

CURRENT TOPICS

UNCLE JOE CANNON'S home county is trying to rival Adams county, Ohio. A Danville, Ill., dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "One of the most sensational charges ever delivered to a grand jury in this county, the home of Speaker Cannon, this afternoon brought to the attention of the grand jury here the practice of vote selling in this city and county. The court plainly charged that the practice had been carried on here for many years and by both parties, and he urged that a careful and thorough investigation be made, and if sufficient evidence were found, to indict the men responsible for it. The court said that a moral wave is sweeping over the country and that the sanctity of the ballot must be protected, and he proposed that it should be in this county, if grand juries would do their duty. A large number of witnesses have been summoned and indictments are expected."

HERE IS A GOOD story contributed by a Washington correspondent to the Chicago Record-Herald: "Robert E. Lee stood in stately hall at the capitol this afternoon, gazing admiringly upon the bronze statue of Robert E. Lee. Smooth-shaven, rotund, short of stature and young, there was no likeness, not even a family resemblance between the living Robert E. Lee and the bronze general of the southern confederacy. To a visitor who stopped beside him, the younger Lee remarked: 'An excellent man!' 'Yes,' was the reserved reply. 'That's my name, too, and I have been elected a member of the next house,' continued Lee, warming up. 'I am from Pennsylvania, and I know that none of my constituents is demanding that the statue be removed. In fact, many of my constituents, union soldiers, voted for me, and in my district there was no prejudice caused by the name I bear. I came down here because of the agitation to remove this statue,' said the congressman, with the suggestion of humor. 'I wanted to be in congress so that in case the bronze Robert E. Lee was removed from the capitol I would be on hand to do all I could toward keeping the name in the minds of congressmen and of the public.'"

THEODORE A. BELL, of California, who was permanent chairman of the Denver convention of 1908, delivered an address before the Franklin County Democratic club at Columbus, Ohio. The Cincinnati Enquirer report of the meeting says: "Mr. Bell, who followed Congressman Littleton, agreed that there was no difference between the sections of the country on fundamental democratic doctrine, but there was a serious difference as to the method of applying them. This was a matter of environment. The middle and far west and the south and the northwest were living in a different atmosphere from the east, and beheld a wider horizon. The worship of the dollar had not reached its collective heart. Starting from this standpoint, Mr. Bell entered upon an eulogy of William Jennings Bryan as the man, who in 1896 aroused the conscience of the country and began the fight against the government being a species of personal property. The reference to Bryan brought out substantial cheers. It was true that honest business had nothing to fear from the democracy of any section, but it was equally true that the people of the east in common with the rest of the country at the last election had declared that there should be a divorce between big business and the government. The country should be neither capitalized nor brutalized. The cry of confiscation raised by the corporations was a false one, and represented only surprise that they should be asked to live under the same laws as other people. This cry was raised in 1896, when Bryan was called an anarchist by mercenary orators employed by predatory wealth for advocating control of the railway rates, now the law of the land under the spurious claim of Roosevelt's authorship. Admitting that the election of Dix and the other eastern governors was unusual, he created a stir by saying: 'The election of the governor of Ohio was not experimental as in the other states. Through the

country there are more eyes by far fixed upon Ohio than any other state. In this hour of reaching out the democrats are not blindly groping, and in the searching process there are more eyes fixed upon the governor of Ohio than upon any other man.' Mr. Bell said that the people of the country are going to watch the governors and the new congress very closely. The big interests were loosing their tentacles upon the republican party, now drained of its blood, and were seeking a new hold elsewhere. They have no politics, but only seek power. The people are going to see where these tentacles fall in 1912, where the interests light. If the democratic party remains progressive, it will win the presidency. If it dallies with the interests and even permits the appearance of alliance, it will not elect a president and it should not."

EDITOR JOSEPHUS Daniels of the Raleigh News and Observer, and member of the national democratic executive committee from North Carolina, was the recipient during the Christmas holidays of a splendid testimonial from the democracy of his state in the public presentation of a handsome silver service of nine pieces beautifully and appropriately engraved. In the delegation present as representatives of the democracy of the state was the chief justice of the supreme court and other prominent officials, as well as many of the state's most distinguished citizens in private life. The presentation was made by ex-Governor Charles B. Aycock, who in behalf of the democracy of North Carolina said in part: "I will present these to you in the words chosen for the democracy—'in recognition of his loyal, courageous and eminent services to his party and to his state.' These being high words of praise worthily bestowed and fully deserved and their truth will be borne out by you all the days of your life. The News and Observer, with Josephus Daniels, has been behind the great movements for industrial progress, moral uplift, enlightenment and the other purposes for the advancement of the people of North Carolina. We have not always agreed with you, but these things are all forgotten in the face of the strong love you have shown for North Carolina, this from the very beginning of your newspaper career. It has been yours to do work for the people of the state and you have always held that the man God made is of infinitely more value than the dollar that man made. I am directed on behalf of the democracy of North Carolina, to present to you this beautiful silver service, and better still to give to you the letters which come from the men making the gift, in which they make plain that you are held to be true to your party and to your state, and to have you know that the gift comes with the best wishes of the people of the state for the man who makes the fight for them." Referring to this incident the Houston (Texas) Post says: "Such a tribute from a grateful people is more to be prized than all the honors that come from wealth or station—he served his people faithfully and well. It is a tribute that those who have been associated with him in the work of counseling and directing the course of the national organization of the party know is richly deserved—Josephus Daniels has never shirked a duty nor faltered in his advocacy of what he believed to be right."

A READER OF THE Philadelphia North American writes to that paper to say: "The writer feels sure the North American will have the thanks of the progressives of all parties, wherever the North American is read, for publishing today with an epitome Mr. Bryan's letter to a friend in the state of Washington. So little is now published in the east about Mr. Bryan that unless The Commoner is taken by newspaper readers they know very little about him, and the earnest work he is constantly doing. Mr. Bryan has for fourteen years been the strongest advocate of reforms, and most of his past methods and suggestions have become the keynote for the present. When

he tells the so-called leaders of the democratic party throughout the country, who represent either state, county or city, that they must understand they are servants, not masters, of the people, and that all should be ready to follow where the intelligent judgment of all the people of all the states is pointing the way, it is quite evident that Mr. Bryan will oppose in 1912, if alive and well, any man who may be nominated, at the then democratic convention, 'whose record will not justify the hope that all the people may depend upon him.' These are Mr. Bryan's words, so it will be well for so-called leaders, great or small, to remember them. The character of the man is here clearly indicated. He will have to be sincere, and should be positively capable of not only leading the real democrats, but the present progressive republicans. Certainly, new recruits could be added by such a man, then, if victory should be achieved, some real reforms could be inaugurated during the following four years. There is no doubt that truth is in the assertion frequently made that what are termed 'the interests' have controlled in the past a large number of the 'scheming politicians' of the democratic party. These interests will no doubt endeavor to influence the nominations in 1912 (for the presidency) of both parties; for having profited so long by present conditions they will not want any material change."

T. J. BROOKS, of Atwood, Tenn., senator-elect from the Twenty-fourth district, is out in an open letter to the candidates for United States senator. The letter follows: "The legislature soon to convene will have as one of its duties the election of a United States senator. Each member-elect of the general assembly is being importuned to commit himself as to whom he favors for this position. To my mind a member of the legislature is unworthy of the confidence reposed in him if he is willing to work for the election of any man without knowing how the candidate stands on the vital problems of the day pressing for solution. I have seen no statement from any prospective candidate defining his position on national questions. So far as I am concerned I will support no man who will not state publicly his position on the following questions: The election of United States senators by direct vote; the income tax; the initiative and referendum; immigration; the physical valuation of railroads and authorizing the interstate commerce commission to regulate rates on this valuation; holding officers of corporations personally responsible for violation of law by the corporation; the merchant marine; shipping intoxicants into prohibition states; dealing in futures; publishing campaign expenses; military appropriations; tariff. The time was when a candidate had only to say: 'I am a democrat' or 'I am a republican,' and that settled it. This is no longer the case. Measures are being considered on their merits regardless of parties. Every one of the issues above enumerated are right in the forefront for settlement by congress, and no man should ask for a seat in either branch of that body unless he has convictions on these questions and is prepared to defend his views before his constituents. No demagogical side-stepping will answer. To say, 'These questions shall receive my most careful consideration, bestowing upon them the best thought of which I am capable, with an eye single to safeguarding the public and promoting the general welfare of my country,' is to give forth pure buncombe and show evidence of moral cowardice. Nothing short of a definite, bold statement will suffice. I have convictions on all these questions and am ready to defend them against the opposition of any candidate for the United States senate, either through the press or from the platform. If this earnest letter is beneath your notice so will you be beneath my notice when it comes to voting for a senator."

The American Homestead, a monthly farm journal of national scope, will be sent to all Commoner subscribers, without additional cost, who renew their subscriptions during the month of February when this notice is mentioned.