

# CURRENT TOPICS

**DENNIS KEARNEY** is dead. He was born in Ireland in 1847; he became a sailor, then engaged in the draying business in San Francisco, taking also an active part in local politics. In 1877 he began an agitation among the working men directing his energies particularly at the evils of capital, Chinese labor, etc. For several years Kearney was a conspicuous character. He finally dropped out of public notice, and for the last twenty-five years he has been practically unheard of.

**M. R. ROOSEVELT** has written to the editor of the Review of Reviews to take exception to certain statements made in an article recently printed in that publication, which article was entitled, "The Doctor in the Public Schools." "This writer states clearly," says the president, "that it is an erroneous idea to assume that the average family should have a larger number of healthy children than the present birth rate showed. The vital statistics of a state like Massachusetts show that there the average family of native American descent has so few children that the birth rate has fallen below the death rate. This, of course, means race suicide, and it ought to be understood that if after a while there are no children to go to school the question of their health in school would not even be academic." Continuing Mr. Roosevelt says: "The greatest problem of civilization is to be found in the fact that the well-to-do families tend to die out; there results in consequence a tendency to the elimination, instead of the survival of the fittest, and the moral attitude which helps on this tendency is, of course, strengthened when it is apologized for and praised in a magazine like yours. Our people could still exist under all kinds of iniquities in government; under a debased currency, under official corruption, under the rule of a socialistic proletariat, or a wealthy oligarchy. All these things would be bad for us, but the country would still exist. But it could not continue to exist if it paid heed to the expressed or implied teachings of such articles as this."

**REV. DR. C. F. AKED**, lately of London, has become pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist church, New York, which is commonly known as "John D. Rockefeller's church." A dispatch to the Denver News, under date of New York, April 28, says that in his Sunday sermon, Dr. Aked "unconsciously looked straight at the pew the oil magnate usually occupies: 'Can you reconcile your business with God? Was yesterday's deal in harmony with His mind? Will your books stand a heavenly audit? In your office dare you put up the prayer—that is to say, should you dare if you had any realizing belief in the efficacy of prayer—'Abide with Me; come not to sojourn, but to abide with me!' Will you reconcile your business methods with God? A ministry which does not force these questions home is sawdust and chaff.'"

**W. L. ROSS** of Philadelphia gives the North American of that city, as well as some other metropolitan newspapers, something to think about when he writes: "In your issue of April 30 you say: 'Louis F. Post, editor of the Public, is one of the leading socialistic thinkers and writers in the United States.' Your statement is true, provided the word 'socialistic' is omitted. After all that has been said in your paper about socialism, it is about time that more accuracy were shown as to its meaning. The Century dictionary gives a fairly good definition: 'Any theory or system of social organization which would abolish, entirely or in great part, the individual effort and competition on which modern society rests, and substitute for it co-operative action, would introduce a more perfect and equal distribution of the products of labor, and would make land and capital, as the instruments and means of production, the joint possession of the members of the community. The name is used to include a great variety of social theories and reforms which have more or less of this character.' The leading features of socialism are that it would have the state absorb all land and capital. It would have the state conduct the production and distribution of wealth. It would abolish competition. For many years Louis F. Post has advocated the theories of Henry George. He sees that our overcrowding in business and in the labor market is not caused by

competition, but by monopoly. He takes the same position that that great educator, Nicholas Murray Butler, takes. "Therefore, socialism is primarily an attempt to overcome man's individual imperfections by adding them together, in the hope that they will cancel each other. This is not only bad mathematics, but worse psychology." Louis F. Post is one of the most able and brilliant writers of the times. He sees with clear vision the causes of the unjust distribution of wealth. But he is not a socialist if you assign any definite meaning to the term. He is a single-taxer—a follower of that most profound and accurate of reasoners, that leader of the world's best thought today—Henry George."

**M. R. ROOSEVELT** is now making an effort to reform the Elks. The St. Louis Times says that the following letter was sent by the president on March 3 to Henry A. Melvin of Oakland, Cal., the grand exalted ruler of the order: "My Dear Judge Melvin:—I am not an Elk, but the writer of the enclosed letter is. I have a very full appreciation of the immense amount of good done by this great social and benevolent order. I all the more regret that the noblest remaining of our wild creatures should be threatened with destruction primarily because of the custom which has grown up in the order of wearing elk's tusks as the emblem of the order. Killing elk for the tusks has now become a regular trade. Most of the killing is illegal; and in almost every case the carcass, containing hundreds of pounds of good meat, is left to rot—one of the most beautiful and stately creatures of the wilderness being turned to mere carrion so that its teeth may be worn on the chain of a well-meaning man who does not take the trouble to think of the sinful waste and destruction caused by the gratification of his whim. Although not an Elk, I at one time a number of years ago, wore as an ornament on my watch chain a peculiarly fine elk's tusk belonging to a big bull I had shot. But although it was my trophy I gave up wearing it when I found the widespread destruction that the custom of wearing these tusks was causing. Is it not possible that your order, which has done so much for uplifting our American citizenship and for rendering life among so many of our people both easier and happier, may now come to the front again in rendering the service to our whole people that would be rendered by the abolition of this destructive custom?"

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL** prints what it calls "another chapter of the Alton deal," and a very interesting chapter it is indeed! The Journal says: "The more the Alton deal is studied the more extraordinary does its history appear. Here is a chapter which did not come out at the recent Union Pacific investigation. It will be recalled that the Alton readjustment took place during Mr. Harriman's absence in Alaska. He has nevertheless been held by public opinion chiefly responsible for it, and his associates in the scheme, Messrs. Gould, Stillman and Schiff, have in a large measure escaped the condemnation which has been his portion. The idea has prevailed that Mr. Harriman planned the deal before he left for Alaska, and that what took place during his absence was simply the carrying out of his ideas. Mr. Harriman, to his credit be it said, has not sought to escape any blame which attaches to the transaction by shifting the burden upon the shoulders of his associates. His friends say, however, that upon his return from Alaska he was, in fact, displeased at what had been done while he was away, feeling that a mistake had been made. This, however, did not prevent him from going ahead with his accustomed energy to make a success of the transaction. Complete success depended upon making a market for the bonds which had been issued to the Harriman-Gould-Stillman-Schiff syndicate at 65. Enlisting the aid of Benjamin B. Odell, then chairman of the republican state committee, it is said Mr. Harriman secured the passage by the state legislature of a law extending the permissible savings bank investments to these Alton bonds. A fact of extraordinary interest in view of recent developments is that this law was signed by Governor Theodore Roosevelt. Thus the signature of Roosevelt completed the Alton deal by giving the Alton bonds the prestige which attaches to a savings bank

investment. Yet at this very time the essential facts of the Alton readjustment—stock-watering and all—had been made public. This of course does not imply any complicity on the part of Governor Roosevelt in the operations of the Harriman syndicate. On the contrary the governor unquestionably accepted the bill as it came to him, in good faith, believing that it represented the desires of the investment market. He did not then understand the matter as he does now. Seven years later, as president of the United States, Mr. Roosevelt believed it to be his duty to proceed against Mr. Harriman and condemn this very deal which he himself, in his ignorance, as governor of New York, had helped to consummate."

**THE SPECULATORS** of Wall street seem to have had a special interest in Mr. Roosevelt's Jamestown exposition speech, and so deep was the interest of Wall Street that it is charged that in some mysterious way the speculators received advance copies of the address. The New York World says: "For several days typewritten copies of what is purported to be extracts of the speech President Roosevelt is to deliver at the Jamestown exposition today have been in circulation in Wall Street brokerage houses. As these extracts have been interpreted as showing that the president has adopted a more conservative policy toward the railroads, they have been the basis of stock manipulation on the bull side. The alleged copies of the speech bear the usual release notice sent out with the president's messages and speeches. There is a very strong reservation against the contents being permitted to leak to the public. Wall Street is guessing as to how the alleged copies came into the possession of the numerous members of the stock exchange who had them yesterday. The first copy appeared on Monday, and on Tuesday the number had increased by several score. It is said positively that the speech did not leak through any of the newspapers or through the Associated Press, which is usually selected by the president to distribute his speeches and messages to the newspapers."

**EASTERN NEWSPAPERS** very generally interpret Mr. Roosevelt's Jamestown exposition speech as a marked concession to the corporation element, while some regard it as plain assurance that the administration has no intention "to run amuck," in dealing with trusts and special interests. The Philadelphia Public Ledger says: "It may be confidently stated that the president has sounded for him a new note. It is evident that he is beginning to fear the enthusiasm of some of his most unregulated followers, and that he sees, if not a chance of some danger to the country, embarrassment to the party, if the wildest elements of the populists shall be permitted to dominate the republican party and give to it its tone and temper."

**IN HIS ADDRESS** at the Jamestown exposition, Mr. Roosevelt said that Edmund Burke combined unshakable resolution in pressing reform with a profound temperateness of spirit which made him, while bent on the extirpation of the evil system, refuse to cherish an unreasoning and vindictive ill will toward the men who had benefited by it. He quoted Burke as saying that if he could not reform with equity, he would not reform at all, there being "a state to preserve as well as a state to reform."

**INTERPRETING THE** president's address, the Wall Street Journal says: "The fact that President Roosevelt has put this passage into his speech is significant. The president's enemies charge that in pressing reforms he has not done so with a temperateness of spirit and that he has cherished unreasoning and vindictive ill will. They declare that in his eagerness to reform he is an agent of destruction and that his whole policy as he has applied it is thus ruinous to the country. It would appear that the president had these criticisms in mind when he penned this quotation from Burke, and declared that what Burke said was the exact spirit in which this country should move to the reform of abuses of corporate wealth. In other words, President Roosevelt wishes to impress upon the country that his policy is constructive and not destructive; that it is intended to build up rather than to tear down;