

and unobtrusive. It is often disgusted at what it witnesses in connection with elections and party spoils, but it says little and minds its own business until the time comes when the country really needs patriots to defend its flag, and then it comes to the front. One kind of patriotism glories in fat salaries, social prestige and political power. The other kind cheerfully accepts the scant pay, hardy fare and dangers of the soldier's life. One kind is an inflection we have not yet been able to get rid of; the other is one of the grandest manifestations that human nature gives forth. The masses of the people are slow to distinguish, but all should live in hope that they sometime will learn, the difference.

#### TINGED WITH SOCIALISM.

There is much to be said in favor of the principle couched in the phrase, "Initiative and referendum;" that is, the suggestion and determination of legislation by the people themselves, provided means for putting such a system into practical operation could be so devised as to separate it from the evils that threaten to accompany it should it ever be adopted. A new charter is being prepared for San Francisco, and it is proposed to embrace within it the following provision for the initiation of legislation by the people direct, and its passage or rejection at the polls instead of in some legislative body:

"Whenever there shall be presented to the board of election a petition signed by a number of voters equal to fifteen per centum of the votes cast at the preceding state or city and county election, asking that an ordinance to be set forth in such petition, be submitted to a vote of the electors of the city and county, the board of election commissioners must submit such proposed ordinance to the vote of the electors at the next election. \* \* \* If a majority of the votes cast upon such ordinance shall be in favor of the adoption thereof, the board of election commissioners shall, within thirty days from the time of such election, proclaim such fact, and upon such proclamation such ordinance shall have the same force and effect as an ordinance passed by the supervisors and approved by the mayor, and the same shall not be repealed by the supervisors. But the supervisors may submit a proposition for the repeal of such ordinance, or for amendments thereto, for vote at any succeeding election. And should such proposition, so submitted, receive a majority of the votes cast thereon at such election, such ordinance shall be repealed or amended accordingly."

At a cursory reading this provision seems a simple and harmless means of ascertaining the wishes of the voters in respect to some proposed ordinance, whether or not they desire it to become law. But the San Francisco Chronicle points out that under such a section of the city charter, bonds to an indefinite amount could be issued, and the proceeds expended in response to a popular demand for public improvements, or for employment for idle labor. The Chronicle reasons as follows:

"The Chronicle believes that there are many improvements which San Francisco might profitably make, and does not hesitate to express the opinion that the cost of them should not devolve wholly upon the generation making them. But we think it would be a fatal mistake to make it too easy to initiate such improvements. This the proposed charter does by providing that an ordinance must be submitted to the people upon the demand of fifteen per centum of the voters. Under this provision all

sorts of fantastic projects may be suggested and entertained. If the privilege would cease with the acquisition of certain utilities the trouble might not prove so grave, but there is no assurance whatever that, having once entered upon 'a comprehensive system of public improvement,' the illusory temporary prosperity which follows the expenditure of borrowed money would not be taken for something permanent and induce the piling up of a big municipal debt."

The constitution of the state of California forbids the incurring of any municipal indebtedness above a certain limit without the consent of two-thirds of the voters of the municipality; but the Chronicle denies that the restriction would be availing under such a provision as that above quoted, and strongly opposes its adoption. Here is a case in which it is deemed unwise and unsafe to permit the wishes of the majority to become law; to allow the majority to rule. That is, the Chronicle takes this view.

Were the provision under consideration actually the law in a city like San Francisco; were times to become hard and many men to be thrown out of employment; and were an agitation to be started in favor of borrowing money for public improvements, it is easy to see that grievous burdens might be placed upon taxpayers, for in such a community the owners of taxable property are always in the minority. Such a use of the initiative and referendum might easily produce that disease of the body politic which has been facetiously called "bondicitis;" and it is very obvious that the minority who own the property and pay the taxes ought to be protected from possible rapacity on the part of a majority which does neither.

How to enlarge man's liberty without increasing the danger that he will plunder his fellow man, continues to be the same old problem.

#### CRUISERS, BATTLESHIPS, TORPEDOES

A correspondent of the "News" asks some questions about the United States naval forces, and first regarding Commodore Schley's flying squadron. This, according to a New York paper, is composed of the following vessels: Texas, Massachusetts, Brooklyn, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Scorpion, and St. Paul. The two first named are battleships; the others are cruisers. The New Orleans is the vessel bought from Brazil at the beginning of the war, and the St. Paul is one of the American line steamers armed as a commerce destroyer.

It is of importance to understand the difference between a battleship and a cruiser. The latter is a vessel, lightly armed comparatively, but capable of making high speed. Its business is to defend itself whenever capable of doing so, and to get away when meeting a too strong antagonist. The Brooklyn and Minneapolis are supposed to run faster even than the little torpedo boats. A battleship, on the contrary, is not constructed with regard to speed. It is a floating fort, heavily armed, and its business is to give battle to the enemy whenever found. The cruisers are either armored or only "protected." The former are completely clothed in a dress of steel, while the latter have a protecting shield only where the so-called "vitals" of the ship are exposed.

The special mission of Commodore Schley's flying squadron is, of course, known only to the board of strategy, but it appears to have been necessary to have a naval force stationed at some convenient place, like Hampton Roads, in case a Spanish fleet should suddenly turn up off one of our eastern sea ports.

With the location of the Spanish admiral's forces, other disposition could be made of the flying squadron, whereby more direct co-operation between Schley and Sampson would be secured. The idea now seems to be to concentrate under Admiral Sampson's command the fastest and most powerful ships of the two squadrons in order to hunt up Admiral Cervera and force him to a decisive battle. The powerful monitors Puritan, Terror, Amphitrite and Miantonomah would be left in the Florida strait to look to Havana and frustrate any attempt to bring assistance to the blockaded city.

A torpedo boat is a small vessel built entirely of steel, often not more than 1-16 inch in thickness, as, in order to get the necessary high speed, the minimum weight is of utmost importance. There are three classes of torpedo boats. The first are sea-going vessels, carrying coal enough to go 400 knots at full speed; the second are for harbor defense; the third are carried on board a ship. These boats are supposed to steal up on the enemy's ships, unnoticed as far as practical, and discharge a torpedo against the enemy, and then retreat. The Whitehead torpedo is the one in common use. This is a cylinder from 12 to 19 feet in length and from 20 to 15 inches in diameter, tapering to a point at each end. On being discharged it travels from 5 to 15 feet below the surface. It is divided in several compartments. The first contains a charge of gun-cotton, which is fired when the torpedo strikes a ship.

The question of the value of torpedo boats to a squadron in battle is not yet decided. Some naval experts believe that the powerful searchlights and quick firing guns of modern battleships and cruisers render them practically useless, since they cannot approach an enemy unseen, and a well directed shot is sure to penetrate their frail shell and sink them. The weak point in all contrivances of this class has been the inaccuracy of the aim. Vessels in an engagement are in constant motion, going, often, in opposite directions and at different rates of speed. This lessens considerably the chances of hitting the ship aimed at. It takes actual test to determine the value of the torpedo boat in naval warfare.

A torpedo boat destroyer is a vessel of superior size and strength, of the same speed of the torpedo boat. It is armed with machine guns. For vessels at anchor a steel netting surrounding the ship and suspended on booms have proved effective; but it is cumbersome and heavy and cannot be used except when the ships are stationary. The rapid-fire gun is depended on as the most effective destroyer of torpedo boats.

#### FUTILE EFFORTS.

Many of our readers will remember an amusing exposure of the methods of Rev. J. D. Nutting of this city which appeared in these columns last year. He resides and his pastoral labors principally lie in a part of the city thickly inhabited by Mormons, and he had always posed and passed as a religious worker who could pursue his calling without animosity towards others for serving the Lord in a manner different from that taught by his creed. But he obtained the address of a lady residing in an eastern state who had recently become a Mormon, and with no further introduction to or acquaintance with her, wrote to her in a manner intended to convince her that the church she had joined was a very reprehensible body of people. His letter to the lady and her rejoinder were published in the "News," and placed the meddlesome minister in a very embarrassing position.

Since then he has not made himself