

# CURRENT TOPICS

**A**SSERTING that Senator Lodge has lost favor at the White House, Walter Wellman, Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald says: "The minute that Lodge went down Taft came up. Mr. Roosevelt is so constituted that he likes to have two or three strong men to lean upon. One at least. He is self-reliant enough but he loves to have a confidant with whom he can talk over everything he thinks and proposes to do. Lodge was once in that relation. Then it was Taft. Now it is to be Root and Taft. It is safe to say that these two men will have far more influence at the White House than all the other members of the cabinet put together during the next three years. Taft is not ambitious. Shaw is. The secretary of the treasury is crazy to be president. The president likes Taft and doesn't care much any more for Shaw. It is only a question of time when Mr. Shaw retires to nurse his presidential ambition in Iowa."

**T**HE Home College Company has been incorporated at Chicago. The "college" to be maintained by this company is to be strictly non-sectarian and is to be used as a home for men and women of (?) years of age and over. The scholarship in this college entitles the owner to board and room and all privileges, together with such studies as he may desire to pursue for the balance of his natural life. Free medical attendance and funeral expenses at death are included. It is claimed that the cost of these scholarships are about one-third the cost of ordinary life insurance. It is the purpose of the college, whenever a sufficient number of scholarships have been sold in one state to justify the erection of a home college in that state, to do so. A college has been established at Chicago. A board of regents was recently chosen, among whom are Frank Gunsaulus, D. D., pastor Central Independent church; Prof. Walter W. Wood, superintendent of education, Y. M. C. A., Chicago; James J. Barry, chancellor Holy Name cathedral; Volney B. Cushing, national lecturer for prohibitionists; Mrs. Matilda B. Carse, Chicago, W. C. T. U.; Edwin M. Randall, secretary of the Epworth League; and Prof. Herbert Willets, Chicago university. The officers of the College company are as follows: President, John M. Driver; secretary and general manager, Hamilton White; treasurer, C. S. Ennis.

**T**HE Massachusetts State Bureau of Statistics has made a report in favor of old age pensions, the same to be granted by the commonwealth from the public revenue. This recommendation appears in the bureau's annual report for 1905. Referring to this report a writer in the Springfield (Mass.) Republican says: "The line of argument is that it would be quite as cheap and economical, and more satisfactory otherwise, to provide an old-age pension for those 65 years old and over, who need help, as to continue the present method of supporting them in public alms and work-houses and through private benefactions. The bureau has made an effort, through special inquiry, to obtain some notion of the amounts contributed annually in charitable relief by individual and corporate benefactions \$4,179, along with this total are given the state and local government contributions for similar purposes, as follows: By the state \$1,368,317, by cities and towns \$4,016,055, for soldiers' relief \$1,385,023, by individual and corporate benefactions \$4,179,473; total \$10,948,868. These figures are for the year 1900."

**T**HE PEOPLE of New Orleans are making a gallant and successful fight against yellow fever. The Philadelphia Ledger pays a deserved tribute to New Orleans heroism and one that must provide encouragement to the brave people of that city, particularly when they know that the Ledger speaks, on this occasion, for Americans generally. The Ledger says: "The yellow fever situation at New Orleans is likely to furnish another example of the courage of men and women when put to the supreme test. Father Damien among the lepers; Stephen Girard performing the duties of a nurse when the yellow fever prevailed in Philadelphia; the heroes of the smallpox and cholera epidemics which have

ravaged the world, and of the plague of which De Foe has graphically written, are typical examples of the heroism of which we speak. In every such crisis men and women in whom the heroic element had not been recognized or suspected braved every peril of contagion, kept ceaseless vigil over the sick and the dying, and in the vanguard fought the king of terrors until the danger passed or they themselves were numbered with the fallen. It is in these fateful periods that we set true value on the dignity of human nature, its capacity for self-sacrifice, its sublime courage and fortitude. The New Orleans Times-Democrat says that, instead of running away in the mad panic that frequently prevails when the first suspicious case of yellow fever in that city is announced, 'many absent citizens have hurried home to tender their assistance to the committee which has undertaken to crush out the fever.' Such instances of obedience to the call of civic duty and to the cry of stricken humanity correct the impression which many of us have entertained that the present age is wholly given over to materialism, to money-getting, to selfishness and to forgetfulness of the teaching that we are our brother's keeper."

**I**N THE same article the Philadelphia Ledger says: "One of the compensations of such anxious, troubled experiences as New Orleans is confronting, is the altruism which shines forth in the sacrifices of personal comfort, possibly of health and life, now in evidence in that city. Many of the heroes of former epidemics are laid away in forgotten marble. Whoever they were and in enduring marble. Whoever they were and wherever they lie, all were martyrs of the finest mold. Jean Paul Richter says that the graves of the noblest martyrs are like 'the graves of the Moravian brethren, level and undistinguishable from the universal earth; and if the earth could give up her secrets our whole globe would appear a Westminster Abbey laid flat.' In the days when fever and pestilence walk abroad woman faces the peril with the calm courage of the ministering angel, of the nurse, of the various Sisterhoods of Charity. Because history records only the self-sacrifices of the male sex and because she dips her pen only in blood is it that in the eyes of the unseen spirits of the world our annals appear doubtless far more beautiful and noble than in our own. The Archbishop of New Orleans, stricken with the fever, is an example of the devotion in which the world will recognize true heroism. Priest and minister, the devout layman and the religiously unattached, physicians, men and women, the great and the obscure, those whose official duty commands their presence at the bedside of the stricken, and those who have no official call to be there, will be found in the hospitals and the homes and wherever the ministry of help and sympathy may be needed. This has been the history of all previous visitations of the yellow fever and other scourges in this country. Every crisis in the affairs of men breeds its own heroes."

**S**PEAKING for the people of New Orleans the Times-Democrat thanks the Ledger for its kind words; and on its own account the Times-Democrat says: "Let us add to this, not with the intention of lessening in the slightest degree the heroism of those who have joined in this great fight—for we have found no preventive or remedy for the fever—but simply to explain the moral courage that now dominates New Orleans in its struggle, that the discovery of the cause of the disease, in the petty and despised though hated mosquito, has robbed yellow fever of its oldtime horrors. It was the former mystery about it that carried terror into many households, as people saw it creeping along from house to house, unlocking doors, breaking down barricades. What it was and how it traveled we did not know—whether in some poison floating in the air or crawling in the earth. Man is naturally terrified by what he does not see and can not understand, and it was the mystery of the yellow fever that made it the most dreaded of all diseases. Now that we know its origin and how it is transmitted, how it can be checked and terminated, the terror of mystery is removed. This knowledge has contributed not a little to quiet the timid in New Orleans and to restore courage and confidence

here. It has encouraged the people to organize for the fray and to take the proper steps to crush out the fever forever. It will be noticed that in every town or city where the people have had a chance to inform themselves as to the real character of yellow fever, its origin and transmission, this has put an end to the panicky fear formerly prevailing and which sees no reason, and it has stirred them up to vigorous and intelligent action. The panic is confined mainly to the ignorant, who cling to the old delusions and who are still overcome by the mysterious terrors of yellow fever. Nothing has been accomplished by panic. It is through courage, determination and energetic work that the country will be freed from the yellow fever. It is the last epidemic of yellow fever that will ever occur on the Gulf coast, said Dr. John Guiteras, head of the Cuban quarantine service, and who had so much to do with getting rid of the disease in the island republic. No one doubts his prophecy; but it calls for determination, courage and heroism to accomplish that result."

**R**ECENTLY it was announced that President Roosevelt would call congress in extra session during November. It is said that this announcement was made on the president's authority, but a dispatch to the Denver News, under date of Oyster Bay, August 13, says that the indications are now that no extra session will be held. The News correspondent explains. "Strong pressure is being brought to bear upon the president not to call an extraordinary session. The president has received a large number of letters regarding it. Many senators have urged against an extra session. They point out that practically nothing will be gained by an extra session that will not begin not more than three weeks before the opening of the regular session, and that it will cause much inconvenience to many members of congress in both branches. Taking these things into consideration, the president has reserved a definite decision of the matter, the chances as noted being that the session will not be called. Last spring it was the president's idea to issue at the proper time a call for an extraordinary session of congress, to be held in October, for the purpose of enacting if possible railroad rate legislation. Incidentally, it was expected that some recommendations might be made by the president regarding proposed changes in the existing tariff law. The idea of an October session finally was abandoned, and subsequently the president made arrangements for a two weeks' trip through the south, beginning on the 17th of October. It then was announced that the proposed extraordinary session would not be held until after the November elections. If finally the president should decide to call congress together, the session will begin on the first Monday after the November elections, which will be just three weeks before the beginning of the regular session in December."

**I**N THE same report is given a census statement of the number of persons living in the commonwealth during the same year, who were 65 years old or older. This number was 143,107, and the life insurance tables tell us what the expectations of life are for these ages. Assuming that pensions to be paid are \$260 a year, or \$5 a week, it would cost the state \$37,207,820 per year if all of these ages were pensioned; but if one-fourth were considered the cost would be \$9,301,955. The report says that it is not to be assumed that more than one-fourth of the old folks would apply for a state pension, and that the experience of foreign countries is that only about one-fifth apply.

**C**OMMENTING upon the report made by the Massachusetts Labor Bureau, the Springfield Republican says: "We may deduct from the total sum derived from the above table the amount paid by the state for charitable purposes—mainly persons of the defective classes and outside of an old age pension scheme—and still have left a local and private expenditure fully equal to the cost of the old age pension. If, therefore, the pension would provide for all the present objects of local and private charity, the substitution would be no more expensive to the