

MISCELLANY

THE HAND OF THE DEAD MILLIONAIRE.

For The Public.

They founded a school in which to teach
The young idea to shoot.
They built a college in which to pick
Whatever might come to fruit.

They heard of a teacher who didn't believe
In a Chinese wall at all.
They found a professor who taught his class
The land belonged to all.

They dearly would like to have called these
men,
Ah, yes, but they didn't dare,
For out of the gloom of the tomb they felt
The hand of a dead millionaire.

W. D. McCrackan.

A LETTER FROM TOLSTOY.

At the request of Mr. Ernest H. Crosby, who was one of the promoters of the Doukhobor emigration from Russia to Canada two years ago, Mr. John F. Baker, of Kingston, Ont., wrote to Count Tolstoy last December some account of the condition and circumstances of the Doukhobor emigrants. Miss Nellie F. Baker, Mr. Baker's daughter, had spent last summer among the Doukhobors. An interesting account of her work was published in The Public of December 8, 1900. Mr. Baker has received the following letter of acknowledgment from Tolstoy.

10 January, 1901.

Dear Mr. Baker: I received the two papers that you sent me, and also your very interesting letter, with the photos, for which I thank very heartily you and your daughter.

I was very glad to know that you are a warm partisan of Henry George. I am quite sure that he will conquer in the long run, and I will try to help in this as much as I can. Yours truly,
(Signed) LEO TOLSTOY.

"THE JOKE OF THE CENTURY."

The Argonaut does not wish to be irreverent, and it trusts that it will not shock any loyal Englishman, but we cannot conceal our belief that the pageantry and ceremonies over the accession of Edward VII. are deliciously, uproariously, and excruciatingly funny. It is the greatest joke of the century—which, it is true, is only two months old. How any person with a sense of humor can look at the London pictorials without laughing, we do not understand. To see pictures of a short fat man, with a protruding abdomen, waddling beneath enormous royal robes; to see him seated in an elaborately carved medieval chair, with his abdomen reposing on his knees; to see this short fat person covered with jewels, hung with orders, blazing with diamonds, be-wrapped with ermine, and begirt with gold; to see around him tall thin men

in petticoats, short fat men in bath-gowns, bald-headed, solemn men in wrappers, bewigged and beperuked funny little men in tea gowns, bearing Caps of Maintenance, Imperial Crowns, Royal Rods, and Court Keys to Back Stairs; to see the foolish face of the marquis of Winchester in medieval garb, with a modern monocle stuck into his starboard eye, carrying on a tea-tray a tinsel crown; to see this amusing medley, looking something like the jacks of clubs and spades, and something like a cheap masquerade; to reflect that these men are of the same blood as we are, and that this is the twentieth century; to believe that they believe that the short fat man is their ruler because of the accident of birth—to contemplate this amazing spectacle is too much for one's gravity. When we remarked, on the death of Queen Victoria, that monarchical ideas had received a shock, one of our readers took a column to convince us we were wrong. All the same, we remain unconvinced. If this solemn mummery is one of the great jokes of this century, it will not be one of the jokes of the next.—San Francisco Argonaut.

THE PASSING OF FREE LAND.

The growing scarcity of land and the hunger of man for a place he may call his own are never more graphically illustrated than during one of those rushes for land like the one in 1889, when the free land of Oklahoma territory was thrown open to settlement. Who can forget the mingled tragedy and comedy of that exciting time and not pray that its like may never come again! Yet there is in prospect just such another scene of brutality, outrage and murder, for at this moment thousands of men are waiting on the borders of other vast areas of land, prepared to make the run of their lives to secure the land soon to be thrown open. This land comprises about 3,800,000 acres, and is composed of reservations in Oklahoma ceded to the United States since 1895 by the Wichitas and affiliated bands of Indians, and the Comanches, Kiowas and Apaches in the southern and southwestern portions of the territory. Most of this area is said to be fertile land, quite as rich as any in the territory.

It is true that the government has taken some precautions to lessen the dangers of the forthcoming rush. For instance, it has arranged to subdivide in advance the land into counties, for each one setting aside 320 acres for county-seat purposes. This will do away with the county-seat town-lot

speculator, and this is important. But with the memory of the 1889 rush still fresh, it appears strange that the officials of the general land office have not devised some means whereby the choice of locations might be made without danger of bloodshed and riot. If nothing better, a system of drawing lots might be devised under which the men drawing first choice in given counties would be privileged to select first, their filings to be the first ones accepted at the local land offices. Anything would be better than the wild and unrestrained anarchy of past experience.

The passing of the land of the people into private ownership is a sad moment in the history of our country. As we go out and in about Chicago, travel through Illinois, or Michigan or Indiana, and see the millions of acres of virgin land—land that never grew a crop, yet which is held at prohibitive prices—and consider at the same moment the millions who now are landless, and the new-born children who are coming into times when there is left for them no heritage in land such as awaited their parents born under our flag—as we contemplate this strange and unnatural condition we are compelled to question the future. Lord Macaulay said that so long as we had a vent in free land the safety of our nation was secure, but he foresaw troublous times when the people no longer go out to the land and establish homes for themselves. Man belongs to the land—he is a land animal; the history of the world has shown that the active and passive factors of production may not be separated with safety, either to the individual or to the state.—Editorial in the Farmers' Voice, of Chicago.

NO PUBLIC GOVERNMENT BY PRIVATE INTERESTS.

A letter written to the Buffalo Municipal Ownership league, by Louls F. Post. As published in the Buffalo Enquirer of July 18, 1899.

I have the honor of acknowledging receipt of your letter of the —, asking me to state briefly my reasons for favoring the municipal ownership of natural monopolies. The question as you put it I am unwilling to answer, because the term "natural monopolies" is as a rule used without precision; but as your allusion is doubtless to highway monopolies, such as water and gas mains, electric conduits, street car lines, etc., I will give you my reason for favoring municipal ownership as to them.

The reason is fundamental. The business of distributing gas, water,