

morning. Admiralty wouldn't sell fleet. War office refused to scrap guns. Colonial secretary declined to let me have Jamaica as a tip for our ashes. At this rate no use staying out. Picked up Thames steamboat fleet for an old song on way back. Will do to run on the canals inside our fitting slop.

Thursday, 5:0 p. m.—Things been humming to-day. Steamboat deal evidently leaked out. Bought the P. and O., Cunard, White Star, Orient, Union Castle, and North German Lloyd. Bought the Liverpool docks. Bought the London and Northwestern. Cabled to my company that they might begin making.

Friday, 10:0 a. m.—Cable from company asking me to buy less and sell more. Nonsense. Plenty of time for selling. Much better policy to buy up all our customers first; sell to ourselves then, and make sure of orders.

4:0 p. m.—Bought Holyhead harbor. Made an offer for St. George's channel.

Saturday, 9:0 a. m. — Cable from home, "Rival trust formed. Under-selling. Return at once."

10:0 a. m.—Returning.

#### MAYOR JOHNSON'S WAY.

"Mr. Mayor," exclaimed Maj. W. J. Gleason, entering the board of control meeting yesterday morning, "I want to make a complaint."

"Go ahead."

"The Big Consolidated is preparing to relay its tracks on Cedar avenue and put down the old cobblestones between tracks."

"What's the kick?"

"They're an eyesore and—"

"Come forward, Mr. McCormack," called the mayor to the manager of the Big Consolidated.

"We're only relaying one track," said McCormack, "next year we'll relay the other and put down Medina block stone between both tracks."

"Is that satisfactory, Mr. Gleason?" asked the mayor.

"Yes, if they do it."

"Will you write a letter to the board agreeing to do that?" inquired the mayor of Mr. McCormack.

"I will."

"Another thing," said Maj. Gleason, "they're putting these cobblestones on our lawns."

"Will you repair all lawns?" said the mayor, turning to McCormack.

"We are willing to do anything we can."

"Will you repair the lawns?"

"We'll put down boards and protect them."

"Will you repair the lawns?"

"Um—er—yes."

"Will you include that in your letter?"

"Yes."

"Are you satisfied, Major?"

"I am."

"What's the next business?" inquired the mayor.

Before the board adjourned Manager McCormack returned with the letter in question.

"Hold on," exclaimed the mayor, "this don't say you are going to relay the second track next summer. If you don't agree to relay it then we'll make you pave between the tracks you are now tearing up, with block stone, if we can."

"I think we will relay the second track next summer, but if you insist on that I want to consider the matter further."

"All right. How long do you want?"

"Until to-morrow."

"Have you begun laying any of those cobblestones?"

"Yes."

"Stop it, will you, until we agree as to that second track?"

"I don't know as I should."

"Then you won't?"

"I don't see why I should."

"Tom Galvin," cried the mayor. The deputy director of public works came forward. "Go right out to Cedar avenue and stop the men who are relaying cobblestones there. Don't allow them to begin again until you hear from this board."

Galvin hustled out. McCormack's face flushed, but he didn't have a word to say.—Cleveland (O.) Plaindealer of June 4.

The park police were the subject of an extended conference yesterday between the mayor and Director of Public Works Salen, in whose department the parks are. Complaint had been made to the mayor that at Lake View park Tuesday, while the boat race was on, the people were peremptorily ordered off the grass, either by the park police or other custodians.

"I want to know about that, Charley," said he when the director entered the room. "Is it true that people were not allowed to stand on the grass?"

"I had not heard about it."

"Well, I have. Look into this matter right away. Call in the men who ordered the people off and find out what they have to say. The grass in the parks is not for the people to look at, as I have said before. It is there to be used. Those policemen

or no one else had any right to order people off the grass at Lake View or any other park.

"By the way, have all the 'Keep off the grass' signs been taken out of the parks?"

"I am told that they have been, except in spots where grass seed has been planted."—Cleveland Plaindealer, of June 6.

"Reduce the water rents," exclaimed Mayor Johnson Wednesday, when asked if he favored the movement started by the Wade Park Improvement association. "Well, I should say I am in favor of that proposition. It is wrong to tax the water users for more than the absolute cost of supplying them. Observe that I say that it is wrong to tax them more than the cost. If it is possible to give it to them less than cost it ought to be done.

"The water rents should not be one cent in excess of what is absolutely necessary to maintain the department. They are now thousands of dollars in excess of that amount and the surplus is being used to pay for improvements of the system. There ought not to be one cent of surplus.

"All improvements of the system should be paid out of the general funds of the city.

"I understand that a measure is to be introduced into the city council providing for a reduction of water rents to an amount equal to what is necessary to pay the running expenses of the department. It will have my hearty support."—Cleveland Plaindealer, of June 6.

#### TOM L. JOHNSON'S PLANS.

Extracts from a private letter from Tom L. Johnson, mayor of Cleveland, O., on subjects of general interest.

We are attempting, with some show of success, to equalize the assessment of land values, paying almost no attention, of course, to inequalities in the valuation of improvements. With this letter I inclose you a pamphlet by W. A. Somers, the tax expert of St. Paul, Minn., which explains our method. Mr. Somers has been with us some time, giving instructions to the engineers and valuers, and as an improvement of his plan has adopted my suggestion to have a large blackboard at one end of a room in which a hundred people could be seated so as conveniently to see upon this blackboard a map drawn with white chalk showing about one-hundredth part of the

city, in blocks, but without property lines. This blackboard will also exhibit in figures the value of the center lot on each of the four sides of each block, these valuations to be calculated in each instance upon the basis of the market price per front foot (100 feet in depth) of the least valuable property on the block and the side of the block to which the center lots so valued respectively belong. The center lots so valued will serve as standards or units for the valuation, by comparison, of the more valuable lots.

I think that Mr. Somers's invention for valuing property for taxation, as explained in his pamphlet, will very greatly facilitate our work; and with the aid of the blackboard arrangement I have explained above, we hope to utilize it in such manner as to present the question of bare land valuation to an interested audience. The assessors are expected to act as judges; my representative will be prosecuting attorney, as it were, advocating high valuations; individual owners will be expected to defend low valuations if they can.

What I look for in the end is an increase of the aggregate of lot valuations to a point at which they will bear to the aggregate improvement valuations something like the proportion of two or three to one. Today, land and improvements are assessed at about the same amount.

In addition to this work, I have employed Prof. E. W. Bemis, and we have been making a campaign against the present assessment of steam railroad property for taxation. Eighteen or 20 of the railroad assessing boards have met in Cleveland, and we have been able to show in each case that the railroad property was assessed at from 5 to 15 per cent. of its true value in money, averaging very much below ten per cent. when considered all together. These local boards have made only slight increases in assessments as a result of our appearing before them, and we propose to carry a protest to Columbus before a board of equalization composed of four state officers who have the power to increase these assessments without limitation. We may fail there, also, but we are arousing this entire state on the subject, and the question appeals to the rural districts more strongly than was anticipated.

Our aim is to make this the principal issue at the election of members of the legislature next fall. Should

we succeed in doing that, I predict a revolution in the conservative country vote.

We propose showing that more than \$500,000,000 of steam railroad property escapes taxation through the ignorance or cupidity of the auditors in the 88 counties. We will also show how much each county loses by the present unjust plan. There isn't a county in this state that is not affected, and the distinctively farming counties are the heaviest losers.

From the responses I have received from all classes of citizens in this state, I feel that we have touched a sympathetic chord, and I look for great results for just taxation. It seems to me that the issue of taxing railroad property as high in proportion as other property, will be the thin end of the single tax wedge. It will give us a hearing before the farmers that we could hardly have hoped to get in any other way; and to get a hearing before them for the single tax is assuredly to get their cordial support.

My ability as mayor to accomplish something for the single tax cause is growing on me. Opportunities seem to be opening up. For instance, a board of equalization, having to deal with all classes of property in this city, assessing real and personal property, steam railroads, street railroads, gas companies, etc., is in existence here. This board has never used the power in the past and has generally been filled by very ordinary, if not corrupt men. I have discovered that this board is appointed by the mayor, two every year, they holding office for three years. By some strange accident I am the only mayor in the state of Ohio that has this appointing power. The first two vacancies would have occurred the 16th of next July, but that was too far off for my purposes. I have, therefore, found pleasant and profitable occupation for four of these men in other city positions, and now I am appointing four out of the six who can be absolutely relied on against all temptations, and the other side has just waked up to the fact that this board may raise Cain.

Whether they will attempt to legislate it out of existence next January at Columbus, or have the supreme court declare the law unconstitutional, I do not know nor do I care; the damage will probably be done before they can act. I expect to put \$100,000,000 on our tax duplicate. It is now less than \$200,000,000,

and if this process does not raise the dead in this locality, I very much miss my guess.

#### A PAIR OF UNPROFESSIONAL CRITICS.

For The Public.

MacMillin was just recovering from what the doctors called nervous prostration resulting from too intense application to business operations that had taken an unfortunate turn.

"Read something dramatic and moving," he said to Jeannette, who sat absorbed in some volume which he eyed with curiosity. "What have you?"

"Tolstoy's Resurrection," Jeannette returned, briefly.

MacMillin sank back heavily. "Something religious, I suppose," he sneered.

"The church doesn't call it so. Let me read the opening chapter," said Jeannette, who was unhampered by conventions in her quest of moral and political truths.

MacMillin listened. At the end of the chapter he bade her "Go on."

"Is it dramatic and moving?" she questioned, with a smile.

"Very novel situation," MacMillin assented. "But that Nekhludoff is a fanatic and a fool, I'll be bound."

"Refreshing to find a hero—aye, and a heroine—a little off the conventional color," Jeannette said, reading on with a dramatic rendering of the successive situations in which individual and governmental iniquity were uncovered with ruthless hand.

"These things might be true of the beastly Russian nation, but nothing of the sort is possible in our free America, with its perfect social and political equality," interjected Mac, with patriotic pride.

"Are you sure?" flashed Jeannette over the open pages that she had been turning rapidly, with omission of details not bearing directly on the great moral issues of national life which were beginning to be an interesting study in her experience.

MacMillin glanced aside from her clear, questioning eyes.

"Oh, I know you are thinking of rascally politicians, self-seeking government officials, corrupt courts of justice, and all that sentimental fol-de-rol that fire-brained agitators like this traitor Tolstoy are flourishing like a red flag to inflame bucolic minds," he said, contemptuously. "Of course it is human nature to be somewhat self-seeking. In fact, our very progress in all directions is due to selfishness first of all. What is the use of denying it?"