

carry out his bargain when left to himself, without possibility of detection at the polls. This has been found to be the case in Australia and England, and, in fact, wherever the secret ballot has been put into practice. It is the unanimous testimony of all English authorities that it is the secrecy provision, rather than the rigorous provisions of the law against bribery of all kinds, which has abolished bribery at the polls in Great Britain. Speaking on this point when he was in this country last year, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain said:

"In my opinion there is at the present moment exceedingly little electoral bribery and corruption in the United Kingdom. The elections are singularly pure, and are daily, if it were possible, improving in that respect. Corruption, indeed, is almost an impossibility, owing to the fact that the briber is absolutely dependent upon the bribe-taker's observance of the motto, 'Honor among thieves,' for the briber has no means of ascertaining how the latter votes. This is due to the secrecy in which the ballots are cast, so very different from here, where the voter practically casts his vote in public."

Yet before the English law requiring a secret ballot went into effect, bribery had reached proportions there far in excess of what we have ever witnessed here, even in the late election. The secrecy requirement abolished it completely; for while, under the former system, there had been enormous expenditures of money, and charges of bribery sometimes affecting nearly one hundred seats, in every Parliamentary election, at the first election under the new law the expenditures dropped from \$15,000,000 to less than \$4,000,000, and there were only two charges of bribery made, and at the second election under it the expenditures fell off still more, and there was not a single charge of corrupt or illegal practice.

Sooner or later we must have in every State a reform in our election laws based upon secrecy in voting as the fundamental principle. It exists now in the Wisconsin law which went into operation in the city of Milwaukee last spring, and has worked with great success there; but it applies nowhere else in the State. It exists also in the new Massachusetts law which will go into effect next January, and will apply to the whole State. Experience has shown that secrecy is as imperative in the rural districts as in the cities, for the growth of bribery at the polls has been quite as alarming in the former as in the latter. There are signs of a greatly increased public sentiment in favor of the reform; and whether it is strong enough to compel the politicians to grant it this year or next, it is certain to become so before many years have passed.

#### THE SALOON IN POLITICS.

THE candidacy of David B. Hill for Governor of New York as the champion of the saloons was so open and flagrant an exhibition of subservience to the liquor interest, and its effect upon the national election was so obvious, that the public is in danger of overlooking some other manifesta-

tions of the same influence in politics which are hardly less important. This tendency is strengthened by the fact that Republicans find party advantage in fixing attention upon the discredit which the Democrats of this State brought upon their organization throughout the country by yielding to the demand of the saloons for Gov. Hill's renomination, and thus claiming that the Democratic party is always and everywhere the liquor party.

But the idea that the saloons are Democratic any more than Republican in politics, or that the liquor interest cares anything for politics at all, except as it can make either party serve its ends, is altogether wrong, as has been proved by elections held in other States. We have more than once referred to the fact that, while the Republicans of New York were inveighing against the Democrat, David B. Hill, as the friend of the saloons, the Republicans of Connecticut were trying to elect to the Governorship of that State Morgan G. Bulkeley, who has long been equally notorious among his neighbors as the friend of the saloons. The saloons of Connecticut, without regard to party, were as stoutly opposed to the Democratic candidate for Governor of that State as the saloons of New York were to the Republican candidate for Governor of this State.

Still more striking was the influence of the saloon in the politics of Missouri. This is a State long controlled by the Democrats, and where, according to the theory of New York Republicans, one would expect to find the liquor interest controlling the Government through the Democratic party. On the contrary, Missouri was one of the first States to accept the doctrine of high license, a law of that sort having passed the Legislature several years ago and been maintained against all attempts to weaken it. In the chief city of the State a Democratic Mayor, David R. Francis, has enforced the Sunday Closing Law, and secured St. Louis the quietest Sundays it has ever known. In short, Democracy has given Missouri, and particularly its metropolis, a severer restriction of the liquor evil than Republicanism has brought about in Ohio, and especially in Cincinnati, where a Republican Mayor obstinately refused to enforce the Sunday Law passed by the last Legislature.

With the same impartiality in the matter of parties as was exhibited in New York and Connecticut, the saloons in Missouri waged war upon their enemy. Mr. Francis having been nominated for Governor by the Democrats, the saloons of St. Louis, which are chiefly beer-saloons, threw their whole influence against him, and carried the city for the Republicans by a large majority. The *Republic*, the chief Democratic newspaper, says that "they polled at least 8,000 votes, and polled them as a unit, demonstrating the power of the beer-saloon in politics as it has never been demonstrated before until this election, when we have similar evidence of it in the vote for Hill in New York."

The saloon showed equal impartiality in national politics. Mr. Gallus Thomann, the head of the Literary Bureau of the United

States Brewers' Association, tells a reporter that "the Republicans were beaten in 1884 because they nominated a man for President from the great prohibition State of Maine, whose record on the prohibition question did not suit the Germans. I know what I am talking about," he added, "for I myself made the investigation of his record. I found that Mr. Blaine, while a drinker himself, had been hypocritical enough to be an ardent advocate of the Maine law in his own State. That lost him the German vote, and cost the Republican party the election." But the Republican managers changed front this year, and so won back the German vote and carried the election. "They found out their mistake," Mr. Thomann went on, "and in 1888 they nominated a man who had no objectionable prohibition record, gave the Prohibitionists the cold shoulder, and adopted a resolution copied after the utterance of the National Liquor-Dealers' Association. The consequence was that the Germans came back to the party and Harrison is elected."

The moral of all this is plain. The saloon is in politics only for the saloon. If in one State it throws its weight for the Democrats, it is not because it loves the Democratic party, but because that party in that State is on its side; and it is equally ready at the same time in another State to cast its vote for the Republican party if the latter party in that State makes the higher bid. In like manner it will oppose the Republican candidate for President in one election if it suspects him of affiliation with prohibition, and support the Republican candidate four years later if convinced that the saloon has nothing to fear from him.

The great advantage which the saloon has in all these controversies is the fact that its favorite, when once nominated by one of the great parties, is sure to be supported by a large percentage of the opponents of the saloon, simply because he is the regular candidate. Most of the Democrats in this State who deplore the power of the drink evil voted for Hill as the Democratic nominee, just as most Republicans of the like mind in Connecticut voted for Bulkeley as the Republican nominee. In other words, so long as the saloon can nominate its man in a close State, it can rely upon a large share of the churches to help elect him.

#### THE SUPINENESS OF RAILROAD STOCK-HOLDERS.

THE present state of some of our great railroads in the West is certainly amazing. We hear much said of the timidity of capital, and many bugbears in the shape of organized labor, State interference, and even anarchy, have in recent years been paraded before frightened property-holders; but it appears after all that their foes are of their own household. A really "smart" president or general manager, such as stockholders apparently delight to select, can do more harm to his own railroad, as well as others, than State Legislatures or Knights of Labor are likely to effect, and the success of these men of late has been phenomenal. The stockholders submit to the loss of their property with the apathy of the subjects of an

Asiatic despotism, while their servants exult in irresponsibility, and fight the most desperate financial contests with the pleasant consciousness that, whoever may win, their withers are unwrung. They are deaf to the startling admonitions of Judge Cooley, to the benevolent suggestions of the Commerce Commission, and to the warnings of experts upon the railroad question, and they are blind to the threatening attitude of the State Legislatures. They are willing to be as lavish with their stockholders' money as Artemus Ward was with the blood of his wife's relatives, and plunge them into a railroad war with as light a heart as M. Ollivier's over the declaration of war in 1870.

We are accustomed to smile at the folly of the Hindus, who, when unable to obtain justice, starve themselves to death upon the doorsteps of their oppressors; but our railroad directors seem to think that this policy is dictated by the profoundest sagacity. Whenever a railroad attempts to do business at a loss, its rivals are excited to the most frantic emulation. They proceed to punish the offender by showing it how much more severely they can injure themselves than any one else can injure them, and they have kept this up until several fine properties have been brought to the brink of ruin. During the intervals when they are not employed in cutting rates, they devote themselves to building parallel roads as a preparation for renewed rate-wars on their completion. Their methods have a curious resemblance to those of the territorial magnates of Europe during the Middle Ages, when the chief business of rulers was to enlarge their possessions regardless of the sufferings of their subjects. To do them justice, it must be said that they have the same excuse, the temptation to seize on a rich province being as great to a railroad man as to a prince; but some regard ought to be paid to the lessons of history.

Speaking broadly, the lesson of European history is that wars of conquest have seldom been very successful. Territory acquired in this way is generally held by an uncertain tenure. It may be held for a long time, as Alsace and Lorraine were held by France; but so long as there are other Powers which feel that it is wrongfully held, there is always danger of retaliation. No considerable Power can placidly behold the advance of another into provinces that are naturally connected with the former—provinces which, if not actually tributary, are at least in the possession of friendly Powers of moderate strength and circumscribed ambition. It was a great mistake for France to extend her control to Tunis. She gained little or nothing, but she incurred the lasting enmity of Italy, and converted a friendly and grateful nation into a dangerous foe. It is by no means impossible that she may eventually lose Nice and Savoy as a punishment for her disregard of those feelings of quasi proprietorship which Italy naturally has in African territory so closely approaching her own. Geographical and racial distinctions cannot be arrogantly overridden. In the acquisition of territory, compromise is almost invariably more profitable to all parties than competition.

Our railroads, it is true, need pay no attention to distinctions of race, but they cannot ignore geography. Every great road regards certain territory as naturally belonging or tributary to it: it is territory which already it fully supplies with transportation, or which it can reach, by extending its branches, with greater facility than other roads. If a rival road undertakes to build in this territory, it is sure to excite retaliation, and it will probably lose more by arousing this competition than it can gain by attempting to annex territory to which there are existing claims. The consequences are frequently disadvantageous to the communities that suppose themselves to be benefited by the competition. Unless the amount of transportation is very large, it can be done at less expense by one road than by two, and in the long run increased expense must fall upon those who use the road. Railroads may be built by foreign capital, but they must always be operated with their own earnings, and the greater the expense of transportation, the higher the charges.

To determine what territory naturally belongs to a certain road is often, of course, a matter of difficulty; but to fight over the question is not the only way of determining it. Men in charge of great trusts ought to be able in most cases to come to some agreement or compromise, and when they cannot, they ought to seek the help of arbitration. What stockholders need is some advisory board to which they can apply when they become convinced that their property is mismanaged. As it is, they are the victims of their tyrannical rulers. They elect them, it is true, but they are incompetent to displace them, or even to criticise them; they have not the necessary knowledge, and they are disunited. They know that their property suffers, but they seldom know just why, and they cannot tell what to do about it. It should be the duty of such a board to inform itself as to the merits of railroad disputes, and, if its advice was not followed, to point out to stockholders the errors of their rulers, thus enabling them, if they chose, to insist upon their correction. It would not be necessary to confer upon this body power to dictate policies or to compel action, and it would be undesirable, even if it were practicable, to have it established by Government. The railroad president who persisted in fighting after a properly constituted board had proposed reasonable terms of peace, would probably soon find that his resignation would be acceptable.

The prohibition of pooling by the Commerce Act is probably unwise, but no one believes that it would really prevent the railroads from maintaining fair rates if they were all managed by honest and reasonable men. The trouble is, that some managers have a very low conception of their powers and responsibilities. Their views as to obtaining business seem to be those of the ordinary commercial traveller, and they have not sufficient breadth of mind to appreciate the advantages of honorable management. They make rates for the public and grant rebates in private; they con-

nive at the cutting of rates by their agents when they have entered into agreements to maintain them; and they have created a dangerous public prejudice against railroads by their duplicity and arrogance. Most men do not demand special privileges and rebates on their own account, but because they are afraid that other people are getting them. Most railroads grant them, not because they prefer to, but because they are afraid that other roads will grant them. The prohibition of pooling makes it harder to remove these suspicions, but it does not necessitate the present reckless competition. The example of the coal companies shows that fairly satisfactory results can be obtained by a tacit understanding that is apparently not obnoxious to the statute.

The settlement of our Eastern railroad wars by the agency of a leading firm of bankers shows that the plan which has been suggested is not an impracticable one. If men of this standing could be induced, by the action of railroad stockholders as a class, to serve as disinterested advisers and peace-makers, doubtless railroad directors as a class would be glad in most cases to appeal to them. Certainly the stockholders in the Western roads have suffered enough, owing to the causes which we have indicated, to lead them to take measures for self-preservation. When a road has been ruined, the bondholders generally unite and appoint a committee to protect their interests. There is no conclusive reason why stockholders should not unite for a like purpose before their roads have been ruined. Unless they can bring themselves to adopt some such means of checking the follies of their trustees, they are likely to suffer quite as severely in the future as in the past.

#### COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

THE protest against the abuse of examinations in England, to which we referred last week, touches indirectly on the effect of competitive examinations for admission to the public service; and Prof. Max Müller doubts whether they have not been injurious to the Government service in India, where he was one of the most strenuous advocates of their introduction, and Mr. Frederic Harrison makes the somewhat foolish remark that, under them, "Arthur Wellesley would not have got into the army and Burke would have received low marks." The protestants suggest no substitute for the competitive system, but mention, in a faint-hearted way, that somebody else has suggested a pass examination, to be followed by a term of probation, which, as the *Economist* points out, would result in practice in the restoration of the old system of favoritism under a very thin disguise.

The fact is, that the competitive system in England is what its enemies in this country used to say ours was—an examination in a variety of subjects, with no direct bearing on the work the successful candidates were to do, and which only college graduates could pass. In England these examinations are so severe, and cover so much ground, literary, historical, and scientific, that not only are college graduates as such unable to pass