

# CURRENT TOPICS

A HUMAN interest story is told by the Associated Press in this dispatch: "Minneapolis, Minn., December 29.—Prisoner 'No. 2085' at the state penitentiary at Stillwater, Minn., who is said to be a relative of an English nobleman, today sent to the police department here a unique letter. He said: 'I shall be released from prison on February 15 and would like you to find me a position. If you know anyone who is willing to give a man with six prison terms behind him a chance, let me know. I have been twelve years and ten months behind prison bars. I wish I had the silver-tongued eloquence of Demosthenes, the orator of ancient Athens, that I might go out into the world and persuade young men to avoid the pitfalls of sin.' A Minneapolis detective holds the writer's name."

WHAT THE Associated Press calls "an unhappy incident," occurred on the occasion recently of ex-Vice President Fairbanks' visit to Rome. An Associated Press cablegram from Rome says: "Mr. Fairbanks had expressed a wish to pay his respects to the pope and it had been announced that an audience would be granted the distinguished American. Subsequently it was learned that he had promised to address the local society of the American Methodist Episcopal church, and following the receipt of this information at the vatican it was announced that Mr. Fairbanks would not be received by the pontiff unless his purpose to address the church society was abandoned. Mr. Fairbanks elected to keep his engagement with the Methodists. Today Protestants generally warmly congratulated the former vice president on what they termed his dignified attitude in the matter. The Catholics on the other hand, express regret that what was intended to be in the nature of homage to the pontiff should have given rise to a cause for friction. Each party accuses the other of having assumed an irreconcilable attitude. The Catholics place the responsibility for the unpleasantness upon what they describe as the offensive Methodist propaganda being conducted in Rome."

ARCHBISHOP IRELAND gave to the Associated Press in Chicago a statement concerning the Fairbanks incident at Rome. The archbishop's statement follows: "People in America may easily misapprehend the circumstances in Rome which led the vatican to refuse an audience with the holy father to Mr. Charles W. Fairbanks after he, a former vice president of the United States, would have made a public address before the Methodist association of that city. Most likely Mr. Fairbanks, himself, did not fully realize the meaning which Romans would attribute to his address. It was not a question of Mr. Fairbanks being a Methodist or going to a Methodist church in Rome for Sunday devotions. It was a question of appearing to give the fullest approval to the work of the Methodist association in Rome. American Methodists in Rome are active and—I may readily say pernicious proselyters. The Methodist association is not in Rome to serve and meet American Methodists, but to pervert from the Catholic faith all those whom they can influence. I was in Rome last winter and made a very particular study of this Methodist propaganda. It has gone so far that Catholics have organized the society for the preservation of the faith to fight against it. The purpose of the work of the Methodist association in Rome is confessed openly. The means employed are by no means honorable. They take every advantage of the poverty of the poor of Rome. The books circulated and displayed in the windows of their book stores are slanders against the Catholic faith, the holy pontiff at Rome and a misrepresentation of the whole Catholic system. The success of the movement is far from adequate to the efforts put forth, and the money expended. They do not make permanent Methodists of Italian Catholics. They may possibly detach pupils from the Catholic church and this means from all Christian things for Italians. Now, a public address by a former vice president of the United States before the Methodist association can have no other meaning in the eyes of the Roman public than the approval

by America of the propaganda of the Methodist association. Had the holy father, guardian of the spiritual interests of the Catholic church of the world, smilingly welcomed Mr. Fairbanks to an audience on the following day, in what other position would he appear to be than giving his approval to the propaganda of the Methodist association, before which the address had been given? It was simply impossible for the holy father, in his official position as a sovereign pontiff of the Catholic church to do aught else than to say politely to Mr. Fairbanks: 'I can not receive you and accord you the honors due you in all other circumstances as an American and a distinguished representative of a great republic.' I repeat I am most willing to believe Mr. Fairbanks did not catch the full meaning, in the eyes of the Roman people, of the address he was to make to the Methodist association. One arm of combat which these Methodists employ in Rome, as I know from personal observation, is to create the impression that Methodism is the great faith of the American republic and that the Catholic church is merely an Italian institution. There are in Rome Protestant American churches for the benefit of Americans that put forth legitimate efforts, minding their own business and make no war on the Catholic church. What I have said of the Methodists in Rome does not apply to the other churches there. I have in mind the Protestant Episcopal chapel on the Via Nazionale and its former rector, Dr. Nevins, a man whom I was pleased to call a friend and whom I was always glad to meet. I shall leave for New York tomorrow and I shall be pleased to answer the Methodists here or in the east at any time. I can not make it too plain that I am not attacking the entire Methodist church, but merely the Methodist association in Rome. I am not too old to enjoy a fight when the occasion requires it."

FORMER VICE President Fairbanks gave out at Rome the following statement: "When on Sunday I reached the American college, Monsignor Kennedy said that he had been advised from the vatican that it would be impossible for me to have a papal audience if I delivered my contemplated address at the American Methodist church. I replied that I had agreed to make an address and was obliged to keep the engagement; that I had always exercised the privilege to speak to Catholics and Protestants whenever they desired, and whenever it was possible, and therefore, the arrangement for audience I regarded as ended. I spoke to the students of the American college along patriotic and moral lines, giving the Catholic church a full share of the credit for the great work accomplished by all the Christian churches. The subject of the papal audience was suggested again by Monsignor Kennedy a little later. He had received further instructions in the meantime and said that if I did not speak at the Methodist church the audience would hold good. I replied that I appreciated the intended courtesy, but the alternative was impossible. I would speak as announced and thus would be obliged to forego the audience with the pope. When I advised Dr. Tipple, the pastor of the Methodist church, he said that he was ready to release me from the engagement, but I answered that that was impossible. Under the circumstances I felt obligated to the fulfillment of a promise made before the papal audience was arranged."

AN INTERESTING story of Burbank and Carnegie is told by the San Francisco Star in this way: "The Carnegie Institute has withdrawn the \$10,000 annual grant to Luther Burbank, voted to him conditionally five years ago for a period of ten years. So Burbank is once more a free man. In regard to himself, his work and the action of the Carnegie Institute, Burbank says: 'The grant brought with it cares, responsibilities, correspondence and visitors and a full crop of envy and jealousy. But for the advice of friends I should have dissolved my connection with the institution last year. I am exploited whether I am willing or not, and very much against my own wishes. I am not past sixty years of age, have done good work and no

one is dependent upon my efforts. Personally I have no desire for wealth or fame. A thirst for these is the root of many evils. My ambition has been to leave the world the better for having passed this way. To be misjudged is a passing trifle; to have lost a life of honest labor is a tragedy.' In being exploited whether willing or unwilling, and much against his will, Burbank has plenty of company. He is a worker; like all other workers, he is exploited. Nevertheless, his ambition 'to leave the world the better for having passed this way' will be realized—has been realized. And how true it is that, 'To be misjudged is a passing trifle; to have lost a life of honest toil is a tragedy.' Certainly, when Burbank passes away no one can say that he has lost a life of honest, useful work, nor can it be said that he has exploited his fellow men and taken from them aught that he has not earned. Burbank's life and work are an inspiration to other men, to the youth of our land. He will be remembered as a man who worked for men, while Carnegie will be remembered as a man who worked other men."

FOLLOWING IS an Associated Press cablegram from Rome: "The pope today personally considered the recent incident involving Former Vice President Fairbanks, who was refused a private audience by the vatican because he insisted upon keeping an earlier engagement to address the Methodist society here. The pope said he regretted he had been unable to receive Mr. Fairbanks, but could not depart from the policy adopted, as to do so would appear to give recognition to the 'disloyal interference of certain Protestant denominations.'"

IT SEEMS THAT President Taft is not very much afraid that Mr. Roosevelt will take a stand against him. A Washington dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "John A. Stewart, president of the New York League of Republican clubs, arrived here today and will confer with President Taft tomorrow regarding the home-coming celebration in honor of former President Roosevelt. A cablegram was received in New York from Roosevelt, accepting the Republican club's proposition to form a reception committee with representatives from all over the country, to meet Roosevelt on his arrival in New York harbor some time between June 15 and 21 next. President Taft is giving his hearty support to the plan for a nation-wide reception. It has not yet been determined whether or not President Taft will be able to take any part in the reception. He has promised to go to Alaska the latter part of May, provided congress has adjourned by that time, and if he should take the trip he would not return to the states until some time in July."

SENATOR SHIVELEY, of Indiana, is opposed to the postal savings bank bill in the form now presented in the senate. Speaking to a newspaper correspondent, Senator Shiveley dissected the measure and explained his position in this way: "What about the postal savings plank in our last national platform? That platform declares for a postal savings system only in default of the bank guaranty of deposits. That platform expressly limits and qualifies this declaration by the provision that deposits shall be retained in the community where they are deposited. This is the essential condition without which legislation on the subject must prove not only disappointing, but dangerous. What of this bill? Within fifteen minutes after the funds are deposited in the local bank they can be forwarded by the bank to New York or to any other point where either normal or speculative prices for money invite them. The bill creates a vast sponge by which 55,000 postoffices are to gather up the money and deposit it where three men in Washington shall direct, after which the money is released to go wherever profits to the local depositors dictate that it shall be sent. Human ingenuity may be capable of devising a more cunning, dangerous, far-reaching and mischievous scheme to assist powerful interests to exploit the country, but it certainly never has. What does this bill mean? If en-