

IN THE MILLENNIUM.

"I called about my personal taxes," said the wealthy citizen. "I was referred to room 44."

"Yes, sir," said the official, courteously. "I am the man you want to see."

Under the old system the wealthy citizen would have been referred, in succession, to half-a-dozen men who would not have known anything about the matter, and having, at last, found the right party, would have had some trouble in making the right party take a languid interest in his existence. But this was the Millennium.

"What is the trouble?" asked the official, pleasantly.

"In the first place," said the wealthy citizen, "I am in some doubt whether my taxes are payable in New York or in Westchester county. I have consulted eminent lawyers, and the weight of opinion is in favor of New York; and, as the tax rate is higher in New York, my own inclination is to pay my taxes here, because, now that we are in the Millennium, I would not care to have my conscience suspect me of tax-dodging. However, to remove all scruples, I thought I might pay taxes both in New York and in Westchester."

"I hardly think—now that we are in the Millennium—that Westchester would accept the money under the circumstances," said the official. "However, that is not a matter within my jurisdiction. You will have to settle it with your conscience and with Westchester."

"Yes. But that is not the principal point I wished to discuss with you. You have assessed my personal property at \$873,500. I have no doubt that your appraiser is a most careful, skillful and conscientious man—as, indeed, all our officials are and have been since the Millennium set in—but I think he has made a mistake in this case. I have made a careful inventory of my personal property and I am convinced that it is worth \$100,000 more than your figure."

"We have an inventory, also," said the official. "Suppose you go over it and find out where the difference is."

"I shall be obliged if you will allow me to do so," said the citizen.

After a long and careful examination he said:

"I have found out where the difference is. I have an extremely valuable painting—a Velasquez—which your appraiser values at \$2,000. Now, this painting is a genuine Velasquez,

and it is worth \$100,000 if it's worth a cent."

The official smiled.

"The assessor spoke to me about that," he said. "I am very sorry to say anything to hurt your feelings and I would not think of doing so if stern duty did not demand it. But our appraiser says that your picture is merely a very clever imitation. He is positive that it is not a genuine Velasquez."

"Nevertheless, and with all due respect to your appraiser, I am sure it is a genuine Velasquez, and I insist on paying taxes on it at an assessment of \$100,000."

"We could not accept such a payment," said the official, pleasantly but firmly.

"Then I shall be obliged to appeal to the courts. I shall apply for a mandamus to compel the city to receive the money."

"Very well, sir. The city will resist the claim to the bitter end. It is unfortunate that litigation cannot be avoided; but the courts will decide, and each side will have the satisfaction of having defended what it believed to be right."

Shaking hands cordially, the wealthy citizen bowed himself out, remarking pleasantly that he would have the papers served at once.—William E. McKenna, in Puck.

HOW TO REACH THE STEEL TRUST.

Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow, pastor of the Vine Street Congregational church, of Cincinnati, preached Sunday morning, August 25, on "Tolstoi as a Reformer." He quoted from a recent published letter of Tolstoi to the effect that "those who desire to organize the social life of mankind on juster foundations will not be able to avoid Henry George's plan, but will take it as their basis." Mr. Bigelow discussed this plan with reference to the steel trust. He said in part:

Oppression comes about in one of two ways: When the government interferes in private affairs; or when the government allows private citizens to monopolize public affairs. The plan of Henry George, which Tolstoi says must be taken as the basis of social reform, may be stated thus: Let the government attend to public business, and allow individual citizens freedom in private affairs. A man's religious opinions are his own private business, or any other kind of opinions, for that matter. Formerly governments used to try to think for men. That was an instance of how oppression can result from the government's trying to attend to private business.

The steel trust furnishes an illustration of oppression from the practice of allowing private citizens the exercise — unofficially, irresponsibly and for private gain—of public functions.

Your home is a private institution. Unless they come as invited guests, your neighbors have no business in your house. That is adapted to the needs of your family. But the street is not your private property. If it were, your neighbors could not get to their homes without paying toll. The street must be free to all—it must be administered by public servants as public property, for unless all have equal right to use it liberty is destroyed.

Likewise your store is a private institution; so are the farm and the factory. The farmer is not dependent for his goods upon this merchant. He may go to another. The merchant may open or close his store. The manufacturer may run his factory or close it down. He is not obliged to make any particular article. All farmers and merchants and manufacturers as such are private citizens. But the railroad is essential to their business. None of them can do without it. It is essential to modern industrial life. But while the railroad is public in its character by virtue of the fact that all are dependent upon it, we leave this public function in private hands, and by this radical blunder we leave industry at the mercy of the syndicate which has the power to make the rate "as high as the traffic will stand." An independent mine owner takes a contract for delivering so much coal at a given date. A combine is formed for the purpose of compelling the independent miner to go out of business. The railroad managers are in the conspiracy. They tell the independent miner that they are sorry that they have not half as many cars as he needs. This fictitious scarcity of cars is the cause of his failure to deliver the coal in time. Thus he loses his customers, and is deprived of his liberty to mine coal.

Railroads are public highways. While these public institutions are left in private hands railroad magnates have the legal right to be highway robbers.

To make these roads pay taxes on the salable value of their stocks and bonds, or to reduce and regulate rates, or even to operate them as a part of the public service—this would

not bring the millennium, but it would be a step in the right direction.

Mr. Schwab has testified before the industrial commission that the steel trust controls 80 per cent. of the ore fields of the northwest, and has a monopoly of the Connellsville coal fields—60,000 acres in all—worth, as he said, more than \$60,000 per acre.

Ore fields and coal mines are in their nature public property. The steel trust has a right to use ore and coal. It has no right, or rather we have no right, and it is very bad policy for us to permit the steel trust to gain a monopoly of these raw materials. Property in these raw materials is so different in its nature from property which is the product of labor that public interest requires that such restrictions shall be imposed upon its acquisition that it may be freely used, but not monopolized. To prevent this monopolization, and to give capital and labor access to the raw materials, it was the proposition of Henry George to tax monopoly out of existence. For instance, if the steel trust has purchased 60,000 acres of Connellsville coal, it has done so, not because it has use for so much coal but because it seeks to prevent competitors from using it. Mr. Schwab says that the value to his corporation of this monopoly of the best coking coal in America is worth \$60,000 an acre. Then let the trust pay taxes on that valuation. As Tolstoi says, the plan is as clear as the multiplication table. Such a tax would compel speculators to let go of such coal fields as they could not use. This would give others a chance.

This reform, applied to the mines and ore fields, and applied to city lots as well—even this would not bring the millennium to us, but it would take us a long step toward the millennium, and that is all anyone claims for it. We boast that the world is better than it was. This could not be if men had not been willing to see their mistakes. Henry George has shown us a few. Let us so act that our children can boast that their world is better than ours.

LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY.

For The Public.

The impending change of the Indian territory from a collection of tribal governments to a regular territory of the United States is especially interesting for several reasons. One of these is that the system of landholding therein will be altered from tribal to individual ownership. The tribal

system has been in theory a kind of communal ownership, but in practice it has fallen far short of that.

The five principal tribes of territory Indians are the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Cherokees and Seminoles. Any member of one of these tribes has been allowed to use, rent to others, or cause to be used, as much land as he could take possession of and fence in. Had all the lands been equally valuable and unlimited this might have been equitable enough. No doubt it was as the matter stood originally. But it resulted in the rental of large tracts of land to cattlemen and business men by a small minority of shrewd Indians, and, the margin of cultivation being thus crowded down, a further result was the introduction of the rental and wage methods of employment, to the disadvantage of large numbers of duller tribesmen. Under treaties with the several tribes or "nations" made by what is called the Dawes commission, this is to be altered to the system of land-holding in severalty, prior to organization of these "nations" into a United States territory. When this is accomplished, the Indian lands, under certain partial and temporary restrictions, may be bought and sold by Indians and whites as are lands in the states of the union, and whites will have free commercial access to the territory. A large number of the Indians, and especially the full bloods, have persistently obstructed the processes of the change, holding that it was merely the culminating step in a long process by which they have been deprived of all their lands by the whites. They say that a majority of the Indians, not being accustomed to civilized business methods, and not practiced in the restraint of their desires from prudential motives, will part with their lands as soon as they are allowed to, and become paupers and charges on the community. Considering the previous policy of the government towards the Indians as wards, this is not an unreasonable contention. That policy has been such as to weaken or leave undeveloped the character of the Indian because he had means of support without much effort, sufficient unless he were of an ambitious or avaricious disposition.

It is true there will be certain safeguards thrown around the disposition of parts of the allotments, such as the setting aside of a portion of each homestead as inalienable for 21 years, not taxable, and not liable for debt. But even these portions may be sold upon determination of courts that it is for the best interest of the allottee.

Present practice already shows that in such cases where buyer and seller are agreed and the terms not too obviously flagrant, the desired exchange may be effected. There seems to be no reason for inferring that individual ownership of lands will result differently in the Indian territory from elsewhere, except as it will not result so well on account of the inexperience in commercial and competitive practices and the lack of self-restraint of the Indian.

There are, however, in one or two respects, favorable provisions for the benefit of the citizens in the system about to go into effect. In the Choctaw and Chickasaw joint reservation there are large and rich tracts of coal lands, which have hitherto been leased to mining companies by those tribes on royalties. The return from these leases has been utilized for common purposes, principally for a school fund; and has been large enough so that the schools of those nations have been of excellent character and no burden on individual earnings. Of such manifest advantage has this been that the idea will be applied to all coal, oil, asphalt or other mineral lands of the new territory. The royalties will be small (15 cents per ton of coal, 60 cents per ton of asphalt), but they may be legally advanced, and since "mineral rights" will hold precedence over certain other claims, will without doubt furnish a large and favorable source of income for common purposes. It is probable that the return from mineral lands may not be so large eventually as that from the one section in each township set aside for similar purposes in the Cherokee strip of Oklahoma, or the two sections in each township of the lands just opened in the same territory, but the principle is correct and valuable. Indeed, to one unaccustomed to our conventions about land, it would seem strange that the same principle is not applied to all the other lands of the territory. If the community has a right to take mineral values in this way, the same would apply to the values of other lands so far as those values are the product of the demand for the lands caused by the presence of communities, and not the product of individual labor in the form of improvements. Or if it is a matter of expediency, it is not apparent that it would not be well to similarly lease (or preferably tax) the unimproved values of lands of every character, allowing the Indians to choose and retain allotments under such tenure. All the dangers felt by the Indians as to the ultimate aliena-