

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,

electricity, etc., to the inhabitants of a city, or of operating street cars, is a business which in its very nature cannot be carried on without a delegation from the government to private individuals or corporations of a governmental function, either the exercise of the right of eminent domain or the monopoly of public highways. These two may be regarded as the same function; for when the right of eminent domain is exercised in such cases it is for the purpose of establishing what is essentially a highway. Private ownership of the franchises necessary for the carrying on of those businesses, therefore, involves public government by private interests; and that is a mother evil which can breed nothing but evils.

If car tracks could be owned by the municipality and used freely by competing car owners, I should favor municipal ownership of the tracks, and private competitive operation of rolling stock, just as the municipality now owns the brick or asphalt pavements which the owners of vehicles adapted to that kind of pavement freely use—for railroad tracks in a street are in truth only a species of pavement. But if operation of the rolling stock and ownership of the tracks must be in the same hands, then the proper hands are those of the municipality. Operation is in that case a necessary incident to ownership of right of way, and the incident should be subservient and not superior to the right or function to which it attaches. The municipality should never be divested of ownership of right of way. In all cases in which it has been divested of that right, the right should be restored to it, with all inseparable incidents, as one of its inalienable functions.

The same reasoning applies to all other highway monopolies. When right of way and right of operation are inseparable, right of operation becomes a mere incident of right of way; and as ownership of right of way is essentially a government function, right of operation becomes a government function also, notwithstanding that, if separable from right of way, it would be a private function.

Many reasons for municipal ownership might be enumerated, to which I should assent; but it seems to me that in the last analysis they would all resolve into the fundamental reason I have mentioned and tried to explain.

The Chinese were not entirely wrong in their views about foreign devils. There are some.—Puck.

A GREATER "TRUST" THAN HAS BEEN.

Editorial in Montreal Daily Star, of April 8.

The New York Sun declares that there is a scheme afloat to create a railway trust compared to which the United States Steel corporation with its capital of over a billion dollars will be rather a small affair. There is nothing essentially improbable in the story. Financial combinations are the order of the day, and they are so generally successful that it is no wonder their development occasions the greatest alarm among the people of this continent. The scope of their influence is by no means limited to the ostensible objects for which they are formed. The Standard Oil trust has its fingers in lots of things besides coal oil. In one line of business after another independent enterprise is being crushed out of existence. A combination of the transportation interests of the United States will have every farmer, every merchant, every manufacturer at its mercy. The American people will still have their glorious personal freedom. The constitution guarantees that. They will be absolutely free to do anything they want to do, but to buy and sell, to eat and drink, to work for wages, to travel, to light their houses, to go to dramatic or vaudeville entertainments, to wear clothes and to do a few little things of that sort, except upon the terms dictated by their Sovereign Lords the Trusts. With these trifling exceptions, the American people will still enjoy absolute freedom, and will still be able to look with pity upon the downtrodden nations of Europe, oppressed by royal tyrants and privileged aristocracies.

The serfs, vassals and villeins of Europe may not be able to appreciate the subtle superiority of the American type of serfdom, vassalage and villeinage, but it is there all right. The present generation of Europeans have inherited their bonds; the present generation of Americans can proudly boast that they are self-made people and have themselves forged the fetters that hold them, and they can boast that they have forged the fetters strong enough and good enough for the purpose. The first step in forming a "trust" or "combine" is to go to a legislature composed of representatives of the people and ask for legislation to authorize the deal, and whenever there is found a link in the chain that needs to be strengthened or lengthened resort is had to legislative enactment. Slavery there may be

once more in the land of the free, but it will be white slavery, and the chains and fetters will not be rusty with age for a long time to come.

Unless we are very far astray, the census of the United States taken this year will reveal an appalling concentration of wealth in that country. It does not always and necessarily follow that where wealth accumulates men decay. The resources of the country are so great and the quality of the people so good, that it is to be hoped that the census may not show a diminution of the average wealth proportioned to these huge accumulations in the hands of a few millionaires and billionaires. But it must be evident that the financial tide is not running in the direction of the greatest good to the greatest number. Forces are being brought into existence which seriously menace the interests and the practical freedom of the masses of the people. To check these forces is a problem for the highest and best American statesmanship and one of infinitely more importance to the people of the United States than any questions of foreign policy.

"THE HEROISM OF THE BATTLEFIELD."

An extract from an article by Jos. Dana Miller, in the October Arena, entitled "Militarism or Manhood?"

Advocates of "the strenuous life" defend the continuance of war as necessary for the development of the virtue of physical courage, or at all events justify war as furnishing opportunities for heroism. As well might one ask for immunity for "firebugs" on the ground that they furnish opportunities for heroism to members of the fire department. But one may doubt if the battlefield affords the highest examples of physical courage. The anesthetics of battle smoke and battle music induce a sort of somnambulistic state in which prodigies of valor may be performed. Even the Chinese possess a passive courage superior to that of any known race. Most of the heroism exhibited on the battlefield is of the passive sort, disguised somewhat by the activity of maneuver, the noise of cannon and the onslaught of cavalry. There is but a small individual initiative to the great fighting mass. A French philosopher said that the art of creating soldiers was to make them more afraid of their own officers than of the enemy. To make more certain the death that awaits them in the rear, and less certain that which awaits them in front, is