

MR. GONEGAGA SAYS AU REVOIR

GEORGE HENRY PAYNE



MR. GONEGAGA seemed to be unusually serious, which was quite becoming in one who had asked for an appointment at such an early hour.

"I am leaving New York to-day," he explained, "to be gone several weeks and therefore, in all probability, I shall be out of America on Election Day."

"Let me congratulate you," for I thought to cheer him up; "you have

assimilated one of the first of American habits."

"I understood that Americans were indifferent," and he smiled in his gentle understanding way, "but I did not know that they left the country."

"No, that's true, they don't exactly leave the country, — they go down on Long Island."

"But I thought the rich had reformed and were taking a great interest in this election."

"They are. They have financed a society to get out a one hundred per cent vote; they have pledged every factory owner to get all his employees to vote (right); and so with the feeling of having done their duty to America they will go to the country on Election Day and play golf while they discuss the superiority of the Oil Interests over the Dry Goods Interests as high bidders for the social favor of H. R. H. The Prince of Wales."

"But I understood that Long Island was very much one hundred per cent American," and Mr. Gonegaga nodded sagely to show that he was becoming familiar with the undercurrents of American politics.

"It is," I replied, "as much as Maine and more than Indiana. It never elects any but Republican assemblymen. In fact the one hundred per cent American movement is so strong from Westbury to Southampton that if it were not for the fact that the Prince of Wales has very wisely announced that he is going around the world for a year, a Restricted Emigration Law would have been necessary to keep the Hundred Per Centers from moving over next spring to England in a body."

"I thought I was beginning to get your political situation straightened out," Gonegaga said moodily, "and then the Prince came;" he sighed despondently. "It's too bad, isn't it?" Mr. Gonegaga was almost tearful. "It will mean trouble for a long time."

"Yes, it is too bad," I assented. "We were moving on so nicely when the Prince had to come and mix things all up. Think how simply and harmoniously we were getting along: the business men and the Methodists were all for Coolidge; the labor people and the Irish and the magazine writers were all for La Follette; and the Jews and the plain people who were not Democrats were for Davis; and while we might not have had an election at least we would have known where we were and what we were."

"And now," said Mr. Gonegaga, shaking his head ominously, "the election will go to the House and there will be no choice? Is not that the probability?"

I studied my strange and inquiring friend carefully for some minutes. There had been times during our conversations in the past several months, and in the intervals when he did not appear, when I had pondered much about him, — times when he had more than puzzled me, and when I had wondered if he was the strange exotic creature that he seemed. Once or twice I had almost come to the suspicion that instead of being a philosophic observer from the Himalayas or wherever it was he was supposed to come from, he might possibly be a western member of the Republican National Committee or a representative of George Moses's Senatorial committee trying to find out how Hiram Johnson was going to vote.

But I brushed aside the thought and determined to be frank to the end. "Mr. Gonegaga," I said solemnly, "you and I shall not meet again until after this election is over, and as our friend-

ship has been a serious one I am going to do what I vowed I should never do again, — I am going to make a prophecy. I am not the seventh son of any son of a gun, but my father was born in Holyoke, Mass., and I'm willing to lay you a little eight to five that there'll be an election, and in order to give you a further opportunity to collect some rupees, if the election does go to the House I'll stake you three to ten that choice will be made before March fourth."

Gonegaga looked at me soulfully. "I understand you," he said; "you wish to bet me. But I cannot 'bet' as you call it," and he shook his head sorrowfully, "I cannot bet, — I see that I would be stung either way."

"Then," I said, "let us part friends. This is my parting prophecy. There will be no stalemate if the choice ever reaches the House of Representatives. For —" I took him into a corner and whispered: "Did you ever drink moonshine?"

"Do people drink moonshine?" he exclaimed.

"In Washington they do. If the election goes to the House you may expect to see one of the most interesting contests ever staged by our great industrial leaders. Already the Administration is looking for a new Prohibition Enforcement officer and to-day, this morning, on the hills of Tennessee and their suburbs, the pot is on the fire and the juice is running from the corn."

"But the contest," said Gonegaga eagerly, "you said there would be a contest."

"I did. Do you think that the Scotch whiskey distillers of East Houston Street are going to let those corn licker sap-heads have everything their own way? At this very hour, probably at this very minute, the honest garage keepers of lower New York are pasting the imported Black and White labels on the denatured alcohol and prune juice that is going to make this Republic sit up, — *Business MUST GO ON!*"

"But," and there came into his eyes a strange look, one that was far from oriental; "but" — and his sapiency made me gasp — "but how about the Overholt Distillery?"

"Mr. Gonegaga," I said, with dignity I hope, as I pushed him toward the door, "that is a matter only to be taken up if the election goes to the Senate."

FOOTPATH AND HIGHWAY

By THE PEDESTRIAN

THE ELECTION

IT is Edward Elwell Whiting, I think, who has made the important discovery that, though cats and politics have much in common, there is this difference: "No one has to keep a cat." Just now we must all keep politics; even a pedestrian is permitted to vote. Yet a true pedestrian finds it hard, in this year 1924, to make an irrevocable choice. Those inscrutable gods who devised elections and umpires forbid him to vote with a reservation, or to re-arrange the tickets to his taste. If he is in the "both — and" state of mind proper to a pedestrian, he might conceivably wish to see Coolidge elected President and Davis Vice-President. It sounds fanciful to your machine politician, I know, but think about it a few minutes, if you have time for political philosophy as well as practice, and if you can take a by-path far enough afield to detach yourself from the pretense of parties (now stalled on the highroad).

But as the tickets read, such by-path philosophy seems academic to the practical voter. The polls are all on the highway, and we must keep up the pretense of voting by parties. It is still possible to walk, however, and to observe that excitement over alleged party-issues is confined to the flivver-mind. To be sure, there has not been greater interest in a Presidential election for years, — but, then, there have never been so many flivvers. Really, when you come to think of it, there is less cause for excitement than in most elections of the past, far less cause than in 1896, when the silver-tongued orator nearly persuaded us that you could get something for nothing (though possibly those were not his exact words). For between the two elder parties there is no real principle involved. Both are trying to be liberal, but not too liberal; conservative, but not too conservative; Federal, but not too darned Federal. Their similarity and alleged difference reminds me of the remark of a *maitre d'hôtel* in Athens, from whom I once sought to buy some brandy. As I wished it for medicinal purposes, I thought I had better take the best and so