

HOPE FOR HONEST JOURNALISTS.

Journalists are frequently accused of using their newspapers for illegitimate purposes, and libel suits against the press of the day are becoming so common that "what should be the mirror of public opinion is fast losing its reflective power." But we are pleased to state that a reaction is within measurable distance, as will be seen by the following from the *New York World* :—

"A military newspaper, the *Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette*, has been publishing a series of articles charging several distinguished personages with a conspiracy with the Sir William Armstrong Arms Manufacturing Co., by which the latter was to secure government contracts for the supply of ordnance. The company has brought a libel suit against Captain Armit, the proprietor of the journal in question, and subsequently petitioned the Court of Queen's Bench for an injunction to restrain Captain Armit from continuing to publish fresh allegations of corruption of ordnance officials pending the result of the action. The Court rendered its decision on this petition last Saturday. The injunction is refused, and the refusal is based upon the sound and sensible ground that the alleged libels come within the class of 'privileged communications,' since if the charges are true it is of the utmost importance that the country should be made aware as speedily as possible of the knowledge they convey. This decision marks the difference between the publication of a malicious libel for personal purposes and of a charge of alleged or supposed public corruption in the interest of the community. When there is good reason to believe that dishonest practices prevail in any public department, or that a public wrong is being committed by any individual, it is the duty of a faithful press to make it known. An honest public official would recognize this duty, and instead of blustering about libel suits would set to work to show that the apprehension was unfounded. In any libel suit the Court and the jury ought to distinguish between a malicious personal libel and charges or criticisms, however mistaken, made with an honest desire to check public evils and protect the interests of the people."

SWEETER THAN HONEY.

Those who have a relish for sweets, and who are wont to complain that the sugar used by the manufacturers of confectionery is lacking in saccharine matter, will probably be interested in one of the latest and most wonderful of the scientific discoveries of the age. For many years the chemist, familiar with the distillations of coal tar, has been aware of the presence of a slight fraction of a percentage of sugar or saccharine matter in this substance, but it has been left for Dr. Constantine Fahlburg, a German-American, to turn this knowledge to any practical account. After many successful experiments Fahlburg has succeeded in distilling from coal tar a substance infinitely sweeter than anything hitherto known to the human taste. The substance is called saccharine, and Fahlburg is enabled to produce it at the rate of \$12.00 per pound, and he is of the opinion that it will in time be manufactured at a comparatively low cost. Beet root sugar, and glucose, which have been inferior to cane sugar principally because their sweetening qualities were not as great, can now be made by the addition of a small percentage of saccharine, equal to the best brands of refined sugar in the market. Saccharine is so sweet that a teaspoonful converts a barrel of water into syrup. A small wafer of it converts the bitterest quinine solution or sourest acid drink into a regular molasses. It will therefore be invaluable in disguising and rendering palatable all the bitter and sour tastes in medicine without changing the character or action of the drugs. Saccharine does not decay, mould, or ferment, neither is it attacked by bacteria. It is said to have no injurious effect upon the human system, what effect has been noticed seems to be beneficial rather than otherwise. This immunity from decay will render it of great utility in preserving delicate fruits and vegetables. For family use, it is not claimed that the new substance will entirely replace sugar, but for flavoring purposes it is thought that it will. In the future the new sugar will be used by druggists, physicians, bakers, confectioners, preserve and pickle makers, wine makers and dealers in bottlers' supplies.

THE BOYCOTT.

In our issue of last week we published the letter of a correspondent condemning the opinions expressed by us with respect to the boycott, and calling upon us to show in what manner it could be injurious to the best interests of any community. The correspondent has answered himself most conclusively, inasmuch as while asserting that the movement is invested with the dignity and characteristics of philanthropy, he admits that in carrying it out the fundamental principle embodied in the Golden Rule of Christianity, "do as you would be done by," cannot be observed. Our correspondent sees no objection to the boycott, believes that it does not interfere with individual liberty, and that it is in short a powerful instrument for promoting the welfare of the toiling masses. Now, were this true, we should be among the first to advocate its use by labor organizations, but as a matter of fact it does interfere with individual liberty, and it does tend to prejudice the public mind against any labor organization which adopts it. In the first place, in this free country, the employer and employee are free agents. If the employer is dissatisfied with the work performed by the employee he has the right to dismiss him; on the other hand, if the employee is dissatisfied with the wage received he has the right to seek work elsewhere. But when the employee, in conjunction with his confederates, undertakes to boycott the employer, he interferes with his liberty to sell to whoever might buy, and as the purchasers are placed under the same ban, their liberty as buyers is curtailed, without their being in any way responsi-

ble for the differences which have arisen between employer and employee. If boycotting is dignified with the characteristics of philanthropy those engaged in it should at least display that love for mankind based upon self-sacrifice. Now it is apparent that the boycotters are not called upon to sacrifice anything, but that it is the boycotted, innocent as well as guilty, who really undergo hardships. We have taken the trouble to make ourselves familiar with the views of many working men upon the expediency of the boycott, and invariably we have found it condemned by them as harsh and injurious to the righteous cause of labor. Certain it is that public opinion has emphatically condemned this tyrannical method of forcing up wages or shortening hours of labor, and our correspondent will some day agree with us that it is at any rate "impotent for good." The great majority of mechanics and artisans, both in Canada and the United States, are electors, and as such have the rights of citizenship, with freedom to use the ballot box in their own interests. They can, if they will, frame the laws of the land so as to protect labor and prevent the tyranny of capital, but when they, without the sanction of law, combine to substitute a second tyranny quite as objectionable as that of capital, they cannot expect that public opinion or the common sense of the community will give them that support that they require in order to be successful. This labor question is a difficult one to solve, but its solution will be arrived at without resorting to questionable and extreme measures. Our correspondent must be well aware of this fact, and we most earnestly recommend him, and all such as are interested in the labor question, to peruse the First Report of the Commissioner of Labor, recently issued by the United States government.

THE WHY AND WHEREFORE

It is somewhat difficult for Nova Scotians to grasp the full significance of the land question in Ireland, for in this country we have a comparatively sparse population, and land enough, if equally divided, to give each man, woman and child in the Province a thirty acre lot. But in Ireland, with its dense population, and its limited acreage suitable for cultivation, the conditions for securing subsistence are greatly restricted, there being, including mountain and bog lands, an average of but four acres per head of the population. The truth is, that the demand for land in Ireland exceeds the supply, and as a consequence, rents, nominal or real, are kept at a point far in advance of the actual value of lands to the occupiers; and it was probably this fact that led many Liberals to object to Gladstone's Irish land bill, which provided for the purchase of the land by the tenants within twenty years. Now, it is well understood by those most conversant with the Irish land problem, that five sixths of the holdings would not enable the tenants to pay two per cent upon a fair valuation, over and above the subsistence of the tenant's family, and it is therefore evident, that such tenants would have found it impossible to become proprietors of their holdings within twenty years. In England, rents have fallen from 25 to 50 per cent, in consequence of the demand for land having slackened, and English landlords cheerfully accept the reduction, knowing well that a refusal to accept it would cause the farms controlled by them to be vacated. An English tenant farmer, if his landlord refuses to accept a fair reduction in rent, can very readily secure a vacant farm for a fair rental. But with the Irish tenant it is different, he is between the devil and the deep sea. He must either pay an exorbitant rent, or run the chances of eviction. If he pays what the landlord demands, bankruptcy stares him in the face; if he is evicted, he and his family go to the workhouse, and their support will add an additional tax to land owners. The Irish land question is by no means easy of solution, when it is remembered, that of the 660,000 holdings in Ireland, "the rental of 538,000 is practically irrecoverable by anybody, whether landlord, English Government, or Irish Government." It is plain that the nationalization of the land is the only measure which promises relief to the Irish people.

CONTESTED WILLS.

One might gather from the number of wills that are contested that the true theory is, that the desire of the heirs, and not the will of the testator, is to govern the distribution of property. But this tendency of the age is likely to receive a serious check, if the will of the late Mr. Tilden is hereafter taken as a model. "I have made," said Mr. Tilden, "a disposition of my property according to my best judgment," and under these circumstances he felt justified in inserting in his will a clause providing, that in the event of the will being contested, the heirs would be cut off from anything they might have otherwise received under it. If testators, anxious to have their estates freed from expensive and vexatious litigation, would but take the trouble to add such a clause to their wills as that used by Mr. Tilden, we venture to predict that many heart-burnings, many misunderstandings, and many estrangements, might be avoided. Of course, the insertion of such a clause would not prevent the heir or heirs of any testator contesting his will, but in doing so, they would have to assume a very serious element of risk. It is probable they would think twice before undertaking to break the will, and the public would be spared the nauseous narratives which are trumped up against deceased testators by disappointed heirs. A man in his lifetime can dispose of his property as he will, and unless there are grave reasons to the contrary, his will should be binding upon his heirs.

The Hon. L. G. Power has contributed to the *Dublin Review* a very sensible article upon Irish Home Rule. The Senator evidently appreciates the drawbacks in Ireland, resulting from Castle Rule, and strongly advocates distinct legislative assemblies in three kingdoms, with but one Imperial Parliament. He takes the Canadian confederation as his model.