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EDITORIAL

Mexico and America.

It seems after all that Mr. Taft either did try to deceive the American people or was himself deceived (p. 241) when he announced that the maneuvers of the American army on the Mexican frontier were only for military practice. Admissions are now made that possible intervention was contemplated, in consequence of the growth of the Mexican revolution. What kind of intervention and why, are as mysterious still as if this government were a dynasty instead of a democracy. But confirmation of the suspicions of two weeks ago that the intervention is as likely to be against Diaz as for him (p. 242) is stronger now than then. Only one thing, however, is yet more certain than anything else, and that is that the intervention, whatever form it takes or in whosoever interest nominally, is at the behest and for the benefit of It. "Brother Charlie" knows more about it, probably, than President William.

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Tom L. Johnson's Illness.

Reports from Cleveland for the past two weeks have again drawn attention to the serious illness of Tom L. Johnson; and friendly requests for information, accompanied with affectionate expressions, pour in from all points of the compass and from distant as well as nearby places. Friends near him make no secret of the slender thread that holds him yet to physical life. They only hope. But they are not without reasons for hop-

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ing. And Mr. Johnson himself, well aware of his serious condition, is characteristically cheerful, unafraid, and vigorous in his determination to live for the sake of the work he has to do. "Wouldn't it be a joke," he said, when the sense of recovering strength came to him, "if I were to get better and run for Mayor again? I believe I'd rather like that joke myself." That he may recover is the earnest wish of a world of friends, and not for personal reasons alone.

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Whoever has observed the career of Tom L. Johnson as Mayor of Cleveland with more than superficial interest, must have seen that his plans have gone far beyond minor reforms. His 3-cent car fares, his advocacy of municipal ownership of public utilities, his efficient administration—all these have been to his larger purpose as ploughing to harvest, or as digging for foundations is to triumphs in architecture. To understand his work in Cleveland and appreciate his determination to be up and at it again, one must read with Johnson's generous and apprehending spirit that message of Henry George which set him going in his work for social regeneration as far back as the early eighties. His work is indeed unfinished, but as far as it has gone it is well done. Though he were not spared to go on with it, it would nevertheless rank—in its conception, in its progress, and in its widespread influence—with the best democratic service in this spring-time period of our changing social order. It has been done so well that the wish is universal that his determination to live, so he may help further, will stimulate the hope among his friends everywhere which inspires those of them that are near him in his illness.

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Single Tax Dangers in Vancouver.

The letter by Henry George, Jr., in our Editorial Correspondence (p. 294) calls attention to an already visible effect of the Single Tax movement in Canada (pp. 83, 187, 233), an effect which every thoughtful student of the subject has looked for and will continue to look for with confidence, unless a further progressive move is made. Unless the Canadians manage to advance their rate of land value taxation, so as to take for public use a good share of the increase in land values which the exemption of improvements and other industrial products makes, their prosperity will collapse.

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To exempt improvements in a municipality tends to encourage improvement there. This is

happening now in Vancouver, and making her prosperous. But it has the same tendency that any other cause for local improvement has—the cause more people, more capital, more enterprise, or more effective labor. It makes land values higher. To perpetuate the advantages, then, which the single tax may bring to any municipality—Vancouver, for instance—land value taxation must be repeatedly advanced, so as to leave but little of the consequent increase in land values in the hands of landed interests. Otherwise the speculation in land that land value taxation tends at first to drive away, will by prosperity be encouraged to return; and if it does return, land values will leap upward in the speculative market to the bursting point, and then will come industrial depression and municipal desolation.

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There is nothing new about the desolating effect which Congressman George predicts for Vancouver if the people of that city content themselves with the degree of land value taxation they have now, while their exemption of improvements progressively stimulates land values. His father gave warning more than thirty years ago, in "Progress and Poverty." Observing that in the better developed countries the value of the land taken as a whole is much more than sufficient to bear the entire expenses of government, the author of "Progress and Poverty" wrote:* "Hence it will not be enough merely to place all taxes upon the value of land. It will be necessary, where rent exceeds the present governmental revenues, commensurately to increase the amount demanded in taxation, *and to continue this increase as society progresses and rent advances.*" If Vancouver fails to heed this warning, let her not account for the inevitable disaster by criticizing the single tax, of which she now boasts. Her plight will be due, not to the degree of single tax she has adopted, but to the greater degree which in folly she may neglect to adopt.

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Harrison and the Brewery Ring.

It is a significant coincidence that the brewery interests of Chicago have endorsed Mr. Harrison for Mayor at the very moment when they were secretly arranging to secure a monopoly of beer saloon licenses. Under the cry of "personal liberty," these interests urge the election of Harrison. One might suppose from their outcry that the only personal liberty for which the people of Chicago

*Progress and Poverty, book viii, ch. II.