

WHITE HOUSE HOME LIFE.

"THE FIERCE WHITE LIGHT THAT BEATS UPON A THRONE."

Washingtonians Watch and Criticize Every Detail—The Mounted Messenger—Benjamin Harrison McCracken and 300 Other Namesakes—Plain Mrs. Harrison.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26.—To show that the White House and its inmates and the doings therein and throughout are constantly under the strong light of public interest and curiosity one has but to mention a trivial incident. A week or so ago Welch, the White House mounted messenger, rode down Pennsylvania avenue on his black horse. There was nothing unusual about this. That same hand-



THE WHITE HOUSE COURIER.

some animal Welch has been riding for four or five years. Yet a buzz of conversation followed the messenger wherever he went. People paused on the sidewalk, pointed to the black charger and shook their heads. And what was all this commotion about? Why, Welch had a new saddle and a new mail bag. Across the face of this bag was painted, in letters large enough to be read a block away:

EXECUTIVE MANSION.

This was in bad taste, the people said. They did not like it. How did Mr. Halford happen to consent to having the identity of the mounted carrier thus proclaimed in circus poster type? Why should the White House messenger go about advertising himself like a dairyman or butcher?

They heard of these unpleasant whispers at the White House. They heard the populace was displeased with the saddle bags of the president's mounted messenger. They made excuses, and thus gave us a fine example of the thoroughly democratic nature of our institutions. Here was the buzz of the boulevard about the gilt lettering on a pair of saddle bags making the immediate satellites of the king hang their jaws. Polite and bewhiskered Col. Crook protested that he had never heard of the saddle bags. Urban Maj. Pruden, who will go down to history as the man through whom a dozen presidents have hurled their communications at congress, said the saddle bags were a topic which he must respectfully decline to discuss. Private Secretary Halford, first lord of the White House during the absence of the president, thought the letters were a trifle large, but that the liberties of the people were in no wise endangered. It appeared, finally, that Welch had procured the bags and the lettering without anybody's consent or authorization. Thereby he had subjected his august master to open ridicule upon the thoroughfares of the capital city. And there was none to chide him, none to plunge him into a dungeon cell for unhappy presumption; and no soldier to go forth with sabers and cocked hats to discipline the multitude that dared make sport of the president's courier upon the highway. A democracy this, for sure!

Messenger Welch is brave enough to face public ridicule. He was one of the men of the First Maine regiment of volunteers who made the gallant assault on Petersburg, losing 600 of their comrades in a few minutes—the regiment which Gen. Walker says lost more men in one battle than any other regiment of the armies. The custom of keeping a mounted messenger at the White House had its origin in the war time, when the executive mansion was military as well as civil headquarters. Now there are two messengers—Private Welch, of the new saddle bags, and Edgar R. Beckley, colored. There is work enough for them both, particularly in winter. Etiquette requires the president to send all of his communications within the capital by hand. The rule is not rigidly enforced, but the exceptions are rare. One messenger goes several times a day for the White House mail, and carries letters to the postoffice, it being one of the traditions that no mail carrier must set foot within the mansion. Then there are many letters and documents to be carried to the departments and bureaux. During the season one messenger is kept fairly busy carrying social communications, none of which should be intrusted to the mails.

Invitations to state dinners are always sent out by messengers, and, of course, to the homes of the invited guests. Secretary Windom's office is but a couple of hundred yards from the executive mansion, but to invite Secretary Windom to dinner at the White House the messenger must mount and ride a mile to the secretary's residence. Every winter the president gives a series of card receptions to the senators and representatives in congress, the judiciary and the army and navy. For these events hundreds of invitations are sent out, and it is interesting to note how the White House staff strike a happy medium between strict observance of official etiquette and a careless method of transacting the state's social business.

Invitations to supreme justices, army and navy officers and newspaper men are delivered by mounted courier at their residences, while the cards of senators and representatives are deposited in the house and senate postoffices, though with the understanding that they are not to be delivered in the Capitol, but at the residences of the addressees.

I asked one of the old timers about the White House if they had mounted messengers a half century ago.

"Oh, no," he replied; "in those days there was no need for a mounted messenger or any other sort of a messenger. The president used to get lonesome and go out on the street corners and talk to the people, and invite them to come up to the White House and see him. Now we employ seventeen doorkeepers and watchmen to keep the people out."

The last time the president was at the White House he stepped into the assistant secretary's room and stood for a few minutes in front of the mantel gazing at an array of photographs. He gazed long and earnestly at one after another, and finally turned away with the remark: "My Benny is not the only pretty baby in this country."

The mantel was fairly covered with pictures of little Benjamins, Harrisons, Benjamin Harrisons and Harrison Mortons, with all sorts of surnames. Ever since March 4 photographs of babies named after the president have poured in upon the White House. A score of these are displayed upon the mantel in Mrs. Pruden's room. There is Harrison Meyer, of Brooklyn, N. Y., a little chap sitting in a chair about fifty times bigger than himself. Benjamin Harrison Weygant, of Ada, Minn., looks like Buck Ewing, the baseball player. Benjamin Harrison Pullins, of Ohio, greatly resembles Andrew Jackson. The proud father of Benjamin Harrison McCracken, of Paxton, Ill., drops into poetry on the back of his baby's photograph, and in the same place advertises his business as a breeder of Poland, China, Victoria and other first class swine. Benjamin Harrison Bigbee, of Templeton, Mass, is a very pretty boy, and so is Harrison Husey, of Cameron, Mo., and Benjamin Harrison Mason, of Marietta, Mo. Other bright boys who were given the benefit of comparison with Benny McKee in the mind of the president are Benjamin Morton Morris, of Murphysboro, Ill.; Benjamin Harrison Wright, of Williamsville, N. Y.; Harrison Carter, of Petersburg, Ill.; Harrison Berckey, of Hamilton, O.; Harrison Mainzer, of Milwaukee; Harrison Watersheet, of San Francisco; Harrison Hawkins, of San Bernardino; Harrison Morton Rowley, of Claridon, O., and Benjamin Harrison Bull and Binger Herman Bull, twins, of Milwaukee.

It is estimated that 300 photographs of babies named after the president have been received at the White House since March 4, and while the president very much appreciates the compliment paid him thereby, his secretaries, who must make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of each and every photograph, think the White House picture gallery already sufficiently stocked with infantile Benjamin Harrisons.

At the executive mansion there is a keen appreciation of the fact that very small incidents often have very great effect upon public opinion. Naturally, there is no little timidity among the employees of the White House in the matter of talking about what they see and hear. The rule is that no man but the private secretary shall open his mouth, and this individual is not given to loquacity. Why, the zealous clerical assistants of the president were even bent upon refusing me a look at the sweet faces of the two score little Benjamins. They were afraid something unpleasant might be said about them, or that the president might not like to have the public gossiping about his collection of namesakes.

Sometimes I think public men greatly underestimate the good sense of the people. A case in point came under my observation not long ago. One of Mrs. Harrison's nieces, on returning from a journey abroad, called at the White House to pay her respects to her aunt, the mistress of the mansion. She sent up her card from the blue room, and presently Mrs. Harrison came down with a big kitchen apron tied round her waist and a towel wound around her head. Mrs. Harrison was housecleaning. The niece professed to be greatly shocked by being thus received by the first lady, and hearing of her account of the call, and of her having described the incident to a newspaper correspondent, a certain high officer of government, not employed at the White House, sent for the correspondent and begged him not to print the story.



MR. PRUDEN'S BABY SHOW.

"No doubt it is true," said the official, "for Mrs. Harrison is just that sort of a woman. If she has work to do, she isn't afraid to get at it with her own hands. But how will it sound? What will the people think about it?"

My opinion is that the people will think it all right. The people are not so foolish as to condemn Mrs. Harrison for being in the White House the same plain, careful housewife and mother she was in her Indianapolis home. Timidity in the face of public opinion is one of the peculiar traits of Washington life, not at all confined to the executive mansion. On the whole, it is one of the most wholesome phases of public life in the national capital. WALTER WELLMAN.

ODDS AND ENDS.

The mantle of charity has been worn this trying to cover so many sins.

The greatest critics in the world are the dead beats who do not pay for what they criticize.

The efforts made to introduce European vegetables and fruits in the Congo states have been rewarded with great success.

About one hundred and fifty colors are now obtained from coal tar, which has almost entirely supplanted vegetable and animal dyes.

A Redding (Cal.) man has made a lot of sugar from the native maple, and connoisseurs pronounce it equal to the eastern product.

Charles Dickens' youngest son, Mr. Edward Buiwer Lytton Dickens, has been elected a member of the New South Wales parliament.

One Dr. Theinus, of Vienna, has invented a process by which he declares that good heavy sole leather can be made from the wood of old red beech trees.

At present the Lifeboat institution has a fleet of nearly 300 boats, but as there are about 6,700 miles of coast in the United Kingdom to guard, the number is none too large.

A bird has built its nest in the cone over an electric light down in Brunswick, Ga., and at night makes a pretty picture against the background of white fire.

A piece of coal weighing five and a half tons has been cut at Abercrombie colliery, Cornwall, England, to be sent to the Paris exhibition. The block measures 7 feet 6 inches long, 5 feet 6 inches wide and 3 feet 9 inches deep.

It is said the science of medicine now knows 11,000 remedies for diseases, and the most remarkable thing in the face of this is that people keep on dying, precisely as if disease could not be cured.

The northern papers are alluding to the "southern melon trust." There is no melon trust, but if there was, it would be all right. The farmers ought to have some kind of trust in order to keep up with the rest of the people. —Atlanta Constitution.

It is stated in Fox's book upon regimental losses in the American civil war, just published, that the Thirtieth regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, had a smaller percentage of deaths from disease than any three years' regiment in the entire Union army.

In fifteen cases investigated after lightning had struck a building and done more or less damage, it was found that in nine cases the discharge made its way to earth through the water pipes, in two through gas pipes and in only one was there any probability of a regular lightning conductor having done its duty.

John A. Fulmer, of Moravia, N. Y., has in his possession a neck yoke which has a history. It originally belonged to Maj. Gen. Frederick William Augustus Baron de Steuben, who came to this country in 1770. He died in 1804, so it will be seen this neck yoke is quite a relic. The wood appears to be white oak.

At the St. Louis fair ground they have trained a big elephant to pull the heavy harrow used to smooth the training track after the horses are done working, and she is so fond of the exercise that as soon as she is let loose she goes to the place and kneels to have the harness put on her.

A southern farmer has a colt that has learned to ring the farm bell by catching the rope in his teeth and prancing back and forth. He knows, too, when to ring it, at daybreak to awaken the farm hands, and at noon to call them to dinner, and is never five minutes late or early.

Mr. Gladstone's ancestors, it appears, were pirates. In 1655 a company of adventurers sent out the George of Glasgow, fully equipped as a privateer, to prey on the Dutch mercantile marine, and "Halbert Gladstone, merchant in Edinburgh," was one of the co-adventurers. From this gentleman-buccaner the English Liberal statesman is descended.

The Medical Press says there is a talk of applying telephones to the infectious wards of the French hospitals, so as to enable the sick people isolated in their contagious sufferings to have the comfort of hearing their relatives' voices without any risk of conveying infection by an interview. It certainly is a very humane idea, and would not—one would think—be a very costly one to carry out.

The "pictured rock" of the Kanawha valley, near Charleston, W. Va., has been covered by the river, owing to the building of a dam by the government. It is one of very few documents of the Indians left in the eastern states, and has often been attributed to a vanished race of the ordinary Indian type. Figures of men, bears, fish and fowls are carved on a smooth part of the stone in a fashion that is thoroughly Indian, though perhaps not the work of the tribes last in possession of Paint Creek and the valley of the Kanawha.

Mexican Chivalry. The gallant act of Sir Walter Raleigh, in spreading his cloak before Queen Elizabeth, to save her feet from the mud, will always be remembered as an instance of knightly devotion. Yet the act has its parallels, all the more noteworthy, in that they sometimes occur when the recipient of the courtesy is no queen, but a humble maiden. The author of "A White Umbrella in Mexico" describes such a scene.

Once I caught sight of a ceremony not often seen in Zacatecas, and rarely met with elsewhere. In the middle of the street, upon their knees on the rough stones, walked, or rather crawled, two native Indian girls, dressed in white, their heads bare, their black hair streaming down their backs, their eyes a flame with excitement. Both clasped to their breasts a small crucifix. Surrounding them were a dozen half crazy devotees, whose frenzied cries swelled the chant of the youngest penitent.

Suddenly, from out a pulque shop on the opposite corner, darted three men, evidently peons. With a quick movement they divided the pressing crowd, sprang ahead of the girls, and, taking their own zarapes from their shoulders, threw themselves in turn in front of the penitent.

As the girls crawled across them the first peon would again seize the zarape, run ahead and respread it.

"It is a penance, señor," said a bystander, "not often seen here. The girls believe they have committed some great sin. They are on the way to Los Remedios, the chapel that you see on the hill yonder. But for those drunken peons they would leave a bloody track." —Youth's Companion.

What May We Eat? We may eat potatoes and salt and—exist. We may eat fish and become—"cranks." We may eat bread and butter, without limit, and—die of dyspepsia. We may eat meat only, and become gross and coarse in mind and person. We may eat fruit and content ourselves with the assurance that "in Adam all die." We may eat anything and everything, unselectively given and carelessly received, and make of our stomachs a bric-a-brac repository and a physical junk shop. But it is well to do this—Good Housekeeping.

A SENSIBLE FARM HOUSE.

Original Plans and Description by Architect E. H. Gibson.

In making a plan for a farm dwelling it is in the minds of many that it should be distinct in some respects from a town or suburban dwelling. The principal difference, however, is largely in the matter of conveniences.

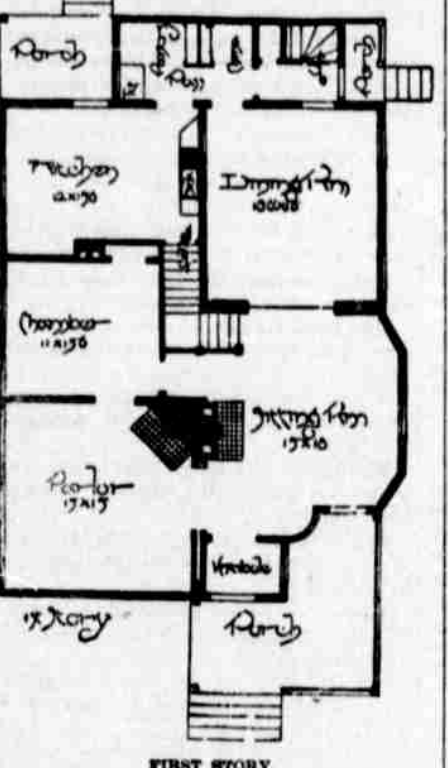
In the plan which is here submitted there is a front vestibule, in which may be placed wraps, etc., before going into the sitting room. There is a rear vestibule from whence one may pass from the kitchen, dining room or rear porch to the second floor. In this vestibule is a low closet and a space for a hat



ELEVATION.

rack. In front there is a parlor, with a grate in it, the smoke from which enters the same stack but not the same flue as the one in the sitting room. There is a bedroom which may be approached either from the sitting room or parlor. The latter door is not necessary, and could be omitted and afford better bed space for that room. It is to be noticed that there is a closet in connection with this chamber. The stairway to the second floor goes to the sitting room. The approach is to a square landing and from thence to the second floor. From the kitchen one passes to the cellar under the front stairway. The usual kitchen conveniences, which have been common to the plans furnished by the writer, are herein included. The rear porch could be enclosed with lattice work to an advantage.

On the second floor are four bedrooms, an alcove, a bathroom and a large number of ample closets. In one instance this house was built with sliding doors between the two side chambers, as indicated by this plan. Attention

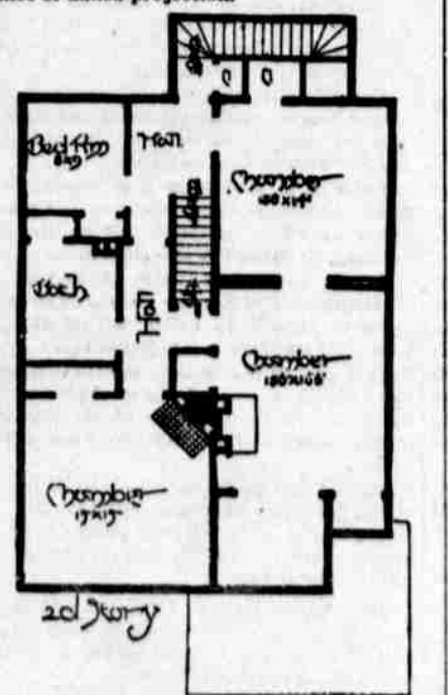


FIRST STORY.

tion is called to the large store closet in the rear hall. There is an attic stairway to the second floor in the position indicated in second floor plan.

This house was built in frame at a cost indicated by the schedule which is given. It makes an exceedingly picturesque structure, well adapted to a country house.

In painting, it is suggested that the first story be a rich buff, the second story a lighter, more yellow color, the body of the gables a light orange tint. The trimmings and shutters, to unite this combination, should be a dark olive green. The under side of the porch ceiling should be the same tint as the gable. By trimmings is meant the exterior window and other casings, the porch columns, balusters and rail and gutters molding. The under side of the cornice should be painted same color as second story body. This, with the dark color to the gutter moldings, gives the cornice the appearance of added projection.



SECOND STORY.

This house was built in Indiana as per following prices:

SCHEDULE OF COST. Building, first floor finish oak, second floor finish pine. Privy vaults, 20 barrels. Cisterns and connections, 50 barrels. Well, connections and pump. Walks of brick. Fences, light board 2x3, picket 1 1/2x3. Plumbing, cellar sink, kitchen sink, bath tub, water closet, wash stand, street washer, cistern water. Four mantels and grates, average cost. Furnace. Total.

Here is a unique Masonic event. On board the special train which conveyed the M. W. grand master and his officers to New Castle, New South Wales, for the banquet, every one was a Mason. The engine driver, fireman, guard and conductor, as also the servants attending his excellency, were all Masons.

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