

**EVARTS AS A STORY TELLER.**

The late William M. Evarts was pronounced by George Augustus Sala the best raconteur, with possibly one exception, in American public life. Washington cherishes and retells with zest many of his stories, particularly those relating to himself.

He was the most approachable of men while secretary of state. "I find that it pays better in the long run," he once said, "to see a man while the impulse is still fresh upon him and before he has had time to think up a set speech or prepare an argument. So, when a caller asks me to fix a future day and hour for an interview of five minutes—he always wants just five minutes, no matter whether his errand merely involves the writing of an autograph or portends the collapse of an empire—I answer, 'I'm ready now; go on.' Taken thus by surprise, he probably puts into the fewest words possible whatever he has in mind, and I get off easily.

"Once in awhile my confidence is imposed upon. I was just closing up my business as attorney general at the end of the Johnson administration, when a man who announced himself as a New Yorker called, as usual wished me to make an appointment, and, also as usual, was admitted at once. He wore a very mysterious look and requested that I dismiss my secretary, as his business was of the most private nature. When he was sure that we were alone he said:

"Knowing that you were going back to private practice in New York, I wish to avail myself promptly of your services as a legal adviser."

"I bowed.

"As there should be no secrets between counsel and client," he went on, "I may as well tell you frankly that I am a sneak thief by profession, and have devised what I believe to be a novel and ingenious trick; but, before putting it into operation I should like to consult you regarding the law on the subject. Suppose I went into a savings bank and, by pretending to be one of the employees, led a depositor into handing me his money—using no force, of course, but simply accepting what he voluntarily handed me; is there any statute under which I could be punished for that!"

"I suppose a good many lawyers would have knocked the fellow down; but I saw that he had no idea of insulting me—that he considered the whole thing a simple matter of business, and that he had done me the compliment of a first choice from among all the members of the bar. So I answered quietly that I had never studied the law on that point and was too busy to look it up. 'You had better go to somebody else,' I added.

"Well, would you do me the favor to recommend the lawyer who has made, in your judgment, the most exhaustive

examination of the criminal law that fits a case like mine?" he persisted.

"With pleasure," I replied. "Try the district attorney."

"Our diplomats make a rather unimpressive appearance, I fear," he said on another occasion, "in comparison with those of the Old World at the great public functions. I realized this one day at a reception at the White house, when the diplomatic corps were there in full regalia, and I was acting, in a sense, as master of ceremonies. Senator — had brought along his little boy, whose eyes, I noticed, seemed to come back to me curiously after every survey of the room. Presently I overheard him ask his father in a hoarse, childish whisper: 'Pa, is that man there too poor to buy a dress?'"

"Speaking of diplomats, reminds me that Mrs. Hayes, who, as you remember, was a staunch teetotaler, argued with me for an hour over the first dinner the president was to give to the foreign representatives. I tried to make her see that it would be no sacrifice of principle on her part to set wine on the table, but only the civility we always show to guests by recognizing their ways of living at home.

"I'm afraid," she declared, "that the ministers will have to make up their minds to be sociable with water."

"And I shocked her dreadfully by answering: 'Mrs. Hayes, I have never known people to be sociable with water—except in a bath.'"

"Did Mrs. Hayes carry her point?" he was asked.

"Yes, indeed," he responded with a dry chuckle. "She had the dinner as she wanted it and the water flowed like champagne."

Once, when twitted on his small size by a statesman of the strenuous type, Mr. Evarts retorted: "That remark proves what I have always asserted—that in your eyes, measures were more important than men."

To another critic, who found fault with his habit of stringing out a whole paragraph without a break, by the use of parenthetical clauses, he said, cheerfully, "I have noticed that criminals object to long sentences."

One day a young woman dressed in the height of fashion, and with a most self-satisfied air, called him out of the senate for an interview in the marble room. She explained her visit as due to a desire to benefit his children. Mr. Evarts was all attention in an instant.

"I should like an engagement to instruct and entertain the younger members of your family," she went on. "My friends tell me that I am very clever, and I am accustomed to recite for hours every day."

"It may be said to have become chronic," suggested Mr. Evarts, sympathetically.

"I suppose so," the elocutionist answered with enthusiasm.

"Well," commented the senator,

dreamily, "it has always been the practice of our family to mix benevolence with our business, whenever we can; but we have to exercise some discretion in doing this. We had a nursemaid once who became lame, and a coachman who was badly deformed by an accident. In both cases the misfortune occurred after the parties had entered our service, so that we felt bound, in Christian charity, to retain them for the rest of their days. But I should hardly feel justified in closing a contract with a governess whom I knew, at the time of making the engagement, to be in an advanced stage of elocution, probably incurable."—New York Commercial Advertiser.

**AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM OF TAXATION IN COLORADO.**

The house of representatives of the Colorado legislature has adopted the Bucklen bill which means a radical change in the system of taxation in that state if the measure becomes a law. The bill provides for a constitutional amendment to introduce the Australian system which is based upon the Henry George single tax theory. The bill leaves it optional with each county to avail itself of the privileges of the amendment. The three main provisions of the amendment are:

1. The general assembly shall have power by law to exempt any or all personal property and improvements on land from any or all taxation. All laws exempting from taxation the whole or any part of the full cash value of any rights of way, franchises in public ways, or land, exclusive of the improvements thereon, shall be void, except as otherwise provided by this constitution. Any part or parts of this article of the constitution conflicting with the provisions of this section, shall be and the same hereby are amended so as to conform hereto and harmonize herewith.

2. Once in three years, but not oftener, the voters of any county in the state may, by vote, at any general election, exempt or refuse to exempt from all taxation for county, city, town, school, road and other local purposes, any or all personal property and improvements on land; but neither the whole nor any part of the full cash value of any rights of way, franchises in public ways, or lands, exclusive of the improvements thereon, shall be so exempted; Provided, however, that such question be submitted to the voters by virtue of a petition therefor, signed and sworn to by not less than one hundred voters of such county, and filed with the county clerk and recorder, not less than thirty nor more than ninety days before the day of election.

3. The rate of taxation on property, for state purposes, shall never exceed four mills on each dollar of valuation; but the provisions of this section shall not apply to rights of way, franchises in public ways, or land,—the full cash value of which may be taxed at such additional rate as shall be provided by law, after exempting all personal property and improvements thereon from such additional rate of taxation.