

Current Topics.

HERR HERHARDT, A GUNMAKER OF GERMANY, has sold to the United States war department the right to rearm the American field artillery with a new firearm of which Herr Herhardt is the inventor. A Berlin dispatch to the New York Tribune, referring to this sale, says: "The United States ordnance officers have long complained that their field gun was less effective than the French and German guns. They learned some time ago that the Krupps had a new, light model, and asked for an exhibition of the piece. The Krupps declined, saying that even if they demonstrated that they had the best piece in the world there was no certainty that the United States would take it. Herr Krupp recently made a gun of exactly the same bore as a certain American type, but considerably lighter. In a test a few days ago it threw shrapnel effectively six thousand yards, against the American gun's 2,900 yards. Besides his plant at Dusseldorf, Herr Herhardt has works at Eisennach, and five years ago established a branch at Pittsburg for the manufacture of cartridges and shells. But this venture proved unprofitable, and the works were closed, the machinery being brought back to Germany."

ILLINOIS CLAIMS CREDIT FOR BEING THE first state in the union to complete its share of the collection for the McKinley national monument fund. The Chicago correspondent to the New York Tribune says: "The amount allotted to Illinois was \$50,000, and that sum has not only been raised, but several hundred dollars in excess has been contributed. The check for the amount has been forwarded to the treasurer of the association at Canton, O., by Alexander H. Revell, the chairman of the state commission. The popularity of the work for the fund in the state of Illinois is attested by the fact that the contributors, including the school children, who gave their mite, number more than one hundred thousand. It may be added that the collection of the money was in nowise a hurry or rush affair, but that contributions were quietly solicited wherever and whenever opportunity offered."

THE DEATH OF LUTHER R. MARSH AT Middletown, N. Y., recently revived an interesting story relating to Mr. Marsh's connection with the notorious Ann Odellia Dis de Bar. Mr. Marsh was one of the leading lawyers in New York city. The New York correspondent to the Louisville Courier-Journal says: "Luther Rawson Marsh was born at Pompey, Onondaga county, N. Y., April 4, 1813. He was admitted to the bar in 1836 and began practice in New York city. But a year later he went to Utica and practiced for five years. In 1841 he returned to New York city and entered into partnership with Oscar W. Sturtevant. When Daniel Webster, having left the office of secretary of state under President Tyler, went to New York he associated himself with Sturtevant and Marsh until his return to the senate. Mr. Marsh delivered many lectures and public addresses. In 1888 he went to Middletown, where he afterward made his home, retiring from active practice. For many years Mr. Marsh was a diligent student of the writing of Emanuel Swedenborg. In 1885 Mr. Marsh became acquainted with Mrs. Ann Odellia Dis de Bar, through her alleged spirit pictures, and her influence over him became so great that he was induced to make over property in New York to her for a nominal consideration. Notwithstanding the exposures of her methods, Mr. Marsh continued his faith in her alleged portraits of Bible characters and in spiritualism."

AT MARION, IND., AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT is being made at the Western Strawboard plant. A process of manufacturing paper from oats hulls is being tested. In the manufacture of cereals oats hulls accumulate and are all waste. It is claimed that paper may be manufactured by this new process at a cost of from five to ten dollars a ton less than the old plan.

SINCE THE ACCIDENT RESULTING IN THE death of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fair the Paris papers have had much to say in condemnation of what they call "speed madness." The Figaro says that it is remarkable that this epidemic is most prevalent in persons of great wealth, culture and leisure, who are absolutely masters of their own time and who least of all have any reason to be in a hurry. This Paris paper declares that it is as ridiculous for a man of leisure to "scorch" on the roads of France at a death dessemminating veloc-

ity of over a mile a minute as it would be for the owner of the winner of the Grand Prix de Paris to gallop at a breakneck pace through the Bois de Boulogne on his own mount. The Paris papers seem to be determined to affect a reform with respect to what they call "speed madness" and it cannot be doubted in the light of recent happenings that a reform is necessary.

THE DEATH OF GENERAL FRANZ SIGEL removes an interesting figure of the civil war period. General Sigel was born in Germany. He came to this country in 1852 and located finally at St. Louis, engaging in school teaching. Sigel was made colonel of the Third Missouri volunteers and finally came to be a major general. In 1862 Grant P. Robinson, a union soldier, wrote a bit of verse, as follows:

"I FIGHTS MIT SIGEL."

I met him again; he was trudging along,
His knapsack with chickens was swelling;
He had "raided" those dainties and thought it no wrong.

From an absent secessionist's dwelling.
"What regiment's yours, and under whose flag
Do you fight?" said I, touching his shoulder.
Turning slowly around, he smilingly said—
"And the thought made him stronger and bolder—
"I fights mit Sigel!"

The next time I saw him his knapsack was gone,
His cap and his canteen were missing;
Shell, shrapnel and grape and the swift rifle ball
Around him and o'er him were hissing.
"How are you, my friend, and where have you been?
And for what and for whom are you fighting?"
He said, as a shell from the enemy's guns
Sent his arm and his musket "a-kiting,"
"I fights mit Sigel!"

And once more I met him and knelt by his side;
His life-blood was rapidly flowing;
I whispered of home, wife, children and friends,
The bright land to which he was going.
"And have you no word for the dear ones at home—
The widow, the father and mother?"
"Yaw, yaw," said he; "tell them, oh, tell them I fights—"
Alas! he could think of no other—
"I fights mit Sigel!"

We scooped out a grave and he dreamlessly sleeps
On the bank of the Rapidan River;
His home and his kindred alike are unknown,
His reward in the hands of the Giver.
We placed a rough board at the head of his grave,
And we left him alone in his glory,
But on it we marked, ere we turned from the spot,
The little we knew of his story—
"I fights mit Sigel!"

PHYSICIANS OF ELDORA, IA., ARE DEEPLY interested in the case of Charles Jensen, a railroad flagman living at Clarion, Ia. While Jensen was at work he was attacked by thousands of mosquitoes and bitten until his eyes were closed. When he was discovered several hours later he was in a state of collapse. It is feared that blood poisoning may result.

MRS. MICHAEL NOONAN OF LIME SPRINGS, Ia., was born in Ireland August 14, 1794, and lived under five successive monarchs, is a fine needle woman and sews without the use of glasses. Mrs. Noonan has one son, three daughters, thirty-four grandchildren and twenty great grandchildren.

AN INTERESTING STORY HAS BEEN GO-ing the rounds of the press to the effect that the American Bankers' association has contracted to pay the sum of \$500 per month to Charles Becker, the notorious forger, who is serving a seven-year sentence in a California prison. Becker will be released in a few months and according to this story the Bankers' association think it will be cheaper to put this criminal on the salary roll, the only service required of him being that he will "just be good." Members of the association deny the story.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LOCUST IS DE-scribed by a writer in the Philadelphia Record in this way: "The evolution of the insect is one of the most interesting things I ever saw. I watched one last Sunday, and it matured in just about half an hour. The shell was attached to the trunk of a tree on my lawn, and while I was examining it it gradually split up the back and the locust pushed itself out. It dropped to the ground, a pulpy, almost shapeless thing. It re-

minded me somewhat of a soft-shell crab. It was almost colorless. The wings, which were then without form, were wrapped up over what seemed to be, and subsequently proved to be, the head. In an incredibly short time the body hardened and took color and form. The gauzy wings unfolded and were draped downward over the lower part of the body. In just half an hour the locust began to crawl, and shortly afterward it flew away."

THE IOWA PLATFORM RELATING TO THE tariff question appears to be very popular among the rank and file of the republicans. It is significant that while the administration and party leaders are opposed to any readjustment of the tariff, a very large number of the party papers give cordial indorsement to the Iowa plank. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, New York Sun, New York Press and the New York Mail and Express are the republican papers that appear to have a monopoly in the work of indorsing the administration's position on this question. The New York Tribune, the Philadelphia Press, Chicago Inter-Ocean, Chicago Tribune, Indianapolis Journal, Kansas City Journal, Boston Journal, Chicago Record-Herald, Philadelphia Inquirer, Toledo Blade, Cleveland Leader, Pittsburg Gazette and the Hartford Courant are among the republican papers that heartily indorse the Iowa plank protesting against the tariff being used as a shelter to monopoly.

THE PROPOSITION MADE IN THE CUBAN congress that the new government obtain a loan of \$35,000,000 has been met with a clause in the amendment, which provides that the Cuban government shall not contract a debt to pay the interest upon which and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island after defraying the current expenses shall be inadequate. It is interesting to observe that while we refuse to grant Cuba reciprocity and thus give her a outlet for her markets, we also assume the right to prevent her from borrowing money.

AN INTERESTING CONTRIBUTION TO THE discussion is made by the Philadelphia Times when it points out that there is nothing alarming in the government borrowing a little more than twice its annual revenue. The Times points out that the largest national debt in the world is that of France, amounting to \$5,800,691,814, nearly nine times the annual revenue of the French government. It is further pointed out that the debts and revenues of the countries of Latin America are as follows:

Country—	Debt.	Revenue.
Argentina	\$509,404,414	\$63,500,000
Ecuador	7,882,435	3,564,000
Costa Rica	13,124,000	3,513,000
Honduras	89,376,920	1,114,429
Mexico	168,771,428	29,267,131
Paraguay	19,972,000	844,000
Peru	124,374,189	16,608,000

BOOTH TARKINGTON, THE INDIANA NOV-elist who has been elected to the legislature, announces that he will introduce a bill providing for an annual literary prize contest, the state to name the judges and award the prizes. The prizes will amount to \$500 per year. Gen. Lew Wallace objects to Mr. Tarkington's plan. General Wallace declares "that Indiana literature will be out of place pinned to the tail of the legislature; better leave it entirely to its own independent effort." James Whitcomb Riley, however, favors the Tarkington plan and says it will tend to bring literature in America under such official recognition as is given the Profession of Letters in other countries.

AN INTERESTING REPORT WAS RECENTLY made by physicians concerning infant mortality in Russia. It is asserted that the proportion of children who die in the first year is as high as forty and even fifty per cent. The rate of infant mortality is much lower among the Mohammedan and Jewish population than among the Christians. For instance, in one section the rate of infant mortality among the Mohammedans is only 140.4 per 1,000, while among the Christians in the same territory it is 342.1. A newspaper dispatch explains: "The report ascribes this terrible mortality mainly to the ignorance of the peasants, and to the fact that the mothers have frequently to neglect their own children in order to work in the fields; it is also pointed out that the death rate is considerably higher in summer than in winter in spite of the severity of the climate. Another class, particularly among the middle classes, appears to be the growing practice of employing wet nurses, with the result that the nurses' own