

IT IS THEIR DEN

WHERE WASHINGTON NEWSPAPER MEN FIND SOLID COMFORT.

A Cozy Little Place in Which to Pass Long Hours - Interesting Characters Seen There - At the Press Club - A Great Variety of Character Represented.

[Special Correspondence.] WASHINGTON, March 26 - In the long, dull days while the appropriation bills dragged through the house and the senate made ready for discussion of the tariff, while representatives of adverse interests crowded about the rooms the senate finance committee repeating the old, old "chessnuts" about ruin if this or that or the other thing was or was not done, and while Chairman Voorhees continued to throw up on the market his oft-discouraged promises that the completed bill would be proclaimed



Press gallery story tellers.

"next Tuesday" or "next Thursday," there was always one place where hilarity reigned. This was the little smoking room back of the reporters' gallery in the house. Visitors looking from any other gallery see only the desks and seats rising in the gallery above the speaker and do not know that behind the doors through which they see the reporters come and go there is a very large and commodious room, with telephones, telegraph, long tables and every convenience for writing. East of this room is a cozy little den, with easy chairs and a big, old fashioned fireplace, where in cool weather a fire of hard wood gives an amazing air of comfort - and Uncle Sam pays for the wood.

Waiting For Something to Be Done.

Here is where we take our ease, and during the dull days aforesaid there was really nothing to be done and no chance of any fellow getting a "scoop" on any other, and so, as aforesaid, hilarity reigned. The great pressure was to get the chair occupied by Bill Sterrett of the Dallas and Galveston News - Sterrett the inimitable, the peculiar and indescribable character of the press gang. The group was complete when Al Lewis of the Chicago Times sat on one side of him and H. L. Merritt of the Washington Post on the other, punctuating his stories with humorous comment.

Interesting Characters.

Another interesting character, though one would hardly suspect it who sees him at work, is Alfred J. Stoffer of the Richmond Dispatch, who came here from St. Louis. He seems to know the whole gamut of American negro character by instinct, and his songs and stories in darky dialect are irresistibly funny. He plays the banjo, is a member of the Gridiron club and is always in demand. Incidentally it may be added that he took a liberal prominent part in the so-called Hill riot in Virginia as against the administration, but little things of that sort don't count in the smoking room aforesaid.

Partial to Dominoes.

Soon after congress adjourns every afternoon there is a scene of quite a different kind at 1347 Pennsylvania avenue, or, to be exact, "just around the corner from Newspaper row" - that is, at the Press club. Many of the boys - in fact, all those who have no home ties - take their dinner there, and then the regular evening begins, and strange to say, the big game is dominoes. Whether it is because this game makes so little draft upon the intellect, and is therefore a rest, or for some other cause, I know not, but every evening a domino group, prominent among them John Harrison of the Washington Star, president of the Press club, and J. Durium, clerk of the committee.

Another prominent writer sometimes seen at the domino tables is Colonel W. E. H. H. author of what many of the boys call the best story of the war, entitled "Corporal Si Klegg and His Pard." When there is a regular evening at the club, Fancullin takes his seat at the piano, and any one who may be called upon joins with vocal music. Fancullin, leader of the Marine band, is an associate member of the club, as are many other artists of Washington, several congressmen, Sergeant-at-arms Bright and other officials. One of the best singers, if not the best in the club, is Jim Allison of the New York Tribune, who has won distinction in many lines. He served under General (now Secretary) Gresham, and won his title by the hardest kind of hard knocks. In journalism he is best known as a writer in political and economic subjects, a friend of the late Sam Randall, a student of congressional history and full of ready precedents. Best in the club he is known as a dry humorist, with an immense reserve force of social vivacity, a good story teller and a genial, approachable gentleman. I think he can come as near talking easily on any subject, from the stage of Atlanta to the variations in the wool tariff, as any man in Washington.

Another quaint character is O'Brien

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria. When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria. When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria. When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

more of the St. Louis Republic, or whom the country has recently heard a great deal, and there are many others, only not quite so noted. But it must not be supposed that all Washington journalists are of a jocular sort. There is as much variety of character among newspaper men as there is, if not more. And we have among us religious leaders, men very successful in business and others of that class which every one can recognize and no one can describe - the class who seem to have been bowed down and their original nature completely changed by some great sorrow or long run of adverse fortune.

Prominent in Many Ways.

One of the most men in Washington - yes, one of the very most men in the world - is H. B. F. Macfarland of the Boston Herald and Philadelphia Record, who is the son of an old correspondent of war times and was educated for the law, but fell into his father's business by a sort of destiny. He is a member of the Church of the Covenant, President of Harrison's church, superintendent of that church's mission school in Georgetown and a very active member of the Salvation Army.

Fred Perry Powers, now in New York,

was once here an elder in the same church, and William Elmer Curtis is a member. Just at present, it must be added, Mr. Curtis has need of pretty strong moral support, for he has several little but heated discussions on his hands. He is after the scalp of Josiah Quincy, is ripping up the lithographic scheme and administering on some of the concerns of the bureau of American republics, in addition to doing work for the Chicago Record and performing other literary labors. He is prominent in many ways outside of journalism. With a branch of the tariff commission in 1882 he went to South America and wrote the report. He was then correspondent of the Chicago News. Later he was executive officer of the Pan-American conference of 1889-90 and still later established the bureau of American republics. He has acquired a good deal of wealth for a newspaper man, but it has not yet operated to relax his energy.

Old Timers.

Another tolerably serious man is E. J. Gibson of the Philadelphia Press. His hearing is defective, but he has scored some great "scoops," especially in getting advance information on tariff bills. The boys speak of him as "fy" on finance and tariff, and he was the first to exploit the fact that the senate finance committee had decided to wipe out the reciprocity treaty. "Judge" J. J. Noah of the Rocky Mountain News is ranked among the serious thinkers, with an unusually good grasp on the general course of legislation and politics. F. A. Richardson of the Baltimore Sun is one of the old timers, who reported the senate from the gallery many years ago, before any reporters were allowed on the floor, and did it well. He has silver gray hair, looks like a successful stock broker, is a man of some wealth and acquires information without saying much.

Another remarkably observant man,

who seems to acquire information easily and hold it tenaciously, is the well known John M. Carson of the Philadelphia Ledger, who was clerk of the ways and means committee in two former congresses and is an expert on tariff. In fact, he is said to be the only journalist in Washington who thoroughly understands the McKinley bill. He makes a tour of the doubtful states during each presidential campaign, and his letters on the progress are quoted as high authority. Another writer somewhat in the vanguard line at times is E. G. Dunnell of the New York Times, and if he has any speciality it is an acquaintance with foreign affairs.

Lige Halford's Brother.

In these days correspondents have so many privileges on the floor of the house and every one has so many opportunities to get solid with the members from his state that, so far as general legislation is concerned, there is not much possibility of making one of those "scoops" the rush for which formerly made up so much of the life of Washington journalists. Among those who have a permanent "sit" in the house is A. J. Halford, who represents the United Press and sits a little in front and just to the left of the speaker. He is a younger

brother of Elijah W. Halford, who long

conducted the editorial page of the Indianapolis Journal, who came to Washington with President Harrison and is now in Omaha as a paymaster for Uncle Sam. He is also to be included among the religious men of the profession. And in a general way it is to be said that the outside world must not look upon us as a set of agnostics entirely, or even of careless Galloos who "care for none of these things." I believe we have about the same proportion of serious thinkers as any other body of men in Washington, and I am very certain that we compare very favorably with the gentlemen on the floor below, whom we are here to report. By the way, the Breckinridge case and the onslaught of the so-called "A. P. A." and some preachers of the ultra sort have excited quite an inquiry as to the number of Roman Catholics in the house, and the general per cent of religion among the members, but down to this point no journalist has succeeded in making up the count and striking an average.

J. B. PARKE.

Beyond the Aeronaut's Limit.

Aeronauts cannot rise much above five miles of vertical height on account of the increasing rarity of the air, but double that height has been attained by self-registering balloons, which tell us that some 90 degrees of frost prevail up there.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A BUSHEL of sweet potatoes will yield a gallon of alcohol. AUSTRALIANS are beginning to use horseshoes made of cowhide. ABOUT fifty gamblers commit suicide at Monte Carlo every year. THE ladies of the Aster family possess jewels to the value of \$3,000,000. HENRY IV. of France so disliked cats that he visibly trembled whenever he saw one. WILMINGTON, Del., is to have a social club to which both men and women will be admitted.

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PERSONAL PRATTLE.

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLENOY has grown old enough to enter Harvard college next fall.

The name of the man who lights the statue of Liberty in Washington nightly is Mr. America.

The men of Mr. Cleveland's cabinet are all heavy men. There is only one that tips the scale under two hundred pounds.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, despite his great age, is described as lithe, silver-haired and keen-eyed. He laughs and chats with animation and his flashes of repartee are as frequent and brilliant as they were in other years.

MR. JOSEPH WRIGHT COOPER, formerly a hired man in his native county of Howard, Mo., at twenty cents a day, is at present the one-fourth owner of 165,000 acres of land near Santa Barbara, Cal., and is styled a "pastoral

Her Experience.

Readsley - What is the greatest place of fiction in the world, in your estimation? ROSS BRON, Miss Faase (scurry) - Man!

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