

## JUSTICE TO THE RAILROADS.

Because there are some railway companies that are disposed to be arrogant, aggressive and grasping at times, is no reason why railroads in general should not always have fair treatment at the hands of the public. Some of the younger cities and more sparsely settled counties do not, however, always observe this line of conduct and seem to regard a railway corporation or the railway itself as a goose to be plucked whenever the fancy takes them that way. A case is now on in a Colorado court in which the Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf Railway company have applied for an injunction to restrain the city government of Pueblo from further interfering with its property, and particularly with the bridge over the Fountain river, which was set on fire by order of the city council some days ago. At first, as we are advised, the court hesitated to act on account of belief that the offense was beyond its jurisdiction, but after argument on behalf of the railway company, the order was granted.

It seems that the bridge, which is very necessary for the company's business, was built fifteen years ago. It has been declared a nuisance by the city council and set on fire, causing damage amounting to \$5000, and now the city officials threaten that the company will not be allowed to make repairs. It is further asserted that a project was on foot by which the city of Pueblo expected to throw the creek into an entirely new bed, altogether on the company's land, which would entail a loss of over \$10,000. An injunction restraining the city pending a hearing was properly granted. There are many better ways of getting satisfaction and compelling a road to do its duty by the public than by resorting to violence and destroying its property.

## A POET AND THE LADIES.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian poet, novelist and popular agitator, is pretty well known on the other side of the Atlantic. In the winter of 1880-81 he spent a few months in this country studying American conditions, political, social and otherwise. On his return to the old home the impression became pretty general that he was disappointed. His friends said he did not find this Republic the pattern for a commonwealth which he had expected. Others intimated that his chagrin was mostly due to the fact that his presence in our country did not occasion such demonstrations as he thought himself entitled to. Be this as it may, while in this country he certainly gave expression to sentiments which have a strong savor of spite.

To quote one instance: In January, 1881 Bjornson came to New York. In a conversation with Hjalmar Boyesen the question of New York ladies came up and Boyesen insisted that the average personal beauty is higher in that city than in Boston for instance. This gave Bjornson the key note to the following harangue:

Beautiful? Well, now, what constitutes beauty? They have soft skin, well-cared for persons, good clothes. But the

soul, the soul, my boy, that gazes out of this transparent covering is vain, flimsy, self-conscious, and filled with a thousand petty trifles. Mere regularity of features counts for little with me, if there is no nobility of soul that shimmers through. The American women I have met have, with few exceptions, been of this type. They demand much of life, but they have no idea that life has something to demand of them. They are clever, with a sort of flimsy, superficial cleverness, and they know how to assert themselves, and get the most out of their husbands and fathers. But they have been woefully spoiled. They never can get away from their own dear, little, pretty selves; they cannot lose themselves in a great thought, a great idea, and learn the blessedness of living for something better than vanity and flirtation and social tittle-tattle.—*Hjalmar Bjornstjerne Boyesen in the Cosmopolitan.*

There is no need for us to rise up in defense of American women. In every respect they compare favorably with the better half of any nation on the earth, and this fact is so universally recognized that a few unfavorable remarks by an enthusiast do not count for much. But in connection with this criticism of American womanhood it is interesting to recall a story that is widely circulated in Norway and which concerns Bjornson's views somewhat. It is said that the poet, years ago, when thinking of entering the sacred state of matrimony, hesitated between two young ladies. One was beautiful, the envied possessor of a soft skin, regular features etc., but without that "soul," of which he speaks in the sentences quoted above. The other was comparatively homely but endowed with a bright intellect that sparkled through her otherwise not remarkable eyes. For some time he considered the important question as to which one to offer his love-sick heart. Finally, he made up his mind—so the story goes—with this remark, prosaic enough for a poet: "I guess I will take the flesh; I have got spirit enough myself."

## NO REDUCTION.

The action of the county board of equalization yesterday afternoon in rejecting the petition of prominent property-owners for a general reduction in the tax assessment, probably caused little surprise. In view of the legal opinions heretofore published against the county's power to make such reduction, any other course than to deny the petition could scarcely have been expected. The board would hardly assume to pass on a question of law in defiance of all the opinions solicited and handed in on the subject; yet their refusal to grant the petition would not have been so offensive if they had with greater emphasis laid down that as the basis for their action.

As it is, they have succeeded in arousing much indignation in quarters where they ought to desire to stand well. The heavy tax-payer is not a person to be despised by officials whose operations depend so large an extent upon his contributions to the public fund. His voice is not to be peremptorily and petulantly stifled. Making due allowance for the inborn dislike of tax-paying, he must still be credited with a degree of intelligence

as to the actual value of the property upon which he is assessed. The needs of the county, as dwelt upon by the county judge, may be all that were depicted; yet no public needs can be held to justify exorbitant burdens or extortionate exactions upon the individual. Still less entitled to weight is the argument of one of the selectmen, that the property-owners hurt themselves and injure their prospects by depreciating their property; but as he atoned for his impropriety of speech by casting a vote in favor of reduction, he will doubtless be forgiven.

The condition of business generally, the scarcity of employment and cash, the reduction in wages—all this stares us squarely in the face. If there are pressing public demands, there are also pressing private needs. Retrenchment is the watchword of the hour. Those who heed it will fare the best. A just share of the public burden no right-feeling person will object to bearing. More than that ought not to be asked—and if asked it will be resisted. The action of the county board may be final as far as themselves and the general question are concerned; but the way has been paved for a vast deal of special work on individual cases, and they have contrived to make the unpleasant labor of the tax-gatherer doubly disagreeable. All eyes will now turn to the territorial board, and its action will be awaited with great interest. Somewhere there must be power, and certainly there ought to be willingness, to give a favorable reply to the prayer of these petitioners.

## TWO STRONG ARTICLES.

The August *North American Review* contains a dual article on "The Financial Situation" by the controller of the currency and the governor of Oregon, each presenting his personal views and diametrically opposing the other. The ball is opened by the former, Mr. James H. Eckels, who advocates the gold standard in just such a way as those who know him and of him would naturally look for. He shows that the present financial depression is different from any other that was ever upon the country and that it has been of unprecedented length and severity, but through it all the people have maintained their wonted equanimity, and he concludes from this that "no matter how bad the outlook there can be no general bankruptcy and distress like that of 1837, 1857 and 1873." There will be a great army ready and willing to believe the conclusion, where it would be difficult (in this corner of creation at least) to find many who support the supplementary conclusions and the premises upon which they are based; although it cannot be denied that the showing is a skillful and argumentative one, bringing out all the familiar and many new points to show why silver should be "cut loose from." He predicts that in the end the opponents of unconditional repeal must be beaten, but it seems at this distance as if the writer had permitted his inclination that way to get a little the better of his judgment.

Gover. or Penoyer is much better known to the average reader, not only as an official but as a writer and speaker.