

CURRENT TOPICS

THE NEW YORK DIOCESE of the Episcopal church met September 28. J. Pierpont Morgan was a lay member of that body. During Mr. Morgan's absence from the meeting, Rev. John Marshall Chew, of the Church of the Good Shepherd, offered a resolution which newspaper dispatches say "touched upon the perversion of trust funds, and openly criticised those persons accused as represented in the insurance investigation." Referring to this incident the New York correspondent for the Baltimore Sun says: "Bishop Potter, who was presiding, frowned all through the reading of the resolution, and at the close suggested to Rev. Dr. Chew that he take some paternal advice from him and not press his resolution until after the case had been fully tried by the authorities who were sitting in judgment on life insurance companies. The introduction of the resolution caused a sensation, and the deputies listened in silence to the caustic and sarcastic arraignment by Dr. Chew of the business men who dabble in high finance and yet are respected by the church, although they seemingly practice deception and infidelity. The resolution among other things said: 'The tampering with trust funds by men in high positions of privilege and confidence in the business world constitutes a most discouraging evidence of moral laxity and bad example among those from whom the church and nation have a right to expect better things. No talent for high finance, no useful service to the community, no benefaction to the church or to objects of philanthropy, can excuse or atone for dereliction in trust, contempt for the rights of others, or disregard of the rules of common honesty.'

AT THE SAME CONVENTION Coadjutor Bishop David H. Greer declared that no more difficult problem confronted the country than that offered in the negro question. Referring to this question, Bishop Greer said: "Can we hope to solve it fully and adequately by secular education or by industrial education? These indeed, are important, imperative and essential. But must there not go along with these such educational help as the Christian church can give, such educational help as will tend to change the character, to regulate the emotions, to purify the passions, to develop or create or gradually instill those fixed moral principles which would tend to make these Afro-American people dwelling in our midst a moral force and factor in our national life and growth, and help them thus to reach that destiny, still undetermined, but great and high, I believe, which awaits them in the future? What are we, as a part of the universal Christian church, doing to solve this problem?"

PAUL MORTON, president of the Equitable Life Assurance society, recently invited Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, to become a director of the Equitable. President Butler notified Mr. Morton that he could not accept the invitation. Later, addressing the students of Columbia on the occasion of the opening of the university's one hundred and fifty-second year, President Butler declared that "just now the American people are receiving some powerful lessons in practical ethics, and are having brought home to them with severe emphasis the distinction between character and reputation."

ON THE SAME LINE President Butler said: "A man's true character, it abundantly appears, may be quite in conflict with his reputation, which is the public estimate of him. Of late, we have been watching reputations melt away like snow before the sun; and the sun in this case is mere publicity. Men who for years have been trusted implicitly by their fellows and so placed in positions of honor and grave responsibility are seen to be mere reckless speculators with the money of others and petty pilferers of the savings of the poor and needy. With all this shameful story spread before us it takes some courage to follow Emerson's advice not to bark against the bad, but rather to chant the beauty of the good. Put bluntly, the situation which confronts Americans today is due to lack of moral principles. New statutes may be

needed, but statutes will not put moral principle where it does not exist. The greed for gain and the greed for power have blinded men to the time-old distinction between right and wrong. Both among business men and at the bar are to be found advisers, counted shrewd and successful, who have substituted the penal code for the moral law as the standard of conduct. Right and wrong have given way to the subtler distinction between legal, not-illegal, and illegal; or, better, perhaps, between honest, law-honest, and dishonest. This new triumph of mind over morals is bad enough in itself; but when, in addition, its exponents secure material gain and professional prosperity, it becomes a menace to our integrity as a people."

AGAINST what he calls "this casuistry of the counting office and of the law office, this suterfuge and deceit," President Butler said: "Real character will stand like a rock," and he added: "This university, and all universities, in season and out of season, must keep clearly in view before themselves and the public the real meaning of character, and they must never tire of preaching that character, and character alone, makes knowledge, skill, and wealth a help rather than a harm to those who possess them and to the community as a whole. Diverse as our intellectual interests here are, and various as are our daily tasks, there is one aim which all faculties and schools, all teachers and scholars, have in common—the building of character. Whether we pursue the older liberal studies or the newer applications of knowledge, or some one of the learned professions, we are all concerned, first and foremost, with the forming of those traits and habits which together constitute character. If we fail in this, all our learning is an evil."

IN A RECENT ISSUE Colliers Weekly printed the following editorial: "Gains in the morality of public life, and in the standards which the general sentiments enforce, are the most agreeable incidents which it falls to a journal to record. So much failure in the integrity of office is necessarily forced upon our notice that the opportunity to chronicle the brighter side is doubly valued. The Loomis case has ended in a signal victory for the people. It was a leading case, and in some respects an insidious and rather gross one. Corrupt politics everywhere in America are dependent in large part upon a certain brand of good-humored tolerance, by which an official whose bearing is popular is allowed much latitude in the workings of his conscience. Mr. Bowen's instinct for demeanor was not distinguished, and it looked for a time as if his unpopularity in administrative circles, and Mr. Loomis's popularity there, would result in the flagrant condonation of the kind of fault in office which at present most needs extirpation, namely, the improper relation of money-making to public trust. Whether Mr. Root or newspaper clamor was the immediate cause, a change came over the spirit of Mr. Roosevelt's dreams, and, decently protected by stories about ill-health and future plans, Mr. Loomis was effectively removed from a position to which he has been no honor. From his successor there seems reason to expect standards which will give satisfaction to that public conscience which now shows such distinct signs of increasing strength. Although attempts to hide the reasons for Mr. Loomis's dismissal are to be regretted, the harm done by such attempts in this especial case is small, because attention has been focused on the outcome, and the example will be a useful one."

SINCE THE ABOVE editorial appeared in Colliers, correspondence between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Loomis has been made public. Mr. Loomis wrote to the president directing his attention to the fact that certain newspapers had charged that the late Secretary of State John Hay had severely criticised Mr. Loomis, and was in fact generally antagonistic to him, and asking that the president state the real facts. Replying to Mr. Loomis, Mr. Roosevelt gave to the late first assistant secretary of state complete assurance that Mr. Hay had not criticised him, but in fact was very partial to him. Throughout Mr. Roosevelt's letter there is very clearly a tone showing that the president, as well as the

late secretary of state, entertains a very high opinion of Mr. Loomis, and it may also be said, a very poor opinion of Mr. Bowen. Incidentally it may be observed that some criticism has been passed upon Mr. Roosevelt because of this latest manifestation of partiality for a man who, so far as public opinion is concerned, may be said to be in discredit.

BY WAY OF REPLY to Mr. Roosevelt's letter to Mr. Loomis, Herbert B. Bowen, former American minister to Venezuela, has issued a statement in which he says: "In answer to the letters that were recently exchanged by Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Loomis, I have to say only this: After I sent to Washington all of the documents which I found in the legation at Caracas relating to Mr. Loomis I received a letter from Mr. Hay stating: 'I have been greatly surprised and pained in reading the documents you sent me.' The following month he wrote me a letter containing these friendly words: 'I have always taken your part, not only from personal liking, but from a conviction of your merits, your ability, your courage and your integrity.' In conclusion, in order to show President Roosevelt's attitude toward Mr. Loomis, I will simply quote my remark to him and his to me in the presence of witnesses the day he dismissed me: 'Mr. President, you will remember that after I sent to you all the information I had about Mr. Loomis you offered me a promotion that was intended to lead to an ambassadorship.' 'Well,' he answered, 'I would have done a great deal to hush up the scandal.'" Later Secretary of War Taft, who was present at the meeting referred to, denied that the president made any such statement, saying what he really said was that he was "sorry the whole matter happened."

S. P. DAVIS, comptroller and insurance commissioner for Nevada, has revoked the license of the New York Life Insurance company in that state. Mr. Davis sent to President McCall the following telegram: "Pending the investigation of the corrupt management and fraudulent disposal of funds entrusted to your company, and so long as yourself and George W. Perkins retain offices of trust in the management of the New York Life Insurance company, the license to do business in the state of Nevada is hereby revoked. Upon advice of a change of management and satisfactory proof of honest management the license will be reissued. A notice has been forwarded throughout the state warning all agents of the fact of the order and giving the agents two weeks to close the records."

RECENTLY IT WAS ANNOUNCED that Secretary Shaw would resume on October 2 the refunding of the short-term 4 per cents into 2 per cents. The New York World says that this announcement reveals another underground route between the United States treasury and the National City bank, which enjoyed profitable privileges during the administration of Lyman J. Gage and afterward made Mr. Gage president of the United States Trust company with his assistant F. A. Vanderlip, vice-president of the National City bank itself.

ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS of national banks in New York, the National City bank for two weeks prior to Secretary Shaw's formal announcement had been buying short-term 4 per cents from national banks, offering a slight premium above the market price, which enabled it to accumulate millions of the bonds from the unsuspecting holders and at the same time it has been selling its 2 per cents at the market price. About ten days ago the 2 per cents sold at 104%, but when Secretary Shaw's circular reached Wall street they dropped to 103% asked, 103 bid, and there was a corresponding rise in the 4 per cents, so that the National City bank has made a round profit already on the speculation, and will make a still further profit on the refunding transaction. Referring to these facts, the World says: "This discovery has caused a great deal of indignation among the national bankers, who say that there is a leak in the office of the secretary of the treasury, and that it leads direct to the National City bank."