

CURRENT TOPICS

A SIGNIFICANT fact is brought to light by the Boston Herald with respect to the comparative prices paid for the American built warships built by the Turkish government and by the American government. The Herald says: "If a Paris dispatch is correct, it might be well for Uncle Sam to engage some of the officials of the Turkish navy to bargain for the purchase of his new warships. In this dispatch it was stated that the Turkish government was so pleased with the cruiser recently constructed for them at Philadelphia that they have ordered a second vessel of the same type, to cost \$850,000. According to the Statesman's Year Book, these Turkish war vessels are protected cruisers of 3,250 tons, and are expected to make about twenty-two knots. Such a ship would be very cheap at \$850,000. For vessels of about this tonnage, such as the Galveston and Cleveland, Uncle Sam has contracted to pay more than a million dollars, although our ships are to be called on to make only sixteen and a half knots on their trial. There would seem to be such a wide difference between the requirements of the Turkish vessel as regards speed and that for the American ships that the reported cost of the Turkish cruiser would appear to be ridiculously low in comparison with what Uncle Sam pays."

AN INTERESTING story of the origin of "Dixie" is related by a writer in the New Orleans Times-Democrat. In the beginning, this writer says: "'Dixie' Dixie's Land—there is the suggestion in the words of romance, of war and peace, of love and bloodshed, of charging columns and the dashing half frontier life of the antebellum south of the Mississippi river days. Through near three generations it has meant all this to the natives of the south, and now the stirring strains of 'Dixie' are played to cheering audiences of Americans in every part of the whole United States. It was played at the battle of Manila, at the battle of Santiago, and to its rhythm now march the soldiers of the nation as proudly beneath the stars and stripes as ever strode the southern legions beneath the stars and bars. And in the song there is a story of moment to New Orleans."

THE meaning of the term "Dixie," how it originated, and how it grew to favor is a question often mooted and never yet settled to the general satisfaction of all those investigators of the unique and unusual who delve into the mine of tradition and legends. The Times-Democrat writer says: "'Dixie' was a negro minstrel song, sung in music halls of New York in the late fifties, belted lustily to Mark Twainesque audiences from the 'Floating Palaces' of the antebellum Mississippi by burnt cork artists and artisans who have long since followed the echoes of their songs into silence and oblivion. And the song took. By 1859 it was whistled and sung from the James to the Passes, from Richmond to New Orleans. Peculiarly was it the favorite song of the jolly gentry who thronged the steamboats upon the old highway of the Mississippi, and all through the states tributary to the stream the song spread with a rapidity strange in that day of restricted communication and slow travel. Then the war came, and blood made precious the suggestion of the song, and the song itself became a part of that which it suggested. Young lips sang the song at parting, went forth to death, and died. In stricken homes the stirring strains have brought, through all the years gone, memories and day dreams of that which might have been, or that which was. Graybeards of today, through the mist of decades, hear in the appealing cadences voices which long ago blended sweet soprano with their bass. And the song itself! Nothing in the words beyond silly doggerel—but a silly doggerel which laughingly referred to all the southerner held dear. The music, catchy, with a spark of the vital fire in the lilt and turn of the dashing phrases, struck a responding chord in every listener hailing from the 'Land of Cotton.'"

CONCERNING the origin of the song, there are, according to this writer, several explanations. This authority says: "Everybody knows the name of the jolly comedian, Dan Emmet, who immortalized the ballad, but few know where he got the phrase. One theory, long since exploded,

was that the expression 'Dixie's Land' came from the phrase, Mason and Dixon's Line. The other was that a certain farmer down in New Jersey, just before the war, ran his fields with negro labor, and assumed the manners and the bearing of a southern planter. His name was Dixie, and topical songs of the period referred to his estate as a miniature southland. Audiences which did not know the local reference took the song as referring to the real south, and Emmet, in his famous ballad, so used the expression. However, there is another story, and one which brings the subject home to New Orleans. For twenty years prior to the civil war the Citizens' Bank of Louisiana was the great financial institution of the south, and ranked among the one or two largest in the land. Its name was as familiar upon the Paris bourse and the London exchanges as is now the name of the City National Bank of New York. In the days of 'shin-plasters' and depreciated state bank currency, the issues of the Citizens' Bank passed at par all over the land. The best known issue was a ten-dollar note done in red upon one side and black and red upon the other. The feature of this denomination was that the most conspicuous part of the engraving was the French word 'Dix.' Upon the river steamers, on the ships bound for New York, on the stage coaches which went west from Galveston, these bills were termed 'Dixies.' Not one man of any twenty that handled them knew that dix meant ten."

THEN, upon the upper Mississippi and the Ohio, people began to speak of the south as Dixie's Land, and as the years passed they forgot why the name was applied. The Times-Democrat writer says: "The gamblers who won luscious rolls of the 'Dixies' at poker played with the roof removed, the victims who gave up their rightful walletfuls of red and black currency, the Irish deck-hands and the negro roustabouts—all spoke of Dixie's Land. The civil war came on. Months passed, and Butler's army occupied the city. Butler ordered the Citizens' Bank to pay back all deposits to private individuals in confederate bills, and ordered that all sums due to officers or representatives of the confederacy should be paid to the United States government in United States coin. More than \$225,000 was thus confiscated, and the bank has now pending in congress a war claim for this amount. Later General Butler made the Citizens' Bank the United States depository and distributing center for the territory under his charge. After the war came new banking laws, new customs, new ways and habits of thought. The 'Dixies' had gone out during the changes inaugurated immediately before the civil war, and by the end of that struggle and the national banking law of the late '60's the once-famed currency was forgotten."

WASHINGTON dispatches say that it is very likely that George B. Cortelyou, secretary of the department of commerce and labor, will be selected as chairman of the republican national committee. It is understood that the suggestion that Secretary Cortelyou be chosen comes from Mr. Roosevelt. His friends say that he is well equipped for the duties of the position and should be elected he will resign his place in the cabinet. It is further stated that J. W. Blythe, the attorney for the Hill railroad interests, will be connected with the republican campaign in the west and may be made vice chairman of the committee, or sub-chairman in charge of the western campaign.

IN RESPONSE to a petition signed by 30,000 Massachusetts business men, a mass meeting was held at Boston, May 16, in the interests of reciprocity with Canada and Newfoundland. The Associated press report of the meeting says: "A set of resolutions, embodying the purposes of the meeting and providing for the appointment by the president of the chamber of commerce of a committee of 100 who should lead the fight for reciprocity had been read, when former Representative C. A. Underhill jumped to his feet and said: 'I would like to offer an amendment to combat the one power behind the throne in Massachusetts. I move that our state senators; the men who elect our junior senator to Washington, be added to that committee. Our junior senator says he

believes in reciprocity, but adds, 'Wait.' When the subject of reciprocity came up in the Massachusetts legislature one after another of the men assembled there came to me and said: 'I believe in this, but the word has come from our junior senator at Washington that it must not be and I am bound to think of my political future,' and it was not.' Amid an uproar the amendment was seconded and accepted and the resolution then carried."

DAVID B. HENDERSON, former speaker of the house, has left New York and will relocate in Iowa. It is said that Mr. Henderson intends to re-enter politics in the Hawkeye State. A Washington dispatch to the Omaha World-Herald, referring to Mr. Henderson's re-entry into politics, says: "This change is declared by politicians to indicate a longing for further political preferment. Senator Allison's age is telling on him. His illness of last winter somewhat weakened him. Iowans begin to talk about a successor for the venerable senator. Colonel Henderson is said to have recovered from the fit of anger in which he withdrew from Hawkeye politics. He was offended because many of his constituents didn't agree with him on the tariff question, so he said. There was another story that enemies forced him out of the race by threatening to make disclosures of a personal nature. But now there are evidences of a reconciliation between Colonel Henderson and his enemies."

NEWTON C. BLANCHARD was inaugurated governor of Louisiana May 16 and his inaugural address has attracted widespread attention. Governor Blanchard said: "Mob law in contravention and defiance of law will not be tolerated. Lynchings will not be permitted under any circumstances. Sheriffs will be held to the strictest accountability possible under the law for the safety from mob violence of persons in their custody." On the negro question he said: "The negro is here. He is a man and a citizen. He is useful and valuable in his sphere. Within that sphere he must be guaranteed the equal protection of the law, and his education along proper lines—mainly agricultural and industrial—is at once a duty and a necessity. He must be protected in his right to labor and enjoy the fruits of his labor. He must be encouraged in industry and taught habits of thrift. No approach toward social equality or social recognition will ever be tolerated in Louisiana. Separate schools, separate churches, separate cars, separate places of entertainment will be enforced. Racial distinction and integrity must be maintained. But there is room enough in this southland, with proper lines of limitation and demarcation, for the two races to live on terms of mutual trust, good understanding and good concord. The south asserts its ability to handle and solve the negro question on humanitarian lines—those of justice and right. We brook no interference from without. It is up to the south to so solve and handle it, as to furnish no occasion for such interference."

THE Indiana supreme court has rendered a decision declaring the republican legislative apportionment to be unconstitutional. The republican legislature in Indiana gerrymandered the state and this proceeding was entirely overturned by the supreme court's decision. The Indianapolis correspondent for the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "The decision means that the members of the next legislature must be elected according to the act of 1897. The decree is regarded as a big victory for the democrats, for under the act of 1903 it would have been impossible for them to have carried the legislature without exciting the state ticket by a majority of between 50,000 and 60,000. The decision was on the appeal of the case from Ripley county, in which there was a petition for a writ of mandate that the election of members of the next general assembly shall be held under the act of 1897. This removes the danger of having no constitutional act under which to conduct the next election."

THIS decision lays down the principle that a gerrymander "giving an unfair political advantage" is unconstitutional, and it asserts that the inequalities found in the act of 1903 com-