

Current Topics.

THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE COMBINATION of all the great packing houses into one trust will be accomplished at an early day. Negotiations to this end have been under way for some time. The purchase of the Hammond company by Armour & Co. has been formally announced, and it is believed that this is but the initial move toward an organization of all the concerns. The New York World prints an interesting table showing that the probable total capitalization of this great trust will be \$201,000,000. Some idea of the immense interests affected by this proposed organization may be obtained by a glance at the following figures: Swift & Co., capital, \$25,000,000; annual business, \$200,000,000; stock value in merger, \$75,000,000. Armour & Co., capital, \$20,000,000; annual business, \$200,000,000; stock value in merger, \$60,000,000. Nelson Morris & Co., capital, \$5,000,000; annual business, \$25,000,000; stock value in merger, \$15,000,000. Cudahy & Co., capital, \$5,000,000; annual business, \$15,000,000; stock value in merger, \$15,000,000. Stocks and securities representing purchase of Hammond & Co. and Omaha Packing company by Armour & Co., \$7,000,000; value in merger, \$21,000,000. Stocks and securities representing the purchase of Fowler & Son Packing company and the Anglo-American Provision company by Swift & Co., \$5,000,000; value in merger, \$15,000,000. Probable total capitalization in the meat merger, \$201,000,000.

IT IS SAID THAT THE LONDON DAILY MAIL collected \$450,000 from the sale of Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Absent-Minded Beggar." These proceeds were used for the erection of a hospital. The building has been completed and possession has been delivered to the British war office. A recent article in the London Outlook says that this is to be converted partly into a consumption hospital and partly into a general hospital for soldiers. The Outlook adds: "The building together with the freehold on which it stands cost about £90,000. Mr. Kipling should now write a poem lauding peace in order to maintain this admirable military structure. This, I hear, would be covered by some £2,500 per annum—requiring therefor a capital of £25,000 to meet it, i. e., half as much as his effort produced."

ONE OF THE INTERESTING APPROPRIATIONS made at the recent session of congress was the sum of \$10,000 in order to enable the agricultural department to make experiments in the raising of silk worms and the production of raw silk in the United States. The people of Kansas evidently had some experience with silk culture, and if the Wichita Eagle fairly understands the result Kansas people will not ask Secretary Wilson to expend any portion of this \$10,000 in their state. The Eagle says: "Kansas' experience with the silk worm proved several things. Among others, that the silk worm would pass a mulberry tree by to eat himself cross-eyed on Osage orange leaves; that he was as delicate as a Poland China hog in cholera times, and that he demanded as much attention as a teething baby in summer. At first there were visions of fortunes in every township, and ideas of forcing France into bankruptcy became general throughout Kansas. But by the time eight thousand individual Kansans had crawled out of bed at midnight to roll a French worm over on his back and feel of his pulse, the anti-silk worm movement in Kansas grew quite vigorous, and the silk worm propaganda, so far as this state was concerned, curled up like a caterpillar and died. This isn't saying the silk industry couldn't be made to succeed in Kansas. It is saying that the Kansan isn't built on the French peasant model. We are not the worm kind. Our style is more in the line of a good, substantial Poland China hog, jammed so full of corn from the 'semi-arid regions' that his fat has shut his eyes and his kinky tail has disappeared in a dimple."

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD, THE AGED blind poet, recently buried his wife at Sag Harbor, N. Y. The scene at the grave was a most pathetic one. The newspaper reports say: As the friends gathered around the grave and the body was lowered, Mr. Stoddard, quivering with grief and emotion, said: "Before the earth is between her and me I want to say one more parting word to my beloved wife." Every head bowed, and many eyes filled with tears as the husband continued: "My good neighbors, it is with a sad, sweet comfort that I look into your faces today, seeing but dimly as I do, and with all my heart

thank you for your companionship in this terrible bereavement. We are looking down into the grave for the last time up a good, a truly good and noble woman. The heart weakens with its effort to find expression through human lips for such a moment as this to me." Here the old poet wept and shook with the sorrow that weighed so heavily upon him. Many others sobbed aloud. Vainly he attempted to resume his speech. Failing, he raised both hands to his brow, as if straining his eyes for a look into the grave, and murmured: "Good-bye, dear. Good-bye, dear soul." He was led back to his carriage and driven to the French residence in Sag Harbor, where he and Mrs. Stoddard lived for many years, and where he wrote many of his famed verses.

THE LONDON CORRESPONDENT OF THE New York World cables his paper as follows: "There is one point on which the World correspondent has the most positive information, and that is as to the complete reconciliation between the king and the queen. It appears that when the surgical operation was about to be performed the king had a most affecting interview with the queen, and at his request she held his hand when he was being put under the influence of chloroform, in order to gratify his expressed wish that her face might be the last he saw if the operation proved fatal. When he was recovering consciousness the queen was again brought to his side, and he looked gratefully at her. Since then the queen has taken entire control of everything concerning him. But whether other influences will reassert themselves later on remains to be seen." The public was not informed that there was any necessity for reconciliation between the king and queen, but it is gratifying to be assured that if reconciliation was necessary, it has taken place. To many men the ponderous ceremonies attendant upon the formal crowning of a king and the applause of the multitude would all be insignificant compared with the high favor of a good wife.

THE JOHANNESBURG CORRESPONDENT of the New York Times says that owing to the scarcity of native labor mining houses contemplate the introduction of Chinese. If the plan is persisted in, the British government is to be asked to intervene in the interest of the public. Those who object to the introduction of Chinese declare that South Africa is to be a white man's country, and the admission of Chinese would seriously complicate affairs.

FEW PEOPLE REALLY APPRECIATE THE immense work that the United States has undertaken in the construction of an isthmian canal. There were many who feared that the adoption of the Panama route would result in delay or indefinite postponement, but a correspondent of the New York World says that it is very probable that the work will be commenced in 1903. According to the World's correspondent a special messenger, whose identity is unknown, sailed from New York on July 26 with a draft of a treaty agreed upon by Secretary of State Hay and Senor Concha, the minister from the United States of Colombia, which the Colombian congress will be asked to ratify. It will convene in October for the specific purpose of passing on the treaty.

IT IS PREDICTED BY THIS WRITER THAT there will be no objection to the ratification of the material features of the proposed treaty, and it is said that while the Colombians are considering the matter, Attorney General Knox, representing the United States, and Mr. William Nelson Cromwell, representing the French stockholders of the present Panama Canal company, will be engaged in Paris in adjusting the legal features of the lease of the canal to the United States in perpetuity, so that by the time the American congress convenes the treaty ceding the great waterway to this country will be ready for consideration and the exact terms of the lease of the property definitely settled. It is within the view of the representatives of the United States and the Colombian government possible for the inauguration of the work of completing the canal under the direct supervision and control of the United States to begin within the next year.

ACCORDING TO THE PLANS AS DESCRIBED by this same writer, the French canal Company is to receive \$40,000,000 in cash for the complete surrender of all claims on the canal, all contracts, machinery, and a railway traversing the entire course of the waterway between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. Then the government of Colombia is to receive \$7,000,000 in cash and an annuity of \$600,000 for the surrender absolutely to the United States of three miles of property on either side of the canal for its entire

length, and authority over five leagues of sea at either entrance. The United States is then to immediately expend at least \$15,000,000 for the purchase of machinery and for the employment of a force of laborers to do the work. It is said that the railroad, the purchase of which is contemplated, is valued at \$7,000,000 and that this railroad will become the property of the United States, a fact in itself interesting to those who have favored as well as those who have opposed government ownership in our own country. According to this statement the canal will be completed within six years, or in 1909, and it is estimated that the total cost including the purchase price will be in the neighborhood of \$130,000,000.

FROM A TREASURY REPORT RECENTLY made public the New York World takes the following figures showing the value of exports for 1901 of the seven leading classes of American manufactures. In the last column appears the average ad valorem duty on imports of the same class of manufactures:

Exports of	Value.	Duty, per cent.
Iron and steel.....	\$43,812,323	43.58
Copper	41,454,074	45.00
Leather	21,211,088	35.68
Agricultural implements....	10,494,530	20.00
Chemicals, drugs and dyes..	6,741,068	31.69
Wood	5,595,256	21.29
Paper	2,920,048	35.00

The World adds: "It thus appears that of these seven classes of manufactures we export to Europe alone goods to the value of \$132,000,000 a year, paying the ocean freight thereon and selling them at prices as low certainly, probably lower than those of the foreign manufacturers in their home markets. To North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania we send these same classes of our manufactured goods in large quantities, paying the ocean freight in many cases for distances three times as long as the distance from New York to Liverpool. Our exports of iron and steel manufactures alone to the other divisions of the world were valued for 1901 at \$72,506,403, not far from double the value of our iron and steel exports to Europe—and in some markets protective duties as well as ocean freights were overcome." The World hits the nail on the head when it says that "these duties are not levied to protect our trusts in the home market. They can serve but one purpose—to make these American manufactures dearer to Americans than to foreigners. These are the duties which the Iowa republicans say 'afford shelter to monopoly' and which democrats would reduce or repeal."

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING REVIEWS of the campaign book recently issued by the republican congressional committee was written by the Washington correspondent of the Des Moines Register and Leader, a republican paper. In this review it is admitted that this campaign book is "more remarkable for what it omits than for what it contains." "Great skill," says this reviewer, "has been shown in compilation and it may be read from beginning to end without discovering any evidence that there are questions pending before the voters this year on which republicans are divided." This reviewer makes this interesting point: "There is no explanation of the failure of the republican majority of congress to redeem the promises of President McKinley and carry out the policy advocated by President Roosevelt of giving reciprocity to the Cubans. There are also many pages devoted to Cuba and to telling what the republican administration and congress has done in freeing that island from the dominion of Spain, and setting up an independent republic. No hint is given of what has been left undone and of how the Cubans were led to believe that commercial arrangements were to be made with them whereby they would be enabled to recover from the desperate condition in which their long struggle with Spain had left them, and by which both they and the United States would be benefited."

IN THIS SAME REVIEW THIS REPUBLICAN correspondent points out that "on the broader subject of general reciprocity—the policy which President McKinley proclaimed in his last speech at Buffalo and left as a heritage for his party and to which President Roosevelt pledged himself on taking office—there is ominous silence. Extracts from speeches by President McKinley are freely quoted throughout the book. They are printed in prominent type at the bottoms of pages where they will readily strike the eye of the campaign orator seeking apt quotations, but none of these extracts is from the Buffalo reciprocity speech. It is only when the end of the book is reached that the Buffalo speech is found with its reciprocity arguments and with this pertinent inquiry from the dead president, which his party has failed to