

increased throughout the State during the past two years in a way unparalleled since the crisis of 1873. Considering the broadness of the questions involved, the discussions were unusually practical in their character. It is true that many crude suggestions were made, Socialists urging that Socialism was the only remedy for the tramp evil, and General Bragg, representing the other extreme, demanding in extreme cases recourse to the whipping-post. But in the main those who took part in the discussions kept in mind the public sense both of justice and humanity. The chief result of their deliberations was a resolution declaring "that county workhouses or some other judicious system of labor for all prisoners, including tramps, should be universally adopted." Such labor tests, as we have before had occasion to point out, can rarely, if ever, be made directly profitable, but they relieve communities altogether of the men who will not work, besides furnishing work of some benefit to the public to those who are honestly seeking and cannot find it. The Wisconsin Convention brought out in a striking way the extent of the sums now paid by the taxpayers of various communities either to support men in idleness in the community, or to transport them to other communities where they will be equally idle. One exceptionally bad feature of the present situation brought to light was the wide prevalence in Wisconsin of a system paying justices and constables for their disposition of tramp cases by fees. One county official said that in his county the city marshal and a railway policeman had formed a combination by which the former's fees had risen as high as forty-five dollars a day. Rumor had it that men committed from five to thirty days were released the next day and again ready for recommitment. This uncommonly pernicious development of the generally pernicious fee system led the Conference to adopt a resolution "that the system of remunerating public officers for public services by fees should be abolished."



In the Children's Street-Cleaning Leagues of New York City a movement has been started which may prove a most important auxiliary in developing the higher life of our great cities. Several of these leagues have been formed in New York within the past year, under the initiative of Colonel Waring, the Commissioner of Street-Cleaning. Their object is to secure the interest and co-operation of the children in maintaining clean streets, chiefly through the means of inspection, reports, and personal avoidance of offense, it being no part of the design to have the children aid in the actual work of cleaning. They are pledged to abstain from throwing paper, fruit-skins, etc., in the streets, and to use their influence to this end over their playmates and in their own households. The leagues hold weekly meetings, at which reports are made as to the condition of the streets of the neighborhood, the work of the street-sweepers and ash-collectors, special offenses as to overfilled ash-barrels, etc., etc. The leagues choose their own officers—president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer—and their meetings incidentally furnish a valuable training in parliamentary procedure to the future citizen. In the flourishing clubs connected with St. George's Church the small boys have proved the most efficient workers, the President being a bright boy of only eleven. In this church the boys and girls have separate clubs, each meeting once a week on Saturday morning, and having the help and advice of one of the clergy. These particular clubs, of course, are composed of children of the more prosperous classes; in some of the more distinctively East Side leagues the meetings are held in the evening, to accommodate those

who work during the day. Once a month the leagues are brought into close touch with the Street-Cleaning Department at a public meeting held by Colonel Waring, to which a representative of each league reports. Badges and shields are provided for the children, and the sentiment of civic pride and usefulness is awakened and fostered in various ways. Children who learn to take a pride in clean streets will soon learn that clean politics are a necessary accompaniment of a clean city. The men and women who learn this lesson in their childhood may be relied on to cast their influence in favor of both clean streets and clean government in our great municipalities of the future.



## Cowardice and "Bunkum"

Every kind of government presents its own peculiar temptations, and the freer the government the greater the number of these temptations and the more difficult to resist. We have discovered by more than a century of practical experience that a republican form of government makes by far the severest tax on character and intelligence of all the methods of rule which men have tried. It demands more of the men who live under it than any other form of political organization. The two temptations to which its public men seem to succumb are the temptations to cowardice and to that kind of exaggeration which is popularly known as "bunkum." When a man holds his seat in Congress by a small majority in the district which he represents, he is tempted to follow what he supposes to be the general sentiment of that majority rather than his own convictions. He is tempted to forsake the rôle of the statesman, who brings independent judgment to the matters brought before him and speaks from personal conviction, for the rôle of the politician, whose aim it is to keep in office by always running in line with the voters.

Ten days ago, when the Cuban resolutions were rushed through the House of Representatives in hot haste, the entire Massachusetts delegation voted against this precipitancy, on the ground that haste in dealing with so grave a matter was out of place. It is reported that, after the vote was taken, a great many members of the House from other localities congratulated the Massachusetts Representatives on their action, and expressed their entire approval of it, and their regret that they were "so situated politically as to be unable to vote according to their own judgment." This downright cowardice is the bane of our public life. It explains the rash and precipitate conduct of Congress in foreign affairs through the whole session, until the country has begun to dread the reports of each day's proceedings, and to long for the time when a deliberative body which has ceased to deliberate shall cease to meet—a body which leaves pressing questions like the currency untouched, and gives itself up to windy truculence on foreign questions.

The action of the Senate on the Venezuelan message was an illustration, first, of entire uncertainty as to what ought to be done in view of the fact that the political situation had suddenly become very much confused, and that it was impossible to decide at the moment in what direction public opinion would go; and, secondly, of the lack of downright independence among the members of that body. For several days no voice of protest against haste and violence, and in favor of the traditional, honorable, and statesmanlike practices of such a body, was heard. Angry denunciations and passionate appeals for sudden action filled the air, and a great many Senators, who must have revolted from such a travesty of the manners, the methods,

and the spirit of a dignified, deliberative body, sat speechless in their chairs. By and by, when the second sober thought of the country began to be heard, and it was discovered that public sentiment was not stricken with the fury of the war spirit, calmer counsels began to be expressed. The discouraging feature of the whole discussion lay in the fact that those counsels were not uttered at the very moment when they were most needed, and that no brave and statesmanlike voice made itself heard above the tumult.

This temptation to cowardice, which makes so many of our public men mere echoes and trimmers instead of leaders, is supplemented by the vice of "bunkum"—that is, the vice of an exaggeration of what they suppose to be public sentiment. If a listener in the galleries of the Senate or the House during the debates on the Cuban resolutions had shut his eyes, he might have supposed himself to be in a boys' school, such was the rant, the violence, and the truculence of a great deal of the speechmaking. There was plenty of material for clear, well-balanced, and effective criticism of Spanish action, of the kind which is consistent with decency of manners between nations, and which ought to be persuasive in deliberative bodies; but that proud and sensitive country was insulted by every epithet which an invention weak in history but strong in language could devise. From one point of view it was laughable; from another it was humiliating. The orators seemed to feel in duty bound not only to express what they supposed to be the sentiments of their constituents, but to give that expression the wildest possible rhetorical exaggeration. Good manners and decent language are quite as necessary between nations as between gentlemen. When men of honor and force differ, they sometimes express their opinions of each other with a great deal of definiteness, but they do not assail each other like pickpockets, nor do they indulge in the language of blackguardism. Between nations the same proprieties ought to be observed. The Outlook has no sympathy with Spanish rule in Cuba, or with Spanish spirit and methods in many other directions, but, for the sake of our own honor and dignity, our public men ought to be able to express national disapproval without either vulgarity or violence. As a matter of fact, a great deal of this talking is pure "bunkum." It represents neither the indignation which comes from a thorough knowledge of facts nor that coming from profound conviction; it is an inflated expression of what is supposed to be public sentiment, and it brings into clear light a vice which a great many of our public men have contracted. The evidences of real strength lie always in power of independent action and in that moderation and balance of statement, scrupulous of the truth, which gains in effectiveness by refraining from every form of exaggeration.



## National Honor

It is very clear that what constitutes national honor stands in need of radical revision. In the conceptions of many people it is as unreal and artificial as was the old sense of honor which constantly bred duels. The case of Italy is in point. Italy has wantonly invaded Abyssinia, without a shadow of moral right. Her armies have been met by the best-equipped barbarous people in the world, and they have been overwhelmingly defeated. If they had been successful, the enterprise would have done little for Italy except add enormously to her expenses. Meanwhile Italy is practically bankrupt. She is loaded with an enormous debt; her people are crushed by vexatious and oppressive taxation, and the very vitality of the nation has seemed to

be diminished by the enormous loads which have been imposed upon the people. As soon as news from Abyssinia comes, the shout goes up that the national honor is in peril and must be protected at any cost of life or money. What is national honor? Is it a keen sense of righteousness, a keen desire to do justice, an intense longing to consider the rights of all, an application of a high-minded common sense to affairs? or is it a determination, when one has made an immoral blunder, to persist in it, to waste treasure and life like water in the carrying out of a policy which is morally indefensible and which is financially ruinous, even if successful? This is a good illustration of the conception of national honor which is being constantly appealed to in a great many newspapers and by a great many persons in this country. National honor is not a conventional or artificial thing. It is a fine sensitiveness which grows out of a noble thought of a nation about itself. It is not a blind, arrogant, unscrupulous forcing through of a policy which has once been inaugurated. It is not a stupid refusal to learn a lesson when the lesson has been taught.



## Law or War?

We publish on another page a series of opinions from distinguished men in favor of substituting Law for War as a means of settling international difficulties. These writers, and those whose letters we have previously published, represent every section in the community—East, West, North, and South; every class—merchant, lawyer, farmer, statesman, soldier, clergyman; each party; and both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic communions.

Judge Cooley shows that a permanent tribunal is entirely practicable; and Judge Cooley's judgment on that question would be conclusive with most dispassionate readers, even without being reinforced as it is by the similar judgment of Justice Brewer, Professor Thayer, and other jurists. Captain Bourke shows that the National honor would be safer in the hands of a tribunal comprising such men as Sir Charles Russell and Chief Justice Fuller than in the hands of "the political wirepullers, *et id omne genus*." It does not need Carl Schurz to show that statesmanship calls for this one further step in advance, along the pathway of National honor and prosperity which this Nation has been treading for a hundred years; nor such clergymen as Drs. Lorimer and Newman and Father Malone to bear their testimony, with that of substantially all Christian clergymen of every name, that the Church concurs in this judgment with the judge, the soldier, and the statesman.

Not one of these men, nor The Outlook through which they speak, desires to leave the country defenseless. Our navy is large enough. Our army needs but little increase, if any. Coast defenses we probably do require; but so rapidly is invention changing the methods of war that great sums appropriated for coast defenses to-day would probably have to be followed by new appropriations to destroy the defenses almost before they were finished. The spirit of peace forbids expense for offensive warfare. The spirit of prudence demands caution in expenses for even defensive warfare. And both the spirit of peace and of prudence admonish us that the best defense of National honor is to devote to the beam in our own eye the attention which Congress is now devoting to the mote in our neighbor's eye, and to guard our interests by the creation of a tribunal as quick to guard the rights of our neighbor as our own. Better than to prepare for war is to prevent it altogether. And the history of eighteen centuries demonstrates the truth that Law prevents War by preventing injustice.