

saving work, — a work whose full import he could not know, whose far-reaching consequences he had not divined. They shape our life. Modern civilization, liberty, science, social progress, attest the world-wide scope of the Protestant reform, whose principles are independent thought, freedom from ecclesiastical thrall, defiance of consecrated wrong. Of him it may be said, in a truer sense than the poet claims for the architects of mediæval minsters, "He builded better than he knew." Our age still obeys the law of that movement whose van he led, and the latest age will bear its impress. Here, amid the phantasms that crowd the stage of human history, was a grave reality, a piece of solid nature,

a man whom it is impossible to imagine not to have been; to strike whose name and function from the record of his time would be to despoil the centuries following of gains that enrich the annals of mankind.

Honor to the man whose timely revolt checked the progress of triumphant wrong; who wrested the heritage of God from sacerdotal hands, defying the traditions of immemorial time! He taught us little in the way of theological lore; what we prize in him is not the teacher, but the doer, the man. His theology is outgrown, a thing of the past, but the spirit in which he wrought is immortal; that spirit is evermore the renewer and saviour of the world.

Frederic Henry Hedge.

SOCIAL WASHINGTON.

WHEN Washington was planned, — so tradition tells us, — it was intended that the city should crown what is known as Capitol Hill, stretching away toward the east, and that the White House should be in a retired spot a mile out in the country. Georgetown was not expected to grow eastward across Rock Creek, and the capital city, it was assumed, would have that proper respect for the dignified retirement of the chief magistrate which would deter it from making unseemly advances upon his residence. All the world knows that Washington has disappointed its projectors. Those worthy persons apparently failed to appreciate the social influences that would spread out from the home of the President. Perhaps General Washington and his contemporaries could not grasp the idea of social pleasures that did not involve a long ride over country roads and through virgin forests. Their festivities meant journeys to distant plantations and farms, and embraced not

only the breaking of bread at the host's board, but lodging for the men and women, and stabling for the cattle. In the new country there could be no price too great to pay for social privileges, but the demands of public business made it necessary that those engaged in it should live near each other, and not far from the place of meeting of Congress. The city was intended for the carrying on of the work of government, and there seems to have been no thought that other influences would have any agency in directing its growth. The serious labors of such a statesman as John Adams were expected to command more consideration than the frivolities of all the fashion that might ever find its way to the town. But it turns out that fashion, by which is generally meant not only the frivolous but the best social life, is stronger than the plans of sages, and its convenience has required that the people who feast and dance, who lionize and are lionized, who give and receive

the inspiration that is the best result of the meeting of clever men and women, should dwell near the White House. Thus it is that the dignified official home of the President is not out in the country, but in the thick of the city, looking out upon its most fashionable quarter.

The President and his family are expected to lead not only in the official society, but in the more intellectual and cultivated life of the capital. Some administrations have disappointed this expectation, but as a rule the influence of the head of the nation is felt in the active social life of Washington; and, generally, to be unknown to those who rule at the White House is to be at least out of the centre of the finest privileges which the capital has to give. There are those who, because of personal or political rivalry, have no relations with the executive power except of business; but if they possess that kind of merit which makes men and women sociable or companionable in the eyes of the people who stand within the reflection of the light that beats upon the throne, they are safe from utter exclusion.

The fashionable quarter of Washington has been a natural growth. First, the cabinet officers were obliged to live near the man to whom they ministered advice; then, naturally, the families of senators and of justices of the supreme court followed, while the diplomats, having nothing to do with the legislative branch of the government, and everything to do with the executive, have always dwelt under the shadow of what has come to be called the Executive Mansion. These official people and a few Georgetown aristocrats, whose descendants ceased to recognize Washington when the war of the rebellion broke out, made the beginning of the rich and picturesque life that is now to be found at the federal city.

Of all places in this country, Washington is the city of leisure. On bright winter afternoons, its thoroughfare is

full of pleasure-seeking saunterers; it is the one community in the United States whose working people are not forever filling its streets with the bustle and hurry of their private affairs. In truth, trade disturbs it very little. Commerce has no foothold where are enacted the laws intended to regulate it. Business has left all the region for a more congenial atmosphere. In one or two places on the Potomac it has grasped at the river, but its fingers have slipped off, and the days when Georgetown and Alexandria were important market towns have passed away. Decaying warehouses and ruined wharves and grass-grown streets remind one of a tradition which is to the effect that once farmers brought their produce to now departed commission houses, to be loaded in sloops that crept sleepily down the yellow waters to the Chesapeake. The broad river seems consecrated to the heroic memories of two wars, for the interest in its almost townless shores centres in the thousands of graves at Arlington and the one tomb at Mt. Vernon. The banks of the stream at Washington are almost as green with herbage and trees as the water-side of an unpretentious village. People who are in government employ still make the majority of the more interesting classes, and work for the public is done by many hands and in a few hours. Moreover, the men who are engaged in it rarely permit it to worry them, and almost invariably shake off its cares with their office-coats. After four o'clock in the afternoon, they do with their time what seems best to them, and, if their position warrants it, they devote themselves to the performance of social duties, — a task which, more than in any other city of the country, is a pleasure. The afternoon teas, the evening receptions, — most of them very simple entertainments, — and the round of dinner-parties make constant demand upon the eligible men and women who spend their winters in

Washington; and most of the men, except those who are in political or judicial life, have time to satisfy the demand.

The question that interests the world outside seems to be, "How much is social life disturbed and coarsened by contact with the politicians?" If we were to answer this inquiry from the novels that have been written about Washington, we should be obliged to confess that those who govern us have a great capacity for demoralizing the people whom they meet when they lay aside the labors of state, and unbend. The truth is, however, that a fair picture of the social side of Washington has never been painted. There have been truthful sketches of certain features, but all attempts to portray the life led by the clever and refined people have been unfaithful. The misrepresentation of which the capital has been the victim is due largely to the great hotels and their environment. The best side of the city cannot be studied in its public places. It would be unnecessary to say this of Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia. No one would think of undertaking a study of the inner and best life of any one of our great business communities in the vestibule or smoking-room of his hotel. It is possible that Washington receives a different treatment because the public has an idea that the city is composed mainly of congressmen and treasury clerks. It suffers from superficial observation. To a stranger nothing is so distracting as the bustle of the great caravanseries that are the centres of a life redolent with surface politics, noisy, showy, and misleading, and with all the cheap pretentiousness of shoddy fashion. Into this coarse and glaring activity very often fall the honest, worthy, unsophisticated country member and his wife, — he, frequently, a man of strong head and solid accomplishments, and she a modest, trustful, sensible housewife, whose ambition is satisfied with her husband's honors.

This mingling of the vulgar and the innocent helps to maintain the deception, and does much to induce the casual observer to believe that he is seeing the true essence, when he is looking at a very bad imitation. Almost all the writers of fiction who have fluttered, moth-like, about the shining subject have been too much attracted by the glare of the public places. It takes time and opportunity to learn that the men who are most in the newspapers are not necessarily the most prominent in society. There is many a popular orator or party leader whom one will never meet outside of the Capitol, except at hotel hops and the crushes sometimes given by short-sighted people, who think to reach social eminence accompanied by the notes of a ball-room orchestra, amid the fumes of unstinted champagne, and on the wings of indiscriminate invitations.

There is a vulgar side to Washington society. Why should not this be expected? There is a vulgar side to the society of every city in the country. There are coarse and untrained people even in Boston, and strange tales come from New York. Social solecisms are due largely to provincialism. When, therefore, the various degrees of provincialism which are to be found in the United States are brought together into one heterogeneous mass, and are mixed up with the low politicians and lobbyists who infest every capital in the country, it is not to be wondered at if provincialism, looking upon these creatures as men of the world, adopts their bad manners, which give the noisome reputation that some writers of fiction, both in novels and in the newspaper press, have liberally spread over the whole city. So far as I know, only one writer — the author of *Democracy* — has shown any familiarity with the customs of the best side of Washington; and even he (or she) has misrepresented or misunderstood the people whom that most deceptive of books assumes to portray. All

the other inventors have been blinded by the glitter of politics, and by their industry in circulating their own misinformation they have given the capital of the country a bad name, both at home and abroad. Much of this reputation is due to published letters written by persons who never enter a private house, except on business with its master, and who meet no women habitually except those found at their boarding houses.

Washington has become a winter resort, and the character of its society is of interest and importance, because we ought to expect that, in its development on its intellectual and æsthetic side, it will be representative of the culture of the country. Many of the growing class of rich persons with leisure are discovering that the capital is tending toward the intellectual headship of the nation, and that the crude display that first catches the eye is no more an indication of the real life than is the brilliant disorder of a modern bar-room the symptom of discordant drawing-rooms. The turbulent revelries of adventurers drown for a time the harmonies of a life that is essentially undisturbed, and even untouched, by them.

Politics is the business of Washington, and men whose work is in the large affairs that concern the public naturally dominate. The painful effect produced by men of the lower stratum of politicians has been indicated, but their social organization, if it be an organization, is primarily for the purposes of business, and they reveal their object so openly that none but the unwary can be trapped more than once. Those who entertain for the advancement of their schemes are easily read by men who are only ordinarily shrewd. The best public men are never found at certain dinner-parties. The congressman who attends them likes terrapin and champagne more than he cares for a good reputation.

The best society of the capital is

probably the most delightful in the country. The city has cast off much of its rural character, and its fashionable quarter is as beautiful as the corresponding part of any city in the country. Of course, there are occasions when the larger cities outdo anything that can be done in Washington, but the tone of society there is continuously and uniformly good. During the last three years the town has taken marvelous strides. There has been almost an epidemic of building. The senate is becoming a club of moneyed men, and its members put up handsome houses, and pay for them by successful speculations in real estate. Judges of the supreme court follow their example. A great house in Washington, however, is not the affair that a railway king makes for himself in one of the large cities. A house costing \$25,000 is noteworthy, and when the charges of the builder reach \$50,000, the city has acquired one of its palaces. Equipages also are modest. In this wholesome restriction of outward show is illustrated one of the pleasant features of Washington. The average income of the place is comparatively small. When it is recollected that a cabinet officer receives \$8000 a year, a justice of the supreme court \$10,000, assistant secretaries, bureau chiefs, chief clerks, and other employees of the government from \$2500 to \$6000, a senator \$5000, it will be understood that social success must depend largely on cleverness and good taste, and that lavish display and extravagance must be vulgar. An impression seems to obtain elsewhere that the members of the diplomatic corps indulge in the rush and whirl of extravagant life, and that, though they are exclusive, they keep up at least with the reckless dissipations that are represented as characterizing the national hotbed of grossness and corruption. But the truth is that foreign ministers in this country live very inexpensively. They are to

be found in modest rented houses, and sometimes in boarding-houses, almost never in the large hotels. They are, as a rule, pleasant, companionable people, who take kindly to the methods of Washington. Certainly, they do not complain because the demands upon them are so light that they can live more cheaply here than at almost any other diplomatic station in the world. They do not indulge in revels; they do not throw away money in unseemly pleasures; most of them are gentlemen of moderate tastes and of fair abilities. There is a tradition that foreign ministers regard Washington as a place of exile. There was once a time when it was necessary, in order to make a diplomatic call, to flounder through mud that was hub-deep. In that day, a stream, crossed by a foot-bridge only, traversed the road over which the English minister had to make his way to the White House. All that, however, is past, and the United States has become a rather popular mission among the stations of its class. The pleasure of living at the capital has been greatly added to, without a material increase of expense. Men of small means can enjoy all its social advantages. Cleverness and presentability are now and must remain the passports to its best houses.

Politics and politicians necessarily exert much influence in a city which would probably not exist were it not the capital of the country. But it is a pleasant fact that the trade of politics is rarely talked of by the people who are met in the society which is made up of the clever and refined. To talk politics in Washington is to talk shop. As a matter of course, one hears discussions of public questions, and it is undoubtedly true that ambitious men talk to sympathizing women of their hopes and aspirations. The affairs of the government make certainly a worthy subject for conversation, and can hardly be compared with the private business interests

of which one constantly hears in the more pretentious cities. But the grosser side of politics is no more talked about in the presence of refined women than are the details of the day's bargaining at the dinner-table of a Boston merchant. One may possibly hear, at a Washington dinner-party, of a public measure, or of a public man. The subject, however, must be of immediate and universal interest and importance in order to afford entertainment to the men and women who, for the moment, are more interested in one another than in the larger concerns of the country. The man who would drag the affairs of the caucus or primary, or the transactions and *personel* of the lobby, into parlors and dining-rooms would not be tolerated. He does not exist outside the pages of Washington novels; and the writer of fiction who is familiar with the best side of life at the capital, and who nevertheless introduces such a creature into his pages, is guilty of that incomprehensible but too common vice of preaching an untruthful sermon against a sin that is never committed.

It must not be understood, by the statement that to talk politics is to talk shop, that public questions stand in Washington as haberdashery stands in commercial communities. Indeed, the conversation about matters of public interest that is heard in private houses at the capital is especially charming, for it is made up largely of the honest opinions of the leading men of the country, expressed with the frankness that is induced by the confidence which the speakers have in those who hear them, and without which intimacies and friendships could not exist. In Congress, men are limited in their speech by the fact that they are advocates; outside and among their friends, there need be no repression of the whole truth. The real meaning of political movements, the precise significance of important measures, the true character of public men, are

best learned from familiar intercourse with the actors in the events and the associates of those who are shaping the history of the country, and who cannot be constantly and satisfactorily met except at the capital.

Public affairs are, however, seldom talked about. The serious business of life is not generally the topic of conversation when people of varied accomplishments and tastes meet for pleasure. The men who are found in the finest drawing-rooms and the most delightful dining-rooms of the capital are seeking for rest and for an inspiration that is derived best from a well-ordered and highly civilized society, of which women of wit and intelligence are the important factor. They do not carry their speeches with them; they do not shoulder the burdens of their constituents with the covert purpose of distributing the load among their friends. A public man need not go into society, and if he does not like it, or if society does not like him, he is very likely to stay at home with his books or his game of cards. The difference between the society men of Washington and those of other places is that among the former less is heard of "form," and more is seen of substance. It is, of course, an axiom that no society can exist without the youth of agile heels. He is the amusing and interesting being at the capital that he is in other cities; but the percentage of him is not so large, and the percentage of the man with a head is greater.

Congressmen are not the prominent features of Washington parlors. Most of the members of the legislative branch of the government are country lawyers, many of them able and accomplished men. They go to Washington with the habits of village life. They are not only unaccustomed to take their pleasures gracefully, but most of them are too old to learn. Many of their wives are like them, in this respect, and the best and wisest lead precisely the kind

of life they have at home. The church thus becomes as much a social institution as it is in the villages of New England and Ohio. It is one of the noteworthy features of Washington that many men who live for years amid the best influences never overcome their awkwardness. They acquire a certain familiarity with the superficial usages of the people with whom they associate, but the polish remains imperfect. They have passed their early years in the society of women who, following an unwholesome rural tradition, have permitted the duties of housewife to put an end to all effort for mental growth. These men enjoy the acquaintance of women of the world, but they never completely understand them, and seldom acquire the intellectual grace which is essential to put themselves wholly at their ease. They therefore gradually slip out of sight, and seek the companionship of men who, like themselves, unbend best in the presence of their own sex. A game of whist at their rooms, with the stock stories of the country bar during the deals, has more solid enjoyment for them than all the elegance and refinements of society.

A politician is not aided by social influences at the capital. The strength which a member of Congress has with an administration depends on his standing at home. Even his own merit has not so much weight as a strong, many-headed constituency. All the allurements of beauty, all the charm of the most delightful hospitality, cannot alone advance a politician to the cabinet. Back of all the attractions that may surround a public man must stand heavy masses of voters, who can repay the administration for the favors bestowed upon their "favorite son." It is true, indeed, that army and navy officers are sometimes given desirable posts and stations, and that young men in civil life secure appointments at home and abroad because they and their friends are known

to the appointing power. These, however, are comparatively unimportant matters in the great governmental machine. The country ought not to care very much because a young man receives a twelve-hundred-dollar clerkship through the friendship of the administration. He is much more likely to turn out a good and conscientious public servant than is some worker for a politician. The civil service is reforming now, but, as matters stood before the law was passed, appointments based on personal considerations were quite as good as those bestowed for party services. The little that Washington society has been guilty of in this direction has not made a ripple on its surface. Men of the world do not give dinner-parties, or balls, or receptions in order that they and their wives may intrigue for political advancement. They know well enough that, as politics go in this country, it would do them no good. To be able to give a model dinner to a President who loves gastronomy may help along an officer of the army or the navy; but the country might as well settle down comfortably to the conclusion that it will always hear of injustice to the individuals in these two services, — at least until a war shall enable the President to award honors for merit in battle. All this has very little to do with the government, and it is hardly fair to condemn a whole community because, for friendship's sake, an occasional officer is promoted or given a pleasant station. All that is done in this direction does not turn a single tea-party, much less a whole social fabric, into the whirlpool of intrigue that Washington has been represented to be. The country can rest assured that refined women do not become busy politicians and lobbyists merely by translation to the federal capital, the fictitious assurances of some novel-writers to the contrary notwithstanding. The average woman of society in Washington hates corruption and immodesty as strongly as does her sister

of the commercial cities. She is good and pure. She is not made coarse by fast companionship and excessively high living. If her husband is a public man, as he may be, and she has kept pace with him and has grown with his advancement, so that her home is worthy of his place in the world, she is likely to be much more interesting than many who read *Democracy*, or *Through one Administration*, or *A Washington Winter*, and shudder at her ignorance and her ill-breeding.

Occasionally there will be found a woman who has not grown up to her husband's position, but this is a blemish on that society which rests entirely on official rank. It makes up a small part of Washington life, however, and its duties may be made merely perfunctory. It has its stated reception days, and its people go to certain entertainments given by other persons similarly situated. It is all formal, and does not make any part of the best life of the capital. That depends wholly on congeniality. Many official people are found in it, for there are a good many agreeable persons among the employees of the government, — more perhaps than strangers imagine. People who are interesting and pleasant to one another drift together everywhere, and in Washington, as in other cities, there are all sorts of social conditions. The trouble has been that the glare of the coarser kind has obscured that in which are found the really influential people of the capital and the country; and yet it is the very best and most cultivated that make the social activity of the place.

"Does political position carry a man into this best society?" is an interesting question. It may take him just within its edge, but beyond that individual merit must be depended on. Occasionally there will appear a strong, coarse-natured, ambitious senator or cabinet officer, who bears down upon the refined life of the city with the purpose of making an im-

pression upon it; but people draw themselves together and defend themselves, for they realize that any impression that such an exotic can make must be necessarily fatal. A vigorous and influential statesman standing in the middle of a drawing-room, red with embarrassment, tugging away at his big white gloves and looking helplessly for a friendly face, is an uncommon but not a wholly unknown spectacle at the larger parties, given by persons who cannot refuse to send a card to a congressman who is bold enough to ask it.

The public men of the country do not pollute the men and women into whose houses they enter. As a rule, they are men whose training and accomplishments make them additions to any society. Congress has a bad reputation, for the newspaper press has naturally most to say of its bad deeds and its corrupt men; but its character is better than its reputation. The stock congressman of the writers of fiction does not exist. He cannot even be compiled from the vices of all the wicked men who have cajoled their constituents into voting for them. The senate, instead of being composed of corruptionists, has not a dozen members who suffer under even unsupported accusations. One writer, who is very popular in England, says that the senate chamber has a "code of bad manners and worse morals," and intimates that it matters little, in this country, whether a man is in politics or in prison. This brutal flippancy is not very uncommon, and it is usually uttered in the name of reform; but what kind of morality is it that talks of fewer than twelve men, among them some of the weakest of the body, making a code of morals for sixty-four stronger men? If our politics are to be reformed by the banishment of the wicked dozen, is the amelioration to be brought about by persons who are careless enough to state that because twelve senators are bad, therefore all the seventy-six are

bad? By an examination of the list of senators, I find at least twenty whose "manners" have been formed by association with the most polite people of the country. Fifty certainly, perhaps more, are entitled to respect for the possession of some undeniable element of strength, or for professional learning. There have been grossly corrupt men in the senate, but almost without exception exposure of their vices has driven them into private life.

There are pretenders among civil-service reformers, and office-beggars among "scholars in politics;" but such persons are surely not more dangerous than those who write books and newspaper editorials in which wholesale abuse is substituted for sober truth. There are facts about public men and public life that are grave enough, and that call sufficiently loud for change; but the reform that is demanded cannot be accomplished by false and exaggerated statements. One mischief, at least, that does not exist in Washington is the social ascendancy of men and women to whom no political advancement could give a like leadership in the life of the smallest and most unpretentious city in the land.

More and more every year, as the city grows in beauty, the society of Washington is becoming worthier of the capital of the country. The advent of people of wealth and leisure does not mar its simplicity, because those who must remain its leaders have moderate incomes; it is not broken into sets or cliques, because it is composed largely of attractive men and women who spend the winters together, and who have none of the local traditions and prejudices that do so much to breed dissension among those who live in the communities where they were born and it is safe to predict that before many years shall have passed Washington will be the social capital of the country as indisputably as it is now the capital of its government.

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