

# CURRENT TOPICS

**G**EORGE FRANCIS TRAIN, WELL KNOWN in all parts of the world, died at one of the Mills hotels in New York city January 19. Mr. Train's death was due to heart disease, following an attack of acute nephritis. Mr. Train was born in Boston in 1830. For years he was a successful business man, and did much to the upbuilding of the city of Omaha, Neb. He was one of the prime movers in the construction of the Union Pacific railroad and organized the credit foncier and credit mobilier for the purpose of raising the money to finance the Union Pacific. Mr. Train once made a trip around the world in sixty-six days. He made several fortunes and gave them away. He was identified with the Fenian movement, and was once imprisoned in Downpatrick, Ireland.

**A** STATEMENT RECENTLY PRINTED BY the New York World presents the Panama revolution in an entirely different light from that given by Mr. Roosevelt in his special message to congress, in which he declared that his administration had no part, directly or indirectly, in the revolution. The World says that its facts have been gathered from men who took an active part in the events described, and that the greatest care has been taken to substantiate all the statements given. According to the World, the Panama revolution was fostered and promoted in many ways by a syndicate of New York and Paris brokers who had formed an immense pool for speculating in the shares and other securities of the Panama Canal company. This syndicate furnished \$100,000, which was used by the revolutionary party in Panama to perfect the revolution. Of this money \$8,000 was used to bribe Colombian troops and get them to leave the isthmus. The agent of this speculative syndicate was Philippe Bunau-Varilla, the present minister of the Panama republic to the United States. The leading members of the syndicate was Minister Varilla's brother, Maurice Varilla, editor of a Paris newspaper. The shares of the Panama Canal company, when the bankers' syndicate took hold of the revolutionary project, were selling at 87 on the Paris bourse. Today they are selling at 114. The profits of the syndicate at present prices are estimated at \$4,000,000.

**T**HE OPERATION OF THE BANKERS' SYNDICATE and the connection of Minister Varilla with the speculative pool was, according to the World, not known until quite recently, but the native Panamanians went into the revolution out of a spirit of loyalty. The World says that there is no evidence that any of these joined in the syndicate pool or reaped any of its profits. It adds that the appointment of Varilla as minister of the new republic to this country was bitterly opposed by leaders of the revolutionary party on the isthmus until they discovered through representatives they had sent to Washington that nothing could be done in the way of getting assistance from this government except through Mr. Varilla.

**I**T IS FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT SOME time before the revolt occurred, Varilla insisted to the active leaders of the revolution that he must be made minister of the republic to this country, in exchange for which he would furnish, first, the revolutionary fund necessary; second, that he would have United States warships on the scene at the proper moment to serve the interests of the revolutionists; third, that he would have the United States recognize the republic of Panama immediately after the revolution. Varilla kept all three pledges.

**A**N INTERESTING STATEMENT WAS RECENTLY given out by the chief of the bureau of statistics. This statement is entitled "The Progress of the United States in its Material Industries," and shows: Area, population, wealth, public debt, gold and silver production, money in circulation, savings bank deposits, farm products, imports and exports of principal articles, railways in operation, number of postoffices, receipts of the postoffice department, and many other subjects are included in the tables, which give op-

portunity to compare present conditions with those of earlier years. The population in 1903 is estimated at 80,372,000, against 23,191,876 in 1850 and 5,308,483 in 1800. The wealth of the country is stated at \$94,000,000,000 in 1900, and it is declared that presumably \$100,000,000,000 would not be an unreasonable estimate for 1903, while for 1850 the wealth of the country stood at \$7,000,000,000. The per capita wealth is set down at \$1,235 in 1900 and \$307 in 1850, having thus more than quadrupled.

**A**CCORDING TO THE SAME STATEMENT, the interest-bearing debt in 1903 is \$314,000,000, against \$1,724,000,000 in 1880 and \$2,046,000,000 in 1870. The per capita indebtedness of the country in 1903 is \$11.51, against \$60.46 in 1870. Gold and gold certificates in circulation in 1903 for the first time exceeded \$1,000,000,000, or, to be exact, \$1,031,000,000, against \$810,000,000 in 1900 and \$232,000,000 in 1880. The total money in circulation in 1903 was \$2,367,000,000, against \$1,429,000,000 in 1890, \$973,000,000 in 1880, \$675,000,000 in 1870, and \$435,000,000 in 1860. Deposits in savings banks in 1903 were \$2,535,000,000, against \$1,524,000,000 in 1890, \$550,000,000 in 1870, and \$149,000,000 in 1860. The value of manufactures for the census year 1900 is given at \$13,000,000,000, against \$5,333,000,000 in 1880, and less than \$2,000,000,000 in 1860. Railways in operation in 1902 had 203,132 miles of track, against 166,703 miles in 1890, 93,262 miles in 1880, 52,922 miles in 1870, 30,626 miles in 1860, and 9,021 miles in 1850. Coal production increased in nine years from 162,814,977 tons in 1893 to 269,081,049 in 1902. Steel shows an increase from 4,019,995 tons in 1893 to 14,947,250 tons in 1902. In the same nine years exported manufactures increased from \$158,023,118 to \$407,526,159, and total imports from \$866,400,922 to \$1,025,719,237. The excess of total exports over total imports in 1903 was \$394,422,442. In 1893 the imports exceeded the exports by \$18,735,728.

**"KING JOSEPH'S COMMISSION,"** IS THE form of reference used by some London newspapers to Mr. Chamberlain's tariff committee. The London correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean says that Punch's cartoon represents them as all blowing trumpets, each man facially a replica of Mr. Chamberlain, who is conducting what is called "Joseph's Orchidstra," being a pun on the former colonial secretary's hobby of wearing an orchid in his button-hole. The Inter-Ocean correspondent adds: "It appears that even the king himself shares the notion that Mr. Chamberlain is inclined to run the country on his own hook, and that he is not pleased that he selected the word commission for a collection of business men who are preparing a tariff scheme for presentation to the country at the next election. Commissions in England are issued only by royal warrant, and Mr. Chamberlain is not even an officeholder now. He refuses to withdraw the name, and approved of the meeting place at the Whitehall rooms, which are only a few minutes' walk from the house of parliament. This commission numbers sixty-five, and, although the official tory Standard dubs them plutocrats and nonentities, they include a remarkable number of the chief manufacturers, railway and shipping managers and economists of England."

**I**T IS CLAIMED BY THIS SAME CORRESPONDENT that the statement of Prime Minister Balfour at Sheffield that he was not now sure of the fiscal methods which would be the best in securing imperial union, was to prepare the way for the announcement in the king's speech February 2 when parliament meets, of the appointment of a royal commission to consider the best means of including colonial representatives on the national defense committee, making them imperial by adding them to the judicial committee of the privy council, which is the ultimate court of appeal of the empire, and making colonial statesmen like peers. According to the Inter-Ocean correspondent, Mr. Balfour's friends say that such a policy is complimentary and not antagonistic to Mr. Chamberlain, but they admit it may be difficult to bring Mr. Chamberlain over to this view.

**A**DDRESSING THE VERMONT TEACHERS' association recently, Mason S. Stone told some interesting stories about school life in the Philippines. A correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, referring to Mr. Stone's address, says: "At one place he found this definition of a hat written on the blackboard: 'The hat is the thing that men use to take off the sun. At another place he found this geography lesson for the pupils to learn: 'The products of the Philippines are cucumbers, onions, and tomatoes, milk, garlic, watermelon, candy, mangoes, goose, duck, figs and many other fruits and nuts.' Professor Simo, a Spaniard, thought himself qualified to write a primary English reader to be used in the schools after the American occupation. The sample book, shown by Mr. Stone, contained twenty-five lessons, and here is the concluding chapter: 'Sit by me, Molly, and let us breathe the fresh breeze which comes from the sea. We are here at our full easy. Look at these bees flying about—I will seize them said Betty—Oh, no, do not seize the bees, please, nor tease them, for they will at once sting you—Then, reach me that slice of cheese with some bread. Thank you, Molly; now squeeze hands.' A small 16mo. geography, the only one used in the private Spanish schools in Manila, contains only two pages descriptive of the United States, and closes with this statement: 'The most conspicuous products of the United States are millionaires, advertisements, and eccentricities.' The book was published in Barcelona, and affords an excellent opportunity to get a glimpse at ourselves as others see us."

**A**LFRED HARMSWORTH, THE LONDON newspaper publisher, recently adopted the plan set on foot by one or two Paris newspapers, and caused his agent to bury medallions, each of which entitled the finder to 50 pounds. In all 1,000 pounds were thus distributed about the metropolitan districts. The London correspondent for the New York World, describing this plan, says: "Clews were given in articles which appeared in Sunday's issue of the Dispatch and early that day men, women and children, armed with sticks, umbrellas and trowels, began to feel along the top walls, explore the crevices of pavements and grub about the base of lamp posts, and despite printed warnings 'No medallions buried in private property,' to upturn the edges of lawns. Many persons came upon what they thought the much sought medallions only to find later that they were penny lead medals buried by some joker. Mr. Harmsworth's newspapers have been booming the treasure hunt, but those of C. Arthur Pearson, who is considered his rival in the newspaper field, have been calling on the police to stop what they term 'such wholesale trespass and vandalism.' That American ideas are continually being imported even in journalism was attested by the announcement the other day that the Daily Mail, beginning next Monday, would commence running a special train to the west of England for the delivery of its own edition. This is followed by similar statements from the Daily News, the Express and Morning Leader."

**A**N INTERESTING DECISION IN WHICH "love" played a part was recently rendered by Supreme Court Justice Bischoff of New York. In this decision, Justice Bischoff declared that marriage for love is not the only lawful marriage, and that while that kind of marriage is "a condition favored by the poets," it is not yet favored by our jurisprudence. This opinion was rendered in the case in which the justice refused to annul the marriage of Charles V. V. Gunther, on the alleged ground that his wife had married him for the purpose of advertising herself as an actress.

**I**N THE OPINION REFERRED TO, JUSTICE Bischoff said: "The fraud for which annulment of the marriage is sought by way of counterclaims, is alleged to arise from the fact that the plaintiff induced the marriage through false assertions of affection for the defendant, concealing her real motive, which was to advertise herself in her profession as an actress, by means of this marriage. It appears from the matter pleaded, however, that this mental atti-