

is such a thing as fresh fish, but if I were in shambles, where all was piscatorial rottenness, I should hold my nose."

McKnom: "But let us look more closely at political virtue. What, Dr. Facile, do you consider your chief duty as a member of Parliament?"

Dr. Facile: "To carry out my pledges. In my address to my constituents I set out the policy of my party and proclaimed myself a follower of my leader. It is my duty on all occasions to be in my place in Parliament to support by speech and vote the policy of my party and to uphold my leader."

McKnom: "But do questions never arise not embraced in the set of pledges you made your constituents?"

Dr. Facile: "Certainly. Then if it is very serious we have a caucus and the course the party shall take is decided on; if there is no caucus I go with my leader."

McKnom: "Even if your opinion should differ from his?"

Dr. Facile: "Yes; as an eminent member and friend of mine says: 'My opinions are my own, my vote belongs to my party.'"

McKnom: "Without any exception?"

Dr. Facile: "Well, my leader does my political thinking for me. That is the way to be a true party man. Let me see—there are cases, perhaps, there may be a case where a question greatly concerns your own constituency, and your constituents take a strong view—you may perhaps vote as your constituents wish."

McKnom: "So that your leader does your political thinking for you except when this is done for you by your constituents?"

Dr. Facile: "Yes; if you like to put it in that way. A man can't be wrong if he sticks to his party—votes right. What would your constituents think of you if you did not do this? A good and virtuous politician is a good party man."

McKnom: "Quite so; and now how far do you think a member of Parliament should use his influence to enrich himself or to benefit his family?"

Dr. Facile: "Ha! ha! mighty few of them enrich themselves. How can they do it? Take my own case. There are several members of my profession in Parliament. Three or four months every year away from our practice destroys it; I suppose they like the honour. As to one's family, what harm is there supposing one's party be in power in getting your sons or cousins into Government positions? And if an opportunity occurred of making money properly, I don't see why it should not be done."

McKnom: "Occurred, you mean, because of the influence you would be supposed to possess in consequence of your party being in power."

Dr. Facile: "Yes—and—"

"Permit me," interrupted Rectus, "to say a word or two; I cannot agree with Facile, I do not think—and I hope there are many members of Parliament of my way of thinking—a member of Parliament should allow himself to use his position for any personal advantage whatever, and unless there was no one else in my constituency fit I would not give an appointment to son or cousin or any relative."

"But," cried Madame Lalage, "St. Paul says you should first take care of your own household. Charity begins at home."

"We must not jest, Madame, on a subject so important," said McKnom.

Madame Lalage: "Indeed I am not jesting. Is a man to do nothing for his relatives?"

Professor Glaucus: "Madame expresses the enlightened sentiment of the country. The society in which we live is the archetype of conscience, and the conscience of the politician will reflect the sentiment of the people. You will admit, sir [addressing McKnom] that there is no room for self-sacrifice of any kind in the political ideal held up before us by Dr. Facile."

Dr. Facile: "No room for self-sacrifice! What do you call attending late and early at those Buildings, in which the air is poisonous? Do you know the life we lead? I studied pretty hard when I was working for my profession; but such a three or four months' work I never put in as the work there. You get up in the morning; breakfast; glance over the *Citizen*; hurry up to the Buildings; read your letters, some asking you to do impossible things; others urging you to make enquiries of various kinds in the Departments; one or two describing cases and asking you to prescribe; and before you have got through you have to be off to the Committees. These will last until twelve or one o'clock. If they are over before one you hurry to your place and write a few letters; then off to lunch. As you come out from lunch perhaps you find one or more constituents waiting for you—three o'clock comes and you hurry to your place—there you are until six. Then dinner. At eight you are again in your place and sit there until twelve or one o'clock in the morning. Meanwhile some of the old cold-blooded members have sent word to the engineer that the chamber is chilly. He heats it up so that it becomes intolerable. No room for self-sacrifice! Look at the death rate. If there is a weak spot in a man it finds it out."

"It is, indeed," sneered Glaucus, "an immolation."

"And how do you manage to look so ruddy and well, Doctor?" demanded one of the young ladies.

Dr. Facile: "It is marvellous. But I have to prescribe for myself pretty often, and still more frequently for my friends."

"Yes," said Glaucus, "I am told the amount of drugs swallowed by some members makes a serious hole in their

indemnity. The United States' Senators have to take so much quinine, that quinine pills form a large item in their estimates. The least the country could do for you is to pay for your pills. There is a platform for you. Devotion to Party and Pills *ad libitum*, free."

McKnom: "My dear Professor, let us have no jesting. Now, Dr. Facile, we will suppose it came to be a received opinion in regard to your profession that no doctor would be expected to leave his bed after one o'clock at night to attend the sick, no matter how grave the case. Is there not something in us which would honour the doctor, who, notwithstanding the prevailing sentiment, should yet, if his bell were rung at two or three or four in the morning, rise and drive through sleet or rain or snow, or when the glass was fifteen or twenty below zero, to see some suddenly stricken sufferer, and still more if it was some poor person who could not pay?"

Dr. Facile: "Certainly."

McKnom: "Should not a prominent politician, like a member of Parliament, give more attention than other people to political questions? Ought he not to be acquainted with the history and science of politics as a medical man should be with the history and science of medicine?"

Dr. Facile: "I suppose he ought."

McKnom: "Has not a good doctor in every new and complex case to exercise his reasoning power, applying to the condition revealed by the diagnosis the facts ascertained either by study in experience or both?"

Dr. Facile: "Certainly."

McKnom: "What would you think of the doctor who should always ask another doctor the prescription he should write, and then tell the patient what it was proposed to give him and ask him whether he approved of it?"

Dr. Facile: "He would be a useless fool."

McKnom: "So that where you have an instructed doctor he will use his own mind and be guided by his judgment as to what is best for the patient without regard to the patient's views."

Dr. Facile: "Certainly."

McKnom: "And if the patient refused his treatment would he not tell him he must call in another doctor?"

Dr. Facile: "Certainly."

McKnom: "And if you have a well instructed politician, should he not say and do what he conceives to be right without regard to the view of any other politician's views and with little regard to the opinions of the people or of his constituents?"

Dr. Facile: "Do you suppose such a man would be any use to his party? Would he be re-elected?"

McKnom: "That we will discuss hereafter; what I ask you now is this, Would not such a man play a manly part?"

Dr. Facile: "Well, yes, but he would be a mighty poor politician."

McKnom: "But whether his views were right or not he would act a manly part?"

Dr. Facile: "Yes."

McKnom: "And the more manly if such action were out of keeping with the prevailing ideal of how a politician should act."

Dr. Facile: "Certainly—"

McKnom: "Now, I think we have got at what political virtue consists in. To do at all times and in all places what he believes to be for the best interest of the country! To do right in a word!"

Dr. Facile: "But he must not go against his party."

McKnom: "Not to do right?"

All laughed, and Helpsam quoted two lines from "The Sweet o' the Year":—

And when I wander here and there,
I then do most go right.

Dr. Facile: "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Helpsam, for that quotation. It hits off the unsteady political character Mr. McKnom, Mr. Goldwin Smith, Professor Glaucus and the other ideologues would create."

Helpsam: "It is from 'Winter's Tale' and therefore need never infest the glorious summer of your political ideal."

Rectus: "I do not agree with all Dr. Facile has said; but I do not wish to interfere with Mr. McKnom."

McKnom: "Permit me—Dr. Facile are you not a member of the Presbyterian section of the Christian Church—an active member? [The Doctor nodded.] And do you not believe in God—in a moral Governor of the world—a Judge to whom men must give an account? [Assent on the part of the Doctor.] While, then, the leader of your party has a right to be regarded and the interests of your party—while you are responsible to your constituents—are you responsible as a politician to nothing higher?"

Dr. Facile: "In politics, as in every other sphere of action, we are responsible to God."

McKnom: "Then you could not be far from playing the part of a virtuous politician if you acted as Milton says, as in 'Your Great Task Master's Eye.'"

Dr. Facile: "Yes."

"But," said Helpsam, "some men have been great and good statesmen who were not religious men."

"How," replied McKnom, "do you know? How can you know whether a man is religious or not, unless he is openly and persistently immoral as was Pericles in private life. A man overweighted may fall into great sins and yet be a religious man. But, if there were such, then they acted as politicians on the same rules as they would frame were they religious and as politicians were, therefore, virtuous. Glaucus are you content?"

Glaucus: "You have shown what was superfluous—that men can behave virtuously as politicians. But you have not shown how political virtue and organized faction can co-exist. You have not shown that there is anything in your Canadian political life but dreary villainy."

Rectus: "I think I may be permitted to say something now, and if you will permit me I will show that political virtue and party politics are not exclusive of each other—and perhaps will prove to Glaucus that there is political virtue in Canada."

Mr. Lalage, who is a noble and generous soul but not so spiritual as his wife, said: "Well, Helen, this has been a pretty dry discussion, and I think, as we lawyers say, a 'refresher' would not be out of place."

McKnom: "I must go—"

Helpsam: (looking at his watch) "It is within ten minutes of twelve o'clock—"

Glaucus: "Madame Lalage, I shall have to give a strict account to Mrs. Glaucus."

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THE BEHRING SEA CONTROVERSY.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—As you have been good enough to honour my rather hasty and crude letter of the other day on this subject, I make bold to add a few words in explanation of my allusions to the ignorance of certain historical and physical facts bearing on the question of *Mare clausum*.

The field—*habitat*—of the fur seal in question, in the Northern Pacific, is about six millions of square miles, viz., from San Francisco, about lat. 38° N., long. 122° W. (of Greenwich), to the western shore of the Sea of Japan in about the same latitude, and in long. 124° E. (of Greenwich), thence north to Behring Straits about lat. 63° N.—say twenty-five degrees of latitude and a hundred and fourteen of longitude. Within these points all round shore, and out in the deep to an extent unknown, but assuredly, from experience, known to be over a hundred miles, they are found, following their chief bait, the delicious salmon of the Pacific. They abound in the northern isles of Japan, as in the Alaskan and Russian. In the open sea, wherever their food is, they may be found. The Northern Pacific, though comparatively shallow in its most northerly parts, has, it is now well known from recent measurements for cable service, depths unsounded so far by plummet. The sea of Okhotsk and that of Behring are, like all essentially Arctic waters, comparatively shallow; but, in the immediate approach to these shallower seas, off the line of the Kurile chain and Kamschatka occurs this vast profound; giving there what the old navigators would call an open "hollow" sea. It is just in the line of highway to the Arctic—British as well as Russian, or other Arctic of the nations of the earth, with the twenty-five miles wide Strait of Behring, so called, as portal to that "world's common."

For two hundred and fifty years, according to record, those far Northern waters, even the so called "Inner Sea of Behring" have been navigated by British ships, not in exploration but in trade with the natives in furs principally. As far back as A. D. 1640, Spain found, in her explorations thus far north, an English ship owned by Major-General Gibbons, of Massachusetts, under command of a markedly intelligent navigator, Captain Shapley, from Boston, from whom the Spanish Admiral, De Fonte, bought, at the goodly price of a thousand "pieces of eight," with gratuities to double that amount, maps and charts of those coasts then unknown to even the Spaniards of that main.

Sixty-one years before that, England's Drake, in effort of passage to England by a supposed northwest route from Atlantic to Pacific, sailed so far north in those seas that in June his vessel was stopped by Arctic cold, and with frozen rigging he had to turn southwards, at last striking the western shore of America at a point about twenty miles north of the Golden Gate of California of to-day, where, after six weeks' sojourn amongst welcoming natives, who offered him the sovereignty of their land, he formally took possession of it in his Sovereign's name, Elizabeth of England, and called it New Albion. When still such in the map, many years (26) before, the Pathfinder Fremont, just dead the other day, found passage for the United States in its march of empire to the Pacific, the writer, with his father as first representative there of England's chartered Hudson's Bay Company, stood on that shore a witness and participant in starting again a British trade in the Northern Pacific.

Then United States' ships and also Russian were prosecuting a desultory coast trade in fur with the natives, but both very perfunctorily. Astor's *Tonquin* of 1811, with all on board, save one, had been destroyed by the hostile natives. In 1813 H. B. M.'s warships swept off the "U. S. flag" of those days from those shores. The Russians, in peace, kept off at a respectful distance. In fact then, from 1813 to 1822, during which the two great fur companies of British North America, viz., the Canadian Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, were in deadly conflict, there was but little coast trade north of Mexico. What there was of it was in the hands of the Russians and the Americans, but so tentative and weak was it, notwithstanding the strong attractions for market in China, that it never gained power enough to master the native or in any sense obtain a foothold on isle or continent, save, in the case of Russia, in Sitka or Kodiak, where soon afterwards a strong military garrison, with a fleet of about a