

may expect that he will then pursue the wicked wall paper trust to the bitter end as it is well known that he never leaves unfinished anything he undertakes.

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In all probability, therefore, it is merely a question of time when we shall know all that is to be known about the pauper wall paper of Europe and the protected wall paper of the United States.

WM. E. M'KENNA.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

MATTERS IN CLEVELAND AND NEW YORK.

Cleveland, Nov. 17.

One of the events of the Cleveland election which has been passed by with but little notice is the referendum adoption (p. 1094) of a franchise for a subway. This is one of the aftermaths of the Johnson administration. The franchise is for seventy-five years, with profit limitations, and provisions for city ownership at the end of the term.

What makes this franchise commercially possible in a city no larger than Cleveland, is the invention by A. B. Dupont of a subway traction mechanism which reduces the cost of subway construction fully two-thirds, with a further reduction for rolling stock and greater comfort for passengers.

A half mile full size model of Dupont's invention is now on exhibition in Cleveland; and among those who rode in the car over this length of track to-day were Tom L. Johnson, Senator J. W. Bucklin of Colorado, George A. Briggs of Elkhart, Dr. Wm. P. Hill of St. Louis, Daniel Kiefer and Fenton Lawson of Cincinnati, and W. S. U'Ren and W. G. Eggleston of Portland, Oregon.

The car is hardly deeper from roof to floor than the height of a tall man. The floor lies close to the track. The seats run crosswise from side to side, with an entrance door for each at each side of the car and no corridor within. Seats face each other as in an English railway carriage, though there are no compartment partitions. All the doors are opened or closed at once mechanically. There is no standing room—which makes the invention objectionable to traction magnates, since "the money is in the straps," as Mr. Yerkes used to say. The seating capacity is four in each seat, making eight in each set of seats, and 64 for the entire car. In the New York subway cars, much higher from floor to roof, much wider and longer, the seating capacity is only 48, but the standing capacity is expansive.

The construction of the Dupont car makes it possible to lay the subway only ten feet below the surface of the street and to avoid all the expense of tunneling.

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New York, Nov. 18.

One of John Z. White's lectures was given here to-night at Cooper Union, to a large audience before whom he is giving a series. The subject to-night was the French Revolution. Mr. White's friends

over the country will be glad to know that he has been accorded here by the Cooper Union management the honorary title of "Judge;" and as "Judge White" is easier than "John Z.," he may find himself judicially branded for life.

With others from far away and near by he is here in attendance at the first general conference of the Fels Fund Commission (pp. 1076, 1087, 1099) which is to meet to-morrow at the rooms of the Liberal Club. Among those already here for that purpose from outside of New York are Daniel Kiefer, the chairman, and Tom L. Johnson, the treasurer, both of Ohio, and Lincoln Steffens of Connecticut, George A. Briggs of Indiana, and Frederic C. Howe of Ohio, all of the Commission; also John Z. White of Chicago, Frank Stephens of Philadelphia, Dr. W. P. Hill of St. Louis, W. S. U'Ren and W. G. Eggleston of Portland, Oregon, and Senator Jas. W. Bucklin of Colorado.

L. F. P.

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ON THE BRINK OF AN ABYSS.

Langdon, Canada.

The evil effects of one crop failure on the renting class, on the millions of tenants, show how near a large proportion of our rural population is hovering on the brink of the abyss of poverty and absolute want. And under landlordism this dire evil will ever be present to threaten.

In many sections of the Western States and Canada this season's crop has been practically lost through drought. Because of this failure many a small farm will be absorbed into the larger holdings of the rich landlord, and the small farmer who has been taxed to death by the government and grafted by the corporations to the verge of bankruptcy, will be lost in the seething mass of drifting humanity.

But the magnificent holdings of the absentee landlord will be increased by the surrender of the little home, which, under present social and economic conditions, has proved unequal to the task of supporting a family in decency and comfort.

It is appalling to the thinking man, that such a large proportion of our substantial population should be driven so near the brink that one year's failure might topple them over. It is appalling to think that there is no more stability than this, in the agricultural classes, upon which the welfare of the nation rests.

Suppose we should have two or three or four droughts, as have occurred in Australia? What would happen in many of the Western States under such an increased stress when one year cuts so many small farmers and especially renting farmers, adrift? Many sections of country would be entirely depopulated. The farms, drained to their very utmost by the tribute levied by governments and landlords, would be unworked. The unstable populations, subject to the greed of rich landlords and oppressed by unjust taxation, would simply be forced to the large centers, to swell the army of the discontented and unemployed.

Suppose there were in force such wise taxation laws as have been urged and advocated by The Pub-

lic and other defenders of the truth—laws which would limit the greed of the landlord by land value taxation laws which would make the small homeowner secure in his holding, laws which would prevent the concentration of the resources of the country into a few hands,—not one crop failure, nor two, nor three, would have any terrors for the well established farmer. The rural population would be stable, the land would be worked continually, the volume of traffic would be increased by this well paid labor, and there would be no fear in the minds of hundreds of thousands, who today cringe from year to year, lest they fail to pay the landlord's tribute and the government's extortion.

I have asked hundreds of American farmers coming into Canada, the direct question: "Why are you coming out of the United States into a foreign country?"

Nine-tenths of the answers have been that they were tired of paying such high rents to landlords.

The substantial class of American farmers coming into western Canada, are being driven out of their native land by landlordism, by high taxes, by small returns on unremitting labor.

They regret to leave the United States. They love their home and country. But that underlying economic reason which drives men to the extremities of the earth—the love of ownership, the kingship of independence, is forcing them to seek homes in this last unconquered wilderness, under a strange flag.

If the Roosevelt country life investigating commission could or would come to the Western States, especially the semi-arid sections, where the agricultural class shifts rapidly, where land is owned by large corporations and is farmed by tenants, they would find that landlordism is the canker that is eating away the heart of the agricultural communities.

People grow weary of rentpaying, and yet it is well-nigh impossible to become owners under the present conditions. There is no limit to the holdings of the landlord. There is no graduated tax, no bar to the unbridled greed of the rich landowners, and the poor man cannot pay the price against ruthless competition.

The consequence is that the population of the country is shifting continually—changing, migrating, wandering. One crop failure starts hundreds toward the cities, seeking a livelihood with their empty hands, sick and disheartened with the fruitless struggle on another man's soil.

And yet we go on strengthening the bonds that bind us. We refer the idle workingman to the charitable institutions, and the bankrupt farmer we direct to Canada as a country offering cheap land and just laws—and all the while the landlord smilingly reaches out for more acres and is undisturbed.

BERT HUFFMAN.

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Why Rocky Continues to Grab Rocks.

What is really desired under the name of riches is power over men.—John Ruskin (applied by Bolton Hall).

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE EXPLOSION AT LOS ANGELES.

Oshkosh, Wis., Nov. 20.

I was at Los Angeles just after the Times disaster, and made an inquiry into the matter. As near as I could learn the facts were about as follows:

A strike of the metal workers was on, but everything had been perfectly peaceable except for a wordy clash or two between strikers and the secretary of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association.

For two days before the explosion there had been, as credibly reported, a great deal of free gas in the Times building, and two plumbers had been working to find the gas leak. That some of the employes left the building on account of escaping gas, is testified to by many employes in sworn affidavits.

The Times people claim that a dynamite explosion occurred outside of the building in a blind alley running from the street between the walls of the building, and that the explosion broke a gas main which caused the fire. This was on the ground floor and the building was six stories high. But Dr. Hunter, who was standing on the walk beside the building at one o'clock that night, when the explosion occurred, said that in less than two minutes after the explosion the building was a mass of flames from top to bottom and that flames were coming out of all the windows.

Dr. Hunter's statement contradicts the theory of the Times.

It is a well known fact that dynamite is used to blow up buildings in order to stop conflagrations. It was so used in the San Francisco great fire. And it almost never starts a fire. Besides that, the walls of the building gave no indication of a dynamite explosion, and there were no windows broken in the neighborhood except by heat from the burning building.

If this was a dynamite explosion breaking the gas main, a considerable time after the explosion would have been necessary to fill the building with gas. Free gas could not possibly have traveled from the bottom to the top of a six-story building in less than fifteen or twenty minutes under the most favorable conditions. Furthermore, had the dynamite broken the gas main and then set the gas on fire immediately, there would have been no explosion. The gas would have caught on fire like a gas jet and burned. It probably would not have reached the top of the building at all. But in fact the building was a mass of flames from top to bottom almost at once. This indicates free gas in the building.

The report that the building had been dynamited by the unions was first made by the Times. In its issue of that morning, got out in another office by union printers who volunteered to help, this paper made the charge against the unions, although it came out at about seven o'clock, about six hours after the explosion, while the fire was still burning and before any investigation at all had been made or could have been made.

Not a bit of evidence has connected the explosions with the unions; and the Times has many ene-