

Washington Letter

Washington, June 3.—The announcement of Mrs. McKinley's death cast a gloom over the entire capital. Not only because of her deep suffering and the tragic incidents in her life, but by reason of her many acts of charity and deeds of sympathetic intent, she had endeared herself to the hearts of all Washingtonians as no mistress of the White House since the halcyon days of Dolly Madison.

From the date of her entrance into the White House until the last days when she took her departure with the silent sympathy of all classes here, she had an enviable place in the affections of the people.

The White House was never conducted with less ostentation than during her regime, and yet the very democratic sympathy of the entertainment and receptions given under her direction—in which she rarely took part—won for her an enviable reputation for good taste.

After the death of her two daughters, it will be recalled Mrs. McKinley's health began to fail rapidly. The fortitude with which she laid aside her grief and moulded her life into the ambitions of her husband was almost a marvelous characteristic in this delicate woman who hardly realized what the term good health meant, that set her intimates often wondering. But toward the end of President McKinley's first administration her health became so bad that she had to lay aside nearly all official duties and faded away until she was but a spectre of the girl who won the admiration of all Canton and the Ohio country round about. Then it was that she began to interest herself in flowers and children. The picture of her face drawn with pain and steeped in suffering, but ever smiling and kindly, looking out over the White House lawn, is one well drawn in the minds of thousands of Washington children. On the historic old back porch she used to sit for hours knitting slippers—3,000 pair she once said she had made—"for some one to wear." After while even this pleasure was denied her and the president had his desk moved in her chamber so that he might be always near her. That she survived him so long has been a matter of comment among her friends for many a long day. The delicate fabric of her constitution should have in all natural order long since broken, it was thought.

The kaleidoscopic color of the life here and the rather spectacular passing to and fro of public personages has necessarily made Washington more or less callous, and the death of a public man or woman, unless it be attended by some tragic feature, rarely attracts any great amount of attention except in his own or her own immediate circle. But the heart of the whole city seems to be grief-laden over the passing away of this woman, whose life was hung by a gossamer thread for years. After President McKinley's death many of the old residents besought her to make her home here. The requests were always quietly negated until one day when a friend, a trifle more insistent than the others, asked her the reason for her refusal.

"My child," she answered, "through every vista, down every city street and country lane of this beautiful capital, I see my husband's face silhouetted in the background. I will see it at Canton and everywhere else I go, but it will be different."

The subject was never broached to her again, but she had been missed as no mistress of the White House in recent years, not only because of her bountiful charities, but for many other reasons. While her health permitted, Mrs. McKinley passed a good part of her time in the White House conservatories. She loved flowers, not simply as decorations, but because of the nature beauty of the plant, and she had a store of knowledge about "her floral friends" as she termed them. The White House gardeners knew and appreciated this, and every year the basket of white roses that has been sent her on Decoration Day by a special messenger were as fine as can be grown. The special messenger was to leave with them on Tuesday and they were almost ready to pluck. These same roses that were to lighten one of the dark days of her declining years will be laid on her bier, and the grief of the every day gardener is not less than some of the officials who are close to her that are higher up. In several of the churches of the capital tonight President McKinley's favorite hymn, "Lead Kindly, Light,"—and his affections were always hers—was sung with all its tender

pathos and rhythmic beauty. And it saddened all that heard it, for it was hard even for Washington where fame, after all, is but like a flickering candle, to write "Vale" to William McKinley and his brave and often-bereaved wife.

Several notable addresses were made at the recent peace conference at Lake Mohonk, but in none of them was allusion made to the anomalous position the United States will be forced to occupy at The Hague conference. The South American republics are looking to us to champion, in case of opposition, the Calvo or the Drago doctrines which they will present at The Hague, and which will mean more to them than any other principle that will be discussed there. Briefly stated, the Calvo doctrine, or the more recent Drago exposition of it, lays down the principle, which it is claimed should be recognized by international law, that no nation, or body of nations, should be allowed to forcibly collect its debts or those of its citizens owed them by another power. As a matter of principle the doctrine thus expressed is fundamentally correct. Citizens of France, or any other European power, that lend money to Venezuela or Santo Domingo, or any other American republic, should take into account the resources of the country, its ability to pay, and the security offered for its loan. A foreign creditor goes into the business with his eyes open. He charges as a rule a heavy premium for the risks he assumes and, therefore, he has no right to complain or to appeal to force in case the debtor is unable to pay or refuse to do so.

President Roosevelt has already stated in a recent message that by the Monroe doctrine we do not guarantee any state against punishment if it misconducts itself, provided the punishment does not take the form of an acquisition of territory by any non-American state.

In another message President Roosevelt said:

"It behooves each one (independent nations in America) to discharge its just obligations to foreigners. When this is done they can rest assured that, be they strong or weak, they have nothing to fear from outside interferences."

In the message of December 5, 1905, the president said:

"Our government has always refused to enforce such contractual obligations on behalf of its citizens by an appeal to arms. It is much to be wished that all foreign governments would take the same view."

It will be seen from these statements that while the present administration would oppose a collection of debts against an American republic by the creditor nation acquiring territory, that it does not go flatly upon record against the collection of such debts by forcible means, either blockade, bombardment, or a seizure of the debtor nation's customs revenues or surplus cash. There is not that frank avowal of a great principle of international law which one would like to see made by a great nation to whom its weaker neighbor looks for protection.

We are prevented from taking this high ground by complications in which we knowingly involved ourselves. The seizure and administration of the customs revenues of Santo Domingo by the United States, although done under the color of a treaty, is really nothing less than a violation of the Drago doctrine which we are called upon to champion at The Hague. If the United States can usurp the sovereign rights of another country, take possession of its customs houses, and administer its revenues, even if it does it well it ill-behooves her to object at The Hague to other nations accepting her attitude as a precedent and incorporating it into the principles of international law.

The action of the National Manufacturers' association this week in declaring for an immediate revision of the tariff is significant. Their vote was neither hasty nor ill-considered. It was preceded by a lively discussion upon the acceptance of the report of the committee on tariff and reciprocity. This report was itself based upon a thorough investigation of the question and upon a poll of the three thousand members of the association. Of the total number replying over fifty-five per cent declared for immediate revision. The remaining votes were scattered between the opponents of revision, those who wanted to "wait awhile," and those who expressed indifference or returned non-committal answers. The committee recommended an immediate revision of the tariff, and this was overwhelmingly carried.

The vote of the Manufacturers' association is no surprise to those who have been following tariff revision sentiment the last few years. In the last congressional canvas the republicans

found it necessary to meet the evident public demand for revision by a modification of the standpat policy with which they began the campaign.

In New England where the revision sentiment is rampant, Secretary Taft delivered a speech in which he practically declared that the Dingley schedules had outlived their usefulness. In the last congress there was a revision movement in the house of no mean proportion.

Even in the more deliberative senate things were not as the standpatter would have had them. Senator Spooner, it will be recalled, in a debate with Senator Aldrich near the close of the session expressed his conviction that the time had come when the tariff should be re-adjusted, and Senator Aldrich himself, although he has been termed "the high priest of protection," admitted that a number of the schedules should be lowered, and many of them altered to meet changed conditions. As far back as two years last February a conference was held at the White House in which Senator Aldrich voted for tariff revision, as did Senator Allison. Only the determined "standpattism" of Speaker Cannon and his allies in the house prevented the president urging revision on the last congress in its first session. Senator Lodge also considered tariff revision as imperative, and today Senator Hale is probably the only "rock-ribbed standpatter" in the senate. Senator Spooner's successor has already announced his belief that the duties should be lower, while Senator Allison said recently for publication: "In the next campaign, and possibly in the next session of congress, the tariff is certain to be an important issue."

The national movement for revision has been supplemented by international complications over which congress has little control. The new agreement with Germany and the evident purpose of France to demand concessions equivalent to those given German exporters has brought up the very question the standpatters thought they had carefully laid upon the inaction shelf. The only question now is as to the length of time tariff revision can be delayed.

In this connection a comment by the Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune is significant. This paper is extremely favorable to and favored by the administration. It says: "The tariff program which has been most extensively discussed in executive and legislative conference in Washington and which has many advocates, consists of a definite pledge to be incorporated in the next republican national platform, to call congress in special session soon after March 4, 1909 for the purpose of revising the existing tariff schedules. From a political point of view this program has much to recommend it."

This, then, is the program—to delay an immediate revision of the tariff that is demanded by over fifty-five per cent of the manufacturers protected under it, to say nothing of the great mass of our people; to delay it in spite of the opinions of our ablest statesmen in both parties; to delay it in the face of grave international complications that urge a change; to delay it against the dictates of the best patriotism that the worst politics may be played. The Sixtieth congress can and should dispose of the tariff. If the republican party wants the Dingley schedules revised by friends, why not do it in a congress in which they have a majority in both branches. There are fewer republicans in the Sixtieth than in the Fifty-ninth congress and all prognostications show that there will be still fewer in the Sixty-first. In fact it is more than likely that the democrats will control the house in the Sixty-first congress. If this be so the republican senate would repudiate any tariff bill the democratic house might devise and come off with a plausible excuse for leaving the Dingley schedules in force. If the republican party sincerely desires to revise the tariff, why do they leave it to the doubtful possibilities of a future congress and pass it by in the congresses they have and do now control? Of course it is evident that they prefer to save the tariff question for a campaign issue and again finance a presidential candidate on promises of special tariff favors rather than listen to a present demand for revision. Is the republican party, then, sincere in its tariff revision pronouncements? And if they make the tariff an issue in 1908, should the readjustment of our import duties be left to politicians who delayed revision for political rather than patriotic reasons?

Much ado is made concerning Secretary Taft's declaration in favor of tariff revision. It is regarded in some unthinking quarters as a brave response to the attack of the American Protective Tariff League—a response worthy the valiant secretary of war, who if not so much of a fighter as the late General Hancock, ex-