

Cliques in Washington Social Life

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TO THE NOVICE in Washington's official life, society for the first year is a maddening, mystic maze in which she is perpetually face to face with the least desirable reflections in the mirrors. During the second year she succeeds in straightening out to her own satisfaction and, incidentally, that of her guests and acquaintances, the question of precedence. And just about the time that her husband's term expires and they drift back to their native city, she discovers that all this while she might have been one of a delightful and independent clique, if only she had known the ropes.

Social life at the national capital divides itself along two distinct lines—officially and temperamentally. The official divisions are determined by certain unwritten laws handed down from administration to administration. These must be observed at all functions of an official nature, but, having done her duty in this respect, a woman is free to make such friends as she elects. But woe unto the woman who does not observe first these official distinctions, or who, through motives of personal friendship, gives precedence to a civilian when representatives of official life are also her guests. From the president himself to the department clerk, all are slaves to these social laws.

The woman who is experienced in Washington life, whose husband has served more than one term, knows her social code so thoroughly that she dispatches all official duties by routine and has ample time to enjoy such relaxation as appeals to her sisters in private life.

Custom and the inordinate clamor for rank and the right of precedence have separated the "smart set" of official life into various small sets, or cliques, which entertain among themselves and keep jealously aloof from all other cliques save on such occasions as the prescribed state or official "affairs" make appearance and ostensible cordiality almost obligatory.

What might be termed the "White House" set consists of the chief executive and his family, the members of his cabinet and their wives and daughters, and the chief justices and families. In addition to meeting at purely official functions, there is likely to be a more friendly feeling among them, evidenced by informal dinners and even simpler forms of entertaining.

The diplomatic corps forms another small clique, marked by the most pronounced forms and ceremonials in the capital. The representatives of the monarchies in particular know their etiquette as the Mohammedan his Koran, and in their limited circle are wheels within wheels, the watching of which gives the humble outsider social vertigo.

In the matter of formal entertaining, par-



MRS. ROOSEVELT, IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME, WASHINGTON'S SOCIAL LEADER.



MRS. CORBIN, WIFE OF GENERAL CORBIN, LEADER OF THE MILITARY CLIQUE.

ticularly in giving dinners, the hostess is frequently confronted by the question of precedence in its most formidable form. It takes infinite tact to seat those whose knowledge of their social rights seems for the time being their most absorbing problem. While rights of precedence go to foreign ambassadors and ministers, should a chief justice and his aides be present they hold equal social rank. The senatorial contingent claims the same position; hence the only safe path for the hostess to follow is to avoid entertaining officials of equal rank at the same dinner.

Men may be too busy to make a social mountain out of a mole hill, but with women it is a burning question. It is still debated whether the wives of cabinet ministers should call on the wives of the members of the supreme court or vice versa, and at all dinners daughters of justices and senators expect to precede daughters of private citizens. Many heart burnings and the severing of friendships have followed infringement of this rule. It may be interesting also to learn that strangers call upon the ladies of the official world first.

Probably the most enjoyable of the sets now in existence is Mrs. Roosevelt's private musical coterie, in which are found many of her friends, irrespective of rank or condition—an innovation which may surely be granted the "first lady of the land," for she may not show partiality or special friendliness to any one when fulfilling her official duties. As the wife of the presi-

dent she never infringes upon the unwritten laws of precedence, but as Mrs. Roosevelt she opens her parlors occasionally to those who appeal to her personally. These affairs are of the simplest sort, and Mrs. Roosevelt is usually assisted by Miss Hagner and Miss Alice Roosevelt.

Second comes the clique composed of private citizens, who make up a small proportion of Washington's "smart set." These people are of large means, entertain lavishly and, having no axes to grind, choose their friends from any of the antagonistic official circles.

The most exclusive set—and the smallest in point of numbers—is composed of the old Washingtonians, who regard with aversion the official element. Their social functions consist of quiet teas and dinners, given without ostentation or display.

The nearest approach to aristocracy in Washington may be found among the army and navy people. Generation after generation, drawing prestige from deeds of valor in many wars, have gone to Annapolis or West Point. No more polished men are to be found in America, and they hold their own in matters of etiquette and ceremonials with the foreign representatives. Social opportunities abroad and the indefinable polish which is gained only through travel are theirs. The men marry women of wealth and family, and while among themselves they adopt a less stringent code, at official functions they are sticklers for the prestige and precedence due their rank.

In both the senatorial and congressional cliques there is much friendliness. This is due probably to the fact that so many of the various members, with their families, came from the same portions of the country and were friends or acquaintances prior to the exodus to Washington official life. Again there is, especially among the newcomers, a bond of sympathy between the women in their struggle for recognition, all meeting the same formidable unknown etiquette of official rules in Washington.

It must not be forgotten, too, that there is a vast army of lesser government employees who flock to the official receptions and balls, and who fancy that they are enjoying the highest of social life. This set probably contains the oddest and most amusing of the types. The callow youth who has recently acquired an appointment and who attends his first "reception," is not quite certain whether he should wear a dress suit and high hat at 4 o'clock p. m., or retain his business suit with his favorite red tie. He usually appears in a motley assortment of clothes, having tried to effect a compromise, shakes hands awkwardly with his hostess, stands about for a bit and wishes he had not come. But he usually goes again and after a while learns something of the conventionalities. This type is omnipresent. The women as a rule are more adaptable and make fewer blunders.

Then there is, too, the eternal visiting, floating population seeing Washington, who find it nice to return to their rural homes and tell their friends that they attended this or that reception. In many cases they make the same laughable mistake of not going as casual onlookers in street attire.

Among other interesting sets is one that consists of a small army of young women who represent the four sections of the country—well-bred girls, daughters of men of wealth, who spend winter after winter in Washington at some "finishing school." They ostensibly take a course in this or that thing, but their real motive is to enjoy the social functions to which they can obtain entrance.

One of the best known and perhaps the most successful and popular of these "schools" has as its head a southern woman of infinite tact and good breeding. She has personally, by birth and breeding an entree to many of the most exclusive affairs, irrespective of the social or official status of the entertainer, and "her girls" thus often obtain a social footing and invitations where even the most eager of some other set finds it impossible to break down the barriers. These young women hear all the best music, go to all the best shows, are carefully chaperoned on all occasions and are perhaps the happiest of all who participate in the queer social life of Washington.

Gleanings From the Story Tellers' Pack

AT a recent banquet in New York ex-Congressman McAdeco of New Jersey presided. His opening words pertained to the coal situation, and he aroused great laughter when he told of his returning from Europe last year. When he arrived he was holding a handkerchief over his eye. A Hibernian customs officer asked: "Why are you holding your eye under cover?" "There's a bit of coal in my eye," responded McAdeco. "Ah, bringing in coal, are you, sir? You'll have to pay a duty on that."

At the same banquet Hon. Henry Burke of Philadelphia said: "One of the wittiest retorts I ever heard was of an Irish lady in Philadelphia. Her husband had heard a riddle, 'Why are you like a donkey?' and the answer, 'Because your better half is stubbornness itself.' It gave him an opportunity to get a glorious dig at his wife, so when he got home he asked, 'Ellen, can you tell me why I am like a donkey?' and she answered, 'I suppose it was because you were born so.'"

Marshall P. Wilder was recently engaged by Mr. Vanderbilt, whose charity is displayed in many ways of which the general public wots but little, to entertain the inmates of one of the Keeley institutes. After the entertainment, relates the New York Times, the humorist was taken on a tour of inspection about the place. Some of the patients were still highly delirious, and shouted in their mad ravings in a manner to make even the humorist shudder. One of them suddenly roared from his room that it was full of snakes, and was wild in his fear of the imaginary reptiles. Suddenly he changed his tone and declared that there was a woman in his room, and then relapsed into silence.

"She must have been a snake-charmer," murmured Wilder, as they moved on to the next ward.

"Yes, I am from Minneapolis," said E. P. Buss, general western representative of the Berlin machine works, quoted by the Washington Post, "and I suppose that it is up to me to tell some story indicative of the hostile feeling existing between my burg and St. Paul, our neat little rival across the river. The latest one I know is of the Minneapolis Norwegian who was being prevailed upon by an importunate

book agent to buy a bible. The flax-haired man from the cold peninsula was all but persuaded when he happened to glance within the volume and ran across the name St. Paul; he threw the book down in disgust, saying, 'Aye tank you can't fool me into buying a book that has anything to say about St. Paul.'

"At least, that is not so old as the tale of the Minneapolis minister who was fired by his congregation because he took his text from St. Paul," said Mr. Buss.

"It always pays to be conservative," said Internal Revenue Commissioner Yerkes, quoted by the New York World. "Now, I recall the case of the man from Dyersville, Dyer county, Tenn.

"I can lick any man in Dyersville," he announced one day on the main street of that village.

"There was no response. 'I can lick any man in Dyer county,' he then proclaimed.

"Still there was no reply to the challenge. Emboldened by the success of his bluff, the man shouted, 'I can lick any man in Tennessee!'

"At that a long, lank mountaineer peeled off his coat and wiped up the street with the boaster.

"Gentlemen," said the braggart, as he brushed off his clothes, 'the trouble with me is that I scatter too darn much.'"

A woman with her little son, a child of 4 years of age, inquired of a man standing in one of our railway stations: "Can you tell me what time the next train leaves for Scranton?"

"At t-t-twenty m-m-minutes p-p-past f-f-four." About five minutes later she again put the same question to the same man, and he repeated the same answer in the same stuttering way. When she approached him for the third time with the same query he said to her: "W-why do y-y-you a-a-ask me s-s-so m-m-many t-t-times? I-I a-a-al-ready t-t-told you t-t-twice."

"I know you did," replied the woman, "but my little boy likes to see you work your mouth."

The Michigan delegation to congress is telling stories about the late Governor Pingree.

"One night," said Representative Corliss, "just before Pingree left the governorship, he thought he would like to put out

a farewell message to his enemies. He wrote about 20,000 words. He was on the outs with about all the newspapers in the state and he didn't know how to get the message printed. He finally made up his mind he would pay for it as advertising and he called up one of the owners of a Detroit paper by long-distance telephone from Lansing. Pingree told the publisher what he wanted and after a lot of figuring the Detroit man allowed he could print the stuff for \$1,233.25.

"What!" roared Pingree over the telephone. "Now, you git out, young man. I'm willing to retire one member of your firm for this job, but I ain't going to put them all on Easy street at the same time."

The teacher had been explaining to the class in etymology the meaning of the word "gamy" as an ending in compounds and had taken as illustrations the three words "polygamy," "bigamy" and "monogamy."

"Polygamy, children," she explained, "is the condition of having several wives; bigamy, the condition of having two wives, and monogamy, that of having only one wife."

After discussing various other roots and words, relates the Philadelphia Ledger, she reverted to those she had first explained and put questions to test the knowledge of her pupils.

"Now, children," she said, "when a man has many wives, or a woman has many husbands, what do we call it?"

"Polygamy," was the response.

"And what is it when there are two wives or two husbands?"

"Bigamy."

"Very good. But if the right state of affairs exists, and a man has only one wife and a woman only one husband—what is it then?"

"Monotony."

Judge Adams, the county court judge of Limerick, in presiding at a lecture on Irish humor at the Irish Social club, in London, spoke of the humors of Irish matchmaking. According to the well known proverb, marriages were made in heaven, but anybody who knew rural Ireland knew that very often marriages were made in public houses. They were generally made on Shrove Monday, and the talk between the parties concerned was not of love, or constancy, or of blue eyes and golden hair, but mostly about cows and sheep, pigs and feather beds. It often happened that a

bride and bridegroom met for the first time at the altar. A young girl once rushed into the house of a girl friend of hers and said: "Mary, Mary, I'm to be married in the morning!" "Yerrah, to whom?" inquired her friend. "To one of the boys of the Donovans." "To which of them?" asked her friend. "Well," said the bride, "'twas rather dark near the fireplace and I didn't rightly know which." The judge mentioned another case where a woman called out to her daughter an hour earlier than usual of a morning: "Mollie, get up at once!" "Yerrah, for what, mother?" "You're to be married today, Mollie." "Indeed, and to whom?" inquired Mollie. "Now, what's that to you?" replied the mother.

In one of the large manufacturing establishments in Philadelphia an Irishman was employed to watch one of the entrances.

One day the superintendent saw the Irishman was neglecting his duty, and told him to go to the office and get his money, as his services were no longer needed.

The superintendent went away on business that day, and was gone about a week or ten days.

On his return he happened to be passing this same place, and was surprised to find the Irishman he had discharged still acting as watchman.

He said: "I thought I discharged you a couple of weeks ago."

"Sure," says the Irishman.

"Well, why didn't you get out when you were told?"

"Oh! I know when I got a good boss, if you don't know when you have a good man." Needless to say, he is still there.

One of Dr. Lorenz's compatriots chuckles every time he tells this anecdote, which is told as an actual occurrence in the great surgeon's career.

"The doctor was always very charitable, and treated a great many people gratuitously. Among them was a poor little girl in whose case he was deeply interested. One morning Dr. Lorenz happened to meet her mother, and was surprised to hear that his patient had died a few days before.

"Why didn't you send for me when the change came?" he asked.

"We were going to do so, sir, but we thought it better to let the dear child die a natural death," was the tearful answer.