

Items of Interest Taken From Here and There Over the State.

A case of smallpox was last week reported near Wood River.

Hans Jensen, aged 16, was shot and instantly killed by his hunting mate, Walter Brandenburg, near Plainview, while shooting ducks.

Miss Marie Douglas and Ben Windham will represent Plattsmouth in the East Central Nebraska oratorical contest to be held at South Omaha on the evening of March 31.

The new State Bank of Cook at Cook, Johnson county, is now ready for business, having just opened in its new building with a complete new equipment.

Preparations are being made by the Mannerchor der Cemethlichkeit of Hastings for the annual sangerfest of the Nebraska sangerbund, which will be held there next September.

In the district court at Kearney Carl S. Carson was sentenced to one year in the state penitentiary for stealing hogs. Joe Feilding was also sentenced for a like period for the same crime.

Roy Benfer, aged 19 years, is confined in the county jail at Plattsmouth awaiting the arrival of an officer to take him back to Deadwood, S. D., where he is wanted for a statutory offense.

Miss Margaret Peery has been elected to fill the vacancy in the Bloomington High school, caused by the resignation of Miss Lorraine, who was forced by failing eyesight to give up her work.

At Tekamah the jury that went out to deliberate on a verdict in the case of Nicholas Farrens, who was charged with the death of Lester Ball at Decatur last December could not agree and were discharged.

While hunting ducks from a boat in the river near Peru, Joseph Sharp was drowned and John Sheet of Peru and Rich Agimer of Auburn had narrow escapes from the same fate. The boat overturned.

Several of the hunters from Tekamah went to Lyons to kill a few ducks on the Logan, but returned without firing a shot. After that three of the boys went out east of Tekamah a few hours and bagged 102.

Gus Childs, "Doc" Tribbets, Jerome Tribbets and George Gamble, four of the men arrested at Beatrice pleaded guilty to the charge of gambling and were fined \$20 and \$25 respectively and costs.

The Seick & Co. general merchandising store at Huntley was entered by burglars. Three boys, all about the age of 10 years, did the work and will be given terms in the state reform school.

Sheriff Fischer of Otoe county returned from Council Bluffs with Geo. Clark and Frank Dickson, charged with robbing the store of L. F. Teide of Berlin. Part of the stolen goods was found on the men and they pleaded guilty.

The Cass county mortgage record for February shows that there were eight farm mortgages filed, amounting to \$53,000; released, nine, amount, \$29,555; city mortgages filed, seven, amount, \$3,672; released, four, amount, \$2,368.

The Board of Home Trustees of the Odd Fellows decided to accept the proposition of York for the location of the Odd Fellow's home at that city. They purchased a tract of 160 acres of land overlooking the city and the valley of the Blue river for the sum of \$30,000, of which \$10,000 was donated by the business men of that town. There is an eleven-room house on the land with fine outbuildings and shade trees.

Salesmen representing mail order express liquor houses soliciting personal orders from consignees in York are given a warm reception. Owing to the many arrests a number never stop in York, but pass on through.

City Engineer Watson has been instructed by the supervising architect of the Treasury department to establish the grades of the site for the government building in Fairbury, so that plans for the same can be made and the contract for building awarded as soon as possible.

Jesse Blount of Stromsburg, died from tuberculosis of the stomach after an illness of about two months. Mr. Blount was 22 years old and leaves a widow, having been married only about a year. He was in the employ of the Council Bluffs Remedy company, and it is supposed that he contracted the disease from dissecting dead cholera stricken hogs, which he frequently carved up for the purpose of demonstrating the benefits of the remedy which he sold.

A week recently closed was a record breaker at the county clerk's office in Fairbury in point of number of instruments filed for record. The filings for the week amounted to 185. Of these 118 were warranty deeds and mortgages. The balance were quit claim deeds, releases, cemetery deeds, etc. There was a total of sixty-three deeds recorded, representing a valuation of deeds filed of \$748,170, and the farm mortgages \$181,525, making a total representation of cash transactions for the week of \$729,795.

The estate of N. A. Duff of Otoe county has paid into the county treasury \$3,393.90 as its tax under the inheritance tax law.

If the stockmen of Custer county will follow government instructions, it is probable the quarantine that has existed for some time, may be lifted in the near future.

The Ossenkup murder trial, which recently closed at Plattsmouth, was one of the longest cases ever tried in the county. More than 100 witnesses were examined and much of the testimony being of an expert character made it hard to follow.

# First Lady of the Land

By **MRS. EDWARD DUNROY-REED**



**W**HAT manner of woman is Mrs. William H. Taft, whose name has been added to those of the women whose influence has made the social fame of past administrations? How does the White House regime with which history connects the name of Taft compare with the hospitality of Madison's, the elegance of John Quincy Adams', the simple democracy of Andrew Jackson's, or the stateliness of James Buchanan's? More



MRS. ROOSEVELT

quaint atmosphere of the early century. Becky Sharp, perhaps, temporarily deluded the same youthful group as she for a time deluded her own glad array of daughters, much of the



THE WHITE HOUSE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

pertinently still, how does it measure with the record of the Roosevelt regime?

These are to-day queries of absorbing interest, and nowhere has this phase of a new administration quite the significance that it has at Washington. Diplomats, and back of them the governments for which they stand, are as much interested in the personality of the rising American powers as their own countrymen.

Mrs. Taft is neither the soft green of the soul of Burke's ideal feminine, nor is she Napoleon's abhorrence, intellect in petticoats. She is that rarer thing, a well-balanced woman. The Tories, said Wellington, when Victoria ascended the English throne, could hope for little headway under a female sovereign, because he had no small talk and Pitt had no manners. Mrs. Taft is a woman whom one might well imagine making allowances for both shortages, provided there were such compensations along other lines as Wellington and Pitt possessed.

Given such a foundation in character, with youth, good health and ambition and the peculiar advantages her life has already given her, few women have gone into the White House so well equipped to meet the exactions of the position of "first lady of the land." Her regime, moreover, has not that negative quality which circumstances have infused into the social atmosphere of some previous administrations. She has tastes and enthusiasms which will give character to the social life at Washington, of which the White House is the center, for the next four years.

Music, which has flourished at Washington under White House patronage during the seven years of Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt's residence there, has even more emphatic encouragement under the social sway of a woman who was one of the founders of Cincinnati's famous musical organization, the Symphony orchestra. Not only is she a patroness of music, but is a musician. She kept up her hours of daily practice regularly until within recent years, when the frequent changes in her life and its many added duties made the continuance impossible.

Though she does not regard herself as sufficiently in practice to perform for a critical audience, she has by no means lost her skill and frequently plays for her husband and children during their evenings at home. These are more than might be supposed, for Mrs. Taft is one of the women who stays usually at home unless her husband can go out with her.

Other avenues through which her artistic taste finds an outlet are her love of pictures and her appreciation of wood carving. Charles Taft's art collection has no more appreciative friend than his sister-in-law. She is enthusiastic about every treasure he adds to it, and enjoys few things more than pointing out its beauties to others. Faces and figures appeal more to her than landscapes, and a recently acquired Rembrandt has given her keen pleasure. She has made a study of wood carving, and has the nucleus of a collection containing some excellent specimens. She is a connoisseur of the craft, and knows the fine points in the work of various schools and masters.

She is a book lover, and has been a student all her life, first because she grew up in a home where books came down from the shelves and made the worlds they contain part of the domestic environment. Elizabeth Bennett and her sisters, with their heart affairs and all the incidental character delineations, stepped from a worn copy of "Pride and Prejudice," bringing into the Herron home in Cincinnati, with its

own kith and kin. Henry Eamond embodied their ideal of chivalry, and Thackeray's whole world of characters were familiar figures on the horizon of their imagination. Mrs. Taft is loyal to her old literary friends, and still dips into their society. George Elliot is one of the favorites of her later years.

She is a general reader, the newspapers coming in for a daily share of her time. To any subject in which Mr. Taft is interested or of which he is making a study she also gives her attention. As few men of the period have had occasion to look up information on such a variety of subjects as the president-elect, Mrs. Taft has made herself a student of wide range. It has intensified the sense of comradeship existing between them, and is perhaps but another expression of the sentiment which takes her walking over the golf course with her husband, though she does not play. At Hot Springs last summer she made the tour of the course with Mr. Taft every day, a strenuous walk, as every one knows who has climbed the hills and descended the dales of the golf inclosure at that resort.

Mrs. Taft has brains, and uses them, without being in any sense aggressive or pedantic. She talks well, and looks well when she is talking. Her smile has the charm of intelligence, that quick flash of recognition, distinct from the frozen, automatic smile peculiar to many women in official life, on whom social duties make many demands, even to that of continuously "looking pleasant." She has a generous mouth and handsome teeth, a straight nose, well proportioned to her other features, a broad forehead, above which her brown hair is arranged in a soft pompadour.

In her knowledge of languages Mrs. Taft has an advantage over many of her predecessors. During their last winter as members of the cabinet circle, Mr. and Mrs. Taft were in mourning for Mr. Taft's mother, and they took no part in formal social occasions. They have many friends in many lands. Mrs. Taft, however, like many women who have grown up in a large family of girls among whom the tie of kinship is strong, has few intimate friends.

She plays a scientific game of whist, and has gravitated here toward the women who take the game seriously. Of these Miss Cannon, daughter of the speaker of the house of representatives, is one who is frequently with Mrs. Taft. They drive together, one of Mrs. Taft's favorite diversions, and are often together at concerts. Mrs. Hallie Ermline Rives Wheeler, wife of the secretary of the American embassy at Tokyo, is another of Mrs. Taft's friends. She spent several months recently in this country, and during part of the time was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Taft. Their friendship goes back to days of travel in the east, when they saw many things together and discovered a sympathy in the point of view.



CHARLIE TAFT



MRS. W. H. TAFT

MISS HELEN TAFT

Gen. and Mrs. Corbin and Gen. and Mrs. Edwards are prominent in the social entourage of the next White House regime. Gen. Corbin comes from Ohio. Mrs. Corbin was Miss Edith Patten of Washington, formerly of California. Their friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Taft is of long standing. They were all in the Philippines together. Gen. and Mrs. Corbin have recently completed a handsome country home at Chevy Chase, Washington's most fashionable suburb.

Gen. and Mrs. Edwards are close neighbors of the White House. Their friendship with the Tafts has also a far-reaching and interesting background. With Gen. Edwards they have reminiscences in common of many lands. The chief of staff of the army and Mrs. Bell and Gen. and Mrs. Garlington, with their pretty daughter Sally, one of the army circle at Washington, are all prominent figures at the White House. Mrs. Garlington and Miss Garlington were members of the little party who heard the result of the nomination convention at Chicago last June with Mrs. Taft in the office of the secretary of war.

In addition to the sons and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Taft, there are plenty of young people at the White House from time to time, representing various branches of the family. The country became familiar with the names of Mr. Taft's nieces and nephews at the time of the convention in June, when they were on hand to cheer for "Uncle Will." Of Mrs. Taft's five sisters, four are married, as are also her two brothers, and all have families.

Mrs. Taft's sisters are Mrs. Parsons of Columbus, O.; Mrs. Charles Anderson of Cincinnati, who has three charming daughters who are graduates of Bryn Mawr, where Miss Helen Taft is now a student; Mrs. Louisa Moore of Cincinnati, who has one little son, and Mrs. Thomas Laughlin of Pittsburg, who has two small children. Her brothers, William Herron, who married Miss Janey Esby of Cincinnati, and John Herron, who married Miss George Aldrich, both have young children.

ed there as wife of the secretary of war, she wore a demi-toilette of black lace over white, with a black and white hat. She prefers hats to toques.

The question has already come up as a matter of speculation in official circles of Washington society as to whether Miss Helen Taft will finish her college course or be a White House debutante within the next two years. The question undoubtedly will be left to her own inclination to settle.

One afternoon last June, when the eyes of the nation were on Chicago, there emerged from one of the big, substantial brick houses in K street, Washington, a little group of figures, including a woman who led the way as they turned into Sixteenth street and walked southward toward the White House. She swung along with a step as elastic as that of the boy and girl accompanying her. They talked and laughed as they went, and their voices, all pitched to the same pleasant contralto tone, bespoke their kinship.

Perhaps they noted through the green vista of Lafayette park the glistening columns of the north portico of the White House. The picture was a familiar one to all of them. That to the woman it stood for the moment as the concrete presentment of fate toward which her steps had turned 22 years before almost to the day, who shall say? Her clear, blue-gray eyes looked as unblinkingly at the reality as they had at the vision. Though in no sense under the spell of that faculty which Thurlow Weed years ago declared had bewildered many men whose eyes were turned in that direction, she was too frank to feign an indifference to the alluring possibility of a residence within its walls. She had a candidate at Chicago that day, and if the question were put squarely to her she was ready unhesitatingly to avow him.

The woman and children made altogether an inconspicuous little group as they crossed Pennsylvania avenue and entered the big triple department building on the corner of Seventeenth street. The watchman at the door of the war department and the messengers in the corridors recognized them, however, as they made their way toward the office of the secretary, returning the grinning salutations that greeted them on all sides.

Mrs. Taft wore a white linen suit. A flower-laden hat shaded her face, which retains all its girlhood contours. The door closed upon them, and it was five o'clock before they reappeared. Was it the same party, or had that history-making afternoon wrought some subtle change? Mrs. Taft, wife of the secretary of war, was now Mrs. Taft, wife of a presidential nominee. Her step was lighter, her eyes brighter. Happy? Surely. Her candidate had won the first approaches to ultimate victory.

They went as they had come, on foot, stopping in the street to buy an "extra" for the pleasure of approaching the good news from another angle.

The wife of a man already one of the most conspicuous figures in public life in America, Mrs. Taft became from that moment a national figure. The November victory of the Republican party but concentrated the attention which had been upon her for five months as the wife of its nominee. There were no longer favorites in the field. Comparisons were out of order. The names of the president-elect and his family became household words throughout the land.