

# The Public

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## EDITORIAL

### The Movement against Coeducation.

Coeducation in the Chicago University is said to have "broken down." To the impartial man up a tree it looks more as if it had been "broken into" or "broken up."

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### A Delightful Prospect.

The Republican leaders of the country are looking forward with delight, so their organs say, to a great reduction of their majority in Congress. They consider it so much easier to manage a small majority than a large one. Some

of the more astute, however, are fearful that this thing may be overdone.

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### An Honest Chicago Mayor.

Mayor Dunne has been criticized for many things, justly in some instances perhaps and unjustly in most; but nobody has yet accused him of dishonesty. And now the Chicago Tribune, his most virulent and recklessly slanderous adversary, is obliged to admit in its issue of the 13th that his "personal honesty is not questioned" even by the Tribune. The voters of Chicago of both parties who have so long sighed for an honest man for mayor might profitably make a note of this.

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### Chicago Schools and Chicago Newspapers.

The attitude of the Chicago newspapers of the self-righteous and pretentiously respectable sort, toward the efforts of what they call the "Dunne members" of the Board of Education to substitute a genuine merit system for the wretched system of secret marking of teachers now in use in the public schools, exposes either their own idiocy or their own bad faith. In their news columns they cut out vital parts of the proposition, and in their editorial columns they denounce the proposition for weaknesses caused only by these omissions. This attitude may be explained upon the theory of bad judgment or of bad faith, but not upon any theory of intelligent and honest journalism.

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### Railroad Ownership.

In a discussion of Mr. Bryan's railroad policy the Minneapolis Farm, Stock and Home of the 1st ably supports a suggestion which in one form or another has been advanced during the past twenty years, and which should not be lost sight of as the railroad problem becomes more acute. As presented by Farm, Stock and Home, the original suggestion is modified to this form: "One trunk line government owned and operated road from the Atlantic to the Pacific—costing, if a double track, less than the Panama canal will when completed—would be sufficient to demonstrate practically what railroad services can be rendered for while making a fair return on actual capital invested in the enterprise." In support of this proposal it is argued that this one "vital point demonstrated, the rest will be easy;" for "the power of

public sentiment alone, buttressed by the demonstrated truth, would soon compel all roads to come to the same plane; or if not, that truth would make possible, even easy, legislation so intelligent and just that successful evasion of it would be impossible." To these considerations, Farm, Stock and Home adds: "But at the most it would require government ownership of not more than ten per cent. of all our railroads to constitute a rail-rate regulation system that for ease and economy of operation, positiveness of action and satisfactory results will never be approached by mere legislative enactment and official administration. Such limited public ownership would destroy railroad monopoly; would 'take railroads out of politics;' would make rebating impossible, for every patron would be in the enjoyment of the minimum and only rate; it would orphan every trust; every city, town and individual would enjoy equality of opportunity as to transportation." That this plan would operate to make the ascertainment of just rates possible we are disposed to believe. But with private interests still in control of all rail highways except a few nationally owned trunk lines, we should fear for the honest management of those lines. As in New York the Vanderbilt lines corrupted State canal management, so we should fear that private railroad rings might corrupt national trunk line management. The only true way, as we believe, of killing railway corruption and monopoly, is to construct and maintain governmental rail-highways, with time table regulations which would allow any person to run trains on equal terms with every other person. This would encourage the free play of competition in transportation, and there would be little chance to corrupt train despatchers. Short of that, however, the plan of Farm, Stock and Home is the best of which we know.

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#### Getting without Giving.

A most interesting and romantic story of the greatest institutional method of getting without giving, of taking without earning, of living in the sweat of other men's faces, comes by way of the New York Sun. In its issue of the 2nd, that paper publishes the letter of a correspondent (Kinahan Cornwallis, once editor of the old Knickerbocker Magazine), who tells of the explanation made to him in the '60's by John M. Bixby of the manner in which that millionaire got his great fortune. Here is the story as Mr. Bixby told it:

I should be as poor as a church rat but for one incident in my life. I had wealth forced upon me

and didn't know it. I had come from the backwoods of New York, and a dollar looked like a big sum to me. I was a raw and struggling young lawyer, and paid \$4 a week for my board and washing, and found it hard to make both ends meet. It looked as if I should starve at the law, so I was looking for work outside of it.

Just then a friendly lawyer in the office where I had desk room said to me: "Here's a chance for you to buy a farm, Bixby. I want to sell it to close up the estate. You can have it at the appraised value, \$200. I think you will be able to get more for it in time."

"No, thank you," said I, "I have no money."

"But," said he, "I will take your note for it and renew it till you sell it."

The upshot was that I took his advice and gave him my note for \$200 for the farm. I felt very nervous about giving my note for such a large amount, and once offered to sell the farm back to him for the note. But after two or three renewals of the note New York had grown so fast northward that I was able to sell a small part of the farm for more than enough to pay the note and interest and taxes. The rest of the farm was then free and clear, and if I had kept it all I should now be worth about \$7,000,000. As it is, I have sold parcels of it that have brought me more than \$1,500,000 in cash, and I value what I have left at two or three times as much—all made out of nothing, by giving a note for \$200, almost against my will, and when I was practically not worth a dollar.

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Mr. Cornwallis characterizes Mr. Bixby's story as "a commentary upon the great rise in real estate in New York during the last two generations," and as enabling "us to see how rapidly and easily the Astor and other large landed estates grew so enormously in wealth with the growth of Manhattan." But there is nothing peculiar about the Bixby case except the size of the fortune. Fortunes innumerable, larger and smaller, have been made in the same way. The significance about it all is not that some men are made rich by this private appropriation of the value of public growth; the significant thing about it is that many men are thereby robbed. In comparison with the vast volume of land values that are annually diverted unearned to private pockets, in village and town, on the prairie and in the city, the Bixby instance is but a minor illustration of a gigantic system of institutional robbery.

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#### Eva J. Turner.

Friends of the Henry George movement outside of Brooklyn, N. Y., can have little realization, if any at all, of the impetus which Eva J. Turner, who died last month, contributed to that movement. Her work, dating back to the 80's, was incessant throughout her life. Once a mem-