

JOURNALISTS ON DECK.

THEIR REMARKABLE PROMINENCE IN WASHINGTON.

James G. Blaine, Elijah Halford, J. S. Clarkson, Public Printer Palmer, Census Commissioner Porter and Many Others, Chief Justice Fuller began as Reporter.

(Special Correspondence.)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23.—A somewhat remarkable dinner party assembled at Chamberlin's last Saturday night. Four or five prominent officers of the government, formerly connected in an editorial capacity with The Chicago Inter Ocean, gave a dinner to a former managing editor of that paper, Senator Pierce, of North Dakota. This pretty little dinner called to mind the prominent part which newspaper men are now playing in public affairs. It seems to me that wherever one turns in this capital city he comes upon newspaper men who are wielding great influence in politics and other fields of human activity, over and above the influence which they naturally exert as writers and editors. I do not as yet hope that the editors will be able to take the place of the lawyers as the principal components of the ranks of statesmen.

Probably the lawyers will always lead in this respect, as it is right and proper they should. A somewhat careful study of both senate and house has convinced me that the best preliminary training for a national legislator is that acquired in a law office, in court, and in necessary familiarity with the laws and parliamentary usages. The training of the law is not indispensable to success, but it is much in one's favor. Two of the most successful men of their times in the house of representatives, James G. Blaine and Samuel J. Randall, had not this advantage. Neither ever studied law. One of the most eloquent, witty and useful members of the house during the last quarter of a century, the late S. S. Cox, was not a lawyer. There are many other exceptions to the rule, but the rule nevertheless remains that nearly all of the leaders on both sides of the house and in the senate have had legal training and experience.

But in purely executive offices this rule does not hold good. Here the editorial training is fully as good as that of the law. Some of the most successful executive officers of the present government are journalists, and the same thing has been true of past administrations. I wish here to pause momentarily to defend the use of the word journalist. It is a good, wholesome word, of well defined, precise meaning, perfect pedigree, convenient application. It may as appropriately apply to the reporter as to the editor, to the desk man as to the special correspondent. A newspaper is a journal of the times, and all of us who help make journals are journalists. It is the common bad among press workers to say: "I am not a journalist, I am a newspaper man." But I protest against that. The counselor does not call himself a "lawyer man," and only in decision is the physician termed a "medicine man." No such cant is indulged in by the educator, the architect, the minister, the civil engineer. Why, then, the awkward, superfluous "newspaper man" as a substitute for journalist?

Daniel Manning did not object to being called a journalist, and he was more than that. He was a great politician, a Warwick, a party statesman. He made Grover Cleveland president of the United States and served creditably in his cabinet. Charles A. Dana was and is a journalist, and he was a cabinet officer. Daniel Lamont was a journalist, and he helped make Grover Cleveland, both before and after the election of that gentleman to the presidency. Another journalist, and a good one, now occupies the delicate and responsible position of private secretary to a president whom he helped to make. John C. New, proprietor of The Indianapolis Journal, and the present consul general to London, had a strong hand in the nomination and election of Harrison; but there was no more vital, well balanced, effective force in that effort than that exerted by Elijah Halford as editor of the principal paper of Indiana.

Long before Gen. Harrison was nominated for the presidency, before he was much thought of for that office, I went to Mr. Halford for data on which to write a sketch of Gen. Harrison's career. In giving me what I wanted Mr. Halford incidentally predicted that his friend would be the next president of the United States, and described to me in detail the forces, influences and conditions which in fact afterward did combine to fulfill his prophecy. It was faithful adherence to these principles and ability to inspire others with the same spirit through the columns of the journal of which he was editor that made Halford such a potent factor in the raising up to the presidency of Benjamin Harrison.

As I have said, on every hand we see evidences of the capacity, usefulness and great influence of men trained in the making of newspapers. Successful construction of newspapers is after all the highest of sciences and greatest of arts, since it involves perfect understanding of human nature. So why should the successful editor not make a successful government executive? It is a pleasure to record the fact that two of the most noteworthy personal successes under this administration have been made by journalists. First Assistant Postmaster General Clarkson has by common consent made the most distinguished personal success of the Harrison regime. His popularity is greater than that of any other officer of the government at the present moment. Though a second rate officer he is consulted as often and relied upon as implicitly by the president as any member of the cabinet. His wife is Mrs. Harrison's closest friend. Even a success like this has not turned the modest editor's head. His ambition is still in the line of his profession, and he intends hastening the day when he can return to the making of newspapers. Another successful officer of the ad-

ministration is Public Printer Palmer, also a veteran journalist. It was but a few days ago that President Harrison said to one of his friends: "There is one bureau of the government about which I have ceased to have anxiety. I have no sort of worry about the government printing office, which every one tells me is managed better than it has been for many years." This is high praise, and it will be readily conceded that none but an experienced printer and publisher could so manage that great office as to deserve it. Mr. Palmer's editorial training, and his absorption of the traditions and the human nature of the print shop, now stand him in good play.

Among the most effective workers in the various World's fair interests which have been so ably and so interestingly represented here of late, I saw members of the editorial fraternity gallantly conspicuous. Col. Elliott Shepard was the handsomest and most polished of the New York workers, while the round and good humored James W. Scott, of Chicago, and the gayly bewhiskered, keen eyed Col. Jones, of St. Louis, were as marked for their energy and judgment as for their personal attractions. These latter two are the men who by sheer force of newspaper genius have within a few years built up about the finest printing properties in their respective cities.

When we mingle with the bright and the big men of our times, journalists, or those who were once journalists, are at our elbows. Census Commissioner Porter was a maker of newspapers. Capt. Meredith, who manages that great workshop, the bureau of engraving and printing, has from boyhood had two hands stained with honest printer's ink. Secretary Blaine and Chief Justice Fuller started out in life as reporters in the same town. Occasional visitors to Washington, and men who while here are sought out by the most powerful cabinet ministers and senators, are Editors Medill and Nixon, of Chicago; Watterson, of Louisville; Halsted, of Cincinnati; Charles Emory Smith, of Philadelphia; Agnus, of Baltimore; Rublee, of Milwaukee; Rosewater, of Omaha. McLean, of The Enquirer, lives in royal style here, consulted and courted by men of both parties.

There are many journalists and printers in congress. Some are one, some the other, and not a few both together, for there is and probably always will be a strong link between the trade and the profession. Senator Hawley, of Connecticut, has been an editor for a quarter of a century. Senator Hearst likes newspapers so well that he has bought one for his son in San Francisco. Senator Teller owns a good newspaper in Colorado, and Senator Joe Brown, of Georgia, edited a country newspaper when he was a young man. Senator Plumb, who has been almost everything in his time—farmer, lawyer, court reporter, soldier, stockman, miner, millionaire—also added to his accomplishments the setting of type and writing of editorials. Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts, to whom the country owes the establishment of the signal service and final completion of the Washington monument, was a country school teacher before he was a country editor. Fifty years ago Mr. Dawes was presiding genius of The Greenfield Gazette and The Adams Transcript.

Senator Pierce left journalism but a few years ago. Gen. Banks, the man who was speaker a third of a century ago, was an editor before he was a statesman. Representative Stockbridge, of Maryland, combines editorial duties with legislative, daily writing articles for the paper of which he is one of the editors, The Baltimore American. Fithian, of Illinois, left a print shop to go into politics, while Shively and Cheadle, of Indiana, are still in the editorial harness. O'Donnell, of Michigan, is editor of one of the best papers in his state. Farquhar, of New York, has been a printer for a quarter of a century, and to this day prefers an afternoon in the government printing office to a good dinner. Moore, of New Hampshire, is editor of one of the many handsomely printed, well edited papers of which his state boasts.

Stivers, of New York, keeps a paste pot on his desk in the house—just such a pot as he used to dip in while editing a paper at Middletown. Laws, of Nebraska, was one of the pioneer editors of his state. Amos Cummings is a newspaper writer and worker known the country over. Hansbrough, of North Dakota, is the editor of The Inter Ocean at Devil's Lake. Wickham, of Ohio, and De Haven, of California, were printers years ago, while Hitt, of Illinois, and Darlington, of Pennsylvania, have earned honest dollars making stenographic reports for newspapers. Joe Scranton, of Scranton, is the editor of The Scranton Daily Republican. Scull, of the Keystone state, has conducted a country paper for nearly forty years.

McCord, of Wisconsin, is, as he says in his biography, "by occupation a publisher, lumberman and farmer, and by profession an editor." Delegate Caine, of Utah, founded The Salt Lake Herald, the organ of the Mormons, while Posey Green Lester, of Virginia, is one of the editors of Zion's Landmark.

From what I know of the ability and loyalty of journalist statesmen, I am willing to risk my reputation on the assertion that the country would be safe with an editor in the White House, eight journalists in the cabinet, and 400 printers, reporters and correspondents in the senate and house.

WALTER WELLMAN.

Precautions Against Fire.

A very nervous old lady coming in on the 10:30 train at Des Moines the other night was put by the hotel clerk on the very top floor of the hotel. As the chambermaid was bustling out of the room she stopped her and asked in a trembling voice:

"Do you know what precaution the proprietor has taken against fire?" "Yes, mum; yes, mum," said the bright one. "He has the place insured for twice what it's worth."—General Manager.

A CURIOUS OLD LETTER.

SECOND HALF OF VESPUCCIUS' EPITOLE TO LORENZO DE MEDICI.

He Describes Some of the Strange Things That He Saw on the Newly Discovered Continent of America and in the Heavens of the New World.

(Special Correspondence.)

NEW YORK, Jan. 23.—In a preceding letter were given a brief account of the life and voyages of Alberico Vespuccius, better known as Americus Vespuccius, and a translation of one-half of his famous letter to Lorenzo de Medici, in which he describes his discoveries. It contains a concise account of the two continents and of the Indian races which inhabit them.

It is strange to read that where now are great civilized cities were less than four centuries ago populous tribes who went naked, were cannibals, had neither law nor government and had no religious ideas whatsoever.

The hitherto unprinted half of this letter is as follows:

Their weapons are bows and arrows, and when they prepare for war they cover no part of their bodies for the sake of protecting them, and to this extent are like beasts. We, as far as we could, sought to dissuade them from these depraved habits. The women, as I have said, walk about naked. To us it seemed wonderful that among these women no one was seen who showed any bodily deformity.

These people live 150 years, are seldom sick, and if they fall ill they cure themselves with herbs and roots. The air in that country is very mild and excellent, and, as I was able to learn from the statements of the natives, there is never any pestilence nor any sickness which is due to foul air, and except they die a violent death they live long lives. I believe in that country the south winds are always blowing, and especially the wind which we call the east wind, and which is to them what the north wind is to us. They are very fond of fishing, and their sea is full of fish and abounds in every species of the finny tribe. They are not hunters. I think that, since there are many species of forest animals there, and especially of lions, bears and numberless serpents, and other horrid and ill shaped beasts, and that every where their forests stretch out long and broad and the trees are of immense size, they do not dare, naked and without clothing and arms, to expose themselves to such hazards.

The land of those regions is extremely fertile and abounds in numerous hills and mountains, boundless valleys and mighty rivers, and watered by health giving fountains; and stretching over it are vast, dense and scarcely penetrable forests, filled with every species of wild beasts. In that country the largest trees grow up without the need of anybody to plant them. Many of these trees produce fruit which is pleasant to the taste and useful to the human body, and some fruits, indeed, which are the opposite. There are no fruits, however, which resemble those among us. Innumerable varieties of herbs and roots are produced there, from which they make bread, and they have the very best relishes and many seeds, in every respect different from ours.

None of the metals are found there except gold, in which last those regions abound. We had no opportunity to bring any of it with us on our first voyage. The natives made this fact known to us, and used to say to us that in the interior there was a great supply of gold, and that it was not valued by them or held at a price. Pearls are abundant. If I should desire to recall the particular animals which are there, and to write concerning the numerous species thereof and the multitude of them, the task would be altogether too long and great, and I am certain that our Pliny could not have touched a thousandth part of the species of parrots and other birds, nor yet of the animals which are in the same regions, with such a great diversity of appearance and hues that an accomplished artist would be unable to paint them.

All the trees in that country are fragrant, and some of them produce either an oil or some liquor. If their properties were known to us I do not doubt but that they would be beneficial to the human body, and certainly, if there is an earthly paradise in any part of the world I do not think that it is very far from these regions. Their situation is, as I have said, toward the west, in such a mild atmosphere that neither chilly winters nor broiling summer heats are felt there.

The sky and the air are ever serene and free from thick clouds; the rains fall slightly and last only three or four hours, and disappear in the semblance of a mist. The heavens are brilliant with magnificent constellations and signs, and I have noticed in it about twenty stars of as great brightness as we sometimes observe in Venus and Jupiter. I observed their motions and revolutions, and measured their peripheries and diameters by geometrical methods, and discovered them to be of the greatest magnitude. I perceived in the sky there three stars as bright as Canopus, two of them very clear, but the third obscure. The antarctic pole is not figured with a Great Bear and a Little Bear, as is our arctic pole, nor is there to be seen next to it any bright star, and among those which revolve around it in a shorter orbit there are three which present the appearance of a right angle triangle. Half the periphery of these stars has a diameter of nine and a half degrees. When these stars rise one of them is perceived on the left hand, of white color and considerable magnitude.

After these come two other stars, half the periphery of which has a diameter of 12 degrees, and along with them is seen another canopus star of white color. To these succeed six other stars, the most beautiful and brilliant among all the eight other spheres, which have in the face of the firmament a periphery of a diameter of 32 degs. With them goes

the dark canopus star of an immense magnitude. They are seen in the Milky Way.

I discovered many other very beautiful stars, the motions of which I carefully noted and have graphically described in my book during my voyage. His most serene highness has the volume which I hope he will restore to me. In that other hemisphere I saw things not in harmony with the doctrines of philosophers. White lightning (St. Elmo's fire) was observed in the middle of the night not only by myself but by all the sailors.

Often have we seen the new moon on the day when it was joined to the sun. On single nights, in that part of the sky, innumerable vapors pass to and fro as well as burning fires.

Now, as I have said, we sailed from Lisbon, which is distant 394 degs. from the equinoctial line, through 50 degs., which, added together, make about 90 degs., from which sum, since it amounts to a fourth part of a great circle, according to the true method of measurement handed down to us by the ancients, it is evident that we have traversed over a fourth part of the earth, and by this method we, who inhabit Lisbon on this side of the equinoctial line in a 394 deg., north latitude, are to those who dwell in a fiftieth degree beyond the same line in a southern latitude on an angle of a line which is in a transverse direction; and that you may understand this the more clearly, let a perpendicular line, while we stand erect in a straight line with the zenith, descend to our head to them upon the side of the earth, and draw ribs from them and us, it results that we are in a straight line and on the selfsame transverse line of the same triangle, and let there be drawn the figure of a right angle triangle, of which line we have the corresponding one, and of this same perpendicular let the base and hypotenuse be drawn from our vertical to theirs, and what has been said concerning the cosmography is sufficient.

These matters were among the more important of the things which I saw on this my last voyage, which I called the third day, for there were two other days, two other voyages, which at the command of his most serene majesty the king of Spain I have made towards the west, in which voyage I have noted wonderful things, performed by that sublime creator of all things, our God, and I have made a diary of the things worthy of notice; to the end that if at any time the leisure should be afforded me, I might gather together all those singular and remarkable circumstances, and write a book either on geography or cosmography, in order that a remembrance of me might survive to posterity, and that the vast workmanship of omnipotent God, in part unknown to the ancients, might on the other hand be known to us.

I therefore beseech the most merciful God that he may prolong the days of my life, and that by his good grace and the health of my life I may be able to accomplish the complete fulfillment of my desires. I keep the account of my two other voyages in my private cabinet, and when his most serene majesty shall restore unto me the account of my third voyage I shall endeavor to seek once more my country and repose, where I shall be able to confer with learned men and be strengthened and assisted by my friends for completing my task.

Of thee I ask not a favor, if I do not send unto thee an account of this my last voyage, or rather my last day, as in my former letter I have promised unto thee. Thou hast known the cause how I was not able to receive from his most serene majesty my original documents, and in my own mind I have been thinking up to now to undertake a fourth voyage, and this being accomplished, it was also done with a promise of two new ships and their armaments, that for seeking new regions towards the south in the direction of the east I should pass through the wind which is called the African. In which voyage I think to accomplish many things, to the praise of God and the advantage of this kingdom, and the honor of my old age, and I look for nothing else beyond the consent of his most serene majesty. God grant what may be for the best. He knoweth that which shall come to pass.

A skillful interpreter hath translated this letter from the Italian into the Latin language in order that all who are familiar with Latin may understand how many wonderful things are being daily discovered, and how the courage of those is being tested who desire to scrutinize the heaven and its majesty and to be more wise than it is permitted, since from so great a time when the world began the vastness of the earth is not known and the things which are contained in it.

WILLIAM E. S. FALES.

John Wilkes Booth, the "Ephesian Dome." John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Lincoln, had often talked with his intimates on the notoriety of great criminals, and maintained that, if a heroic motive could be shown, the slayer of a great man enjoyed a reputation worth seeking. At one time he was incautious enough to hint at the abduction of President Lincoln, and in support of his previous position quoted the familiar lines about the man who set fire to the temple of Ephesus in order to be remembered in history. The lines are:

The aspiring youth who fired the Ephesian dome Outlives in memory the pious fool who reared it. "Does he?" asked Booth's friend. "Aren't you his name?" And to his great confusion Booth was unable to name the incendiary.

Though not very appropriate here, it may interest a few to know that Eros-tratus set fire to the great Temple of Diana at Ephesus on the same night Alexander the Great was born, and that the name of the builder cannot be given for the simple reason that the construction extended through several generations, with many different architects. After the first temple was burnt the Ephesians were 220 years in building the second and it was still the wonder of Asia when St. Paul preached there A. D. 54. It was destroyed by the Goths about 302 A. D.

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