

# The Public

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## EDITORIAL

### Morgan Pounding Roosevelt.

A good many of the criticisms of President Roosevelt made by George B. Harvey at the banquet of the Sons of St. Patrick at New York on the 18th are well enough deserved, no doubt; but even just criticisms of Roosevelt from Morganatic sources are to be cautiously considered. When the devil quotes Scripture he means mischief.

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### Relative Cost of Land and Improvements.

Those college professors who argue that in the

course of historical evolution land has ceased to be the most important industrial factor besides labor, may possibly be interested in the fact, as recently stated by the New York Herald, that the city of New York has learned from experience in building the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges, that the land necessary for the approaches to such a bridge is by far the most expensive item of the total cost.

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### The Appropriate Mr. Busse.

It is eminently appropriate that Mr. Busse, who voted in the Illinois legislature for the "eternal monopoly bills" which Governor Altgeld vetoed, should be the Morganite candidate for Mayor of Chicago in the interest of the eternal monopoly traction ordinances. The "eternal monopoly bills" were for only 100 years; the traction ordinances are forever. The "eternal monopoly bills" cost the corporations much money for boodle"; the traction ordinances are costing the corporations much money for "boodle." The "eternal monopoly bills" were laid to rest by Gov. Altgeld's veto; the traction ordinances will be laid to rest by Mayor Dunne's referendum.

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### The Inwardness of Franchise Ordinances.

Reports come from the grand jury at San Francisco to the effect that the traction company of that city distributed \$450,000 as bribes to secure permission to turn its cable system into a trolley system. This permission enabled the company to inflate its stock by millions. If the San Francisco Company paid \$450,000 to change from cable to trolley, how much does the Chicago combine pay for the perpetual franchise its touters are now asking the people to vote for? The facts in detail have not yet leaked out, but no one is innocent enough to suppose that the Chicago price is as low as \$450,000. Chicago aldermen, newspapers, business men, club men, pious men, and financiers come higher than that.

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### Woodrow Wilson on Social Unrest.

The president of Princeton University, speaking at the South Carolina banquet at New York on the 18th, made what appears from the news reports to have been a true diagnosis of social unrest. "The root of inequality," he is reported as saying, "is not wealth, but the special favors granted by such legislation as the extravagant tariff

laws." Of course the tariff laws are not the whole root of the difficulty, and Dr. Wilson says so. The whole root, as he appears to have urged, is "artificial privileges or advantages," a term by which we understand him to have meant enforced discriminations. When he proposed going to the root of the matter and abolishing all such discriminations, he struck a true note. But what could he have meant when he said that we must do this "in all moderation and in all fairness"? To abolish discriminations is itself an act of moderation; to maintain them is vicious. To abolish them is itself fairness; to maintain them is to be unfair. Gentlemen like Dr. Wilson forget, when they urge the abolition of privileges with "moderation and fairness" and without injury to the privileged,—they forget that they are in reality urging injury to the unprivileged. The profits of privilege are not gifts from the past; they are tributes of the hour, a continuous diversion of the fruits of industry from the unprivileged earner to the privileged appropriator.

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### The Wall Street Panic.

A Wall Street panic has come and gone. What of it? There is just as much wealth in the country as before, but some of it has changed hands. The railroads are as numerous and as useful as before, but the stocks—the certificates of title to their rights of way and terminal privileges—have fluctuated in value. But what of the panic? Nothing but this, that some inflated values have been punctured. The whole thing is a phenomenon of stock-watering commercialism, which is in turn a product of the monopolization of public highways. Is the public, then, not concerned with this Wall street panic? Yes, it is concerned. But only because the rights with which the Wall street buccaneers are playing are public rights. But for that, a panic of this kind would concern the public no more than the breaking of a faro bank,—which indeed it very much resembles.

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Some newspapers attribute the panic to a deliberate attempt by financial pirates to frighten President Roosevelt. If that was its origin it has not failed of its purpose. Mr. Roosevelt "came down" with the docility of the famous coon. Did the nice pirates want deposits of government money in their faro banks? They got what they wanted. Did the kind gentlemen want a gift of interest on their government bonds three months in advance? They had only to ask and it was done. Were they embarrassed in their highwaymanship by State

legislation against the holding up of passengers for extortionate fares? The governor of every offending State should be forthwith summoned to Washington and ordered to let the pretty highwaymen alone. Mr. Roosevelt hesitated at nothing to please the pleasant gentleman.

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We doubt if even the masters of finance could have manufactured a panic in order to scare President Roosevelt; we think that panics are born, not made. We doubt, moreover, if they would be willing to manufacture one if they could; for panics once set a-going are erratic, and no one knows when or where or how they will stop. But if panics can be made, and if this one was made, it has served its makers passing well. And this it has done whether manufactured or not. Mr. Roosevelt has been admonished through it that the seat of the government of the United States has been transferred from Washington to Wall street.

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### The Political Turkey Dance.

Independent newspapers are not unlike the dancing turkeys of the old time side-show. They are independent enough until the showman starts up the fire under the floor of their cage. As the fire grows hot the involuntary dance becomes pathetically comic. The most interesting instance of this sort of political turkey-dance, has the Chicago Record-Herald for chief turkey. For civic worthlessness, for political uncleanness, for personal unspeakableness, the "independent" Record-Herald has professed to regard Mr. Busse, the Republican machine candidate for Mayor of Chicago, with immeasurable disgust. But the Record-Herald's "independence" has the Republican machine characteristics, and now that "Boss" Lorimer has set the fires a-going, the Record-Herald begins reluctantly and with wild-eyed amazement to dance to the Busse music. It still gobbles "Goo-goo," and again "Goo-goo," but its steps get livelier as the floor of its cage grows hotter.

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### The Busse Ring and the Civil Service.

What the Republican machine would do with the merit system of civil service in Chicago, if its candidate for Mayor, Mr. Busse, were elected, is indicated by the Citizens' Association of Chicago of which Eugene E. Prussing is president. This organization has sent out a circular, warning the people that—

A crisis has arisen which threatens to defeat the effort to place under civil service the great offices of Cook County not now under the merit sys-