

during the preceding year, had they not?" inquired the lady.

"The officers—president, vice-president, general superintendent, secretary, treasurer, and two or three others—managed the enterprise; but for their work they were paid large salaries—aside from what was distributed to them as their share of dividends.

"This money paid to stockholders, for doing nothing, might better have been paid to workers, for doing something. To begin with, one hundred thousand dollars of this amount ought to be expended in paying higher wages to conductors, motormen and other employes; at the same time reducing their hours of labor. This of course would necessitate the employment of more men; but there are plenty of men in the city, out of work and willing to work at good wages for eight hours a day. There would remain more than \$600,000 with which to buy and equip additional cars, and pay additional conductors and motormen, and defray incidental expenses connected with a more complete and efficient service. This, however, is a digression; my text, for the present, is you.

"These hundred or more additional cars would afford additional seating facilities for the public, so that (except on inauguration day, or some other exceptional occasion), every body could have a seat.

"At the close of the discussion, you will remember, you voted for a continuance of the existing plan, and in opposition to having cars and seats enough so that you could have a chance to sit down. So, in being compelled to stand up and hang onto a strap, I cannot see that you have any ground of complaint against me, for you are getting exactly what you voted for."

"Will you please push the electric button for me," said the lady; "I get off at the next corner. I will think over what you have said."

"I am not certain about that," said the gentleman. "I have only repeated what the advocate of municipal ownership said at the Y. M. C. A. debate, and you evidently did not think of it then, for you proceeded forthwith to vote against him. For a dozen years past I have seen your name in the newspapers as having read at different clubs essays on such subjects as, 'The Renaissance,' 'The Mound-builders,' 'Mary, Queen of Scots,' 'Life and Times of Savonarola,' and other matters that call for the use of the history and cyclopaedia, and not of your own reason. Your mind has been trained to delve among the dusty records of the dead and buried past; not to grapple with the practical problems of the living present. I have not much faith in an old brain acquiring new habits of thought. However, if you are compelled for a few years more to ride standing up and hanging to a strap (when you can find one unoccupied), you may possibly see the propriety and justice, the next time opportunity offers, of voting for a system that will give you a chance to sit down without asking somebody else to get up."

(Of course the foregoing conversation never actually took place; but circumstances occurred under which it might have taken place, if the gentleman of the dialogue had not been prevented by courtesy toward the lady from telling her the truth. In any event, it may serve to show some woman who has to stand up on the cars that her indignation should be directed, not to the man who retains his seat, but to the company that purposely supplies the line with as few cars as possible, in order to reduce expenses as much as possible, so as to have as large dividends as possible to distribute annually among non-working stockholders.)

J. L. M'CREERY.

Washington, D. C.

KINGS AND VIKINGS.

Ernest Crosby, in *Ariel* for April, 1906.

King-stock is booming. It is two hundred and fifty years since England beheaded her king and established the Commonwealth, and to-day among Englishmen kingship is more popular than ever. In the middle of the nineteenth century every dream of reform in Europe took the shape of a republic, but it is noticeable now that the more sober revolutionists in Russia prefer to continue to make use of the monarchy, and Norway has actually gone out of her way to set up a new dynasty. The Norwegians are among the most democratic people in the world, and they abolished titles of nobility long ago, and yet they have chosen a king. Where were Bjornson, the stout defender of the people, and Ibsen, the strong individualist, and Nansen, who had been spoken of as a possible President? Sixty years ago, according to Emerson, "God said, 'I am tired of kings!'" Was Emerson mistaken, or has "Vox populi" ceased to be "Vox Dei"? And the new king at Christiania is no Norwegian, nor even a Dane, though his father is king of Denmark. They are Germans without a drop of Scandinavian blood in their veins, and these proud children of the Vikings had to import from abroad some one fit to rule them, and to admit the bankruptcy of their own race! Surely that was disgraceful. And the worst of it is that it is all our fault!

Yes, it is our fault—no one else's. To us more than to any people was committed the democratic dream—the trust of realizing the beauties of liberty and equality and fraternity—of banishing from our territory all privilege and poverty, and of conducting an honest experiment in the practice of brotherhood. We accepted the task, and with a rich and boundless continent open to us, it seemed certain of success. Franklin and Jefferson never wearied of pointing out the vast advantages of the inhabitants of our country. No one remained long in the position of an employe, for the world was before him, and he could set up for himself anywhere. If worst came to worst, there was the forest, and the virgin soil, and the raw material of a log cabin to be had for the asking, and employers, who realized this, paid high wages accordingly, and hence, while few became rich, the many had plenty, and this is an ideal condition of things from the economic point of view.

And so it always is where the natural gifts of nature are not monopolized. A friend of mine told me how it was recently in Alaska. At a certain mining camp on the coast men could earn an average of sixteen dollars a day by digging for gold, and hence the waiters in the hotel and other similar workers had to be paid that sum per day, or else they would throw up their jobs and go to digging. At last all the gold land was staked out and there was none left for the newcomers, and at once wages went down, till they reached five dollars a day, at which figure a man almost starved, prices were so high. At this juncture one of the waiters who had been a lawyer bethought himself that no individual had a legal right to stake out land between high and low water mark, and this strip included some of the richest deposits. His contention was sustained by the court, and immediately wages jumped up to sixteen dollars again, so that the waiters might be persuaded to continue to serve instead of digging on the shore. Such is the automatic effect of free access to the gifts of nature, the proper heritage of man.

Is our country really fully occupied, so that there is nothing left for the people who are disinherited? We know this is not so. You can lose yourselves in the backwoods within the limits of Greater New

York. There is room in the United States for ten times our present population, and perhaps a hundred times. It has all been staked out, that is all. It is "owned," not in the sense of being used by its owners, but of having other people shut out from it. To "own" ought to mean to "make use of," but we have made it mean to "exclude." All the good sites are fenced in, waiting for a rise. The community by its industry is rapidly multiplying the values of situation in our cities, along the shores of our seaports, on the highways of all kinds that connect our centers of population—and private individuals are pocketing the "unearned increment"—which is not really "unearned," for it is earned by the community itself.

This "staking-off" process has been in existence so long that we can hardly imagine any other. But let us suppose that the question presents itself in some other planet, where our terrestrial prejudices do not obtain—in Mars, for instance, where Mr. Tesla hoped not long ago to establish a branch of his telephone system. Let us ask the good Martians a simple question. "Hello, hello! Is that Mars? Do nine-tenths of your inhabitants pay rent to the other tenth for the privilege of remaining on the surface of the planet when they couldn't get off if they tried?" Perhaps they would ring us off and refuse to waste their time in answering fool questions.

Our democracy has proved a disappointment with its extremes of wealth and poverty, of power and impotency, of comfort and misery, of palace and slum, because, while it insisted upon political equality of opportunity, it forgot all about economic equality of opportunity. A free ballot is a good thing, but a free billet, a free job, is better, and in an unmonopolized world jobs would be free. It is the artificial scarcity of monopoly that has reproduced in America all the problems which beset Europe. If we had carried our democracy into the industrial world, there would not have been a king left on his throne in Europe to-day. Mrs. Carlyle, way back in the thirties, wrote that kings were a sorry sight at that advanced day, and they were. Ten years later crowns were swaying and toppling and falling in every direction, and if we had been true to our trust, they would have come off for good. But the alternative for monarchy is democracy, and America, the great example of democracy, was showing signs of failure. At first Negro slavery belied our pretensions to equal rights, and when we had settled that, after years of turbulence and war, signs were not wanting of new inequalities, not unlike those of the old world. If it is a mere question between billionaires and marquises, we can hardly blame people for not thinking a change worth while. Haakon the Seventh can be handled more easily than Rockefeller the First, for the former has granted a constitution to his people, which the latter never has. I am sorry that Bjornson is not President of Norway, and I regret the accession of Haakon VII., but we can hardly blame the Norwegians, for it is all our own fault.

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A BALLADE OF EASTER TIME.

For The Public.

I who with married woes have long forborne.
Do now rebel against my loving wife
Who holds my pipe and all my views in scorn.
Does she "obey" me?—No, not on your life!
I am the one who dances to her life,
She is the one who leads me by the nose;
She fills our closets all with her own clothes,
And me she treats like any tame white rat.
What is this debt a man forever owes?—
Why must a woman have an Easter hat?

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