

CURRENT TOPICS

THE NEW YORK World presents the results of an interesting poll. It finds that only one of eighty-two delegates who attended the meeting of the Central Federated union in the University Settlement recently was in favor of Taft, and he is a life-long republican. Fifty-three said definitely that they would support Bryan, and among the sixteen who were non-committal two thirds showed a strong leaning toward him. A number who previously belonged to the independence league will join either the democratic or the socialist party this year. The result of the poll follows: Taft 1, Bryan 53, Debs 11, independence league 1, non-committal 16, total 82.

JUEL CHANDLER HARRIS, who became famous over the pen name of "Uncle Remus," died at Atlanta, Ga., July 2. Mr. Harris was in his sixtieth year. He first achieved recognition as a writer when he started a series of animal stories in the Constitution, in which "Brer Rabbit" was always the hero. At that time he was twenty-eight years of age. Many years ago the royalties of his books made him financially independent, but for a long time the love of newspaper work kept him busy as an editorial writer. Finally, however, he retired from newspaper work and devoted his whole time to his books. Recently he became connected with a magazine bearing his name, assuming editorial control of it.

THE NORFOLK (Va.) Pilot says: "The Philadelphia Record is a sterling democratic journal. It was opposed to Bryan's nomination and argued earnestly that some other candidate be chosen. Therefore the Record is a reliable witness as to the merits of the Guffey case, and we find it editorially emphatic in declaring that the 'delegates unseated were properly thrown out; that they were not elected as the result of an honest democratic primary and had no moral rights to the seats they claimed.' This is very gratifying as the testimony of a party whose motives can not be questioned to the justice of the course adopted by the Denver convention. Our first impression was to the contrary and we are glad to be corrected."

THIS WASHINGTON dispatch to the St. Louis Republic will be interesting to Commoner readers: "Thomas E. Watson's charges that William J. Bryan has no love for the soldier of the confederacy, and that he even went so far as to vote against Charles F. Crisp, of Georgia, for speaker of the house in the Fifty-second congress because the latter was a distinguished ex-confederate, are disproved by no less authority than the Congressional Record itself. This official publication shows that Mr. Bryan voted for the confederate veteran on three occasions. It also shows that Mr. Watson, who was a member of the same Fifty-second congress with Mr. Bryan, and who was the farmers' alliance candidate for speaker in opposition to Mr. Crisp, voted for himself for speaker. Colonel R. J. Bright, son of former Senator Bright, of Indiana, and who was Colonel Ransdell's predecessor as sergeant-at-arms of the senate, said today that the charge made by Mr. Watson and circulated by others in the south for the purpose of injuring Mr. Bryan's candidacy was absurd and entirely without foundation. Colonel Bright is thoroughly familiar with the inside details of the speakership fight. So far as can be ascertained, there is no basis for the rumor. Whatever its inception, there is no doubt that the report has been assiduously circulated throughout the south, and there are men in Washington who are inclined to believe that Mr. Watson himself should follow up his charge with whatever information he may have warranting so serious an allegation. The facts of the case are that in the first of the Crisp speakership contests, in December, 1891, Mr. Bryan voted for William M. Springer, of Illinois, as democratic candidate for speaker, in the party caucus, but when the actual balloting for speaker occurred in the house of representatives on the following day, Mr. Bryan, like Mr. Springer and

all of the latter's supporters, openly voted for Mr. Crisp and was so recorded in the Congressional Record. Two years later, when Mr. Crisp was chosen speaker, practically without opposition, Mr. Bryan voted for Mr. Crisp, both in the party caucus and then at the actual election of speaker in the house of representatives. In other words, Mr. Bryan voted three times for an ex-confederate soldier for speaker."

THE ASSOCIATED Press says that Samuel Gompers sent to William R. Hearst at Paris a message stating that in view of the democrats' stand for labor "It would be an act of greatest patriotism for the independence party to endorse the democratic platform," and urging him not to run a third ticket, as it would elect Mr. Taft. Mr. Hearst's cablegram follows: "Paris, July 13.—Tell Mr. Gompers that I am not authorized to speak for the membership of the independence league, but according to my personal standards, a purer patriotism consists in laboring to establish a new party which will be consistently devoted to the interests of citizenship and particularly to the advantage and advancement of the producing classes. I do not think the path of patriotism lies in supporting a discredited and decadent old party, which has neither conscientious conviction nor honest intention, nor endorsing chameleon candidates who change the color of their political opinion with every varying hue of opportunism. I do not think the best benefit of laboring men lies in supporting that old party because of a sop of false promises when the performance of that party while in power did more to injure labor than all the injunctions ever issued before or since. I have lost faith in the emphatic protestations of an unregenerate democracy. I have lost confidence in the ability, in the sincerity and even the integrity of its leaders. I do not call it patriotism to pretend to support that which as a citizen I distrust, and I earnestly hope the independence league will give me an opportunity to vote for candidates that are both able and honest, and for a declaration of principles both sound and sincere.—William Randolph Hearst."

IN CONNECTION with Mr. Hearst's statement, an Associated Press dispatch, dated Erie, Pa., July 17, will be of interest. The dispatch follows: "President Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, said to a representative of the Associated Press tonight that there is absolutely no truth in the published reports that he had cabled William R. Hearst, a leader in the independence league, urging the editor to use his influence to prevent the league from nominating its own candidate for president and to urge the league to give its support to William J. Bryan, because the Denver convention incorporated in its platform planks urged by organized labor. Mr. Gompers said: 'I read in the newspapers that I am credited with asking Mr. Hearst to support Mr. Bryan and that Mr. Hearst has made reply to me. Now I did nothing of the kind. I do not know where the message Mr. Hearst claims to have received came from. I did not send it or any other message to Mr. Hearst.'"

AN UNUSUALLY interesting dispatch was sent to the Chicago Record-Herald under date of New York, July 16. It follows: "Lloyd's, which will insure you against most anything from a rainy day to a grease spot on your new Sunday trousers, has accepted a new risk. During the last few days it has been writing policies on the election of William J. Bryan. The agents have placed already over half a million dollars' worth in the Wall Street district since Tuesday. They insure at ten per cent. The policies have been taken out mainly by brokers and financiers who are long on the market and who are anxious to hedge against a smash in stocks in the events of Bryan's election. In other words, at the ten per cent rate a policyholder has bet, say, \$10,000 against \$100,000 that Bryan will be elected. The only difference is that in either event Lloyd's keeps the \$10,000 this making the odds against Bryan 9 to 1.

Bertschmann & Maloy, insurance brokers, of 16 Exchange place, are handling the business. A member of the firm said today that a prominent manufacturer, whose business would be affected by the outcome of the election, had asked him if it would not be possible to get Lloyd's to cover a risk on the election. The firm cabled and the Lloyd's official replied that they would accept a risk at twenty per cent. This proved too high for the firm's client, and Lloyd's finally came down to ten per cent, with offers to take more business. There was no trouble in getting it. Bertschmann & Maloy did \$445,000 worth of business in one day, and have applications for \$1,000,000 more for which they are awaiting Lloyd's confirmation. It was the opinion on the stock exchange that the Lloyd's people would find themselves swamped with applications from would-be policyholders if they continued to offer policies at the present rate. Farmer Scott, the worker in puts and calls, said that he could go up to Tammany Hall and get enough money at that rate to 'bet Lloyd's to a standstill.'"

THE MILWAUKEE Sentinel (rep.) says: "There is fresh evidence daily of Mr. Taft's remarkably strong strategic position in making this campaign. Such is his personality, that both sections of party opinion find themselves in agreement on his candidacy. Republicans who disagree pretty sharply sometimes on party questions find themselves able to unite heartily on Mr. Taft as (to quote Mr. Spooner) 'an ideal man for the presidency.' Mr. Taft was the 'Roosevelt candidate.' No doubt about that. But that label does not at all deter men not 'Roosevelt republicans' from being Taft republicans. There is J. Ogden Armour, for instance, who dislikes Roosevelt and makes no bones of saying so. But this 'Roosevelt candidate' nevertheless suits him to a dot. 'The ticket is strong and sure to win,' says Mr. Armour, 'and with the election of such candidates the prospects for prosperity in the United States are excellent.' Why is it that such republicans who dislike Roosevelt most, warmly support Roosevelt's closest friend and candidate? As to 'policies,' the two men are in general accord. In point of honest sincerity and backbone it is an even thing. Then there must be a world of difference somewhere. We guess it is one of temperament, training and methods. President Taft will be able to do a lot of housecleaning without smashing the crockery and setting fire to the building."

MURAT HALSTEAD, a well known journalist, died at his home at Cincinnati, July 2. A Cincinnati dispatch to the Chicago Record-Herald says: "The distinguished writer's health has been failing for a year, and a cerebral hemorrhage yesterday only hastened a gradual weakening process. He was seventy-eight years of age. Mr. Halstead's once robust constitution was apparently broken for months before the end came. The members of his family have been prepared in a measure because of his extreme frailty, especially since the death of his son Marshall a few months ago left him shaken in health and spirits. His wife, his son Robert and daughter, Mrs. Arthur Stem, were at his bedside at the end. Mr. Halstead was one of the great figures in American journalism and obtained signal recognition in political life. Connected successively with the Cincinnati Commercial, the Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette upon the consolidation of the two papers, and the Brooklyn Standard-Union, and more lately as an independent writer, his influence was always great in his field. He won special honors as war correspondent in two conflicts and in 1889 was appointed American minister to Germany by President Harrison, his nomination being rejected by congress because of his fiery attacks on that body. He was born in Ross Township, Butler county, Ohio, September 2, 1829. Paddy's Run, the nearest postoffice, was made famous by Mr. Halstead in later years through a series of newspaper sketches called 'Paddy's Run Papers.' He was brought up on his father's farm, attending school during the winter months. He attended select school one term, and after teaching for