

The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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EDITORIAL

Mark Twain.

More than one popular jester has gained his reputation and been forgotten since Mark Twain's humor caught the public fancy and made the man famous. But his popularity has continued and will doubtless long survive his death. The reason for this cannot be found in any superior wit of his humor. Some humorists who were contemporaries of his but whose fame has long since perished, were perhaps more witty than he. It may be found, however, in the serious purposes that stirred his thought and vitalized so much of what he wrote. Mark Twain was witty, but he was more than a wit. He jested, but he was not a clown. His humor was funny, but if the fun of the comedian was in it so also was the humor of a sympathetic and earnest social philosopher. This was the touch that has raised Mark Twain's writings far above the joke books, and kept his fame fresh through several generations of readers. His writings have the democratic ring—the ring of the democracy of the Golden Rule. Read "Tom Sawyer" or "Huckleberry Finn," and you find democracy rooted in the shrewd thought and harum-scarum experiences of natural-minded boys in the presence of the conventional undemocracy of grown men. Read "The Yankee at King Arthur's Court" or "The Prince and the Pauper," and in democracy's struggle there with the rude selfishness and ignorance of a buried past, you find caricatures of the refined ignorance and

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polished selfishness with which democracy struggles now. The death of this man at his age calls for no tears of grief. He passes out of life normally, after doing a life's work so well that it will be a wholesome influence with many a generation yet to come.

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The democracy of Mark Twain was of the kind for which *The Public* stands. Like his sister who went before him, and like her distinguished son, the late Samuel E. Moffett (both of whom were devoted to the truth that Henry George taught), Mr. Clemens found for his democracy a lodgment in that gospel. One of the testimonials to its work which *The Public* cherishes is a letter from him in which he declares his faith. "The Ethics of Democracy," a unified collection of Public editorials, had been sent to Mr. Clemens because it contained quotations from his pen, and in acknowledgment he wrote from Florence:

Villa di Quarto, Firenze, Jan. 7, 1904.

Dear Mr. Post:

I thank you very much for this book, which I prize for its lucidity, its sanity & its moderation, & because I believe its gospel.

Very truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

"Because I believe its gospel." To all others who believe the same gospel we are confident that this assurance of Mark Twain's sympathy will add to their appreciation of the democratic strain that runs through nearly all his writings.

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Land Monopoly in California.

An extraordinary disclosure of land monopoly in California was made by the Los Angeles Examiner in its issue of March 27th last. Only thirty-five owners, it appears, hold one-seventh of all the area of that great State. Their holdings range from 20,000 acres to 14,500,000 each. Holdings of 100,000, 200,000 and 400,000 acres appear in the list between those extremes. This disclosure is only a sample of the land monopoly that prevails, not only in California but throughout the West and also in the East. Will the contented apologist for things as they are, kindly reflect upon this condition? Let him ask himself what his disinterested posterity will think of him for silently permitting their inheritance to slip away from them before they are born. Let him ask himself, too, what they ought to think of him for this.

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Migration of British Trespassers.

Migration of workingmen from England to America is accounted for by the Tory papers over

there as an exodus from free trade conditions, and by radical papers as an effort to escape the blight of landlordism. To the emigrants it won't make any difference which, as they will soon discover. If by "free trade" conditions hard times for workers is meant, they will find that American protection is worse on that score than British free trade. As to landlordism—well, we don't know it here by that name, but we've got the thing itself. With one-seventh of the land of California having only 35 owners and eight families owning one-twentieth of the total assessed land values of Manhattan Island, we of this country could brag of landlordism if we liked.

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Socialistic Reform in Milwaukee.

When the Socialists came into power in Milwaukee (p. 362) they were importuned to retain in office the health commissioner of the old regime, a doctor who seems to have been "solid with the good people." If they removed this man, then woe unto them! But the new mayor investigated. What had this health commissioner done to give him his "goo-goo" popularity? It turned out that he simply "hadn't done." "While making a great show of activity in some directions," as the Socialist investigators reported, "he had done almost nothing for the working people"—hadn't "given any attention to sanitary conditions in the factories and workshops," and "had allowed frightful conditions to continue in the slums." He was therefore summarily dismissed, as, upon this report, he ought to have been.

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A Useless Third Party.

An unsophisticated Republican of Georgia advises the corporations of the United States to organize a political party of their own. What's the matter with the political party they occupy now? Is their lease running out?

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Improvement in Rooseveltocracy.

Roosevelt's lecture on "Citizenship in a Republic," at the Sorbonne, Paris, last week showed signs of improvement in "Rooseveltocracy." He seems to have learned, for instance, that all socialism is not bad. As there are good trusts and bad trusts, so there is, as he now discovers, good as well as bad socialism. The good socialism is, to be sure, *his* socialism; but so are the good trusts *his* trusts. He has learned also that the way in which wealth is earned is at least as important in estimating its character as the way in which it is spent. But Rooseveltocracy is as