

From the Knickerbocker.

A PEEP AT WASHINGTON:

LEAF FROM THE JOURNAL OF AN AMERICAN TOURIST.

"I come to fetch you to the Capitol." —Julius Caesar.

Undoubtedly, the point to which all eyes are turned, during a certain portion of the year, is the city of Washington. The big guns of the nation are there—and there we have batteries of eloquence, and oratorical thunder, and, in these high times, flashes of lightning. I came, this session, to take a survey of the war-ground—to look at the generals, and the colonels, the sergeants, and the corporals, the drum-majors, and the fifers.

I was dropped at Gadby's. It was yet morning—and the flags, with their stars, were waving over both wings of the majestic capitol, indicating that Congress was now under full way. I ascended the hill, whence proceed so much noise, and smoke, and confusion, and law. "My heart beat high at the prospect of beholding the assembled wisdom of the nation: and I did not long pause to look at the magnificent grounds around the capitol—the strong-built terrace—nor the naval monument, floating, as it were, in an artificial reservoir, supplied by an ever-running fountain. I hurried, out of breath, up the steps of stairs, threaded the corridors and rocky mazes, until I found myself under the canopy of the huge dome that arches the rotunda. Every foot-fall echoed and re-echoed, and each whisper reverberated, from a thousand quarters. The groups peeping at this thing and that—the sculpture in the niches of the wall—and the paintings that half encircle the arca, detained my eye but a moment—for my cicero hurried me on, amid mazes and galleries yet more confined, until I found myself overlooking the Representatives of the Nation. I was in the Ladies' Gallery, amid a sea of tossing heads—among belles from the sunny South, with their sallow faces, and the blooming girls of the Northern and Middle States; some bleached by the fogs of New England; such as prevail at Newport, Rhode Island, and along the coast of Maine; and others, grown pale amid the swamps of Georgia and the Carolinas, but making up in spirit, life, and conversation, all that was lacking in the rosy cheek and lip. A long hall was before me. A portrait of La Fayette, and the flag of the Union were at my left—in front, a large circular gallery for "the people," supported by huge columns, of surpassing grandeur.

"And is this?" said I, "the House of Representatives? Those men, there with hats on, buzzing and chattering, whispering and laughing—reading newspapers, hemming and coughing—are they the law-makers of our twenty-four States?" A member is speaking, but nobody hears him; and the louder he talks, the louder the buzzing. "Sir," he says; "Sir," again, in a yet louder tone; "Sir—," and now in a voice, like "the wry-necked fife." The Speaker pricks up and yields his ears: "Sir, I call the attention of the House to the important fact,—." By this time, unless the orator is a favorite, the Speaker's head is again dropped, and the yawning members, it may be, have fallen into a quiet sleep. I borrowed a glass—for one can see but little with unaided eyes athwart the wide extended hall—to take my peep at a few of the talked-of, the written about—"the Lions." "There," said my cicero, "is Mr. Adams, the Ex-President, in his faded frock-coat, and white woolen stockings, plodding and plodding, ever plodding. He is always in his seat, perpetually at work; keeping a journal, it may be, or writing poetry in a young lady's album; perhaps studying to ascertain whether Hesiod is an older poet than Homer; knowing every thing, interested in every thing; a busy spirit, clogged in cold clay; a small Vesuvius, with a peak of snow, with a heart of fire and a hand of ice." "And who," I inquired, "is this other unquiet, slow, moping, head-dropping body, who seems to live by himself, and commune with himself and feed on his own thoughts?" "That is George M'Duffie," answered my cicero. "You have hit him off to the life. When he opens his mouth, this noisy House is as silent as a sepulchre. Political friends and foes are alike still; every whisper is hushed, every head erect, every eye open. You have no idea of the sensation that little fellow can create. He rolls out his words, and bites them off, and thrashes and slashes as did old Horatio Coclere when, with his battle-axe, he stood upon the bridge, and with his single arm defended Rome." That stout built man, a little to the right of M'Duffie, with a snowy head and a Roman nose, is Burges, the "Bald Eagle of the House," as he has been called; a man adroit at all sorts of weapons. He resembles one of the old soldiers; he fights on foot or on horse, with heavy or light arms, a battle-axe or a spear. In modern warfare, he is at home in the artillery or the infantry, the cavalry or the engineers: a broad-sword or a pistol, a king's-arm or a spade, are equally familiar to his hand. There is Johnson, the gallant colonel—the Indian killer. He has a fine head, and a good countenance. He is writing kind things to his constituents. He has half a dozen messenger-boys at his side, trotting at a wink, handing his letters, folding them, or hurrying away to stamp them with the "U. S." seal. There is Edward Everett, the accomplished scholar, the fine writer! Indeed, you might as well throw the muse of History into a caravan, or put him on a "broad horn" on the Mississippi, with a huge pine for a rudder, and a cane-brake for a bundle of quills. Crockett, there, is a better Neptune, and holds a steader trident. And when a man can grin, and fight; flog a steamboat, and whip his weight in wildcats, what is the use of reading and writing? There is Wayne, an accomplished man, and Wilde, a fine scholar, a poet, and as civil a Georgian, too. Biny is there, a grave looking man, a mighty logic-chopper.

But I must pause—for what a mass of representatives there are here! What singular samples of our vast country! Here sits a Tennessean, and there a Missourian, educated among buffaloes, and nurtured in the forest—as intimate with the passes of the Rocky Mountains, as the cit with Broadway; who lives where hunters and trappers have vexed every hill, and who cares no more for a Pawnee than a professed beau for a bright-plumed belle. Here is a man from the prairies—and there another from the swamps and morasses, whose blood the musketeers have utterly stolen away. There is a sallow face from the rice-grounds, and here the flushed cheek from the mountains; and by his side a man from the pine grounds; the land of tar and turpentine. What a people we are! What a country is this of ours! How wide in extent—how rich in production—how various in beauty! I have asked in my travels, for the West, in the streets of the Queen of the West; a fairy city, which but as yesterday was a wilderness. They smiled at my inquiry, and said it was among the "hoosier" of Indiana, or the "suckers" of Illinois. Then I journeyed long. I crossed great rivers and broad prairies, and again I asked for the West. They said it was in Missouri. I arrived at its capital. They complained that they were "too far down east." "But go," they said, "if you would see the West, days and days, and hundreds of miles up the Missouri; farther than from us to New England, and beyond the Rocky Mountains, and among the Snake Indians of the Oregon, and you may find it." It was the work of a dozen years to find the West, and I turned about in despair. Indeed, I have found no bounds to my country. I have searched for them for months, in almost every climate; under the torrid zone of Louisiana, the land of the orange and the olive, and beneath the cold sky of Maine. I have seen the rice-planter gathering rich treasures from a boundless soil, and the fisherman anchoring his little bark on the rocky island, drooping his hook as carefully as if the ocean were full of pearls, and not of mackerel. I have seen the mill-man, sawing wood in all variety of forms, on the farthest soil of New England; and I have beheld the same wood floating down the Savannah, or the beautiful Alabama, in

the strangest metamorphoses: it may be, in a clock, regularly ticking off the time; in a pail—perchance in a button; and for aught I know, in a tasteless ham, or an unfragrant nutmeg! I have never been off the soil of my own country; and yet I have seen the sun go down, a ball of fire, without a moment's twilight, flinging over rich, alluvial lands, blooming with magnolias and orange trees, a robe of gold; and again I have stood upon the bare rocks of colder climates, and when the trees were pinched by the early frost, I have marked the same vanishing rays reflected from the leaves, as if a thousand birds of paradise were resting in the branches: and when the clouds, streaming with red, and purple, and blue; tinged and tipped by the pencil of beauty, were floating afar, like rainbows in motion, as if broken from their confinement; how mingling and interlacing their dyes, and glittering arches, and anon sprinkled over, and mellowing the whole heaven; then I have fancied that I was indeed in a fairy land, where the very forests danced in golden robes; responding to the setting sun, as the statue of the fabled Minion gave forth its welcoming notes, as the rays of the morning played upon its summit. I have been where the dog-star rages, scattering pestilence in its train; where the long moss hangs from the trees; where the pale faces and sad countenances give admonition, that this is the region of death. I have stood by the wide prairie, and beheld the green billows rise and fall, and the undulations, chequered with sun-light and shadow, chasing one after the other afar over the wide expanse. And I have gone amid the storms of winter, over the high hill, upon the loud-cracking crust, amid the music of the merry sleigh-bells. And here are the Representatives from all these regions—here in one grand council—all speaking one language—all impelled by one law! Oh, my Country, my Country! If our destiny be always linked as one—if the same flag, with its glorious stars and stripes, is always the flag of our Union; never unfurled or defended but by free-men; then Poetry and Prophecy, stretching to their utmost, cannot pre-announce its destiny!

But to return from our digression. We have rethreaded the cork-screw galleries, and are in the Senate chamber. Here is a different body from the one we have just left. The Senators seem older than the Representatives; but so many of these bald seniors exchange gray heads for black ones, that it is difficult to determine. They sat with their hats off—that looks better. They bustle about less—that is more agreeable, if you would hear a speaker. "Show me the lions," said I to my cicero: "Where is Van Buren, where is Clay, and Webster, and Calhoun?" My first query was answered by pointing to the Vice President's chair. I should have much to say of Mr. Van Buren; but they have elevated him to a high office, which, like all offices, has its draw-backs and disadvantages. "He cannot figure," said my guide, "in debate; his mouth is shut, unless opened to say, 'the eyes have it,' or 'the memorial is referred, or something of the like.' His manner is calm and bland, and he presides with ease and dignity. And there he sits, with no opportunity for display—thumping with his mallet, when the galleries are out of order, having occasion only to remark, now and then, that 'the question is so and so, etc.' The newspapers talk of his shrinking, cowering, blushing. This is all the veriest romance in the world. He lives in the Senate like an embodied abstraction. He takes Clay's jibes, and Webster's thrusts, as the ghost of Creuse received the embraces of Aeneas. He heads them not. He leans back his head—piles one leg upon the other—and sits as if he were a pleasant sculptured image, destined for that niche all his life.

That massive forehead—those prodigious eyes—those heavy shoulders—that iron-built frame, point out Webster. How like Satan himself can look, and what a malicious smile! He talks as if he were telling a plain story; not enthusiastic, but concise and clear. His arm comes up, as if lifted by a spring. He speaks like one from the grave—so solemn and so severe. Anon the lion is roused. What a voice! The sentences leap into life—with well-timed metaphor, skillfully interwoven—all perfectly wrought out. Yet Webster is a man of no imagination. He has a well disciplined taste; and give him a clue to a figure, and he will trace it out with force and beauty.

That slender-built man, apparently about fifty years of age, in a blue coat, with bright buttons, a frizzy head, and an eye like a hawk, erect and earnest, with mouth partly open—that is Calhoun. He is not an orator—yet few command so much attention—none more. His voice is bad. His gesticulation is without grace. He is zealous and enthusiastic, but without being frantic. His apparent candor, earnestness, and sincerity command attention. His voice struggles in his throat, and you almost understand the thoughts swelling there, and they soon rush out as fast as words can convey them. He speaks, in debate, as a farmer, in earnest, would talk to his boys, a merchant to his clerks. He steps about, stands here and there, looks at this man and that—if a man looks inquiringly at him, he asks "I am right, am I not?" But as I was saying, this conservative principle. "It hurts me to talk to-day; I've got a cold," etc. This is much the manner of Mr. Calhoun. If an idea comes into his head, out it comes, without regard to rhetorical polish. Mr. Calhoun's power is in colloquy—animated conversation. Men are willing to listen to a man who talks well, whose declamation might be insufferable. Calhoun links words, together—bites off the last syllables, and oftentimes eats up, as it were, whole sentences, in the rapidity of enunciation.

That tall, well-formed man, with a wide mouth, and a countenance indicating every change of thought within, is Clay. He has been so often described, that I shall dwell upon him briefly, here. Nature made him an orator to figure in a free government. In a despotism, his head would have reached the block, for impudence, before he was thirty. He is good at every thing. I have never heard such a voice. It is equally distinct and clear, whether at its highest key or lowest whisper—rich, musical, captivating. His action is the spontaneous offspring of the passing thought. He gesticulates *all over*. The nodding of his head, hung on a long neck, his arms, hands, fingers, feet, and even his spectacles and pocket-handkerchief, aid him in debate. He steps forward and backward, and from the right to the left, with effect. Every feature speaks. The whole body has its story to tell.

There is Forsyth, with his arms a-kimbo, head thrown back, spectacles on, laughing at what somebody has to say, who is speaking over the way. I cannot describe his figure, but it is a handsome one. He is all ease and composure; is never thrown off his guard. He is ever ready, and the less prepared the better, for the fight. He eludes with the utmost skill, all manner of weapons. No member of Congress is better at the reconnoitering and skirmishing of debate.

That tall, red-headed man, with a large, manly figure, and full face, is Preston, the new member from South Carolina. He looks as if he had long lived under the rays of a Southern sun. Preston is *sui generis*. He talks poetry, all in rich array, and gorgeous sentences. When there is a storm in the Senate, they hang him out as a rainbow; and altho' the rough clouds often darken his glittering hues, before the storm is hushed, yet tempers are cooled, and spirits are softened, by the dazzling arch, and the rich interlacings of its bow. His is unpremeditated eloquence. He does not, like Sheridan, mark in his orations, the place to introduce "Good God! Mr. Speaker." The incidents of debate suggest all his fine sentences. His gestures are admirable. No American orator is more graceful—few have more art; and yet few understand so well the "art above arts." Such a man was necessary in the Senate. All the kinds of eloquence that Cicero describes, are now exemplified and illustrated in that body, no two are formed on the same model.

Felix Grundy is a happy man. There is not a

more jovial, benevolent face in Christendom, than he wears. He was an actor upon the stage of public life, long before, my remembrance. His head is now all gray, and his step begins to falter, and bear the marks of age, but his mind has lost nothing of its vigor, and he none of his humor. He is happy at a resort, skilful at a thrust, and good humored, even in the angriest debate. He has a mind happily tempered for political warfare.

Leigh is a new-comer from Virginia; a round, thick-built man, with a little sharp eye, that snaps at times like a spark of fire. He is something of a lion in the National Menagerie. Perhaps my metaphors might seem objectionable, were it not that we "Republicans" have a right to talk of our "Servants," as we please. Wright has a fine person and countenance. No one exhibits more calmness and dignity, or more narrowly watches the progress of debate.

I would tarry here, had I time and space, to serve up the stout-framed Benton, and give you a touch of his manner of speaking, so odd to Northern eye and ear, but doubtless the mode in his Missouri, where his heart unquestionably is. I would have something to say of Senator Smith, who in his dress connects this age with the days of our fathers and grandfathers—of Porter, with his Irish face and Irish eloquence, a worthy son of the green isle of Erin—and of Wilkins, too, who hates a joke; but I must pause.

And here let me remark, that I should like the Senator better, if it were not such a prodigious snuff-box, and the snuff-takers were less numerous. "Give me your snuff-box," says Clay to Prentiss; and "yours," and "yours;" and thus a snuff-box runs a journey for a day, from Senator to Senator, without ten minutes' rest. And, by the way, in a long day's session, let me add, the hungry Representatives bring in crackers and cheese, and gingerbread, into the House, and spread them out, as for a dinner, upon their hogany desks! If I had the pen of a Trollope, how I would lash them! And, Indeed, why may I not undertake the reform, before some Hamilton comes in among us, and murders us all, for the sins of the few, who, having been but recently caught, we have not had time to civilize, so well as we shall by the time another session comes round? "Off with your legs, then, gentlemen, not from your bodies, but from your desks! Off with your gingerbread, your crackers and cheese! Cease your snoring and sleeping in your seats! Up from the sofas, and no longer repose there, sprawled out like levathans! Men will talk, whisper, tramp, rustle their papers, and yawn; this you are permitted to do; but I insist upon it, you shall not sleep, you shall not snore, you shall not feed, and make a stable of your magnificent hall—for if you do, and the many English travellers, who have been hanging on this session, taking notes, don't print you all, I will!" I should like to turn Orthopist, too, and teach the Yankees to leave off some of the breadth in their pronunciation of the short words, and to give the long ones more longitude, and less latitude. The nasal twang of some of them is abominable. And I would teach the Southrons, likewise, some of them, that *stairs* were not *stars*, and *clear weather* not *clar weather*. And I would say too, that although *mighty smart*, and a *mighty smart chance, mighty big, and mighty little*, was excellent "nigger" dialect, yet it was not so refined, as an orator might use. But, after all, albeit you can see in Congress peculiarities of speech and pronunciation enough to indicate what portion of the country a member comes from, yet no country on earth can assemble people from such a wide domain, where one language is spoken more correctly. The English, talking Irish, Scotch, Berkshire, Lancashire, and all manner of dialect—ought, of all nations, to be the last to laugh at us for our very few peculiarities.

Go with me, for a single moment, into Washington society. I can discourse little about splendor, magnificence, suites of rooms, and gorgeous furniture; but if I had a woman's eye, which sees every thing, and marks every thing, I could make out quite a picture. A President's Levee is a delicious affair. What odd amalgamation of character! What strange groups of men and women! A Cherokee there—a Choctaw here: His Christian Majesty's Charge to the right, and squadrons of *Attaches* either; some in stars, some with ribbons, all in princely court-dresses. A drab-dressed, broad-brimmed-hat Quaker, here; a modern belle there; a thick-built German, a happy Irishman, a chattering Frenchman, a proud Castilian, jabbering all sorts of tongues, from that of the wild Indian, to the double-refined and patent English; the easy dash; the mouth wide open, and head erect—take all in all; in such a current, and my word for it, such a collection cannot be found upon the face of the earth. But parties and balls are pretty much the same in Washington as any where else. Etiquette, it may be, is severer here—the art of *carding* is carried to sublimer perfection. Yet, the chief distinction is, the fine minds, the distinguished men, among whom you are thrown. The charm of Washington society is in the array of intellect, of character, of reputation, civil, political, and military; and of that influence which exerts a vast power over the destinies of our Union. We meet with men and women of the very first order of intellect, assembled from almost all nations, and from the various divisions of our country; thus concentrating an immense variety of information, manners, and customs. Talent nowhere finds more, who can appreciate its worth—no matter whether it be the mind that thunders in the forum, or the foot that trips it gracefully in the lively dance. This is our court; an odd court, indeed, it is—but the only difference between us and our brethren over the water, is, that they have court-dresses, and rules of etiquette, and we all sorts of dresses, and do as we please. There is no Parisian milliner over in our dominions who can spread her wands over our whole Union—nor French *Perquinier* who is monarch over the externals of the head, making every lock tremble at his bidding. As we are singular in government, so we are singular in fashions. All claims put in their hands for collection, by non-residents, will be promptly attended to.

Lawrenceburg, Sep. 10th, 1833. 35-
J. P. DUNN & CO.

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A FEW BBLS. OF WHISKEY;

All of which they are offering for sale at the store

room lately occupied by Maj. John P. Dunn.

Lawrenceburg, April 1, 1834. 12

JOHN P. GAINES.

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Rail Road Company.

THE subscribers of the stock in the Lawrenceburg and Indianapolis Rail Road Company, are hereby notified that at a meeting of the Board of Directors of said Company, held at Greensburg on the 27th day of April, 1834, the following order was made:

Ordered, That a call of one dollar per share be made, and is hereby made, which the stockholders are required to pay on or before the fourth day of July next—and that the same may be paid to Stephen Laudlow