

# The Public

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A Maine court is reported to have decided that a buried body is the property not of the surviving husband, wife, parent, child or other relative, but of the owner of the burial lot. This is a legitimate application of landlord law. The buried body, like a fixture, becomes part of the realty.

"Politics is business," said Senator Hanna, at the Lincoln birthday banquet in New York city, where Lincoln's name was celebrated and his principles ignored. "Very serious business at that," he added. From Mr. Hanna's point of view, and that of all other monopolists, he was right: politics, truly enough, is serious business. And he and they make the business profitable in many devious but businesslike ways.

When Lyman Abbott again declares in his lectures that "there is no right to vote save as society confers it," he might render a service by explaining how the will of society as to conferring the voting right is to be ascertained except by voting, and if in that way then how those who vote on that question acquire their voting right. In other words, does the right to vote originate in the power of one supreme man here and there, or in the assumption of oligarchies, or in the simple natural right of manhood?—which includes womanhood.

The report of the city electrician of Chicago is another contribution to the fast accumulating mass of testimony in favor of municipal owner-

ship of municipal monopolies. Since 1888 the city has expended \$2,786,100.12 for the construction, maintenance and operation of its electric lighting plant. Had the lights been rented, they would have cost \$2,507,110.50, or only \$278,989.62 less than they have cost in fact, and there would have been nothing besides that difference but monthly bills to show for it. As it is, though the city has no collection of light bills and has expended \$278,989.62 more than the lighting might have been rented for, it has an elaborate electric lighting plant of its own.

The Washington report that the administration has notified Venezuela that this country reserves the right to review the decision of the Venezuelan courts in the contest between two American grantees of asphalt privileges is hardly believable. The reason given for asserting that right is wretchedly inadequate. It is this, that as both the parties to the litigation are American corporations, the American government may review Venezuelan judicial decisions affecting their property interests in that country. That this government might object if its citizens were outraged in their rights by the government of a foreign country in manifest disregard of the laws of that country, is true enough; but it has not the shadow of a right to revise the regular decisions of foreign tribunals respecting their own laws. When American citizens or corporations go into business in a foreign country they engage thereby to submit to the regular administration of the laws of that country. Nor would our government presume to dispute that principle with any nation of its own military size.

At a banquet given by the Mer-

chants' club of Chicago last week, Prof. Jenks, of Cornell university, spoke on the subject of "Commercial High Schools," a subject which is just now prominent in the business and educational circles of Chicago. In the course of his address Prof. Jenks said, as the newspapers report him, that in his opinion only a few are born to be leaders, and that Providence intended the many to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. We should hesitate, without better authority than a newspaper report, to characterize this sentiment. Prof. Jenks's language may not have warranted the repulsive inference that the report would justify. But there is no doubt that the comfortable classes do very largely entertain the self-gratifying notion that their success in amassing wealth is attributable to their superior talents and virtues, and that they hold some sort of authority from Providence to set the rest of mankind at work hewing wood and drawing water for them. It is the slave masters' theory, and college professors might be at worse business than in exposing its falsities and fallacies and pointing out its immorality.

The work of the constitutional convention of Cuba in drafting an organic law for that new-fledged nation, is now practically complete. In a few days the document will be in the hands of President McKinley. It is understood that he will transmit it to congress for the action of that body, accompanied by a message setting forth his own views regarding it. What his recommendations will be is as yet unknown. They are foreshadowed by Washington correspondence, apparently inspired, but that is no guarantee that when made they will not be entirely different. It would be premature, therefore, to dis-