

The Most Interesting Man In Congress

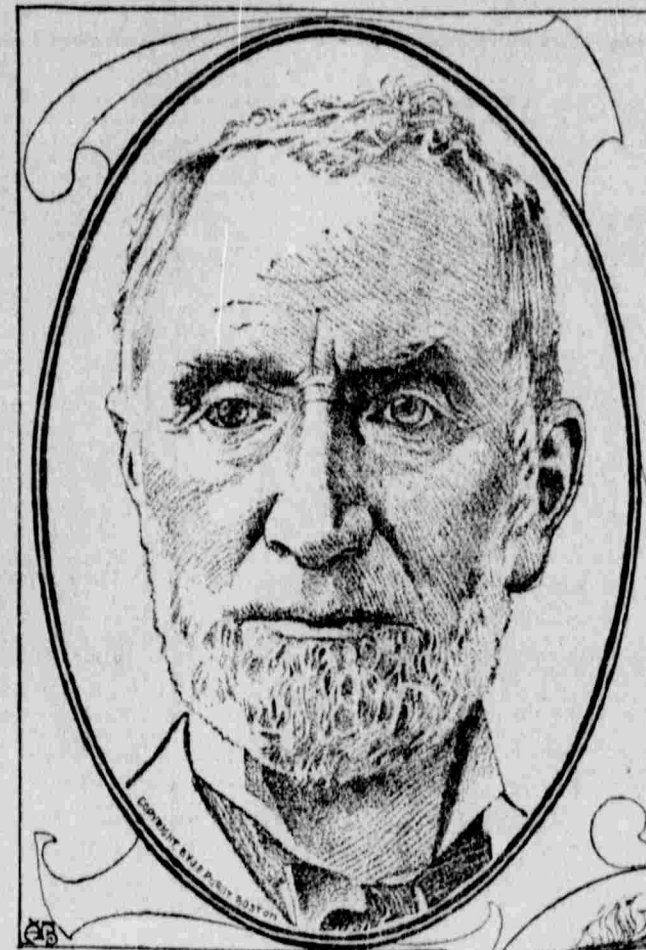
THERE are certain subjects which cannot be easily said and written concerning them. There are likewise certain persons who never cease to be interesting, becoming even more so after long years of vigorous exploitation. Notable example of this rare human perennial, this variant of the genus homo that accumulates age and popularity as coincident happenings, is to be found in Joseph G. Cannon, affectionately known to the American public as "Uncle Joe."

When a man has shown such remarkable and unmistakable intellectual capacity—demonstrated by long years of legislative initiative and an insight into political problems that seems almost clairvoyant—as has Uncle Joe Cannon, he may pose as a humorist, if he wishes, without any loss of prestige or even of dignity. That he has long been the accredited "funny man" of the national house has not worked any mischief to the career of the speaker. There are those who have never been able to live down the reputation acquired suddenly by a single humorous outburst in the legislative precincts. Their fellows and the public have ever refused to take them seriously. Such has not been the fate of Mr. Cannon. He may descend, if he will, to the broadest burlesque and retain still in his earnest grasp all the power and authority of his most serious moods.

Perhaps one of the most humorous features of Mr. Cannon's case is the fact—the foundation joke, it might be termed—that he is in appearance as unlike what he really is, the man endowed with the "yes" and "no" power to an extent beyond any other in the civilized world, as possibly could be. He is the very antithesis of a typical "car of the house." He is an easy autocrat, but there does not seem to be any power behind the throne. When he decides, no one doubts that he is in earnest and that it is Joseph G. Cannon who has spoken.

Uncle Joe is seldom seen nowadays divested of his cigar, "the inevitable cigar," as the correspondents term it. It is not always lighted, but as the humor comes and goes it projects argumentatively, reflectively, punningly, humorously and often generously from the corner of his mouth or dangles expressively from his swaying, explaining hand. He is never in one spot for any great length of time. He doesn't sit at his desk like a bank president and transact his business amid the imposing grandeur of stern immovability. He is constantly on the move, alert, nervous and prepared to tackle anything. He has been compared to a benevolent katydid full of happy emotions and pressing engagements, and the absurdity of the comparison does not seem absolutely inappropriate.

Like many another genius, Uncle Joe has a marvelous disregard for conventionalities. On certain occasions this has seemed to amount almost to contempt for the prescribed usages of good society. A ludicrous instance of this came to light at the recent Oregon exposition. Uncle Joe was in Portland on the opening day by special arrange-



AS HE IS AND AS THE CARICATURISTS MAKE HIM.

ment and had consented to make an address. It was a hot June day and the aged statesman was perspiring freely as he entered the speakers' stand in company with a crowd of invited guests and fair officials. Before seating himself Uncle Joe strode to the front, dropped his hat on the table, poured a glass of ice water from a convenient pitcher and took a long and hearty drink. Then he poured more water into his hand and gave his heated pate a vigorous swabbing. He closed the performance by capturing a vagrant piece of ice in the pitcher and putting it into his mouth. Most of the guests were convulsed, some were rather shocked, and the wife of the president of the fair commission was indignant. She smothered her wrath until Uncle Joe began to show indications of repeating his ablutions, and then sent a messenger to inform him that the water was intended for drinking purposes only. Mr. Cannon was so upset over the contretemps that he declined to speak.

Uncle Joe's most recent access of publicity has come from his adoption of a costume composed entirely of homemade material. A North Carolina admirer sent him enough homespun jeans for a suit, and the speaker took it to a fashionable Washington tailor and had it made up after the very latest and most exclusive mode. When he

made his first public appearance in this attire Mr. Cannon attracted immediate and universal attention. This was not, as might be inferred, on account of the homeliness of the material, but rather because of the extreme nattiness of the make. The coat was in frock style, and the tailor added an extra nobby twist by making it button only once, and that at the waist line. The suit was of a light butternut shade, and when Uncle Joe was inside of it

he had the appearance of a rather foppishly attired curstione broker out for an early spring airing. When Mr. Cannon reached the capitol he did not seem to be in his usual unperturbed state of mind. He confessed to a friend who rallied him on his depressed appearance that he was afraid he had overdone it—that folks might say that he was trying to look young and sporty. Reassured by the congratulations of his intimates, he

"let him in on good things." Almost every day of the speaker's life he is handed the card of some unknown caller who is anxious to do something pleasant and profitable for him. A few weeks ago one of these benevolent individuals intercepted Uncle Joe in the house corridor and began glibly to unfold his scheme. He began by saying that he feared the speaker had neglected to provide himself with the wherewithal to obtain all of the good things of life and that he had come to Washington to give Uncle Joe a financial lift.

"It's a rubber company," the man explained, making a vain attempt to buttonhole the wary seer. "We own hundreds of square miles of bearing plants in Mexico, and we want you to be vice president. We'll—"

"Vatued!" interrupted Uncle Joe. "I'm doing more presiding now than is good for me."

"Of course your duties will be merely nominal," the promoter continued. "I am putting \$1,000,000 in your way, Mr. Speaker, just because I like you and for no other earthly reason."

"I suppose my connection with the company would remain an entire secret?" Mr. Cannon inquired, now highly amused.

At this the tempter looked blank. "Well, of course, we couldn't absolutely guarantee"—he began to stammer.

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to dislike me about \$1,000,000 worth, my friend," said Uncle Joe, moving on with a chuckle.

Had his sense of propriety been less insistent Uncle Joe might have arranged, not long ago, to provide himself with underwear for the rest of his life. A representative of a union underwear establishment made business overtures to him to the effect that all that the speaker would be expected to do would be to allow the company to use in its advertisements a picture of Uncle Joe rigged out in a suit of the union underwear. Mr. Cannon's native modesty appeared in his rosy face.

"Never!" he cried. "Never will I compete for pulchritudinous laurels with a woman—a dead woman, too, the Venus de Milo—in the back pages of the magazines!"

Another enterprising American conceived the idea of naming a new brand of whisky after the speaker. He wanted to call it "Uncle Joe Whisky" and to put a picture of Mr. Cannon on the label of every bottle.

"Our advertising man would get up some natty headlines for the framed ads, such as 'The Kind the Speaker Likes,' 'It's Good Enough For Joe,' or 'If You Must Drink, Drink the Kind I Do' and such like. Your picture would stand above 'em, you know," the whisky man urged.

"But," said Uncle Joe, smiling affably, "what do you suppose the Epworth league in my district would say?"

"What need you care for a few country ball players?" was the counter query. As the speaker moved away the discomfited solicitor saw that his shoulders were moving suspiciously.

GEORGE H. PICARD.

AN ODD BUST OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The interesting bust of Shakespeare herewith presented is the work of Jacobus, a noted French sculptor. The work on the bust is highly meritorious, but the artist put some of his best effort on the pedestal. Here St. George



is seen battling gallantly with the traditional dragon. Close at hand is an allegorical Merry Wife of Windsor poisoning herself daintily. The work was rejected by the British Royal academy, but was afterward exhibited at the New gallery and attracted much admiring attention.

MAY BE CHIEF OF STAFF.

Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, who has been recommended by General Corbin and other military authorities for the responsible position of chief of



staff of the United States army, is a Kentuckian. He was born at Shelbyville in 1856 and was graduated from the Military academy in 1878 and served in a cavalry regiment on the plains and later won distinction in the Spanish war and in the Philippines.

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AN OLD TIMER.

The tortoise shown in the picture had recently at the London zoological gardens at the great age of 400 years. On his shell was engraved a legend which seemed to establish the fact that the animal had been taken in the sixteenth century. A turtle taken recently off the coast of Massachusetts bore marks on its shell which are believed to have been made by Daniel Webster when he was a youth. Many other instances of a similar nature prove that this animal is exceedingly long lived.

THE WAIL OF THE HEN-PECKED HUSBAND.

By Digby Bell.

Though poets sing oft of domestic contentment And picture the joys of the marital life, They do not sing so loud if they knew what resentment They bring to the man that is ruled by his wife. It's all very well to say life is a poem That's lived by twin souls, but from me take a tip: Don't ever think women are weak, for I know 'em. Like all hen-pecked husbands—that's me, Mr. Pipp.

The day we were wed and together departed When I boldly ventured to handle the reins My wife made it plain before anything started That she had a cinch on the family bridle. Right there I began on my new Education And learned that my wife had command of the ship. I'm only a deckhand and keep in my station. A poor hen-pecked husband—that's me, Mr. Pipp.

How often as sadly I play second fiddle, I sigh for the joys of my bachelor days, They had this game beaten both ways from the middle. This marriage game poets are heaping with praise, Why, don't poets marry before they write verses? They'd all change their tune, if they made such a slip. It's tough to be broke, I admit, but much worse is A married man hen-pecked—that's me, Mr. Pipp.

Thus, my education is slowly progressing: Each day I learn something not dreamed of before. I've given up thinking and hoping and guessing. My wife does it for me, all that and much more. She orders my neckties, my suits and my dinner. She puts me to bed, she forbids me a nip. And then she declares I'm the weakest of sinners. I am, if she says so—that's me, Mr. Pipp.

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