

CURRENT TOPICS

THE ESTABLISHMENT of distilleries for the manufacture of denatured alcohol may or may not be a dream in the opinion of the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Gazette. The Gazette says: "There has been a general supposition that the alcohol was easy of manufacture, and that plants could be installed at small expense. But now comes some of the leading distillers of the country with the statement that the people are building air castles. The distillery managers ought to know what they are talking about, and possibly they do. But it should be borne in mind that the most of these managers are members of the whisky trust, and no one believes that the combine will be anxious to do or say anything that will encourage indiscriminate manufacture of the product. There was something suspicious about the suddenness with which certain corporate interests withdrew opposition to the removal of the tax from denatured alcohol. If the combines, including the whisky trust and the Standard Oil monopoly, can practically control the output of commercial alcohol, they will not suffer much loss of revenue through the curtailment of the sale of the oils produced by the oil trust. The Standard magnates are a foxy lot, and if they are outwitted the people will have to be up and doing. All statements from trust sources regarding the cost of manufacturing denatured alcohol and the difficulty of operating plants, should be taken with a good many grains of salt."

ALTHOUGH IT HAD the endorsement of the secretary of war, a bill leasing for coal mining purposes the Batan Island Military Reservation in the Philippines, met defeat in the house. The Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald says: "Chairman Tawney of the committee on appropriations led in the attack on the measure, which contemplated the leasing of the coal mines on Batan Island, which is distant by water route 450 miles from Manila, to a private company for fifty years, with the understanding that the company should sell coal to the United States and the Philippine governments at a price not to exceed 10 per cent above the cost of mining. A military expert had estimated that the coal could be mined and sold to the government at \$2.20 per ton, as against \$5 per ton which it now costs the government to buy Japan or Australian coal. Mr. Tawney attacked the principle of giving away the property of the United States without a royalty. Mr. Clark (Mo.) insisted that if we were going to keep the Philippine Islands, as the speaker intimated a short time ago, then he was unalterably opposed to alienating a single island or a single thing produced on the islands, for in time of war we would need every facility afforded."

IN AN ADDRESS delivered before a Kentucky college Secretary of the Treasury Shaw said: "I will represent Uncle Sam for a little while. I have a neighbor that has caused me trouble for years. One morning I say to my family, 'I am going across the way to settle that trouble,' and my family says, 'Go.' I settle the disturbance, but when I come back I have a little baby in my arms. I wish I had never seen it. I call my family around me and say, 'There will be no further trouble, but what am I to do with this baby?' Their opinions differ. To keep and educate him seems the only thing to do, and when he is grown we can keep him or start him for himself, as seems best. It will cost us something, but the good God has not given us all this for ourselves alone. It will be a wonderful advantage for him, and I say, 'All right,' and the first time I take him he begins to yell and kick and squall and bite. Spank, spank, spank!"

W. A. CROFFUT of New York, writing to the New York World and referring to Secretary Shaw's "parable" says: "Some people may be inconsiderate and audacious enough to inquire how the secretary came in possession of the baby. Whose baby is it? How did he get it? Did he kidnap it? Did he buy it of somebody who didn't own it and could give no bill of sale? And when the chocolate cherub proceeded to kick and squall

and bite, did Secretary Shaw regard it as a sign that it was 'well satisfied?' He adds: 'When he is grown we can keep him.' What for? Full-grown men are not retained except for slavery. The parabolist does not enlighten us on this point. But he adds: 'The other day when I recalled his nurse, Judge Taft, he looked up and smiled.' Who looked up and smiled? Was it the nurse, because his efforts to get a low-tariff nursing bottle had been such a howling success? Or was it the brown baby putting up a smile of derision and irony? Has it come to this, that an unwilling infantile ward shall not be permitted to raise a note of protest when the milk is sour?"

THE "MUCK RAKER" is, according to a writer in the New York World, by no means a newcomer in literature. This writer says: "The year of the publication of 'The Jungle' is the semi-centennial of the appearance of Charles Reade's 'It's Never Too Late to Mend,' a book which the critics of the time found as 'revolting' as they now find Mr. Sinclair's work, and for reasons much the same. Its fidelity to fact in the portrayal of prison abuses shocked a conservative sentiment which was later to demand the very reforms in the treatment of convicts of which it showed the need. The novel with a purpose long ago became common in English fiction. Reade himself, Oxford don that he was and man of refined culture, handled the muck rake without gloves. In 'Hard Cash' published in 1863, he exposed the evils of private lunatic asylums, and in 'Foul Play,' in 1869, gave the world that forcible arraignment of the traffic in sailors' lives by ship-owners which was said to have inspired Plimsoll's efforts for the protection of British seamen from the risks of unseaworthy vessels."

EVEN BEFORE READE, Charles Dickens figured conspicuously as a "muck raker." The World writer says: "In 'Pickwick Papers' in 1836, Dickens dealt a blow to prison evils. In 'Nicholas Nickleby,' published in 1838, he laid bare the petty oppressions of school life in Yorkshire with the thoroughness of a government commissioner. In 'Oliver Twist,' in the same year he laughed away the incompetence of parish charity officials and greatly aided poor-law reform. The Dickens gallery of grafters and swindlers is a full one. In recent times in England Walter Besant's 'All Sorts and Conditions of Men,' by the light it threw on the deplorable social conditions of London's East Side, was almost directly responsible for the institution of the People's palace and gave a strong impetus to settlement work for the reclamation of the submerged. Our own great example of muck rack fiction of a former time is 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' curiously enough from a feminine pen. No one, least of all Mrs. Stowe herself, foresaw the extraordinary influence which this tract in the form of a romance, called forth by the fugitive slave law, was destined to exercise in securing the freedom of slaves. On its publication in book form in 1852 the author despaired of its success. 'It seemed that there was no hope; that nobody would read, that nobody would hear.' Within five years 500,000 copies had been sold and its place at the head of all novels of moral motives established."

SECRETARY SHAW has delivered several speeches in opposition to the renomination of Governor Cummins of Iowa. In one of these speeches Mr. Shaw says: "There is not one-fourth the sentiment for tariff revision there was three years ago, and not a bit in the republican party for immediate revision. I correct that statement. I do know two states that are perfectly willing to remove all the protection that they have for their own benefit. The republican party has never gone out of power, even on the tariff issue, except immediately following a revision of the tariff at its own hands, and neither we nor the democrats have revised the tariff and remained in power a year except in the case of the Dingley bill. Since the election of 1904 President Roosevelt has submitted three messages to congress, in not one of which did he

recommend tariff revision. Are we Roosevelt republicans? If so, why should we not be 'stand patters?' He has made many speeches, but in none has he recommended tariff revision. When you tell the people they are robbed by the tariff, which he does not recommend shall be revised, you indict your president for not demanding that revision. Since the last republican platform was adopted the committee on ways and means, which must originate tariff legislation, has formulated no revision, nor has it considered the formulation of such a bill. Since that platform was adopted the congressional caucus has met again and again, but it has recommended no tariff revision. Who is responsible for the policies of the party? Does not the national convention speak with authority? Are we as republicans not bound by that platform? Does not the republican president, the leader of his party, speak with authority, and as republicans are we not bound by his recommendations and by his failure to recommend? Is not the republican majority in congress clothed with authority to speak for the party, and is it not clothed with authority to keep silence? I say to you that the only phase of the present contest in Iowa, which has attracted national attention is revision, and the success of the candidate who takes it upon himself to speak of the effects of the Dingley tariff as robbery, will be understood in every state of the union as a party defeat."

THERE IS A HINT of graft in the expenses of providing relief for the San Francisco earthquake sufferers. A writer in the Joplin (Mo.) Globe, says: "Bills for \$157,599 for automobile service in the two weeks following the fire—more than was spent for milk, butter, eggs, bread, vegetables, drugs and clothing in the relief of 200,000 homeless persons—were presented to the finance committee today, and threaten to cause a scandal before the work of auditing is completed. The charges average \$35 a day, and in some cases are much higher."

THE CHRISTIAN Scientists recently dedicated what they call their "Mother Church" at Boston. The structure cost \$2,000,000, and Christian Scientists from all over the world attended the dedication ceremonies. The New York World says: "Christian Science as a 'discovery' is forty years old; as the creed of an associated body of believers it is thirty. In 1876 there were one church and seven communicants. Now there are 657 chartered churches, 277 organized missions, 42,000 communicants and 1,000,000 adherents, according to the church figures. New York had three recognized practitioners of the Scientist faith in 1889. Now it has 137. Chicago has 232 and Boston 149. In London there are thirty-nine healers, and San Francisco before the earthquake had the same number. Of New York's six Christian Science church buildings one cost more than a million dollars and another more than a quarter of a million. Chicago has four churches, Buffalo and Kansas City have two each. Every Scientist edifice is paid for in cash as it is built. Out of its material progress Christian Science furnishes an interesting chapter to the religious history of the times."

ARBITRATION IS displacing war in the opinion of Benjamin F. Trueblood. Writing for the Atlantic Monthly, Mr. Trueblood said: "Any one who has carefully followed the arbitration movement during the decade since 1895, including the work and results of The Hague conference, to say nothing of the nearly two hundred cases of dispute settled by this means in the previous eighty years, knows that arbitration can no longer fairly be spoken of as an experiment. Arbitration is not any longer an experiment, nor even a series of experiments. It is now the settled practice of the civilized nations when disputes arise between them, and is universally recognized in international law. A government which will not try arbitration before resorting to arms is, in these days, scarcely considered respectable. War, instead of being the general practice of nations, as it was a century ago, when serious disputes arose between them, is