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HOW THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STATESMEN ARE ADVERTISED.

The Tendency of Newspapers to Dilate on Little Things—Congressman Martin, of Texas, Says "Blow Out the Gas and Become Famous."

(Special Correspondence.)

WASHINGTON, May 9.—What is fame? It has neither limitations nor definition, standard nor rule. It thrives on anything and everything, from ambrosia to dirt, from genius to eccentricity. It differs in races and among peoples. The Slav's poison may be the Saxon's food, and the American may grow famous on that which would bind the Britisher still more securely in the chains of obscurity. America teems with famous men. Railway trains, steamers, hotels, streets are full of them. In no other country are there so many "well known" men—men whose names, spoken or printed, are recognized as familiar by a majority of hearers or readers—as in this blessed republic. Perhaps it would be sheer conceit to say we have so many more really great men than England, France or Germany. In point of fact I don't believe we have half as many, but we become better acquainted with our notable men, and we note men for smaller reason. This is a fraternal, companionable people. Few arbitrary barriers are erected between classes. Our great statesmen, great lawyers, great railroaders, great pugilists, great inventors, great journalists, great gamblers, great wits, great orators, great baseball players, great millionaires, great actors, great politicians, great horse trainers, great merchants hobnob together like brothers. And we are, too, such travelers that the Californian is almost as well known in New York as the New Yorker. Men from all the nooks and crannies of the land are constantly meeting and commingling in business, politics, office seeking, summer resorting, conventions of a thousand kinds, anniversary gatherings such as the presidential inauguration and the Washington centennial.

But more than all we are a nation of gossips. We talk more about men than things. And—the secret of it all—our newspapers are greater gossips than we are. They so deftly mix their news and their gossip that you can't tell one from the other. You don't wish to. Only, if you stop to think about it at all, you are likely to realize that the gossip is the best part of the feast. Without the gossip, news is like pudding unsauced. If really hungry for substantial you could eat your bread minus butter, but you prefer the butter, and plenty of it.

It is the newspaper that makes our great men. It is the newspaper that scans hotel registers, sets Argus-eyed observers in hotel rotundas; it is the newspaper that makes the name of Col. Slapdash, of Texas, well known in Boston, and the name of Judge Goodbody, of New York, like unto a household word in the States of the Mississippi valley or the Pacific coast. The English newspaper does not gossip, except in the most limited and frozen fashion. The French newspaper does not gossip, except about actresses, Boulevard, and the three or four conspicuous figures momentarily before the public eye. The German newspapers never heard of such a thing as gossip, and I doubt if their language contains a synonym for the word.

In this country the man who does or becomes anything a little out of the common run is introduced to the public in detail—as boy, collegiate, early struggler for distinction, winner of fame or success. We are told how many girls he courted before he married, what clothes he wears, what he eats, what sort of neckties he likes. His wife and children are introduced along with him, and a good many of his other relatives. All the newspapers gossip, and then swap gossip, and thus the new man before the public eye, or the new woman, becomes as well known to the whole American people as if our country were a suburban neighborhood and we had a new settler with his washing out on the line and the first calls made by all our good but inquisitive and observing wives.

Nor is this all. We have developed an amazing fondness for printing men's pictures, and for calling men by their baptismal appellations or their nicknames. Thus we have "Jim" Blaine, "Bob" Ingersoll, "Tecump" Sherman, "Mat" Quay, "Charley" Farwell, "Tom" Bowen, "Sam" Cox, "Joe" Cannon, "Tom" Reed, "Chance" Depew, "Uncle John" Sherman, "Grandfather" Payne and many others, just as we used to have "Andy" Johnson, "Chet" Arthur, "Jack" Logan and "Abe" Lincoln. All these are aids to the memory and promoters of familiarity. Going still further we are prone to make men great for little things. In making its famous persons gossip uses a wonderful variety of materials. This man is known to the country over for his old hat, another for his cravat, a third because he is in love with an actress, a fourth because he killed another man, a fifth for his funny stories, and a man may gain fame at one fell swoop by a single remark, like Flanagan's "What are we here for?"

There are centers of commerce, manufacturing, learning, railroads, culture, horse breeding, natural gas, literature and other material and immaterial things, but Washington is the center of gossip. In other places gossip is an amusement; here it is a business. And it is here the methods, trends and influence of the national characteristic of gossiping are best studied. Here it is seen as on a housetop how gossip makes a public man more widely known for his personal traits or eccentricities than for his genius or statesmanship, how gossip gives fame, or at least its common equivalent, notoriety, to men who have no other claim thereto, how reputations are manufactured out of trivial incidents and names are sent thundering down the ages with nothing but inconsequential idiosyncrasies to propel them.

ator Blackburn, surely a famous man. Yet he is better known for his bonhomie, his breeziness and as "Joe" than for his eloquence or statesmanship, great as these are. If ex-Senator Bowen had not been a poker player it is doubtful if his name would have been spread familiarly to all parts of the country, and his former colleague, Tabor, is to this day better known for his two hundred dollar night shirt than for his millions and his business ability. Ex-Senator Chace, of Rhode Island, became quickly known for his Quakerish origin and appearance. Senator Davis, of Minnesota, though a brilliant man, has been helped to a general reputation by the beauty of his wife. Even as great and learned a man as Senator Everts would never have become as familiar to the common people as he has but for the joke about his interminably long sentences and the popular notion that his hat was left in the ark by Noah. A good deal of a statesman is Senator Hiscok, but his personal beauty has secured his name further than his ability could have done, had it been twice as great. The fact that Senator Gorman was once a page in the senate and afterward a ball player has contributed much to the ease and rapidity with which his name has become as familiar as a household word. Senator Ingalls is more famous for his invective than for his statesmanship and eloquence.

Senator Morgan is not well known to the country over, but in many places that he is known, 'tis for his long, continued-in-our-next-speeches and not for his general worth as a senator. Minister Palmer is known as the man who gives such enjoyable dinners and tells so many good stories. Ex-Senator Riddleberger has become famous for his eccentricities. Senator Sawyer is noted for his corpulency and good humor. Even in a really great statesman like John Sherman, his alleged characteristic of frigidity of manner is the first thing that comes to mind when his name is spoken. Who has not heard of Martin, of Texas? His name is known from Maine to Oregon because the newspapers have told stories of his peculiarities, some of them apocryphal. When asked, recently, how to win fame, Martin replied: "Blow out the gas."

Morse, of Massachusetts, was in congress a number of years and enjoyed but a local reputation till McKinley illustrated his tariff speech with a suit of clothes bought for \$10 in Morse's Boston store. An able and admirable man is William Walter Phelps, but his bang and red necktie are better known than anything Phelps ever did or said. Allen, of Mississippi, has won fame as a story teller and not as a statesman, and his namesake of Massachusetts will go down in history, not as the brilliant young member from the Old Bay state (though this distinction he may be fairly entitled to), but as the man who carried a camera under his vest and took snap shots at his fellow members of the house in all their various and undignified attitudes.

A witty, brilliant, eloquent, useful and industrious man is the Hon. S. S. Cox, but his fame is twice as broad with the nickname "Sunset" as it would have been without it. So great is his reputation as a wag that one of the trials of his life is to convince people that he is sincere. Springer, of Illinois, is known to fame as the man who always wears a pink boutonniere, though he, too, is a hard working and useful legislator. Congressmen Bayne and Adams are known as the men who sit side by side in the house and look like a pair of twins. Frank Lawler, of Chicago, a very clever Irishman, has had his name sent to the four corners of the country on account of his peculiar use of the president's English. Bacon, of New York, came down to congress and became known almost instantly and very widely as the man who looked like Shakespeare. "Some men are great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Gibson, of Maryland, is well known as the Adonis of congress, Spinola as the man with the wide collar, Jelu Baker as the statesman with a suit of clothes of the pattern of Henry Clay's day. Bland, of Missouri, will live in history as "Silver Dollar Bland." Snowden, of Pennsylvania, became a national figure because President Cleveland vetoed his bill to build a government post-office in Allentown. Foran, of Ohio, won more fame as the reputed author of "The Breadwinners," which he didn't write, than as a moldier of his country's laws in the halls of congress. Holman, of Indiana, will be celebrated through all time as the great objector. John Wanamaker's strides toward fame are much accelerated by his Sunday school superintendency and his manufacture of trousers. Congressman Mason, of Chicago, is becoming famous as a story teller and wit, rather than as a great public servant, and the fact that all his friends call him "Billy" helps his progress amazingly. Weaver, of Iowa, won much notoriety as a filibuster. Kilgore, of Texas, had his name printed in every American newspaper because of his stubborn resistance to the bill to make Sheridan general of the army while that popular hero was lying on his death bed.

Thus it goes through a long list of men whose names are familiar in the ears of the people. You can count on your fingers the public men now living who have a fame as wide as the country itself and who have not been helped thereto by one or other of these little things on which the popular eye or ear seizes with such avidity and the popular memory holds so tenaciously. Two conspicuous instances, and only two, come to mind as I write. One of these, and the most notable one, is Senator Allison, who has been a quarter of a century in congress, whose fame is as broad as the domain of his country, and who has no peculiarity or characteristic of common notoriety. The other is Congressman McKinley; but even he has been helped by his somewhat theatrical and clever display of a pair of trousers as emphasis to his speech on the tariff.

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