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The Tapping Season's on

By THE GENTLEMAN
AT THE KEYHOLE

THE process of selecting Mr. Hoover's Cabinet has been going on for some time, but unless the President-elect differs from his predecessors the whole slate is not yet finally determined upon.

The last member of President Wilson's Cabinet to be chosen, Lindley M. Garrison, was not picked until two or three days before March 4th. And Mr. Garrison, chosen rather hastily and without the usual study and consideration, proved not to be harmonious with his chief and resigned.

To avoid accidents of that kind, to obviate the possibility that something will turn up about a candidate's history which will give the opposition a chance to attack him, to listen to all objections to a man under consideration, to satisfy the politicians as much as is consistent with the public interest, to leave room for last-minute shifts, a President-elect proceeds slowly and keeps his own counsel about his tentative selections. Men go on and off the slate, often more than once.

The new President ordinarily has two or three men in mind whom he especially desires to have in his Cabinet. They may be cynically described as the window dressing, but that is hardly fair, for every President wishes to have some able advisers in his official family in whom the public has confidence. If the public sees two of these first-class men in a Cabinet it does not look much farther. It calls it a great Cabinet and lets it go at that.

Personal Appointments

Thus Mr. Harding won general applause for his Cabinet by putting Mr. Hughes in it as Secretary of State, Mr. Mellon in it as Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Hoover in it as Secretary of Commerce. With those headliners in it the country overlooked the appointment of Mr. Daugherty as Attorney General.

Mr. Daugherty was a personal appointee of Mr. Harding. Presidents usually make some personal appointments to their Cabinets, though these are not necessarily Daughertys.

The rest of the Cabinet is usually made up of men of whom the President knows little except what he has learned in the process of selection. They are men recommended to him by the politicians or the business interests or by both.

Geographical and other considerations enter into their selection. For picking a Cabinet, like everything else

in life, is a matter of compromise. The President starts out with the hope of getting ten ideal men and is fortunate if he gets two or three ideal men.

Someone estimated that there were not more than twenty ideal Cabinet members in the country and added that most of them for one reason or another were not available for appointment.

Now a man who has been recommended for a Cabinet post, outside of course of the two or three whom the President selects with full knowledge of their characters and attainments, goes through an experience a good deal like that which an engaged man faces when presented to the girl's parents.

Inspecting the Candidate

The candidate for the Cabinet receives a call from someone who is close to the President-elect. The two perhaps have lunch together on some pretext or other. If the candidate is wise he knows he is being inspected by a scout. The two may discuss public affairs. The candidate's opinions are under inspection. An impression is formed of his personality. Even his clothes are eyed and his table manners.

There are two grades of these scouts, the lesser scouts and the greater scouts. If a candidate passes muster with a lesser scout, some greater scout may have to see him before he reaches the tentative slate. An adverse report from the greater scout is generally final.

Colonel House, when President Wilson was making up his Cabinet, was the chief scout. It is probable that he passed upon every member of Wilson's Cabinet except Mr. Bryan, who was reluctantly appointed Secretary of State because of what was regarded as a political necessity.

The process is not ended when the scouts, greater and less, have made their reports. Here is where publicity comes in. It discreetly leaks out that John Smith is under consideration for a place in the Cabinet. Perhaps he is already on the tentative slate.

This is a signal for all his opponents, especially the supporters of other candidates for the same post, to open an attack upon him. His appointment will split the party in his state. He has figured in a labor injunction case, and organized labor is against him. He has been the counsel of bootleggers. He goes off the tentative slate and perhaps when his friends rally to his defense goes back on it again. And so ultimately ten men are selected and the Cabinet is announced.

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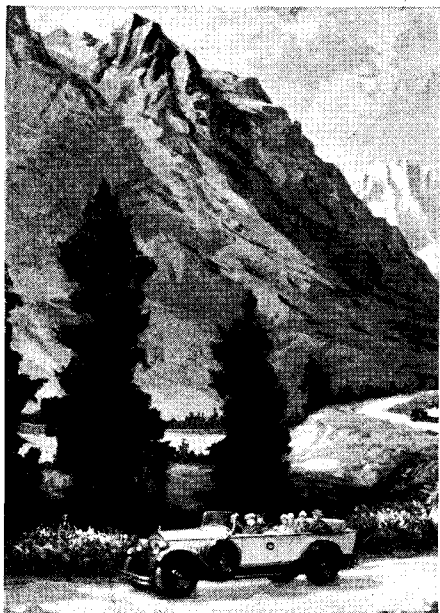


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Continued from page 13



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razor. This was called the Velvet Sweep. It was recently on the market and because I am an alert person I was one of the first in California to use it. What I fancied about it was that it did not resemble a razor in the least. It looked like a fountain pen and cost ten dollars.

All Going Somewhere

The remaining days fled and presently we stood upon the threshold of our voyage to Naples. The Hillary Castle steamed into San Francisco from New York, took on a load of oranges and radio sets and was ready for the great adventure. Esther and I arrived in San Francisco on a train, surrounded by luggage. Harold Demuth likewise appeared and met us at the New York and Orient pier, his countenance wreathed in smiles. And standing there on the dock, amid piles of uncured leather, canned peaches, knocked-down automobiles and gasoline in barrels, I first beheld my future companions, the associates who would be, as you might say, constantly at my side for many weeks.

"Esther," I remarked in a sad voice, "there stands the ocean liner Hillary Castle tugging at her hawsers."
"Yes," said Esther. "Isn't it fascinating?"

"And there, as you can see, are two hundred American citizens—one hundred males and one hundred females, all going somewhere over the sea."

The spouse murmured inaudibly, for she was staring in admiration at the confused scenes before her. Partly disrobed gentlemen were pushing barrels about, donkey engines rattled with the ear-splitting noises donkey engines make and cables swung in the air, hoisting freight from the pier to the hold. A friendly hand clutched me and a friendly voice spoke:

"Come aboard, Mr. Waxman, and look at your cabin."

It was Harold, the tourist guide, doing his first bit of guiding.

We followed him up the gangplank, bumped our heads against the usual beam, faced the curious stares of passengers and visitors, and finally entered Cabin One Hundred.

"There you are," said Harold, and he departed to aid others.

We looked at One Hundred. A Chinese boy began bringing in our baggage. There were two beds, a sofa and a chest of drawers. Esther sat on one bed and looked about, still flushed with the novelty of the adventure.

"We will be here," I remarked, sitting on the other bed, "two months and ten days, or seventy days, including that many nights. This ship, the Hillary Castle, will go gadding about the world, peering into strange ports, and we will sleep seventy sleeps in these twin beds. I will shave seventy times before your mirror, including storms at sea."

"Isn't it a lovely room?" she inquired.
"And the terrifying part is," I continued, "once this so-called Hillary Castle pokes her nose westward into the Pacific, once she starts for China, one cannot get off and go home."

"It's gorgeous," said my traveling friend. "You are not sorry, Roger?"

"I am not exactly sorry, but I am covered with goose flesh. What if I don't like this boat?"

"You'll love it," spoke the optimist.

"Seventy days," I murmured, rising. "The Flood only lasted forty." We then hurried up on deck to look at the other passengers.

One of the jolly features of travel is

the uncertainty of everything and when you stand upon the deck of your stout steamer, one hour before she casts off, the problem is; "Who's going and who isn't?" Advance passenger lists informed us that two hundred American citizens sailed with the Hillary Castle and as we leaned against a belaying pin and looked them over we saw at least five hundred bright-eyed strangers carrying flowers, lunch-boxes and trick cameras to take moving pictures aboard. The Hillary Castle isn't that large.

"Who are all these people?" asked Esther.

"Some of them are going to get seasick," I answered, "but most of them belong to the great legion of seers-off. You cannot kill a seer-off and nothing discourages him. He never dies and the sight of a boat tied to a dock or a train steaming up throws him into spasms. The true seer-off would refuse to go anywhere if invited, his joy reaching its highest ecstasy just as he is forcibly ejected one minute before a ship or train departs, and his greatest happiness comes when he is mistaken for a regular passenger."

The bells of departure rang, whistles blew, people began tossing confetti and a band started playing "Auld Lang Syne." Colored paper ribbons floated in the afternoon air and the sunshine seemed to grow more brilliant as we approached the zero hour. There was pleasant excitement from one end of the ship to the other. Sailors ran about and stewards trotted with bags and boxes. Everybody on board crowded to the shore rail and stared down at the larger crowd that was going nowhere, except home to supper—the seers-off in their final throes. Last-minute telegrams were received and sent. There was waving of handkerchiefs and throwing of kisses and the clock struck five. Simultaneously, the Hillary Castle trembled slightly and by gazing down at the pier one could see that the Waxman family was going to Naples.

I walked slowly to the stern as the ship dodged ferry boats and headed for the Golden Gate and reflected with a sigh that it would be two or three months before I could swing a brassie or putt across the velvet fairness of some foreign green.

Harold Demuth appeared in the offing and grinned.

"I have taken care of you in the dining-room," he stated.

The First Meal

A few moments later we descended to the dining-room and walked to our table with the fixed smiles travelers wear when sitting down to their first meal aboard ship. Harold led the way. He turned out to be a good egg and was kind to us later on when we were unhappy. I shall never forget Harold Demuth, and if he is ever discharged by the tourist company, I shall be among the first to write him a cordial letter.

"Good evening," said Harold with the optimism that was to endear him to us all. "This is Mr. and Mrs. Waxman of Glen Echo, California."

We bowed. Two strangers looked up from their soup and bowed solemnly. We sat down and I looked at the faces about me, strangers all, and figured rapidly. Seventy days on this ship would mean two hundred and ten meals, if one were able to eat them all, if one were uninterrupted. The strangers continued to sip their soup and I went on multiplying days by meals and wondering.

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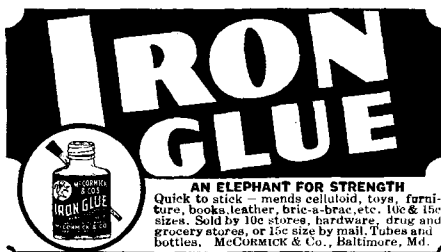


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The two at our table were Mr. and Mrs. Albert Secor of South Chicago, who were quite notable persons, especially at home, for they had invented a new school of thought which was described as the South Chicago Academy of Mental Science, the main feature of which, as I came to understand it, was that a person could eat anything and still avoid indigestion and ptomaine poisoning. It was, they said, a great comfort to those of advanced years who after a small slab of mince pie suffer gastric qualms.

"Mr. Waxman," inquired the male Secor, "do you have dyspepsia?"

"Very rarely. Why?"

"Because," he said, starting in low gear, and as I happened to be sitting next to him the first evening at sea, I found out many interesting facts about South Chicago Science. I learned that I could eat cucumbers and milk in equal proportions, no matter how worn out my machinery. After dinner I led Esther to one side.

"One must act promptly," I said. "When you are officially seated in the ship's dining-room, you must keep your chair for the voyage or deliberately affront somebody. I believe it will be all right if you sit next to Mr. Secor, if you sit next to him now."

Esther said it made no difference where she sat.

I Decide to Go Home

After dinner we listened to the ship's concert and played bridge with the Hinmans of Detroit until eleven o'clock. The Hinmans were in the bond business and were going around the world to cheer up Mr. Hinman, who had lately come down with a nervous attack.

After being on board the Hillary Castle for ten or eleven hours, I decided to get off and go home. This decision was reached at sea, probably one hundred miles out, the hour being early morning.

It was soon after three A. M. when I was torn from the arms of Morpheus by ten active Chinamen equipped with sandpaper, iron holystones, wire brushes and general tools for putting in a pavement. Being a landlubber, I knew nothing of the customs of the sea and it appeared that one of the ancient practices is to begin cleaning up soon after midnight. The first move is to swab the decks and the Hillary Castle was famous for its Chinese swabbers, who were fanatics with a pail of water and a holystone.

Our cabin was so arranged that the top deck passed within six inches of my upper ear, and soon after the Chinese nation began blasting I roused myself. From three to six I listened.

"Esther," I said, "our trip around the world is ending for me even before I expected. I am getting off the boat tomorrow."

"You can't. We don't land for a week."

"I am getting off in a rowboat," I repeated above the Chinese cannonading, "and if they haven't any rowboats, I shall get off in a paper cup. This is arrant nonsense."

Esther returned immediately to the sound slumber from which I had awakened her, and I spent three hours devising horrible forms of torture for Chinamen on liners.

The Chinese feature of our voyage interested all on board, for none of us had ever seen so many Chinamen under one roof. All told there were one hundred and sixty brown-skinned coolies and they skittered about tirelessly, polishing doorknobs that didn't need polish, chattering the strange sounds they use for language and grinning at the foolish Caucasians who had paid out good money to go riding on a boat. Officers on the Hillary Castle numbered fifteen—fifteen white men, commanding one hundred and sixty Celestials.

"Do these Chinks ever get round to starting a mutiny?" I inquired of the first mate, recalling tales of Chinese piracy on the high seas.

"Oh, no," he said, laughing.

"They seem so numerous," I murmured, "and only fifteen white men to keep them in hand."

The mate chuckled at my ignorance. "You're forgetting the passengers," he said tolerantly.

"What have the passengers to do with it?"

"Well, suppose we did have trouble. We never do have it, but suppose we happened to hit something in a heavy sea and the coolies rushed the boats. What is the first thing we do?"

Several gentlemen were listening, but no one could reply.

"Why, we simply arm each male passenger with either a pistol or a shotgun. We might have to shoot down eight or nine Chinks in a panic, but there wouldn't be a minute when we wouldn't have complete control of the situation."

"Ever had a panic at sea?" asked Mr. Macumber, a lumber merchant, making his first voyage, a naturally pale man who seemed paler than usual.

"No, sir."

"And if we ever do have one," I put in, "you can arm me with a sling-shot."

Later on, when I became acquainted with the captain, I had further facts. I had been inquiring about the coolie crew and wondering.

"Well," said the captain, "I see nothing to worry over. Suppose the Chinamen did run off with the boats. What of it? They wouldn't, but what if they did?"

"What of it!" I cried. "Suppose the ship were sinking in a heavy Pacific storm, with two hundred passengers and the small boats full of hurrying Chinamen."

"In the first place, such a thing couldn't happen, because I wouldn't permit it. That's why they have a captain on these ships. As far as the small boats are concerned, I'd stay right here on deck."

"And sink?"

"Certainly. I'd rather sink in comfort, if I had to sink. Did you ever see the Pacific in a heavy storm, Mr. Waxman? Did you ever notice one of the small boats?"

"The outlook is not particularly jolly," I said, staring at the captain, who had a cold blue eye.

"The outlook," he said, "is all right. We may have no storms at all. I have gone completely round the world and never seen a ripple from New York to New York."

The Safest Place in the World

He leaned gently upon the gate that keeps people off the bridge. He was smoking an after-luncheon cigarette and several of the passengers paused to listen.

"This," he continued cheerfully, indicating the ship, "is the safest place in the world—the deck of a ship. Automobiles, trains, airplanes, street cars and pedestrians, each one is dangerous and collects its annual toll, but a staunch liner knocks around from place to place and usually nothing ever happens to her."

"And when it does happen," I remarked, "it makes good reading."

Honolulu and the not always bright Pacific lie ahead! There's another page from the Waxman family log—On a Night Like This—in next week's Collier's.



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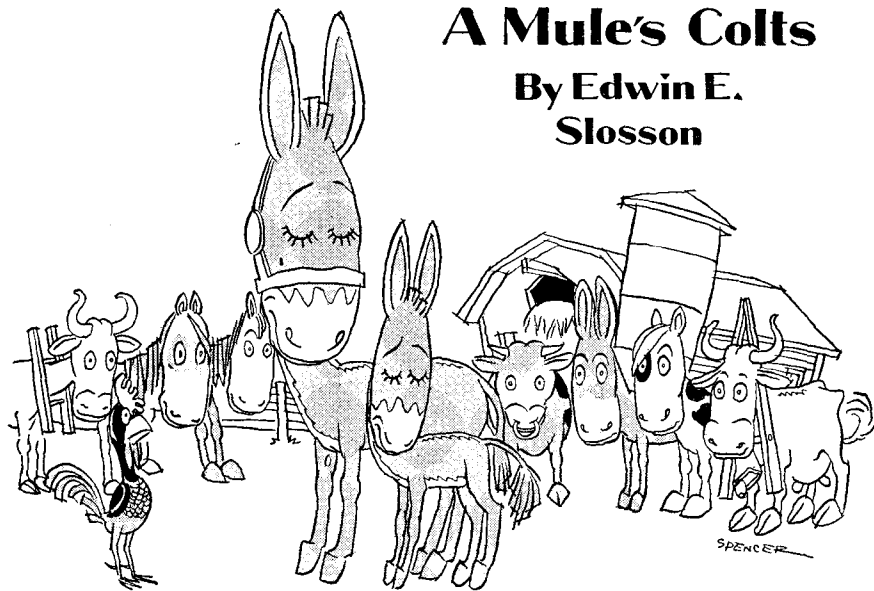
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A Mule's Colts

By Edwin E. Slosson



A FEW years ago when the evolution controversy was hot in Texas a discussion of the question took place in the smoking-room of a train in which the "anti" of the group was arguing that Nature had fixed species forever by her immutable decree that all hybrids must be infertile.

"I'll not believe in evolution," he said, "till you can show me the foal of a mule."

"When I was down at the Texas Agricultural College the other day, I saw a mule suckling her colt," remarked one man.

The Fundamentalist looked at the speaker as if he would like to call him by a short and ugly name. But such language is not safe in Texas. So he contented himself with the remark, "Well, I don't believe in evolution anyway." Which was a more tenable position for him than his first. For the fertility of hybrids has no direct bearing upon the question of the transmutation of species. In some cases widely separated forms will cross, while on the other hand we all know of infertile marriages between couples of the same branch of the human race.

The Texas mule mare "Old Beck" gave birth in 1920, at the age of 20, to a female offspring sired by a jack. In 1922 she was mated with a stallion and produced a male bay colt, looking like his sire, but showing a mulish obstinacy in crossing ditches. He has been mated with a mare and produced a male foal. The Journal of Heredity, which describes these remarkable cases in its September issue, reports later another instance of a foal from a jack and a mare mule.

The chief cause of the controversy over "the origin of species" is due to the misunderstanding as to the meaning of the word "species" as used in science. From the amount of discussion that goes on in botany and zoology over specific names, it is obvious that the definition of a species is largely artificial and often arbitrary. The distinctions drawn

for convenience of classification between varieties, species and genera are in close cases due to the judgment of the individual as to the degree of difference in kind. Everybody knows the difference between a mountain and a hill, or a river and a creek, but nobody can draw a dividing line between them.

Many years ago a Wyoming geologist discovered some strange ferns in the

rocks of that region and sent a sack of the specimens for identification to the leading authority on fossil botany in Washington. The expert was so much interested in them that he came out to see the site. I happened to be standing by when he got off the train. Said the local geologist modestly: "I suppose you could not make much out of the few fragments I sent you?"

"Well, yes," replied the expert, "I made five new species and two new genera out of them." And he added meditatively, "And I think some of them will stick."

Human Harpies

Every living creature is dying all the time. If he should stop dying he would stop living. Throughout life the cells must be continually renewed. That's why we eat. Each person during his lifetime is a procession of personalities, each in turn changing gradually into his successor as one lantern slide dissolves into the next. And in the end his friends dispose of only the last of the long series of the bodies in which his individuality has been successively incarnated.

What has become of all the rest of them? Who disposed of them? The answer to these questions is one of the strangest things about the body. They disposed of themselves. Each cell when it dies dissolves itself, for it carries around within itself all through its life the means of its own dissolution. This reminds us of the Japanese samurai who wears the swords with which to commit hara-kiri when his honor demands it. Or, better, of the Chinese mandarin who takes with him on his travels his coffin.

This means is a sort of enzyme or ferment, similar to those in the digestive juices which liquefy the meat we eat. But the stomach does not digest itself. The intestine does not attack the tape-worm that lives in it. But once the life has departed, the protective influence, whatever this may be, ceases to act.

A piece of meat will decompose spontaneously if still kept warm and wet. Liver becomes sweet through the change of starchy stuff into sugar.

Professor Donnan put the point beautifully in his recent Glasgow address:

"The harpies of death sleep in every unit of our living bodies, but as long as life is there their wings are bound and their devouring mouths are closed."

