

# CURRENT TOPICS

HERE IS AN interesting dispatch sent to the New York World by its Washington correspondent: "Dutiable hides will put Massachusetts in the democratic column. Free hides will carry three and probably five states to the democratic party. This was the view of tariff revision put up to President Roosevelt by former Secretary of the Treasury Leslie M. Shaw in August, 1905, when there was a cry for tariff revision. Secretary Shaw's letter was dug up yesterday, and it illustrates pretty well the condition in congress today. In this letter he said: 'No political party within the last fifty years has ever revised the tariff downward and carried the next election. The republican party tried it in 1883, and Mr. Cleveland was elected in 1884. The democratic party tried it in 1887, and the republican party elected the president and the congress in 1888. The republican party attempted to lower the tariff October 1, 1890, and a congress, democratic by 142 majority, was elected thirty days thereafter. The democratic party consummated revision in August, 1894, and seventy days thereafter a congress was elected republican by 82 majority. I desire to throw out a note of warning to my friends in the agricultural states. Bear this in mind—that there are several times as many people demanding cheaper food as are demanding a reduction of the tariff on any manufactured article.' Commenting on the proposition to take the duty off hides, Secretary Shaw said: 'I agree with you that the issue between free and dutiable hides is relatively immaterial to everybody.'"

THE DAUGHTER of Zachary Taylor died recently at Winchester, Va. A Winchester dispatch to the Louisville Courier-Journal says: "Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor Dandridge, the daughter of Zachary Taylor, president of the United States, died this evening at her home in Winchester, after an illness lasting several weeks. Mrs. Dandridge was in the eighty-sixth year of her age. Until a month ago she had enjoyed remarkably good health. She became unconscious late this afternoon, dying within a few minutes thereafter. Mrs. Dandridge was born near Louisville, April 20, 1824, and was the last member of her immediate family. She was married to Colonel William Wallace Bliss, of her father's staff, in Texas during the Mexican war. When General Taylor became president she took the place of her invalid mother as mistress of the White House. Her mother died during the administration of President Taylor. Her husband, Colonel Bliss, died of yellow fever in New Orleans not long after the death of her father. Some years later she was married to Philip Pendleton Dandridge, a noted Virginia lawyer of Winchester, who died in 1881. She was a sister of the first wife of Jefferson Davis, president of the confederacy, and also of the wife of Surgeon General Wood, United States army. For many years she had lived quietly at her home here with her niece, Miss Sarah Wood, who survives her. Despite her advanced age, Mrs. Dandridge appeared much younger than she really was. She retained much of her former great beauty until stricken with her last illness. In her house are many old relics, one of the most valuable being the sash worn by General Braddock when he was mortally wounded, and which still bears the stains of his blood. The funeral will be held Wednesday morning from Christ's Protestant's Episcopal church, of which Mrs. Dandridge was a communicant."

REFERRING TO the mistress of the White House in '49, the New York World said: "When 'Uncle Joe' Cannon was a gambolling boy of thirteen in Illinois, far from dreams of speakerships, a gracious young woman presided at the White House who was known to the popular tongue as 'Miss Betty.' She was the daughter of President Zachary Taylor, taking as hostess the place of her invalid mother. The wife then of Major W. W. S. Bliss, her father's secretary, she has just died at Winchester, Va., as the widow of Philip Pendleton Dandridge. In 1849, when 'Miss Betty' went to the White House, there were the days still of Clay, Webster, Benton, Everett, Calhoun, Marcy. Lincoln

had been sent to congress, but made no national figure. Grant was a lieutenant of twenty-seven at Sackett's Harbor. Hayes was in his late twenties. Garfield was learning at eighteen the trade of a carpenter, having been graduated from his course in driving on the Ohio canal, and Chester A. Arthur, a young blade of nineteen, was following his college course with the study of law. Grover Cleveland was a boy of twelve at this time, with Tom Reed two years younger. James G. Blaine was a nineteen-year-old teacher at Blue Lick Springs, Ky., while Benjamin Harrison was a college boy of sixteen. McKinley was six years old. Theodore Roosevelt was to be born in nine years and William Howard Taft in eight. It was the year of the argonauts, that 1849, when prairie schooners set the path westward which the Pacific railroads were to follow later. Those who knew 'Miss Betty' as first lady of the land remembered her as one of the most gracious women who ever adorned the place. She entered the White House at twenty-five a bride of three years, loved and petted and proud. Nor was hers the only romance of the Taylor circle. It was her sister Sarah who went quietly away into marriage with Jefferson Davis, the young West Pointer, of whose aspirations to his daughter's hand the general had been unable to approve, but who was destined to go far in his own way in the chronicles of America."

NEW YORK dispatches say that it has developed that Charles T. Barney, the banker who committed suicide following the panic of October, 1907, under the impression that he was penniless, lacked a good deal of being in that condition. It now develops that his estate is worth considerably more than \$1,000,000. Other bankers pinched him and he, as well as they, thought that he was in a bad financial condition. Referring to Mr. Barney's tragic taking off the Philadelphia North American says: "Less than two years ago a man in New York shot himself. Intentionally he aimed the bullet so that death would be sure, but not sudden. He thought that he had good reason to end it all. He was ruined. The great financial institution of which he was the responsible head had crashed into failure that he knew would start banks and corporations and business houses toppling into bankruptcy throughout the country. He apologized to the surgeon summoned instantly by explaining: 'I couldn't stand the pressure, doctor.' The suicide chose some hours of suffering rather than an instantaneous death, because there were some things that he wanted to do. He felt that he had disgraced as well as impoverished his family. But he wanted to see and know them at the last after he had made the only reparation he could think of for what seemed to him dishonor. So when Charles Tracy Barney, the broken president of the wrecked Knickerbocker Trust company, of New York, lay dying of his self-inflicted wound, he signed a hastily written will, leaving his entire estate to his wife. It seemed a mockery—that last testament, scribbled on a sheet of letter paper, with a torn bit of a postage stamp fixed upon it in lieu of the formal seal. For all that the broken, dying man thought that he could bequeath was a legacy of insolvency. Last week the tax appraiser filed a report in the surrogate's court in New York showing that that legacy of Charles T. Barney, clear of all debts, amounts today to at least \$909,439, while certain personal property may bring the liquidation up to \$1,173,215. And those two years have seen the Knickerbocker Trust company, the wreck of which was the death signal for its president, rehabilitated with ease, and recognized everywhere as an unassailable strong financial institution. That million-dollar estate of Barney should tell the whole story of the panic of 1907 to every thinking American."

THINGS WERE growing uncomfortable for the highly respected heads of the trusts and masters of Wall Street. The country was so prosperous and commerce and manufacture so active that the country's money was being utilized in the home communities. The stream of

wealth was flowing away from Wall Street into creative industry. The people and their money were too busy to make any more speculations of speculative securities profitable. And additional annoyances to the bosses of the New York banks, and of the then secretary of the national treasury, were certain obtrusively energetic outsiders. The North American adds: "Heinze was a thorn in the side of the copper-handling crowd of Standard Oil. Morse was playing the part of a daring game that every big manipulator, from Jay Gould to Jim Keene, has risked, and doing it without consulting any of the inner circle. Belmont was growing restive about his enforced relations with Ryan. The steel trust needed the Tennessee Coal and Iron company, with its open-hearth process, and needed it badly to clinch the trust's control. And ranged with the intruders were men like Barney and Thomas and others noted chiefly for wealth and social qualities. The big men thought it was time to teach the country and some individuals a lesson. Some men, therefore, were marked. The word went forth, and in a day gilt-edged collateral became worthless as security. So Barney killed himself and Morse is a convict, and Heinze, a fighter always, is fighting his hardest fight to keep out of a cell similar to that of Morse. The Rothschild friendship saved Belmont. Thomas is living on what his creditors allow him. But the steel trust has swallowed its most formidable competitor. Standard Oil no longer is uneasy about its copper holdings. Every banker and broker and 'conservative,' properly chastened, including the present tariff-making congress, bows in fervent admiration of those 'saviors of the country,' Morgan and Rockefeller, whose stocks and bonds have swung back naturally to the former prices, and who now are predicting jubilantly another era of great prosperity. Of course, some millions of people have had rather a bad time of it. But somebody must suffer when, in order to remove men, it becomes necessary to make a splendidly solvent institution an appalling wreck and cause an honest man worth a million to shoot himself as a dishonored bankrupt. The case of Barney, we think, is a curious one that should be studied when the representatives of the American people begin to reconstruct our financial system next winter. Whether Charles Barney was a suicide or a murdered man is a question which, it seems to us, may have some bearing upon the proposals of the Aldrich monetary commission, and the approval or disapproval thereof by the men who now have no rivals in Wall Street."

IN AN EDITORIAL entitled, "Sources of Bossism," the Chicago Daily News said: "In his address to the jury in the case of Patrick Calhoun, president of the United Railroads of San Francisco, charged with bribery in connection with a franchise grant, Francis J. Heney, prosecutor for the state, dealt with the genesis of the modern political boss and indicated the sources of his power. Mr. Heney said the boss was supported by two classes. 'One holds forth in the 'tenderloin,' where they want a permit to commit crimes. The other class hold forth in the fashionable neighborhoods and wants higher dividends from investments in gas and railway and telephone stocks. They join hands with the 'tenderloin' to accomplish their ends and that is what has made the boss possible.' This analysis of the sources of corrupt bossism coincides with the experience of most other practical students of city government problems. The combination of privileged business with privileged vice was what fastened the grip of the boss and the grafter upon San Francisco. Either alone would be powerless to dominate the politics of a community, but the two working together are too much for the forces of decency except in cases where the public is peculiarly well informed and alert. The citizens who profit only by good government can not safely ignore the political partnership of the forces which flourish under the rule of weak or venal officials."

Great is Galveston, and the sea wall is its protection.