

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## GOSSIP ABOUT THE PRESIDENT.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 2, 1897.—The most interesting man in the United States is President McKinley. He is also the busiest. He works about fifteen hours a day and then goes to bed and sleeps like a baby. He rises at 8 a. m. and shaves himself. He has no valet to help him with his toilet, and he does not spend much time before the looking-glass. Still he is one of the best-groomed men who have ever been in the White House. He has a clean, dark skin, and he always looks as though he was fresh from his bath. His clothes are better cut than were those of President Arthur, and his patent leathers seldom show a crack. The President and Mrs. McKinley breakfast together. They go down stairs at 8:30 and their meal is eaten in the private dining room. After breakfast the President smokes a cigar in Mrs. McKinley's boudoir on the second floor while he looks over the morning papers. At the same time he chats with the superintendent of the White House grounds. Mrs. McKinley's physician comes in. After this the coming social events of the day may be discussed or a private letter read. His takes up his time until about 9 o'clock. He then throws away the stump of his cigar and goes into his office.

The President is now at work from 9 until midnight. Urgent matters are attended to between 9 and 10. From 10 till 12 he receives senators, representatives and distinguished officials. From 12 to 1 people who have no official title are disposed of. At one he takes a hasty lunch and then goes back to his office. The afternoon is spent in receiving congressmen and others who have special appointments, and it is not until 4 o'clock that he gets a chance for a ride. He is fond of horseback riding, and he often takes a ride with his secretary. He finds that the exercise keeps him in good physical condition, and prefers it to carriage riding. He has good horses, however, and he now and then takes a drive in the afternoon instead of a ride. Returning he lies down for a few minutes. Then he takes a bath and dresses for dinner. By 8:30 he is again in his office and from there the time until ten is often given up to special appointments with public men. He may see a senator, a cabinet minister of a diplomat or some special caller from out of town. At ten he begins to work on his mail. The contents of the most important letters are laid before him and he directs Mr. Porter how they must be answered. Some very important letters he dictates himself, but he seldom has a pen in his hand except to sign his name. A large part of his work upon his messages is done late in the evening. This was the case with his last message. He thinks well on his feet, and sometimes dictates speeches and public papers to his stenographer as he walks up and down the room. He keeps himself so well in hand that he can dictate at any time. His oration on Grant was dictated after 11 o'clock one night after a hard day's work and was delivered in almost the same words that he gave to the stenographer. The President tries to finish his work before the clock strikes twelve. He wants to be in bed by midnight, and usually sleeps about eight hours.

President McKinley has received at least 100,000 persons since he came into the White House. He has talked with over 50,000 in his own office, and he has shaken hands with a vast multitude in the east room. I watched one of his

afternoon receptions this week. The show was as good as the theater. It came off at 3:15 p.m. in the east room and the President shook hands with 504 people in seventeen minutes. A pen was made by arranging the sofas and chairs about the big door, which opens from the corridor into the east room, and until the President appeared the crowd was kept outside this pen. Then the door opened and President McKinley walked into the pen at a 2:40 pace. A brace of White House messengers opened the fence just wide enough to admit one man or woman at a time. One of the messengers stood at each side of the opening and Captain Loeffler was at the back of the President on the lookout for cranks. The crowd were rushing through as fast as they could walk and the President shook hands with each one of them as he passed. His handshake in the east room is different from the one which he gives in his office above. It is a sort of a "pull-you-along" shake. It begins high and drags the party with whom he shakes on past him as the hand goes down. As the President shook hands I noticed that his lips moved, and that now and then he spoke. He paid especial attention to every boy, giving him a hearty grip, but he shied off a little from the women with babies. He would not kiss the infants, but contented himself with shaking their hands. Not a few of the callers tried to speak as they went by, but the time was too short for much conversation, and messengers hurried them. One woman said: "Mr. McKinley, they would not let me vote for you, but I am for you all the same." An old man said: "God bless you, Mr. President. I have faith in you. With a high tariff and you the country will yet be saved." Now and then a man came who tried to tell McKinley where he had met him before. The President said, "Yes, I am glad to see you. Good day." One woman I saw worried him for a moment by saying: "You don't remember me." The President does not like to forget anyone, and he waited until he learned that he had met the woman at a wayside station where he spoke during a stoppage of the train when going through Kansas. And so it went on until the seventeen minutes were up, when the President said, "Good-bye, my friends, I am glad to have seen you all," and rapidly backed his way out of the room.

Of a hundred thousand people who have met President McKinley in the White House, I venture that 50,000 have tried to flatter him, more or less. There is no city in the country where toadyism is so rank as here. The average man would be awamped in the adulation which is showered upon a President, but Mr. McKinley's actions show that he is still unspotted. He is absolutely democratic and simple. He despises the vanity of some so-called great men. Not long ago a very conceited character of this kind had an interview at the White House. The man is one who is well known. After he had left the President remarked to a friend, in a rather disgusted way: "Oh, the littleness of great men!"

Just before President McKinley was inaugurated a preacher friend of mine warned him about the dangerous effects of flattery upon high officials, and asked:

"Maj. McKinley, are you not afraid that your head will be turned by the adulation which is always showered upon the chief executive of the United States?"

To this the future President replied:

"I think not. The nearer I get to the White House the more humble I feel. Man is such a very little thing in this world that he would be foolish if he allowed his head to be turned by any position."

Sit down with me in the President's room and watch him receiving the office seekers and high public officials. There are sixty-three men and women who are waiting for him. There are six United States senators and there are seventeen representatives, all with one or more friends. Several colored men were present, and a dozen ladies are sprinkled throughout the crowd. What a democratic scene! Here we are in the house of the ruler of seventy million people, in the office of one of the greatest Presidents on earth. How loud those men are talking! You might imagine yourself to be in a depot or in the lobby of a second-class hotel. That big man who is chewing a cigar is a member of Congress, and that friend of his beside him, who is picking his teeth with a quill, wants a position in one of the departments. See that fellow go to the President's desk and take a curious look over the papers. I don't suppose there is anything of importance there, but the action is decidedly fresh. Only the ladies seem to be nervous. There is one of the colored men, who acts as though he owned the house, and several of the representatives are taking their friends about the room and showing them the pictures. Now the door opens and the President comes in. How straight he stands. A line dropped from the crown of his head would just touch the heels of his patent leather shoes. His shoulders are broad, his chest full and his medium stature is added to by his erectness. That tall man he is talking to is Senator Gear of Iowa. Notice how he shakes hands. He acts far differently than he did down in the east room. He holds the hand high, and tall as Gear is, he has to raise his hand to take it. As Gear begins to talk the President smiles, but as he goes on the President's brow darkens, his heavy underjaw comes up, and you can see the doubt in his mind as to whether Gear's request should be granted or not. A second later his face clears, and he tells Mr. Gear that the matter will be carefully considered. As he talks the other people in the room stand about like the mourners at a funeral. They have all risen, and the most of them stand while the President stands. Only a few have the assurance to keep their seats, and only one or two whisper together as the President talks. Now Gear has left, and the President is talking to Senator Foraker. The two have been at enmity many times during their lives. You would imagine them to be friends, to look at them, and perhaps they are so now. The President smiles as he talks, Foraker smiles in return, and as the two part they both seem well pleased.

Now a third man has hold of the President. It is the colored man of whom I spoke as thinking he owned the mansion. The President shakes hands with him as cordially as he did with Foraker and moves off to one side, resting his arm upon the white mantel as he talks. The colored citizen does the same, putting his right hand in his pocket and vehemently urging his claim for a consulship to one of the West Indies Islands. The President directs him to file his papers with the state department and they will be considered, and then takes up another caller. He does not allow much time for any one, but at the same time does not seem impatient. As the time goes on he hurries his reception, and I time him by my watch. There is a man who wants a land agency in Dakota. He gets ten seconds. The