

"APOSTLES OF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT"

The biographers of John Hay seem generally to dwell upon his accomplishments in public life; and when we remember that Mr. Hay was by the world regarded as a "cold" man it is refreshing to read from the pen of Senator Elihu M. Cullom, an intimate, personal friend, the statement: "In private life to all who knew him Mr. Hay was the most companionable of men, of wonderful versatility and particular information, but so modest and unassuming as to be within the reach of all. He was a supreme master of English. His conversation overflowed with apt stories, always clean and always vital. He was an apostle of sweetness and light, with a nature as tender and affectionate as a woman's and a man's strong and hearty approval for that which appealed to him."

That is a fine side light thrown upon the character of the late secretary of state, and while it may seem strange to those who formed their estimate of Mr. Hay by observing him in the field of politics, it is wholly in keeping with the idea one must have of the author of "Little Breeches."

It has often been said in the public prints that in recent years John Hay was not slow in manifesting his displeasure when referred to as the author of the little poem famous the world over and indissolubly linked with the memory of the man who at the time of his death held, perhaps, the highest rank among the world's diplomats. Maybe injustice has been done Mr. Hay, and maybe when he manifested displeasure because he was pointed out as the author of "Little Breeches" it was due to his modesty rather than to his disinclination to stand sponsor for that touching bit of verse. The man who wrote that verse must have had within him much of the material out of which "apostles of sweetness and light" are constructed.

It is something of a coincidence that the late Thomas Dunn English did not take kindly to the fact that wherever he went and whenever his name appeared in public print he was referred to as "the author of Ben Bolt."

But if Hay's only claim to distinction was that he had written "Little Breeches," and if English's only hold upon fame was through the authorship of "Ben Bolt," these two men would be entitled to rank as "apostles of sweetness and light."

While there is nothing classical about "Ben Bolt" or "Little Breeches" these poems are sublime in their simplicity. If English and Hay had continued to live as near the popular heart in later life as they did when they wrote these

pleasing verses, they would not have been offended when public attention was directed to the best work of their hearts and brains. It may have been that, mingling in later life among those who are either ashamed or incapable of appreciating simplicity's majesty, these gentlemen had forgotten that "simplicity is nature's first step, and the last of art."

The "Little Breeches" of John Hay appeals not only to the heart of the parent but as well to the heart of every man and woman who loves little children. Likewise it appeals to the hearts of those who have not become so thoroughly practical as to dismiss the notion that there may be, after all, some power that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

The "Ben Bolt" of Thomas Dunn English appeals to those who are not too busy to delight in the renewal of old acquaintances, who are not so averse to sentiment that they turn their backs upon Auld Lang Syne, who are not so wholly wrapped up in the things of to-day that they must overlook the boy of thirty years ago and reject the delightful reflections which reminiscence often provides.

Nearly every home has its "Little Breeches;" in not all of them is this particular designation made, but as a rule there is some characteristic that suggests an affectionate nickname for the baby of the household; and in every home where "Little Breeches" lives and is loved the same heartfelt gratitude which the parent character in John Hay's little poem poured out to the delight of the world would be manifested under similar circumstances by every character of flesh and blood and heart and brain, in the real life of to-day.

The little four-year-old child lost in a storm on the bleak prairie was, after hours of painstaking search, found nestling among the lambs in a fold "as peart as ever can be." It seemed to the distracted parent that nothing short of a miracle could have saved "Little Breeches" from the terrible storm. The only explanation this rough frontiersman could give was that it was the work of "angels" who "just swooped down and toted it to whar' it was safe and warm;" and this thought drew from the grateful and practical father the eminently correct opinion: "And I think that taking a little child and bringing him to his own is a derned sight better business than loafing around the Throne."

"Ben Bolt" was written in 1842; it was set to the music of a German melody in 1848. Its publication by a music dealer of Cincinnati made

that man rich. It was the favorite song in theaters and parlors for many years, and even today there is no more popular air and no more delightful poem than the simple little story of "Sweet Alice" and the other characters and things recalled in this communion between old friends.

Doubtless in the memory of many a man whose hair is tinged with gray there is a "Sweet Alice." Doubtless before the vision of many a man rises the "slab of granite gray," in some old churchyard in the valley, where some Alice of boyhood days "lies under the stone." The hickory tree which stood at the foot of the hill, and under which Ben Bolt and his companion lay in the noonday shade doubtless has its counterpart within the recollection of many a full grown man. The cabin of logs, the old mill wheel, the school, and "the master cruel and grim, the shady nook by the running brook where the children went to swim" suggests to many a man of to-day memories, tender and true.

Where, also, is the man with blood enough in his veins to cultivate affection, who does not cherish a friendship even like unto that of the Ben Bolts? The pessimist who has come to believe that there is nothing true on earth may find all over the world men who, however active they may be, have not been too busy to cultivate the old time ties. Doubtless in every community and in every block in every village of the land there are men and women who can echo the tribute paid by Thomas Dunn English to the durability of human friendship when he wrote:

"There is change in the things I love, Ben Bolt,
They have changed from the old to the new,
But I feel in the depths of my spirit the truth
There never was change in you.
Twelve months twenty have passed, Ben Bolt,
Since first we were friends—yet I hail
Thy presence a blessing, thy friendship a truth,
Ben Bolt of the salt sea gale!"

In spite of the alleged preferences of John Hay and Thomas Dunn English, "Little Breeches" and "Ben Bolt" will be favorites among the men and women of to-morrow as they were among the men and women of yesterday. "Men are only boys grown tall, hearts don't change much after all;" and the things that have touched the children of the long ago will appeal to the children of the future.

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THAT "GREAT SACRIFICE"

Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, James Madison, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were among the men who served the American people in the high and honorable office of secretary of state. Yet now that Mr. Elihu Root has accepted that position the American people have been surfeited with extravagant tributes to the wealthy man who has abandoned a remunerative practice as a corporation lawyer to accept the highest honor in the gift of the president and to have his name enrolled among those of the eminent men who preceded him. The Baltimore Sun strikes a popular chord when it says: "Unless money counts for everything; unless money making is the only honorable occupation, then the talk of the great sacrifice which Mr. Elihu Root makes to accept the office of secretary of state is wrong. It is untrue, unpatriotic and harmful. The salary of the office is \$8,000 a year, and that should be sufficient for a family to live on. If it is not sufficient it ought to be. Next to the presidency the office of secretary of state is perhaps the highest place in the service of the American people. The secretary is next after the vice-president in the line of succession to the office of chief magistrate. The doctrine that money is worth more than such an office as that of secretary of state and the opportunity it affords to serve one's country and gain fame and honor is a false and a harmful doctrine to teach young men."

STAMP TAXES AGAIN

In a speech before the Ohio convention Secretary Taft referring to the deficit said: "There remains two alternatives, either to impose additional internal taxes or to readjust and revise the tariff. We have repealed the war taxes, which afforded a large revenue, and the eight years of the present Dingley tariff have seen in

this country a prosperity never before witnessed in the civilized world. If the deficit continues in serious amount, then in one way or the other, either our taxation on imports or our internal revenue system must be changed to meet the shortage, with every effort to cause the minimum of business disturbance."

It is noticeable that while Secretary Taft suggests tariff revision as well as stamp taxes he seems to stand, so far as republican statesmen are concerned, practically alone.

The deficit for last year amounted to \$24,000,000 and it is estimated that at the present rate the deficit for the present year will amount to \$40,000,000. The party in power must do something to meet the emergency, and influential republicans one after another suggest the advisability of resorting to the stamp tax. The influences that were powerful enough to send Mr. Taft into retirement as a punishment for "the Taft Free Trade Order" will be sufficiently powerful in republican councils to see that the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff is not destroyed even though the restoration of the obnoxious stamp tax be the alternative.

GRAVE AND INCREASING COMPLAINT

In his message to congress in December, 1904, Mr. Roosevelt said: "Of recent years there has been grave and increasing complaint of the difficulty of bringing to justice those criminals whose criminality, instead of being against one person in the republic, is against all persons in the republic, because it is against the republic itself."

In the same message referring to railroad rebates Mr. Roosevelt said: "We must strive to keep the highways of commerce open to all on equal terms; and to do this it is necessary to put a complete stop to all rebates. Whether the shipper or the railroad is to blame makes no difference; the rebates must be stopped, the abuses of the private car and private terminal track and side-track system must be stopped,

and the legislation of the Fifty-eighth congress which declares it to be unlawful for any PERSON or corporation to offer, grant, give, solicit, accept or receive any rebate, concession or discrimination in respect to the transportation of any property in interstate or foreign commerce whereby such property shall by any device whatever be transported at a less rate than that named in the tariffs published by the carrier, must be enforced."

But in the Paul Morton case Mr. Roosevelt showed that he would amend the law by striking out the word "Person." In throwing a protecting arm around his secretary of the navy Mr. Roosevelt gave a striking demonstration of "the difficulty of bringing to justice those criminals whose criminality instead of being against one person in the republic is against all persons in the republic, because it is against the republic itself."

RAILROADS MISREPRESENTING OPINION

The Chicago Tribune's Washington correspondent says that the railroad magnates have advised their confidential agents that the rate crusade has subsided and that they will be able to prevent any legislation objectionable to the roads. The Commoner has already informed its readers of the methods employed. The roads established bureaus and sent out news items and editorials for reproduction and many of the country papers wittingly or unwittingly fell into the trap. The purpose of the roads was not to convert the voters but to fortify the representatives and senators who want to favor the railroads and at the same time escape the wrath of the people.

The railroad managers may fool the public men in the coming session but if the president does his duty the issue will be made so plain that the next congress will be immune to railroad influence. Railroad regulation can be delayed but it can not be prevented.