method of attacking street car monopolies is not by demanding compensation for franchises, but by requiring a reduction of fares. Under the compensation system, street car passengers—from the millionaire who rides twice a day between his office and his house to the washwoman who is compelled to use the cars as often or oftener—are taxed for each ride, merely to lessen city taxes which otherwise would have to be borne by real estate owners.

Of what use is it to the public—taking a Chicago instance for illustration—to charge Yerkes a good round sum for his street car monopoly, only to reduce the real estate taxes of Marshall Field? Let Yerkes pay for his monopoly privilege in rendering service for lower fares, and shop girls, mechanics, washwomen and the general public will be directly benefited. That is the direction that reform in the way of abolishing street car monopoly ought to take.

NEWS

At the hour of writing last week, no official news had been received from the American fleet in the Philippines since its departure from Mirs Bay, on the coast of China. The reason for this was that the cable from Manila to Hong Kong had been interrupted. It was known only that a battle had been fought and a victory won in Manila Bay. Notwithstanding the suspension of cable communication, however, baseless rumors and counter rumors were afloat daily, almost hourly, until the 7th, when Com. Dewey's dispatch boat, the Hugh McCulloch, arrived at Hong Kong with the commodore's official report. This report, and the cable letter of John T. McCutcheon, staff correspondent of the Chicago Record, who had accompanied the fleet, gave the only trustworthy and complete news of the situation at Manila, down to the 5th. Nothing further had been received at this writing.

Com. Dewey's official report was in full as follows:

Manila, May 1.—The squadron arrived at Manila at daybreak this morning. We immediately engaged the enemy and destroyed the following Spanish vessels: Reina Christina, Castilla, Don Antonio de Ulloa, Isla de Luzon, General Lezo, Isla de Cuba, Marquis del Duero, Elcano, Velasco, Don Juan de Austria, Isla de Mindinao (transport). The squadron is uninjured, and only a few men were slightly wounded. I cut the cable to prevent Spanish communication. The only means of telegraphing is to the American counsel at Hong Kong. I shall communicate with him.—DEWEY.

In a second dispatch Com. Dewey reported that having taken possession of the naval station at Cavite, he had destroyed the fortifications at the entrance to the bay and paroled the garrison; that he controlled the bay com-