

CURRENT TOPICS

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has set aside the verdict of acquittal rendered in the case of Captain Lewis M. Koehler, Fourth Cavalry, U. S. A. Captain Koehler was charged with using disrespectful language in an appeal from the action of General Wood, who reprimanded Captain Koehler for making charges against Major Scott, commanding officer at the Jolo military post, and civil governor of Jolo, and was charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman in making unfounded and malicious statements regarding his commanding officer and with insubordination. The first court-martial sentenced him to be reprimanded, but the second court-martial upon which today's action was based, acquitted him.

SECRETARY TAFT reported to the president, saying that "After much consideration I am convinced that this finding of the court involves affirmative inferences and conclusions of fact that cannot be supported by the evidence. You, as the reviewing authority, are put in this position—that if you approve the findings you necessarily affirm or approve the statement derogatory to General Wood contained in the appeals and if you do so approve those statements, then it would become your duty, as commander-in-chief, to order General Wood before a court-martial for perverting his power as department commander to accomplish an unjust and unfair purpose against his subordinate officer. You cannot in justice to General Wood find any evidence in the record to sustain the bringing of such proceedings or the finding of a court against him." In setting aside the verdict of the second court-martial, which was for acquittal, President Roosevelt said: "I entirely concur in all that the secretary of war says of Captain Koehler and of General Wood and of the poor showing made by the court which last passed on the case."

THE EXPERIMENT made by the Massachusetts physicians has attracted considerable attention. In some quarters it has met with serious attention and in others with smiles and sneers. The Boston correspondent for the New York World says: "Dr. John Sproul, of Haverhill, and Dr. William V. Grant, of Lawrence, today gave additional details of Dr. Duncan MacDougall's experiments to show the existence of the human soul. After repeating the results of the tests with dying men and women, which showed in every case a diminution of weight at the instant of death of from one-half to one ounce, wholly unaccountable for in any other way than the flight of the soul, Dr. Sproul said that in order to confirm their tests the doctors caused the death of thirteen dogs, ranging in weight from fifteen to seventy pounds. Each case was watched with the utmost care, but at the instant of death there was not the slightest diminution of weight on scales adjusted to show a variation of one-tenth of an ounce. Dr. MacDougall, the author of the original experiments, today said: 'There is really nothing proven yet. The research must continue extensively to conclusively demonstrate that the soul has weight. Any hospital that will give us the opportunity to continue these experiments will be reimbursed.'

A GENTLEMAN who is described as "an eminent physiological chemist" dismissed the Boston experiment in short order when, speaking to the Chicago correspondent for the New York World, he said: "Years ago a group of German students settled this point: If a mouse was allowed to die in a hermetically-sealed—by fusion, not merely stoppered—bottle, absolutely no loss of weight occurred, even using a scale showing one milligram (1-446,000th of a pound). But if the mouse died in an open vessel a loss within half a minute of death of from ten to twenty milligrams was noticeable. That proved clearly that a gas was given off. The Boston experiments show a loss on the same ratio for the human body."

"A SEEKER after truth" writes to the New York World to say: "It may not be amiss to call the attention of the credulous to a consideration of the possibility of a scientific explanation of the observed diminution of weight immediately following death, based purely upon the accepted laws of all matter possessing energy. May it not be explained by the wave theory of matter on the

ground that the innumerable waves of motion produced by the rise and fall of the chest add their forces to the other forces acting upon the scales and thus give an increase over the true weight of the body? On the hypothesis we would naturally expect some slight change to follow death and such change to correspond in suddenness with the temperamental character of the deceased. These physicians state that the change does take place, and in the cases mentioned its manifestation was controlled by temperament. The contrast of a man walking across a scale platform and standing still upon it may be used to illustrate my meaning, but the illustration is not an exact one. In one case the forces are so great and their succession so slow that the scale may be seen to vibrate, while in the other the forces are so slight and their succession so rapid that no recoil is perceptible. The spirit of energy in the body ceased to labor, but I do not see any proof that any material part of the body has been set free."

UNDER the New Jersey law corporations are required to file an annual report. It has been discovered that of the fifteen thousand corporations chartered by New Jersey, eight thousand failed to file their report for 1903. Failure to file such a report is punishable by fine, which in the case of all these corporations would aggregate \$2,000,000. Under the law all the directors of these corporations may be disqualified from serving in any capacity in their respective corporations for a period of one year.

THE AGENTS of the lumber trust say that the effect of the president's action in reserving great areas of timbered land from sale or settlement will operate to the advantage of the trust by further restricting the available domestic supply of lumber and facilitating a consequent increase of prices and profits. Referring to this claim the Philadelphia Record says: "This is quite possible; but it is not so good an argument against the creation of forest reserves as it is against the indefensible duty on imported lumber. The true way to cut the claws of the trust is to repeal the tariff duties, under the shelter of which it robs the consumer."

THE FIFTY-NINTH congress failed to provide for an investigation of the nine sub-treasuries of the United States and the St. Louis Republic thinks this is significant for it says: "Recent scandals in three of these institutions, and the ascertained loss of large sums of money from two of them, reveal faulty methods of management which call for broader and deeper inquiry than experts of the treasury department have the power to make. Nothing less than a congressional commission, empowered to summon witnesses from all branches of the treasury service, can bring out the facts in a way to allay a growing public suspicion of looseness and incompetence or worse, if indeed the suspicion be unfounded. Pending the count of cash in the sub-treasury at Chicago credence need not be given to the rumor that the shortage there will be nearer to \$1,000,000 than the \$173,000 already ascertained. But the more than a billion of dollars kept at all times in the government's vaults ought to be so safeguarded that it would be impossible for such a rumor to be put into circulation, much less for it, by any possibility, to turn out to be true. In failing to ascertain whether there is possible ground for such rumors, the republican congress was delinquent in a high duty which it owed to the people. Is the republican party afraid to uncover the record of its guardianship of the public moneys?"

GENERAL LEWIS B. PARSONS died recently at Flora, Ill., aged 89 years. During the civil war he served as chief of river and rail transportation for the federal army. General Parsons was the democratic nominee for lieutenant governor of Illinois in 1880, at the time Lyman Trumble was the democratic nominee for governor. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat says: "In the death of General Parsons the country loses one of the men upon whose ability, courage and integrity the victory of its arms depended in the times that tried men's souls. Among the men of the strong arm and clean hand whose work contributed to its success he was as conspicuous as active. His organizing and executive abilities, soon perceived and sorely needed, led early in the war to his promo-

tion from the line to the post of chief of the transportation department, in which his work won successive promotions in military grade up to the rank of brigadier general. He had the confidence of Lincoln and of Grant, and in the voluminous correspondence he leaves are letters expressing their sense of dependence upon his intelligent cooperation, and their appreciation of the high service which always put men in the right place at the right time. After the close of the war the improvement in methods of transporting large bodies of troops which were made under his control of the transportation bureau, were highly commended by Gen. von Moltke. The United States will be fortunate if, in the next great war, it has in command of such a vital work a man of the singleness of purpose, unselfish devotion to duty, and high ability of Lewis B. Parsons.

THE CITY ELECTION of Chicago will take place April 2. Referring to this election the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: "It is of more than passing import, because if the republicans should win it will be the death-knell to so-called municipal ownership as practiced in this country. Democrats, headed by Mayor Dunne, seek to have the city take over the street cars, and then have the city become the owner, and run the same as it would go into the water or any other business. Indeed, the mayor would have all public utilities go direct to the city."

THE "call of the tame" is on according to the New York World's Waterbury, Conn., correspondent, who says: "The long-continued snow and cold weather have driven game to the desperate expedient of depending upon the mercy of civilized man. At Columbia Mrs. John W. Fuller is maintaining a flock of fourteen quail which began by stealing the food of her chickens and which now not only eat regularly with the domestic fowl, but share their nests and perches. J. P. Little's hen-house numbers among its regular inhabitants several quail and four blue jays which dwell in peace and amity with the Plymouth Rocks. Cornelius Kierstad, of Deep River, reports that deer have taken refuge in his woodshed, and William Townsend, of Middlebury, is troubled by chickadees which fly into his house whenever a door or window is opened."

FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL Frank H. Hitchcock has made a compilation showing how many clerks in postoffices and letter carriers will be affected by the increased pay recently provided for them by congress. The Washington correspondent for the New York Press says: "The additional pay will begin on July 1, the new fiscal year. The total number of clerks promoted, at that time, or as soon afterward as they shall have completed a year's service in the grades in which they are now serving, will be 19,900. Of these 358 will be advanced from a salary of \$400 to \$600; 833 from \$500 to \$600; 3,834 from \$600 to \$800; 4,026 from \$700 to \$800; 4,995 from \$800 to \$900; 3,473 from \$900 to \$1,000, and 2,381 from \$1,000 to \$1,100. The letter carriers, many of whom now are receiving nearly the maximum salary provided by law, will be promoted in the same way. The increase will affect 24,227 carriers throughout the country. Of this number 1,810 will be promoted from \$600 to \$800; 8,835 from \$850 to \$900; 1,073 from \$800 to \$1,000, and 12,509 from \$1,000 to \$1,100. The increase in the aggregate will amount to nearly \$4,500,000 a year."

SOME interesting thoughts are suggested by the Chicago Chronicle when it says: "Two months ago when the city government of San Francisco was summoned or invited to Washington to give an account of itself to the president for its administration of the public schools of that city, the Chronicle called attention to the incident as something unusual and of a dangerous tendency. There was not a shadow of a doubt that the object in view was a good one, but there was something forbidding in the possible unfolding of the precedent. The Chronicle predicted that the time would come when the governors and legislatures of the states would be invited to Washington, and that after they had been 'invited' a few times they would be 'summoned' to appear and give an account of themselves to the United States government. Having made this prediction, it is only natural that this newspaper should be struck