

VARIOUS

THE GREAT ROUND
WORLD AND WHAT IS
GOING ON IN IT, VOL. 1,
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The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1, No. 54, November 18, 1897 / A Weekly Magazine for Boys and Girls

The mayor of the city of Greater New York is Judge Robert A. Van Wyck.

New York city has just been passing through the most exciting election that has fallen to her lot since she became a city.

This being the first election since the passing of the charter which made New York the second largest city in the world, each political party has been trying to get a man in for mayor who represented its own especial way of thinking.

You will remember our telling you about the passing of the charter last spring, and remarking that the man who would be made mayor of this great city would have to rule over nearly three and a half millions of people. He will also have to appoint officers of the government whose salaries will amount to five hundred thousand dollars a year, and to control New York's yearly income, which will amount to more than sixty millions of the people's money.

On January 1st, 1898, Greater New York will embrace Staten Island, the whole of Brooklyn as far down the Bay as Rockaway Beach, extend as far north as Yonkers, and stretch across the country to the Sound, which it will cross to take in Queens County on Long Island.

In the recent election one of the principal candidates for the mayoralty was Mr. Seth Low, the president of Columbia University, who was mayor of the city of Brooklyn in 1881, and was re-elected to the same office in 1883. Besides Mr. Low there were Gen. Benjamin F. Tracy, who was Secretary of the Navy under President Harrison in 1889, Robert A. Van Wyck, chief judge of the city court, and Mr. Henry George.

The contest was a very lively one, and each man who thus offered his services to his city had to endure a severe course of the abuse which it is the fashion nowadays to heap on any man who puts himself before the public gaze.

Accusations have been brought by each party against the others, until, to the unprejudiced outsider, it has seemed as if none of the candidates selected was fit to hold office at all.

Judge Van Wyck and General Tracy have been accused of being so much under the rule of their party leaders that they could not possibly give New York honest government. Mr. Seth Low has been declared to be such an autocrat that he would rule the city according to his own ideas, were they good or bad. Mr. George was called a visionary person, who would turn the world upside down if ever he came into power. These were, of course, the opinions of the candidates' enemies. To their friends each of them was felt to be the one man for whom the city had been waiting, and whose election would insure the best possible government at the lowest possible cost to the people.

You may judge for yourselves that all these opinions could not possibly be true; and that therefore the candidates, as well as their parties, must have had their good sides and their bad sides. We can only hope that Judge Van Wyck, who was elected to the position by a very large majority, may prove to be the best man for the place.

A very sad and painful turn was given to the election by the sudden death of Mr. Henry George, one of the candidates.

Mr. George was a man who had made a world-wide reputation for himself as the originator of the Single-Tax system.

The Single Tax is rather a hard matter for you to understand.

In brief, it was Mr. George's belief that poverty could be done away with, and every man placed in a position where he could earn a comfortable income, by abolishing all taxes upon industry and the

products of industry, and substituting one single tax on land. The land-owners would then be the only persons taxed, and, according to Mr. George's theory, the land tax would be so heavy that it would prevent the men who do not want to use the land from keeping it out of the hands of the many who would like to have it for homes or raising crops. There being no longer any other taxes, the cost of living would be greatly lessened, and every man would be able to earn enough to support his family in comfort—and poverty would be at an end.

It is claimed for Mr. George's theory that no one has been able to find an argument which disproves it; but at the same time it has not yet been proved by practical use, and to many people it seems only a wonderful idea which can never be brought into working order.

Be that as it may, Henry George was one of the really great men of our century; and while the troubles between labor and capital exist, he can never be forgotten.

Mr. George did not go into the campaign from any desire of personal gain or profit. He felt that it was a critical moment in the history of the city, and he ran for the mayoralty of Greater New York because he thought he was needed by the people whom he so greatly loved.

The cause of the people was ever nearest his heart, and to benefit them he willingly gave up the comfort of his quiet home, and the labor in which he found his greatest pleasure, the writing of a book on the "Science of Political Economy," which he had hoped would prove a greater work than his famous "Progress and Poverty."

Mr. George was not, however, strong enough to stand the strain and worry of a political campaign. His health gave way under it.

The night before his death he overtaxed his strength by speaking in several different places, making several tiring speeches on the same evening, and hurrying from one meeting to be in time for the next. Worn out by the burdens which he was not strong enough to bear, he passed away in his sleep, stricken with apoplexy.

Rich and poor alike mourn the loss of this great man. On the Sunday after his death his body lay in state in New York that the people whom he had loved so well might bid good-by to their friend. For hours they passed by his bier; rich and poor, young and old followed each other in the long line.

At the funeral services which were held later, many ministers of different sects and religions combined in the praise of the great and good man who had passed away in the act of doing his duty.

The establishing of Home Rule in Cuba does not seem as near as the Spaniards would have us believe. An official who understands the ins and outs of Spanish policy declares that it will be fully a year before the proposed reforms can be put into working order.

At the present moment there is a general election taking place in Spain, and until this is settled nothing will be done in regard to Cuban reforms.

As soon as the elections are over, the Colonial Minister will prepare the bill which will give Home Rule to Cuba. The bill will then be sent to the Cortes, where it must be discussed by both the Upper and Lower Houses before it can become a law. It may take many months before the members can agree on such an important measure as this will be.

When it has finally passed the Cortes, it must be sent to the Queen, who will look it over at her leisure, and sign it if she thinks fit.

Even after her signature is affixed the Cortes has the power to lay the measure aside and prevent its ever becoming a law.

It is therefore hinted in Cuba that the offers of reform may after all mean nothing but an endeavor to gain time, and prevent the United States from going to the assistance of Cuba.

The reforms offered are not at all acceptable to Cubans, because they find that they will be expected to pay the whole of the debt caused by the war, which now amounts to nearly six hundred million dollars. Furthermore, the captain-general who will rule over the island as governor will have the right to veto every act of the legislature. The Cubans therefore feel that the Home Rule offered is

not a genuine reform which will bring them relief from the abuses from which they rebelled against Spain, but a sort of game, invented to keep them good tempered, which is as unlike real Home Rule as playing with a doll is unlike nursing a real baby.

It is stated that the Cuban people in the field and in the cities do not believe in the offered Home Rule, and are determined not to accept it.

A proclamation to that effect has come from Cuba. It is signed by Calixto Garcia, Maximo Gomez, and Domingo Mendez Capote,—which, by the way, looks as if the report was true that Garcia had been elected commander-in-chief of the army, Gomez, minister of war, and Capote, president of Cuba; else why should they sign the proclamation, which is an official document?

General Gomez has also issued another statement in which he says that the change in the Spanish Government will not affect the Cuban plans in the least. The Cubans, he says, are fighting for liberty, and liberty they will have. They scornfully refuse the Spanish offers of Home Rule, believing them to be insincere and misleading.

Gomez further declares that the army has been making great preparations for the coming winter campaign, and expects to show the mother-country, by force of arms, that Cuba will have nothing from her but freedom.

General Weyler has left Cuba, and General Ramon Blanco has taken command in his place.

The demonstrations so much feared by the Americans and Cubans in Havana occurred in spite of all the efforts to prevent them, but, happily such excellent precautions were taken that no rioting ensued.

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