

from New York. General Pershing has two military aides.

Peru's preparations for the celebration included displays and fêtes of many kinds, historic pageants, military and civic parades, and public demonstrations of rejoicing.

Gene Stratton Porter

MRS. GENE STRATTON PORTER, novelist and naturalist, died on December 7 in Los Angeles from the effect of injuries received in a collision between her automobile and a trolley car.

The author of "Freckles" and "A Girl of the Limberlost" was also the author of "Homing with the Birds" and "Friends in Feathers." The reason why many thousands of readers liked her novels, despite the obvious faults that made literary critics scorn them, was her own deep love of outdoor nature, with which she imbued her fictitious characters. The people in her novels might alternately gush and preach, the plot might be puerile, and the sentiment might be exuberant, but the characters were usually simple and honest and good-natured, and when they took us into the woods we felt through them the author's knowledge and love of outdoor things. The nearer she got her boys and girls to nature, the better was the book; the more she led them into artificial social life, the poorer the book.

There are many who have had more pleasure from Mrs. Porter's "Homing with the Birds" than from any or all of her stories. She was an expert photographer, and didn't mind waiting for days with Indian-like patience to see just what she wanted to picture and tell. This book was exactly described in our review columns as a near-at-hand talk about bird home life by an intimate friend of the birds.

The Lame Duck Congress

SOMETIMES an epithet will succeed when argument fails.

If there has been anything clear to the politically thoughtful, it is that the survival of an old Congress for months after a new Congress has been elected is an anachronism. There was reason in this when the fastest means of transporting both news and people was horseflesh. Once on a time news of the people's balloting had to be conveyed either by courier or stage-coach to the centers where the results were compiled;

then the results had to go to the people by the same slow method; then by the same method the electors were supposed to gather together in their several States and deliberate; and then, still by the use of horses, in many cases plowing through snow-drifts and fording streams, the official results of the electors' voting had to



International

Mrs. Gene Stratton Porter

be conveyed to the Nation's capital to await the deliberate action of Congress. Of course a new Congress could not be ready there to receive the results. For three-quarters of a century, however, we have been living in an age of railways and telegraph; and yet, so conservative a people are the Americans that we still hold fast to stage-coach methods after entering the age of the airplane and the radio. Reason has been showing the need of a change. Perhaps what reason has failed to accomplish ridicule will. Somebody has called the Congress that survives an election a "lame duck Congress." Perhaps Congress will seek to rid itself of the stigma of this sobriquet, and will undertake to put itself *en rapport* with the twentieth century.

There is now before Congress a proposed Constitutional amendment which, if adopted, would change the date of the assembling of a newly elected Congress from December, thirteen months after election, to the preceding January, about two months after election. By the same amendment the inauguration of the President would be changed from March 4 following election to a few days after the assembling of Congress in January.

If this amendment were in operation, the "lame ducks" that are now letting legislative eggs get cold under them would occupy the nest at Washington only until next January—if indeed they would be asked to sit after election at all. As it is, in the ordinary course of events, the Congress that was elected last month will not assemble for nearly a year. Meantime until next March the Congress that aroused the scorn of the people and was thoroughly rebuked at the polls remains in charge of National legislation.

It is hard to get lame ducks to shoo themselves off their nests.

It would almost seem as if self-respect in members of Congress would lead them to provide for their own retirement after they had received so vigorous an invitation from the people to leave their seats.

That the election has had a salutary effect on Congress even before effecting a change in its personnel is evident at Washington. At present it looks as if Congress were to be less obstreperous than was expected generally and more productive of legislation.

Of course it will be charged with the task of providing the means of carrying on the Government. It will have to pass the regular appropriation bills if it performs even its most elementary duty. There are other measures, however, which it may enact.

It will probably do something about Muscle Shoals. The chance that it will adopt any plan for Government operation, except as a last resort in case no offer for private operation is made and accepted by July 1, is remote. The bill with the best chance of passage is the Underwood Bill, which, though written before the President's Message was, reads as if it had been based upon it. It provides for guaranties that the Muscle Shoals plant shall be used primarily for the manufacture of nitrogen for making fertilizers in times of peace and making explosives if the devil ever breaks loose again and plunges us into war. Men who do not wish the Underwood Bill to pass predict that it will. The public should be on guard against permitting Congress to do what it threatened once to do—allow the lease of Muscle Shoals to extend for a hundred years. Whatever we do, we have no business to tie the hands of future generations in that way.

Congress will probably stretch out its wing and hover the agricultural co-operatives. What the provisions of the bill for the promotion of co-operative marketing will be when passed cannot be

foretold, but some kind of co-operative marketing bill will probably, as even men who do not want it believe, be passed by Congress and approved by the President.

Congress may make some effort to pass a branch banking bill, and possibly a bill to regulate radio.

Whatever Congress does beyond the routine, however, will be done out of shame rather than out of conviction. A "lame duck" Congress is not likely to be very competent, because it is not really representative. The American people are good-natured and put up with inconveniences and impositions which are quite unnecessary. A Congress like the present one is quite needless. The people ought to get rid of "lame duck" Congresses altogether.

The Washington Sewing Circle

THE city of Washington finds Mr. Coolidge parsimonious. He saved the public money, it seems, and declined to take a private car on his trip to Chicago. It is said at the White House that the President did not oppose a private car until it was discovered that the railroad, in addition to the fee for the car, was about to charge additional fees based on the number of persons occupying the car, and that this number was fixed at about twice the number of those who could actually go in it! Then the President decided to travel as if he were merely Mr. Calvin Coolidge.

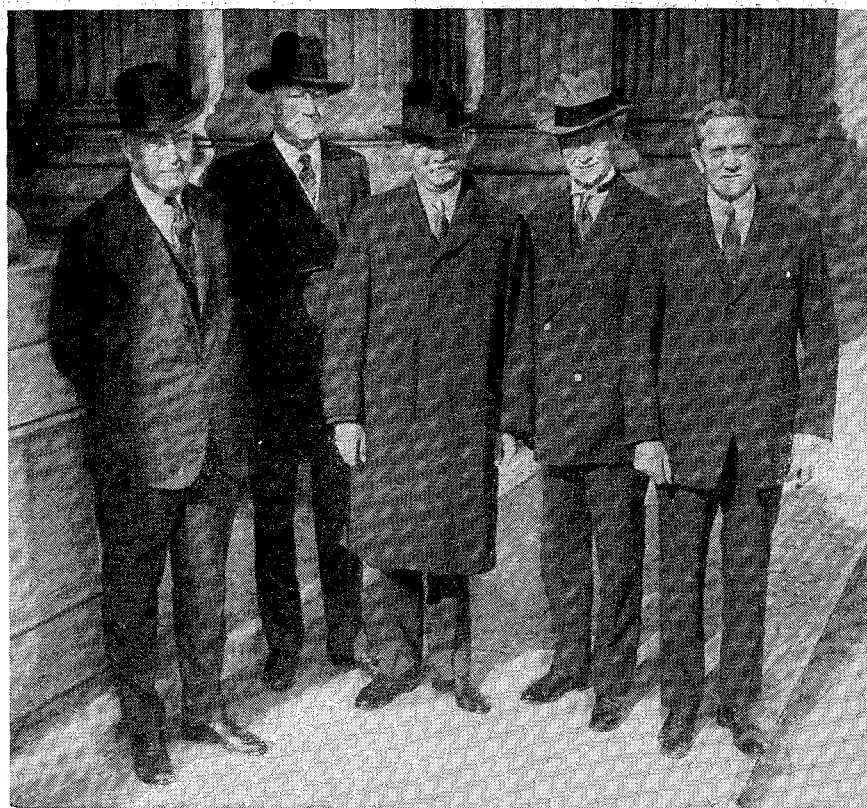
He did so. He went and came in comfort and safety, and if he found his stateroom too warm at night (as most of us do), if the porter during the dark hours covered Mr. Coolidge's boots with a mixture of tar and glue (as porters are wont to do), or if there were cinders in the ice-water at breakfast, no complaint has come from the President about it. A number of persons think he should have guarded his dignity and security better; that the President has a difficult job, and that he ought to look out for himself and keep in good condition.

But Mr. Coolidge will, very likely, go on being Mr. Coolidge. He preaches economy—and he practices it. (His critics call it cheese-paring.) He has never led the career of a millionaire, and he finds it not only hard but impossible to begin such a life. Would we

not criticise him even more severely if he suddenly began to cut a dash?

Does it matter greatly what Washington thinks of any President? It sees Presidents at close quarters, but often with rather blurred vision. It judges them with the eyes of milliners, caterers, and gossips. The whole country, as a Vice-President, Mr. Marshall, remarked, is too apt to look upon a President as Sir Galahad on inauguration day, and as Benedict Arnold on election day. Washington thought Mr. Roosevelt "brutal" and noisy; Mr. Taft too complacent; and Mr. Wilson too cold and austere. It mocked the Hardings because they said they were "just folks," and the Coolidges for simplicity and economy. Mr. Roosevelt talked too much; Mr. Coolidge doesn't talk enough.

Would it be advisable to let a President keep his individuality? While Mr. Roosevelt was being denounced for his "imperialism" and supposed regal ambitions he was driving about Washington in a very simple carriage, wearing an old overcoat and a slouch hat, and looking much like a comfortable Dutch burgher. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were a handsome and brilliant-looking pair, in a fine limousine; the President fairly radiant in his shiny topper and well-tailored



(C) Harris & Ewing

After the Republican Senatorial Caucus—Left to right: William M. Butler, new Senator from Massachusetts; Senator James Watson, of Indiana; Senator Charles Curtis, of Kansas, elected by the caucus as Senate leader to succeed the late Senator Lodge; Senator J. H. Metcalf, from Rhode Island, succeeding the late Senator Colt; Senator George H. Moses, of New Hampshire

clothes. During the recent campaign it must have struck many observers with amusement that the leader of the so-called party of privilege and plutocracy was a little country lawyer who spent his vacations pitching hay on a farm—not a new occupation taken up for political effect, as his opponents intimated, but a matter of lifelong custom. And the candidate of the party of the "plain people," the follower of Jefferson and Jackson, was accustomed to wear fine clothes and to live among the fashionables of one of America's sportiest sections. What of it—aside from the humor which dwelt in the situation? Nobody seriously thought that either man was posing or insincere. There would have been humbug in it only if Mr. Coolidge had suddenly appeared at Chevy Chase in "plus fours," or if Mr. Davis had bought a pair of overalls and commenced to rake in the meadows sweet with hay.

Would it, perhaps, be sensible to let our Presidents be themselves, and not to fuss too much about their methods of traveling, eating, drinking, and sleeping? Would it be well to guard against the standards by which the city of Washington judges a President? For those are, too often, the standards of the "society reporter," the political gossip, and some-