MONEY AND BRAINS.

THE COMBINATION REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN CONGRESS.

Good Stories Told in the Smoking Rooms. Mr. Hitt Explains Blaine's Condition. Afraid His Friends Would Kill Him If He Reached the White House.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, April 28.—The gossip of the smoking room is the attraction which keeps many a man in congress. The proceedings and debates on the floor of the house are for the most part dull and uninteresting. One quickly tires of them unless he be a leader in the thick

GOOD STORIES AND BAD CIGARS.

of the fight, and only the few can be leaders. But the smoking rooms and the sofas and easy chairs in the rear of the hall never lose their charm.

Say what you please about the mediocrity of congressmen, I know from personal contact with the statesmen of a number of congresses that while the art of oratory is gradually being lost in this country the art of talking well in a conversational way is continually growing. Sit down in these smoking rooms and you will hear all the latest stories, all the freshest mots, all the newest gossip of men, women and politics. Here the leaders are pulled to pieces, humbug exposed, demagogy confessed or ridiculed, the future of parties predicted and the fortunes of presidential candidates settled about fifty times a day.

Men like these daily symposiums, this meeting together of kindred spirits, and the pleasure here obtained is about all the satisfaction a majority of the members get out of congressional service. I think my friend General Newbury, of Chicago, voiced a prevalent sentiment when he said the other day that but for the gossip and stories of the smoking seats he would have resigned his membership long ago. "I am at the same time paying pretty dearly for my whistle," added Newberry. "My board bill for myself and family, five persons, four rooms, is $600 a month. I pay $150 a month for a carriage, that being cheaper than bringing my own carriage on from Chicago. My other expenses foot up about $250 a month, and so I find that my salary of $416.66 a month falls a long way short of keeping me going. It costs me about $125 a week to sit in the smoking room and listen to John Allen's stories."

There are plenty of other congressmen who spend as much money for the honor of sitting in the house as Mr. Newberry. The great majority, however, are hard up all the time, because they are poor men and a $5,000 a year salary does not hold out very well in this town. I have it on good authority that the stories told in the smoking rooms are of better quality as a rule than the cigars there consumed. Nine out of ten of our friends from the west and southwest are content with a five center, but when you see Bourke Cockran, Speaker Crisp and Mr. Catchings putting their heads together, you may be sure that none but five-for-a-dollar cigars are in their mouths. Mr. Cockran furnishes them.

This young Tammany lawyer, a veritable giant in frame, is coming to the front as one of the strong men of the house. He is immensely popular. He and Tom Reed, who sit opposite each other with only an aisle between them, are about the most noticeable pair in the house. Both are big physically and in brain power. Each of them is a great debater. Both are wits and good fellows. They wear the two largest hats in the house, Reed's being a seven and a half and Cockran's a seven and three-quarters. Reed and Cockran are immensely fond of each other, too, and the ex-speaker often dines at the fine house which the young Tammany man maintains here. Probably Cockran is living in Washington at the rate of $1,000 a month, but he can afford it, for his law practice in New York yields him a handsome income.

PUTTING THEIR HEADS TOGETHER.

Reed is still the leader on the Republican side, and when he assembles his lieutenants and tells them what he wants done his dictum generally settles it. The big man from Maine is lucky enough to know how to make men obey his wishes without rousing their ire. He hasn't so much tact as genius. He simply overshadows everybody that comes in contact with him, and no one presumes to rivalry. Tom Reed has two sore spots. One is his sensitiveness on the czar business. He believes the outcry that was raised against his rule in the last congress had much to do with Republican defeat in the elections of 1890, and yet he thinks he was right in his rulings.

Probably no living man is so much talked about in the house smoking rooms as Mr. Blaine. There is always a mystery of some sort about Mr. Blaine. Will he run for president, or won't he? Is he sick, or is he well? And so it goes. The secretary has just one close friend in the house. Mr. Hitt visits Mr. Blaine about seven times a week. Blaine has no secrets from this tried, trusty friend. So of course Hitt is often appealed to by his fellow members for some information about the secretary of state. He doesn't often respond, but a few days ago he sat down on one of the sofas and in the presence of an interested crowd of congressmen thus explained Mr. Blaine's position and condition:

"Mr. Blaine," said Hitt, "is not well. He is not as sick as he thinks he is, but he is not a well man. He has his ups and down. One day he is like his old self. His great intellect flashes out gloriously, as in the old days. Friends gather around to listen, perfectly entranced. The very next day, perhaps, you can't get a word out of him. He is so despondent and morose that he seems incapable of thinking or expressing himself. While in the dumps he is not much more than a big baby. Then he is no more like the Blaine as the world knows him than night is like day. Mrs. Blaine is naturally much worried about him, and it is painful to see that good, faithful wife watching her great husband as a mother watches a child and wondering what she can do for him.

"One recent day I found Mr. Blaine in the depths of the despondency which often assails him. He wouldn't say a word. Finally I thought I would shock him into activity, and I began by asking him what he meant by acting in this way. 'There's nothing the matter with you,' I said, 'except that you have lost your courage. Brace up. Why did you go and write that letter withdrawing from the presidential race? You had no business to do it. If you had kept still you would have been nominated without a word of opposition. You would have been triumphantly elected. There are hundreds of thousands of Democrats in this country who would like a chance to vote for you. What do you mean by throwing away all this power, all this opportunity to be useful to your party and your country as if it were a mere bauble?'

"At this Blaine brightened up and showed fight. 'You don't understand it at all,' he said. 'Can't you see that I am not well and strong? How long do you suppose I would live in the White House? It isn't the campaign that I

REED'S DICTUM SETTLES IT.

dread. I would leave the campaign to others. It is afterward that makes me shudder and which induced me to write that letter. You must remember that I have been before the country for sixteen years as a presidential aspirant. I have been followed by a host of loyal friends. All this accumulation of sixteen years of obligations would be presented to me for payment the moment I put my foot in the White House. They would come down upon me by droves. I would have to see them. Friends such as they have been could not be put off upon another. No one else could satisfy them. And what would be the result of all that? How long could I, in my condition, withstand an ordeal like that? That is the way Blaine talked, and he meant every word of it. Of course you fellows can understand how sorry his immediate friends are that he takes this view of the matter, but I am afraid he will not change his mind. He lives in constant fear of his own collapse, and he has acquired the notion that a year in the White House would kill him.

"Well, as I was saying, I had begun to fight at Blaine to rouse him up. I succeeded. I struck fire, and for an hour or more he talked as I have never heard any one else talk. Blaine has that way of saying the thing which every one has been thinking, but never knew how to express, just as Tom Reed has, only there is this difference. There is a sting in everything Reed says; he always bites. Blaine is as gentle as a child. He loves even his enemies. That man never bore spite against a living creature. He is incapable of it.

"When roused Mr. Blaine is today as brilliant a man as he ever was. On this occasion he and I fell to talking of the politics of the past. I happened to mention a cabinet officer of the Jackson administration. 'You are mistaken,' said Mr. Blaine, as quick as a flash; 'he was under Van Buren, and went into office in 1838.' I afterward looked up the record and found that Mr. Blaine was right. There is nothing the matter with that prodigious memory of his. Mention any one you please who has ever been prominent in the history of the country and Blaine will instantly tell you all about him. Let him meet a man he knew a quarter of a century ago and he will remember not only the man, but his family history and everything else in connection with him."

This free hand picture of the Blaine of the present, drawn by Congressman Hitt for his colleagues, and with no thought that it would ever reach the newspapers, I give as a sample of the sort of gossip which our friends of the cloakroom regale themselves with.

WALTER WELLMAN.

CHARACTER STUDIES.

A PILGRIM'S OBSERVATIONS IN A PALACE CAR.

Interesting Anecdotes to Prove That Law, Politics, Religion, Philosophy, History, Trade, Finance, Poetry and Pugilism Are All Local Issues.

[Special Correspondence.]

HARRISBURG, April 28.—For study of character, for variety in conversation, for opportunity to listen to discussions of every topic under the sun—law, politics, religion, philosophy, history, trade, finance, poetry, pugilism, etc.—there is no place under heaven like the smoking room of a Pullman.

The pilgrim used to think we as a people were strictly and indeed one; in characteristics, in tastes, in habits of life—a veritable "E pluribus unum," as it were. He doesn't think so now. Observations from lakes to gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, for half a score of years have taught him to the contrary.

Take the Old World, with its differentiated forms of life in habit and in appearance. Its nation divided people are scarcely more unlike than our own, taken by states; their Jews and Turks than our "Knickerbockers" and "Hoosiers;" their pride soaked Spaniards and tame lived Dutch than our "F. F. V.'s" and Oregon "webfeet."

There were six of us in the smoking room out of New Orleans on the Queen and Crescent one night last week. One New Yorker, one Indianian, one Marylander, one Yankee from Maine, one Kansas chap and the pilgrim.

Politics was the theme, and Lord, how our tongues rattled! Every fellow "had it in" for every other fellow. There was one Hill man, one Cleveland man, one Gorman man, one Blaine man, one Harrison man and one Philistine of a Farmers' Alliance advocate.

The Hill man pitched into Cleveland, the Cleveland man dittoed Hill, the Gorman man both; the Blaine man thumped Harrison, the Harrison man cat-o'-nine-tailed Blaine, the Democrats annihilated the Republicans, the Republicans "mopped the floor" with the Democrats, while that Ishmaelite of a Farmers' Alliance man desiccated all the rest.

What fierce denunciation of corruption in politics; what championing of the people's rights; what scathing rebuke of demagogism! Wisdom crowded the compartment, stuck out of the windows and fell off in great chunks along the road.

The pilgrim noticed, though, that locality seemed to govern every man's politics and shape his arguments, for the Hill man was the New Yorker, the Gorman was the Marylander, the Indianian was for Harrison and the Maine Yankee sung the praises of Blaine, while the advocate of greenbacks galore and a government pawnshop a la Farmers' Alliance was the Kansan, whooping it up for Peffer and Simpson.

So the pilgrim wrote it down for future reference that locality makes our politics, just as it governs also our morals and shapes our creeds in religion.

"Look at God's country, will you?" said a stalwart Kansan, one of a party in the smoking room out of Topeka on the "Cannon Ball" train one day to the rest of the group, waving his hand toward the window; "Kansas, the promised land of milk and honey, gentlemen."

"Holy smoke!" retorted a pink eyed Jerseyman of the party, "God's country? Why, my friend, if Jonah had come to this country when he fled from the presence of the Lord, the Lord would never have found him, for I don't believe the Lord ever did visit this desert. God's country! This forsaken corner of creation God's country!"

"I was down in Jersey once," calmly put in the Kansan, "spent a month there; lost over thirty pounds of flesh in the four weeks. All I could get to eat in the whole month was Jersey mosquitoes served up as quail on toast, with a few shoots of asparagus that I mistook for a bundle of toothpicks, and really never was quite sure whether it was asparagus or toothpicks, it was so infernally tough and dry."

"The trouble with Kansas," insinuatingly retorted Jersey, "is that her people don't know how to properly utilize her resources. Look at her roads now. None finer anywhere in the world. Why don't the cussed fools who get caught on these wind swept barrens utilize them as they ought?"

"How's that? I'd like to know," said the Kansan.

"To get out of sight of the measly, grasshopper, jack rabbit and coyote infested abode of desolation," snorted the Jerseyman as he stalked out of the smoking room.

Telling the above incident to a party in the smoking room one night out of Chicago, on the Rock Island road, the conversation at once drifted to the subject of state pride generally. Among the party were representatives from each of the states of Massachusetts, Kentucky and Colorado, each of whom proceeded at once to champion his particular state as the place par excellence for climate, resources and character of citizenship.

Talk of eloquence, of grandiloquent description, of originality of argument, of utter abandon of statement, it was genius itself, and the pilgrim was never so proud of being an American in his life.

Directly the Massachusetts man got the floor. "Gentlemen," said he, "it's no use talking, Massachusetts is the bright particular star in the galaxy of statehood, and, if you please, I'll give you a toast: Here's to old Massachusetts, her men, her mills, her churches and her schools.

"Her men are patriots every one,
Her mills make everything under the sun,
Her churches the way to heaven guide,
And her schools are the nation's safety and pride."

Then up rose the Kentuckian. "Gentlemen," said he, "that's all very well for Massachusetts, but here's to old Kentucky, the fairest gem in the nation's crown; her men, her women, her horses and her whisky.

"Her men are strong, her horses fleet,
Her women are handsome and very sweet,
Her whisky's almighty hard to beat,
And without her creation wouldn't be complete."

Then Colorado asserted herself in the person of the slouch hatted and profane Denverite.

"Gentlemen, all the world knows Colorado is the biggest trump in the deck. Here's to Colorado, her men, her mines, her mountains and her mules.

"Her men are the boss galoots that walk,
Her mines pan out the stuff that talks,
Her mountains are the grandest in all creation
And her mules are a cross between h—l and d—n—t—n."

"Verily," soliloquized the pilgrim, "state pride is a great thing, and a good place to see it assert itself is in the smoking room of a Pullman."

One cold, stormy night in January back in the eighties, five of us were seated in the smoking room en route from Indianapolis west. One of our number was a glum looking, swarthy complexioned, stiff haired, unsocial man, who smoked in silence and seemed greatly bored by the conversation of the rest of the party, never smiling even at the best jokes rehearsed by the others, who vied with each other in an effort to make things cheerful for him with their smoking room yarns.

The pilgrim don't like your grum, unsocial fellows. Your human hedgehogs, who rolling themselves into a ball of taciturnity and unapproachableness with porcupine quills of nonappreciativeness sticking out all over them, seem to him the embodiment of selfish meanness.

This fellow in particular gave him the chills; he was so gruntily nonresponsive, so sour visaged, such a wet blanket to the cheerfulness and good fellowship of the rest, smoking on in grim silence while we wished him elsewhere and in our minds relegated him to the limbo of utter disfavor.

Directly the train conductor entered the compartment, followed by a motherly looking, genteelly dressed woman, whom he introduced as "A good Samaritan, gentlemen, seeking aid for a destitute family in one of the forward cars."

"A sick man, gentlemen," she said, "who has a wife and six little children, and they've lost their tickets somehow and are penniless besides, have no money to pay their fare, and must be put off the train at Terre Haute unless aided by the charity of the other passengers."

"Certainly, madam," was the ready response of four of the occupants of the smoking room. And four silver dollars passed into the hand of the Samaritan.

The hedgehog grunted. "Same old story—frauds, no doubt; dead beats; playing on the sympathy of the public. Put 'em off, conductor; that's my advice."

How hateful he seemed. It wouldn't have taken much urging to have induced the organization then and there of a company of four Whitecaps to chastise the grunting brute for his inhumanity.

The Samaritan said: "Of course, sir, you need not give anything if you think the family unworthy, but I really think they are deserving. The man tells me he has a brother down in Tennessee, and if he can only get to him he will help care for them all, and he's really too sick to stop off and I thought I"—

"What's that you say?" interjected the hedgehog. "From Tennessee? Where are the family? Show me the way? Which car are they in, did you say? Gentlemen, I'll attend to this matter. Here, madam, give the gentlemen back their money. This is my business."

The fellow seemed actually excited, and while the rest wondered the woman led the way to the family, the hedgehog at her heels, followed by a suspicious quartet of unbelievers in his good intentions.

"If that fellow insults that sick man I'll knock him down," whispered one of the other gentlemen to the pilgrim, and the pilgrim said "amen."

Prone on a seat in the second class coach was the sick man, a sallow and cadaverous appearing consumptive. The wife, a mite of a woman, weeping. The children howling in chorus, a scared looking set, a poverty stricken group indeed.

"This is the family, sir," said the Samaritan. "You can see they are very poor and in trouble."

"Are you from Tennessee?" demanded the hedgehog of the sick man. And the pilgrim saw the man who didn't propose to see the sick man insulted clinch his fist.

"Yes, sir; I was from Tennessee, sir, but I've been living in the Wabash bottoms lately and got sick thar, sir. I'm from Wakely county, sir," feebly answered the sick man.

"What's your name?" fairly shouted the hedgehog in a blaze of excitement.

"Wister's my name, sir; my family live in Wakely county. My wife thar, she's from Wakely, too, sir. Her name was Glenn, sir."

"Great God! Mary Glenn; and you are Jim Wister?" gasped the hedgehog. "Why, look here, man; I'm an old schoolmate of yours. I'm from Wakely county, Tenn., myself. Here you, conductor; what's the fare to St. Louis first class for this whole family? They're going through; and here, you Pullman man," to the Pullman conductor, who had followed the party into the car, "take this whole crowd back into the Pullman. Give 'em two whole sections. These are friends of mine. I'll pay the bill. Here, gentlemen; some of you help carry this sick man to the sleeper. My God! From old Wakely county, Tenn. Mary Glenn and Jim Wister!"

The quartet assisted in the removal of the family back to the Pullman, saw them snug in their berths, saw them fed bountifully from the buffet, saw a big roll of bills pass into the hands of the little wife and mother from the paw of the hedgehog, saw the children laugh for very excess of comfort, while tears of gratitude wet the cheeks of the sick man. And then the pilgrim sought his berth, saying softly to himself, "Verily, state pride has its uses, and a good place to learn lessons of life is the smoking room of a Pullman."

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