

"UNCLE JOE" CANNON'S STRAW MAN

Even "Uncle Joe" Cannon has been disturbed by the popular discussions now going on. "Uncle Joe" has given a newspaper interview in which he says: "They say things are not now like they were in the old days; that we are becoming aristocrats; that there is no longer honesty in legislative bodies; that there is no ability at the bar; that we are liable to become a monarchy, that some strong man is liable to rise up and dominate everybody."

"Uncle Joe" is simply building up a straw man, doubtless because he prefers to discuss things of his own describing rather than popular complaints as they are actually made.

They do not say that there is no ability at the bar; because, manifestly, there is great ability at the bar. They do not say that we are liable to become a monarchy, because the people would not tolerate a monarchy. They do not say that we are becoming aristocrats; because most of the people find it difficult in these days of trusts to make both ends meet.

They do say, however, that the house of representatives over which "Uncle Joe" presides has ceased to be a representative body and is controlled by a coterie of men—and controlled for the use and benefit of special interests.

They do say that many members of the United States senate are nothing more than the representatives of great corporations, and that instead of protecting the interests of the people they are zealous for the special advantage of their corporation masters.

They do say that insurance magnates have embezzled the money of their policyholders, and that the party to which "Uncle Joe" Cannon belongs—and to which party he has so often referred as "the party of God and morality"—has repeatedly been the beneficiary of those stolen funds.

They do say that among the pretentious leaders of the republican party, and in the face of the facts clearly established before the insurance committee at New York, not one has had the courage to rise in his place and insist that his party organization shall restore these ill-gotten gains to the policyholders, to whom everyone knows they belong.

They do say that in spite of the fact that men of all political parties, and men of no political party, are demanding railroad legislation, the corporations are so thoroughly in control of the United States senate that even the president of the

United States is unable to persuade his party colleagues to heed the popular appeal.

They do say that under the administration of "Uncle Joe" Cannon's party trusts have so multiplied that since 1896 more trusts have been created than existed in all the history of the country prior to that time.

They do say that with all of their noise and bombast republican leaders have not given to the public protection from the impositions of these greedy concerns.

They do say that even now while the members of the beef trust are undergoing trial in the city of Chicago they are piling higher and higher upon the people the impositions of which the people have so long complained.

They do say that under the republican administration a few men have come to monopolize the money and the commerce of the country, and, having the United States senate securely in their control, they defy those who plead for relief for the people.

They do say that under the republican administration men powerful in republican party circles have been permitted to escape prosecution for the violation of law.

They do say that the republican party has elected to the house of representatives and to the United States senate many unworthy men, some of whom have been indicted, others of whom have been exposed in various ways, but none of whom have been called upon by republican leaders to surrender the high commissions they hold.

They do say that "Uncle Joe" Cannon's party is so completely in control of the trusts that it will give no heed to the strong appeal made by the rank and file of the party to the effect that the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff be removed.

They do say that there is something rotten in the republican party's management of the Panama canal, just as there was something rotten in the republican party's management of the post-office department, of the interior department and of other branches of the federal service.

They do say that the republican party is the representative of special interests; that it may be depended upon to increase the wealth of the few at the expense of the many; and that at the hands of that political organization men who demand equal rights to all and special privileges to none have nothing to expect.

These are only a few of the things "they do say." Let "Uncle Joe" Cannon employ his lingo in explanation of these things.

WHY?

In explaining his failure to proceed against John R. Walsh, the Chicago bank president, who in violation of law loaned to himself more than 10 per cent of the bank's capitalization, Secretary of the Treasury Shaw says: "The violation of that law by one bank is no more than has been done by almost every bank in the country." Also, "He (Walsh) did no more than many other bankers in the United States are doing all the time."

That is a very interesting confession coming from the secretary of the treasury charged with the enforcement of the banking laws of the country.

If that law is not a wholesome one, why not repeal it?

If it is a wise one, why not enforce it?

Why should these national bankers, in addition to all the privileges they are given within the law, be accorded the extraordinary privilege of acting without the law?

A Merry Christmas at The "Bide-a-Wee Home"

It was a sarcastic gentleman who remarked that "a philanthropist is one who would rather give two shirtless men collars than to give one shirtless man a shirt," but every now and then one comes across a bit of news or undergoes an experience that impels one to believe that the sarcastic gentleman was not so very far wrong. The New York World of December 26 contained a very interesting, if somewhat disgusting, account of the Christmas celebration given in the Bide-a-Wee home at No. 145 West Thirty-eighth street. It was stated that "the celebration started very early in the morning," although the little guests were "allowed to sleep an hour longer than usual," and that when they did finally wake up they found that "Santa Claus had been busy." Then the account tells of the good things given to each little inmate, of the pretty ribbons and collars, and dainty viands and little Christmas presents well calculated to make wee folks happy. The World winds up its interesting account with the following:

In the afternoon a number of society women who maintain the home dropped in to extend greetings to their charges. Among them was Mrs. Henry U. Kibbe, president of the society. She said it was as merry a Christmas gathering as she had even seen.

But before the readers of The Commoner become too enthusiastic over the work of the society women who maintain this "Bide-a-Wee," let them understand that all this entertainment, all this Christmas cheer, all these pretty and good things were not given to homeless children. No, indeed! They were given to cats and dogs. The dogs were given "juicy bones and side dishes of delicious biscuits," says the World. And a few blocks away little children were suffering the pangs of hunger and wondering if, after all, Santa Claus was a myth and Christmas a delusion and a snare!

"The cats had an unlimited serving of milk that wasn't skimmed and the most delicious catnip imaginable," says the World. And while these society women looked on and clapped their gloved hands at the "merry Christmas gathering," scores of little babies were starving for the lack of a few sups of that unskimmed milk that was being fed to the cats in the "Bide-a-Wee Home!"

"The cats were delighted to find brilliant ribbons in their stockings," says the World. But how much more would a lot of unfortunate children been delighted had they found upon rising that they had even a pair of stockings without the "brilliant ribbons?"

And while in hundreds, yes, thousands, of tenement houses in New York City women and children were suffering for the necessities of life, scores of babies dying of hunger, and misery and woe stalking rampant, a society woman watches a lot of cats and dogs feeding on what would be a banquet to starving mortals and remarks: "It is as merry a Christmas gathering as I have ever seen!"

The philanthropy that would give feasts to cats and dogs and neglect the little children of the streets is fearfully misdirected. And there must be something wrong with the minds and hearts of women who can call feasting dogs and cats "the merriest Christmas" while there are thousands of God's children actually starving within sight and sound of the "Bide-a-Wee Home."

The Cruise of the Good Ship Melderskin

Let those who cavil at the slowness of work on the Panama canal hide their heads in abashed silence, and let those who express doubts about the canal's final completion step forward and announce their conversion from doubt to belief in immediate and triumphant success.

A few days ago the good ship Melderskin sailed from New York, laden to the Plimsoll line with just the supplies needed to push the canal to a rapid completion. It has been difficult to gather these supplies, and during the gathering progress work has been practically at a standstill. In a few days the Melderskin will drop anchor at the isthmus, the cargo will be unloaded, and as soon as the supplies are distributed to the proper places we may expect to see the dirt fly in such huge and numerous chunks that the light of the sun will be hidden. Included in this cargo of canal supplies is the following:

Thirty-six work tables for ladies.
One hundred dozen high, best quality, latest style gentlemen's collars.
One hundred dozen turn down, latest style gentlemen's collars, best.
One hundred dozen, various styles, best quality gentlemen's collars.
Six dozen best silk pocket handkerchiefs.
One thousand pairs best tan sewed shoes for gentlemen, and 1,000 pairs best colored leather shoes.
Six dozen best quality gentlemen's suit-cases.
Large quantity of Rogers' best quality table cutlery, quadruple silver plated.
Dessert table and silver spoons of best quality.
Case of 5 o'clock tea sets.

Five hundred umbrellas at \$5 each; 100 shaving sets; 100 razors.
Twenty dozen ladies' night robes.
Twenty dozen dress shirts.

It is not difficult to imagine that when the Jamaican negroes are given quadruple plated silver spoons with which to throw dirt they will run the canal rapidly towards the coast. Every taxpayer will cheerfully admit that it is foolish to expect men to dig canals without being clothed in dress shirts, and only the mean-spirited would ask the workmen to walk in the trench with anything but tan shoes upon their feet. And how could we expect workmen to walk to and from their work with their picks and shovels over their shoulders instead of being conveniently carried in leather suit cases? Once more, how cruel to ask men to work beneath the sun's tropic rays, when umbrellas are only \$5 each! With 3,600 "gentlemen's collars" of the latest pattern there seems nothing wanting to bring the canal to a completion. But we are at a loss to know why only seventy-two silk handkerchiefs were provided. Surely that is not enough to go around, and certainly it is unjust to let seventy-two men wipe the honest perspiration from their brows while several thousands of others wipe it away with their fingers or common bandanas. This is the only apparent obstacle in the way of the immediate pushing of the work, but even this may be an obstacle that is temporary only, for Alfred Anderson, the purchasing agent, tells us that similar shipments to the one carried by the Melderskin will be sent to Panama every five days.

The canal commission has been open to criticism for its apparent slowness, but surely the dilatory tactics will now be abandoned and active work begun at once. We await with impatience the unloading of the Melderskin's cargo.