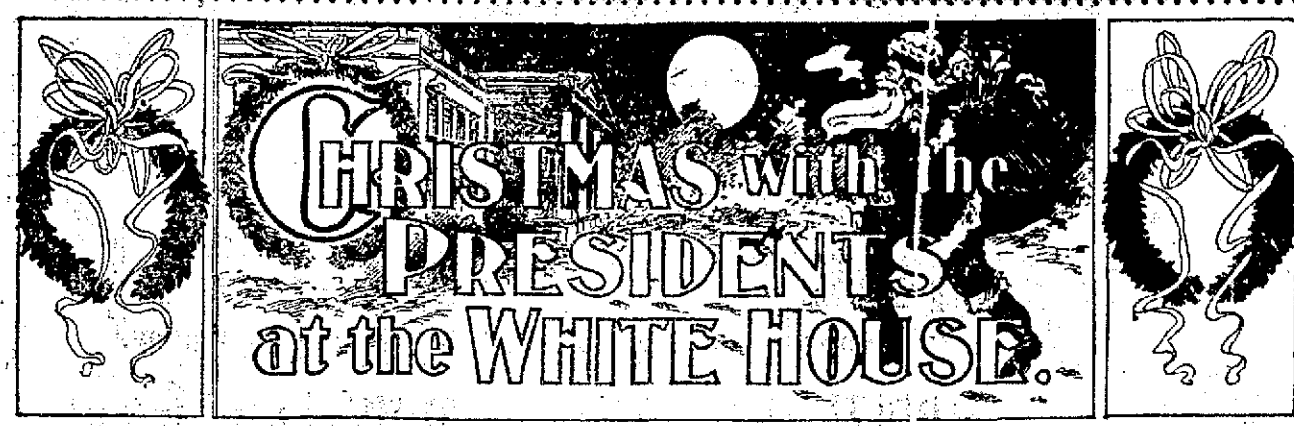


Christmas at Home and Abroad



The coming of Christmas is never forgotten at the White House. While every president's family has celebrated the festival according to their own wishes, and without attempting to follow precedent, none have ever permitted the occasion to pass unnoticed.

President Jackson, whose wife was dead and who had no family, and whose friends were his political associates, made of Christmas a gala day for the few servants of the White House, numbered among whom were two or three personal attendants from his Tennessee plantation.

But few presidents have had young children to make Merry Christmas in the White House. During the civil war Tad Lincoln was the White House baby, and around him centered the interest at Christmas time. The following true story is told of Tad at that time:

"Father," said little Tad, "there is something I'd like for Christmas, if you'll give it to me."

As the son asked the question his father looked at the boy over the rims of his spectacles in a grave way he had, and replied:

"What is that, my son?"

"I want a theater," said Tad.

"Is that all?" responded Mr. Lincoln, laying down the papers (a lengthy report from one of the generals in the field) which he had been perusing. "Well, my boy, I don't know that I have any objection. There are plenty of them, I suppose, in the toy shops."

"O, but I don't want a toy theater," protested the youngster; "I want a real one."

The president gazed at him in some surprise. "Is Grover's theater for sale?" he asked. "Or Ford's, perhaps?"

"Of course not, father. At any rate,

given during the Grant regime, which many of the residents of Washington today still vividly recall. A gigantic fir tree, reaching nearly to the ceiling, was set up in the East room, beautifully decorated, and on the tables beneath it were laid numerous gifts, most of them costly, which were distributed among the guests. The whole of the diplomatic corps was invited and refreshments, including champagne and terrapin, were provided.

No children were born to Mr. Cleveland during his first term, but at the date of his return to the White House his daughter Ruth (since dead) was two years old. Esther, the second child, came into the world not long afterward. Every Christmas Mrs. Cleveland had a fine tree set up in the play room, trimming it with her own hands, and superintending the adjustment on its branches of hundreds of tiny incandescent lights of different colors, which took the place of candles. Invitations were issued in the names of Ruth and Baby Esther to the little people of the cabinet circle, who came on the afternoon of Christmas day to take part in the merry-making and to share the gifts incidentally distributed.

Mrs. McKinley used always to make many Christmas presents with her own hands, devoting much of her time to the production of crocheted and knitted things, embroidered pieces, baby sacks and socks, and knitted purses of silk and steel beads. She was an invalid, and in this way leisure was employed which otherwise might have been wearisome. As a result, on the morning of the 25th of December each member of the clerical force of the White House received from her a muffler and a pair of warm gloves. Though she had no children, she was fond of young people, and at Christmas she always had three or four

The four younger children hang up their stockings as a matter of course. On the morning of Christmas day, after breakfast, Mr. Roosevelt leads the way to the library, which he calls the "study," where the gifts are laid out on the tables. He and Mrs. Roosevelt distribute them, and after the distribution a general romp usually follows.

Of course, while the Roosevelt children are the recipients of more costly gifts, and in greater number, than



Mrs. McKinley Knitting Stockings.

are received by the average American family of children, still there is no extraordinary display of lavishness and expensiveness in their gifts. The president does not go to the extreme in the buying and giving of Christmas presents that one would perhaps imagine.

In the afternoon of Christmas day, after the children have had their gifts and their romp, they go to two or three parties. One of these is at the house of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts, the president's life-long chum, while another is at the residence of Mr. Roosevelt's elder sister, Mrs. Cowles. Here, of course, jollity and much good fun characterizes the parties, and every child present invariably enjoys the afternoon immensely.



The Roosevelt's Christmas Morning.

I don't suppose so. But there isn't any reason why we shouldn't have a theater in the White House, if you are willing."

Mr. Lincoln was not at first disposed to take the suggestion favorably, but Tad, who was his favorite child, and at that time 11 years of age, was persistent, and at length the indulgent parent yielded. This was just before the Christmas of 1863—too late to have the theater ready for the holidays, many preparations being required; but it is a matter of history, though known to few, that not long after the following New Year's day the boy's ambition was realized, a room on the second floor of the executive mansion being set aside for the purpose, and a stage erected, with gas footlights and some simple scenery.

It so chanced that Mr. Grover, the manager of Grover's theater, which stood on the site of the present New National theater in Washington, only a couple of blocks from the White House, was a great friend of Tad. Mr. Lincoln often went there, sometimes accompanied by Mr. Seward, his secretary of state, and it was a common thing for the advertisements of the playhouse to announce that a certain performance would be given "at the request of the president."

Grover helped Tad to "rig up" the theater at the White House, a sort of fence being constructed to shut off the space to be occupied by the audience, for whose accommodation plenty of chairs and sofas were easily obtainable. For quite awhile plays were given twice a week, the patrons of the extemporized playhouse being mostly boys and girls of the official Washington circle. Frequently, however, grown people were present at the performances, and now and then Mr. Lincoln and his wife. The actors were furnished to a large extent by a Pennsylvania regiment of "Bucktails," then stationed at the capital.

Christmas with the Grants.

In the way of Christmas parties at the White House, none in all the history of that interesting mansion has been so remarkable as one that was

young nieces or cousins staying with her as guests.

The custom of giving turkeys to each married man of the official staff was inaugurated by President McKinley, and the custom has been followed by Mr. Roosevelt. This year close to 100 fine, fat birds will be required to go around. Each one will bear a card on which will be inscribed the words: "A Merry Christmas from the President."

For several years the White House did not know the ring of children's voices, but President Roosevelt brought an interesting family of little



Tad Wanted a Theater.

folks to the mansion, and for the past five years Christmas at the White House has been a Christmas for the children, and it is celebrated in very much the same way as is in vogue in other well-to-do American homes.

Although, as a rule, the Roosevelts do not have a Christmas tree, they inherit from their Dutch ancestors a veneration for the spirit and sentiment of Christmas, and the day is given up by them entirely to festivities.

HER OFFENSE.

The despondent damsel had been apprehended in the very act of drinking carbolite. The speedy work of skilled physicians saved her life. The physicians afterward admitted that they had saved it. An officious constable arrested her on the ground of attempted suicide. Then a wise man present interferred and said:

"Object to this high-handed procedure. If this person is to be seized on any charge, it should be as a violator of the pure-flood law."

"How so?" exclaimed every one in unison.

"Because she was putting acid inside 'er."

Whereupon the crowd released the woman and with one accord hanged the author of the pun.—Judge.

WHAT INTERESTED HIM MOST.



Fair Girl—My father made his fortune while he was a young man. Wouldn't you like to know how he did it?

Youth—Well—er—no, but I'd like to know if he has still got it.

Progress.

He bought her candy every night in five pound boxes, maybe; Time passed and now his wealth he spends in penny sticks for baby.

—N. Y. Sun.

The Difference.

Small Boy—Pa, what is the difference between a pessimist and an optimist?

Pa—Well, let me see if I can illustrate. You know I am often discouraged, and things don't look to me as if they'd ever go right. Well, at such times I can be said to be a pessimist. But years ago, when I was a young man, everything looked bright and rosy, and I was always hopeful. Then I was an optimist. Now, my son, can you understand the difference between a pessimist and an optimist?

Small Boy—Oh, yes; one is married and the other isn't.—N. Y. Weekly.

A Gentle Hint.

Paterfamilias (serenely) — There was a young gentleman with you in the parlor last night?

Sweet Girl (gently)—Yes, pa—Mr. Slayer.

"And it was after 11 before he went home, miss. I'd like to know what kept him so late?"

"Well, pa, you looked so angrily at me when you came in and saw him that I guess he thought I needed a protector, and so he stayed until he thought you were asleep."—N. Y. Weekly.

Why She Felt Sorry.

"I am inexpressibly sorry, Mr. Smithers," she said, "to learn that when you called the other day Tiger bit you."

"Oh, that's all right," he said with a forced effort to be cheerful.

"No, it isn't," she sobbed; "the poor little fellow has been ill ever since."

Lost His Job.

The Farmer—So you are out of work, eh?

The Hobo—Da's wot I sed.

The Farmer—How long have you been out?

The Hobo—Ever since me work-house term expired.—Chicago Daily News.

Father Wasn't One.

What is a domestic animal, mother?" asked a little boy.

"A domestic animal," replied the lady, with a scornful glance at paterfamilias, who was putting on his coat, "is one who does not spend all his time at the club."

The Annual Rest.

Young Husband—My dear, after a year of unremitting labor and closest economy we have, I find, succeeded in saving about \$300. What shall we do with it?

Young Wife—Well, my dear, we both need rest. Let's go to a pleasure resort for a week.—N. Y. Weekly.

So She Knew.

Wife—That new lady next door stood in her dining-room for half an hour staring rudely into ours.

Husband—How do you know?

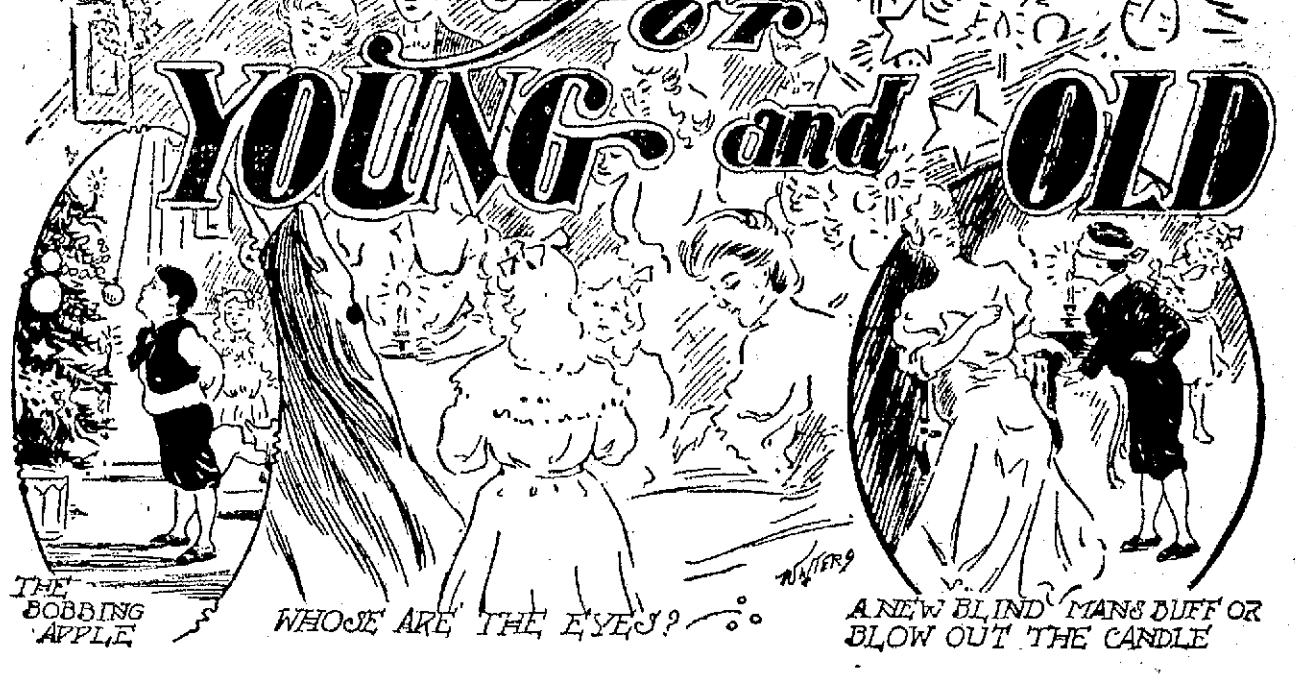
"Why I happened to be in our front bedroom watching her."

Rival Candidates.

"I understand your opponent isn't very popular," said the family friend.

"You bet he isn't!" replied the candidate for office. "Why, that fellow couldn't even get a laudatory sentence on his tombstone!"—Chicago Daily News.

CHRISTMAS GAMES



THE BOBBING APPLE WHOSE ARE THE EYES? A NEW BLIND MAN'S BUFF OR BLOW OUT THE CANDLE

Christmas is the supreme season of happiness for children. Their brains are filled with the beautiful imaginations of the good deeds of old Santa Claus. Many of them receive their first strong impressions in discriminating between good and wrong, and the rewards for the former and the punishments for the latter.

The festive character of Christmas being undeniable, nothing can or could be more pleasing to the children and more strictly in accordance with the spirit of the day than a house party.

The day should begin for the child with the finding of his stockings filled with presents, which on the previous evening were hung on the bed post. This pretty custom should be encouraged until the wonderful travels and kindnesses of Santa Claus are looked upon with doubt by the recipient of his bounty.

The children should gather about the Christmas tree as presents are distributed. Of course if the father wants to impersonate Santa Claus so much the better. His appearance will be appreciated by the youngest and cannot be resented by the more experienced ones of 12 or 13 years.

Here are some suggestions in games.

With a sympathetic person assisting the little folks, there should be plenty of fun.

"Whose Are the Eyes?" which has attained great popularity, dimly suggests the Vehmericht, the secret tribunal of old Westphalia, in which the judges sat closely cowed and with their faces invisible. The game, however, is all mirth. Two of those that take part in it are seated side by side. Over the head of each is placed an outstretched newspaper. In this paper two holes are cut. The paper conceals the head of each of the players beneath and only the eyes are visible through the eye holes. The object of the game is for the rest of the players to guess the ownership of the eyes as they see them by holding a candle close to them.

"Blow Out the Candle." About as popular as this game is "Blow Out the Candle." One of the party is sent from the room. He or she returns blindfolded. A candle burns in the room, around which the other merry-makers are gathered. The blindfolded player must advance to the candle and blow it out.

It looks easy, but it isn't. The thickness of the blind is so dense that the light of the candle cannot be seen



Christmas at the Location

In no other city in America is Christmas celebrated in so many different ways as in Washington, for at Washington are gathered the official representatives of every land—Christian as well as pagan—and in the embassies and legations the holiday is celebrated according to the custom in vogue in the countries having representatives there.

So it is that the celebration there is international as well as national in character. Quaint customs, indeed, prevail in the diplomatic corps. In one house you will find Christians commemorating the birth of the Saviour, while in a house across the street a pagan brother from the orient is celebrating an entirely different day, for an entirely different occasion.

Pursuant to a long-established custom, ambassadors and minister plenipotentiaries entertain their official staffs at Christmas, inviting, also, such other friends as they may desire to have visit the legation at that time.

Probably the ambassador from Italy and his wife are the most gracious hosts of any of the foreigners at Washington, and their guests at Christmas time are always welcomed around the Yule log which burns brightly in the open fireplace. A large urn full of gifts is placed on a table and visitors have great sport getting their presents from out the vast pile.

Germany is the home of the Christmas tree and Kris Kringle. It is, therefore, appropriate that at the Kaiser's embassy the most cosmopolitan Christmas should be celebrated—the custom of the "Faderland" blended with those of the Baroness von Sternberg's "old Kentucky Home."

The family of Senor Casarini, the brilliant Mexican ambassador at Washington, is a happy one, and all of its members join heartily in the festive way of celebrating the "Pestun." At half past seven on Christmas eve they assemble in a room

through it and in most cases the puff which should extinguish the candle is directed in the most absurd places.

"Blind Man's Buff."

If there is a person who has never played this game, he will undoubtedly seek to conceal the fact. The old can join with the young, and what could cause more merriment than to see uncle bump his knee against the table or mistake Aunt Jane for grandma?

"The Bobbing Apple."

This is delight pure and simple. Hang an apple from the ceiling and offer a small prize to the one who is able to grasp it with the teeth without fingering it in any way. Let each child try in turn.

"Musical Chair."

This is considered great by the young, especially if there is a good lively player at the piano. Arrange the chairs in a row, having one less than the number of players. When the music suddenly stops each will make an effort to seat himself, but one must be disappointed.

"Charades."

The description of charades should have been left for the last, because it affords a true climax. Lucky are the children who can go rummaging and have in store for the party a whole lot of old clothes with which to impersonate the familiar home figures. This game requires an intelligent person to oversee it, and the children should enter into it with much seriousness, which gives an added charm to it. It is great fun to see a little fellow come in wearing an old hat and shawl of his mamma's or a little girl clothed in a large vest with a silk hat pulled down over her ears.

Planning for the older guests on Christmas day should be guided by the aim to have them forget that they are old. To say the least, it is bad form to do and act in such a manner as to continually remind some old grandma that she is nearing the end of her course, when she might be doing her level best to forget it.

Games Are Old as Guests.

Of course, many of the older guests will indulge in cards, chess or checkers, while others will find their greatest pleasure in assisting the children. But for those that really want to play games in which all can join try these and don't be surprised if one of your guests remarks:

"Why, I played that game when I was a child."

Rather expect it—for very little in the celebration of Christmas is new.

Game of Plum Pudding.

This game has been played for years in this country under many names, but as near as can be learned the above name is proper.

A round piece of wood or a tin pan is provided and titled "Plum Pudding." The company proceed to choose partners by fixing upon two generals, Gen. Kettle and Gen. Pot.

These officers then commence choosing alternately soldiers from among the company, performing the ceremony of conferring title with some unique speech. Kisses might do in place of words when the soldier is a woman.

The titles should be confined to names familiar in the culinary art, as Lieut. Gen. Duck or Carver, Maj. Gen. Muffin or Fork, Col. Coffee Pot or Carrot, Maj. Corkscrew or Ladle, and Private Potato or Peach, and so forth until all the players have been chosen.

The game begins with Gen. Kettle, who takes the "Plum Pudding" (the plate) between his finger and thumb, ready for spinning on the table or floor, and commences his narrative thus:

"As I was sitting on the fire this morning, sputtering with rage at having no enemy to boil, who should come along in a bag and string but old Plum Pudding. The moment he caught sight of me he ran off, I after him. When turning around a corner I saw Maj. Corkscrew—"

At this word Gen. Kettle spins the "Plum Pudding," which it is Maj. Corkscrew's duty to keep up and continue the story until he mentions "Plum Pudding" and the assumed name of another player.

Forfeits are exigible for letting the "Plum Pudding" fall, for speaking of yourself as a human being and for failing to continue the story properly, as by falling in the narrative by calling an enemy by a wrong title.

When enough forfeits have been collected penalties are then imposed by the two generals, the performance of which is required before the game is returned.