

# CURRENT TOPICS

A WASHINGTON dispatch to the Kansas City Star says: If reductions in wages of workmen follow the enactment of the democratic tariff bill, the investigating powers of the department of commerce will be called in to establish whether the reductions are of a bona fide nature. Secretary Redfield declared that was his purpose. President Wilson has said he would make an effort to learn the cause of any reductions of pay after passage of the bill, and to callers indicated a general approval of Mr. Redfield's ideas. The secretary of commerce and the president had a conference at which Mr. Redfield talked over the powers of the department. Mr. Redfield declared at the White House that probably the first inquiry would be into the pottery industry for which, he said, representations had been made that a reduction in wages would follow changes in duties. "We want to see," said Secretary Redfield, "whether any changes in business, particularly those that affect wages are directly necessary in the industries affected or whether some business men are just bluffing. In other words we don't feel disposed to accept at par statements of the interests themselves as to the effects of the tariff bill, but will make a thorough investigation through the bureau of domestic and foreign commerce. This function has not been used before, but I see no reason why such information should not be gathered for the benefit of congress and the government." The secretary indicated that his department would observe business in general after the tariff bill had gone into effect and if changes in the tariff appeared necessary, the data collected would be a basis for discussion in congress at later sessions.

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THE doorkeeper of the house of representatives suddenly became famous in connection with a new and peculiar cure for dyspepsia. The Washington correspondent for the Dubuque (Ia.) Telegraph-Herald tells the story in this way: The national capital boasts at least one sand eating man. His name is Julian Emmons and he is a doorkeeper at the house of representatives. Emmons hails from Noblesville, Ind., and came to Washington with the democratic regime in the house more than two years ago. He is sixty-five years of age, hale and hearty. Emmons swallows a teaspoonful of sand after each meal. He never leaves home in the morning without a phial of coarse sand. He says he was troubled constantly with sour stomach, heartburn, indigestion and kindred ills until he started the "sand cure." Now he asserts that he is never troubled at all, relishes his food, sleeps like a baby and enjoys life to the full. He has one remedy for all ills. It is sand. If a dark brown taste is present in the morning, do not fail to reach for the sand bottle. He urges coarse sand, not too sharp, and forswears the fine white variety because, he says, it dissolves in the intestinal processes and is of no value as an aid to the functions of digestion.

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JULIAN HAWTHORNE, who is in the federal prison at Atlanta under a fraud charge, is editor of the prison publication, issued monthly and called "Good Words." Following is an interesting editorial written by Mr. Hawthorne and printed in this publication: Though prisons remain, an alteration has come to pass in prisoners. It is obvious that modern industrial development has generated many new laws and has brought under the scrutiny of the law whole classes of people who had been hitherto fearless of it. These men include many persons of good education, gentle breeding and high intelligence, and hundreds of this type are now going to jail for offenses which have been in a manner created by the new-born scruples of lawmakers and the subtle discriminations of public prosecutors. A new order of prisoners has consequently come into existence. They are criminals not by innate tendency, but by accident and stress of circumstances; by novel conditions, not as yet fully digested into the moral sense, and such an irruption to our jails of an unprecedented element could not fall about modifications in the handling of prisoners of all kinds. An ignorant and brutal

thug, or a depraved and hopeless degenerate, needs one sort of handling, and men of brains and refinement another. For though men of education who commit crimes merit more severe punishment than do men who never had a chance to know better, yet their skin is far more sensitive and a tap of the finger hurts them more than a blow of the paddle does the hardened malefactor. But the tendency seems to be to lean to the former principle in the treatment of all. It is judged more expedient for the common good to be lenient to a savage than savage to a man who responds to leniency. Meanwhile our jails are becoming more instead of less populous; the notable increase of federal courts and the tendency to concentration of power in the national government over the states, enables convictions to be more easily obtained. Whether or not this increased facility keeps even pace with impartial justice is a question to be solved by experience. A great body of inspectors and other officials of courts has been created, and they are naturally eager to justify their salaries. A system of espionage has been established so widespread as to breed uneasiness in all walks of civic life. But all evils are accompanied by compensations; and if the processes used to obtain convictions occasionally remind us of Russia, yet if they unexpectedly prove the means of admitting the angel of reform into prisons they may be worth the price.

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REFERRING to an "unaffected president," a writer in the Boston Globe says: Thomas Jefferson is being hard pushed by Woodrow Wilson as an exemplar of simplicity. For a century the former has been held up as a model of unaffected manners, and no president has wrested first honors from him, but just now he has a rival in the person of our chief executive. Mr. Wilson, to be sure, rides in an automobile instead of on horseback, but he goes about his business in such a quiet, matter-of-fact way that Washington passes from one surprise to another. The latest incident to illustrate his simplicity happened in a restaurant. The place was crowded, the waiter was busy, and, as the identity of the party was not disclosed, scant attention was paid to an inquiry for seats. The presidential party wasted no time, but promptly went to a hotel where accommodations were certain. Most people would have gone away in a huff. The Wilsons very quietly retired to better quarters, without comment. Unobtrusiveness is the Wilson rule. Neither the president nor any of his family have put on any frills since they occupied the White House. They are setting the nation a good example by doing their daily work without ostentation, and in their dealings with other people act quite the same as would the ordinary individual. Jefferson couldn't improve on the Wilson plan unless it be urged that the sage of Monticello, if now living, would insist on running his own car, while Mr. Wilson is content to be piloted by a chauffeur.

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PUBLIC attention was recently attracted to the fact that the bishop of the Philippine Islands made the journey to America in the steerage. The New York Herald printed from the pen of a Washington correspondent the following interesting story: Simplicity is the motto of the Right Rev. Charles Henry Brent, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of the Philippine Islands. That's the reason he came to America from Liverpool in the steerage of the Caronia, instead of the first cabin, as churchmen have done since time out of mind. "It was my duty to come that way," he declared. "That's where a churchman belongs—with the poorer classes who need his encouragement. That's why I came in the steerage of the Caronia, and I'm glad I did." Bishop Brent left the Philippines more than two months ago, coming east over the trans-Siberian railroad. He did not stay long on the continent, but hurried to Liverpool, where he did not make his identity known. There he bought a steerage ticket to New York. On board the steamship he had the same fare as the immigrants, of

whom there were 1,442 on board. The only difference in his accommodations was that he occupied one of the double staterooms alone. Once or twice on the trip across he ate his meals in the room, but at other times he sat at the long tables and broke bread with the immigrants. When the steamship passed Daunt's Rock, off the Irish coast, the immigrants began to whisper around that the head of the Episcopal church in the Philippines was on board with them in the steerage. They crowded around to meet him and he shook hands with several hundred. Then his presence became known in the first cabin, and it was suggested that he go to a stateroom there for the remainder of the voyage. But the bishop, determined to stay with the people who could not afford the luxuries of higher priced passage, refused with thanks. Those in the salon compartment who wanted to meet the bishop had to go to the "steerage," which was filled with people of many nations, some ignorant and dirty, others educated and ambitious, all intent upon the fortunes of a new world. With these people in the steerage Bishop Brent sat and talked for hours. They told him of the homes that they were leaving and of what they expected to see and gain in America. They found the high churchman sympathetic, tender and lovable. They opened their hearts to him willingly and sought his advice as to what they should do in the new country.

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A CEREMONY of unprecedented character was held recently at Indianapolis. A special dispatch to the New York World says: While the stars and bars of the confederacy were afloat over the state capitol and the band alternately played "Dixie" and the "Star-Spangled Banner," there was unveiled the bronze bust of Col. Richard Dale Owen of the union army—the gift to the state of Indiana of the United Confederate veterans. Colonel Owen was in command of the federal prison at Camp Morton, near Indianapolis, in 1862, which under his control was in contrast to the horrors of other war prisons. Owen became widely known to the confederates as a man of unflinching kindness and courtesy to his prisoners. Being himself captured a year after he was sent to the front from Camp Morton, the confederate commander refused to detain him, saying: "Colonel Owen, your kindness to our men at Camp Morton is well known to us all; you are free to go at will." S. A. Cunningham of Nashville, Tenn., publisher of the Confederate Veteran, started the Owen memorial fund in his part of the country. He having been a prisoner at Camp Morton had reason to remember Colonel Owen gratefully. The presentation of the bust was made by Gen. Bennett H. Young of Kentucky, commander-in-chief of the confederate veterans, and the speech of acceptance on behalf of the state was made by Vice President Marshall. The cord releasing the draperies covering the bust was drawn by Mrs. Nora Owen Armstrong, a granddaughter of Colonel Owen and wife of a southerner. Vice President Marshall in his speech of acceptance dwelt upon the fact that it was the first time in history that a union soldier had been so honored by confederate veterans. Several members of the Owen family were present, including Horace P. Owen, the only living son of the union soldier.

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MAKING electricity from exhaust steam is an accomplishment of the people of West Hartlepool of England. An American consular report says: West Hartlepool, which can claim to be the first municipal authority to produce electricity by means of waste heat, will open its new generating station in the course of two or three weeks. The two turbo-generators, each of 1,500 kilowatts, will be driven by exhaust steam from the furnace-blowing engines of the Seaton Carew Iron company, adjacent to whose works the station is built. In return for their exhaust steam, which has hitherto been blowing to waste in the air, the Seaton Carew Iron company will receive free from the corporation the supply of electric current they need at their works. Expenditure on coal will practically be