Matrimonial Adventures

The Second Coming of Mrs. Bain's First Husband

BY

Irvin S. Cobb

Author of "Back Home," "The Escape of Mr. Trimm," "Roughing It Deluxe," "Paths of Glory," "Old Judge Priest," "Fibble," "The Glory of the Coming," "The Thunders of Silence," "The Abandoned Farmer," "The Belled Bussard," "J. Poindexter, Colored," etc.

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IRVIN S. COBB

Is there anyone in this country who does not know the name of Irvin S. Cobb? Or what that name stands for in American literature? Judging from the way his books are taken from the public libraries—and they are too many to be named here—I should say emphatically not.

He has been and done many things—newspaper man, war correspondent, author, playwright, etc., etc.; there isn't space enough to chronicle all the ground he has covered, but from the time he first began writing he has been claimed by his fellow countrymen in a way that seems to make him belong to his admirers individually. The author who touches us humorously almost never fails to do just that. But it is his serious side, that side that gave us "The Belled Bussard" series and "The Escape of Mr. Trimm," that has added to his great quota of our affections.

In "The Second Coming of Mrs. Bain's First Husband," written for the Star Author Series of Matrimonial Adventures, we have a story of marriage of striking originality. It takes up an old point—the nagging wife—in an entirely new fashion.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

If only Mrs. Thomas Bain had been content to compare Mr. Thomas Bain with men about him, to her conclusive arguments, would not have been put at a serious disadvantage. Out of her ammunition locker he might have borrowed shells to fire in his own defense. Did she, for instance, cite the polished beauty of Mr. So-and-So's dancing-room behavior, speaking with that subtle inflection which as good as said that his own society manners left much to be desired, Mr. Bain's rebuttal would have been prompt and ready. He would have spoken right up to point out the fact that So-and-So notoriously neglected his family or that he drank entirely too much for his own good, or that he habitually failed to pay his just debts. Mr. Bain was no scandal-monger, understand. Still a man must fight back with such weapons as he may command.

But Mrs. Bain's method of attack was entirely too subtle for him; it left him practically weaponless. Out in the world he amply was competent to fend for himself. Beneath the domestic roof-tree, where his wife sat in judgment on him, his ways, his small shortcomings or his larger faults, he completely was at a loss for proper rebuttal. It gave him such a helpless feeling! It would have given any normal man a helpless feeling. And Mr. Bain was in all essential regards a normal man—a good citizen, a good provider and, as husbands go, an average fair husband.

I would do Mrs. Bain no injustice. She was a normal woman, too. But it is only natural that when destiny has fashioned an advantage to fit our hands that we should employ it. Her advantage was a very great one. Her criticisms of Mr. Bain took the form of measuring him off against the conceived picture of her first husband.

And her first husband was dead. Now, in common decency, an honorable man—and Mr. Bain was an honorable man—may not speak ill of the dead. What is more, had he, under stress of provocation, been minded to retort that after all Mrs. Bain's first husband was not exactly perfection either, he could have produced no proof to support the assertion. For he had never seen his predecessor. He knew nobody who had known the deceased. The present Mrs. Bain had been for three years a widow when first he set eyes on her. She had lately returned then from Honolulu; it was in Honolulu that she had been bereft, as the saying is, by the hand of death. And Honolulu is a long distance from Brockway, Mass., where Tom Bain's people, a stay-at-home stock, had lived these five generations past.

So, on those frequently recurring occasions when Mrs. Bain, with a saddened, almost a wistful, air was moved to remind herself of her first husband's marvelous qualities—temperament, disposition, tact, amiability, or what not—there was for her second husband nothing to do but to suffer on in an important silence. It is not well that anyone on this earth—and more especially a husband—should be required to suffer discomforts in silence. Suffering calls for vocal expression.

Otherwise, as human beings go, Mr. and Mrs. Bain were well suited one for the other. It was that dead first husband of hers, who, invoked by her, kept rising up to mar the reasonable happiness which might have been theirs. The thing was getting on his nerves. Indeed, at the time this briefened narrative begins, it already had got upon his nerves. He had come to the point where frequently he wished there had never been a first husband.

There were even times when he almost permitted himself the wish that there never had been such things as second husbands, either.

With the acute vividness of a war scarred veteran remembering the first time he was shot, he could reconstruct the occasion when Mrs. Bain's former husband first came into his life. They had been married just two months then. The honeymoon was in its last quarter. If the couple were ever to go along together in harmony the time had now come when mutual understanding must succeed the period of adjustment and balance. She had the benefit of experience on her side; for she had been through the process once before. Tom Bain might be a green hand at this business of being married, but, subconsciously, he was beginning to adjust himself in his ordained and proper place in the matrimonial scheme as it related to him and this very charming lady. In other words, he had reached the place where he was slipping out of the bridegroom pose into the less studied and more matter-of-fact status of a husband. He was ready to quit acting a part and be his own self again always, though with regard for the limitations and restrictions imposed by the new estate upon which he had entered.

The campaign against him—we may as well call it a campaign—opened on the evening following their return from the trip to White Sulphur. That first day at his desk had been a hard one; so much which seemed to require his personal attention had accumulated while he was away. He left the office pretty well tired out. On his way home he built up a pleasant vision of a nice quiet little dinner and then a peaceful hour or so in the living room in slippers and an old smoking jacket.

Mrs. Bain met him at the door with a greeting that put him in thorough good humor. This, he decided, was the best of all possible worlds to live in and he, undoubtedly, was the best of all possible ways of living.

"You're late, dearest," she said. "You've just time to run upstairs and slip on your evening clothes. I've laid them out for you."

"Why, there's nobody coming in for dinner, is there?" he asked.

She drew away from him slightly.

"No, there's no one coming," she said. "What difference does that make?"

"Well," he said, "I'm rather fagged out, and I sort of thought that, seeing there'd be only the two of us, I'd come to the table just as I am."

"Very well, dear," she said; "suit yourself."

But he took note that she had shortened the superlative "dearest" to "dear." Also she slipped herself out of the circle of his enfolding arm. Suddenly there was a suggestion—a bare trace—of an autumnal chill in the air.

But, as a newly married man, how could he suit himself? He clad himself in the starchy shirt, the high, tight collar that pinched his throat, the pinchy patent leathers, and all the rest of the funeral regalia in which civilized man encases himself on any supposedly festal occasion. She gave him an approving look when, ten minutes later, he presented himself before her.

"Tom," she said as they sat down, "I think you always should dress for dinner. Arthur always said that a gentleman should dress for dinner."

He stared at her, puzzled.

"Arthur?" he echoed. "Who's Arthur?"

"My first husband," she explained. "Arthur looked so well in this evening clothes."

"Oh!" he said, like that. That was all he said for a minute or so. He was thinking.

She was thinking, too. Practically all women are popularly supposed to have intuition, and certainly this particular woman had her share of it. Probably it was in that very moment of reflection that the lady decided on a future plan of action.

At any rate, this was the beginning. Eventually, Mr. Bain awoke to a realization that he was the victim of a gentle tyranny—that he had fallen captive to a combination enemy made up of an affectionate if somewhat masterful lady and the memory of a dead and gone personality. Mrs. Bain's first husband was persistently dogging Mrs. Bain's second husband. Daily, after one fashion or another, the latter was reminded of the late Arthur. Arthur, it seemed, had never lost his temper. What made the comparison hurt the more was the indubitable fact that Mr. Bain occasionally did lose his. Arthur had never raised his voice above the low-pitched key of innate refinement—no matter how irritated he might be. Arthur had been so tidy; never left his clothes lying about where he dropped them. Arthur had not given her a cross word in all the seven years of their life together. Arthur, invariably had been so considerate of her feelings. It was Arthur this and it was Arthur that. She realized her power and she used it. Mrs. Bain's first husband was ever, so to speak, at the elbow of Mrs. Bain's second husband, by proxy chiding him, admonishing him, correcting him, scolding him, even.

And for all that he naturally was a sunny-natured and companionable person, Mr. Bain's second husband was, at the end of the first year of his married life, in a fair way to become a most unhappy person. Their matrimonial craft was sliding down the rapids toward a thundering Niagara; and she didn't realize it and he, thoroughly under the dominion of forces with which he found himself powerless to cope, only dimly and duly appreciated the peril. He wanted above all things to have and to hold his wife until death did them part. But always there was Arthur tagging along, making a crowd of three of what otherwise might have been a congenial company of two.

But, as some one has most aptly said, it's always darkest just before the dawn. In this instance, though, deliverance came to the oppressed, not with the graduations of the spreading dawn, but rather with the solid emphasis of a bolt from the blue. There had been an evening of bridge with the Tatums and Bain, who played well, had for a partner Mrs. Tatum, who didn't. It is barely possible that he had betrayed a passing emotion of testiness once or twice. At midnight, as they were entering their home, Mrs. Bain renewed her remarks on a matter to which reference already had twice been made on the way home in the cab.

"My dear," she was saying, "I really must repeat again that, to my way of thinking, no amount of exasperation could have justified you in showing your feelings as you did show them at least twice at that card table. Now, Arthur would never—"

At this instant Mr. Bain's finger found the push button, just inside the lamb of the living room door and the lights flashed on. What next ensued—the vocal part of it, I mean—might have suggested to an eavesdropper, had there been one, that the vowel sounds in their proper order were being repeated by two persons laboring under strong excitement.

"Eh?" That was his astounded ejaculation.

"E-e-e-!" A shrill outcry, part scream, part squeal, from her.

"I—I—" Mr. Bain again.

"Oh!" Mrs. Bain's turn.

"You!" Her startled gasp of recognition.

"Yes, Evelyn, that's who it is." This, in matter-of-fact tones, was a third voice speaking.

After this for a moment the spell of a terrific fascination held both Mr. and Mrs. Bain silent.

Standing in the middle of the floor, facing them, was a shadow. I use the word advisedly. With equal propriety I might write down "apparition" or "wraith" or "shape" or "spirit" to describe that which confronted them. I prefer "shadow."

It had the outline, somewhat wavery and uncertain, of a man. It had the voice of a man—a voice calm, assured, almost casual. It had the garb of a man, or at least it had the nebulous faint suggestion of garbing. But it had no substance to it, none whatsoever. It had no definable color, either. It had rather the aspect of a figure of man drawn in the tints of very thin smoke. You could look right through it and distinguish, as through a patch of haze, the pattern of the wall-paper behind it. And now, as it spoke again, you could, in some indefinable sort of way, see its voice starting from down in its chest and travelling on up and on and on out of its lips. It was no more than a patch of fog, modeled by some unearthly magic into vaporous semblance of a human form. It was inconceivable, impossible, an incredible figment of the imagination, and yet there it was.

Its second speech was addressed to Mr. Bain, who had frozen where he was, his finger still touching the push button, his eyes enlarged to twice their size and his lower jaw sagged.

"You are astonished, I see. Permit me to introduce myself. I am Arthur—Mrs. Bain's first husband. I am glad to meet you."

Mr. Bain, under this shock, came to himself. The shackles of twelve months of bottled-in restraint fell from him.

"Are you?" he answered. "Well, I'm d—d if I'm glad to meet you."

"I understand." The voice was gentle, almost compassionate. "You will be glad later on, I think—very glad. Shall we sit down all of us?"

The Thing took a chair. And the back of the chair cloudily revealed itself as a sub-motif for the half-materialized torso of its occupant. Mechanically, moving jerkily, Mr. Bain followed suit; he likewise took a chair. Mrs. Bain, uttering choked whimpering sounds down in her throat, as though had fallen upon a couch and was mudded there. It was just as well the couch had been handily near by, for her legs would no longer support her.

Her first husband—we may as well call him that—turned to her.

"Control yourself, Evelyn," he bade her. "There is no occasion for any excitement. Besides, those curious sounds which you are now emitting annoy me. I haven't long to stay and I have much to say."

He cleared his throat—the process might be followed with the eye as well as by ear—and proceeded.

"I have been endeavoring for months past to bring about this meeting. In fact, ever since shortly after your second marriage to this gentleman, I have striven to return to earth for the one purpose of having this meeting. But it was difficult—very difficult," he sighed a visible sigh. "It is not permitted that I should explain the nature of the obstacles. I merely state that they were very great. As you will notice, I am not fully born yet to attain the requisite solidity—substance and specific density—which I craved to take on. So I just came along in the somewhat sketchy and incomplete guise in which you now see me.

"My reason for coming is simple. I desire to see Mr. Bain alone. Where I was, I could not rest in peace knowing that you, Evelyn, were lying so outrageously and, what was worse, making me an unwitting accomplice, as it were, to your lying campaign.

"Evelyn, you have been a foolish, wicked woman. You have done this gentleman here"—including Mr. Bain, with a wave of a spectral arm—"a cruel wrong. But what, from my point of view is even worse, you have done me a grave wrong as well. I may be only a memory—I may say that literally, is what I am—but even a memory has its feelings, its sense of responsibility, its obligations to itself.

"Very well, having made that point clear, I shall proceed: Sir, for nearly a year past you have been intimidated by the constantly presented image of a fabulous creature. Your peace of mind has been seriously affected. Before your eyes I have been held up as a paragon—I. And I resent the slander on my name. It has been an insult which no self-respecting memory should be compelled to stand. Sir, I wish you to know the truth. I was not a paragon, and I thank God for it. I was not the perfect husband this woman would have you believe. I was fussy, faulty, crochety—and I am proud of it."

"Oh, Arthur!" Mrs. Bain, under attack, was reviving, was rallying to her own defense as powers of coherent speech returned to her.

"Don't 'Oh, Arthur' me," he snapped, "but listen! And you, too, sir. If you will be so good. We quarreled frequently in the years of our married life. She complained of my brusque ways, of my fits of irritability, of my refusal to like many of the people that she persisted in liking, of my tastes and my habits and inclinations. She didn't care for some of my friends; I didn't care for some of hers. I objected to any number of things about her—and rarely refrained from saying so. She has told you that between us there was never a cross word. Bah! There were tens of thousands of cross words. When we got on each other's nerves, which was often, neither of us hesitated to let it be known. When we disagreed over something—or anything—we argued it out. We loved each other, but merely loving did not make either of us angelic. We quarreled and made up and quarreled in some more. We fell out and we fell back together again. There were times when we were like a pair of cooing doves and again there were times when the proverbial monkey and parrot had little if any thing on us. In short, and in fine, sir, we behaved just as the average, reasonably well-mated married couples do behave. And for my own sake, and incidentally for yours, sir, I would not have you believe differently.

"That, I believe, is practically all I had to say to you. Having said it, I wish to add a final word to our wife, here. Evelyn, speaking with such authority as is befitting a first husband, I wish to state that, so far as my observations from another sphere have gone, your present husband is a first rate fellow. I like to think of him as my successor. And I intend to see that he has a fair deal from you. I trust this visit from me has been a lesson to you. Hereafter, in your dealings with him you will please 'be' so good as to stand on your own merits. You will kindly refrain from dragging me into your arguments as an advocate on your side. My stock of patience is far greater than it was before I became a memory—remember that. I sincerely trust it will not be necessary for me to admonish you personally a second time. Because I warn you here and now that next time I shall return under circumstances that will be most embarrassing to you. Next time there will be no privacy about my appearance; I shall come to you in public. You'll be a talked-about woman, Evelyn. There'll be pieces about you in the paper and spiritualists and trance-mediums and believers in the occult—a mischievous, noisy lot, too. I may add—with make your life a burden for you. So have a care, Evelyn!

"Sir, to you I extend my best wishes. I'm sorry we didn't meet before. But, some of these days we'll make up for lost time—when you join me on the plane where I am at present residing. Well, I guess that will be about all . . . Oh, if you don't mind, I'll just dissipate into air and float up the chimney—it's more convenient." Out of a nothingness near the fireplace came a voice, growing thinner and fainter: "Good-by, Bain—good luck, old chap. Good-by, Evelyn—and don't forget."

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Bain went off into a swoon. It also should be noted that, even as he sprang to her side to revive her, Mr. Bain wore on his face a look of husbandly solicitude and concern, but his feet twittered a dance measure.

Personally, I do not believe in ghosts. I assume, readers, that you do not believe in ghosts, either. But Mrs. Bain does, and as for Mr. Bain, he does, too, firmly—and, as a happily married man, he is every day renewing and strengthening his belief in them.

"Retirement."

A tired feeling has evidently turned the thoughts of several of our readers toward pensions and retirement.

They will feel better when they have had a holiday!

Until then, we venture to remind them of the dire effects that frequently result from giving up work.

Work is the most deep-rooted of habits—with those who have been engaged in it till past middle age. Suddenly to renounce it isn't easy. We can recall edifying—if unverified—tales about those rich men who retired and died at once; or else came back and asked to be made office boys, in order that they might be saved from boredom.

You don't believe these stories? Then you reject our proffered consolation. You will have to fall back on the far hope of an old-age pension, perhaps, big enough in these days—to nourish an undersized sparrow.—London Mirror.

Courtship.

They met at the winter colony in California.

"Will you give me a kiss here in the daisy field?" he asked.

But she was shocked.

"Why not?" he urged. "Daisies don't tell."

"Ah! right," said the girl, "but let's get away from this babbling brook."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

FIND CITY BURIED FOR CENTURIES

Once Populous Center, Unearthed in Turkestan, is Believed to Antedate the Christian Era.

Some years ago singular discoveries were made by Russians in central Asia, discoveries which have been supplemented by later expeditions. In Turkestan, on the right bank of the Amou Darya, is a chain of rocky islets near the Bokharan town of Karki, and a number of large caves, which upon examination were found to lead to an underground city, built apparently long before the Christian era.

According to edicts, inscriptions and designs upon the gold and silver money unearthed from among the ruins, the existence of the town dates back to some two centuries before the birth of Christ.

The underground Bokharan city is a little over a mile long and is composed of an enormous labyrinth of corridors, streets and squares surrounded by houses and other buildings two or three stories high. The edifices contain all kinds of domestic utensils, pots, urns, vases and the like. In some of the streets bills of earth and rock have obstructed the passages, but generally one can walk about freely without so much as lowering his head.

The high degree of civilization attained by the inhabitants of the city is shown by the fact that they built in several stories, by the symmetry of the streets and squares and by the beauty of the baked clay and metal utensils, and of the ornaments and coins which have been found.

It is supposed that long centuries ago this city, so carefully concealed in the bowels of the earth, provided an entire population with a refuge from the incursions of nomadic savages and robbers.

It's surprising how many clothespins a little woman can hold in her mouth.

The American Legion

(Copy for This Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.)

HIS IDENTITY IS IN DOUBT

Soldier Patient in Toledo (Ohio) Hospital May Be Martin Lyons or Bert Jordan.

Is Martin Lyons, a patient in the Toledo (O.) hospital for the insane, a soldier of the United States army prior to 1917, or is he the man whose identity he has at times claimed—Bert Jordan, a World war veteran?

This is the question which has puzzled authorities of the American Legion and other agencies for the relief of the ex-service man since the man was found wandering about the streets of Toledo two years ago.

At Lyons, he has been identified by the War department as having served in the army in 1915. Finger prints added to the establishment of this identification.

When discovered in Toledo he gave the authorities the name of Bert Jordan, said by War department officials to have been an officer of the World war. Cards and letters in the man's clothing bore this name. Since then he has become paralyzed and lost use of voice and hands, but has indicated that his correct name was Martin Lyons. He once claimed California as his home state and when found carried a photograph of a Salt Lake City (Utah) restaurant in his pocket.

Through the agency of the Red Cross it has been determined that such a man was a patient in a Stockton (Calif.) hospital, but was discharged or escaped. He is then thought to have enlisted in the United States army at Alameda, Calif., in 1915, but was dropped two months later as "mentally deficient."

He is now hopelessly bedridden, due to the paralytic affliction, and is in the Toledo institution, the ward of the women's department of the Legion Auxiliary, who believe that he is a World war veteran. The injury which caused his illness is due to a depression of the left side of the skull, but his arm from wrist to elbow shows signs of skin grafting. The man claims this resulted from service in France.

About six feet in height, the man is of splendid physique, weighing in the neighborhood of 190 pounds. He has sandy hair, blue eyes and strong, refined features. When found he stated that he was thirty-three years of age, and indicated since that he has two brothers and two sisters. Any information as to the man's identity or as to his family should be sent to Mrs. F. C. Conrad, 1207 East Broadway, Toledo, O., chairman of the hospital committee of the Legion department of the American Legion Auxiliary.

TO PREVENT AIRPLANE FIRES

John Gose and Others of Committee on Aeronautics Invent Fireproof Gasoline Tank.

Having lost his right leg and suffered severe injuries caused by a burning airplane in the World war, John Henry Gose of Washington, D. C., a member of the American Legion's national committee on aeronautics, with other aviators, who had received similar injuries, set to work to devise a system to eliminate for others the dangers that caused their own injuries.

The result was the invention of a fireproof gasoline tank, containing a fire-resisting chemical solution that guishes any fire that may start from a leak in the gasoline tank system. Another flask containing acid is installed over the engine of the airplane. This flask releases its acid as soon as a certain temperature has been reached. The invention is built in much the same manner as a thermos flask, is constructed.

Mr. Gose entered the service at Fort Myer, Virginia. He served for a time in a battery of field artillery until he obtained a transfer to the aviation service. He received training with the Canadian Royal Flying corps at Toronto, and completed his course at Hicks, Tex. Commissioned a first lieutenant, he went overseas with the Twenty-second aero squadron. Later he was detached for service with the British Royal Flying corps. It was while he was with the British that he suffered the accident.

Flying at an altitude of between 500 and 600 feet, a sheet of flame shot from underneath the front gasoline tank of his plane. Lieutenant Gose immediately put the machine into a sideslip to put the flames out, and also to make a landing. The plane crashed on one wing and the pilot was pinned in the burning wreckage. Struggling to get free from the burning plane, he broke both legs in the attempt. Meanwhile the fire was burning around his legs and body. Eventually, comrades, risking their lives, succeeded in pulling the lieutenant from the plane. What was left of his right leg had to be amputated.

"My one thought during the 19 months I was in the hospital was to find a fire-prevention equipment that would save other flyers from my own experience," Lieutenant Gose stated.

An organizer of the American Legion post at Bristol, Va., Lieutenant Gose has been connected with the ex-service organization since the early days of its existence.

The Double Robbery.

The Punxville grocery store had been broken into and robbed.

"It was the work of local thieves, home talent," announced the sheriff, after sleuthing the place over thoroughly. The grocer beamed.

"Well, then," he said, "I got no grudge."

"That's neighborly, but why?"

"Oh, tain't so much neighborliness, I guess, as it's that. Charley Jones been sellin' the guilty parties their groceries."—American Legion Weekly.

Washington Sidelights

Navy Building Program Is Outlined

WASHINGTON.—The navy building program for the coming year comprises eight cruisers, four river gunboats and three cruiser submarines.

This announcement, calling for only eight cruisers, created surprise in the ranks of naval observers, because of the known opinion of Secretary Denby, that the fleet is markedly deficient in the cruiser class. Considering cruisers less than ten years old, the United States would be represented in any international ratio by "zero," while Great Britain has 214,000 tons and Japan 51,000, it was pointed out. Considering vessels now building, however, the United States has 75,000 tons, Great Britain 249,000 and Japan 157,000 tons.

Report on this year's war games stressed the lack of fast scouts for the navy. This need also applied second only to the deficiencies of the Panama canal defenses. Technical advisers of the Navy department were understood to have agreed that seventeen 10,000 ton cruisers would be necessary to maintain a 5-5 ratio with Japan, and nineteen would be needed if a 5-5-3 ratio was to be sought, as planned.

In submarines of less than 1,000 tons the United States is ahead of both Great Britain and Japan, but a major ity of the American craft, notably the "S" boats, have never reached the operating efficiency which would permit their being considered for other than coast defense.

As to submarines of more than one thousand tons, the United States has three built and three building; Great Britain, nine in service and two building, and Japan, nine in service and twenty-five building. After the World war all of the first power conferences agreed that naval submarines should be of more than one thousand tons, in order to operate out of touch with their nearest base.

It has been predicted that Mr. Denby would make some recommendations as to aircraft carrier tonnage, of which the treaty permits the United States and Great Britain to maintain 135,000 tons and Japan 81,000 tons. The Langley of 12,700 tons is the only representative of the type in the United States navy, and the addition of the Lexington and Saratoga, being converted from battle cruisers, will raise such tonnage to 72,000 tons. The British navy has 44,000 tons in service, and 93,000 tons of it building. Japan has one ship of about ten thousand tons in service, two under construction and is converting the battle cruisers Amagi and Akagi.

Tablet Is Placed on Historic Mansion

AMID a gathering of distinguished persons at the Arts club, 2017 I street, Northwest, once the home of President Monroe, Mrs. Rose Gouverneur Hoes and Miss Maud Campbell Gouverneur, great-granddaughters of the author of the Monroe doctrine, unveiled a tablet which will mark the building as one of the foremost historic spots of the District.

The bronze tablet, upon which are inscribed the names of the famous persons who have lived there, was presented by the District Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In speaking his approval of the marking of the historic house, Representative Rudolph said, in part: "Everything associated with the name of James Monroe ought to excite the interest of every patriotic American.

"The event in his official career that brought him closest to our interest is his connection with the selection of the location of the site of the seat of government of the United States.

"He was a member of the committee appointed by congress in October 30, 1783, to report to the lower falls of the Potomac, to view the situation of the country in the vicinity of the same, and to report a proper district for the residence of congress.

"In a letter to Thomas Jefferson on the 25th of the following May, he says: 'My letter by the last post will inform you of the occasion which pointed that as the favorable spot, viz., the mouth of Georgetown and at our awaiting yourselves of it.' Yesterday evening we returned. Our report will be in favor of the Maryland side and of a position near the town.' The site so favored was that now occupied by the City of Washington, which shows how harmoniously he worked with Washington and Jefferson in furthering his founding of the national capital."

The house was built in 1802 and for six months it served as the nation's White House after the burning of the original one by the British in 1814. Many distinguished persons, in addition to President Monroe, have resided there.

Wins Pilot's Wings at the Age of Sixty

SECRETARY OF WAR WEEKS formally announced that Maj. Gen. Mason M. Patrick, chief of the army air service, has duly qualified as a pilot at the age of sixty years.

"We need to hear that a man more than thirty years of age should not attempt flying, but General Patrick has won his wings at twice that age," said Mr. Weeks, who was obviously proud of the achievement of the chief of the air service.

Secretary Weeks added that General Patrick had done a great deal of flying as a passenger and observer, and now had passed all the tests required of an officer to become a full fledged pilot. These include taking off, landing, cross-country flying, and a knowledge of the construction and operation of airplane motors. General Patrick was transferred to the air service from the engineers corps in 1921. He began taking flying lessons a few months ago.

The entire personnel of the air service is happy over General Patrick's formal announcement that General Patrick, pilot, certainly confirming that no matter how excellent an officer's other qualifications, unless he knows actual flying he cannot have the real sympathy of men who make a business of it.

Secretary Weeks also announced that he has authorized General Patrick to detail two air service officers to make a preliminary survey of the route for the proposed around the world flight. These officers will make a reconnaissance of the coast of Alaska and the Aleutian islands and touch Japan. The general plan is to pick up at the Alaskan outpost the route followed by British pilots on their flight from London to Australia.

The around-the-world flight has not yet been formally authorized, and congress probably will be asked for a specific appropriation to cover the expense, which will be considerable, especially if a small squadron makes the flight instead of a single plane.

President Taft's Trip Still Holds Record

PRESIDENT HARDING, on his visit to the Pacific coast and Alaska, started a trip that in mileage will be equal to nearly two-thirds of the way around the world, but yet will leave standing the record presidential tour in point of mileage.

Mr. Harding and his party on the basis of the itinerary as now arranged will cover 15,057 miles. This mileage includes approximately 5,000 miles by train and the remainder, mostly by boat—the naval transport Henderson, which will take the executive to Alaska and return; the shipping board steamer President Harrison, which will take him from San Diego, Cal., by way of the Panama canal to San Juan, Puerto Rico, and another shipping board vessel, the American Legion, which will convey him from San Juan to New York.

The 15,057 miles is shorter by just 20 miles than the famous "swing around the circle" made by President Taft in 1911. On his trip of 15,077 miles President Taft, however, did not leave the United States proper, but made an extended tour through the Middle West and West and then through the South. He was absent from the capital just about the same length of time that President Harding will be gone—ten months, or from September 15 to November 22. Just a year previous Mr. Taft had made a trip of 12,750 miles, and in 1912 he traveled about 7,000 miles in going to the Panama canal zone.

Mr. Taft not only holds the record for the longest single trip, but no President has ever traveled as much in one term of office as the present chief executive. Mr. Taft, it is estimated, traveled 114,550 miles. Mr. Roosevelt made one 60-day trip of about 14,000 miles, and while figures are lacking Mr. Wilson is considered to have covered an equal mileage in his two terms in Paris together with his visit to England, Italy and Belgium.

Assistant Secretaries Will Run Things

GOVERNMENT at Washington will be administered largely by assistant secretaries this summer.

Charles E. Hughes, secretary of state, has announced his intention of "sticking on the job" while the President and many of his official family are on the Alaskan trip, but most of the other heads of departments plan to be absent from Washington during the hot spell.

Secretary Mellon has left for a vacation trip of from six weeks to two months in Europe. While there he intends to make a study of economic conditions, so that, as a member of the debt-funding commission, he may be prepared to know better what the European nations now indebted to the United States to the extent of many billions of dollars, can do in the way of paying their obligations.

The President took with him to Alaska Secretary Wallace, Secretary Work and Secretary Hoover. Mr. and Mrs. Hoover joined the presidential party on the West coast.

Secretary Denby, who made a recent cruise to the Orient and later accompanied a congressional party on a five-week trip to watch the joint maneuvers of the Atlantic and Pacific fleets near Panama, is expected to spend considerable time with the navy this summer.

Attorney General Daugherty, who has been absent from Washington the greater part of the time for several months on account of illness, is expected at his desk in the Department of Justice soon.

Postmaster General New usually spends his summer at a fishing camp in northern Michigan, but is expected to spend most of his time here this year.

The legislative branch of the government will be even more sparsely represented in the capital this summer than the administrative.

Capitol hill virtually is deserted. A few senators and representatives drift in to clean up odds and ends of their business from time to time, but remain only for a day or two.