

Our Athletic Secretary

Gossip and Stories About Richard Olney, the Head of the State Department.

The Blood of a Bostonian, but the Face of an Irishman—How Olney Looks, Acts and Talks—Who He Is—His Long Walks—His Polite Ways—How He Handles the Diplomats and the Diplomats—His Remarkable Ability as a Worker—His State Papers and How He Writes Them—His Relations to Cleveland—A Word About Mrs. Olney and Her Famous Ancestry.

Special Correspondence of the News.
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WASHINGTON, March, 12th, 1896.



UR troubles with Spain will make Richard Olney more prominent than any other man in the American people. He has been Secretary of State for only a few months, but his work has made that department the most important branch of the government. He stirred up our patriotism in his letter to Lord Salisbury as to Venezuela. By his action he brought the English to time, and he may be called the father of the fighting spirit which is now abroad in the land. Within the space of three months he has shown himself to be the strongest element in Cleveland's administration, and today upon him, in a large extent, rests the question as to whether America shall have peace or war. Within less than three months he has jumped from comparative obscurity to international prominence, and the situation at present is such that he may be a strong presidential candidate at the Democratic national convention.

And still, with all this, neither the politicians nor the people know much about Richard Olney. He was not personally known to the people of Massachusetts before he was made Attorney General, and today the majority of the statesmen of the Democratic party have no close personal relations with him. He has never been a politician, and does not know what it is to play the toady and lick boots to get office. He was one of the biggest lawyers of Massachusetts at the time of his appointment. He had a practice largely connected with railroads, which I am told was worth at least \$50,000 a year, and, like most railroad lawyers, he was to a great extent an autocrat in his own office. He saw whom he pleased and did as he pleased. He has carried the same principle into his work here at

take a trot now and then out to the Capitol and back. Secretary Olney leaves the State Department at 5 o'clock every day, and he usually walks out to the Capitol, takes a trot around the National Library on the other side, and then goes to his home, not far from the Maine mansion. This walk, all told, is about three miles in length, and the Secretary makes it in less than an hour. He walks at the rate of about four miles an hour. He has a good spring step, and when he comes to a gutter, he, like any one, goes over it with a jump. His stride is greater than that of most men, and only those who are good walkers can be persuaded to attempt a pedestrian jaunt with him. On Sundays during the summer he often walks out to the President's country place, and you may see him any morning at 8:30 o'clock starting from his home opposite that of Mrs. General Sheridan's on Rhode Island avenue to walk down to the State Department. He uses other exercises outside of walking to keep himself in trim. He has, I am told, a pair of pulley weights in his room, and he takes a turn at these every night and morning. He has a punching bag also, and the agility with which he jumps about this is said to be surpassed only by the noted Jim Corbett.

WHO OLNEY IS.
But before I go farther into Mr. Olney, the Secretary of State, let me tell you something as to Mr. Olney, the man. He is one of the most striking figures in Washington. His face is that of an Irishman though his blood is of Puritan blood. The pictures which have been published do not do justice to him. His face is strong and pug-nacious. It is Irish in every feature, and though it is said that his ancestors emigrated from England, they must have originally come from the vicinity of Cork. The first Olney settled at Salem, Mass. He was a preacher and his name was Thomas. He is said to have been the founder of the Baptist Church in America. One of his sons was a colonel in the revolutionary war, and another was a captain, who received a number of bullet and bayonet wounds during the struggle. Another Olney—ah, I think, belonged to this same family—was the author of the Olney Geographies. These were used in the public schools of America for more than thirty years. They had, it is said, a larger sale than any other book outside of Webster's spelling book. They ran through ninety-eight different editions, and millions of copies of them were sold.

Secretary Olney's father was the cashier of a bank in Oxford, Massachusetts. Richard Olney, the Secretary of State, was his oldest child. He was born in 1835, and he is now just sixty-one years of age. He was educated at Brown University and the Harvard Law School, and he began his study of the law under Judge Benjamin Franklin Thayer, one of the most famous lawyers of Massachusetts. He soon showed his fitness for the law, and it is said that he has made a fortune out of his legal ability.

AN ATHLETIC SECRETARY OF STATE.
Secretary Olney has better physical machinery than any other man in the cabinet. He keeps himself in perfect condition by exercise. His joints are well oiled. His blood is full of iron, his eyes shine with life, and he has the springiest step of all those who tramp Pennsylvania avenue. There is no public man who goes to more dinners. There is no man who has a better digestion and a greater physical activity. He is the champion walker of the administration. He takes from a three to a five-mile walk every day. He expresses, in this respect, old John Quincy Adams, who, when he was President, used to

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HOW OLNEY FEELS THE BAYARD LETTER.
I have said that the Secretary declines answers to all of his letters. It is interesting to know how he prepares his state papers. When he has anything very important to write he does not use a typewriter. He first takes a pencil and writes out carefully just what he wants to say, and then he dictates the manuscript over to the typewriter to be copied. He reviews carefully, and when the paper is ready he signs it with his exact thought. All of the important State Department papers which have been sent out during his administration have been written by him. He writes all of the Bayard instructions except the last paragraph. This was written by President Cleveland.

HE HAS A BACKBONE.
I called upon Secretary Olney some time ago at the State Department. He talked with me for some time, but would not permit me to quote him in the newspapers. I could see, however, that he has a number of new ideas as to our diplomatic service, and that he is in a high enough man not to be twisted around the fingers of any man. He is a British minister, or of the other world diplomats of Washington. He is a man with a strong backbone. He has opinions of his own, and he is not afraid to act upon them. He comes out in striking contrast with Secretary Bayard, who had no backbone at all, and who, I believe, the weakest man who ever held the portfolio of state. Bayard was always an English triton. When he was Secretary of State he was knocked down to the English, and he was only happy when he was giving a cushion to some of the Englishmen who now and then come to the capital.

OLNEY AND CLEVELAND.
Secretary Olney has a summer home not far from Gray's Green, where Cleveland has been spending his summer vacations, and it was probably through the acquaintance there formed that the President chose him as Attorney General. I am told that Olney took the place thinking that his work would be, to a large extent, judicial in its nature. He found it was much more political than anything else. It is said that he was much disgusted with it, and that he was glad to leave it for the Secretaryship of State. While he was Attorney General, Cleveland advised with him as to state matters, and the two were very close to one another upon all matters relating to the administration. Olney is made of different stuff from the average cabinet member that Cleveland has had. During his last administration, the President's secretaries were only clerks to the President, and this is, to a large extent, the case today with the exception of Secretary Olney. Olney has an opinion of his own on every subject. He al-

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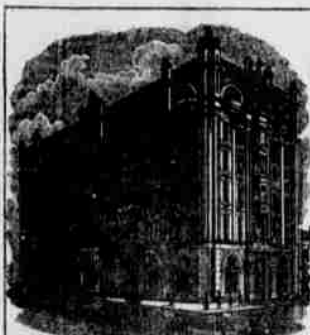
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