

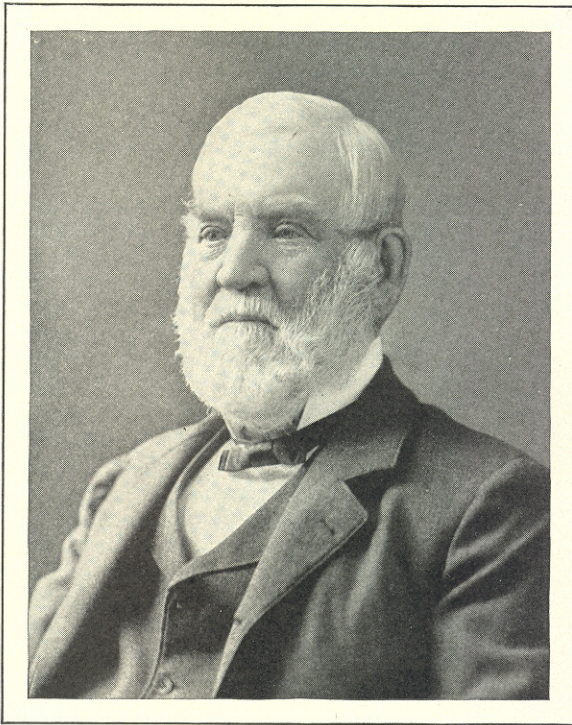
particularly in California. Francis J. Heney, the same intrepid spirit who represents the Government in its avenging course in Oregon, has worked to as fine purpose in California. Heney is a bright, clear-headed young man, formerly Attorney-General of Arizona, who came to the front as a shrewd, able handler of big law cases in California. When, after listening to many complaints of land iniquities in the West, President Roosevelt determined to strike at the root of Land Graft in California, he appointed Heney as an assistant to the Attorney-General of the United States to prosecute the offenders. At once he began to storm and escalate what had seemed the impregnable position of the grafters. He has measured steel with many a mailed warrior of Graft. He has put to rout

his superb battling, Heney's life has been in danger; but he has valiantly fought on and has gloriously won.

The most picturesque and puzzling of all these land frauds is that shown in some cases in the Federal courts in California and in the Appellate courts, where it is likely to drag along for years. These are the cases of John A. Benson, Frederick A. Hyde, Henry P. Diamond, and others, held for conspiracy to defraud the Government in the matter of forest-reserve lands. Now the jobberies of the land ring, of which Benson and Hyde are the leaders, have been conducted in such a wholesale manner and with such sublime assurance as even to touch the comic. While that particular phase of the frauds which relates to the forest-reserve lands is new, the schemes of the grafters had their origin away back in the seventies, when John A. Benson, long known in California as the arch-conspirator in the Coast land swindles, began his operations.

As an extreme type of the American opportunist, against whom the pale-faced transcendentalist aims his anti-utilitarian shafts in vain, Benson is a character well worth studying. His experience illustrates the fact that where a forceful man—a man of initiative and genius for fraud—goes in to make millions in the land business, he finds the tools ready to his hand. Benson is a heavy, paunchy man of the Ben Butler type, with a full face, gray, scanty hair, and a mild eye that looks straight at you. He was born in Jefferson County, N. Y., fifty-eight years ago, and graduated from Warren College, Ill. At twenty-one he was elected surveyor of Keokuk County, Ia., and held the position for five years. Then he went to California and first taught school there, but soon gave up pedagogy to enter the Government service as deputy surveyor.

It was while working about the Coast with transit and pole that the poor young surveyor saw the possibilities of rolling up a large fortune that awaited the touch of the cunning hand of Graft. After a little study he became versed in the history of the land frauds in California. In the course of that study he saw how José Limantour, in collusion with a



*Photograph by Taber, San Francisco.*

JESSE D. CARR.

He has strung a hundred miles of barbed wire around land belonging to the United States.

the boodling host; but there is still a redoubt in which a band of the iniquitous ones has taken its stand and fights stubbornly, using the ugliest of weapons—for example, enlisting women on its side to besmirch the character of its assailant. At many a stage of