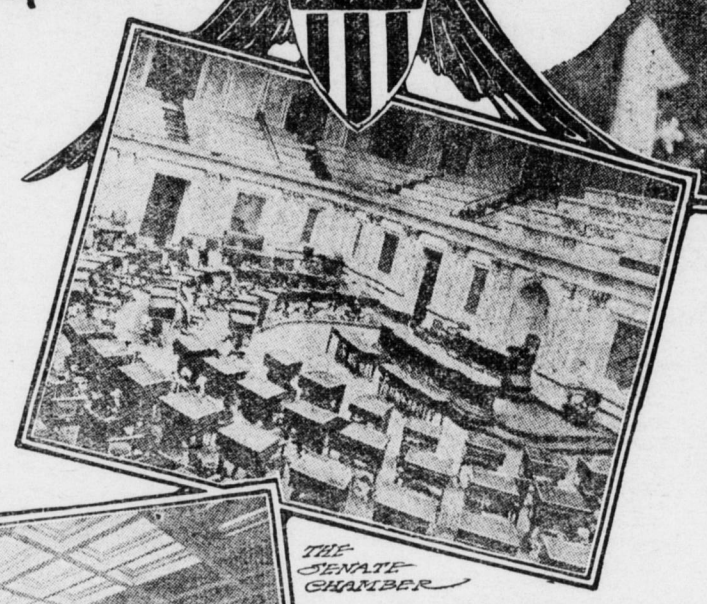
GOSSIP OF OUR LAW-MAKERS

by EDWARD B. CLARK

JAMES S. SHERMAN PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE SENATE



THE SENATE CHAMBER

THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CHANGES which are certain to come in the membership of the United States Senate next March will involve much more than a mere disappearance of old faces and the appearance of new ones. It often has been said that the senate of the United States is a law unto itself in matters of procedure, and so it is. The senate does things as no other legislative body in the world does them. The senators pride themselves upon the dignity of their body and they take no little pride apparently in the uniqueness of the rules which govern them and in the accepted method of doing things without absolute governing regulation.

Over in the house members draw for seats. A man just elected is as likely to get a first-class seat as a man who has been in the service of the house for years. The leader of the majority and the leader of the minority and the oldest member in point of service in the hall are allowed to select their own seats. After they have made their choice all is a lottery. In the senate the thing is different. A newly elected member of the upper house takes such a seat as he can find vacant, and his first duty to himself is to "file" on the seat of some other member so that he may get it when the other member dies or retires.

At times there are five or six "filings" for the same seat. For instance, if some senator has a choice seat and he is aged and in the ordinary course of things may be expected to die soon, his seat is certain to be in request by several senators provided that those lower on the list of applicants think that those above them like the holder of the seat himself, are likely to die, or to be retired quickly from the service by their constituents.

Some of the old senators do not like the way in which the younger members file for their seats. Then there are some senators who are not old who do not like to feel that others think that their seats soon are to be vacated. When a senator in the prime of life finds that his seat has been "filed" on he takes it as an intimation that the senator who does the filing thinks that the seat's occupant is nearing the end of his tether because his state has disapproved of his services, or that the political party opposing the one of which he is a member is likely soon to become in the ascendant.

Senator Dolliver, who died recently, had one of the best seats in the senate chamber, a commanding place from which he could always catch the eye of the presiding officer. The Iowan's successor in the senate will not get his predecessor's seat, for notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Dolliver was apparently in good health and was only fifty-two years old, there were three applications on file for his seat when he should vacate it. Of course it must be understood that the seats of the Republicans and those of the Democrats are separated and that no man of one party ever files an application for the seat of a man of the other party.

Senator Beveridge of Indiana was in the upper house for years before he succeeded in getting a seat to his liking. Early in his service he had filed an application for the seat occupied by Senator Spooner of Wisconsin, a vigorous man with apparently a long lease of earthly and senatorial life ahead of him. Unexpectedly Senator Spooner resigned, and Beveridge moved to what is perhaps the best seat in the house, one on the middle aisle midway between the front and rear of the chamber.

Elihu Root, who is accounted one of the foremost men in the upper house in point of ability, is obliged to sit in what is known as the "Cherokee Strip." There are so many Republicans in the present senate that they more than fill the seats allotted to the majority on the left side of the center aisle. There are not enough Democrats to fill the seats allotted to them. The vacant Democratic seats are away around near the wall to the extreme right of the vice-president, who has to turn his head to see the seats of the occupants. In this "Cherokee Strip" sits the "overflow" Republicans and one of them is Elihu Root.

Before the new senate office building was completed it was the effort of the senate to provide a separate room in the Capitol for each senator. All of these rooms were called committee rooms, but in order to dignify them as such it was necessary to create several committees which really were nothing more than committees in name, for they seldom held meetings and it is said that in one or two cases no meetings ever have been held. The senators as they were assigned to rooms were made chairmen of the committees which were supposed to meet in the assigned chambers. This gave the minority senators chairmanships, but it can be taken for granted that the majority always saw to it that the committees presided over by minority men were not of a kind to have any great influence on legislation.

Now that the senate office building is occupied and each senator has a general office, a private office, a reception room and a bath, it is not necessary to provide separate rooms in the Capitol for all the upper house members. So it is that before long it may be that the farce of naming committees which never have anything to do may be done away with.

Here is a list of some of the practically useless committees of the senate: "Transportation and sale of meat products;" "Revolutionary claims;" "Transportation rates to the seaboard;" "Investigate trespass upon Indian lands;" and last, "Disposition of useless papers in the executive departments."

There are to be many changes in committee chairmanships in March next and in fact there will have to be a general shaking up in the committee memberships as a result of changes in the senate's roll call. Senator Dolliver who died was the chairman of the committee on agriculture and forestry, one of the most important subsidiary bodies of the United States senate. Senator Frances E. Warren of Wyoming is the ranking member of the committee now that Senator Dolliver is dead, but Warren is the chairman of the committee on military affairs, a position which he would prefer to hold to that of the chairmanship of the agricultural body. No member holds two important chairs and so some one besides Senator Warren must be selected to take Mr. Dolliver's place at the head of the committee which looks after the bills in which the farmers of the country and the forest enthusiasts are particularly interested.

Eugene Hale of Maine will retire in March. He is at the head of the committee on appropriations, a position which next to the chieftainship of the committee on finance is the most important chairmanship in the gift of the senate. Nobody knows yet who will succeed Mr. Hale as committee chief, but it can be taken for granted that if the Republicans hold control of the senate and the so-called regulars hold control of the Republicans, Mr. Hale will be succeeded by a man of what in these days the country is given to call the old school of Republican thought.

Senator Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, the Republican leader in the senate, is the chairman of the committee on finance, which corresponds to the committee on ways and means of the house of representatives. It was the committee on finance which considered the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill and which reported it to the senate. Every bill which has to do with the raising of revenue goes to Mr. Aldrich's committee. Under the constitution all such revenue measures must originate in the house of representatives, but frequently the United States senate takes house bills and strikes out everything in them except the enacting clause, thus gets around the constitutional question, and frames revenue bills much as it wishes to. Of course these bills have to go back to the house for agreement, but the senate despite constitutional inhibition does just about as much original work in revenue measures as the house itself.

Who is going to succeed Nelson W. Aldrich as chairman of the most powerful committee in the senate of the United States? Nobody knows. Senator Julius C. Burrows of Michigan ranks next to Mr. Aldrich on the finance committee and in the natural order of things he would succeed to Mr. Aldrich's place as finance chairman. The difficulty is that Mr. Burrows has been defeated in the primaries for re-election to the senate and like Mr. Aldrich he is to retire in March. Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania comes next on this all powerful body, but it is more than whispered that chairmanship preferment is not to be given to Mr. Penrose. Next in order comes Eugene Hale of Maine, who is to retire in March, and thus is out of consideration. Then comes Shelby M. Cullom of Illinois, who will not accept the chairmanship under any circumstances, for his age precludes his undertaking the hard work connected with it. No one knows yet who will succeed the powerful Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island as the chief of the finance committee, a position which carries with it ordinarily the Republican leadership of the senate of the United States.

A good deal of historic interest centers in some of the committee rooms of the senate. The present senate wing of the Capitol was not completed until the year 1859, but there are several committee rooms still located in the old part of the great building. Even in the new section there are two or three rooms which have witnessed stirring scenes. In the room of the committee on territories for instance, a body of which Senator Beveridge of Indiana is the chairman, there were held the hearings on the Kansas-Nebraska bill and on other "free or slave soil state" matters. In the room of the committee on privileges and elections, of which Senator Burrows of Michigan is the chairman, many senators have had what might be called grand jury hearings on the question of their right to their seats. The Utah cases have been heard here, and it was here that Senator W. A. Clark of Montana appeared through his counsel to try to prove that he did not use wrongful means to secure his seat in the senate.

In the room of the committee on military affairs hundreds upon hundreds of problems were worked out during the days of the civil war. Since the United States has become a world power Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the committee on the Philippines, has had many puzzling questions on his hands, and the hearings which have been held in this room at times have attracted crowds and nearly always have been of deep interest. In the Philippines room the "anti-Imperialists" have argued on behalf of independence for the Pilippino, and there have been met in debate by men who have maintained that the day of liberty for the "little brown brother" must be postponed until he is qualified for its privileges.

Memories of men pass quickly. While the United States government as a government is only about 121 years old, few men can be found today to identify without looking at the names, the pictures and the busts of men high in official government position or of great fame in their time in contemporary history. In the senate chamber placed in niches about the gallery walls are busts of the vice-presidents of the United States. Only the guides of the Capitol who have their lessons letters proof, can tell the names of these men without reference to the printed lists or the printed inscriptions.

When the house cleaning days were over only a season ago two pictures were replaced on the walls of the corridor of the senate. One of them was a picture of Patrick Henry and the other was that of Thomas Jefferson. For weeks the fact that Jefferson's picture has been labeled Patrick Henry and Patrick Henry's had been labeled Thomas Jefferson went undetected. Finally a visitor noticed the error, called attention to it and had the change made.

Perhaps the most striking picture in the senate corridors is that which shows Commodore Perry standing in the row boat to which he went from his sinking flag ship Lawrence to the ship Niagara at the battle of Lake Erie. Perry is pictured erect in the boat while a small boy evidently a "midship-mite," also standing trying to pull the Commodore down to a seat so that he will be less exposed to the furious rain of the shot of the enemy. The boy who is trying to induce the commodore to take the necessary precaution to save his life was a nephew of the great sailor, and it was he who later opened the ports of Japan to the commerce of the world. So it is that in the painting are the portraits of two Perrys, both of whom are famous in the naval annals of the United States.

MAD KING OTTO'S LIFE

Some remarkable details relating to the mad King Otto of Bavaria are published from a diplomatic source by the Giornale d'Italia, the London Chronicle says. Though shut up for forty years in castles, now at the Castle Furstenried, and though sixty-two years of age. Otto is still a fine, handsome figure, with a magnificent beard and flowing gray locks.

The stories about his periodical fits of fury are quite untrue. His court is presided over by Marshal Baron Redwiz and consists of a few trusty gentry belonging to the most ancient families of the Bavarian aristocracy.

King Otto suffers terriby from insomnia and often sits up in bed half the night staring toward the door, as if expecting somebody to enter. He, however, rises punctually every morning at 8 and mutely allows himself to be dressed by his valet. He has a holy horror of soap and water, and of having his hair and nails cut, so that servants have to await patiently a favorable day for these operations, when the poor patient is in a state of complete apathy. King Otto smokes incredible quantities of cigarettes and is always puffing away save when he is absorbed in his favorite pastime of studying the operatic music of his pet composer, Verdi. Often he causes the castle to resound all day long with the melodies of "Rigoletto."

The diplomat relates that the first symptom of brain decay in the young prince, till then so bright, forceful and courageous, was manifested during the Franco-German war. Just before the seige of Paris Kaiser William summoned him to the headquarters of the general staff and kept him under observation, in company with Bismarck and Moltke, the reason being that King Otto had called out a squad of cavalry and ordered them to charge straight at a stone wall, which, he insisted, was a body of the enemy's infantry.

He began preaching everywhere the stern necessity of concluding peace with France at any price. Soon after intercepted letters were brought to the Emperor William which the Bavarian prince had been dispatching secretly to the enemy. It was then that the old kaiser sadly sent for the demented prince, decorated him with the order of the iron cross for service rendered in the campaign and packed him off under a medical escort for a pleasure trip in Spain and Italy.

Curari a Queer Poison

Curari, the vegetable poison with which the Indians of the upper Amazon tip their hunting arrows, remains a mystery in its composition after a hundred years of investigation by scientists. The Indians will sell it for its weight in silver, but will not reveal the plants from which it is derived. Not long ago a professor in a German university was sent to the Amazon wilderness for the express purpose of discovering the secret, for curari, or urari, as it is otherwise called, is now thought to be of great value in medicine. The professor lived two years in Indian villages, and while he was permitted to witness the boiling of the "witches' broth," which lasted several days, he could not tell what plants went into the brew. Returning from his baffled quest down the Amazon with a quantity of the poison, the professor was met by another traveler, Dewey Austin Cobb, who had got possession of a native blowgun. The latter tells in the National Geographic Magazine how he put some of the professor's curari on some of his blowgun arrows, which are like toothpicks feathered with cotton, and tried it on a buck deer in the forest.

"After a deliberate aim our hunter fired," says Mr. Cobb, "if I may use such a word for the little puff, scarcely heard by us, and entirely inaudible above the rustling corn leaves at the distance of the deer. The animal gave a slight start as it felt the prick of the arrow on its flank and turned partly around, sniffing the air for a scent, and looking about as if searching for the insect that had bitten or stung it. Detecting nothing, it stood still and unalarmed. At the end of a minute, or a minute and a half at most, its head dropped a little, as if it was sleepy.

"When the hunter saw this he arose and stepped out in plain sight. The deer turned his head and looked at him, and moved forward, not away from him, a few steps, and stopped. It showed no fear, but simply curiosity. After another minute the professor and I arose, and all three walked quietly to within reach of it. It made no movement to run away, but watched us intently, and shifted its position a little. Its movements seemed perfectly easy and natural. Absence of fear was the only observable change, until at the end of three minutes more; then it lay down, not falling, but as naturally as a cow or sheep when ready for sleep.

"We all approached its side, and the hunter laid a hand on its shoulder. It looked up at him, but showed no resentment or fear. Even its breathing seemed easy and natural, which surprised me, as I had heard that death resulted from paralysis of the lungs when caused by urari."

Gaunt House of "Vanity Fair."

Writing on the original of Gaunt House in Thackeray's first novel, "Vanity Fair," C. Van Noorden concludes that this was Harcourt House, Cavendish Square, and not, as most commentators incline to believe, either Hertford House, Manchester Square, or Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square. Harcourt House, says Mr. Van Noorden, corresponds almost exactly with the novelist's description in "Vanity Fair."

"The vast hall, the great gateway, etc., all are here, while the equestrian statue resolves itself into that of the Duke of Cumberland, the 'Butcher' of Culloden, which was removed in 1868, ostensibly to be recast, but has never reappeared. This figure appears in Thackeray's own illustration of the arrest of Capt. Crawley when leaving Gaunt House, affording another proof of the correctness of this localization. Harcourt House has now given way to a block of residential flats."—London Graphic.

DEATH OF EX-MAYOR GRANT

Twice Chief Executive of New York and a Man of Great Prominence.

New York.—One of the most prominent figures in the political life of New York City 20 years ago was Hugh J. Grant, who died in the metropolis recently, at the age of 55. He was a native of the metropolis and received his education at St. Francis Xavier College and in France and Germany, where he studied languages and music. Afterward he studied law at the Columbia Law School and engaged in real estate and legal business.

In 1883 he entered politics, being elected alderman, and his course in the board the following year in opposition to boodle legislation made him a candidate for mayor on the Tammany ticket in 1884. He was defeated,

Hugh J. Grant.

however. In 1885 he was elected sheriff and three years later was chosen mayor, and was re-elected in 1890. It was Mayor Grant who made the telephone and telegraph companies take down their overhead wires. The wires formed a network over the city, interfering with firemen and forming a danger and a nuisance. When the subways were ready and the wires did not come down Mayor Grant settled the controversy in a characteristic way. He went out with gangs of linemen, laborers and axmen and chopped down the poles and tore down the wires.

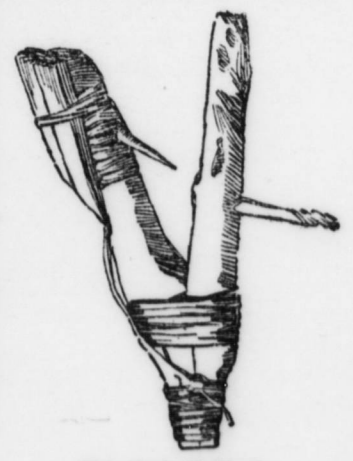
In 1894 he was again a candidate for mayor, but met with defeat at the polls. He then withdrew from active participation in politics.

Mayor Grant was a man of fine physical proportions and was big intellectually. He was fond of outdoor life, took a deep interest in trotting horses and was a member of several golf clubs. He married a daughter of ex-Senator Murphy, of Troy. In business he amassed a large fortune and was charitable during his life in its disposition. At Christmas time he spent large sums in charity. While Mayor Grant like his great namesake, Gen. Grant, was a man of silence, he was not in the least morose.

MOST REMARKABLE FISHHOOK

Primitive Affair Used by the Indians of Alaska for Catching Halibut.

St. Paul, Minn.—The picture illustrates a halibut hook used by the Indians in Alaska. It is about nine inches long and two inches wide in the widest portion. From top to bottom of the fork it is about five inches. A heavy sinker is attached to the cord that is seen descending from the lower fork of the hook, and this sinker rests on the bottom when the hook is in action. The hook itself floats about two feet above the sinker, and is kept



Fish Hook of Wood.

in the position shown in the illustration by the strips of light cedar that are tied to the upper fork of the hook. The hook itself is of wood in two pieces, lashed together by thongs of some kind of hide, with a steel prong lashed to the upper part of the fork with thongs of hide. A piece of salmon steak is placed on the hook prong, and the halibut comes along and tries to eat it. When the wily redskin feels a tug on his fishline he gives it a jerk and the hook prong is driven into the lower jaw of the halibut and the fish is caught. Halibut weighting as high as 200 pounds have been caught on these primitive hooks. The hook illustrated was brought to St. Paul by Martin Kennedy, Jr., on his return from his recent trip to Alaska. One peculiarity that puts this hook out of the ordinary class of salmon and halibut hooks is that the lower prong is carved in the shape of an idol.