

# CURRENT TOPICS

**A**N interesting dispatch, carried by the Associated Press, under date of Jefferson City, Mo., Feb. 17, is as follows: Governor Major today issued a statement in which he attacked United States Senator Reed for not attending to his duties in Washington. Senator Reed is opposing a public utilities commission measure in the Missouri legislature. He is also serving as attorney for the prosecution in the murder trial of Dr. B. Clarke Hyde. At the conclusion of a statement in which he said the legislature was competent to pass upon the public utilities bill without outside interference, he said: "You may add this to my statement: At this particular time our United States senators are needed at Washington."

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**S**PEAKING about cabinets, a writer in the Washington (D. C.) Herald says: During the evening of March 3, 1869, General Grant took from his waistcoat pocket a list of distinguished men. He showed it to a personal friend, asking if the initials of one of the names were correct. This is believed to have been the first disclosure of the complete identity of the cabinet whose nominations he sent the next afternoon to the senate. Of course, there were guesses and conjectures, but some of the men upon whom he bestowed a portfolio were not advised until after the appointment was announced. Governor Wilson is apparently bent upon equaling this record. Judged by recent standards, he has been highly successful in keeping the secret of his choice. No positive confirmation has been accorded any report. Every one believes Mr. Bryan will be secretary of state because every one else believes it, but nowhere is to be found any admission of this, either by the president-elect or by the commoner. The personnel of the Taft cabinet was known long before this four years ago, with one or two exceptions. Mr. Roosevelt in 1905 retained most of the cabinet of his previous administration, which was a mixture of McKinley appointees and his own. Mr. McKinley let it be known, previous to his inauguration in 1897, who would sit at his council table. It is now more than three months since Woodrow Wilson was elected president. Single-handed he has shaped the plans for his administration. Advice he has sought from many, but his confidence has been given to few. He has not deemed it necessary to accord the public an indication of his policies through the announcement that this or that man representing a certain element of his party or a certain point of view in public affairs has been chosen. Soon after election Lincoln asked Seward to be his secretary of state. Seward was then in the senate and his effectiveness in many conciliatory efforts made to prevent secession was heightened when it became known that he had been tendered and had accepted the portfolio of state. Mr. Lincoln found the announcement of Seward's selection a source of strength, but Mr. Wilson evidently feels no such dependence on any other member of his party. How significantly this now forecasts the relations of president and cabinet only time can tell.

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**T**HE death of Joaquin Miller removes one of the world's notable figures. Attended by his wife and daughter, the famous poet died in his cabin in the Piedmont hills in California. An Associated Press correspondent says: For many years "The Heights" has been the mecca of lovers of Joaquin Miller's poetry. He always received his guests graciously and loved to talk in a vein of quaint humor of the old, adventurous days which he memorialized in his verse. His faculties were undimmed until almost the end and he worked at intervals upon a poem which he said was to be the most momentous work of his life. He guarded the poem with the utmost secrecy and not even his wife and daughter knew its subject. Hope of saving his life ended when the attending physician announced that the end was only a matter of a few days. Senility was the only cause of death the physician could give. Of all California poets, Miller's work is said to reflect most perfectly the primitive grandeur of the west. He

wrote of the mountains and the plains, and penned the epic of the pioneers. His education was scant, but he did not require books for his inspiration. From childhood his was a stirring, eventful life. He was born in the Wabash district of Indiana November 10, 1841, and was christened Cincinnatus Heine. His father was of Quaker stock. At the age of eleven young Miller accompanied his parents across the plains to the Pacific coast. The family took up a government claim in Oregon. His craving for adventure, stimulated by stories of the gold strikes in California, caused him to run away at 15 to seek his fortune. Already he had participated in the Indian war, receiving an arrow wound in the neck. In Siskiyou county he was adopted by a tribe of Indians and married the daughter of the chief. Shortly afterwards the woman was killed by settlers in a punitive expedition against raiding redskins, and Miller returned to Oregon, where he studied law. At this time he had begun to write verse, contributing to various magazines, and he met and married Miss Minnie Myrtle, a young Oregon poetess. Three children were born to the couple, a daughter, Maude, and two sons. The latter ran away early in life and their names were erased from the family record. Miller went in 1866 to Mexico, where he joined Walker's filibusters and was arrested. He obtained a pardon and returned to Oregon. In 1869 Miller published his first volume of poems. Soon afterwards he was divorced from his wife and went to Europe. There he became popular. He always dressed in a flannel shirt and knee-high boots, a costume that English of that day are said to have expected of Americans. Returning to America he took up newspaper work in Washington, D. C. While there he took a third wife, Miss Abby Leland, daughter of a Chicago hotel keeper. One child was born to her—Juanita. The poet returned to California in 1887, purchasing near Oakland the tract that he called "The Heights."

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**A**NSWERING an inquirer who desires to know if there has been a Baptist president of the United States, the Richmond Times-Dispatch says: There has not. There have been eight Episcopallians: Washington, Madison, Monroe, William Henry Harrison, Tyler, Taylor, Pierce and Arthur. There have been six Presbyterians: Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Lincoln, Cleveland, Harrison, and to these Woodrow Wilson must soon be added. There have been four Methodist chief magistrates: Johnson, Grant, Hayes, McKinley, Van Buren and Roosevelt were adherents of the Reformed Dutch church. John and John Quincy Adams were Congregationalists. Fillmore and Taft were Unitarians. Garfield was a Disciple. Seven religious bodies have been represented by the twenty-six presidents.

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**A**N unusual scene occurred in the Indiana legislature, report of which is made by the Associated Press as follows: Lieutenant Governor O'Neill caused a sensation in the senate when he stopped Rev. E. R. Henry of the Emmanuel Baptist church of this city, who was making the opening prayer, and said: "Stop making a political speech." The minister had prayed for the separation of the "rum traffic" from the state and for "the coming of the day when Indiana would refuse to sell to men the right to make other men drunkards." The lieutenant governor, who had been showing signs of impatience, vigorously banged the marble slab with his gavel and commanded the minister to stop. He ordered the journal to be read and Mr. Henry immediately left the chamber.

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**T**HE GERMAN EMPEROR surprised his hearers recently, in a sermon. A Berlin cablegram to the New York World, says: Declaring that the Prussians were "oppressed and dismembered folk" in 1806 as a consequence of God's judgment because they had lost faith in Him, the German emperor at a memorial service at Berlin university delivered a characteristic address warning the present generation of Germans not to forget the faith of their fathers. The emperor emphasized his words by pounding

his right fist on the desk repeatedly. He was often interrupted by applause. He asserted that the Germans of today were inclined to believe only in tangible things and to place difficulties in religion's way. They should study history, he said, and see how the Prussians regained their old faith and fought the war of liberation, whose glorious result was not man's work but God's work. "So," continued the emperor, "we have in the history of the past certain proof of God's guidance and that He was and still is with us. And with this teaching of the past all German youth can forge in its fire the tried shield of faith, which must never be lacking in the armory of Germans and Prussians. With such weapons, looking neither to the right nor to the left, we will go our direct way, eyes uplifted and hearts uplifted with trust in God. Then we can all repeat the great chancellor's words: 'We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world.'" A storm of applause followed the emperor's speech, which was impromptu and unexpected, surprising the rector of the university, who had started for the rostrum to close the exercises.

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**A** WRITER in the New York World says: The cabinet selected by Washington in 1789 comprised Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury, Henry Knox as secretary of war, Sampel Osgood as postmaster-general and Edmund Randolph as attorney-general. The first secretary of the navy was named in 1801 under Jefferson; the first secretary of the interior in 1849 under Taylor; the first secretary of agriculture in 1889 under Cleveland. The department of commerce and labor was created during the first Roosevelt administration, bringing the cabinet up to nine members. If congress now creates a department of labor the cabinet will be twice the size of Washington's cabinet.

## THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

A man is above his time in proportion as he possesses the power of imagination—the attribute that enables him to look beneath the surface of things and from the eternal elements of thought construct a new order, a new system, a new philosophy, or from the crucible of his intellect fashion something useful in the interest of mankind.

The man of imagination can grasp your idea, and from this premise frame for you whatever you may wish. He can take a rock and from the knowledge he may have of science show its relations to the universe, or from a bone buried beneath the dust of centuries show the form and nature of the animal of which it was once a part. He can look into the science of language, trace a word to its root, take a number of them and, following back to the origin of all languages, show from that language the thoughts of the people who uttered it, and outline to a wondering world, their hopes, their aims and their institutions. If to this origin he can trace the name of a divinity he knows something of their religious aspirations. If he follows back to this people the word "plow" he knows that they were cultivators of the soil.

So with music and with song.

The man of imagination may search the heights and depths of human thought or the secrets of nature, and from an understanding of natural law, he will construct a new civilization, a new religious philosophy, a new science of life. He is the one who has pointed the way to every achievement ever made by the hand or mind of man. He is the light of the world of every age, and from his fertile brain emerges all the blessings of mankind. He is the father of all arts and sciences, the designer of every invention, the builder of every avenue of commerce, the thought that preceded the construction of every vessel that ever drove its furrows through ocean wastes and bulled the commerce of the world—the peace envoy of all time.

All hail to the man of imagination.—Laurie J. Quinby in Omaha Chancellor.