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WASHINGTON LETTER.

MANNERS AND METHODS OF THE MODERN OFFICE SEEKER.

How Senators and Members Are Compelled to Protect Themselves—The Blue Book—Why Do Men Give Up Good Places to Seek for Small Offices?

WASHINGTON, March 14.—The office seeker now has the floor. He has taken possession of the town. He gets up early in the morning and stays out late at night. He is to be found everywhere, anywhere. There is no escaping him.

Nobody pretends that it is dishonorable to seek public office. Nor does anybody hereabouts hold to the fine old sentiment that the office should seek the man. But there are good and proper ways in which to seek places, and bad and ridiculous ways.

At the senate chamber, where the senators meet for a short time every day at noon, a crowd of persons willing to serve their country is always assembled. They stand out in the lobby or prevail upon the doorkeepers to let them into the marble room.

One of the Washington papers, knowing from experience that the town would be full of place hunters, printed on inauguration day a list of the principal places in the government. That edition is still selling rapidly. On the news stands in the hotels are displayed for sale little "blue books," also containing incomplete lists of offices.

There seems to be a general craze in the country to go abroad. Public men say they never saw anything like it. The desire to travel at the government's expense appears to be contagious.

When the office seeker first reaches Washington he registers at a first class hotel. Four or five dollars a day is a mere bagatelle to a man who expects to get a three or four thousand dollar position.

Step into the Ebbitt house or Willard's, or any of the other hotels, and you will see a hundred place seekers. A vigorous, intelligent, seemingly forceful and prosperous lot of men they are. This one is a merchant, that one a banker, another a lawyer, and a fourth a farmer.

Probably any one of them can make two or three thousand dollars a year at home, and make it easily. Can you understand why he should come here and run his legs off after some little office which will afford him a bare living? I can't, and the best advice I can give, or anybody can give the man who thinks of joining the scramble is—don't.

The evolution of office seeking is a curious study. Two weeks ago something like modesty was discernible. The aspirant had a nice and unctuous way of saying: "I have come down to see the inauguration. I am not a candidate for anything. Some of my friends think I ought to take something under this administration, and to please them I don't know but I might be willing."

It is almost pathetic to make the rounds of the departments these days. Step into the ante-rooms of the cabinet ministers, particularly the interior, postoffice and treasury, and take a look at the crowds of men there assembled, waiting for a chance at the ear of the chiefs. They are a discontented, eager looking lot, respectable enough, but with the strain of anxiety showing in their faces, in their eyes, in the cat like manner in which they watch each other, and the solemn, hardened man who stands guard at the door.

There are plenty of "guides to Washington" for the use of sight seers, but the most popular manual just now is the "guide to office getting." It is a very pretty little book, and was admirably written by a Washington newspaper man. In passing it may be remarked that newspaper men do not escape the importunities of the ambitious. They are appealed to for favorable mention in their dispatches, and sometimes are asked to indulge in downright lying.

According to "The Office Seeker's Guide," an applicant should obtain letters of recommendation from the leading citizens of his neighborhood, without regard to their political affiliations. He should "endeavor to get a separate autograph letter from each indorser, couched in the writer's own language.

Next, the would be public servant is informed that after securing the indorsement of the senators from his state and the representative from his district, he must "thenceforward, for a definite time (say a short month), devote his whole surplus of time and energy to keeping his personal and political friends at work upon his case, writing or speaking to anybody and everybody likely to be of any service, and always acting upon the theory that everybody, no matter how much interested, apparently, in his case, forgets all about it as soon as he is out of sight or hearing."

It is also refreshing to read in the guide that if no progress be made after a few weeks of this sort of effort the applicant should "desist long enough to enable his friends and backers to get over fatigue and doubtfulness, and then begin afresh."

There is no more office hunting now than there was four years ago. The itch for office is no more prevalent in one party than in another.

Are You Going to Build a Lawn? There are about 6,000 species of grasses growing here and there all over the planet we inhabit—6,000 species, and yet a man can spend two summers and \$300 on a half acre lawn and then have nothing to show for it but the biggest, healthiest, coarsest crop of plantain that ever spread itself all over the earth like a green bay tree and hollered for more room. This also is vanity.—Burdette.

Engaged on the Spot. Dry Goods Merchant—You have called in response to our advertisement as a floor walker? Well, sir, what are your qualifications for the position? Applicant—I am the father of three pairs of twins.—Boston Courier.

A Friendly Caution.



Mr. Weepleigh (who has come around the corner unexpectedly)—Good morning, Uncle Phillip! Uncle Phillip—Good mornin', squire; good mornin', sah! I war jist a comin' up to yo' house for ter warn yer dat dey's a new family ob rooms moved in ober on d' hill, an' dey's lib'lar be fond ob chickens. How's yo' Lechorns a gittin' long, sah!—Judge.

Their Mother. My boy sat looking straight into the coals, From his stool at my feet one day, And the firelight furnished the curly head, And painted the cheeks with a dash of red, And brightened his very eyes, as he said, In a most confidential way: "Mamma, I think, when I'm a grown-up man, I shall have just two little boys."

Not So Prosperous, After All. At a religious convention held in a western town each minister was required to give an account of the condition of his charge, and if prospering receive congratulation, or, if not, to receive advice and encouragement, with perhaps aid.

Practical Philosophy. Al.—Say, why are you always treating that Miss La Fayette to ice cream in winter? Ed.—Because cold contracts, you know, and I thought by applying it inside when the weather was applying it outside, I might, perhaps, get her reduced so as to put my arm around her.—Detroit Free Press.

Explained at Last.



Mabel (passing the Whippersnapper club)—Mamma, dear, what do all those men always sit at that window for, I wonder? Mrs. N.—They sit in that window, pet, in order to let all of us see that they have that window to sit in.—Life.

Mr. Vanderbilt Got In. A good story is told about one of the Maine Central engineers. Last summer, when the Vanderbilt car was at Bar Harbor, the manager of the Maine Central sent an engine down there to take the car to Portland. The run was made in very quick time, and at Brunswick the train stopped to take on water.

Delicate Treatment of Constituents. The other day a western congressman came into the senate restaurant with two constituents, good men, but a little rustic in appearance and manners and unused to conventionalities and points of etiquette that are unknown in Wayback. The restaurant was full of ladies and gentlemen. As the congressman seated himself he of course removed his hat. A moment or two later he noticed that his untutored friends had not removed their hats.

A Smart Boy. "You see, my boy, that even the noble locomotive, the rugged iron horse, seldom lasts over thirty years, from being a constant smoker," said a wise father to his tempted son. "Yes, dad," replied the boy, "but it don't seem to work that way with some of the noble chimeys we have read of that have stood it over three hundred years." Readiness of reply in young people is always entertaining.—Boston Globe.

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