

Communism, and when we told her it was a failure, said that was because the men who tried it were a "bunch of theorists and intellectuals, and didn't know how to work." Shades of our hard-working and high-minded Pilgrim ancestors! When we showed her that the contrary was in fact true, that the failure of the Plymouth experiment was due to the same thing that has caused the downfall of the Russians, was the same old truth that work as a means of grace stands foremost, that to labor is to pray as truly in the twentieth century as in the eighth, you experienced a remarkable revulsion of feeling towards Peggy. I think Peggy did you

a lot of good. You saw just how foolish and hollow her ignorant theories were, and in time you saw just her own measure of selfishness and instability. The world will teach Peggy—in fact, you taught her maybe more than she taught you—but meanwhile she taught you a tremendous deal.

Lucy, dear, our civilization may fall, just as that of the Jews fell after the days of Solomon, or as did that of ancient Rome. When a mother disciplines a naughty child, she is not thereby ruining the child's life; on the contrary, she is preserving it, she is teaching it needed lessons of self-control, of power to choose the right.

So, my dear Lucy, don't worry over these "young intellectuals." They'll get over it in time, and a new crop take their place. Just remember that there are really a very great number of people in the world who think just as you do and are striving for just the same honorable and clean and forthright aims. Very many more of you, in fact, than of the weaker kind, that Peggy represents. Only you are inarticulate, she is glib. She has to be, poor thing! All the right, all the security, is on your side, Lucy. Her volubility is really an effort to justify herself to her own conscience. It is too bad she should waste so much effort on such a useless task.

## UNDER FOUR PRESIDENTS

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OSCAR S. STRAUS

#### CHAPTER III—FIRST TURKISH MISSION

I WAS naturally disposed to be an independent in politics, especially in city and State politics, where sometimes the conflict of character and personality called for more consideration than in those larger National campaigns of opposing issues. I was a believer in election reform, and in later years became president of an organization for vitalizing the party primaries.

The William R. Grace-Tammany fight in New York in 1882 was the first political campaign in which I took an active part. Grace was an excellent Mayor, gave the city a good business administration—so good and so independent that Tammany refused to renominate him. But the independent voters gave him a banner and backing; Republicans, too, joined the ranks; and Grace was re-elected.

In this campaign I served as secretary of the Independent Executive Committee, with Frederic R. Coudert as chairman. Two years later, being then in business, I aided in organizing the Cleveland and Hendricks Merchants' and Business Men's Association, which paraded 40,000 strong from the lower end of Broadway to Thirty-fourth Street.

A few days before the election the Republican managers called a ministers' meeting in New York. About six hundred clergymen, representing all denominations, assembled at Republican headquarters to meet the candidate. Dr. Samuel D. Burchard, a brilliant orator, was selected to address them. In concluding his speech, which on the whole was dignified and temperate, he stigmatized the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion."

Mr. Blaine, great politician that he was, failed to repudiate the sentiment on the spot. Extraordinary efforts had been made, and with some measure of success, to secure the Roman Catholic vote.

I was present at Democratic headquarters when the reporter who had

been sent to this meeting returned. Senator Gorman asked the reporter to read from his shorthand notes. When he came to the expression, "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," it immediately arrested the chairman's attention. He had the reporter write it out. The Democratic managers saw its importance, and had the whole country placarded with posters headed "R. R. R.," with many additions and variations. The election proved very close, the victory depending upon the vote of New York. The official count gave the Presidency to the Democrats by only 1,047 votes. Without doubt, the number changed by Dr. Burchard's remarks decided the election.

Because of the closeness of the New York vote the Republicans did not at once concede Mr. Cleveland's election. There was a feeling of nervous apprehension. Jay Gould, who controlled the telegraphic lines, was accused of holding back the returns. The Tilden-Hayes contest was recalled, and the recollection did not serve to allay the fears of the Democrats.

It was imperative that the uncertainty be dispelled and that confidence be expressed in the announced result. So the Merchants' and Business Men's Association held a victory mass-meeting at the Academy of Music, then the largest auditorium in the city. This celebration had an assuring effect throughout the country. August Belmont was chairman, and I, as secretary, presented the resolutions. Among the speakers were Henry Ward Beecher, Daniel Dougherty of Philadelphia, Algernon S. Sullivan, and others. Beecher's eloquence was interspersed with humor. Replying to waggish remarks that Cleveland would not fit in the Presidential chair because of his avoirdupois, Beecher said:

"If the chair is too small, then make it larger."

The campaign over, I devoted myself

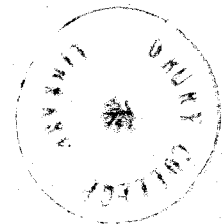
again to business. When a member of the National Committee with whom I co-operated while organizing the merchants' movement asked whether there was any political office I aspired to, I replied that my only wish was that Cleveland should live up to the political principles which brought him the support of so many independent voters.

#### MARYLAND SENATOR PROPOSES DIPLOMATIC CAREER

A talk I had almost two years later, however, resulted in a shifting of my plans for the future. In September, 1886, I was in Chicago on important business. At the Palmer House, where I was stopping, I met Senator Gorman, of Maryland, who had just returned with several other Senators from a Far Western trip.

One evening, while we were sitting together and talking of matters political, the Senator mentioned that during the trip he and his son had read my book, "The Origin of the Republican Form of Government in the United States." He remarked that it aided him towards a clearer view of the sources and early growth of our form of government. This remark was followed up with a surprising suggestion. S. S. Cox, the Minister to Turkey, had resigned, or was about to resign, the Senator said, and he would like to recommend me to the President for appointment to that post. It would provide suitable circumstances, he added, for further studies of government.

The entire conversation served to make me think along new lines. Occupying my consciousness, it diverted my course in a way of which I had not dreamed. I was married, had two small children, and with these responsibilities was deeply absorbed in making my way in business. I had no thought of a political career, nor of service in the diplomatic corps. I had never





Oscar S. Straus, from a photograph taken in Constantinople in 1888, soon after his arrival in Turkey on his first diplomatic mission

given much attention to our foreign relations.

When I returned to New York, I conferred with my father and brothers. They encouraged me wholeheartedly, saying they would look after my interests and not permit them to suffer. Without this generous offer on their part the position would have been impossible, for to maintain it adequately would require an expenditure of several times my salary.

The salary of Minister to Turkey had been reduced to \$7,500, though subsequently restored to \$10,000; and in order to live properly we had to rent a winter house in the capital and a summer house outside, or live in hotels, as Mr. Cox and his predecessor, General Lew Wallace, did. General Wallace was restricted to his salary, and felt compelled to decline the invitations of his colleagues because he was not in position to reciprocate. His "Ben Hur," by the way, he had written before his sojourn in the East, and not afterward, as is often supposed.

Shortly after this time the relations

between Senator Gorman and President Cleveland became strained. This had the effect of shelving all his recommendations for appointments. The Senator apprised me of the situation, and advised me to use such influence as I might be able to command.

Originally the post had not been of my seeking, but now that my expectations had led me to make all sorts of new plans I wanted to see it through. Help was freely offered, and from sources so gratifying that a mere expression of interest would have been flattering.

I also conferred with Carl Schurz, with whom I stood on intimate terms, and with John Foord, another friend. In the early 80's we used to have a lunch club that met about once in two weeks at a little French restaurant, Louis Sieghortner's, at 32 Lafayette Place, now Lafayette Street, in a house that had been a former residence of one of the Astors. We used to discuss various political and reform matters—the "Mugwump" movement, the Cleveland campaigns, or what not. There were ten or twelve of us, and Carl Schurz was one;

Charles R. Miller, a leading editorial writer of the "Times," who died on July 18, was another; and John Foord, whose death by accident occurred in Washington only a few days ago as I write, was another. Foord was then editor-in-chief of the "Times." He took up my appointment with both President Cleveland and Secretary of State Bayard. Schurz encouraged me and said he would speak to Oswald Ottendorfer about having me appointed. Ottendorfer, proprietor of the "New-Yorker Staatszeitung," was a client of our law firm and knew me well. Subsequently I saw him, and he wrote to Cleveland strongly recommending the appointment.

Cleveland was favorably impressed, but hesitated. America's chief concern in Turkey, he said, was the protection of the American missionary interests. He would not like to appoint any one to this mission who might be objected to by the two missionary societies, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Presbyterian Board of Missions.

A. S. Barnes, the publisher, was an important member of the American Board. Barnes knew me well. He had been in frequent consultation with our law firm when we represented Brooklyn in its action to compel the Atlantic Avenue Railroad to sink its tracks. Barnes brought the matter before his Board, resulting in its Prudential Committee sending a letter to Cleveland expressing full approval of my appointment. They merely suggested that I be asked not to hold any receptions on the Sabbath, as one of my predecessors had done. This intimation was not necessary, as I would naturally have refrained from offending the religious sensibilities of my nationals at that post.

#### HENRY WARD BEECHER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CLEVELAND

The greatest American preacher of his time, Henry Ward Beecher, heard through one of his trustees of Plymouth Church that I was being considered for the Turkish post, and that there was some hesitation about appointing me because of my religion. He wrote a notable letter to the President on February 12, 1887. I am happy to be the possessor of the original, which was given me by Governor Porter, then the First Assistant Secretary of State, and I quote from it:

Some of our best citizens are solicitous for the appointment of Oscar Straus as Minister to Turkey. Of his fitness there is a general consent that he is personally, and in attainments, eminently excellent.

But I am interested in another quality—the fact that he is a *Hebrew*. The bitter prejudice against Jews, which obtains in many parts of Europe, ought not to receive any countenance in America. It is because he is a Jew that I would urge his appointment as a fit recognition of this remarkable people, who are becoming large contributors to Ameri-

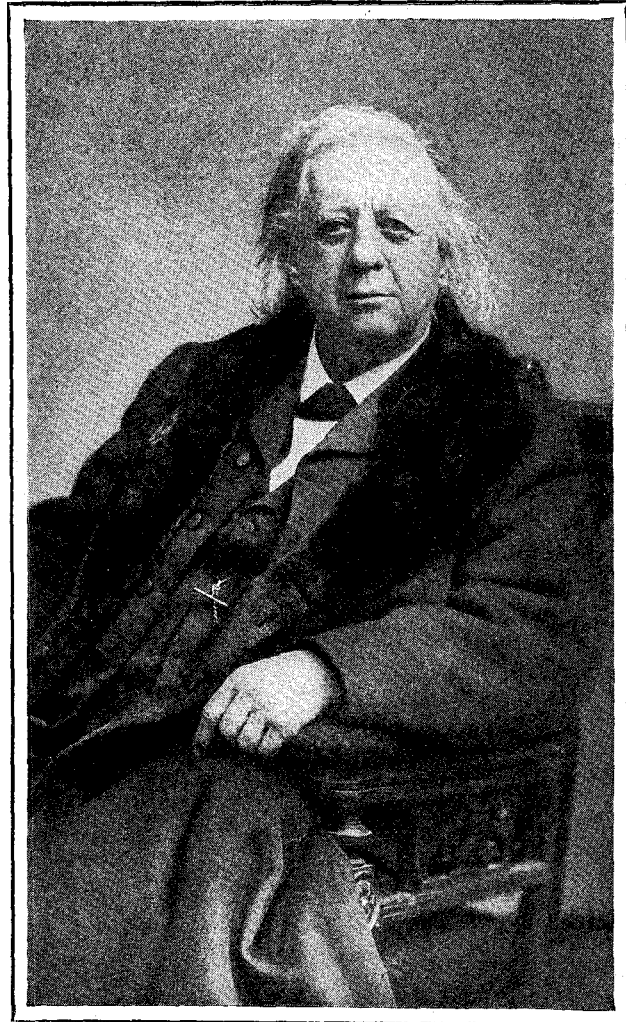


can prosperity and whose intelligence, morality, and large liberality in all public measures for the welfare of society deserve and should receive from the hands of our Government some such recognition.

Is it not, also, a duty to set forth, in this quiet but effectual method, the genius of American government?—which has under its fostering care people of all civilized nations, and which treats them without regard to civil, religious, or race peculiarities as common citizens? We send Danes to Denmark, Germans to Germany. We reject no man because he is a Frenchman. Why should we not make a crowning testimony to the genius of our people by sending a Hebrew to Turkey? The ignorance and superstitions of mediæval Europe may account for the prejudice of that dark age. But how a Christian in our day can turn from a Jew, I cannot imagine. Christianity itself sucked at the bosom of Judaism. Our roots are in the Old Testament. We are Jews ourselves gone to blossom and fruit, Christianity is Judaism in Evolution—and it would seem strange for the seed to turn against the stock on which it was grown.

While recuperating at Atlantic City from a cold I received news of my appointment. A few days later I was taken on a department tour through the intricacies of relations with the Ottoman Empire under the guidance of the Third Assistant Secretary, John Bassett Moore, now the noted authority on international law, and Alvah A. Ade, that distinguished veteran of the State Department, who has broken in diplomats to

Henry Ward Beecher, "the greatest American preacher of his time, heard that I was being considered for the Turkish post, and that there was some hesitation about appointing me because of my religion. He wrote a notable letter to the President"



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Henry Ward Beecher

State  
and  
July 17/67  
July 12. 1887  
Brooklyn N.Y.  
Approved Cleveland  
Dear Mr. President  
Some of our best  
Citizens and Solicitors  
for the appointment of  
Oscar Straus, as Minister  
to Turkey. — Of his fitness  
there is a general consent  
that he is personally, and  
in attainments, eminently  
excellent. —  
But I am interested in  
another quality — the fact  
that he is a Hebrew.

their duties for more than forty years. With Ade at his desk the Department could always carry on.

#### AT THE WHITE HOUSE

The day I arrived in Washington I called upon the President. Replying to a question, I told him I would leave for my post April 9.

"That is businesslike," he said. "I like that."

He seemed to be very much pleased with the reception of my appointment by the press throughout the country.

My selection as the head of an important mission appeared to the press all the more significant because of the Keiley trouble two years before. A. M. Keiley, of Richmond, a Cleveland nominee for Minister to Italy, was declared *persona non grata* by the Italian Government because he once publicly denounced King Victor Emmanuel for his treatment of the Pope. Cleveland then appointed him Minister to Austria-Hungary, but that nation, then a member of the Triple Alliance, preferred to present objections rather than displease her Italian ally. Austria-Hungary used as a basis for her objections the fact that Keiley's wife was a Jewess. The President and Secretary Bayard were incensed. Both rebuked this religious bigotry publicly, the President in his annual Message to Congress and the Secretary of State in the

Facsimile of the first and last pages of Henry Ward Beecher's famous letter to President Cleveland, urging the appointment of Mr. Straus as Minister to Turkey

following answer to the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Washington:

It is not within the power of the President, nor of the Congress, nor of any judicial tribunal in the United States, to take or even hear testimony or in any mode to inquire into or decide upon the religious belief of any official; and the proposition to allow this to be done by any foreign government is necessarily and *a fortiori* inadmissible.

Two days later, by appointment of Colonel Lamont, the President's secretary, Mrs. Straus and I, accompanied by brother Isidor and E. G. Dunnell, New York "Times" correspondent, called on Mrs. Cleveland in the Green Room of the White House. I vividly recall this visit. Mrs. Cleveland came into the room with a sprightly and unceremonious walk, very friendly, with charm of manner and a sufficient familiarity to put us entirely at our ease. She was a very handsome woman, with remarkable sweetness of expression, and her appearance symbolized beauty and simplicity.

What most impressed me about the Cleverlands, after these two visits, was the simple, unassuming manner that was so in keeping with the spirit of our laws and the democracy of our institutions. Verily, I thought, in the words of Cleveland himself, "a public office is a public trust," and while administering such office we are but for a time the servants of the people.

#### LONDON AND PARIS GRACIOUS TO AMERICAN ENVOY

Before leaving Washington we again called on the President, as agreed. In his entire conversation and attitude he expressed satisfaction with my appointment. He said he understood the missionaries were doing good work, and he felt sure from what he had learned of me that they would receive impartial and just treatment at my hands. He commented on the fact that the press of the country had been so unanimously in favor of my appointment.

"I wished they would go for you a little; I have something to give them," he said. From Mr. Dunnell I learned later the meaning of this remark. He had received a letter from the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, highly approving of his appointing me as Minister to Turkey and indorsing me of their own accord in unqualified terms. This letter he was holding to give to the press should any unfavorable comment be made because a member of the Hebrew race was being sent to a post where the Christian mission interests were so large.

Mr. Cleveland's parting remark to me was: "I know you will do well; I have no trepidation—none at all."

On Saturday, April 9, at 6 A.M. we—my wife, Aline, the younger of our little daughters, and myself—sailed out of the harbor on the S.S. Aurania. My one prayer in bidding farewell to my home

was that I might find no vacant seat round my table upon my return, and that I might discharge my high trust with credit to my beloved country and with honor to my friends and myself. For this no sacrifice would be too great.

London and Paris were hospitable and gracious to an American envoy on his way to the Orient. In London I got the Turkish view of affairs while dining with the veteran Turkish diplomat, Rusten Pasha, who represented the Sultan at the Congress of Berlin. I met many literary people, editors, authorities on constitutional government, with whom I was eager to exchange opinions.

We spent one pleasant evening with Dr. and Mrs. John Chapman, of the "Westminster Review." My article on "The Development of Religious Liberty in America" was appearing in a current number of the "Review." The Chapmans were good friends of George Eliot and Professor Lewes. In fact, the novelist and the professor first met at the Chapman home. Dr. Chapman also told me that he was the one who first employed George Eliot in literary work. He became editor of the "Review" in 1851 and engaged her as associate editor.

The impetuous personality of General Boulanger, the fire-eating Teutonophobe Minister of War, dominated the thought of Paris. The idol of the revanchists and the populace in general, Boulanger was at this time about fifty years of age, but looked younger. Of pleasing appearance, with brown hair and closely trimmed beard, he seemed more Anglo-American than French.

We were at luncheon at the beautiful residence of Count Dillon, outside of Paris. The General entertained us with an account of his experiences as the delegate of France to our Yorktown Centennial Exhibition.

"With your American officers I travel as far as the Pacific Ocean. They show me their fortifications. They ask me what I think."

Turning to Mrs. Straus, he continued, with a twinkling eye: "You know your American fortifications. What can I say? It is not for a guest and a friendly fellow-soldier to tell how antiquated and insignificant these fortifications are. No! So I say: 'Splendid! Never have I seen such protection; and why? Because no country has two such big ditches in front of their fortifications—the Atlantic and the Pacific.'"

When the champagne was being drunk, each made some observation. Turning to the General, I said: "May you administer the War Department so well that posterity may honor you as the great preserver of peace!"

To this he responded that for fifteen years France had pocketed insults, and the time had arrived when she must be ready for the offensive. At a subsequent meeting he asked whether I would be willing to assume charge of French interests in Turkey if war came. I said that, while I was personally willing, this

was something for my Government to decide.

The subsequent meteoric career of Boulanger is history. For two years his personality dominated French politics and became an open menace to the Republic. Then came his fall. He fled from Paris when a warrant was signed for his arrest, and was afterwards condemned for treason. In 1891 he committed suicide on the grave of his mistress in a cemetery at Brussels.

While in Paris we dined with Mr. and Mrs. William Seligman. Among the many distinguished guests was the noted Hungarian artist, Munkacsy, who painted "Milton Dictating Paradise Lost to his Daughters" and "Christ before Pilate." Mrs. Straus's face seemed to interest him very much. The dinner over, he sat beside her all evening. He admired her plain style of hair-dress, remarking it was most becoming and natural. He intimated that he wanted to paint her face in a picture, and expressed great regret when he learned that we intended to leave Paris in a few days. A heavy man, with bushy hair and beard, and with unusually small and inexpressive eyes, he looked a laborer; in fact, he was a carpenter before he became a painter.

He talked little. His wife, showy and loud, presented a strong contrast. After dinner, we were entertained by a young musical prodigy who has since become famous in his profession throughout the world, Joseph Hoffman.

#### CONSTANTINOPLE, CITY OF PICTURESQUE DIRT

We left for Vienna on May 10. At that time there was no railway connection with Constantinople. The Oriental Express went by way of Bucharest to Varna, on the Black Sea. From there we went by steamship to Constantinople. The view as we passed through the Bosphorus and approached Constantinople had the effect upon me of a dream. I suddenly realized how much of my Homer I had forgotten—the Homer on whom I had spent years of hard study. However, most of us meet so many new subjects that have a more direct relation to our surroundings that it is next to impossible to get that "elegant leisure" necessary for a continued interest in the classics.

My predecessor, S. S. Cox, having been given the sobriquet of "Sunset Cox" in the States, had christened the Legation steam launch Sunset. When we reached the quay at Constantinople, we were met by the Sunset, with the officials of the Legation and Consulate aboard. There being no residence at the Legation, we took an apartment at the Royal Hotel. Later, with summer approaching, we engaged the entire second floor at the hotel in Therapia, some twelve miles from Constantinople on the Bosphorus, near the entrance of the Black Sea. Several other Ministers lived at the same hotel.

Our first impression from the windows





*The harbor of Constantinople*

of the Royal Hotel in Constantinople was of picturesque dirt. As Mrs. Straus said at the time, dirt not only on the hard earth roads and the people, but even on the dogs. In time, however, one is less impressed by the dirt than by the picturesqueness—the venders calling out their wares of fish, fruit, meat, vegetables, all carried on the edges of baskets covered with leaves; the water-carriers with their urns carried on yokes; and the veiled women.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was in Constantinople as a special envoy to negotiate regarding the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt. Acquaintance with him soon ripened into friendship. He was in that awkward situation which sometimes develops when special envoys are sent on missions into territory already represented by an accredited diplomat. There was an evident estrangement between Wolff and Sir William White, the British Ambassador. Both were exceptionally able men.

Wolff, being detained longer on his mission than he had anticipated, was also compelled to seek rooms at Therapia. He was unable to find suitable accommodations, so we shared part of our suite with him. This arrangement proved to be very pleasant and diplomatically advantageous. I got the benefit of Wolff's tried experience in Oriental diplomacy.

Frequently we all dined together in the large *salon* of our apartment. Our party usually included the Dutch Minister, Baron van Tets, and his wife, both very charming. Baron van Tets subsequently became Minister to Berlin, later Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Immediately after my arrival at my post I communicated with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Said Pasha, to present my credentials and arrange for

an audience with the Sultan. It was one of the insidious peculiarities of the Sultan to delay audiences by making successive appointments and postponements. This—or so the Sultan must have thought—might impress the new representatives of foreign governments with the importance of his Majesty.

At this time also Ramazan, the month of fasting, was observed, and only the most pressing official functions took place during that time.

#### AN AMBASSADOR'S £300 WIFE

We looked forward with more than usual interest to the evening of our dinner at the Persian Embassy. The Persian Ambassador's wife had been a Circassian slave whom he bought for three hundred pounds, with a horse thrown into the bargain. However, everything and everybody was quite

European, and there was nothing extraordinary about the occasion, after all. The Ambassador's wife was of course typically Circassian; chalky white skin, soft black eyes, small features, an unattractive figure unattractively dressed, with whom conversation was almost nil because she knew only Turkish.

The streets of Pera, the European part of Constantinople, are exceedingly narrow and very hilly, for the city is built on several hills, like ancient Rome; in addition they are poorly paved and dirty. This makes driving dangerous; and, as in mediæval times, sedan chairs are quite generally in use as a means of conveyance for the ladies of the diplomatic corps and the wives of the higher Turkish officials, especially at night to dinners and other official functions. Two sinewy porters carry these chairs, one in front and the other behind, and they shuffle along with considerable rapidity. Usually the lady is carried while the gentleman, preceded by his kavass in the case of a diplomat, walks alongside, except in inclement weather, when he follows also in a chair.

I am reminded of the wife of the German Ambassador at the time, a large, heavy woman, whom the porters quite justly charged double. She, however, was entirely oblivious of her extra avoirdupois and always complained of the injustice of these porters. The Austrian and Russian Embassies were particularly difficult of approach by conveyance other than the sedan.

We certainly were living in a new sphere of life, in a strange land among strange people with customs and habits that brought to mind the age of the patriarchs. There was much to see where some thirty nationalities lived and did business as if in their own homes—much to wonder at, much to deplore, much to praise and admire.

### IN THE SULTAN'S PALACE

ABDUL HAMID's reception of an American diplomat is faithfully described in next week's installment of "Under Four Presidents." Even the egg-shaped coffee cups resting in jewel-studded holders are depicted. The Sultan is further described at his prayers in the mosque. Mr. Straus reports a series of interesting diplomatic tangles, including his defense of the sale of the Bible in Turkey, and his reopening of the American missionary schools. He concludes the chapter with a vivid account of a journey to Cairo and a close-up of the Khedive.



# A FORT WHICH NOT EVEN PACIFISTS OBJECT TO

PICTURE FROM AN OUTLOOK READER



A FOREST SERVICE LOOKOUT STATION PLACED ON A THIRTY-FOOT STEEL TOWER LOCATED ON BLACK FOX MOUNTAIN, IN THE SHASTA NATIONAL FOREST

Watch towers such as these are forts holding the line against the invasion of ever-threatening fires—of fires which neither give nor take quarter

From Everett Smith, McCloud, Cal.