

lay dying the muffled keys carried and received the news from day to day.

But let us cross the hall into the room of the secretary of the President. Secretary Porter is one of the busiest men in the United States. He is the buffer between the people and President McKinley, and it keeps him moving to attend to his duties. All the callers upon the President are filtered through him. He has to get the right men in at the right time and keep all in a good humor. He has the President's mail to attend to. He has to arrange his social affairs and his official meetings, and he is, in fact, the business manager of the White House. I like Mr. Porter better than several of his predecessors. Thurber managed this office with the dignity of a college professor. He looked like a saint, but he was as slippery as the soaked bark of an elm tree. He promised much, but did little. Porter promises little and does a great deal. Thurber was a great know-nothing. He could never tell you whether Cleveland could do anything for you or not. Porter can often tell you that McKinley will not oblige you, and he is not afraid to say what he thinks. Thurber looked upon Cleveland as a god. He bowed before him as a graven image, and one instinctively looked at the secretary's knees to see if his pantaloons were not worn away by his perpetual attitude before his master. It was different with Elijah Halford. Halford kept Harrison's dignity, but he never worshipped him. Halford was a born diplomatist, and at the same time a man of high character. Every one liked Dan Lamont. He knew all the politicians of the country, and he never forgot a name or a face. Lamont had a business view of things. He knew Cleveland thoroughly and was not afraid of him. He had been a newspaper man, and so was Porter. Cleveland trusted Lamont, and I understand that McKinley trusts Porter, and in some respects the two secretaries are much alike.

I don't covet Secretary Porter's job, however. He gets \$5,000 a year, but he is on the go from 9 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock at night. The President always seems to be in good trim, but he is at his strongest in the evening, and he pushes things from 8 until 11. He pushes Secretary Porter at the same time, and it is often after midnight when the secretary's work is done. During our stay in the secretary's room there are more than a dozen senators and representatives present. Each one of them has an ax to grind and wants Mr. Porter to turn the stone. There are several women with letters of introduction of the strongest character. They are told that the President will see them later on.

There comes a young woman who wants a private audience with McKinley. She is a dashing girl, dressed in black of a fashionable cut. She has a sailor hat upon her head, and she makes eyes at Mr. Porter as she talks. Her eyes are pretty, too, and her teeth are as white as pearls. Mr. Porter smiles and asks her for her business with the President. She answers that it is very private and very important, and the secretary tells her to go into the next room and wait there with the congressmen and senators, and the President will see her in her turn. She leaves, but a moment later returns and tells the secretary that she does not think that will be a good place for her to explain her business with the President, and says that she must see him alone.

"But could not I present the matter to him?" Mr. Porter replies. "Is it anything regarding office?"

"No, it is not about office," answers the maiden. "It is something of far more importance. It is a matter which affects the whole nation."

"Well," says Mr. Porter, "I would like to oblige you, but the President is very busy, and without I know exactly your business I could not think of taking up his time by making a special appointment for you."

The young lady pouts. At last she says:

"Perhaps after all, Mr. Secretary, you can help me. I will tell you what I want. I want the President to join with me in the work of abolishing sectarianism in religion. I want to see all Christians meet together in one church and work together, and I am sure that he will unite in the work."

"Now, don't it seem to you, madam, that you have undertaken a pretty big job?" says Secretary Porter. "It's too big for the President to join with you in it just now. Don't you think there are other things quite as important—the Cuban question, for instance?"

The young lady would argue the matter further, but a dozen other people are waiting, and the secretary has to bid her good day. The next man is a correspondent for the London Illustrated News. He is anxious to have an interview with the President, and would like to have a social chat with him in order that he may make an article for his newspaper. He is told that he cannot have an interview, but that he can meet the President.

Now a messenger enters with an important telegram. It relates to a matter which Mr. Porter can settle without asking the President, and he rapidly dictates a reply. He is hardly through before another man demands his attention. This is a senator who has made an appointment to see the President this evening, and he wants the hour duly registered in the appointment book. Mr. Porter has to keep track of all the President's engagements. He has to arrange nearly all the matters connected with the White House and to attend to a number of details outside. All those letters which we saw in the other room have to pass under his eye, and hundreds of them will be answered by him. He has to see that the appointments which the President makes are sent to the Senate. He keeps track to a certain extent, of congressional matters, and in addition to this, answers all the President's mail. He has a stenographer with him all the time and dictates answers to letters between his receptions of the callers. His work goes on from nine o'clock in the morning until midnight, and President McKinley's days are so full that it is often 10 p. m. before he has time to go over the matters which he alone can settle and give directions to Mr. Porter as to how they are to be disposed of. It is often midnight by the time he is through with the President, and after this some of the most important mail has to be answered. These long hours are absolutely necessary in order to keep the business of the White House up to date, and this is so, notwithstanding the fact that Secretary Porter has systematized the work better than it has ever been arranged before. In another letter I shall deal more directly with the President himself.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

OUR SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

San Francisco, Nov. 24, 1897.—A yellow fever scare, the excitement incident to Durrant's chances of hanging. A squabble at the race track, a few social reforms by the city fathers, Thanksgiving dinners to the poor with an abundance of turkey and plum pudding, a society doll show and an Al Hayman interview on "Jay Towns" in which he refers to "Frisco" as being at the head of the list, includes about all the news for the past week.

Will Theodore Durrant hang? Can the convicted murderer of Blanche Lamont possibly cheat the gallows? The foregoing questions were asked on every hand and the opinions seem to be pretty equally divided for and against the prisoner's execution. Some claim that his attorneys have exhausted every point that could possibly be introduced in the prisoner's favor and have failed to save him, while on the other hand many persons claim that the case has become so complicated by reason of the number of technical law points presented, that Durrant's chances of cheating the gallows are very favorable and it is also suspected that his attorneys have some new technicality which they are holding in reserve. That he is guilty but very few doubt; still there are many who would like to see him released. His courage during the many trying ordeals has won for him many sympathizers. All through the long trial which lasted for months, he never once weakened, and the three times he has stood up to receive his sentence of death, a time at which almost any man would have shown weakness, he has not displayed the slightest feeling or emotion. Surely this criminal of the century is a man of iron nerve, and as such it is not hard to imagine how he could entice two young girls into a church to murder them.

Since the appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court has failed to give him the relief prayed for, and death again stares him in the face, his attorneys have made a request that before the sentence in the Lamont case is carried out, the court try Durrant on the Minnie Williams charge, as they claim if that is granted they will be able to introduce evidence that will prove the innocence of the prisoner on both charges and fasten the blame where it belongs. This request has been denied and is regarded as a move to gain time and lengthen the convicted man's life. Whether he will be again sentenced and the sentence carried out, or whether his attorneys will find another loop-hole through which he can escape, remains to be seen. At any rate, he will live to enjoy the holidays, as his case has again been taken to the state supreme court and will not be heard much before January 10, 1898, if then. By some mysterious means a confession has come to light supposed to have been written by Joseph E. Blanthier, the murderer of Mrs. Langfeldt in this city about a year ago, and who afterwards committed suicide in a Texas jail. The police authorities do not put any faith in the story and the chances are it will have no effect in the Durrant case after all.

Horse-racing in California has been seriously threatened through a disagreement between the jockey clubs and the horse-owners; and unless the matter is amicably settled and allowed to drop, the chances are we will soon see the sport stopped in California as it was in Chicago and other eastern points. The horse-owners have concluded that the \$300 purses for which they are compelled to run their horses are not large enough and in order to bring about a change an association for the mutual protection of all owners has been formed for the purpose of holding out and demanding larger stakes for the racers. It was decided at the first meeting of the new organization to appoint a committee to wait upon the jockey club people and present their grievances, and in case their demands were not complied with, it was their intention to withdraw their horses from the tracks and refuse to enter any more races. This would mean the temporary closing of the tracks. As soon as notice of this proposed boycott reached the jockey club,