



Robert Lansing,  
Secretary of State

Edward  
B. Clark

COPYRIGHT 1915 BY  
WESTERN NEWSPAPER  
UNION

**S**OMETHING more than a score of years ago James G. Blaine resigned his position as secretary of state in the cabinet of President Harrison. He was succeeded by Gen. John W. Foster. A few months ago William J. Bryan resigned his position

as secretary of state in the cabinet of President Wilson. He was succeeded by Robert Lansing. These two statements of fact are put together because it may be justified by the human interest which seems to exist in the fact that John W. Foster is the father-in-law of Robert Lansing. It is probable that no two men more entirely different in temperament and in manifestations thereof ever existed than William J. Bryan and his successor in office, Robert Lansing. Mr. Bryan was more or less inclined to be half fellow well met with men. Mr. Lansing has little of the half fellow well met in him, but nevertheless he is approachable, genial and almost without question the best listener that the state department has had for a great many years.

Now it is said frequently that the man who is a good listener is more apt to get results than the man who is, we shall not say a good, but a great talker. Those who know the present secretary of state say that there is no channel connecting one of his ears with the other. This simply is their way of expressing the fact that nothing that goes into one of Mr. Lansing's ears finds exit from the other. He holds fast what he hears and later he acts on his knowledge or refuses to act on it as seems better to his understanding of the case.

Ordinarily speaking, persons like to hear stories about men in high positions. It is probably no exaggeration to say that there are a thousand stories about Mr. Bryan, about Mr. Knox, about Mr. Root, and about one or another of the predecessors in office of the present incumbent to one about the present incumbent himself. When one says stories, of course, he means human interest and humorous stories. Mr. Lansing does not lend himself readily to the exploitation of fun making. He is a grave man, a receptive man and therefore not at all an exuberant man. His sense of humor, however, is keen and he enjoys a good story well told and enjoys it with an evident, if quiet, showing of appreciation.

The kind of story they tell about Mr. Lansing when a story is demanded is in character something like that of the man himself, grave and dignified, and not possessing the qualities which make up the more or less substantial story with a substratum of humor.

For instance, not long ago two ambassadors representing foreign countries, and one high official of the United States government, expressed a desire for an audience with Mr. Lansing on a certain Thursday evening. Mr. Lansing said that he would be happy to see the gentlemen at almost any other time, "but on Thursday evening I must go to church."

Now, Robert Lansing is a Presbyterian, and a good one. It took real sincerity of purpose for a secretary of state, who is supposed to be ready at any hours of the day or night to listen to the plenipotentiaries of foreign powers, to say in effect, "No, state matters must wait until after prayer meeting."

When Mr. Bryan was secretary of state he saw the newspaper men frequently, and his intercourse with them was rather of the free and easy sort because the Nebraska gentleman was and is a newspaper man himself. The correspondents, however, did not get any extraordinary amount of news out of Mr. Bryan despite his affability. Mr. Lansing has regular business meetings with the correspondents. There are few stories to fly back and forth, few quips of humor, and there is the usual reticence on many subjects which marks diplomacy, but Mr. Lansing, nevertheless, always gives up a story, a news item of minor or greater importance, whenever it is proper for him so to do, and, moreover, he is a pretty keen judge of news values despite the fact that he is a lawyer and probably does not know a 4-em dash from a linotype machine.

Some people say that Mr. Lansing had several months' training as secretary of state before he took office actually. These are the people who think that he did most of Mr. Bryan's work. This probably is unjust to Mr. Lansing's predecessor, but it is known definitely that the present secretary was consulted constantly and consistently upon most of the matters relating to our foreign intercourse, which recently, as everybody knows, has been in a state not only delicate, but perilous.

It is pretty definitely known now that when Mr. Lansing was counselor for the state department he aided the president materially in writing the note to Germany which was penned June 9. It was the tone of this note which Mr. Bryan thought was too militant and it was this note in a way which caused the Nebraskan to resign his position as chief of the president's cabinet.

When it is said that a man is grave, a good listener and not overgiven to talking, the impression received is perhaps that he is lacking



Mrs. Robert Lansing

in interest in what are called the human things of life. Robert Lansing is a baseball fan; he is also a painter of no mean ability; he knows how to handle the rod and reel and can land with neatness and dispatch a brook trout or a small-mouth bass. Moreover, Mr. Lansing likes the social life, and not infrequently he is to be seen at afternoon affairs when state department duties are not pressing, and still more frequently at evening affairs where, as one might say, he loosens up a bit and talks in a way to draw his auditors and to hold them.

Oswald Garrison Villard has written in the New York Evening Post this little description of Mr. Lansing's personal appearance:

"The contrast between Mr. Bryan and his successor is nowhere more marked than in their personalities. Mr. Lansing is a handsome man, with notably fine eyes and a winning countenance that lights up most attractively when he is amused. He smiles with his eyes as well as otherwise," writes a Washington reporter about him, and there is a keenness in their expression which indicates an able and a nimble mind. He is altogether of grave and dignified presence, which is enhanced by his prematurely gray hair—he is only fifty-one. He is well groomed, stands up straight and looks directly into the eyes of his questioners. Usually he is wearing the black cutaway of statesmanship. You feel instinctively that he is a man to tie to, the kind which shrewd, intuitive women would naturally seek as a counselor. Indeed, this title which he has hitherto borne in the state department fits him like a glove."

In the paragraph which is quoted something is said about the secretary of state being a handsome man. Some Washington residents declare that he is the handsomest man in the cabinet. Others do not agree to this, but all admit that the secretary's way of carrying himself is all that it should be. It is perhaps probable that Mr. Lansing knows that he carries himself well. At any rate he alone is responsible for his carriage, while his tailor is responsible in considerable measure for making the secretary admittedly the best-dressed man in public life in Washington.

It may be asked who is, or, rather, who was, Robert Lansing? While the answer is not to be given in a few words, it is probable that the secretary of state was comparatively unknown until he came into prominence in connection with our delicate dealings with Mexico and with the other powers, little and great, which recently have been at trouble among themselves or within themselves, and have been directly and indirectly causing trouble to the United States. Robert Lansing was born in a small city, Wa-

tertown, in northern New York, only a few miles from the St. Lawrence river, from the waters of which it is probable that as a boy he drew many a pickerel and bass and laid the foundation of his love for the sport which Isaac Walton made famous. He entered the state department as counselor one year ago last March, succeeding John Bassett Moore. For thirty years, that is since he was twenty-one years of age, Mr. Lansing has been studying and practicing international law. He was connected in behalf of the United States with a great many arbitration cases. He was this government's associate counsel in the fur seal arbitration twenty-two years ago, and later he represented the government before the Bering sea claims commission. He was counsel for the government in the Alaska boundary dispute and he has served Uncle Sam in China, Mexico, Venezuela and at The Hague in various arbitration matters.

It is said that Robert Lansing slipped easily and gracefully into the big chair in the cabinet room, which stands at the right hand of the bigger chair which is occupied by Woodrow Wilson. A good many men of note have occupied the chair. When a man ceases to be secretary of state history invariably makes an estimate of him and of his services. What will the verdict be concerning Robert Lansing?

One thing is certain, Mr. Lansing entered upon his great office duties at a time when it is possible for a man to win his spurs or to lose them, and that quickly. There are heavy burdens on the shoulders of this present incumbent of high cabinet office. When the corner stone of the Pan-American building was laid Theodore Roosevelt, then president of the United States, delivered an address in which he said that there had been many great secretaries of state, but that there had been none greater than Elihu Root.

At the laying of some corner stone or at the ceremonies attending some other memorable occasion will it be Woodrow Wilson's part to rise to his feet and say, "There have been many great secretaries of state, but none greater than Robert Lansing?"

In writing this sketch one very important matter came pretty near being overlooked. Robert Lansing, secretary of state, is a poet. Some people say that he is "a writer of exquisite verse." Poetry is poetry; verse is either near poetry or no kin to poetry. Mr. Lansing does not claim to be a great poet. It is probable that he writes poetry as a diversion. At any rate, it is generally conceded that he is a pretty fair poet, and that he also is much more than a pretty fair painter.

So when the American people have a secretary of state who can make other nations sit up and pay attention, who can fish, who can play baseball, who can dress well, who can paint, who can write poetry, and, what is better, exceedingly forceful prose, ought not the said American people to be satisfied with the man who has taken upon himself a large part of the burdens of state at a time when those burdens are heavy?

**WAS CONSERVATIVE.**

His Host—By the way, what do you think of the Mexican imbroglio?  
Mr. Malaprop—To tell the truth, I like old-fashioned American fruits the best.—Judge.

**WISE HOB.**

"How is it you always pick out a bachelor to listen to your hard-luck story?"  
"A married man has troubles of his own usually."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

**SELF-CONGRATULATION.**

She—I suppose you know I came near marrying Jim before I married you?  
He—Now I know why he shakes hands so warmly when we meet.—Judge.

**CAME TRUE.**

"A fortune teller told me yesterday that I would meet with a financial reverse."  
"And did you?"  
"Yes; she charged me \$2."

**STRICT PARTY MAN.**

"Do you promise to love, honor and cherish this woman?"  
"Yes," said the politician, "whatever the platform is I subscribe to it."

**ONE ON THE COCO.**

Golfer (proudly)—I play with my head, my boy.  
His Rival—Yes, I notice that you are partial to wooden clubs.

**IN THE LIMELIGHT**

**SHERRILL'S PAN-AMERICANISM**



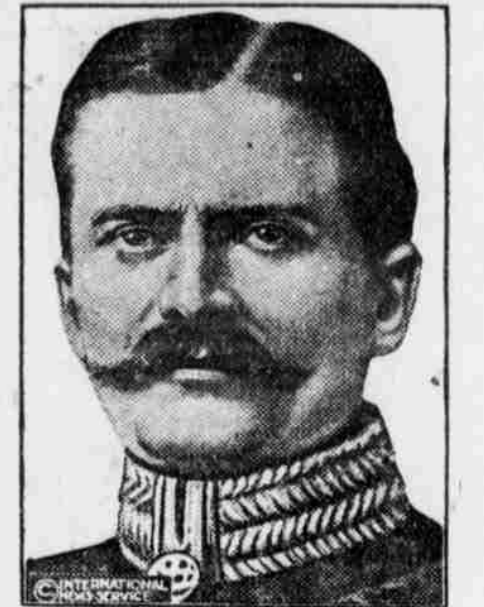
Charles H. Sherrill, former American minister to Argentina, in an address at Buffalo, made the rather startling assertion that the time is ripe for the United States to ask European countries to relinquish possession of their colonies in the western hemisphere.

"It is very doubtful if ever again the United States will be in a better condition to ask favors of Europe than it is at present," said Mr. Sherrill, in referring to the fact that European nations were seeking financial assistance in this country as never before; and he declared the United States owed it to her sister republics to ask Europe "to release to the sovereignty of the peoples themselves all colonial territory in the western hemisphere."

Mr. Sherrill went so far as to suggest that if financial considerations were involved the United States might meet the cost. The speaker did not make it entirely clear whether he would include Canada in the bargaining for independence, saying only: "Canada can have her independence whenever she likes it, but continues her connection with the British empire by her own volition." Mr. Sherrill spoke more particularly of freedom for the Guianas, British Honduras and such European colonies.

**GERMANY'S "SPHINX"**

They call him "The Sphinx" in Germany—that quiet, unassuming man with the square jaw and the clear blue, penetrating eyes, who next to Field Marshal von Hindenburg is the most popular military leader in Germany today. Like Von Hindenburg, Lieut. Gen. August von Mackensen was practically unknown even in Germany until he penetrated the iron ring of the Russian forces around Lodz early in January and achieved victories over superior Russian forces at Lowicz and Wloclawek. His recent victories in Galicia have won for him the Iron Cross of the first and second class and the elevation to the highest distinction in the German army—the title of field marshal.



Von Mackensen was born on December 6, 1849, being the second son of a "country gentleman" in Merseburg, Saxony. His father intended to make a lawyer out of him. He graduated from the gymnasium in Halle and then attended the University of Berlin. In the fall of 1869 he entered the Second regiment of the Berliner "Leibhusaren," the favorite cavalry regiment of the kaiser, to serve his one year of compulsory military service.

When war between Germany and France broke out in 1870 young Mackensen was sent to the front as a private. A few weeks afterward he distinguished himself in battle and was promoted to a lieutenant. During the famous charge of the Prussian and Saxon cavalry at Mars-la-Tour, Lieutenant von Mackensen's bravery was brought to the notice of Emperor William I, who rewarded him with the Order of the Red Eagle and promoted him to a captaincy. Before the war was over he had been made colonel of the regiment in which he had been a private.

Von Mackensen is a deep thinker. He invariably maps out a phase of the campaign, and plans every detail and every move in the quiet of his tent.

**WEEKS FOR CHEAP POSTAGE**



Planning to aid legitimate business to throw off the depressing effects of the European war, Senator John W. Weeks of Massachusetts, an aspiring candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, has proposed the reduction of postage on letters intended for local delivery from two cents to one cent. The reduction, the senator believes, would be especially advantageous to all lines of local business.

For many years the senator was chairman of the house committee on post offices and post roads. He is at present a leading member of the corresponding committee of the senate.

"Aside from business created by the demands of the European war and business concerning the manufacture of some specialties like automobiles," said Senator Weeks, "the United States is not in a prosperous condition. Without the war business this country would undoubtedly be in a condition of great commercial depression. We should adopt a legislative course encouraging business without detriment to the individual."

"Cheaper postage on local delivery letters would aid small and large businesses alike. This alone would amply justify the government in taking the step. And in all other ways the government should be helpful in business affairs, not coercive and repressive."

**CZARINA CURED BY THE WAR**

It is no secret that the mind of the czarina of Russia has been seriously affected for many years past. She was subject to a marked form of melancholia, with other mental peculiarities. Physicians who had examined her feared that she was drifting into hopeless insanity.

And now, miracle of miracles! Her mental sickness has been completely cured by the war. That which has brought such unspeakable woe and misery to millions of people has brought relief to the once unhappy czarina.

It is the serious hard work she has been doing as a war nurse that has benefited the czarina's mind. Coming into close contact with pain and grim reality, with human patience and human weakness has lifted her out of her life of morbid self-concentration and exaggerated terrors, and made her a normal human being.

The czarina has gone into war nursing in a most serious and efficient manner. She has established a hospital of her own, known as "the Court hospital," at Tsarskoe Selo, the village where the famous summer palace of the czar is situated.

