

CURRENT TOPICS

THE DRAFT of the new Transvaal constitution was issued in London April 25. Newspaper dispatches quote General Cronje as saying that this constitution is a plain violation of the peace treaty. The Transvaal constitution provides for a legislative assembly consisting of the lieutenant governor, six to nine official members and thirty to thirty-five elected members. Every burgher of the late South African republic is entitled to vote for the members of the first volksraad, as also will white males of British birth occupying premises at annual rental of not less than \$50, or having capital to the value of \$500, unless convicted of treason since May 31, 1902, or murder, unless they have obtained a free pardon. A commission will divide the Transvaal into electoral districts. The debates in the assembly will be carried on in English, but the president of the volksraad may permit a member to use the Dutch language. Financial measures must be recommended to the assembly by the governor, and no part of the revenue may be appropriated without his authority.

A LONDON cablegram through the Associated Press, referring to the Transvaal constitution says: "In a communication to Lieutenant Governor Lawley, accompanying the letters patent providing for the changes, Colonial Secretary Lyttleton says that the time is not yet ripe to grant full self-government. The matter involves party government, and this in the Transvaal will become more practicable when the two races have acted longer together under equal rights of citizenship, and when bitter memories have become softened by time. In regard to the colored population not being directly represented in the volksraad, any bill subjecting them to special disability or restriction must have the sanction of the home government before it becomes operative. Secretary Lyttleton explains that similar constitutional changes can not be extended to the Orange River colony immediately because the industrial and economic conditions there do not so urgently demand them.

JOSEPH JEFFERSON, the eminent actor, died at his home "The Reefs," at Palm Beach, Fla., on the evening of April 23. The correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald says: "The end came after a day of unconsciousness and after a heroic struggle of days which had exhausted his vitality. At his deathbed were his wife, his sons, Charles B. and Frank Jefferson; his nurse, Miss Mabel Bingham; Dr. R. B. Potter, and his faithful old servant, Carl Kettler. The end was not a surprise to his family. Ever since his last sinking spell, which came after a rally on Thursday morning and which was followed by an apparent improvement until Friday, the family has been waiting for the end. Mr. Jefferson's condition Saturday night grew steadily worse, and the family, who had retired, were summoned from their beds and Dr. Potter was called. The patient's condition continued to grow worse all through today, and the brief bulletins from the bedside contained no words of encouragement.

AN OLD PLAY BILL, outlining the performance for the night of October 18, 1833, in which performance Mr. Jefferson, then a mere child, took part, is reproduced by the Record-Herald. This play-bill will doubtless be of general interest. It is here given:

CHICAGO THEATRE

MR. MCKENZIE'S BENEFIT.

Mr. McKenzie respectfully announces that in compliance with a wish very generally expressed by his fellow citizens of Chicago he is induced to announce his benefit, which will take place on Thursday evening, October 18, 1833. There will be presented Sir E. L. Bulwer's play, in five acts, entitled

THE LADY OF LYONS

Or, Love and Pride.

Claude Melnotte Mr. Leicester
Beausant Mr. Warren
Glavis Mr. Germon
Colonel Damas Dr. Sankey
Deschappelles Mr. Wright
Gaspar Mr. Burk
Officer Mr. Watts
Pauline Mrs. Ingersoll
Mme. Deschappelles Mrs. Jefferson

Widow Melnotte Mrs. McKenzie
After the play Master J. Jefferson will sing
the comic song of
"Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy."
Mr. Gorman will sing for the first time
"The Hunters of Kentucky."
The evening's entertainment to conclude with
the first time here,

THE TWO FRIENDS

Ambrose Mr. Sankey
Herbert Mr. Leicester
Valentine Mr. Warren
Elinor Mrs. Ingersoll
Rose Mrs. McKenzie
The curtain will rise at seven precisely.
The box plan is in charge of Mr. W. H. Davis
(at the store of Mr. Hatch on Lake street) who
has consented to act as treasurer on this occa-
sion, where seats and tickets may be procured.

FOR MORE than seventy years, Joseph Jefferson was on the stage. His father and his grandfather, both, were actors, and Joseph made his debut in a child's part at Washington City in 1833. The Chicago Record-Herald presents in a nutshell Jefferson's sketch in this way: "Born Philadelphia, February 20, 1829; debut as an actor, Washington, 1833; appeared in Chicago 1838; with Macready and Booth, 1845; stage manager, Baltimore, 1853; stage manager, Richmond, 1854; in England and France, 1856; with Laura Keane, New York, 1857; created Rip Van Winkle, 1859; went to Australia and England, 1860-65; died April 23, 1905. Mr. Jefferson won fame in parts as follows: As Rip Van Winkle in "Rip Van Winkle;" as Bob Acres, in "The Rivals;" as Caleb Plummer in "The Cricket on the Hearth;" As Mr. Golightly in "Lend Me Five Shillings;" as Newman Noggs in "Nicholas Nickleby;" as Dr. Ollapad in "The Poor Gentleman;" as Asa Trenchard in "Our American Cousin;" as Dr. Pangloss in "The Heir at Law;" as Marrall in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts."

FRANK G. BIGELOW, president of the First National Bank of Milwaukee, confessed to the bank directors on April 24 that he was a defaulter and that his speculations amounted to \$1,450,000. The money was spent in speculation in wheat. The secret was kept for years through falsification of the books. Bigelow said that the assistant cashier, Henry G. Goll, aided him in his embezzlements. Bigelow was promptly removed from the presidency and the directors subscribed out of their own personal fortunes sums sufficient to cover the entire shortage. Bigelow was promptly arrested and admitted to bail. Frank G. Bigelow was in 1904 president of the American Bankers' association, which has a membership of 7,500 banks in all parts of the country.

IN 1902 MR. BIGELOW addressed the American Bankers' association at New Orleans in which address he said: "I sincerely believe the only scientific currency in times to come will be asset currency." The Cincinnati Enquirer says that in Mr. Bigelow's address at the meeting in New York, he made some remarks that are interesting, in view of the exposure of his speculative operations. Introducing his address he said: "However much prejudice there may appear to be at times against bankers, our business is of the utmost usefulness and importance, and the right pursuit of it in its broader and better aspects requires all the courage and all the conservatism we can command." And he concluded as follows: "As I draw these reflections to a close, I remind you that it has been well said that our greatest debt to Franklin, one of the very greatest Americans, has been in the lessons of honesty, thrift, temperance, industry and economy which he inculcated and which have so enormously influenced life. The banker should learn these lessons of self-restraint, of unbroken good humor and cheerfulness under difficulties. He has many opportunities to properly promote good enterprises and to decline to aid doubtful ones. He has a right thus to build up his own business and that of the community where his lot is cast; and if he does it efficiently he will have many experiences in times of stress and trial to encourage him and show him that the masses of men are inclined to be reasonable, considerate and just.

A banker may make friends and keep them in time of need. I close with a short quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson as a sort of benediction. "To be honest, to be kind, to earn a little, and to spend a little less; to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered; to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation; above all on the same grim conditions to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that a man hath of fortitude and delicacy."

THE LAST MEETING of the American Bankers' association was held in New York in September, 1904, Mr. Bigelow presiding. The New York correspondent for the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "By a curious coincidence one of the most important subjects considered at that meeting was a proposed amendment to the constitution, favored by President Bigelow, providing that the executive council shall appoint a board of five trustees for management and administration of a fund, to be known as the 'American bankers' guarantee fund.' This fund was to be used to reimburse banks losing through dishonesty of bookkeepers and clerks. No definite action was taken, although it was shown that 8,033 letters sent to banks in the association had called forth 7,110 answers favoring the proposition. The opposing speech of J. Frank Supplee, of the United States Fidelity and Guarantee company, who was present as an official of the Farmers and Planters' Bank of Baltimore, reflected gloomily on the honesty of bank employees. The secretary's report on the detective branch of the work of the association said: 'In the past year our detective agents have captured seventy-five professional bank criminals and convicted sixty-four, the sum total of whose sentences amount to 181 years. This does not include sixteen indeterminate terms, and nine criminals are now awaiting trial.'

THE CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT for the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "American finance is strewn with the wrecks of embezzlers. The most notorious cases in the last twenty years are given: Ferdinand Ward, New York, \$6,000,000; John C. Eno, New York, \$3,000,000; William Schreiber, Elizabethport, New Jersey, \$109,000; George W. Valentine, Perth Amboy, N. J., \$220,000; Gideon W. Marsh, Philadelphia, \$1,000,000; Charles I. Debaum, New York, \$100,000; Charles W. Spaulding, Chicago, \$1,200,000; E. S. Drever, Chicago, \$316,000; Charles H. Cole, Boston, \$900,000; Charles L. Alvord, New York, \$700,000; Frank M. Brown, Newport, Ky., \$200,000; Henry J. Fleischman, Los Angeles, \$100,000; Frank C. Andrews, Detroit, \$662,000; Frank V. La Bountie, Buffalo, \$500,000; F. G. Bigelow, Milwaukee, \$1,450,000."

A RANDOLPH, IOWA, reader of The Commoner writes: "In the issue of the 10th, a reader of The Commoner asks for statistics showing the change that has taken place in the proportion of property holders in the United States since 1856. If the reader so referred to wishes an accurate statement, or so near it that 'Infinity' himself would have to be called in to get at an exact finish, I would refer him to 'The Present Distribution of Wealth in the United States by Charles B. Spahr, New York, 46 East Fourteenth street. Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, Boston, 100 Purchase street, a work copyrighted in 1896. The work now in my possession I purchased in 1897. The work goes back farther than the reader refers to, 1856, and takes up somewhat in a general way the causes that have led up to the distribution of wealth as we find in England today, which occupies one chapter of the work. The bulk of the book is for American students. The author has given lectures on the subjects of which the book treats in colleges high as the country affords. To show the unprejudiced mind of the author, I will quote a part of his preface, to-wit: 'The writer has learned, and hopes to teach, that upon matters coming within its field the common observation of common people is more trustworthy than the statistical investigations of the most unprejudiced experts. Indeed he has come to believe that social statistics are only trustworthy when they show to the world at large what common observation shows to those personally familiar with the conditions described.'