

CURRENT TOPICS

AN interesting, but generally forgotten fact is recalled by an editorial in the Richmond (Va.) Journal, from which the following is taken: How many people ever knew, or how many remember, that a number of confederates who never surrendered, never took the oath of allegiance, fled to Brazil, established a colony there and that some of them and their descendants still form a North American colony on South American soil? The Daughters of the Confederacy of Chattanooga have opened up this forgotten romance by inviting "the ex-confederates of Brazil" to attend a reception of their organization to be held in Chattanooga during the confederate reunion in that city. Many southerners, filled with bitterness of the war's hates and reverses, determined to seek asylum in another land. Brazil appealed to them, and they went from nearly every southern state and planted a colony in that country. They have a neat, prosperous village, known as Villa Americana, situated something more than 100 miles west of the city of Sao Paulo. Some members of the colony grew tired of the Brazilian life and returned home; but there are some 600 members of the colony now, all within a radius of a few miles.

NEVIN C. WINTER, in one of his books on Brazil, says that these southerners are still Americans at heart, but they have become citizens of Brazil by birth or proclamation. They are thrifty and well-to-do people. The following excerpts from Mr. Winter's book will be of interest just now: "Someone had told me that the war was a tabooed subject; that the few older members left were fighting the battles over. When I met the oldest member of the colony, who had left the United States in 1865, the impulse came to test this subject. I mentioned the fact that my own father had served in the union army and fought for his country on that side. This old man, who was past the allotted three-score-and-ten, and had fought with that intrepid warrior, Stonewall Jackson, then told me the whole history of the colony and the causes that led to its establishment. 'It was a mistake,' he said, 'but we did not realize it then, and afterward it was too late to sacrifice what we had achieved and move back. We still love the old flag.' When Senator Root, to take up another point, then Secretary of state, visited Brazil four years ago, a new station was named Elihu Root in his honor on the Paulista railway, and his name stands out conspicuously on every time table of that line. He was asked whether it would be better for the colony to remain in Brazil or return to the United States. Stay where you are, he said, and be good Brazilians. You will find the states so changed that they would no longer seem like home. The secretary was right. A few months before my visit one of the prosperous members of the colony went, with his family, to his old home in Texas, with the intention of remaining there. He left his property in the hands of an agent for sale. A few weeks after his arrival in Texas he cabled to his agent not to sell his property, as he was coming back. In a few months he and his family returned to the villa, giving as his reason that the old neighborhood had changed so much that it did not seem so much like home as Brazil."

THE Richmond Journal adds: "There were many members of Lee's army that did not remain to view the formalities of surrender. They were mostly cavalymen, who, encouraged by the advantage of having a horse under them slipped away and fled a situation which many, though finding hatefully distasteful, accepted later on. Lynchburg, something over a score of miles from the field at Appomattox, received for the two days following a considerable number of the deserters of the surrender. Most of these men had determined to join Johnston's army further south, but soon saw the futility of a further struggle. These were the spirits, which, unbending in their determination not to acknowledge their defeat, exiled themselves in a foreign land. It was a thoughtful act on the part of the Chattanooga Daughters to invite

them to the reunion, and it should add much to the sentiment and pleasure of the occasion to have these exiles return."

SPEAKING of President Franklin Pierce, a writer in the Washington (D. C.) Star says: Franklin Pierce is at last to have a statue. New Hampshire will so honor the only one of her sons to reach the White House. He has been dead forty-four years. General Pierce served in both house and senate, and resigned from the latter body to resume the practice of law. He thought, too, he was taking leave of politics forever, but ten years later he was nominated as a compromise candidate and elected president. The campaign was enlivened by the inquiry, put by many democrats as well as whigs, "Who the hades is General Pierce?" He had been out of office so long the rank and file had forgotten him. But he made a strong candidate. His title had been won in the war with Mexico, and he was a handsome and attractive man. While he did not make a great president, he proved a very competent politician in office. None other could have steered the democratic party through the high seas that ran between 1853 and 1856, and handed over the wheel to another pilot of that faith. Mr. Buchanan owed much to his predecessor. But General Pierce's greatest public service was neither political nor military. He it was who rescued Nathaniel Hawthorne from a sort of penury, and by giving him a good office insured his independence for the remainder of his life. The two men had been fellow students at Bowdoin college. One after graduation turned to the law and acquired money. The other turned to literature, and although with an exquisite genius did not prosper either financially or otherwise. It was a grim boast of his after fortune at last smiled that for years he had been "the obscurest man of letters in America." But fortune at last smiled. When General Pierce was nominated for the presidency his old college chum wrote the campaign biography of the candidate—Raphael for the moment turned sign painter—and, after election, General Pierce appointed Hawthorne consul at Liverpool, then the best paying office in the consular service. Thus was the most gifted of American imaginative writers not only eased of all care about money matters, but afforded an opportunity to see Europe. From England, after his official term expired, Hawthorne visited the continent and spent some years in the great capitals there. In Rome he found the inspiration for the "Marble Faun," and met the pick of the artistic world laboring there. Both Pierce and Hawthorne were cold during the civil war, and on that account were charged with a lack of patriotism. Hawthorne made one visit to Washington and met Mr. Lincoln, but failed to note and appreciate a genius as exquisite as his own.

THE shoe machinery trust is to be thoroughly investigated by the federal government. Referring to this fact and to this trust, the St. Louis Republic says: "The arrogance and greed of the trust have been unrestricted, if any series of human acts deserves the term. The biography of this trust is rather ordinary, in part. There are eleven defendant companies, nine operated as incidental to the shoe-machinery business of the trust. Through these eleven companies the twenty-three individual defendants acquired the business of fifty-five individual partnerships and corporations. So far this is just the conventional procedure of the lords of high finance. It is in the infamous "tying clause" in the leases on shoe machinery that the peculiar genius of the combination manifests itself. These leases, copious extracts from which appeared in these columns about a year ago, are worded with such diabolical ingenuity that machinery absolutely necessary to every shoe factory, which can be obtained nowhere but of the trust, may be secured only by signing agreements which bind the manufacturer to use the entire line of machinery made by the trust, impose on him heavy and unreasonable burdens in the matter of repair cost and the

purchase of supplies, and then cause the renewal of a lease on any one machine to renew, automatically, the leases on all the other machines leased from the trust throughout the factory. The United Shoe Machinery company sells machines in England which it only leases in the United States. And it uses the whip in its hand to extort "testimonials" from the cowed and bullied manufacturer to the excellence of its service and the general philanthropy of its policy. This is possibly the meanest of all mean trusts. And that, when you stop to contemplate the divagations of Standard Oil from the ways of fairness and justice, is a tribute."

A FINE story of courage and public service on the part of negroes is told by the New Orleans correspondent for the Associated Press: Quick work by determined farmers and a small bunch of willing negroes who were thrown into an incipient crevasse in the absence of sand bags saved another disaster along the turbulent Mississippi river. The dozen negroes who lay in the gap of the Poydras levee, holding back the water until sand bags could be filled to take their places, risked their lives, but saved the day when it appeared hopeless to even try to hold the fast crumbling embankment. The Poydras levee, which is only thirteen miles south of New Orleans, began to cave rapidly shortly after 5 o'clock in the morning. When the caving was discovered the entire batture in front of the Poydras store, one hundred feet wide and extending from the levee to the river bank, two hundred feet out, had caved in and a small gap in the levee had gone. The alarm was given and within twenty minutes a score of negroes were brought up by a planter who lives a few hundred yards south of the scene. The levee was caving rapidly and when this small force arrived water about two inches deep was pouring over the embankment. It seemed too late to prevent the crash, which would spread flood waters over a large area of Plaquemine and St. Bernard parishes, entailing damage to plantations totalling several hundred thousand dollars. Two thousand empty sand bags were being brought up, from the farm house just below, but the flow of water across the top of the levee had to be stopped immediately or sand bags and all the labor within ten miles would be useless. A desperate chance was taken when two twelve-inch boards were put along the top of the broken levee and a dozen negroes accepted the task of holding it in place. These human sandbags might be taken with the very next slice of the levee, but they held on until a row of bags, filled with dirt, were put in place behind the boards. Other bags were hurriedly dropped in the gap and soon a hundred more negroes and white men were working like ants filling sacks and carrying the filled bags to the gap. Then, without warning, the stretch of the levee crown, where the human sandbags lay a few moments before, fell away to a depth of twenty-eight feet. A second row of bags held the water back and within an hour two thousand of the dirt-filled sacks were in place and the caving was temporarily checked and for the time, the levee was saved. Laborers and supplies were rushed to the scene on special trains by steamer and barge and on automobile trucks. At noon the construction of a horse shoe levee behind the endangered embankment, out in the public road, was started. At night a thousand men were working by the light of torches and bonfires and Engineer John Klorer, in charge of the work, expressed the belief that there would be no crevasse. There are still several dangerous places in the levees along Pointe Coupee parish, above Baton Rouge, and at Kempe's bend and just south of Vidalia, La., forces are working night and day to prevent breaks.

DON'T DO IT

William Lorimer announces that he will be a candidate for United States senator from Illinois to succeed Mr. Sherman.

Don't do it, William. You have had trouble enough and the proud state of Illinois has already borne too many burdens on your account.