



Random Stories Hit or Miss



Secretary Hay and His Callers.

IT IS not alone on the chessboard of international politics that Secretary of State John Hay displays his diplomacy. He is a strategist of no mean order in felling the moves of powerful opponents in the game of congressional spoils.

Not long ago a well known western representative in congress was chosen United States senator. He immediately began to figure what was really due him from the government in the way of patronage. Already powerful in the republican councils of his state, the new senator bethought himself of the added glory of government plums that should be plucked by his party workers and their friends. Their name was legion. There was, in fact, a glut in the market of available timber for official sinews. The clamor for office was deep, loud and insistent. The new senator pondered over the prerogatives that, rightfully or unrightfully, belong to the toga-bearers of the nation. He finally saw his opportunity. At least he thought he did.

Straightway with true senatorial dignity he summoned four of his henchmen. He promised them choice berths in the consular service. Such appointments are recognized senatorial perquisites. He took his four friends to the State department, and brushed past the sable-hued messenger, who vainly tried to explain that Secretary Hay was busily engaged on pressing international matters. The senator and the quartet of would-be officeholders stalked single file toward Secretary Hay's desk.

"I am Senator Blank," said the senator. "Good morning," replied the author of "Little Breeches."

"And these are Mr. —," etc., "of my state," added the senator.

The secretary quietly nodded recognition. "Now, Mr. Secretary," continued the senator, "I've been examining the consular list and I find that my great commonwealth is not adequately represented there. My state hasn't its quota of places, and I have now selected some of the desirable posts for some of the deserving men of my state."

A cold, impenetrable expression stole over the face of the premier of the Roosevelt cabinet. It was a look he assumes on occasions of great moment, and one that a number of the diplomatic corps have learned to recognize as a sign to look to their laurels.

"For instance?" suggested Hay. "Well, here's Stuttgart. It's a good post, pays well, and desirable all around. I would like that appointment made first."

"Certainly. Wait a moment. I'll look into it." And Secretary Hay pressed a button. "Send for the appointment clerk," he ordered. The latter hurried in.

Mr. Hay's face became as solemn as the visages of the Goths in the olden days. "Mr. Mosher," he inquired, "why did not you report to me that the consul at Stuttgart is dead?"

"But, Mr. Secretary—" "I want to know, sir, why you failed to report that fact to me?"

"But, Mr. Secretary we have no such report—no advices even to indicate that he had been ill."

"Sure?" "Certainly, sir."

Hay turned to the senator. "Senator," he said, "there's some mistake. You must have been misinformed. The consul at Stuttgart is still alive."

There was an awkward silence. The secretary stood grim and somber. The four who had coveted the foreign posts shifted

position uneasily. The senator boiled with indignation. But suddenly, from somewhere in his inner subconsciousness, there came a realization of the situation and of the futility of argument. He and his bevy of political adherents lost no time in filing out, while Secretary Hay, confronted with problems of worldwide moment, but none the less a ready friend of consular reform, smiled and resumed the consideration of treaty making.—Collier's Weekly.

George Gould's Favorite Story.

"I don't believe George Gould ever told a funny story in his life," said an old friend of his to the writer, "but I don't hold with others that he is utterly lacking in appreciation of humor. There were certain stories that were favorites of his, and his attitude toward a story was the same as toward a friend—he never grew tired of either. I know in college there was a young fellow who once told a story about a German running to catch a ferryboat. The student told it with the German accent and with great particularity. He related how the German went tearing down the street, knocking over baby carriages and stumbling over dogs in his effort to catch the boat before it pulled out. Finally the man got to the pier just as the ferryboat was six feet from the dock, and with a superhuman spring leaped out over the tide, landing on the deck and knocking over the captain."

"Vell, py chimmies, I vos make dot boat, anyways!" cried the delighted German, all out of breath.

"But the captain, picking himself up and brushing his clothes, swore like a pirate and exclaimed:

"You crazy idiot, the boat is just coming in."

"Ten years after George Gould left college this same man told the same story one night at a banquet at which Gould was present. George laughed as heartily at it as he did the first time he heard it. 'I always did like that story,' said he"—Brooklyn Eagle.

What's the Use?

The late Stephen Crane, whose posthumous novel of Irish life is soon to appear, had an imagination at once vivid and delicate.

One night, in a studio in New York, he was talking of old age.

"I can imagine myself," he said, in his strange, quiet voice, "an old man, a very old man, 80, 90 years old. I can imagine myself, at that great age, taken down with an illness. My friends gather about my bed. It is thought that I will die."

"But I grow better. I see myself recovering. The friends are surprised and pleased. They urge me to get up."

"I can imagine, though, how the weight of my years oppresses me, and how, though I am well, death seems so near that I say:

"Oh, it is hardly worth while to get up and dress myself again."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Why He Gave Thanks.

Recently, when Edmund Clarence Stedman was visiting in New England, he was called upon by the head of the house while at dinner to invoke the divine blessing.

"I was rather surprised, and for half a minute sorely tempted," said Mr. Stedman, in relating the incident. "Then I rose to the occasion and asked a grace which I remembered."

"But, Mr. Stedman," demurred a young woman of the party eagerly, "to what were you sorely tempted?"

"To do as Charles Lamb did under similar circumstances."

"And that was?"

"He looked about the board and asked in his surprise: 'Is there no clergymen present?' The host shook his head. Then Lamb prayed: 'For this and all other mercies, O Lord! make us truly thankful.'"—Philadelphia Ledger.

Only One Story.

Chief Justice Story attended a public dinner in Boston at which Edward Everett was present. Desiring to pay a delicate compliment to the latter, the learned judge proposed as a volunteer toast:

"Fame follows merit where Everett goes." The brilliant scholar arose and responded: "To whatever heights judicial learning may attain in this country, it will never get above one Story."—Success.

Useful in the Family.

A woman doctor went to Utah to practice. She was a pleasant lady, as well as skillful, and her patients were very fond of her. "How I wish," said one of them, "that I could convert you to our religion! If you would only marry my husband and come and live with us."

The doctor fled in horror to another friend, to whom she told the story. Her self-respect began to revive and she felt comforted, seeing how the eyes of her listener glazed.

"I don't wonder you feel as you do," replied the friend, indignantly. "The idea! Why, that Mr. — is perfectly horrid. What you want to do is to marry my husband and come and live with us."

A Nery Deed.

"During the war between the north and the south, in 1863," says Admiral Dewey in "V. C.," "I was a midshipman on Farragut's temporary flagship Monongahela, a youngster getting his wisdom teeth cut on the shells of battle. One day while we were besieging Fort Hudson, on the Mississippi river, a round shot from one of the heaviest batteries on the mainmast in two and fell on the deck. A thrill of apprehension ran round the ship; no one knew if it were a shell or not—I must explain that in those days the oldtime fuses were used. But in the midst of the panic one of the crew strolled coolly up to the shot, picked it up and threw it overboard."

Chicago Patriotism.

During the visit of the Moseley commission to Chicago the members visited several public schools, seeking pointers to enlighten Englishmen. One of the schools visited was at Palos Park, a little frame building where about thirty youngsters were cultivating their gray matter. The youngsters gazed awestruck at the Englishmen and were made speechless when they heard the visitors speak. There was one youngster in the crowd who had his nerve with him and his tongue in trim, and he answered to the name of Richard O'Connell. After some commonplace questions as to the methods of the school, Dick O'Connell made himself famous in the following dialogue:

"The boy in the third seat back, what's your name?"

"Richard O'Connell."

"You have studied history. What did we have in 1776?"

"The revolution."

"Against whom was it?"

"The British redcoats." "What did we do to them?" "We licked 'em."

"Did we ever have any more trouble with them?"

"Yes, in 1812; we licked them again."

"If we ever have any more trouble with them would we lick them?"

"You bet."

At this point one of the commissioners lost patience and remarked:

"How perfectly ridiculous to teach a child a thing like that."

When Doctors Disagree.

"There were two sisters living up in my state," said Senator Burrows of Michigan, "who were fond of each other and all that, but who warred constantly about the two great schools of medicine. One pinned her faith to allopathy and the other to homeopathy."

"One day there was great excitement in the family of the lady who believed in homeopathy, and it was soon announced that she was the mother of bouncing twin boys."

"The other sister came down in a hurry. 'Well,' she said, 'now see what's happened. I wanted you to have an allopathic doctor. After this, I fancy you will listen to me.'"—Philadelphia Post.

Once is a Plenty.

There recently visited Washington an Englishman who at home is more or less known for his newspaper "leaders" on matters sociological. The Briton was introduced to Gifford Pinchot, who is at the head of the division of forestry of the Department of Agriculture.

In conversation with Mr. Pinchot the foreigner soon initiated a discussion of his favorite topic, and, in connection with some statistics of suicide in this country, observed to Mr. Pinchot that he rather fancied that in proportion to the populations of the two countries there were more cases of self-destruction here than in the United Kingdom.

"I am inclined to think," oracularly remarked the Britisher, "that one of the prime causes that make for suicide in the United States is the great nervous strain under which you race through everything. I should say, you know, that in the case of the Englishman he doesn't commit suicide so often, you know?"

"And yet," said Mr. Pinchot, musingly, "I never heard of an American killing himself more than once, have you?"—New York Times.

Missed Her "Vocation."

Postmaster General Payne is a master of the epigram. He demonstrated that fact recently when he was questioned about some charges that had been brought against one of the officials of his department. Shrewd political organizer and manager, for many years one of the kitchen cabinet of several administrations, systematic, quick and unhesitating in his own private business policies, his command of incisive speech on occasion and aptitude at epigrammatic replies are not to be wondered at.

"It is not clear who brought these charges," said Mr. Payne.

"They were worked up by Charlotte Smith," suggested his interviewer. "She is a reformer who is a familiar figure at the capitol."

"Charlotte Smith?" repeated the postmaster general. "Yes, I know her. Fathers everything; mothers nothing!"—Collier's Weekly.

