

CURRENT TOPICS

GOVERNOR John A. Johnson, of Minnesota, died at 3:35 o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, September 21. The governor had been operated upon at Rochester, Minn., this being the third operation for appendicitis. Governor Johnson was born at St. Peter, Minn., July 28, 1861. He was educated in the public schools and became editor of a weekly newspaper at St. Peter. He served in the Minnesota state senate. In 1904 he was elected governor of Minnesota. He was re-elected in 1906 and in 1908.

HERE IS A story from life carried from New York by the Associated Press: "When he died of a fractured skull at the Flower hospital Stephen Vogvodich, eight years old, made his last sacrifice for his baby brother. Stephen had always loved the baby better than he did himself. He had watched the baby without complaining while the other boys played in the streets, and had held him in his arms out on the fire escape in front of his flat, on the fifth floor of No. 538 West Forty-seventh street, so that he might be cooled by whatever breezes wandered there. It was while he was holding the baby on the fire escape that Stephen met with the accident that resulted in his death. He went too near the edge and lost his balance. He screamed as he swayed for a moment on the edge, but he did not drop the baby that he might clutch the railing and save himself. Instead he threw the child toward the open window, where the mother, Mrs. Peter Vogvodich, grasped its clothes and clung thus to the baby. But the very act of throwing the child forced Stephen back over the edge and he fell to the street, five stories down. He was unconscious when they picked him up, and when Dr. Charles Barton of the Flower hospital arrived, he told the mother that her son could not live."

A NOVEL CHURCH service is described in a dispatch carried by the Associated Press under date of Cincinnati, Ohio, September 10: "Charles H. King, once a minister in the Episcopal church, who has been retired and in business in Cincinnati for several years, has just done something that perhaps no other minister has accomplished. He preached a sermon at the Wyoming Episcopal church without a congregation. He faced the empty seats and talked away about the spirituality of some men and the non-spirituality of most men. He argued for a universal goodness in man and told the walls, the pews, and the pillars of that beautiful church and his organist just what he thought the matter was with modern, coin-loving humanity. Of course his organist, John W. Hill, heard all this, as he has heard it often before. He and he alone heard the sermon. When the time came for the collection he played the offertory, got up went to the bundle of baskets in the collections room, laid a \$5 note in one, and passed the basket to the Rev. Mr. King. Then he heard the minister's tirade against existing corruption in our cities, played the hymns, sang them with the minister, and the two left the church. It all happened because the pastor of the church is away on his vacation. It was given out that there would be no services, then Mr. King said he was going to preach. No one except Mr. Hill heard about this."

THE ASTRONOMERS are just now interested in a comet. A writer in the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal says: "Halley's comet, which was re-discovered a few night ago by Professor Max Wolf at Heidelberg, Germany, will probably be a bright comet and visible to the naked eye according to astronomers. Professor Swezey, head of the astronomy department at the state university, said that at present the comet is only visible with the largest telescopes, but that by the time it is due to pass the earth's orbit it will probably appear very bright, though this is not definitely known as this will depend upon the position of the earth in its orbit. If the earth will be in that part of the orbit near which the comet will pass the probability is that the comet will be visible to the naked eye. Pro-

fessor Swezey, about a year ago, figured the path of the comet relative to the position of the earth will have as the comet passes the orbit, and he said that according to the former orbit the comet would pass close to the earth. But as it is subject to many perturbations new observations will have to be taken before this can be predicted with any certainty. The comet has been seen by a number of astronomers in different parts of the world. A few nights ago it was observed at the Lick Observatory in California, and a photograph was secured of it by the aid of the large reflecting telescope. From the different positions it has in the sky each night astronomers will be able to calculate its present orbit, and they will then be able to tell how near it will come to the earth. At the time of its last appearance in 1835 it passed within 5,000,000 miles of the earth and was then very bright. Halley's comet is an interesting one in that it was the first one known to be periodical. Its first return was predicted by Halley, its discoverer, as March 13, 1759. Halley showed by mathematical calculations that the orbit of this comet was an ellipse and he calculated its period as about seventy-five years. Halley's prediction was found to be nearly correct, but owing to the perturbations of the planets it was not exact, though the comet passed the sun within a month of the time predicted. The old records show that this comet was first seen in the year 1066. It can not be proved absolutely that this comet and Halley's are the same, but it is believed to be by astronomers, as it has reappeared at the regular interval since that date, and the orbits have been the same, at least back to 1531. The years that it has reappeared since 1066 are 1145, 1301, 1456, 1531, 1607, 1682, 1759, and 1835. Since 1835 the comet has been journeying out to a point beyond the orbit of the farthest known planet, Neptune. Its farthest distance from the sun, 3,270,080,000 miles, was reached in 1873. Its closest approach to the sun will probably be about 65,000,000 miles, which it is due to reach probably some time in March 1911. It is now almost midway between the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn, having passed Saturn's orbit late in 1908. According to the present calculations, the comet provided there will be no change in its orbit owing to the perturbations of the larger planets, will pass the earth's orbit sometime early in next March, though it will probably be visible for a considerable time before."

A STONINGTON, Conn., reader of the New York World writes to that publication over the name "Julius" to say: "I have read your editorial in the World of August 31 under the heading of 'Equal Rights,' discussing the future of the democratic party, etc. I have been a regular patron of the World since its initial number, and, if you will allow me, I beg to express my doubts as to the sincerity of the World's democracy, as that term is understood by old-fashioned Jeffersonian democrats. It is no use in denying the fact that the democracy of today is an adulterated combination of the all-pervading spirit of the times—graft, spoils, loot, etc.—engendered by the late civil war and, unfortunately for our country, is growing from bad to worse, but it is unkind and unjust to charge Mr. Bryan with the sins of omission or commission of the last Cleveland administration. I voted for Mr. Cleveland for both terms of his presidential incumbency. My gratification and satisfaction with his first administration were grievously disappointed with his second. The first was an exponent of democracy as I understand it; the second was one of plutocracy. Do not condemn Mr. Bryan for the sins committed by a debauched democracy—a democracy that for the once forsook its principles and succumbed to Mammon and the fleshpots of Egypt."

AN EXAMINATION for positions in the census department will take place October 23. Appointment Clerk Lindell of the census bureau says that the distinction between the permanent census force and the additional temporary employees provided by the thirteenth census act is

quite important and should be remembered. As vacancies occur on the permanent census roll they will be filled, as heretofore, by transfers from elsewhere in the service, or by selections from the existing registers of the civil service commission. Persons now on the registers of the commission are, therefore, eligible for appointment to vacancies on the permanent census roll, but there is no greater opportunity during the decennial period for such appointments than there has been heretofore. The additional temporary positions, authorized by the thirteenth census act, except those above \$1,200 per annum which will be filled largely by transfers from the permanent census roll, will be given to those persons who pass the test examination on October 23. Those now on the registers of the civil service commission, who desire appointment to these additional census places, should take the test examination as their present eligibility avails them nothing in respect to appointments to these positions. The fact that a person is on the civil service register does not prevent him from taking this test examination. Of the four clerical divisions into which the additional census force are separated, class A comprises those engaged in the operation of card punching and card tabulating machines; class B, those operating typewriters, adding machines, or combined typewriter adding machines; class C, those engaged in manuscript tabulation and other clerical work; class D, the sub-clerical workers. The entrance salary for classes A, B, and C will be \$600 per annum, subject to possible promotion to at least \$900 a year. The minimum of \$600 per year will also apply to employes paid on the piece-price basis. Class D will be: Messengers, \$840; assistant messengers, \$720; messenger boys, \$480; watchmen, \$720; laborers, \$720, and charwomen, \$240. All original appointments for these classes will be made from the eligible registers furnished by test examination. These will be five in number. The first will carry the names of all persons eighteen years of age, or over who pass the examination. The second will list those on the first register, who have had previous experience in operating card-punching, card tabulating or card-sorting machines in census work. The placing of a person's name on this register will not affect his eligibility on the first, third or fourth registers. The third register will contain the names of all those on the first register who make an average of 70 on the test in typewriter tabulation. Persons who pass this test will, by so doing, improve their chances of appointment. Nor does entry on this affect eligibility on the first, second or fourth register.

NOW THE corset trust has taken a steel-ribbed grip upon the neck of the downtrodden and garroted it with linen strings. But the squeezed and gasping common people have found a champion. A Chicago dispatch to the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "The Retailers' Commercial Union has come to its rescue with lance in rest and determined to enforce the rule of trade that 'Free strings go with the corset.' At the Grand Pacific hotel today a shot was fired that will be heard around the world. It was this: 'Resolved, That a corset lace is a part of the original construction and as necessary to the corset as laces in a shoe or buttons on a man's trousers and coat, and should not be considered a by-product for which extra charge should be made; and that we vigorously condemn all manufacturers in the corset trust for refusing to include a pair of laces in the sale of each corset.' Liberty shrieked for several hours before the declaration of war was compiled, but all the speeches were on the one side. It was a meeting of the executive committee of the union which has for its purpose collective buying by retailers in the middle west. The pull back on corset strings was denounced by President W. H. Genner, of Farmington, Iowa, as 'unfair, unjust and illegal and an injury to the middle classes and laboring people who stand the burden of the extra cost.' 'A long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together on this corset string thing, and we'll break the trust's backbone,' said another speaker."