

# CURRENT TOPICS

FOR sixteen years and under eleven postmasters general, books have been carried through the mails as second class matter. The United States supreme court has ruled that the department has all along erred in permitting books to go through the mails as second class matter. The opinion was delivered by Justice Brown. The Associated press report says: "The chief justice and Justice Harlan united in a dissenting opinion, which was delivered by Justice Harlan, in which the course of the postoffice department in changing its own system after sixteen years was referred to as an assumption of legislative authority. Justice Harlan said that the department's order after congress, after a deliberate hearing, had refused to change the language of the law was 'a mode of amending and making laws which ought not to be encouraged or approved.'"

FORMER Queen Isabella of Spain died at Paris, April 9. Isabella was twice expelled from Spain and since 1877 she has lived in Paris. A writer in the Brooklyn Citizen says: "Maria Isabella Louisa was born at Madrid, October 30, 1830. Her father, Ferdinand VII., had been induced by the influence of his wife to issue the Pragmatic decree, revoking the Salic law, and at his death, September 29, 1833, his eldest daughter, then a child, was proclaimed queen, under the regency of her mother, Maria Christina. This event proved the signal for civil warfare, as the claims of the late king's brother were warmly supported by certain classes of the people. The war of succession lasted seven years, and the country was desolated by the struggle between contending Carlist and Christina parties, until the cortes confirmed the claims of Isabella by pronouncing sentence of exile on Don Carlos and his adherents."

IN 1840 the queen regent, according to this same authority, finding it impossible to carry on the government, without making concessions to public feeling, for which she was indisposed, retired to France, resigning her power into the hands of Espartero, whom she previously had been compelled to summon to the head of affairs. For the three years following, while that constitutional leader in great measure was able to direct her education and training, the young queen was subjected to purer and better influences than she before had experienced. She was declared by a decree of the cortes to have attained her majority October 15, 1843, and took her place among the reigning sovereigns of Europe. Maria Christina returned to Madrid in 1845, and her restoration to influence was marked by the marriage of Isabella II. to her cousin, Don Francisco d'Assisi, the elder son of her maternal uncle, Don Francisco de Paula, which took place October 10, 1846.

SACRIFICED to the intrigues of a party whose interests were based on this uncongenial union, Isabella II. never knew the beneficial influences of domestic happiness. Estrangements and reconciliations have succeeded each other in her married life. The Citizen writer says: "It deserves special mention that during her reign, Spain rose to rank among the great powers of Europe, while the internal progress of the country advanced with rapid strides. On September 16, 1868, a great revolution broke out in Spain, starting with the fleet off Cadiz, and gradually spreading over the whole peninsula. The speedy result was the formation of a republican provisional government under Serrano and others, at Madrid, and the flight of Queen Isabella to France. On November 6 of that year her majesty took up her residence in Paris, where she remained during her exile, with the exception of an interval spent at Geneva, during the Franco-Prussian war. On June 25, 1870, she renounced her claims to the Spanish throne in favor of her eldest son, the Prince of Asturias. After eight years of exile she returned to Spain and was received at Santander by her son, the late King Alfonso XII., July 19, 1876. Her residence in her native land, however, was of but short duration, for the next year, 1877, she returned to Paris on a visit. While there she associated with Don Carlos, the pretender to the Spanish throne, and an edict was issued expelling her from Spain for life. The late queen, up to a few years ago, was noted for her cheerfulness and jovialty. In fact, it was this inherent good humor which made her

the easy victim of many intrigues and which to a degree caused the scandals which marked her entire early life."

AN INTERESTING contribution to current political literature is made by the Washington correspondent for the Boston Advertiser, a republican paper. Under date of April 6, this correspondent says: "Andrew Carnegie has sent word to President Roosevelt that he need not worry over the rumors that the moneyed interests of Wall street are not disposed to chip in to the republican campaign fund. The founder of libraries says he stands ready to contribute any reasonable sum up to \$1,000,000, if necessary, to offset any defections by the rich Wall street men."

CANON HENSON of Westminster Abbey has attracted attention because of an article written by him and printed in the Contemporary Review. The London correspondent for the Associated press says: "In this article, Canon Henson upholds the inspiration of the old testament, referring to 'its incredible, puerile and demoralizing narratives,' which are regarded as 'being a pack of lies too gross for toleration.' Letters, interviews and resolutions by church and lay bodies, denouncing Canon Henson, followed. Sir Oliver Lodge, the distinguished scientist, added fuel to the fire by an article entitled, 'Suggestions Toward the Reinterpretation of the Christian Doctrine.' This agitation for revised Christianity led by such well known men, whose religious principles even their critics do not dispute, threatens to stir the church to an unprecedented degree. Canon Henson declares that 'inspiration' is now not allowed to certify to the truth of any statement in the Bible, 'which cannot be substantiated at the bar of reason and evidence.'"

IN THE New Testament, Canon Henson finds little to offend reason or conscience, saying: "But whether much or little it will have to go the way of the Old Testament prodigies." The London correspondent says: "Canon Henson recommends supplementing the reading of the Bible in church with 'Christian compositions which have secured the approval of general acceptance,' declaring that 'indiscriminate reading of the Bible in public is an extremely perilous proceeding, and adding that 'the rigidity which restricts the modern English church to canonical scriptures is as intrinsically indefensible as it is practically mischievous.' Despite its misuse, however, Canon Henson holds that the Bible will continue for all time to be the 'best manual of fundamental morality and the best corrective of ecclesiastical corruption,' besides being 'the most effectual check on the materialistic tendencies of modern life.' In a striking analysis of the present social condition, Canon Henson attributes the spread of anarchy, the ulcer that is eating the vitals of society, to the 'disappearance over large areas of civilized life of the religious basis of morality.' Yet he finds an excuse for these 'nonmoral multitudes,' who, 'from the cradle to the grave, have faced the severe pressure of competition, the squalor of poverty and the miserable exigencies of unmerited want, and who inevitably compare their condition with the ostentation of unearned wealth, the provision of unchecked luxury and the insolence of unchastened power.'"

THE Canon further says that "when it is remembered these cruel, shocking contrasts no longer regarded with the dull sort of figmistic ignorance, but in the full light of those doctrines of equality which are the commonplaces of democratic qualities, it is no wonder that minds of thousands are predisposed towards the sophistries of anarchy. It would be idle to deny that the credit of the scriptures is seriously shaken in the public mind, nor can it reasonably be doubted that the tendencies of popular life, as at present prevailing, are in the main hostile to Christian tradition." In another and similar article Canon Henson, dealing with Christ's resurrection, asks: "Is the faith of the church in the divine Christ 'living, present and active, really built on an empty tomb? For myself I prefer to believe that no such intimate vital connection exists between the truth of Christianity and the traditional notions of its historical origins." Sir Oliver Lodge asks: "Now that religion is becoming so much more real, whether the formal statement of some of the doctrines we have inherited from mediæval

and still earlier times cannot wisely and inoffensively be modified?" and shocks many of his co-religionists by declaring that he regards "the doctrine of atonement in its concrete form as a survival from barbarous times," repudiating the belief in "an angry God appeased by the violent death of Christ," and maintaining that human nature now "is rising to the conviction that we are part of nature, and so part of God. In this sense the union of divinity is what science some day will tell us is the inner meaning of the redemption of man." The Associated press says: "These outspoken utterances have caused public and private appeals to be made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but so far no action has been taken. The upshot of Canon Henson's bold declaration that "current and generally accepted versions of Christian truth are becoming inadequate and unsatisfactory," is awaited with keen interest."

PROFESSOR OLIN of the Iowa college of agriculture says that the value of the hens' product of eggs is \$280,000,000. Professor Olin says that the hens have beaten the mines every year in history with the exception of 1900. The country's hens lay 52,500,000 eggs a day and are themselves worth \$70,000,000. The census report of 1900 confirms Professor Olin's statement. It says: "Value of all poultry, June 1, 1900, \$83,794,996; value of poultry raised in 1899, \$136,830,152; dozens of eggs produced in 1899, 1,293,819,186; value of eggs produced in 1899, \$144,286,158."

THE storekeepers in the west are said by a writer in the New York Commercial to be very partial to the Indians in the selection of customers. This writer says that the Indians know what they want and will pay almost any old price for it. Mrs. J. I. White lives in Porter, I. T., where her husband runs a store. Porter is a brand new town, and is now in the boom state. There are a great many Indians about Porter, and they are the store's best customers. When Mr. White went to the Territory, his wife says, he supposed the Indians would demand as low-priced goods as it is possible to sell, but found out that the redskins were not just as he sized them up. The Indians want the sportiest things on the market. They turn up their noses at cheap clothes, and want loud colors and costly garbs. When Christmas came it was natural to suppose that the Indians would also want costly sweets as well as costly clothes, and Mr. White was surprised to find that the Indians passed up the high-priced candies and bought the cheapest kind possible. The most they could get for the money was the kind they wanted. The Indians argued that they ate the candy and no one saw it, but with the clothing it was different, as every one saw the clothes they wore. The red man is much more particular about what he puts on his back than what he puts in his stomach.

ROBERT B. ROOSEVELT, the president's uncle, was chosen by the New York democratic convention to serve as a presidential elector and thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Roosevelt declines to accept the honor and in a letter addressed to Charles F. Murphy, says: "I have just seen by the public press that I have been nominated as one of the presidential electors of the democratic party. I had no notice of the intention of the convention to make this nomination or I should have declined it. I now decline the honor. While I differ with the president and the party with which he is associated as to certain fundamental principles of public policy, I have the highest appreciation of him personally and his unselfish, unquestioned devotion to the public good. I feel that while he is the candidate of that party for the highest position in official life, our family relations and the strong personal affection which I have for him would make it improper and unbecoming in me to take any part in the approaching national campaign."

IN AN interview with the New York correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, Mr. Roosevelt made a statement that will be interesting to democrats generally. The Tribune correspondent asked: "What do you think of Judge Parker as a presidential candidate?" Mr. Roosevelt replied: "I am told he voted for Bryan. Now, I cannot support any one who voted for Bryan. As for myself, I voted for McKinley in