

BY
THE HONORABLE JOSEPH H. CHOATE

IT WAS in the early summer of 1899 that Bayard Cutting joined the American Embassy in London, as my private Secretary, a post which he continued to hold for two years. He came to us fresh from his brilliant career at Harvard, where he had the reputation of being first in intellectual equipment among the men of his time, not waiting for his Degree, which he received afterwards in 1900. The duties of private Secretary to the American Ambassador in London are very varied, from much of a strictly clerical kind, to participating in matters of great importance and of a highly confidential and delicate character. Before he came I doubted whether a man of his very active brain and high thinking would have the patience for what might seem the drudgery of mere routine, but I was sure, from what I knew of him, that nothing could be too important or too delicate to be entrusted to him. But that ever present sense of duty which guided his life made him equally efficient and useful in the discharge of every kind of duty. So that the two years of his short and busy life which he spent with me in London were very nearly the best part of it, and were an excellent training, as all his

years were a training, for a great career which everyone anticipated for him, but which, unhappily, was cut off almost at its beginning.

The social duties of an Ambassador's Secretary in London are of a most seductive and engrossing kind, and to young men of ordinary mental calibre, seem sometimes to be the most important part of the Diplomatic life. Every door is open to him, and he is always in demand in what is probably the most cultivated and best trained society in the world. But while he was not blind to its charms and recognized the reasonable demands of general society, never neglecting his duty in that regard, I think he sought and found his best companionship among the men and women of kindred and sympathetic thought and feeling, whom he recognized at sight, as it were, and never regarded the social features of the diplomatic service as anything more than a necessary incident, and wholly subordinate to its grander and more important functions.

The transition from the scholastic career at Harvard, which, at its best, is a little provincial, to the broader activities of London, almost world-wide in their scope, appealed very strongly to his vivid imagination and his lofty ambition, and he

seemed fully to realize the opportunity to view the world on a large and extended scale, from what was an excellent post of observation. He took naturally, as it seemed to me, to the study of international law, and to questions of high importance as they arose, to full knowledge of which he was freely admitted. So that I was not at all surprised afterwards to hear how splendidly he had passed the examination prescribed by the State Department for entrance to Diplomatic office, and how superior in its excellence the paper was which he then prepared, and how highly it was valued by the Secretary of State.

There was but one drawback to his life in London, and that was a certain physical delicacy and sensitiveness to which, on looking backward since his untimely death, it has seemed to me I could trace the beginning, almost imperceptible at the time, of that insidious malady which afterwards disappointed and defeated the most sanguine hopes of himself and all his friends. His ambition and the fervid aspirations of his spirit often outran his strength.

The American Embassy in London is full of the noblest traditions, and it was my hope that he would be able to make a sketch of its history, and

of the characters of my noble predecessors from Franklin, the representative of Colonial America, and John Adams, the first Minister of the new nation, through the long line of splendid examples, to John Hay, who added a new lustre to American Diplomacy. The idea appealed to him most keenly, but his time was too short and his strength inadequate for the delightful task, which I hope will yet be undertaken and accomplished by some successor of his at the Embassy.

Very interesting and important questions were being negotiated between Great Britain and the United States during his time with us, and as I made it a rule to have no secrets from my Secretaries, he had a full opportunity to understand them all and to participate in their progress. The Alaska Boundary dispute, sometimes becoming very critical, because of quarrels between miners in the contested area, which might at any time lead to an armed outbreak—the abrogation of the Clayton Bulwer treaty, and the substitution of a new one, which would facilitate the building of the Panama Canal as a purely American enterprise, the seizure of American goods in Delagoa Bay during the Boer War, the initiation of Mr. Hay's grand policy of the "open door" in China,

a proposition which was quickly responded to with great cordiality by Great Britain, and the horrors of the Boer War, were all subjects which would naturally attract and hold the attention of a young man who aspired to a diplomatic career, and it may easily be imagined how earnestly and intently Bayard studied all these, and what a deep impression the successive steps in the progress of each made upon his active and receptive mind. I do not hesitate to acknowledge my obligation to him for assistance in such matters, and I am sure that he gathered from them a vast deal of knowledge, which his wonderful memory always retained and put to use. What he once knew he seemed never to forget.

His years in England afforded an unusual opportunity for observing and studying the character of the English people under all vicissitudes, whether plunged in profoundest gloom by the early disasters of the Boer War, or exalted to the utmost enthusiasm by such events as the relief of Mafeking and of Ladysmith, each of which acted upon them indeed as if it were the relief of London itself from a long siege—and the triumphant return of Lord Roberts, which gave a new occasion for the display of patriotic fervor. A few

months before he left us the death of Queen Victoria gave us a realizing sense of the pious devotion of her subjects and of the universal appreciation by all the world of the greatness of her long and wonderful reign.

It is certain that his residence in London was not lost time, and that it did much for his growth and development, and was full of fortunate opportunities, which he used to the best advantage. It is pleasant and comforting now to believe that he thoroughly enjoyed his brief life in England, where he made hosts of friends, and that every day was full of hope and promise and happiness. His ideals were always of the loftiest, his standard of life and conduct was absolutely pure and high. His brilliant mind was a shining light among us, while his affectionate and lovable nature endeared him to all with whom he came in contact, so that his departure, which occurred on the occasion of his marriage, was greatly regretted by us all. I shall always remember with gratitude the charm of his delightful personality and conversation, and the great privilege which I enjoyed in his companionship and friendship.

I do not know whether, if his health had continued he would have elected to follow diplo-

macy as a career for life, nor whether, in the present precarious condition of our American Service, it would have been worth his while to do so. His inclination always seemed to me to be towards philosophy and high scholarship and the lofty aims of a University life, but his marked success as a Secretary in London, and his subsequent work at Milan and especially at Messina, where, at the risk of his already impaired life, he did such splendid service, prove to me that if he had so chosen, he would in good time have qualified himself to serve his country as an Ambassador, of whom she would be justly proud.

But what boots it now to dream of what might have been. What he already was and what he had already done was enough.

“For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.”

LETTER FROM
DR. W. T. THAYER
OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Baltimore, Md.,

July 25, 1910.

. **T**HE news of his death shocked me more than I can tell you.

I had wanted to write to him during the summer last year and tell him what a truly admirable piece of work his Pellagra report was—how useful it had been to me, and how much appreciated it was by all.

And the days went by—and the flighty purpose never was o’ertook, and then came the news of his death. I had hoped much that the summer might put him wholly on his feet again.

Apart from all the personal side, the loss of such a man to his country is incalculable.

The Pellagra report was shown me first by Dr. Babcock of Columbia, S. C. This was the original copy sent to the State Department and edited for publication by them or by the Public Health & Marine Hospital Service to which it had apparently been referred. By them it was referred to Dr. Babcock. The report is an extraordinary production for one who was not a physician. It must have involved a very large amount of work and it

is admirably put together and presented. I have a copy made including, I think, a number of passages which, in the original, have been crossed out as unsuitable for publication for diplomatic reasons. This copy I am having copied for you. Why it was not published, I know not. I wrote, I think, to Dr. Wyman, expressing the hope that it might be published. Later, I lent my copy to General Torrey, the Surgeon General of the Army, who had it copied for the use of one of his men who is investigating the subject. I am sending you with this a reprint in which I have referred to the work. I wish I might do more.

Your son made a very strong impression on me when I saw him, and I have thought of you, Mrs. Cutting, very often in these past months.

Note: A severe outbreak of Pellagra having taken place in South Carolina, the United States Senate sent a Commission to Milan in 1908 consisting of Senator Tilden and Dr. Babcock to investigate the treatment of the disease in Italy. In the absence of the Consul it became the duty of the Vice Consul to show them through the hospitals in Milan and later to pursue the investigation and prepare a report covering the subject of Pellagra in Italy.