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THE GOWNED JUSTICES.

WALTER WELLMAN WRITES OF UNCLE SAM'S SUPREME COURT.

Its Sessions Have Been Resumed for the Season—The Ceremonies of the First Day—Calling on the President—A Scrap Book Worth Seeing.

[Special Correspondence.] WASHINGTON, Oct. 15.—After a long summer vacation the supreme court is again in session. At high noon on Monday a great crowd gathered to see the



CURTSEYS BETWEEN BENCH AND BAR. opening ceremonies. Even old residents of Washington never tire of visiting the beautiful courtroom with its classical proportions, and the memories of Clay, Calhoun and Webster. The supreme court as a spectacle is by far the most fascinating thing we have in Washington.

This the crier delivered in a monotone, as if he were very much bored by having to say it at all, but lowered his voice reverentially to the concluding words. Then the justices bowed to Attorney General Miller and the other lawyers at the bar, and Attorney General Miller and all the lawyers bowed simultaneously and quite as profoundly

struct his coachman accordingly. Mrs. Justice Brown must make the first calls on the wives of all the other justices. She is last on the visiting lists of all her friends.

Because the court sat only ten minutes on the opening day, let no one imagine that the justices have an easy time of it. They do not. Few successful lawyers work harder than the justices of the supreme court.

When the justices have finished their reading of briefs in a case, a vote is taken, and one of the justices assigned to write the decision and opinion. The justices must be at the Capitol every day from 11 to 4 o'clock, and the daily sessions of four hours absorb a great deal of their energy and strength.

The supreme court is dignified without being stiff. Even its formality appears to be good natured and easy going. Lawyers may and do crack their little jokes, and no ears are more alert for a jest than those of the gowned justices.



to the justices. After this exchange of courtesies between bench and bar the justices sat down and a few lawyers were admitted to practice before the court, taking the oath and kissing more or less fervently the little old Bible, whose covers have felt the impress of thousands of eloquent lips, running back to the days of Taney and Marshall.

Then the court adjourned to meet the following day. Tradition as old as the government itself requires the court on the first day of every session to meet and proceed immediately to pay its respects to the president of the United States. So on Monday the big justices and the little justices, with their marshal, clerk and reporter, were bundled into carriages and driven to the White House.

On the bench Justice Field, being the senior, sits at the chief justice's right. Justice Field was appointed by Lincoln. Next in length of service is Justice Bradley, who was appointed by General Grant, and of course he sits at the chief justice's left. Justice Harlan, appointed by Hayes, is third, and his post is at Field's right. Justices Gray and Blatchford, both appointed by President Arthur, are fourth and fifth, and their seats are respectively at Bradley's left and Harlan's right. Justice Lamar, whose commission was signed by President Cleveland, sits at the left of Gray, while Justices Brewer and Brown, who were appointed by President Harrison, occupy the end seats.

This order of seniority is observed in

all things, ceremonial and social. The justices march from the robing room to the chamber in the order of their appointment, and from the chamber to the robing room again. Their carriages are driven in this order, and the fashionable people who set out to make ceremonial calls must not permit their coachman to take the houses of justices as they come most conveniently, street after street, but must follow the traditional order. Even the body servants are great sticklers for their masters' rights of precedence, and assume their own dignity to be in the same ratio.

One cold New Year's the wife and daughters of a justice nearly froze to death while waiting at the appointed rendezvous for the carriages of the supreme court, so they might all go in ranking order. One of the older justices was very late, and after suffering with the cold for a long time the juniors concluded to violate tradition in preference to freezing to death, though their body servants strenuously objected.

When the court called to pay its respect to the executive head of the nation on Monday the justices walked into the president's library in their ranking order, and shook hands with General Harrison in a sequence of seniority. But as soon as this was over they formed themselves into an informal group and chatted and laughed for some minutes. The judiciary having paid its respects to the executive, it had another ceremonial duty to perform, and that was to leave cards for the vice president, as the representative of the legislative branch of the government.

This the judges did, solemnly sending their cards, in the proper order, to the door of Mr. Morton's palace on Rhode Island avenue. When Mr. Morton returns these calls he must be careful to note the rank of each justice, and in-



BUTLER AND THE BABIES. Mrs. Justice Brown must make the first calls on the wives of all the other justices. She is last on the visiting lists of all her friends.

Because the court sat only ten minutes on the opening day, let no one imagine that the justices have an easy time of it. They do not. Few successful lawyers work harder than the justices of the supreme court. It is one of the rules of this court that every case must be decided by all the justices, and it is the only important court in the world that does not assign cases to individual members. This makes it necessary for each of the justices to read up and work out all of the cases pending, and about 400 cases are filed every year, more than half of which are decided.

When the justices have finished their reading of briefs in a case, a vote is taken, and one of the justices assigned to write the decision and opinion. The justices must be at the Capitol every day from 11 to 4 o'clock, and the daily sessions of four hours absorb a great deal of their energy and strength. Still the briefs must be read, and you may often see the gas burning in the libraries of the justices at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning.

The supreme court is dignified without being stiff. Even its formality appears to be good natured and easy going. Lawyers may and do crack their little jokes, and no ears are more alert for a jest than those of the gowned justices. They even attempt a little in the way of jokes themselves, in a quiet, dry way, and they smile heartily and unanimously, especially at their own jokes. It is really jolly to see a smile start with the chief justice and spread out in both directions like a pair of wings, till it has embraced Justices Brown and Brewer. Justices and lawyers may smile, but they must not laugh aloud, though a number of them came very near offending the traditions some years ago when General Benjamin Butler in arguing a patent case fondled in his arms three or four patented doll babies.



SKETCHES BY EMINENT COUNSEL. One of the most interesting scrapbooks in Washington is one in the clerk's office, in which almost everything that has been printed about the court is pasted, including a few scandals, pictures from the police papers representing the justices in their snuggery drinking grog, and many cartoons from the comic papers. There are also a number of caricatures of the heads of the justices, made by lawyers with deft pencils, who sought thus to amuse themselves while waiting a chance to be heard.

WALTER WELLMAN.

A STORY OF MR. BLAINE.

How He Gave an Interview to an Evening Reporter. [Special Correspondence.]

CHICAGO, Oct. 15.—Brilliant and fluent as James G. Blaine is on the stump, he cannot dictate his literary matter to a stenographer with any degree of ease. This fact was prominently brought out while he was writing his "Twenty Years in Congress," the manuscript of which was almost entirely in his own hand. But long before Mr. Blaine entered upon that great work I had a personal opportunity of proving his hesitancy in the presence of a stenographer and the absence of a stimulating audience.

I was sent by the Chicago Times to interview the man from Maine at a time when his name was on everybody's lips as the next Republican candidate for the presidency. Mr. Blaine was not so accessible to reporters in those days as he has been during his official career in Washington. A number of bogus interviews had been printed, in which it was sought to cast ridicule upon his abilities and personal ambitions. The Times had been particularly savage in that respect, and when I mentioned my mission, Mr. Blaine naturally felt inclined to extend scant courtesy to its representative. I assured Mr. Blaine that anything that he might wish to say on questions uppermost in the public mind would be printed exactly as he said it; that the editor was anxious to make amends in that way for past offenses, and I was to give him Mr. Storey's personal assurance to that effect.

"Well," said the Maine statesman, after a few moments' reflection, "come to the house of Mr. Julius Caesar Burroughs, in Kalamazoo, tomorrow morning, and I will see what I can do for you."

We were on an east bound Michigan Central train when I asked for the interview. I stopped at Kalamazoo, where there were several bands of music and a fine torchlight procession in honor of the arrival of Mr. Blaine, who was to address a meeting on the square the following day.

Next morning I called at the residence of Mr. Burroughs and found his distinguished guest surrounded by a group of admiring farmers. Mr. Blaine did not wait to be reminded of his appointment, but came forward as soon as I entered the room, and said:

"Excuse me a few moments, sir, and I will be at your service."

In a short time he excused himself to the visitors and we went into Mr. Burroughs' library.

"Do you write shorthand?" he asked as soon as we were seated.

"Yes," I replied.

"But do you write it well?"

"I have taken your own speeches, Mr. Blaine."

"Well, that is promising," he said, with one of his magnetic smiles, "but I'll test you in person now. We have very good stenographers in Washington. Get out your note book and we'll begin."

I made sure from this introduction that Mr. Blaine was going to rattle off a three column interview at his platform speed, and I sharpened several pencils to be in readiness for the task.

"Now," he explained, "I am not going to give you a direct interview with myself, but will relate a conversation on the cars between several statesmen, in which I participated, which you will find as interesting as anything that I might say at this time on public questions."

This was not a rash prediction. The matter Mr. Blaine dictated was opportune and touched leading topics in his own masterly style.

The article made exactly a column in length, and at Mr. Blaine's average rate of speaking should have taken about fifteen minutes to dictate. There was no test of my shorthand speed, however, as it took him exactly two hours to dictate it, which was considerably longer than it would have taken to write it out in long-hand. Mr. Blaine hesitated at almost every sentence, and would pause frequently to ask questions about matters foreign to the subject in hand. I was kept changing words and remodeling sentences, and when the task was ended Mr. Blaine remarked, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "Now you can understand why I wanted an expert stenographer."

I attended the mass meeting in the afternoon and heard Mr. Blaine deliver a brilliant speech at the rate of 170 words a minute, which could have been printed from verbatim notes without the chance of a word.

JOHN W. POSTGATE.

She Wrote "Rock Me to Sleep." NEW YORK, Oct. 15.—A remark dropped casually in the office of Current Literature the other day gave rise to a curious search. It was said by one of the editors that Mrs. Elizabeth Akers-Alien was about to publish a volume of poems under a non de plume. The obvious question—"Who is Mrs. Allen?" was answered by an old timer promptly, "She is the woman who wrote 'Rock Me to Sleep, Mother.'"

The next questions, Where is she and what is she doing now? were harder to answer, and in fact required considerable research before they could be answered, but answered they were. Mrs. Allen (whose full name may be given as Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Chase Akers-Alien) is living very quietly, but more than comfortably, in a handsome flat in Ninety-third street, just a block west of Central park. She is known certainly in society, but being nearly sixty years old (she was born in Strong, Me., in 1832) she is seldom seen in public.

Miss Chase was married to Mr. Akers and then to Mr. Allen, who is a relative of a very wealthy publisher, E. C. Allen, of Portland, Me. Her home was for some time in Portland, then it was in Ridge wood, N. J., and now, as was said, it is in New York city. Her title to fame will always rest on her authorship of the beautiful song which she wrote so many years ago, but it was not until that authorship had been fiercely disputed that it was established. Thirty years ago the question was argued as acrimoniously as it was in relation to "Beautiful Snow," but it was, unlike the latter question, finally settled authoritatively.

D. A. C.

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