

ideas. He said there was no doubt but that I could have the place and went at once to the White House. Gen. Grant, however, said that he had already promised the mission to Switzerland, and he asked Senator Morton if I would not rather have something else. He said, "Why not take the mission to Mexico. That is worth \$12,000 a year while Switzerland is only worth \$5,000, and the position is a much more important one."

"Senator Morton then left and reported to me the result of his interview. He urged me to accept the Mexican mission. I said I was afraid I would not be able to fill it acceptably. He laughed me out of my timidity and I finally said I would take it. I did take it, and I have been connected with diplomatic affairs from that time to this."

#### HE REFUSED TO GO TO JAPAN,

"Did you ever have a desire to come to Asia as one of our ministers, general?" I asked.

"No," was the reply. "At that time Asia seemed very much farther away than it does now. As it was, I could have gone as minister to Japan instead of to Mexico. John A. Bingham had been appointed. He was then out of Congress and the place was given to him as a sort of reward for his long services in the Republican party. He preferred to go to some place nearer home. He thought I might go to Japan and give him the Mexican mission. He said that the salaries were the same, but, that he was an old man and Japan was far away. He said I was young and could wait for further advancement. This was reported to me and I thought over the situation. Japan was, as Mr. Bingham said, far away and I saw that if I went there I would be out of the world. I would lose my connection with current events and would soon be forgotten. Mexico, on the other hand, was the next door neighbor of the United States, and there were bound to be complications which would give me a chance to do something if it was in me. I refused to make the change and went to Mexico. In looking back, I am confident that I chose the right."

#### OUR MINISTERS TO JAPAN.

The result of Mr. Foster's refusal was that John A. Bingham went to Japan. He made a very good minister and was most popular among the Japanese. He did not, however, insist on the Americans having a share in all the contracts and other fat jobs which the Japanese were placing abroad, as did the Germans and English, and the result is American influence and American trade is at a discount in Asia. The English demand the lion's share of everything of the weaker foreign governments everywhere, and they usually get it. It is becoming much the same with the Germans, and both nations are against the United States. The ministers we have sent to Japan have, to a large extent, been ignorant of diplomatic methods, and unable to cope with the shrewd Japanese and the polished men of Europe. During my first stay in the country the position of American minister was held by Governor Dick Hubbard of Texas. Hubbard did more for the United States than the average American minister, as I will show further on; still, he was a queer character for a diplomat, and some of his antics surprised the foreigners. It was he who, it will be remembered, got angry at the

French minister because he called him Monsieur Hubbard instead of "Governor" Hubbard. It was, so the story was told me, at a diplomatic dinner where the portly Texan sat next to the polite Frenchman. From soup to dessert he addressed Hubbard as Monsieur Hubbard, never thinking that the title of plain Mr. was distasteful to him. Governor Hubbard, however, thought that his greatness was unappreciated. He grew more angry with every course, until at last, fired by state pride and champagne, he could stand in no longer, and he burst forth:

"Sir, I want to object to your mode of addressing me. You call me Monsieur Hubbard. I want you to know, sir that in my country, sir, I am Governor Hubbard, sir. I have been governor of the great state of Texas, sir—a state sir, that is bigger than all France, sir!"

I don't know what the Frenchman replied. The story got out, however, and not long after it was published in the Paris Figaro.

#### "CIRCUMSTANCES PREVENTED IT."

Another story which I heard in Tokyo concerning Gov. Hubbard seems almost incredible to any one knowing anything of the rigidity of diplomatic etiquette. It relates to a dinner invitation from the Russian minister. This accomplished diplomat, so I was told, entertains in great style in Japan. He gives many dinners to his fellow diplomats, and his functions are great social events. Shortly after his arrival in Tokyo, Gov. Hubbard, I am told, received an invitation to dine with him to meet his brothers of the diplomatic corps. After a day or so he replied, addressing the Russian minister as his "dear colleague," and saying that he would be present if nothing happened. Something, however, did happen. At least the governor thought so, and at the last moment he sent a note, which read something like this:

"My Dear Colleague:

"Circumstances, over which I have no control, will prevent me from dining with you tonight.

"Your colleague,

"RICHARD B. HUBBARD."

That same afternoon, so the story goes, the governor was seen riding about Tokyo, and "the circumstances over which he had no control" were the inconveniences of hurrying back to Tokyo in time for the dinner.

#### HOW THEY EAT FISH IN TEXAS.

Such things as these made our minister the laughing stock of Japan, and all kinds of stories went the rounds about him. Some of them described his eating. This made him very angry and he told a friend of mine, Why, sir; they say I eat fish with a knife; of all the blanked charges against a man that is the blankedest. Why if I reported that charge in Texas the people would ask: If you don't eat fish with a knife, how under the sun do you eat it? These fellows here eat it with their fingers and a fork. They take a little bit of bread in one hand and put the fish upon the fork with it. I never heard of such a thing in America. Did you, now?"

#### GOV. HUBBARD AND THE PALACE LIGHTS

And with all this Gov. Hubbard made, in some respects, a very good minister to Japan. His enormous appreciation of the United States and Texas made him believe that the United States ought to have a share in the contracts which the Japanese government were giving

out to foreigners. The ministers from France and Germany insist on their people being respected by the weaker governments. They demand when they can a share of the foreign business of the countries for their own people, and in this way the English, the French and the Germans have gotten many big Japanese contracts. The Japanese have generally used the American ministers as they pleased, and have given them nothing. Hubbard objected to this. Japan was anxious to revise its treaties, and the foreign diplomats have been meeting oft and on for years in Tokio to agree upon such a revision. When Governor Hubbard found the United States was not getting any of the business of the country he refused to attend these meetings. The Japanese secretary of state was horrified. He knew he could not get along without America and he came to Hubbard at the American legation. He wanted to know what was the matter. Governor Hubbard said: "I don't think that Japan cares anything for the United States, and if so, I don't see why the United States should care for Japan."

"What do you mean?" asked the Japanese minister.

"I mean," replied Governor Hubbard, "that whenever you have anything to give to a foreign country, you give it to Germany, England or France. The United States has been your friend all along, but you never think of giving us anything. I know that England and France and Germany make their friendship the price of foreign contracts. We don't want to do that; but we do think that as we favor you, you ought not to altogether pass us by."

"What do you want?" said the Japanese minister. "We will give it to you."

"I don't know that we want anything," replied Governor Hubbard, "except to be fairly treated. And, besides, I don't know that you have anything to give. You have already given all your contracts to England and Germany."

"Well, I will tell you what we will do," replied the Japanese minister. "There are the electric lights for the new palace, which is now being built. We are considering some American contracts among others, and though there is a great pressure from France and Germany on behalf of their electric firms, I will promise you here and now that we will put in the American lights."

"I don't want your promise," replied Governor Hubbard. "All I ask is that America be given a show."

With this the Japanese minister left, and shortly afterward the Edison electric lights were chosen for the palace. There was nothing too good for Governor Hubbard from that time on, and, rough as he was, he made his country respected. If our ministers would show more nerve and would study more how they could benefit their country instead of devoting themselves to lining their stomachs and their pockets, the United States would be in better condition all the world over.

#### BUSINESS AND DIPLOMACY.

The trouble with most of our foreign diplomats is that they have no idea of pushing American business. They think if they have the American flag floating from the top of their legation building they are doing their whole duty, and they let Americans and American interests fight for themselves. The present