

## The Great Tomato Trust.

**Y**OU have all heard and read about the steel trust, the coal trust and trusts of all sorts, but I want to tell you a little about that soulless corporation that grinds the faces of the poor, known as the Great Tomato Trust! Yes, indeed. A company of capitalists have formed a combination which has in its control the entire Mississippi tomato crop! I ran up against it at Crystal Springs, Miss. I had been warned by my firm to look out for it. But it came to my notice without looking for it. It happened this way:

I was on a trip South for a Cincinnati firm dealing in fruits and produce. When I found I couldn't solicit on consignment I bought outright, when the market justified such a course. I received instructions from the firm to get tomatoes on consignment, so I went to the Crystal Springs depot to get them. The first farmer who drove up to the railroad platform was a lean, lank, hungry-looking fellow. He had about twenty crates of tomatoes in his spring wagon. I hailed him, shook hands cordially, inquired how he was feeling and incidentally remarked that his twenty crates would fetch a fancy figure at Cincinnati, and wouldn't he let me mark them up for shipment to my firm?

"Reckon not, sah," he said.

"Why not?" I inquired.

"I've got to see Sam Perkins first," he replied. Three or four more said the same thing. I thought they took me for an old "con" man. But when each new arrival said Sam Perkins was "it," I made up my mind to talk to the Honorable Samuel, whom I found in a semi-comatose state, sitting on an empty barrel.

"Mr. Perkins?" said I.

"Yes sah, that's my name, sure nuff," he answered. Thereupon I told him who I was and why. To all of which he listened respectfully he was always in danger of falling asleep. Finally he said: "Well, sah, I'll tell you how 'tis. You see, the planters 'round yere have formed a trust of which I am the head, and unless your firm is on our list you'll not get a dern tomato this year, out of Crystal Springs."

I saw how it was, and as no persuasion moved Samuel, I resorted to other tactics. I went over to the telegraph operator's office at the end of the platform and sent a cipher message to my firm which translated read: "Have bank here honor my draft for three hundred dollars." Then I borrowed a fishing rod and went down to the river to fish and wait for the answer to my wire. I caught catfish till you couldn't rest and was elated with my good luck and proudly took my trophies up town and carried them into the general store where I felt sure I would be envied my success by the loafers. Was I envied? Not much, I was derided! Yes, indeed. One fellow said it was a dern shame to take such little fish out of the water. Another said he wasn't sure but that it was unlawful. I thought a twelve inch catfish was big enough to be a grand-daddy, but when in the afternoon I saw two men bearing a gigantic catfish on a pole between their shoulders I watched my chance and when no one was looking I threw my prey under the sidewalk.

But, you say, what has this to do with the Great Tomato Trust? Nothing! So we will go back to the depot and watch Samuel

mark up load after load of tomatoes for every point north except Cincinnati. Gee, I was sore. I went to the bank, proved who I was and sure enough they hadn't heard a word from Cincinnati. Then I was mad. Along about 3 o'clock I got a wire. It was all right. The bank paid the money after satisfying itself that I was all O. K. All next day I bought tomatoes, but paid ten to fifteen cents a crate more than the market, but the firm made money on them at that and there is still on record somewhere a letter saying I should have wired for more money. Goodness me! And the next day it rained. Ever been far from home with the toothache, and it commences to rain and you don't know a soul in the town and you sit in the third class hotel office and look out in the side yard and see a chicken standing on one foot with its feathers all bedraggled, and the man of all work starts to pump water from a squeaking pump, and your tooth aches more and more, and it's growing dark and you hear a church bell ringing away off somewhere? My, my, it sounds lonesome just to read it, doesn't it? That was my fix the last day I spent at Crystal Springs. I told the so-called hotel clerk about my tooth aching. He advised me to have it drawn. Funny how every one but the sufferer knows it's best to have a tooth pulled. They said, "You're a fool to suffer so, go have it drawn." That's good advice. One in 10,000 follows it. The balance suffer and put raw cotton into the cavity. I went to the only drug store in town and bought four different brands of toothache gum and tried them all. No good. Went back and the clerk said oil of cloves would cure it. I bought some, applied it, suffered as usual and besides burnt my tongue. Then I tried creosote. "Sure cure," the man said. The man lied. Told me finally to go get it drawn. And the only reason he said that was because he had nothing more to sell me except sponges or slate pencils, or stamps. I went out to find the dentist. The drug clerk told me where he lived, and said that while he was no regular dentist, yet he pulled teeth.

I went down the street, wondering if the tooth puller was home, (and hoping he wasn't). I went boldly to his house and walked past it and clear around the block till I got back to the hotel. Yes indeed, my nerve failed. And there I was back in that hotel office, worse off than ever, because the clerk tipped it off that I had toothache. Then the consellers commenced to hover over me. One old fellow said his daughter had toothache last week and thought she'd go crazy. Doctored it three days, till she was in agony, then while he held her mouth wide open his wife took a hair pin which had been heated red hot and pushed it clear to the nerve and now the girl has relief! I mentally resolved to die before I'd stand such barbarity. Another man said he had four teeth broken off close to the gums and the doctor had to cut away his gums to get at the teeth, etc., etc.

I became so nervous that I went out and down the street to the tooth puller's house once more. I rapped at the door, and it was opened by an elderly gentleman who looked too feeble to draw a tooth, "but," thought I, "he will be more gentle with me than some younger man would be." "Doctor," I began, "pull this tooth, and

whatever you do, do quick or I'll lose my courage."

"I'm not the doctor," he replied. "He is in the other room, but he will be out in a few minutes." Then I noticed a lady sitting, on the opposite chair to mine across the room.

"You poor boy," said she. "Have you toothache?"

"Yes ma'am," said I.

"My boy is in the other room with the doctor, he has it too!" Suddenly a shriek of agony, came from the Chamber of Horrors and I knew that her boy's time had come. "I can still escape by chasing out of here," I thought. But before I could put the idea into execution, the door of the other room opened and out came the now happy victim, all smiles and tears. How I envied him! The doctor followed. He was a great, big, burly man, with a bushy beard and herculean physique. Coming up to me, he said, "Well sir, you're next." I followed him into the torture hall, and sat down in the dental chair, which was an ordinary kitchen chair.

"Doctor," I said, "I've been suffering for some time and I am afraid my tooth is inflamed by now so I'd like you to be very, very gentle with me for I am not strong and you can easily see I am of a very nervous temperament." (All this was to gain time.) The old gentleman spoke up just here and said: "The doctor is deaf, you will have to speak louder than that." So I yelled as much of my speech as I could remember. All this time the D. D. S. stood there with the horrible forceps in his hand. "Let's see this tooth," he said. I opened my mouth. He made a dive and got a hold on the wrong tooth! "Murder!" I yelled. He thought I was trying to get away, so he put one knee on my chest and out came a molar that never gave me a moment's worry while its neighbor was throbbing along, doing business at the same old stand. When the mistake was found out, he made another dive and a wrench and a jerk, and a pull. The earth got black to my eyes and when I came out of the doctor's office I had a hole in the side of my jaw, big enough to hide a freight car in. Yes indeed. So that's how I beat the Great Tomato Trust!

HARLEY.

## Swell Citizens.

While the press is teeming with alarm at the threatened disaster to Standard Oil products in Manchuria and the opposition in America is frothing at the mouth because American soldiers refuse to submit to being assassinated by degenerate mongrels in the Philippines, the atmosphere has become so impregnated with garlic, etc., in the vicinity of Ellis Island, N. Y., that its fumes may one day reach the Capitol in Washington, D. C., and cause the representatives of the nation to ask themselves in all seriousness if it isn't about time to call a halt on the admission of certain races to this country on any terms. The Italian or Dago is one of the races the writer has in mind. Other undesirable races have their multitude of faults, but nearly all have a few redeeming traits; even the Chinese with their Highbinder societies wage war only on members of the other faction. Not so the Dago. He seems to be a murderer by instinct. His hand is against everybody regardless of race, color or sentiment.

It must arouse a tremendous amount of patriotism in some of our older citizens who have to the best of their ability contributed their mite toward making America the peerless nation it is today, to read that the

immigration statistics show that nearly 200,000 more Dagos arrived during the past twelve months, nearly all of whom will become chestnut roasters, tamale hawkers and \$1-a-day track builders, when not otherwise engaged in blackmailing and murdering. "Well," a Dago lover might ask, "are not chestnut roasting, organ grinding and tamale hawking honorable modes of earning a livelihood?" Yes if the chestnuts are not too ripe and of a good grade. Regarding the tamales, it depends a great deal on the ingredients used, but as for organ grinding, no! Every Dago caught grinding out such airs as "Don't put the workingman down," "Sweet Lily Dale," and "Whoa Emma," should be sent to the works, and besides it's too often the poor monk who is the worker, climbing cornices and shaping fac-simile grimaces of his master to the delight of the children. But as for the able-bodied, cod-eyed Dago, grinding away complacently on a padrone-vented barrel-organ it's about as inspiring as an auxiliary member of the S. A. squaring himself for a soup ticket by carrying a torch in the parade.

"But," you might say, "if you exclude the Dago, wouldn't Italy object and the Italian government adopt similar methods towards our citizens in Italy?" Yes, very possibly Italy would object. Having rid herself of her Mafia and criminals, it would be strange if she didn't object to their return or if she failed to insist on America continuing to allow them camping grounds for conspiracies. Italy's objection will very shortly be overruled in no uncertain manner. Regarding the exclusion of Americans from Italy, why all Washington has to do is to call our tourists home. Also our students, sculptors, painters and excavators and present them with a pamphlet sketch of the Great West, Yellowstone Park, the Grand Canon, the Sierras and the Coast States.

The average American criminal is a gentleman of quality compared with the average Dago citizen. What has Italy or its citizens ever done or ever intend doing towards building up this nation? From Paterson, N. J. to all the big cities of New York state comes the same report—the Mafia, blackmail and assassination—never a good deed. When the Mafia undertook to dictate to the citizens of New Orleans a few years ago they were taught an invaluable lesson. Looking from a passenger coach window a person sometimes sees large gangs of Italians at work building roads and might feel pleased at seeing so many of them contented and laborious. If, however, he had the time and facilities to investigate he would discover that in a gang of fifty Dagos he would find at least fifty stilettoes, and if a poll was taken or could be taken about two-thirds of the number would be found to be members of the Mafia and their present occupation is merely a means to an end. This applies to the miners also. What's the trouble? Are certain congressmen afraid of the Mafia that they don't create drastic measures for their exclusion? It can't be possible they are afraid of adverse Dago votes. If so, heaven help America in the years to come, for while the Italian is but one race there are at least eight or ten others nearly as bad. G. T.

## Municipal Ownership.

The question of municipal ownership is one worthy of the people's careful attention and study. Not until recently has this great question received the sober consideration of those directly interested. For a long time it was considered

by many to be a theory of socialism and one not capable of being put into practical use.

The Municipal Ownership Convention held February last in New York, was rich in facts and figures and showed beyond doubt that the people can and do own their water, gas, electric and street railway plants and manage them with entire satisfaction, both in point of service and expense.

The question of the people owning the public utilities has gone past the experimental stage and is now a positive success. As against the numerous cities actually operating their plants, we have the plain statement of the persons opposed to it that it cannot be done successfully, but with no figures or facts to substantiate their statement. Mr. Yerkes, the street railway magnate, was requested to give his views of the question at the convention previously mentioned. His statement that, "municipal control could not exist, as it is ridiculous to suppose a municipality can manage a railroad," is almost grotesque in its weakness when we consider the fact that a number of cities are actually owning the street railways and with satisfaction to the people.

Taking one city as an example, Toronto, Canada. The experience of this city is about the same as others that have taken hold of their street railways. It owns and leases the lines to a company. This company pays the city \$800 per year for each mile of single track and in addition 8 per cent of the gross receipts up to \$1,000,000, 12 per cent between two and three million, 20 per cent on all over three million. The company pays 15 per cent of its total income and yet makes a profit itself. Besides this six tickets are sold for twenty-five cents and workmen's tickets for about three cents a ride.

The average fare on the cars of the London County Council is 1½ cents, in Glasgow, less than 2 cents. No one need be surprised at those persons interested in street railway franchises stating that municipal ownership is not a good thing. There is no doubt of the fact that the greater part of the thinking people are beginning to look favorably on this question.

The opponents of municipal ownership might be placed in three classes. The first is composed of those who are over cautious and conservative upon all proposed changes. They will always be found in opposition no matter what the proposition is. The second class is composed of those who have not the time or inclination to study and give a proposition a fair hearing, and not understanding it are afraid of it, and oppose it because it is something new. They will take no chances. "Let well enough alone," say they. Progress is not in their dictionary. The third class is composed of those who do not see the advantage of municipal ownership because they do not wish to see, or, to be more accurate, they see but will not acknowledge it because of personal reasons. To this class belong the owners of stock in the private corporations and persons influenced by them.

A very significant fact will be noted: during the recent election for mayor in Chicago the platforms of both republican and democratic candidates favored municipal ownership. This shows that both parties think the majority of the people look upon the favorable side of this question.

The experience of Detroit, Chicago, Duluth, Buffalo, Liverpool, Glasgow and a long list of other towns controlling the gas, water and electric plants, shows this to be the correct solution of the problem of light and waterservice.

(Concluded on page three.)