

# CURRENT TOPICS

**S**PEAKING of the inaugural Sumner Curtis writes to his paper, the Chicago Record-Herald, as follows: Two great, big, almost supernatural characters are camped here tonight—the eve of the inauguration. One of them is Woodrow Wilson, the man who tomorrow will be invested with the power that attaches for weal or woe to the presidency of the United States. He arrived late this afternoon, was acclaimed with such enthusiasm as might be expected when he put foot on District of Columbia soil; was hailed as the coming chieftain along his route to the hotel where he and his family tarry until they formally take possession of the White House, and was received at the head of the line like a conquering hero. The other is William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, who arrived in the capital several hours earlier, the man who three times led a forlorn hope in the interparty conflict for the presidency; the idol of thousands who wear the brand of democracy; the announced premier of the democratic cabinet about to take up the administration of national affairs. He, too, was acclaimed as a man of might. All day long his quarters at the Willard hotel—the president-elect and suite are quartered at the Shoreham—were besieged by vociferous friends. Here, aside from all the display, glitter and thrill, is the striking novelty of this joyous eve of a democratic holiday. In their physical aspects, admitting the excess of spirit and crowd that seem to characterize this particular one, all presidential inaugurations have a sort of sameness. But heretofore there has been one here—one man of the hour, one subject for the limelight. There has been no previous occasion when an incoming executive has had to share honors with a personage of—for the time being at least—secondary importance. Perhaps this is not the happiest way to state the case, for, after all, Woodrow Wilson, be he a man who loves the applause of his fellow men, could find no fault with the heartiness of the reception that awaited him on his arrival at the capital this afternoon. It might be more pertinent to the situation to say that never before in the memory of the present generation of political observers has there been a secondary figure in the cast who has caused so much light to be focussed on himself as in the present instance. Blaine was a great man in the prospective cabinet of a former president, but he cut no such figure in the inauguration of a party chieftain as Bryan does in connection with that of the man he has been instrumental in elevating to the highest position under the government.

**O**NE of the last acts of President Taft was a brief sermon delivered before the Unitarian congregation in Washington. In that sermon Mr. Taft said: "It has always been a wonder to me why all the world is not Unitarian. I think all the world is verging in that direction. We preach the doctrine of sweet fellowship, of love of God, of love of Jesus Christ and of tolerance for every faith that depends upon the great principle of liberal Christianity—and that makes for having toward morality and higher religion. The one trouble we suffer from—if it be a trouble—is that there are so many Unitarians in other churches who do not sit in the pews of our church. But that means that ultimately they are coming to us."

**W**RITING in Everybody's Magazine, F. J. Haskin says: The patronage of the president is not as large as most people presume. In the civil branch of the government there are less than 11,000 people directly depending upon him for appointment, and nearly 9,000 of these are postmasters of the first, second and third classes. While he has the power to remove practically every one of the more than 400,000 employees in the executive service, his appointing power is limited to less than 11,000 offices. It affects about 450 people under the state department, practically all of these being in the diplomatic and consular service; some 750 in the treasury department, the majority of them collectors of customs and other public officials; some 400 in the department of justice, the majority of

them being United States district attorneys, marshals and the like. He has only about a dozen people to appoint in the navy department, 275 in the interior department, about a half-dozen in the department of agriculture, and less than 50 in the department of commerce and labor. He also has the power of appointing members of many of the big commissions, the librarian of congress, the public printer and a number of other important officers. All of these appointments can be made only "with the advice and consent" of the senate. In addition to these there are approximately a thousand positions, the majority of them of minor importance, which he fills without the confirmation of the senate. The change of administration does not represent such a general shaking-up among the several departments of the government as it did even sixteen years ago, and is totally different from the changes which occurred in the flowery days of the "spoils system." The civil-service commission is regarded as supreme in the appointment of more than three-fourths of the people in the employ of the government, and of the remaining positions a large proportion are simply unskilled-labor jobs which are never affected by changes of administration. The treasury department, for instance, had at a recent date 27,879 employes on its rolls, and out of these 27,093 were under civil-service rules. In the interior department there were 14,262, of whom 13,938 were under civil-service rules. The department of commerce and labor had 14,883 employes, of whom 14,797 were under the civil service.

**T**HE selection of Albert S. Burleson for a position in the cabinet of President Wilson is the first distinction of the kind that has come to a Texan from the United States government, though a distinguished citizen of that state filled with great ability a similar position in the cabinet of the confederate government. The San Antonio Express says: John H. Reagan, member of the Texas legislature, district judge, congressman, member of the last constitutional convention, United States senator and chairman of the Texas railroad commission, was postmaster general of the confederacy during the civil war and was acting secretary of the treasury of the confederate government. Judge Reagan filled the position of postmaster general honorably, faithfully and with credit to the state, and the greatest admirers of Mr. Burleson can do no more than hope he will do as well. Mr. Burleson is the first native Texan ever appointed to a cabinet position and credited to Texas. Secretary of Commerce and Labor Nagel, who has just gone out of office, is a native of Texas, but he was appointed from the state of Missouri.

**N**EW ENGLAND in the cabinet, is a favorite subject of discussion just now, particularly in the New England press. It happens that New England does not have a member of the cabinet under the Wilson administration. Referring to this fact a writer in the Boston Herald says: In only one administration before the one now beginning has New England been without representation in the cabinet. The earlier instance was when John Quincy Adams was president. Jackson, who followed John Quincy Adams, began his administration without a cabinet officer from New England, but in the middle of his term he called Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire to the navy department. Of all the men who have served in the cabinets of our presidents, forty have been New Englanders. About twenty-five of these have been Massachusetts men—an eminently distinguished and creditable roll of names. There were two Massachusetts men in the first cabinet that Washington formed and two in the cabinet that went out of office March 4. Of the other New England states, Rhode Island is the only one that has never furnished a cabinet officer. Connecticut has supplied seven, Oliver Wolcott, jr., Gideon Granger, Isaac Toucy, John M. Niles, Samuel D. Hubbard, Marshall Jewell and Gideon Wells. Maine has supplied five, a rather more distinguished list than that of Connecticut, Horatio King, Nathan Clifford, William Pitt Fessenden, Lot M. Morrill and James G. Blaine. Moreover,

Maine may well claim two Massachusetts cabinet members who were residents of Maine before the separation, Henry Knox and Henry Dearborn, two early secretaries of war. New Hampshire and Vermont have supplied two each, Levi Woodbury and William E. Chandler from the former state, and Jacob Collamer and Redfield Proctor from the latter.

**W**HEN Woodrow Wilson took the oath of office he opened the Bible at random and his lips brushed the following verses of the 119th Psalm: "And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonials also before kings and I will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I love. My hands also will I lift up into thy commandments, which I love, and I will meditate in thy statutes." Referring to this fact the Washington correspondent for the Milwaukee Daily News says: Several presidents have kissed verses in Psalms. President Hayes, kissing the twelfth verse of the 118th Psalm, touched these words: "They compassed me about like bees." President Arthur kissed the thirty-first Psalm: "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed." President Cleveland, on his first inauguration day, kissed the fifth verse of the 112th Psalm: "A good man showeth favor and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion." Benjamin Harrison also kissed one of the Psalms. Then came Cleveland again, and this time, too, he kissed another verse in Psalms: "They will bear thee up in their hands; lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." After that time no president kissed verses in Psalms until President Wilson took the oath. The Bible which President Wilson kissed was the one on which he took the oath as governor of New Jersey. Following the ceremony the verses kissed are marked. The book is presented later to the "first lady in the land."

**I**T is now Senator Ollie James of Kentucky. The Washington correspondent for the Louisville (Ky.) Times says: With William Jennings Bryan looking on and beaming and in the presence of the governor of Kentucky and the members of the state's delegation in congress, Ollie M. James was administered the oath as a senator of the United States. Mrs. James and a small family party gazed down happily from the galleries as the great form of the new senator strode down the center aisle arm in arm with Senator Bradley. In the chamber at the time were C. C. McChord, interstate commissioner, appointed from Kentucky. The distinguished ones of this nation were present in great numbers. Although Mrs. James looked happier than it seemed possible for one woman to look, her happiness was no greater than that which showed in the face of Mr. Bryan. For years he and the senator have been the closest of personal and political friends and here it was like a personal triumph to see "Ollie" enter a broader field of effort and reap a higher reward. "If anything were needed to complete my happiness today," he said, "it is this." It was exactly 12:45 o'clock when the name of Mr. James was called and he, with Senator Bradley, advanced to the chair. There was a stir in the cabinet circle; all of whom knew the big Kentuckian. The galleries craned their necks to see the contrast in size between the two Kentuckians. They returned to their places soon and it was all over.

## GOOD WORK

Clyde Harris, Kansas.—Enclosed find check for \$9.00 to pay for fifteen yearly subscriptions, names and addresses herewith. I noticed this rate quoted by Mr. Sol. W. Johnson of Iowa and thought I could send a few clubs from this place as I would like to see The Commoner in every home in the United States.

W. M. Farris, Indiana.—Herewith find bank draft for \$8.40 to pay for the enclosed club of subscribers to The Commoner.