Five Minute Chats on Our Presidents

By JAMES MORGAN

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AN ERA OF REFORM

1883—Jan. 16, Arthur signed the civil service law.
1884—Defeated for the Republican nomination by James G. Blaine.
1886—Nov. 18, died in New York aged fifty-six.

IT IS one of the pranks of fate that Chester A. Arthur, whom President Hayes put out of the New York custom house as a spoilsman and a political boss, should find himself in the White House seven months after Hayes left it and conducting a reform administration. It was the mandate and lesson of Garfield's assassination that we must get rid of factions and spoils or the government itself might next be struck down as its chief had been. Arthur saw that this was the logic of the tragedy which had thrust him into the presidency and he did his best to clean house.

The race for preferment had excited an unnatural appetite for public office, and the getting of a job was regarded as exhilarating sport. From policeman, fireman and letter carrier to chiefship and consulship, every place on the payroll of city, state or nation went by favor. Two endless processions were forever moving, one made up of those who had been turned out or turned down, and the other of those who were struggling to get in.

The civil service law, which was passed in Arthur's administration, took out of politics the departmental clerkships in Washington but 85 per cent of the federal employees as a whole were left under the spoils system. Nevertheless, the difficult first step had been taken toward the present comprehensive system, when all but a few hundred of the hundreds of thousands



Mrs. John E. M'Elroy.

of places are open equally to self-respecting applicants, regardless of parties or politicians.

Arthur also was the useful instrument in carrying forward the reconciliation of the sections. He was the first president in his generation who made no reference in his annual messages to the South or to a Southern question. He was indeed almost the first president in 50 years who felt free to ignore the unhappy issues of sectionalism.

When he stepped into the White House Arthur found his party rent by factions. He left it more nearly united than it had been before in 20 years and with at least a chance to win again in 1884. He might himself have been the Republican nominee in that year if he had not scrupulously refused to take an active part in promoting his candidacy.

He looked as well as acted the president. The first city man in a line of rural or small town men, Arthur was the best dressed man to sit in the chair since Washington, and perhaps the handsomest, with a tall, graceful figure, the manners of the great world and a grave but easy courtesy.

Although a widower president, his sister, Mrs. McElroy, was a charming mistress of the White House and under them the social life of the mansion took on a more sumptuous tone. His son and namesake was away at school much of the time, but his little daughter, Nellie Arthur, lit up the household with her song and laughter.

Mrs. Arthur died only in the year before her husband's unexpected rise to the presidency, and her absence from his side was a haunting sorrow to Arthur.

Declining to remove the collector of the port of New York, whom Garfield had appointed, against his protest, he even permitted that officeholder to leave his post and oppose him in the contest at the national convention.

No other president has done so little as Arthur did to obtain a second term. It was well, not only for the sake of the high example he set, but for his own sake also. Arthur's health was not equal to the strain of another administration and another term in the White House, where he lived not wisely but too well. In less than two years after leaving the presidency, followed by the good will of all the people, he was dead of apoplexy.

SILAS' MEMORIAL

By MARJORIE PIERCE.

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Susan Deborah Mills Fisher Trent was exceedingly proud of her new husband, her third, as her name attested. She was a middle-aged woman, tall, thin, shrill of voice and scant of hair. What little of woman's crowning glory she did possess she drew to a tight little knob at the back of her narrow head. She knew all there was to be known about men, according to her own judgment, and felt that at last she had chosen aright.

The poor deceased Mr. Mills had been a young, rather good-looking fellow when Susan wedded him. That was when Susan was also young and her hair was not drawn so tightly back from her thin face. Mr. Fisher had been an older man, perhaps forty-five. Susan had ensnared him in the gooey net of a lemon pie when she was running a boarding house at Green Hill. Fisher simply could not resist Susan's lemon pies, and when Susan threatened to depart for Howe's Center to work at the hotel, Fisher decided that the wisest course for him to take was to marry Susan and the lemon pies, which he did forthwith.

Perhaps the pies shortened Fisher's mortal coil. At any rate, Susan was soon ready for a third attempt at matrimony. She did not even feign love to Mr. Trent. He needed a housekeeper and she needed a home. Thus the two were married.

Silant Trent was about sixty years old, slim like Susan, and somewhat bent from long hours of hoeing and weeding. He chewed tobacco and smoked. Susan did not know that he chewed, which fact only goes to show that even a woman of Mrs. Mills Fisher Trent's experience does not know all there is to be known about men. She did know that he smoked, but never was the "filthy odor" of tobacco smoke to be found in the farmhouse. Poor Silas smoked in the vast out-of-doors, and only the pure mountain air was tainted.

He was afraid of his wife, not of her physical person as a whole, but he was desperately afraid of her tongue, and she made his life at home very unhappy. He was glad to escape if possible, for a short holiday.

After about six months of married life Mr. Trent decided that he was due for a holiday and, as the circus was to visit the adjoining town, he harnessed up the colt and went to the "show."

At the circus Silas enjoyed his freedom to his heart's content.

There was a refreshment booth at the circus, so he betook himself inside and ordered a supper consisting of "hot dogs" and a glass of pink lemonade. When the frankfurters and lemonade had disappeared Silas was still hungry and thirsty, so a second order of three "hot dogs" and a pint lemonade followed the first and finally a third took the same trail. Silas was at last "refreshed" and he started home to Susan.

On the way he felt rather sick. When he arrived home he felt sicker, and soon Susan in terror called the doctor, for Silas was writhing and groaning in agony. Pains seemed to be in every part of his poor thin body at the same instant.

The doctor arrived, but Silas died. Even a doctor could not overcome nine hot dogs attacking at once.

Susan was, to all appearances, stunned by grief. How she mourned! Black crepe was not enough. Tears continually drowned her eyes till after Silas was buried. She talked of what a great love had been taken from her, and as proof of her loyalty to his memory she showed her friends a small box in which, she explained, she had placed a "memorial" of her poor dear husband. This box she wore suspended from a cord around her scrawny neck, and tucked carefully under her black alpaca waist.

All the countryside was interested in that "memorial." Everyone was curious. What could old Mrs. Trent be wearing in that box as a remembrance of her departed third?

And so on ran the rumors. The newspapers in the nearest city heard of "Mr. Trent's memorial," and reporters, eager for copy, rushed to Susan's humble cottage for information. They returned with snapshots of the much discussed box, but no information as to its contents.

No one was able to satisfy his ever increasing curiosity, and so the box with its "memorial" was the wonder and mystery of the village until the day on which Susan Deborah Mills-Fisher-Trent revealed its secret.

It was not many moons after Silas Trent's death that Susan was sorely stricken with a toothache. She hastened to a dentist. She had only seven of her own teeth in her mouth, and he advised their extraction. Susan at first objected. She claimed that she was minus the necessary funds for the purchase of a set of the manufactured variety. She was about to leave the office when suddenly she stopped, fumbled at the front of her waist and produced the box in which was known to be the "memorial" of Silas Trent. Turning to the dentist she handed him the box which she had loosened from the cord, and in a matter-of-fact tone said:

"Land sakes, I clean forgot that 'memorial.' I saved them old teeth of Silas' a-purpose to have 'em made over some day if I ever had need of 'em."

Thus was the "memorial" mystery solved.

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ANNUAL DEBATE AT W. M. COLLEGE TO-NIGHT AT 7 O'CLOCK

To-night the annual debate between the Webster and Irving Literary Societies of Western Maryland College will be held at the college, beginning at 7 o'clock. The question is: "Resolved that the philippine Islands should be given full independence as soon as arrangements for it can be made." Public invited.

KATCHA—KOO AT OPERA HOUSE TO-NIGHT

Owing to a basket ball game the members of the teams have requested that the curtain in Katcha-Koo will not rise until 8:30 instead of 8.15, in order to allow the game to be finished in time for the teams to see the performance, which will be repeated to-night at the Opera House, this city.

This week Dr. G. Lewis Wetzel, of Union Mills, was confined to his home by sickness.

Last evening during the performance of Katcha—Koo at the Opera House, the Westminster orchestra, under the leadership of Mr. Albert Mitten delighted the audience with many fine selections of music.

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Owing to the very disagreeable weather on Sunday February 20th, we postponed attending services at the Grace Lutheran Church until March 6th.

Meet at lodge room 7 P. M. At our meeting Tuesday February 22nd the rank of Knight was given to 3 Esquires.

March 1st the rank of Page will be given to a class. Come out.

H. G. Mathias K. of R. & S.

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