

call "the power behind the throne," and whom the republicans consider the smartest man in the United States. Yet the time is within the recollection of every reader of politics when the democratic papers denounced this gentleman, and he was caricatured in the public prints as "the tattooed man." Doubtless, too, if the democrats were in power things might be brought to the mind that have been said about some of them individually, with just as great propriety as against this republican. In fact, in political circles, official position, instead of being a safeguard against attack, renders a man a target to be shot at, and no game flies so high that a political foe dare not fire. But with the general public it is different. A man who reaches position or acquires wealth is worshipped by the multitude, regardless in many instances of the means used to the accomplishment of so desirable an end, or the rock of insignificance from whence such success was hewn.

Those who worship the wealth of Elijah Morse, of Massachusetts, do not know, perhaps, and do not care anyway, that he commenced life as a boy by peddling stove polish, which he carried in a basket on his arm. The fact that he now owns immense buildings and stores and even a railroad, and is a millionaire in the true sense of the word, throws a sanctity around his person, and forms a halo, such as is described in sacred pictures, which would keep thousands of men from desiring to meet the gentleman, lest they should be thrust back from his presence as unworthy to look upon him. But to those who have the temerity to enter his room and speak familiarly with him he is as approachable now as when a boy, and perhaps some of his boyish peculiarities still form a part of his private life. Although he is an excellent speaker, and used to speech-making, yet he is a fledgling in the congressional nest, and who knows with what weakness and nervous flutterings he will approach his maiden speech before his brethren law-makers? Notwithstanding the pedestal of popularity upon which he has been raised, or the foundation of wealth in which that pedestal is laid, his friends find him a genial companion, without ostentation, and more proud that he has risen from the ranks by his own efforts than of the fact that he now figures in the Congressional forum.

Such self-made men as Elijah Morse, of Massachusetts; W. J. Connel, of Nebraska; Frank W. Wheeler, of Michigan; Clark Lewis, of Mississippi; and David D. B. Brunner, of Pennsylvania, have far more to be proud of than those who by rich heritages of wealth, early opportunities in education, and the influence of family have been pushed to the front and brought by circumstances, rather than by their own energies and genius, into the splendors of official life. Self-made men have the truest training of all—that which is obtained by combating the fierce opposition of a stubborn fate, and of surmounting diffi-

culties which only genius could bring into subjection. Others are more in the nature of tropical plants, cannot be expected to have the same sympathies, or to understand the details contingent upon a life of toil like those who have endured such a life and mastered its conditions.

At the commemorative services before referred to, I could not help forming comparisons between our American officials—many of whom were cradled in such trying circumstances as have just been described—and the consuls and ambassadors from other nations, who, clad in all the tinsel of official nobility, marched in with regal bearing and glittered before the people in the galleries. I thought to myself, while educational polish is a valuable acquisition, and in some respects indispensably necessary, experience in the vicissitudes of life and a knowledge of the hardships which are entailed upon people in a new country, add much to the other acquisition in forming the philosophical statesman and the competent judge, as they do to the qualifications of a lawyer in following his calling. If there is one thing which shows the weakness of a man in official life more than another, to my mind, it is the absence of knowledge regarding the details of human existence. A familiarity with the use of implements of labor would do more good to college students in after life, when they are seeking to apply the lessons of their youth, than do gymnastic exercises, for which they are so noted, and which simply develop the muscles but leave the mind uninformed by any personal contact or experience as to the methods by which many people get their living, by which trades and manufactures are carried on, and the hum of industry and prosperity made to resound throughout the land. It seems to me that for the welfare of society, at least, one industrial school or college should exist in every State and Territory in the Union. It would be better than a reform school, and might avoid the necessity of extending the area of our prisons and penitentiaries. Some students come from college too proud to work, and it is from this class frequently that counterfeiters, forgers, and confidence men are made; while if they had been taught something at the carpenter's bench, instructed in the art of cabinet-making, or if they were initiated into the mysteries of farming, so that they would know a little more than Mark Twain said he did when he commenced as an agriculturist, they might resort to some of those professions in an honorable and upright way, thus saving themselves from disgrace and the public annoyance. Of course I do not wish to assert that all criminals come from this class, although vice generally springs from ignorance of some kind, and perhaps the teachings of some men are born of the truth when they tell us that if the world were properly instructed criminals would be rare indeed. We must all agree that much of the narrowness which now prevails in considering great questions

is largely caused by a lack of information such as is obtained by travel and contact with people and institutions. The more we know the broader we become, and it is certainly no obstruction to official life that a man knows how to make a bench of a bedstead. When Mark Twain undertook stock raising and farming in a far-off territory, he says: "I already knew a horse from a cow, and was willing to learn more," and he certainly did learn more concerning agricultural and other practical pursuits before he was able to depict to the public mind so vividly the queer characters and ridiculous positions in everyday life which are portrayed in his leading works and have convulsed the reading world with laughter. In fact, the producers and the manufacturers of the world are the nobility of nature; we may call them the true economists, for they take the elements which seem to be going to waste and apply them toward obtaining the means of existence. When they bring this experience to bear upon the duties of public station, and it is mingled with the refining polish of the law school, it forms a good background for the picture of political life, and furnishes good material for showing the lighter tints of classical work. I am confident that if your readers will watch the movements of members of our Congressional Legislature, who have had the experience now mentioned, they will be satisfied that the theories dwelt upon in this letter are not far from correct. Of course no one can deny that legal knowledge is essential to the law-maker, and few, if any, of those who have undertaken to tinker with the laws without that knowledge have ever made much of a success at it. It is an old and true saying that "when a man is his own lawyer he has a fool for a client." It is a good deal like the individual who undertook to make his own boots; they always leaked somewhere. It would be folly in the extreme for people to suppose that mere experience in ordinary life, without learning, would qualify them for the construction of laws to govern the people. The nice discrimination concerning the meaning of sentences, the proper use of words, a knowledge of the rules of grammar, and that grand acquisition—the ability to spell correctly, is also essential to the congressional mind.

Talking of the weakness of officials reminds me that gossip almost depends for its rumors upon the doings of those in official life. The doings of ordinary people do not so much interest the public. It is the acts of prominent persons that create excitement and sensation. Some time ago a senator of seventy married a young lady of twenty-five, and the rumors of the match and her suspected amours have not yet gone into oblivion. Yet a gentleman of eighty-two quite lately married a lady of twenty-five and there was such a disturbance among the young lady's family, while they were boarding with her mother, that the "young couple" had to move away and set up housekeeping for themselves in