

CURRENT TOPICS

A PRETTY story of a 1913 scene on the Gettysburg battlefield is told by the United Press in this way: A handful of men in gray reenacted the charge of Pickett across the field of Gettysburg. Up the slope of Cemetery ridge, where death kept step with them in '63, fifteen veterans of the Virginia regiments of that immortal brigade made their slow parade. Under the brow of the ridge in the bloody angle, where the Philadelphia brigade stood that day, was a handful in blue, scarcely larger, waiting to meet the onslaught of peace. There were no flashing sabres, no guns roaring with shell; only eyes that dimmed fast and kindly faces behind the stone wall that marks the angle. At the end, in place of wounds or prison, or death, were handshakes, speeches and mingling cheers. The veterans in gray marched for a quarter of a mile over the ground that they traversed during the charge. They came up the slope in columns of fours, irregular but responsive to the commands of Major W. W. Bentley of the Twenty-fourth Virginia, one of the few officers of either Pickett's or the Philadelphia brigades who was present. Ahead of them marched a band, and well down the column was a faded confederate flag, its red field pierced with many holes, its cross bars dim and its shaft column colored with the sweat of many a man who died that it might fly high in the last desperate effort to pierce the union lines. Its progress was slow and painful, for the timothy in the field was high and its plowed surface was not easy for the weary feet. Up to the very edge of the stone wall, covered now with tangled vines, shaded by trees and peaceful as a summer lane, they marched in the hot sun while the band played "Dixie." There they stood for half an hour while their comrades in blue peered across at them. The blue line formed behind the walls. Over their heads floated a faded standard of the Second army corps; behind them were the statues of the Philadelphia brigade and the Fourth United States battery, where General Armistead died in the midst of guns, killed, the histories say, by a shot fired by its dying commander, Lieutenant Cushing. As the men in gray formed in a long line facing the wall, the stars and bars and the flag of the Second corps were crossed in amity, the stars and stripes were unfurled and the crowd that came to watch burst into a cheer. Representative J. Hampton Moore of Pennsylvania made a long speech and Major Bentley answered him on behalf of the south. The veterans in gray were given a medal provided by John Wanamaker. They crowded over the stone wall, shook hands and the charge was over. There was many a picturesque figure in the line that came up the slope. W. H. Turpin of the Fifty-third Virginia appeared in the uniform he wore on the day of the charge. His feet were bound in cloth, he had an army blanket strapped to his back and he calmly smoked a long-stemmed corncob pipe. There were fifteen regiments in Pickett's division that day in '63 and the histories say that 5,000 men charged across the field. Every field officer was killed or wounded except one lieutenant colonel and two-thirds of the line officers met the same fate. Of the 5,000 who charged only about 2,000 returned to the confederate position. The Philadelphia brigade numbered about 1,200 men and lost 453 in killed and wounded.

COMPLYING with an order of the war department, General A. L. Miles, chief of the division of militia affairs in the United States army, sent to the adjutant general of South Carolina the following dispatch: "In accordance with action of war department this date, taken in consequence of attitude of governor of your state toward enforcements of federal militia law as expressed in his letters of May 5 and 27 to you and of June 11 to secretary of war, no further federal assistance, either personnel or equipment will be afforded the organized militia of your state, nor further expenditure of federal funds in hands of disbursing officers will be authorized by secretary of war, except to cover such obligation as may have already been accrued and approved by secretary of war. Requisition for property on hand in military divisions is disapproved and no further requisition will be honored. This information tele-

graphed to you in connection with plans for encampment of South Carolina organized militia this summer, in order that you may be guided by such telegram and act accordingly. Disbursing officer has been informed of action taken by war department." A Washington dispatch, carried by the Associated Press says: War department officials said that the defiant attitude of Governor Blease left no alternative but to withdraw federal support from the South Carolina militia. They declared that they not only ignored the standards of efficiency in the state militia demanded by the federal authorities under the Dick law as a condition of federal support, but had announced that as commander-in-chief of the state volunteer forces he would do what he pleased regardless of federal authority.

THE hidden treasures of Colombia, S. A., are just now attracting newspaper attention. The New York Sun says: Lean as an antelope and almost as dark as an Indian, "the animal man," J. J. Schmitt, who has made more lonesome trips into South American jungles than any other hunter of queer creatures and rare plants in this country, returned recently by the Hamburg-American liner Albingia. This time Schmitt was five months in the interior solitudes of Colombia, sleeping under the trees when he could sleep and living like the native Indians. For more than three months he hunted alone. His experience brought down his weight about forty pounds and when he landed with his menagerie he looked like a being of bone and muscle only. Mr. Schmitt says he found gold in abundance in certain parts of the country where he believes no other white man ever trod, and that oil just oozed from the soil in other sections. Primarily he was after animals and plants, but he incidentally grabbed off some nuggets, which he brought along with his collection. He said his trip was the longest and hardest he had ever undertaken. Louis Ruhe, the animal dealer in Grand street, financed it and was satisfied with Schmitt's findings, including twenty iguanas, biggest of South American lizards, chameleon-like in their change of aspect. The biggest of the twenty is more than six feet long. Schmitt lived partly on iguanan meat, which is esteemed a delicacy in Colombia, on his exploring trip. A dozen young meacaws that the animal man risked his neck to take from their nests while the mother birds fought him with beak and claws were mothered by him on the trip up from Colon. They are among the biggest and gaudiest youngsters ever seen hereabouts. Other prizes are a twelve-foot boa wonderfully marked, several "widows," rare wild ducks seldom seen in the United States, and a variety of tropical plants that Schmitt declares have never been seen in New York, and several "royal ducks" as big as geese with glistening greenish black coats. There are also in the collection, fifty or more monkeys, 1,000 parakeets and many kinds of snakes. Mrs. Schmitt, who has won fame as a snake charmer, met her husband at the pier. Schmitt says he expects to interest American capitalists in the vast mineral wealth of the interior of Colombia.

ATTRIBUTE to the faithful effort of the late John P. Morgan, is paid by the Birmingham (Ala.) Ledger, in this way: The Greensboro Watchman is persistent on its point that Senator Morgan wanted the canal across the isthmus at Nicaragua and opposed the Panama idea. Technically the Watchman is correct. The senator was earnest and persistent in his efforts for the Nicaragua route because he had seen it and studied it and was at an age when men do not like to change their minds. It is remembered that there was a bit of scandal connected with the change from the Nicaraguan scheme to that of Panama. Mr. Roosevelt attacked some newspapers in the courts because they charged fraud. Anyway, the United States did do several things that Senator Morgan could not approve in order to cut the canal at Panama. When the republicans at Washington made the change over the protest of our senator he reluctantly yielded and aided the canal as the best that could be done. So it is true that the

senator opposed the Panama route for the canal because he was advocating another location, and the republicans, for reasons and perhaps other "valuable considerations" changed the route. To put it plainly, Senator Morgan had cultivated public sentiment until it demanded a canal. All the world knew that he had brought the four-century-old question to a climax. The republicans refused him all the honor they could and bought, at an enormous price, the French rights and claims and built the canal at Panama. Senator Morgan was the father of the canal, though it had been talked of since the white men first learned how narrow the isthmus was. He educated public sentiment to the canal idea for present day use. He worked for the Nicaragua route because there were no international or business complications. Above all, he worked for the canal; that was his central idea.

COMPARING the Suez canal with the Panama canal, a writer in Scribner's Magazine says: The simplest and most concrete measure of the service rendered by the Panama canal will be the tonnage of ships that use the waterway. This can be forecast with a fair degree of certainty, because it is possible to ascertain how much traffic now moves by routes that would be abandoned in favor of the canal route, and it is easy to find out how fast this available canal traffic is increasing. The history of the Suez canal, the great interoceanic highway with which the Panama canal is closely comparable, is an open book. Last year 5,373 ships, having a net tonnage of 20,275,000 tons, passed through the Suez waterway. The growth of tonnage in 10 years has been more than 70 per cent. The shipping using the Panama canal annually during the first year or two of its operation, that is in 1915 and 1916, will amount to about 10,500,000 net tons. At the end of 10 years the tonnage will doubtless have reached 17,000,000 net tons. The prospect thus is that the Panama canal will start with less than half the tonnage which will then be making use of the Suez canal. Moreover, it will be a long time before the Panama canal catches up with the Suez waterway in volume. Should the Suez tonnage continue to increase at the present rate, the volume of shipping served by the Suez canal in 1925 will be double that passing through the Panama waterway. It is hardly probable that the Suez tonnage will continue to increase at its present high rate; while it may well happen that the stimulating effect of the Panama canal upon industry and trade has been underestimated. Eventually, at the end of two or three decades, let us say, the traffic of Panama may equal or exceed that at Suez. The Panama canal is always thought of, first of all, with reference to the commerce between the two seaboard of the United States; yet it is probable that only one tenth of the ships that pass through the canal in 1915 will be employed in the intercoastal trade.

THE champion office holder has been located at Omaha, Neb. His name is Eben K. Long. An Omaha dispatch to the New York World says: The champion officeholder of the country has resigned because of old age and deafness. Eben K. Long, of Omaha, has been elected to office 179 times. "And I never yet asked any man to vote for me," he says. Mr. Long has been a candidate 180 times, and only once was he defeated; and that was so long ago that he has almost forgotten it. Many of his offices have been in fraternal lodges; others have been city and county offices. Fifty-five years ago he was elected to his first political office and not a year has passed since then that he has not drawn a salary from the public. But long before that he was elected to office in fraternal bodies. Judge Long, now eighty-seven years old, has been a justice of the peace in Omaha for the last twenty-one years, during which time 10,240 cases came before him for trial. Scarcely an election has been held in Omaha for half a century that the name Eben K. Long has not appeared on the republican ticket. In "off" years, when his name was not on a political ballot, he managed to get himself enrolled as a candidate in some order to which he belongs. Eben K. Long was born in Newburyport, Mass.