



‘EQUIPPED WITH NUMEROUS LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.’

THE AMERICAN OFFICE-SEEKER.

BY AN AMERICAN.

GENERAL M—, of Ohio, is said to have spent \$2,600 while waiting in Washington for an office, and to have gone home disappointed.”

This paragraph, which appeared a few days ago in a New York evening paper, is typical in more senses than one. First, as to the word “General:” it is safe to say that at least one-half the office-seekers in America have a military title more or less authentic; and of these, one-half write the word “General” before their names. As the office-seeker has a number of titles from which to choose, he is not content with anything but the highest rank; and be it said that he chooses

this military prefix advisedly: it helps his cause. To have been a general, to have suffered and bled, perhaps, for one’s country, gives, he thinks, a claim upon his countrymen’s bounty.

It will be observed, secondly, that General M— spent \$2,600 in his fruitless endeavours. Again is he typical of a large class of the office-seekers. They come to Washington prepared to lay siege to the White House, and equipped with numerous letters of introduction and recommendation from the great ones of their respective districts. They endeavour to enlist their Congress-man in their behalf. They visit the departments day after day, waiting their turn at the ear of the great man who has patronage at his dis-

posal, and to whom the appeal to the President has been referred.

A system of office brokerage has sprung up in Washington, whereby the broker, for a commission or percentage on the salary of the office for which his client applies, engages to use his influence, whatever that may be, and however exerted, in order to obtain the office.

Thirdly, it will be observed again that General M— went back to Ohio. In other words, he went home, a disappointed office-seeker without the office. He is thereby representative of at least nine-tenths of the office-seeking class.

The figures mount up to strange proportions when we consider that for every office in the gift of the President there are, on an average, ten applicants; and as there are one hundred thousand Federal office-holders in the United States, it almost takes one's breath away to learn that there are in round numbers one million of the office-seeking class, of which nine hundred thousand must needs be disappointed.

It is not necessary in this place to compare the Civil Service of America with that of England, further than to say that at the change of the National Administration from one party to another, every office within the gift of the Executive becomes, in the eyes of the members of his party, a sort of legitimate prize for their avaricious self-seeking.

Happily the current of public opinion is strongly setting against the system embodied in the words of Andrew Jackson, "To the victors belong the spoils;"

and we have good reason for hope that the time is not far distant when the Civil Service of this country will be put upon such a basis that rotation in office will not mean the displacement of every Civil servant, from a Cabinet Minister to a letter-carrier.

Suffice it to say that under the pernicious system so long prevalent in this country, and which is, at present, altogether too firmly established in the political workings of the Federal Government, there has naturally been bred this multitudinous horde of place-seekers, who, if they do not sink to the degrading infamy of a Guiteau, are certainly a menace to the well-being of the body politic, and a reproach to the good name of the Republic.

Many think that an Independent party, which is now springing up (and whose adherents did good work in the last election), will, in the end, stamp out this evil. Others say—and perhaps wisely—that the Presidential term should be extended two or four years, thereby making less frequent the wild scramble for office; to say nothing of the paralysing effect on all business caused by the general excitement of a Presidential election.

Whatever the particular remedy may be that is to prove successful in this case, it is evident that time and education will do most of all; and when the memory of the late war sinks deeper into the past, and the word "General" loses its tender historic interest, let us trust that the trade of office-hunting, thus shorn of half its dignity, will attract smaller crowds to Washington, and that the good men of Ohio will remain quietly at home.

A. Z. S.

MODERN DINNER-TABLES.



SUPPOSE that never were decorative articles of every description to be had in such variety, and at so small a cost. Certainly this is the case with those suitable for dinner-table adornment.

It must be taken for granted that many are unsuitable for middle-class families, at the same time they are subject to modifications, and all who are anxious to improve the appearance of their dinner-tables may gain many ideas from those of a more elaborate kind.

Just now there is a rage for plush of every colour, and it is, unquestionably, one of the most lovely fabrics for the table. Rich shades of crimson, claret, old gold, myrtle and moss greens are all in good taste, and generally chosen, though it is easy to substitute others when these would clash with the dinner service or general surroundings.

In combination with plush, plate-glass plays an important part, and, if bought judiciously, is not so expensive as many would suppose. Very good quality

may be had from a glass merchant (not at a retail shop) in any large town for about half-a-crown per square foot; thus a piece six feet long and eighteen inches wide would cost but twenty-two shillings and sixpence, and—it is almost needless to remark—could be converted to other uses eventually.

At a recent dinner for ten, the table was arranged as follows:—A sheet of plate-glass, seven feet by eighteen inches, occupied the centre of the table, the latter being sufficiently large to leave a good margin for the dinners. On the glass the dessert was placed in such a way as to give every guest an uninterrupted view of the rest of the company.

The centre-piece—very little higher than the others—was an exquisite little fountain, which discharged sweet-scented water; round the base, moss, ferns, and various grasses, with pieces of ice, were artistically grouped.

The dessert service consisted of shallow glass dishes of varied sizes and shapes, of shell-like, ever-changing hues. The time of the year being late autumn, an exquisite garnish for the fruits was obtained from ferns, ivy, marguerites (both white and yellow), and gracefully arranged sprays of the leaves of the black-berry briar, elderberry, and wild geranium; their vivid