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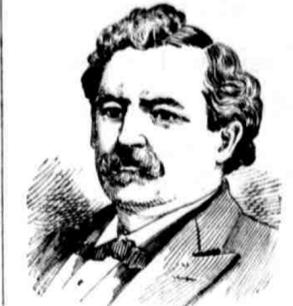
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OF LEGISLATIVE GIANTS.

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How the Sessions of These Great Law Making Bodies Are Opened—Some Notabilities Who Will Be Seen No More at Washington.

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Having seen the congress of the United States open its session and enjoyed many hours in listening to its debates I naturally wanted to "take a go" at the house of commons while in London before the recent autumn adjournment, but that thing "cawn't be done any day, don't you know."



MR. BARNES, OF GEORGIA.

In fact more negotiation is required to get a look at the commons in session than to see President Harrison. The important distinction between the capitol buildings of the two nations is this: In Washington the halls of congress and their galleries make up most of the interior; at Westminster palace the hall is but an insignificant room in the great building, while the gallery is no larger in proportion than that set apart for negroes in old southern churches.

Nor was it easy to find Americans who knew much about the commons, for it is a singular fact that of the many thousand Yankees in London during "the season" scarcely one in a hundred gets a peep at the house. To the question, however, as to what struck them most, as different from the congressional proceedings, all who had looked at parliament answered: "The habit of cross-examining the cabinet officials. There would have to be quite a revolution at Washington before our fellows would stand up and answer any question any member of the opposition party chose to ask."

As a matter of fact, the ministers do not answer all the questions; they are at liberty to "reserve a reply when important interests might be jeopardized by premature publication." And when they do answer their words are often so ordered that an American has to study them with the aid of a world's atlas, a political dictionary and a set of the "blue books" to get at the exact meaning. It is amusing to note, however, that human nature breaks out in much the same way at Westminster and Washington. The members in the minority usually ask in such a way as to imply that the whole concern is going to the "demition bowwows," and the minister's answer contains a marked implication that the British empire is now in the highest state of prosperity, and would be in much better case were it not for the pesky opposition.

The practice of the monarch's appearing in person is gradually falling into disuse, and so the approaching session will doubt-



MR. CHEADLE, OF INDIANA.

less be opened as many preceding ones have been, by the lords commissioners—that is, by the lord chancellor and five other members of the privy council. Exactly at 2 o'clock on the day set Lord Chancellor Halsbury takes his seat "on the woolsack," and the lords present also take seats and remain silent for about one solemn minute. Then the lord chancellor walks into a side room and soon reappears at the head of the commission—all the six in gorgeous scarlet and ermine robes. They range themselves on a bench in front of the throne, and the chancellor commands the "gentleman usher of the black rod" (Hon. Sir James R. Drummond, G. C. B., at present) to announce to her majesty's commons that the lords await.

The commons meanwhile are having a good deal of fun. The speaker simply calls them to order, and then they fall to talking and laughing, inquiring as to each other's health during the recess and "chaffing" the late comers. The door toward the lords opens, the cry of "Black Rod!" is raised and there is silence. He bows three times and delivers his message, then follows the speaker out, and all the members march after to the hall of the lords. Of late years there has been much relaxation, and few of the commons listen to the proceedings. The royal commission is read by the clerks, each of the six commissioners rising and bowing as his name is mentioned. Then Lord Halsbury reads the queen's speech, but no one hears it. The members will soon have the papers containing it, and so they, especially the commons, put in the time socially. They are then dismissed, and go to their own hall by "route step and arms at will," sometimes getting up a pretty good imitation of a college "rush."

Such in brief is the account given by all Americans who have witnessed the ceremony of late years. Not only is there a natural tendency to relax the old strictness, but many of the younger radicals make it a point to be boisterous. The United States parliament (which was named congress only by a sort of accident) never was very formal, and hence in American histories one finds none of those florid and studied descriptions of its beginnings so common in English histories. With but three exceptions party majorities have always been so large that speakers were chosen with no struggle in the house,

though there is generally a hot time in the parliament chamber.

The clerk of the preceding house of representatives makes up the list of the new house, calls the same to order at noon on the first Monday in December, calls the roll and presides till the house chooses a speaker, and then retires without ceremony to private life. Three times, however, in American history the clerk has become a man of great importance, and once he was a bigger man than the president. This was in December, 1855, and John W. Forney was the man. The house began balloting on the 3d of December and kept it up till Feb. 1, 1856; then despairing of giving any candidate a majority of all the votes cast, it agreed to allow a plurality to elect, and on Feb. 2 Nathaniel P. Banks became speaker. It is an odd coincidence that after having been a general and governor of Massachusetts he returned to congress for a time and at the late election was defeated by Sherman Hoar.

The senate being in theory a continuing body, and having the vice president for its presiding officer, meets very much as if it had adjourned but the previous day. Nevertheless the opening of a new congress excites general attention, and the galleries are usually crowded, as they are also at the opening of the second session. At this the speaker usually says a few nice things about his joy at meeting the members again, and it is presumed that nothing has lately happened to cause Mr. Reed to omit that cheerful courtesy this year.

At the opening of the next congress, however, there will be fun. There always is some fun over the proceedings of the new members, and the house of the Fifty-second congress will certainly be "new." Entire state delegations will consist of new men, and there will be nearly 100 members who have never served in any parliamentary body, not even a state legislature. Of these new to congress 120 will be Democrats and 30 Republicans—as near as can now be determined—with a somewhat odd certain quantity of Farmers' Alliance men. That nearly all the prominent Republicans of preceding congresses were "left" is of common knowledge, but it is a little surprising to observe that many prominent Democrats are in the same fix.

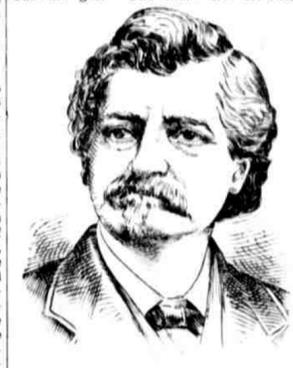


MR. GROSVENOR, OF OHIO.

Georgia, for instance, returns but four old members, while Kentucky sends nine; Indiana returns some old Democrats, but of Republicans not one, and so on "all around the board." The hall of the house will look queer to old visitors. Among the most noted absentees will be Messrs. McKinley, Butterworth, Cannon, McAdoo, Lawler, Grosvenor, Kennedy—But the list is too long. Some who had not had time to acquire leadership will be greatly missed, among them the gigantic Barnes, of Georgia. He is big intellectually and physically, but was turned down in the general overturf. He is the biggest man in the present house and among the very best lawyers.

Mr. Cheadle, of Indiana, has been conspicuous for several reasons, and stands as a remarkable example of how much talent lies concealed about the country till some exigency calls it out. He ran the usual course of the ambitious country boy, first as teacher in a district school, then law student and for some time editor of a ramshackle country newspaper, the financial condition of which was matter for laughter and tears. The coming of a circus show, with its usual \$30 bill for a "mammoth act" was a white day with him then. I speak feelingly on this subject, for Mr. Cheadle sold the concern to me. He went to Frankfort, Clinton county, got a better show, and at the end of a long party discussion was nominated as a compromise candidate, thus becoming the member from the Ninth Indiana district. He served his constituency admirably, and, having been a private for three years in the Seventy-first Indiana, he naturally stood forth as a "soldier champion." According to northern Indiana custom (and not a very good custom) he was given but two terms.

Gen. Charles Henry Grosvenor, of the Fifteenth Ohio district, is also a soldier's champion, and has had an extremely varied experience as lawyer, soldier and speaker of the Ohio house; nevertheless, at the end of his third congress he goes out. Texas dispenses in the near future with Hon. William Harrison Martin, of the First district, and they do say that but for the luck accident of a bell boy with a sharp nose, the world would have dispensed with him, for Mr. Martin is the man who "blew out the gas." The facts are not fully



MR. MARTIN, OF TEXAS.

known, for Maj. Martin threatened death to any man who told them, and actually assaulted one reporter.

"Billy" Mason, of Chicago, will also be missed, and "Little Giant" McCarthy, "Sawmill" Rogers, of Arkansas, and McClammy, of North Carolina; in fact, when one looks over the list of the bright and witty, the old familiar and the solid, the comical and the slightly ridiculous ones who will not come back, he is compelled to wonder who the remarkable and eccentric characters in the next congress will be.

J. H. BEADLE.

A New Orleans man named Joseph Wehring claims to be the only surviving soldier of the Black Hawk war. Who is the next claimant?

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