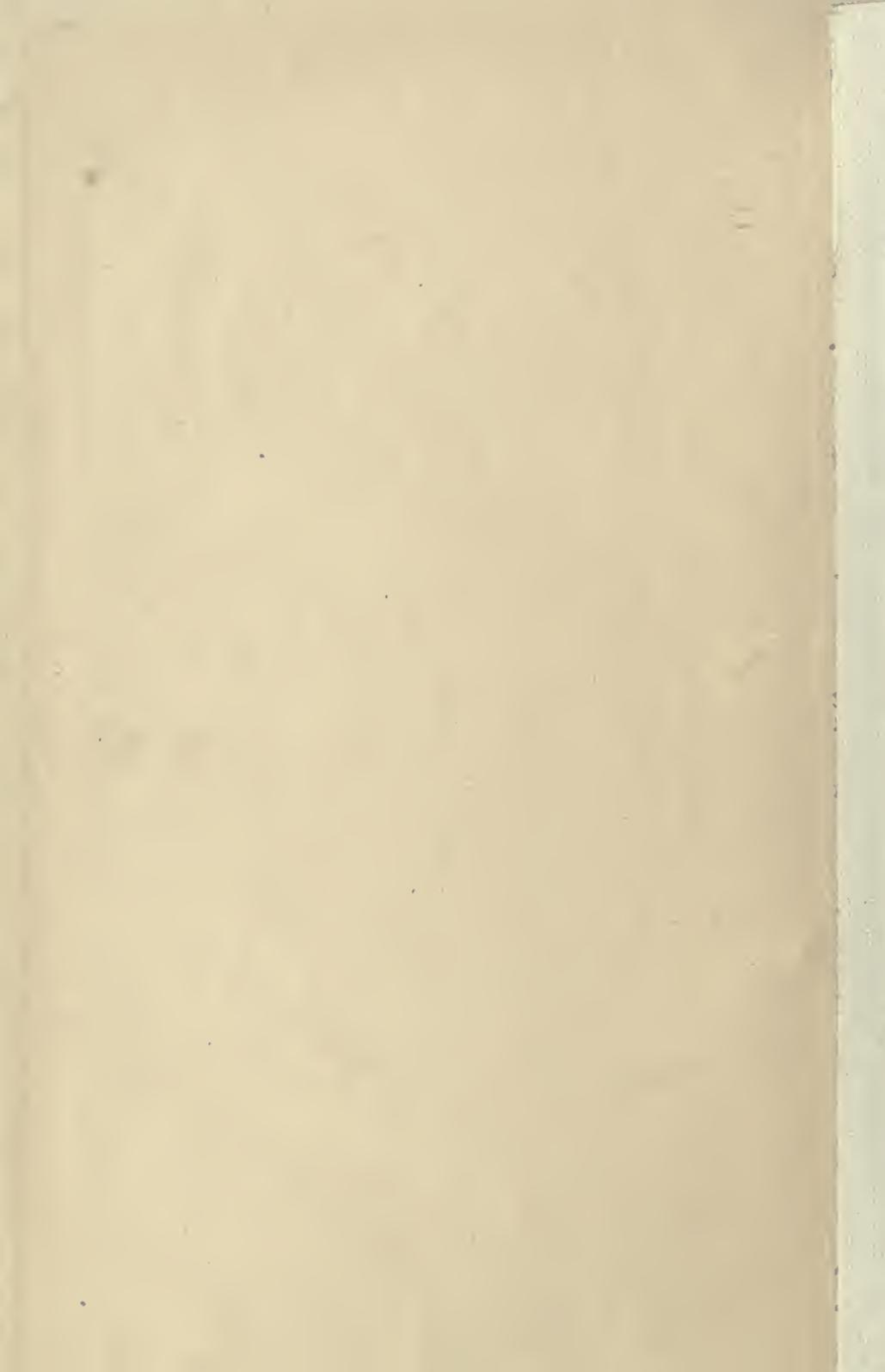
The book cover features a central rectangular panel with a dark background. This panel is framed by a wide, ornate border. At the top center of the border is a detailed illustration of an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a branch. Below the eagle are draped curtains. The sides of the border are decorated with vertical bands of a repeating geometric pattern, possibly representing a woven fabric or a specific architectural motif. The corners of the border are embellished with classical-style scrollwork and floral designs. At the bottom center, there is another decorative element, a stylized floral or scrollwork motif.

THE  
STORY OF  
THE  
WHITE  
HOUSE

BY  
ESTHER  
SINGLETON



1850

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2023







THE STORY OF  
THE WHITE HOUSE



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THE WHITE HOUSE, NORTH PORTICO

# THE STORY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

BY

ESTHER SINGLETON

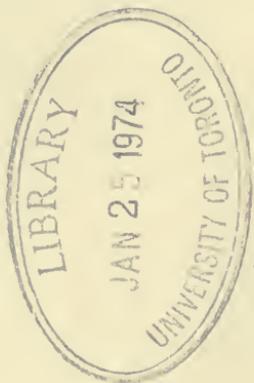
Author of French and English Furniture, etc.



IN TWO VOLUMES  
FULLY ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME I

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## PREFACE

IN writing the history of the White House, I have confined myself to the social life of the Presidents and their families while its occupants. I have strictly avoided any reference to the political turmoils of which the Executive Mansion was necessarily the centre. There is such an enormous amount of material on which to draw that the task of selection has been an onerous one; but, in all cases, I have chosen the lighter and more picturesque points of view when the opportunity offered. The authorities on which I have drawn consist of histories, memoirs, travels, biographies, diaries, letters, official documents, and newspapers. In selecting the accounts of White House entertainments and celebrations of all kinds, I have quoted from the news letters of those correspondents whose reports seemed to be least tinged with prejudice or political bias.

I wish to thank Mrs. S. L. Gouverneur, of Washington, D. C., for permission to have photographs made of her oil portraits of Mrs. Monroe and Mrs. Gouverneur; Dr. J. H. McCormick, for permission to have photographs taken of the picture of the White House in 1811 and miniature of Jean Sioussat; Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Crowninshield and Mr. Frank

## PREFACE

Crowninshield, for permission to quote from the letters of Mrs. Crowninshield; Mr. Charles F. Adams, of Boston, and Mr. Lyon G. Tyler, of Williamsburg, for the privilege of quoting from J. Q. Adams's *Diary* and *The Letters and Times of the Tylers* respectively; Messrs. Lee & Shepard Co., of Boston, for permission to use extracts from Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont's *Souvenirs of My Time*; Colonel Charles S. Bromwell, Commissioner of Public Buildings, for White House statistics; Mr. Robert Kelby, the Librarian of the New York Historical Society, for the use of papers in that invaluable collection; Mr. D. E. Roberts, of the Library of Congress; Dr. D. C. Gilman, of the Johns Hopkins University; Mrs. J. R. McKee, Mrs. Betty Taylor Bliss Dandridge, Miss Olive Risley Seward, and Colonel W. H. Crook, of the White House Executive staff, for courteous replies to inquiries; Miss Marie G. Young, of Washington, for information regarding the present observances and management of the household; Mr. Louis Tiffany, for information regarding the interior decoration in 1881; Mr. Jefferson M. Levy, the present owner of *Monticello*; and Mr. Burt L. Fenner, of Messrs. McKim, Mead & White, for facts regarding the New White House.

I am also indebted to Mr. Arthur Shadwell Martin for invaluable assistance in the work.

E. S.

NEW YORK, *September*, 1907.

## INTRODUCTION

THE White House has peculiar claims to the interest of every patriotic American. *Mount Vernon* and *Monticello* owe their fame and attraction to the reverence, affection, and admiration inspired by the personality and public services of single illustrious owners. The associations and memories of the White House are more varied and extensive; and appeal more strongly to the imagination of the average citizen. The people of the United States individually take a more active part and intelligent interest in politics than do the natives of any other country in the world. From their earliest youth, the eyes of hundreds of thousands of patriots are turned toward the President's House as longingly as are those of the devout Mohammedan toward Mecca. Every man feels a proud proprietary interest in it; and every boy may rightfully cherish an ambition to be its future occupant as President of a great nation.

The White House is a pilgrimage place yearly for thousands of tourists. Foreigners and natives in vast numbers pass through its rooms and corridors, admire its decorations, and gaze on its pictures and relics of the past with keen interest. Memories also of early

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married days of countless bridal couples are indissolubly associated with the President's house.

To a greater degree, perhaps, than any other edifice in the world, the White House is the palace of King Demos. In its reception-rooms people of all ages, rank, conditions, and color have rubbed shoulders on an equal footing to shake hands with the first citizen in the land and enjoy his hospitality. Perhaps at the present day the visitor has to submit to more form and ceremony than in the past; and is not allowed the old freedom of Liberty Hall and "the run of the royal rum"; but what is lacking in keeping open house is a gain in decorum.

How thoroughly at home the ordinary American before the Civil War felt in the White House and what full liberty he allowed himself there are exemplified in the following pages. Travellers and visitors from abroad constantly comment on the license indulged in by the disorderly mob that called on the President to pay its respects. Naturally scenes of confusion and disorder occurred most frequently during the terms of those Presidents who made a special point of pleasing the so-called "plain people," such as Jefferson, Jackson, and Taylor, though considerable latitude was countenanced by other Presidents. Thus, at the close of Jackson's Administration, Frances Anne Butler (Fanny Kemble) gives a lively sketch of the White House and its frequenters. She writes in her *Journal* Jan. 15, 1833:

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“ After we had done seeing what was to be seen, we went on to the President’s house, which is a comfortless, handsome-looking building, with a withered grass-plot enclosed in wooden palings in front, and a desolate reach of uncultivated ground down to the river behind. Mr. — gave us a most entertaining account of the levees, or rather public days, at the President’s house. Every human being has a right to present himself there; the consequence is, that great numbers of the very commonest sort of people used to rush in, and follow about the servants who carried refreshments, seizing upon whatever they could get, and staring and pushing about to the infinite discomfort of the more respectable and better behaved part of the assembly. Indeed, the nuisance became so great, that they discontinued the eatables, and in great measure got rid of the crowd. Mr. — assured me that on one of these occasions, two *ladies* had themselves lifted up and seated on the chimneypiece, in order to have a better view of the select congregation beneath them.”

President Monroe was not so “ hail-fellow-well-met ” with all the world as Jefferson and Jackson were. He and his wife and daughters were people of good breeding, elegant manners, and luxurious tastes. Their purchases of the best that Paris could afford for the embellishment of the President’s house are detailed in later pages, and some of them appear in illustrations that show how well they have survived the wear and tear of time, not to speak of neglect and abuse.

James Fenimore Cooper, writing in 1828, thus describes a couple of visits to the White House:

“ The principal entrance of the ‘ White House ’ communicates with a spacious vestibule, or rather a hall. From this

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we passed into an apartment, where those who visit the President in the mornings, are to wait their turns for the interview. Our names had been given in at the door, and after two or three, who preceded us, had been admitted, we were desired to follow the domestic. Our reception was in a cabinet, and the visit, of course, quite short. Colonel Monroe received us politely, but with an American gravity, which perhaps was not misplaced in such an officer. He offered his hand to me.

“On the succeeding Wednesday, Mrs. Monroe opened her doors to all the world. No invitation was necessary, it being the usage for the wife of the President to receive once a fortnight during the session without distinction of persons. . . . We reached the White House at nine. The court (or rather the grounds) was filled with carriages, and the company was arriving in great numbers. On this occasion two or three additional drawing-rooms were opened, though the frugality of Congress has prevented them from finishing the principal reception-room of the building.”

The origin of the popular designation of the building is obscure; and has been the subject of much controversy. We shall see that the term “White House” rarely occurs in newspapers, books, letters, or other documents until the middle of the Nineteenth Century, and yet Cooper writes (1828):

“The Americans familiarly call the exceedingly pretty little palace in which their chief magistrate resides the ‘White House’; but the true appellation is the President’s House.”

President Roosevelt is the first to have stamped “The White House” instead of “The Executive

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Mansion " on all documents and stationery issuing from the Presidential headquarters.

Turning now to the question of etiquette and social observances as laid down by the various Presidents, we shall note great diversity of taste. Washington's rules of etiquette were far too rigid and formal for *citoyen* Jefferson. Washington bowed to his visitors with stiff dignity, keeping one hand on the hilt of his sword and the other behind his back. He was scrupulously attired in becoming costume on all occasions also. Jefferson cultivated a rough-and-ready familiarity with the multitude and did not hesitate to receive the credentials of a foreign Minister in dressing-gown and slippers.

In his rules of etiquette that superseded those of Washington, Jefferson's aim is plainly to level society. Thus he decrees that " all are perfectly equal, whether foreign or domestic, titled or untitled, in or out of office." He insisted that the foreign Ministers should take their seats or stations as they arrived at his receptions without any precedence,—in other words, " first come, first served." He goes on to encourage the crush and indiscriminate mingling of all sorts and conditions of men by stating that it is his aim " to maintain the principle of equality, or of *pêle-mêle*, and to prevent the growth of precedence out of courtesy "; therefore, his Cabinet Ministers must " practise at their own houses, and recommend an adherence to the ancient usage of the country, of gentlemen *in mass* giving prece-

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dence to ladies *in mass*, in passing from one apartment where they are assembled into another." Thus gentlemen offering their arms to ladies and going in to dinner in any order of rank or honor was prohibited at Mr. Jefferson's court.

Madison bowed and bowed at receptions till he got a crick in his neck. Some Presidents used both left and right when shaking hands; some had both hands gloved, and some the right ungloved; some wore black gloves, some white, some yellow, and others gray. Some wore flowers in their buttonholes, and then again others did not florally adorn their breasts.

In the following pages, the reader may learn all about Presidential tastes and personal habits; how some accepted invitations and how others would not condescend to be entertained in private, official, or diplomatic homes; how some dispensed hospitality with a lavish hand, and others sent their callers away unrefreshed. Some Presidents poured out wine to their visitors in flowing bowls, while one, at least, served nothing but water even at State dinners.

A slight change of form and ceremony occurred with every new Administration. Each President drew up his own rules and regulations, covering such points as when and how often he would hold levees, receive Congressmen, office-seekers, friends, admirers, and casual callers, and at what hours. The style of addressing the President also varied. Thus, James Fenimore Cooper (1828) tells us:

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“An invitation to the White House always runs ‘The President requests the pleasure,’ etc. In conversation the actual President, I find, is called Colonel Monroe. I am told his predecessors were addressed as Mr. Madison, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Adams and General Washington. The President receives twice a week.”

It may be noted in passing that the correct form of address at the present day is Mr. President.

The amount of time the President was willing to devote to receiving people who came to see him on their own business naturally varied in accordance with his hopes, aims, and expectations of being elected for a second term. The scale on which he entertained also sometimes appears to have borne some ratio to such considerations. Jefferson, for example, spent \$8,500 on imported wines, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, and Hungarian (some of very choice old vintages), during his first term for White House hospitality: during his second term he spent only \$1,800. These figures are significant with regard to his impatience to return to his beloved *Monticello* and hold no future public office in Washington.

Again, some of the Presidents were readily accessible to callers, held public levees twice a week, kept practically open house (Jefferson’s dinner-table was crowded with Congressmen, foreigners, and all kinds of hangers-on every day), and were the servants of the public morning, noon, and night all the year round. John Quincy Adams was one of these slaves to duty whose

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labors were not rewarded by an unappreciative public with a second term. When a President on entering the White House decreed that his privacy was not to be invaded to the extent that his predecessor's had been on account of the detriment caused thereby to public interests, that he would receive no callers after a certain hour except by appointment, that the White House was closed on Sundays to all but heads of Departments who might need to see him on the most pressing public business, or that one day a week was to be devoted to his own leisure and pleasure, the dissatisfaction engendered made itself audible in grumblings among his own party and found vent in virulent abuse in the opposition papers.

During the first half of the Nineteenth Century, the most important days in the year (apart from Inauguration Day) were the anniversaries of the Battle of New Orleans and of Washington's Birthday, New Year's Day, and the Fourth of July. (Thanksgiving Day was not observed till 1845.) These festivals received due recognition at the White House. At that period, the Presidents lived in Washington through the summer; and if they absented themselves from the seat of Government for more than a few days at a time, there was a great outcry. Even when John Quincy Adams went to visit his father, who was lying dangerously ill at Quincy, his opponents tried to make political capital out of his alleged subordination of the nation's interests to filial duty.

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Though the Presidents usually celebrated the glorious Fourth at the White House, however, many of them sinned greatly in the eyes of their contemporaries in the matter of absenteeism. The worst offender of all was Jefferson, who would take a few days off on a visit to *Monticello* on the slightest excuse. President Grant's frequent trips to various parts of the country induced his opponents in Congress to try to call him to account.

On April 3, 1876, the President was requested by the House to inform it "whether any executive offices, acts, or duties, and, if any, what, have within a specified period been performed at a distance from the seat of government." In his Message of May 4th, he castigated his inquisitors and justified his absences by quoting precedents. A memorandum attached to this Message shows that Washington absented himself and transacted business during 181 days of his first term; John Adams was absent 385 days, principally at Quincy; Jefferson, during his two terms took 796 days off, spending his time principally at *Monticello*; Madison was absent 637 days; and Monroe 708 days, omitting the year 1824 and two months of 1825, for which period no data are available. During his single term, John Quincy Adams was absent 222 days; and in his *Diary* he speaks of his practice of his leaving with his Chief Clerk signed blank papers to be used when necessary for proclamations, remission of penalties, and commission of Consuls. He speaks also of doing the same thing in regard to patents and land grants.

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Jackson was absent from the White House 502 days. After his time, however, the Presidents before the Civil War greatly reduced their wanderings and sojournings in other cities. The records of the absences of these stay-at-homes are: Van Buren, 131 days; Tyler, 163; Polk, 37; Taylor, 31; Fillmore, 60; Pierce, 57; and Buchanan, 57. General Grant made no reference to his immediate predecessors, Lincoln and Johnson.

The Presidents did not confine themselves exclusively to business: most of them allowed themselves some daily relaxation from the cares and burdens of office. Some of them had strong domestic tastes, and devoted many hours to the simple pleasures of their children and grandchildren in the nursery and other private apartments. A taste for horsemanship is rarely lacking in any President. Washington and Jefferson were particularly fond of a mettlesome steed; and all the military officers who filled the Presidential chair were naturally at home in the saddle. Lincoln, even, used to ride daily rather than drive from his summer quarters to the White House. Van Buren was reproached for the style and luxury displayed in his horses, carriages, and livery. Grant's well-known love of fast horses was confined largely to trotters.

Many of the Presidents were indefatigable pedestrians, among them the somewhat aged General Harrison and Buchanan. John Quincy Adams was addicted to gardening and swimming; Pierce was an enthusiastic

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disciple of Isaak Walton—a taste which is shared by the only living ex-President. Mr. Cleveland's fondness for duck shooting also was common to several of his predecessors. Two other Presidents were interested for different reasons in the products of the barnyard, if contemporaries may be credited: Jackson hugely enjoyed a good main of cocks; and Hayes followed the illustrious example of the Emperor Honorius in his devotion to poultry-raising.

From the earliest days gifts of all kinds were showered upon the Presidents and their wives by their admirers and others who perhaps had a lively anticipation of favors to come. Different Presidents have held different views on the propriety of accepting gifts. In our own day we have seen Arab blood stock from Sultan's stables and various other gifts from foreign potentates cross the water as White House offerings, not to mention domestic trifles, such as Thanksgiving turkeys and game from the Western wilds. From the following pages we glean that many Presidents did not hesitate to accept carriages and horses and other costly gifts, as well as presents of comparatively little value. Jefferson sternly set his face against the practice, as his granddaughter almost tearfully tells us when she was not allowed to have "one of those beautiful specimens of Oriental luxury and taste brought over by the Tunisian Ambassadors." She adds that the incident impressed upon her mind Jefferson's "scrupulousness in conforming to the laws in all things, great or small."

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This scrupulousness was illustrated in the case of the "Mammoth Cheese" sent to him by an admirer in the dairy-farming industry, for which he insisted on paying fifty per cent more than its value. Jackson had no such scruples when presented with a similar cheese weighing 1,400 lbs.; and his successor accepted one every year. Lincoln apparently saw no impropriety in receiving gifts, but Johnson declined them, while Hayes raised no objections. President Grant accepted a carpet from the Sultan of Turkey and a superb silver coffee set of thirty-six pieces and some dressed leopard skins from Mexico in 1869.

The White House has been the stage for the setting of many scenes of tragedy and comedy. Joy, mirth, anxiety, and grief have affected its inmates, as has been the case with every other old mansion in the land, although its occupants have trod the boards for such a fleeting spell. Births (the first, a grandson to Jefferson), marriages and deaths have occurred within its walls; and in the East Room, draped with black, the bodies of many notabilities have lain in state.

No nation has been so niggardly in its provision for the expenses to which its Chief Magistrate is put in upholding the dignity and hospitality of the White House than the United States. In the early days of the Republic, \$25,000 was a respectable salary. In 1845, a writer points out that when the expenses of the many levees, dinners and other entertainments have been met, there is absolutely nothing left for the Presidential chair

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but empty honor. He states that after spending an extra \$10,000 of his own money in two terms, Jackson left for the *Hermitage* without enough money to pay his travelling expenses.

In the face of great opposition, the President's salary was raised by Congress to \$50,000 in 1873. In 1876, Congress reduced the sum again to \$25,000; but General Grant vetoed the Act, although he would have lost nothing by it as he was then going out of office.

Notwithstanding their comparative poverty, a perusal of the following pages will show that most of the Presidents dispensed hospitality with a free and generous hand. They entertained native and foreign celebrities in the various fields of art, science, music, and literature. Patriots, like Lafayette and Kossuth, Indian chiefs, dusky potentates, French and English royal princes, Spanish Infantas and German and Russian Imperial princes and Grand Dukes have been welcome guests at the White House. Many of the entertainments were on a large scale. Buchanan refused to be reimbursed for his heavy expenses in playing the host to the Prince of Wales, when the question was brought up.

The subject that will undoubtedly have the greatest attraction for the reader will be "The Ladies." They played almost as important a part in the history of the White House as the gentlemen did. Here are chronicled details of their daily life, domestic doings, house-

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keeping woes, receptions, visitings, boudoir plots and intrigues, assumptions of rank and state, tastes and habits. The eternal question of etiquette and precedence is constantly cropping up; and is temporarily settled by several heads of the White House, who, however, frequently differ with the views of their predecessors. Here also will be found many descriptions of the costumes worn by the ladies in public and private.

The ladies who presided over the household and received the guests at public or State levees, dinners, and the less formal entertainments were not always the wives of the Presidents. Buchanan was a bachelor; Jefferson, Jackson, Van Buren, and Arthur were widowers; Tyler's first wife and other "First Ladies in the Land" were invalids, or, at least, not strong enough to perform the onerous duties of their position. In such cases the work was satisfactorily performed by the daughters, daughters-in-law, or nieces of the President. Under Jefferson, the wife of his Secretary of State, Mrs. Madison, was practically mistress of the President's house. She was the most commanding figure in Washington for half a century, and completely dwarfed her little husband both physically and socially. After her husband's second term, she was regarded as a sort of ex-Empress, and was the most important guest at all Court functions, frequently eclipsing the hostess. Her advice was sought on all the thorny questions of form, ceremony, etiquette, and precedence; and her authority was unquestioned. Even in her old

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age, after the President's New Year's reception, diplomats, officials, and the host of Washington society would immediately go across the square and pay their respects to Mrs. Madison.

The arrangement and decoration of the mansion was in all cases subject to the individual taste of the mistress; so that the reader cannot fail to be interested in the changes in interior decoration from time to time, and in Mrs. Harrison's plans for entirely remodelling the building.

This brings us to the edifice itself. It is remarkable that as it stands to-day, it is a faithful reproduction in form and dimensions of the plans drawn by the original architect, Major Hoban. The very foundations and parts of the outside walls are relics of the original building burnt by the British in 1814, of which a vivid picture is given in these pages.

From the very start, the work of building met with opposition and obstruction from various parties and interests whose motives plainly appear in the course of this work. For many years there was recurring agitation for the removal of the President's house to a more advantageous (i. e., pecuniarily so to interested real estate investors) or more salubrious site. In its swampy situation and with its total lack of hygienic plumbing, it certainly was not a sanitary dwelling, and its conditions probably contributed to the death of two Presidents and several female members of Presidential families. The objections of several mistresses of the

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mansion to take charge of it, and their reasonable desire and plans to live elsewhere, frequently appear in the text.

Notwithstanding the complaints of many people of the meanness of Congress, the fact remains that the President's house was planned on an adequate scale, and even at this distance of time serves the purposes for which it was built. It is elegant, dignified, and roomy. It deserves neither the contempt of its detractors, nor the denunciation of the extreme faction of parsimony and "watch-dogs of the Treasury," one of whom during the Log Cabin campaign in a flight of oratorical hyperbole branded it as "a Palace as splendid as that of the Cæsars, and as richly adorned as the proudest Asiatic mansion." Quoting from official documents, the above speaker informed his hearers that the building alone had cost \$333,207 previous to its destruction by the British, and \$301,496.25 since that time to date (1840).

The house was under the care of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, who from time to time reported its condition to Congress and asked for appropriations for repairs and improvements. Large sums were voted yearly also for the furniture, and the money was spent under the President's own eye and recommendation in accordance with his own and his wife's tastes.

The work of completing the house according to the original design progressed slowly. When the house was burnt down, neither the North nor South Portico, nor

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the East Front had been begun. From the architect's report of 1807, we learn that the surrounding ground was chiefly used for brick-yards; it was enclosed in a rough post and rail fence. Where the North Portico now is, was a wooden platform, with an area on both sides. Mr. Latrobe further states that

“ During the short residence of President Adams at Washington, the wooden stair and platform were the usual entrance to the house and the present drawing-room was a mere vestibule.”

What, in his plan, the architect calls the Drawing-room is now the “ Blue Room.” To the right of that was the common Dining-room; to the left the President's “ Ante-chamber ”; \* and to the left of that, the “ Library and Cabinet ” at the corner of the house. Behind the Drawing-room was the Hall, to which a staircase led up from the left, but “ is not yet put up ” (1807). Beyond the staircase, the Hall had entrances into the “ Porter's Lodge ” and the “ Butler's Pantry,” which again led into the “ Public Dining-room at the northwest corner. Leading out of the Hall opposite the ‘ Porter's Lodge ’ and ‘ Pantry ’ was the room for the musicians. The whole of the East Front beyond this was occupied by the ‘ Public Audience Chamber,’ entirely unfinished, the ceiling has given way.”

The South Portico was not seriously taken in hand till 1823, when J. Elgar in his report of expenditure

\* Now the Red Room.

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during this year, enters "South Portico to the President's house, \$11,550.34."

The nature of the work done and to be done was as follows:

"The peristyle portico to the South front of the President's House, consisting of six columns of the Ionic order, with the entablature and balustrade, has been completed; the ceiling has been finished and the roof covered with copper. The Arcade has been groined and arched with brick, and the principal floor laid with the best Seneca stone.

"The remaining work to be done to complete the Portico, consists of two flights of stone steps, to ascend from the surface level to the principal floor, and the railing, which, when completed, the South front of the President's House will be finished."

The famous East Room about which there was so much curiosity and misrepresentation took a long time before its interior decorations were complete. It was taken in hand in 1818. On Jan. 1, 1827, Senator Benton wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*:

"This being the day on which the President's house is thrown open to all visitors, I went among others to pay my respects to him, or rather, I should fairly confess, I went to see the East Room, for the furnishing of which we had voted \$25,000 at the last session of Congress. I was anxious to see how that amount of furniture could be stowed away in a single room, and my curiosity was fully satisfied. It was truly a gorgeous sight to behold; but had too much the look of regal

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magnificence to be perfectly agreeable to my old Republican feelings."

This letter called forth indignant denials from opponents, who declared that the furniture and decoration were most meagre.

The East Room always kept its name, but the other Parlors changed their names most perplexingly in accordance with the color of their decoration. This naturally varied with the taste of the new Lady of the White House.

The Oval Room was, as we have seen, the President's Drawing-room. In 1809, when the Madisons came in, it was furnished at a cost of \$1,000. The sofas and chairs were upholstered in yellow satin and the curtains were of yellow damask, evidently draped in the fashionable late Sheraton style. Many years elapsed before this famous Salon became the Blue Room. The handsome French furniture sent from Paris was upholstered in light crimson, or old rose, and the rich draperies were of the same hue. This was sometimes called the "Elliptical Drawing-room," the "Oval Reception Room," and the "Circular Room." It does not seem to have been changed from Monroe's time in either John Quincy Adams's or Jackson's Administrations, although according to Ogle it was formerly the "Green Circular Parlor." It seems to have been first furnished in blue when President Van Buren had new covers put on the Monroe furniture and new curtains

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hung (see page 253). After this date, it is referred to as the "Oval Reception Room," the "Oval Room," the "Blue Room," the "Elliptic Room," the "Circle Room," and the "Round Room." It was again a red room in Johnson's time, and again a blue room in Grant's time, when it is sometimes referred to as the "Violet Blue Parlor." After Tiffany redecorated it in Arthur's Administration, it was called the "Robin's Egg Room" on account of the pale tints used.

The Green Room, also called the "Card Room" in Monroe's time, was, as we have already noted, the ordinary Dining-room in the first President's house. The color of this room does not appear to have been changed.

The room on the left of the Blue Room, although its furniture seems to have been red, was called the "Yellow Drawing Room," probably on account of the hangings and carpet. In Tyler's time, it was called the "Washington Room." In all probability the famous portrait of Washington hung here, as it does to-day.

The money spent on furniture was drawn from the Treasury by the Presidents themselves, or their designated agents. The appropriations for the seven Presidential terms from 1829 to 1853 were as follows: Jackson, \$40,000; Van Buren, \$20,000; Tyler, \$6,000; Polk, \$14,000; Taylor and Fillmore, \$14,000; Pierce, \$25,000. The large sum spent under Jackson was devoted largely to the final furnishing of the East Room.

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When the proposal of the removal of the National Capitol came up in 1870-71, the Committee on Public Expenditures made a favorable report to the House, submitting figures showing that the total expenditures on the President's house and the Executive Mansion from the time the seat of Government was located at Washington to the close of the fiscal year 1858 had been \$1,515,078.54.

The appropriations for the care, repair, and refurnishing of the Executive Mansion since 1870 are as follows:

1871.....	\$40,369.73
1872.....	20,345.00
1873.....	22,000.00
1874.....	25,000.00
1875.....	20,000.00
1876.....	20,000.00
1877.....	17,000.00
1878.....	20,000.00
1879.....	25,000.00
1880.....	25,000.00
1881.....	20,000.00
1882.....	50,000.00
1883.....	40,000.00
1884.....	28,000.00
1885.....	12,500.00
1886.....	16,000.00
1887.....	16,000.00
1888.....	16,000.00
1889.....	16,000.00
1890.....	16,000.00

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1891.....	\$25,000.00
1892.....	35,000.00
1893.....	20,000.00
1894.....	18,000.00
1895.....	25,000.00
1896.....	25,000.00
1897.....	20,000.00
1898.....	20,000.00
1899.....	30,000.00
1900.....	36,000.00
1901.....	20,000.00
1902.....	20,000.00
1903.....	35,000.00
1904.....	60,000.00
1905.....	35,000.00
1906.....	35,000.00
1907.....	35,000.00

“ Extraordinary repair and refurnishing of the Executive Mansion:

1903..... \$475,445.00

Building for Offices of the President:

1903..... \$65,196.00

Extraordinary repairs of the Executive Mansion:

1907..... \$35,000.00

The appropriations for the years 1877-78-79 and 1880 included also fuel for the Mansion and greenhouses, and also the care and repair of the greenhouses.

The appropriation for 1880 contained authority to expend not to exceed \$2,000.00 for a new tin roof for the Mansion.”

These figures have been kindly supplied by Colonel Charles S. Bromwell, the present Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds.

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THE STORY OF  
THE WHITE HOUSE



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

The Federal City; Plans for the President's Dwelling; Troubles of the Commissioners of the Federal Buildings; Appearance of Pennsylvania Avenue and the President's House in 1800; Mrs. Adams's Description of the President's House—Reports by B. Henry Latrobe in 1808 and 1809; Condition of Presidential Mansion during Jefferson's Administration; Description by travellers in 1807 and 1809; Mr. Latrobe's Purchases.

THE selection of the site of the Capitol, and consequently the official residence of the President of the United States, was a burning question in the cradle days of the Republic; and gave rise to many jealousies and heart-burnings, as well as to much log-rolling and intrigue. New York and Philadelphia both considered that they had overwhelming claims to the distinction; but the preponderating influence of the brilliant sons of the Old Dominion—Washington, Jefferson, Randolph, Henry, Madison, Monroe, Marshall, and others—prevailed. Georgetown was practically at the back door of *Mount Vernon*, and within comparatively easy reach of the ancestral seats of the other great Virginians. It was a lively town, and not too remote from other centres of luxury and elegance—such as Williamsburg, Annapolis, and Baltimore.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington was an expert surveyor; and, being the idol of his countrymen, it is not astonishing that the planning of the new metropolis should be intrusted to him; and that the result was that, as Mr. Wolcott expressed it, the Government "left the comforts of Philadelphia to go to the Indian place with the long name in the woods on the Potomac."

Washington selected a hill overlooking the river as a commanding site for the Houses of Congress, and planted the residence of the Chief Executive half-way between that and Georgetown.

At that date, the hills were clothed with forest growth of magnificent trees, but when the land was bought no provision was made for their preservation, and therefore the original owners felled and sold the timber, leaving a desolate and swampy region. This aroused Jefferson's protest: "I wish I were a despot, that I might save those noble trees!"

The final decision on the site for what Washington named the "Federal City," was not arrived at by Congress till 1790, when an act was passed establishing the temporary seat of Government in Philadelphia till 1800, and "thereafter the permanent seat in a district not exceeding the Constitutional ten miles square to be located by the Potomac, and three Commissioners of his choice on the Potomac River," etc., and "according to such plans as the President shall approve, to provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress and of the President, and for public offices



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (1799)



## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

of the Government in time for their occupancy in 1800."

On Dec. 13, 1791, the following message was read before the Second Congress in Philadelphia :

"Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, I place before you the plan of a City that has been laid out within the District of ten Miles square, which was fixed upon for the Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States.  
G. WASHINGTON."

In 1791, the future city was formally named the City of Washington; and in 1792 a prize of \$500 or a gold medal was offered for the best plan for a suitable dwelling for the President. This was advertised in all the leading papers of the day, and was won by Capt. James Hoban, an architect originally from Ireland, at the time a resident of Charleston, S. C.

Numerous plans were submitted, most of which were beneath contempt from an architectural point of view; and many of them have been pronounced wildly absurd structurally and decoratively. In one, a triple window has a cornice broken by an arch over the central opening, on either side of which is a man rampant, with one foot on the arch and the other on the level of the cornice as though the two men were about to do battle over the keystone. This competitor evidently fancied himself as a sculptor, for he lined up a lot of ridiculous figures on the parapet. Another devoted his talents to a clock, the dial of which marked the hours by the

## THE WHITE HOUSE

twelve letters in the words United States. The spread-eagle predominated as a decorative feature in some of the designs; and the noble bird is displayed on pediments and in weathercocks in marvellous poses and poises. To one is attributed the wings of a penguin and an ingeniously designed breast-plate of thirteen circles. Another competitor reproduces the separate chairs of Senators and Representatives, indicating the color and texture of the leather, or other upholstery. Another makes a terrible mess of his perspective.

The plan finally accepted is frequently maintained to be not original with the successful competitor. It is said that he acknowledged that he had based his design on the recently built palace of the Duke of Leinster in Dublin, which was a fine example of "modernized Greek architecture," evidently in the Adam style. The architect's plans provided for a somewhat pretentious edifice of three stories, to which a sweeping colonnade and wings might be added as the need arose. The extravagance of the planned outlay for the dwelling of the President of the new Republic evoked considerable criticism and opposition; and, in consequence, the architect's plans of which Washington is said to have approved, were shorn of much of their magnificence.

In Washington's original plan, which was distributed throughout this country and Europe, he fixed the sites of the Capitol and the President's house, and on his way to Congress in 1796 he also selected the sites of the executive buildings, War, Navy, Treasury, etc., on

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

the President's square. There was naturally a great deal of competition for the best sites among the owners of real estate in the city; and, long before the President's house was finished, there was a great deal of pressure brought upon Congress to transfer the official home of the President to some site contiguous to the Capitol; or, to make the President's house itself (by other interested parties) the Hall of Congress, or (by others) the seat of the Judiciary. In 1798, the Commissioners of the Federal Buildings were G. Scott, W. Thornton, and A. White. Mr. White was sent to Philadelphia to induce Congress to make a liberal appropriation for the completion of the buildings, and while there he discovered that even his colleagues were not in entire sympathy with Washington's plans. On March 8, he writes to his colleagues as follows:

"I had not been long in the city when I found . . . the clashing interests that have caused so much discord in Washington. Some proposed that there should be a small house erected near the Capitol for the residence of the President, and that the executive offices should be built in the same vicinity; some wish his house to be the permanent, others the temporary residence of the President. Those who wish it permanent talk of making a judiciary of the President's house, and allege that the seat of justice would be as advantageous to the adjacent proprietors as the residence of the President. Others propose making the President's house the residence of Congress; and too many on both sides are of the opinion that only one of these houses should be finished, and that any money granted should be appropriated to finishing the one which might be preferred.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Another opinion prevailed that we wanted only \$100,000; and the old clamor against the style of the buildings was revived."

White's desire to carry out Washington's intentions gave offence probably to Mr. Law, certainly to General Forrest, for he adds:

"The facts previously unknown to me are, that the President's house had, from the beginning, through the management or influence of some of those interested in the adjacent property, been calculated for the accommodation of Congress, and that General Forrest had lately procured from Mr. Hoban estimates of finishing it, both for the reception of Congress and the residence of the President; that the first (exclusive of slating the roof) might be done for \$12,000, and that the latter would cost \$54,000 . . . to-day a resolution was agreed to recommending the appropriation of \$200,000 at three annual instalments, which it is expected will complete the Capitol, the President's house, and the executive offices; the judiciary not being considered as immediately necessary."

Though the committee reported the bill, Mr. White met with another stumbling-block. On March 11, he wrote again to his brother Commissioners saying that Congress would not vote the money unless the President's wishes were known; and so he had personally called on Mr. Adams. He was evidently chagrined to find that the President was at least lukewarm in the matter, and indeed was in sympathy with the malcontents, because, although he "paid great regard to the opinions of General Washington," he thought that the executive offices should be as near the Capitol as pos-

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

sible. However, he observed that "with respect to the President's house, so far as concerns himself, he is perfectly satisfied. He said he would go a mile and a half whenever his official duty may require it, as long as he shall remain in office, or, if he should find it inconvenient, he could hire a house, so far as concerns himself."

Messrs. Scott and Thornton, in their reply of March 16, state that the "two appropriations, viz.: for the Capitol and the President's house, the only ones made until the year 1796 were published on the engraved plan promulgated by the President . . . the Commissioners and all others who have made sales of lots in the city have made their sales and contracts under a full persuasion that these appropriations were permanent and unalterable."

There must have been a good deal of lobbying in the matter, for it is not till April 18 that the Commissioners "are informed that a bill has passed both Houses of Congress authorizing a loan of \$100,000 for completing the public buildings in this city." We shall presently see what a mere drop in the bucket this sum was to prove.

On May 7, 1798, the Commissioners write to President Adams:

"We consider the existing orders as sufficient authority for us to proceed with the building; but to secure the completion of the North Wing of the Capitol, and the finishing whatever buildings may be commenced, in due season, we mean at present

## THE WHITE HOUSE

only to contract for one of the executive buildings, and as soon as that shall be undertaken, to discontinue the work on the interior of the President's house . . . only finishing the stone work (which is nearly completed) and slating the roof."

The controversy that had arisen must have been a matter of considerable disappointment to Washington, who took great interest in the President's house. In June, 1797, he had written "the President's house will be covered in the autumn," which shows that the outer walls were already finished.

The result of the general indifference regarding the completion of the President's house was that it was not nearly ready for occupancy when Congress removed from Philadelphia to Washington. The Hon. John Cotton Smith, a member of Congress from Connecticut, gives us a graphic view of the scene presented in 1800:

"Our approach to the city was accompanied with sensations not easily described. One wing of the Capitol only had been erected, which with the President's house, a mile distant from it, were shining objects in dismal contrast with the scene around them. Instead of recognizing the avenues and streets portrayed on the plan of the city, not one was visible, unless we except a road, with two buildings on each side of it, called the New Jersey Avenue. The Pennsylvania leading, as laid down on paper, from the Capitol to the Presidential mansion, was then nearly the whole distance a deep morass covered with alder bushes, which were cut through the width of the intended avenue during the then ensuing winter. Between the President's house and Georgetown a block of houses had been erected,

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

which then bore, and may still bear, the name of the *six buildings*."

Mr. Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, writing to his wife on the Fourth of July, 1800, says:

"It was built to be looked at by visitors and strangers, and will render its occupant an object of ridicule with some and of pity with others. It must be cold and damp in winter, and cannot be kept in tolerable order without a regiment of servants."

For a glimpse of the President's house and its setting on the arrival of its first tenants, we cannot do better than quote the first impressions of Mrs. Adams. Writing to her daughter (Nov. 21, 1800), she says:

"Woods are all you see from Baltimore until you reach *the city*, which is only so in name. Here and there is a small cot, without a glass window, interspersed amongst the forests, through which you travel miles without seeing any human being. In the city there are buildings enough, if they were compact and finished, to accommodate Congress and those attached to it; but as they are, and scattered as they are, I see no great comfort for them. The river, which runs up to Alexandria, is in full view of my window, and I see the vessels as they pass and repass. The house is upon a grand and superb scale, requiring about thirty servants to attend and keep the apartments in proper order, and perform the ordinary business of the house and stables; an establishment very well proportioned to the President's salary. The lighting the apartments, from the kitchen to parlours and chambers, is a tax indeed; and the fires we are obliged to keep to secure us from daily agues is another very cheering comfort. To assist us in this great castle, and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanting, not

## THE WHITE HOUSE

one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. This is so great an inconvenience, that I do not know what to do, nor how to do. The ladies from Georgetown and in the city have, many of them, visited me. Yesterday I returned fifteen visits—but such a place as Georgetown appears—why our Milton is beautiful. But no comparisons; if they will put me up some bells, and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. I could content myself almost anywhere three months; but, surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had, because people cannot be found to cut and cart it! Briesler entered into a contract with a man to supply him with wood. A small part, a few cords only, has he been able to get. Most of that was expended to dry the walls of the house before we came in, and yesterday the man told him it was impossible for him to procure it to be cut and carted. He has had recourse to coals; but we cannot get grates made and set in. We have, indeed, come into *a new country*.

“You must keep all this to yourself, and, when asked how I like it, say that I write you the situation is beautiful, which is true. The house is made habitable, but there is not a single apartment finished, and all withinside, except the plastering, has been done since Briesler came. We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience, without, and the great unfinished audience-room I make a drying-room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up, and will not be this winter. Six chambers are made comfortable; two are occupied by the President and Mr. Shaw; two lower rooms for a common parlour, and one for a levee room. Upstairs there is the oval room, which is designed for the drawing-room, and has the crimson furniture in it. It is a very handsome room now; but when completed, it will be beautiful. If the twelve years in which this place has been considered as the future seat of government had been improved, as they would have been in New



MRS. JOHN ADAMS



## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

England, very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed. It is a beautiful spot, capable of every improvement, and the more I view it, the more I am delighted with it.

"Since I sat down to write, I have been called down to a servant from Mount Vernon, with a billet from Major Custis, and a haunch of venison, and a kind congratulatory letter from Mrs. Lewis, upon my arrival in the city, with Mrs. Washington's love, inviting me to Mount Vernon, where, health permitting, I will go, before I leave this place."

A week later, Mrs. Adams writes :

"Briesler procured nine cords of wood; between six and seven of that was kindly burnt up to dry the walls of the house, which ought to have been done by the Commissioners, but which, if left to them, would have remained undone to this day. Congress poured in, but shiver, shiver."

She then says that they "have one cord and a half of wood in the house where twelve fires are required," and "where we are told the roads will soon be so bad that it cannot be drawn. The public officers have sent to Philadelphia for wood-cutters and waggons." Mrs. Adams notes that there are "two hundred bushels of coal in the house," and then continues:

"The vessel which has my clothes and other matters is not arrived. The ladies are impatient for a drawing-room; I have no looking-glasses but dwarfs for this house; nor a twentieth part lamps enough to light it. Many things were stolen, many more broken, by the removal; amongst the number, my tea china is more than half missing. Georgetown affords nothing. My rooms are very pleasant and warm whilst the doors of the hall are closed.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

“You can scarce believe that here in this wilderness city, I should find my time so occupied as it is. My visitors, some of them, come three and four miles. The return of one of them is the work of one day; most of the ladies reside in Georgetown, or in scattered parts of the city at two and three miles distance. Mrs. Otis, my nearest neighbour, is at lodgings almost half a mile from me; Mrs. Senator Otis, two miles.

“We have all been very well as yet; if we can by any means get wood, we shall not let our fires go out, but it is at a price indeed; from four dollars it has risen to nine. Some say it will fall, but there must be more industry than is to be found here to bring half enough to the market for the consumption of the inhabitants.”

The actual conditions of his official residence must have been a sad blow to Mr. Adams: he had evidently been misinformed as to the forwardness of the preparations for the reception of himself and Congress. In his speech (Dec. 3, 1799) he had announced:

“The Commissioners appointed to provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress and of the President, and of the Public Offices of the Government, have made a report of the state of the buildings designed for these purposes in the City of Washington; from which they conclude, that the removal of the seat of Government to that place, at the time required, will be practicable, and the accommodation satisfactory.”

The progress made on the public and private buildings of Washington was very slow. On Dec. 20, 1802, Thomas Munroe reports from the Superintendent's Office “the state of the public buildings, directed to be

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

reported, is the same as the last Session of Congress, or not materially changed. The private buildings, then 735 in number, have since increased a few more than one hundred."

In April, 1802, we find a great turmoil over the fact that part of the President's square has been conveyed to the Queen of Portugal, or her minister.

In his report on the progress of public buildings in 1807, presented March 25, 1808, B. Henry Latrobe, Surveyor of Public Buildings, says:

"The work performed at the President's house has consisted of the covered way in front of the offices on each wing; of the erection of one half of the wall of enclosure and one of the gates; of the levelling of the greatest part of the enclosed grounds and of minor repairs and improvements of the house itself. Neither the wall of the enclosure, nor the levelling of the ground could be completed by the appropriation, but as much has been done as was practicable, and the ground is now partially enclosed and ready to be planted." (The appropriation for the President's house for 1807 was \$15,000.)

Mr. Latrobe's estimate for the year 1808 was "To complete the wall of the President's house so as to close this branch of expenditure; build a solid flight of steps to the principal door, and minor expenses, \$15,000."

In his report for 1809, Mr. Latrobe says:

"The appropriation made at the last session for the President's house has been expended towards the arrangement of the ground and garden within the enclosure; the coping of part of the surrounding wall; the construction of a carriage house,

## THE WHITE HOUSE

and the better arrangement of the interior for the accommodation of a family.

“On the removal of the seat of Government to Washington, in the year 1800, the President’s house was in a most unfinished state, and quite destitute of the conveniences required by a family. The roof and gutters leaked in such a manner as materially to injure the ceilings and furniture; the ground surrounding the house, barely enclosed by a rough fence, was covered with rubbish, with the ruins of old brick-kilns, and the remains of brick yards and stone cutters’ sheds. During the Presidency of Mr. Jefferson, from the year 1804, annual appropriations have been made, by the aid of which several bed-chambers were fitted up; the most necessary offices and cellars, which before were absolutely wanting, were constructed; a new covering to the roof was provided; a flight of stone steps and a platform built on the north side of the house; the grounds were enclosed by a wall, and a commencement was made in levelling and clearing them in such parts as could be improved at the least expense. But notwithstanding the endeavors of the late President<sup>1</sup> to effect as much as possible by these annual legislative grants, the building in its interior is still incomplete. It is, however, a duty which I owe to myself and to the public, not to conceal that the timbers of the President’s house are in a state of very considerable decay, especially in the northern part of the building. The cause of decay, both in this house and in the Capitol, is to be found, I presume, in the green state of the timber when first used, in its original bad quality, and its long exposure to the weather, before the buildings could be roofed. Further progress in the levelling and planting of the ground, in the coping of the wall and in current repairs and minor improvements are also included in the estimate (\$20,000) submitted.”

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson.

## THE FIRST PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

The above reports fully bear out the descriptions given us by contemporary visitors from foreign lands.

One of these,<sup>1</sup> writing in 1807, says:

“The President's house is certainly a neat but plain piece of architecture, built of hewn stone, said to be of a better quality than Portland stone, as it will cut like marble, and resist the change of seasons in a superior degree. Only part of it is finished; the whole salary of the President would be inadequate to the expense of completing it in a style of suitable elegance. Rooms are fitted up for himself, an audience chamber, and apartments for Mr. Thomas Mann Randolph and Mr. Epps, and their respective families, who married two of his daughters and are members of the House of Representatives.

“The ground around it instead of being laid out in a suitable style, remains in its ancient rude state, so that in a dark night, instead of finding your way to the house, you may, perchance, fall into a pit, or stumble over a heap of rubbish. The fence round the house is of the meanest sort, a common post and rail enclosure. This parsimony destroys every sentiment of pleasure that arises in the mind, in viewing the residence of the President of a nation, and is a disgrace to the country.”

Edmund Bacon, who was Jefferson's manager at *Monticello* for twenty years, visited the President's house in 1809, and reported:

“When I was there, the President's house was surrounded by a high rock wall, and there was an iron gate immediately in front of it, and from that gate to the Capitol, the street was just as straight as a gun barrel. Nearly all the houses were on that street.”

<sup>1</sup> Janson, *The Stranger in America*.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

We have now traced the growth of the first President's house up till the opening of the Administration of Mr. Madison, who was destined to be a fugitive from his official home during its destruction by the British.

In 1809, \$5,000 of the money voted by Congress was expended by Mr. Latrobe in furniture. Some of the items of his account are as follows: Louis Deblois, for two mirrors and expenses, \$1,060; repairs, etc., \$550; Louis Mark of New York, for table-linen and looking-glasses, on account, \$1,225; Paul S. Brown, for china, \$556.15; Charles Bird, for knives, forks, bottle-stands, waiters, andirons, \$220.90; George Blake, for a guitar, \$28.00; Andrew Hazlehurst, for a pianoforte, \$458.00.

Another \$1,000 was expended in furniture for the drawing-room. The chairs and sofas were upholstered in yellow satin, and the curtains were of yellow damask hung with festoons and flutings.

It had taken a long time for the President's house to approach completion. By the irony of fate, it had no sooner reached its majority than it was destroyed by ruthless hands.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OFFICIAL AND DOMESTIC FORMS AND CEREMONIES

Washington's Regard for Forms, Ceremonies and Punctilious Etiquette; His Opening of Congress; Alexander Hamilton's Recommendations for Formalities to be observed at the Republican Court; Jefferson's Sympathy with the *Sans Culottes*; Washington's Levees and Mrs. Washington's Receptions; John Adams on Republicanism and Jefferson; John Adams in Washington.

HAVING now described the shell of the first home provided for the Chief Magistrate of the new nation, the next inquiry is naturally into the forms and ceremonies of official and domestic life and entertainment there.

Washington was not only responsible for the founding of the Federal City and its public buildings, but his example with regard to punctilious etiquette when he held official receptions, etc., constituted a precedent which was more or less adhered to in succeeding Administrations. He was a great stickler for forms and ceremonies; he maintained a dignified presence with somewhat cold reserve in all official functions. He realized the importance of uniform and costume and state display. He was accustomed to open Congress in glit-

## THE WHITE HOUSE

tering style. His great cream-colored coach with its painted panels beautifully decorated with Cupids and festoons of flowers in the style of the artists of the period of Louis XVI., drawn by six horses and driven and attended by coachmen and footmen in white livery trimmed with bright orange, drove to the Hall of Congress accompanied by an escort of cavalry and an attendance of elegant coaches. Washington in full dress would then alight, proudly glance over the assembled crowd of sight-seers, and then, with dignified step, enter the Hall and deliver his address. His example was followed by Adams in Philadelphia and Washington.

President Washington, who had been accustomed to the luxuries and elegances of nobles and lords of the manor, as well as the "pomp and panoply of glorious war," had little sympathy with the *sans culottes* excesses of the French Revolution that appealed so strongly to "Jeffersonian simplicity." When he became President in 1789 (April 30), the *états généraux* had not yet met at Versailles. When they did meet, a month later, his old brother-in-arms, Lafayette, was still a strong prop of the old *régime*. Washington was, therefore, in full sympathy with the forms and ceremonies of the French and English Courts. The English officers with whom he had come in contact in friendly or hostile relations were members of the aristocracy, and the heads of the assistance he had received from abroad were marquises, counts, and barons. Washington's



LAFAYETTE



## FORMS AND CEREMONIES

favorite staff-officers were aristocratic by instinct, and to those who sympathized with his attitude he turned for support in an attempt to establish the prestige of a Republican President of a great nation.

Washington was inaugurated on April 30, 1789. He had consulted Alexander Hamilton beforehand regarding the desirable formalities; for on May 5, Colonel Hamilton addressed to him the following recommendations:

“ 1. The President to have a levee once a week for receiving visits; an hour to be fixed at which it shall be understood that he will appear, and consequently that the visitors are to be previously assembled.

“ The President to remain half an hour, in which time he may converse cursorily on indifferent subjects, with such persons as shall invite his attention, and at the end of that half hour disappear. . . . A mode of introduction through particular officers will be indispensable. No visits to be returned.

“ 2. The President to accept no invitations, and to give formal entertainments only twice or four times a year, the anniversaries of important events in the Revolution. If twice on the day of the Declaration of Independence, and that of the Inauguration of the President, which completed the organization of the Constitution, to be preferred; if four times, the day of the treaty of alliance with France, and that of the definitive treaty with Britain to be added. The members of the two houses of the Legislature; principal officers of the Government; foreign ministers, and other distinguished strangers only to be invited. . . . The President on the levee days, either by himself or some gentleman of his household to give informal invitations to family dinners on the days of invitation. Not more

## THE WHITE HOUSE

than six or eight to be invited at a time, and the matter to be confined essentially to members of the legislature and other official characters. The President never to remain long at the table."

In view of the breeding, social standing and aristocratic connections of the first President, therefore, it is not astonishing to find that there were many complaints in the succeeding generation by those who regarded him as somewhat of a martinet in the *salon*, as well as in the field. These critics forgot that Washington had never been abroad, as Jefferson had, and took office before the wild days of The Terror. Jefferson was Washington's Secretary of State, and having just returned from France, was full of the ebullition of his friends, D'Alembert, Condorcet, and extremists. It is, therefore, interesting to see that Washington took counsel with Jefferson's opponent, Hamilton, on the question of Republican Court Etiquette.

One of Washington's critics,<sup>1</sup> writing in 1834, says that in the early part of his Administration "great complaints had been made of the aristocratic and royal demeanor of the President," and that among his critics was Thomas Jefferson. The particular complaints related:

"to the manner of receiving such visitors as came from respect or from curiosity, of which there were multitudes.

"He devoted an hour every other Tuesday from three to

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Sullivan.

## FORMS AND CEREMONIES

four to these visits. He understood himself to be visited as the *President* of the United States, and not on his own account. He was not to be seen by anybody and everybody; but required that every one who came should be introduced by his Secretary, or by some gentleman, whom he knew himself. He lived on the South Side of Chestnut Street, just below Sixth. The place of reception was the dining-room in the rear, twenty-five or thirty feet in length, including the bow projecting into the garden. Mrs. Washington received her visitors in the two rooms on the second floor.

“At three o'clock, or at any time within a quarter of an hour afterwards, the visitor was conducted to this dining-room, from which all seats had been removed for the time. On entering one saw the tall, manly figure of Washington clad in black velvet; his hair in full dress, powdered and gathered behind in a large silk bag; yellow gloves on his hands; holding a cocked hat with a cockade on it, and the edges adorned with a black feather about an inch deep. He wore knee and shoe buckles; and a long sword, with a finely wrought and polished steel hilt, which appeared at the left hip; the coat worn over the blade, and appearing from under the folds behind. The scabbard was white polished leather.

“He always stood in front of the fireplace, with his face towards the door of entrance. The visitor was conducted to him, and he required to have the name so distinctly pronounced that he could hear it. He had the very uncommon faculty of associating a man's name and personal appearance so durably in his memory as to be able to call any one by name who made him a second visit. He received his visitor with a dignified bow, while his hands were so disposed of as to indicate that the salutation was not to be accompanied with shaking hands. This ceremony never occurred in those visits, even with his most near friends, that no distinction might be made.

“As visitors came in, they formed a circle around the room.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

At a quarter past three, the door was closed, and the circle was formed for that day. He then began on the right and spoke to each visitor, calling him by name and exchanging a few words with him. When he had completed his circuit, he resumed his first position, and the visitors approached him, in succession, bowed and retired. By four o'clock this ceremony was over.

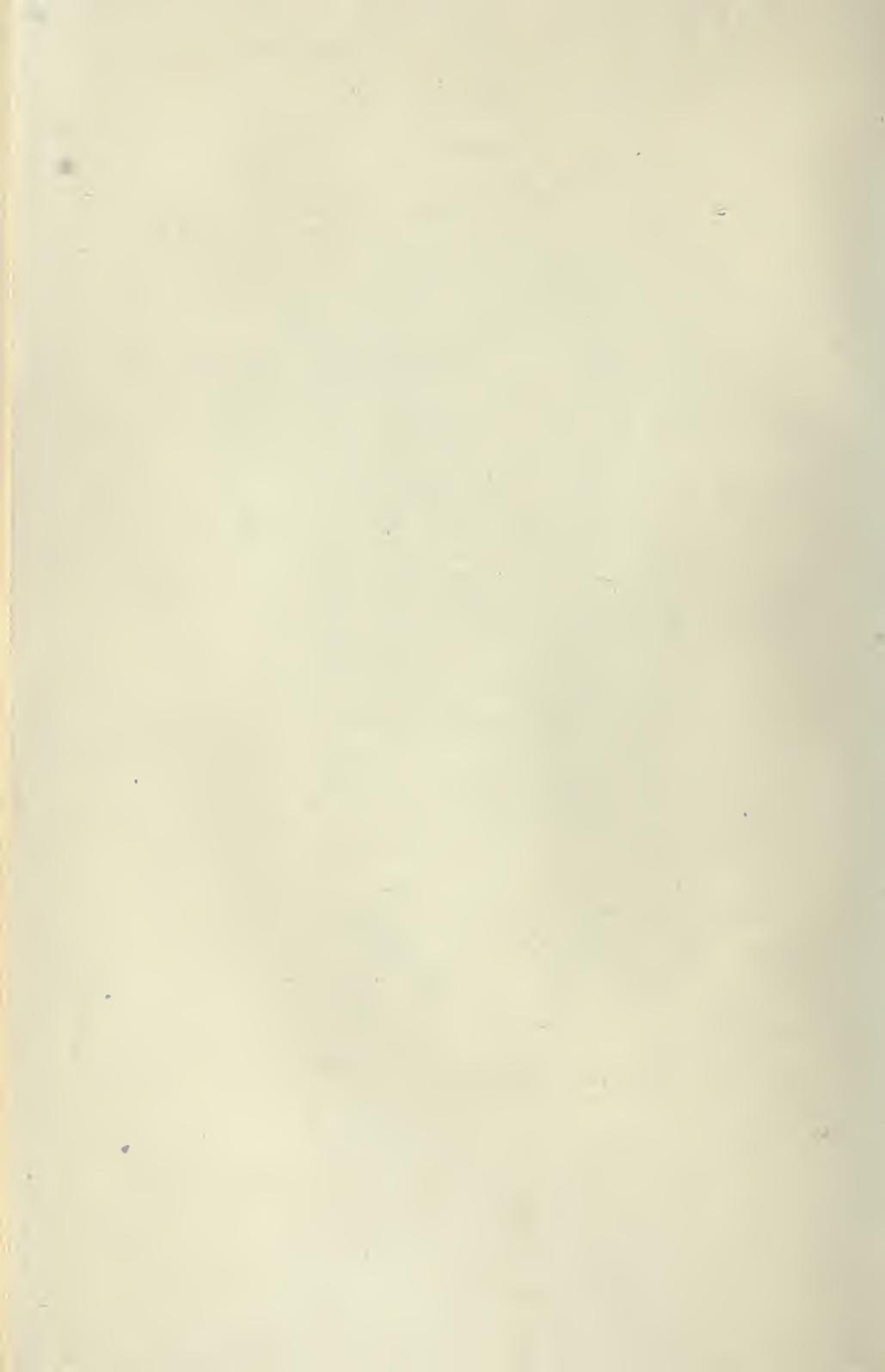
“On the evenings when Mrs. Washington received visitors, he did not consider *himself* as visited. He was then as a private gentleman, dressed usually in some colored coat and waistcoat (the only one recollected was brown, with bright buttons), and black on his lower limbs. He had then neither hat nor sword; he moved about among the company, conversing with one and another. He had once a fortnight an official dinner, and select companies on other days. He sat (it is said) at the side, in a central position, Mrs. Washington opposite; the two ends were occupied by members of his family, or by personal friends.”

John Adams, who had also spent some years in England and France, developed a different point of view from that of Jefferson with regard to the French Revolution. He seems to have thought that the rule of the masses was a mistake; he deplored their excesses, and from his conduct while in office we are sure that he was not pleased to be “hail fellow well met” with everybody and to be addressed as “*citoyen*.” We have evidence of this in a letter which he wrote to Dr. Rush in 1811:

“In point of Republicanism all the difference I ever knew, or could discover between you and me, or between Jefferson and me, consisted



*John Adams*



## FORMS AND CEREMONIES

“ 1. In the difference between speeches and messages. I was a monarchist because I thought a speech more manly, more respectful to Congress and the nation. Jefferson and Rush preferred messages.

“ 2. I held levees once a week that all my time might not be wasted by idle visits. Jefferson’s whole eight years was a levee.

“ 3. I dined a large company once or twice a week. Jefferson dined a dozen every day.

“ 4. Jefferson and Rush were for liberty and straight hair. I thought curled hair was as Republican as straight.”

Thus we see that Adams was more in sympathy with Washington and Hamilton than with Jefferson. He carried his feelings so far as to absent himself ostentatiously from Jefferson’s Inauguration.

He was not at all averse to display when he considered that the occasion required it. He arrived in Washington on June 3, 1800, and was met by a number of citizens on horseback, who escorted him to the Union Tavern in Georgetown. Two days later he removed to Tunnick’s Hotel in Washington. We have already seen his veiled threat not to occupy the unfinished President’s house. However, we have also seen that he and his wife took possession of it; and we learn that at his New Year’s reception in 1801, he welcomed his callers in full dress, consisting of a suit of black velvet with silk stockings, silver knee and shoe buckles, white waistcoat, powdered hair, and gloves. He followed the ceremonial forms adopted by Washington. He had driven

## THE WHITE HOUSE

to the Capitol in November in a coach and attendants similar to Washington's when he opened Congress.

There is little to be said of President Adams's tenancy of the President's house, since it terminated on March 4, 1801.



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (1800)



## CHAPTER THREE

### THOMAS JEFFERSON

1801-1809

Inauguration of Thomas Jefferson; Old Forms and Ceremonies Abolished; Jefferson's New Rules of Etiquette; Sir Augustus Foster on the Troubles of the Diplomats; the British Minister at the President's House; Tom Moore's Description of Jefferson, Sir Augustus Foster on Jefferson's Behavior and Policy, and the Troubles of the Merrys; Jefferson's Informality; Mrs. Madison, the hostess of the White House; Jefferson's Hospitality and Household; John Quincy Adams's Description of Dinners; General Turreau and General Moreau; New Year's Day and Fourth of July; Jefferson's Retirement from the Presidency.

**T**HOMAS JEFFERSON was the first President inaugurated in Washington. On Nov. 27, 1800, he arrived in Washington and took lodgings in the apartments recently opened by Conrad and McMunn, on New Jersey Avenue, about two hundred steps from the Capitol. Here he remained all through the winter until March 19, 1801. From these lodgings, he went to the Capitol to take the oath of office; and to these lodgings he returned when the ceremonies were over.

The story that "his dress was of plain cloth and he rode on horseback to the Capitol without a single guard, or even servant in his train, dismounted without assistance and hitched the bridle of his horse to the

## THE WHITE HOUSE

palisades," rests on the authority of an English traveller, John Davis, who has evidently confused Jefferson's entrance into with his exit from the Presidency. It is said to have been Jefferson's intention to have a coach and four for the occasion; but that his son-in-law, Mr. Eppes, did not send the horses in time; but he acknowledged the arrival of the four splendid fiery bays in a letter dated May 28, 1801. Mrs. Upton<sup>1</sup> says:

"Mr. Jefferson himself, like Washington, was fond of horses, handsome equipages and handsome dress, despite what has been said of his republican simplicity. He may have ridden horseback up to the Capitol for his Inauguration, as goes the myth, but he meant to have a fine coach and four for the occasion—only Jacky Eppes did not get to Washington with them in season. He may sometimes have been carelessly attired, but often he flashed out in contemporaneous record in his white coat, scarlet breeches and vest, and white silk hose fit to figure on a Watteau fan."

An undoubtedly authentic contemporary account of the Inauguration published in the *National Intelligencer*, March 6, 1801, reads as follows:

"At an early hour on Wednesday the City of Washington presented a spectacle of uncommon animation, occasioned by the addition to its usual population of a large body of citizens from adjacent districts. A discharge from the company of Washington artillery ushered in the day, and about ten o'clock the Alexandria company of riflemen, with the company of artillery paraded in front of the President's lodgings.

<sup>1</sup> *Our Early Presidents.*



THOMAS JEFFERSON



## THOMAS JEFFERSON

“ At twelve o'clock Thomas Jefferson, attended by a number of his fellow-citizens, among whom were many members of Congress, repaired to the Capitol. His dress was, as usual, that of a plain citizen, without any distinctive badge of office.

“ He entered the Capitol under a discharge of artillery.

“ On his entry into the Senate Chamber, there were assembled the Senate and the members of the House of Representatives. The members rose and Mr. Burr left the Chair of the Senate, which Mr. Jefferson took.

“ After a few minutes of silence, Mr. Jefferson rose and delivered his address before the largest concourse of citizens ever assembled here. After seating himself for a short period, he again rose and approached the clerk's table, where the oath of office was administered by the Chief Justice; after which he returned to his lodgings, accompanied by the Vice-President, Chief-Justice and heads of Departments, where he was waited upon by a number of distinguished citizens.

“ As soon as he withdrew, a discharge of artillery was made. The remainder of the day was devoted to festivity, and at night there was a pretty general illumination.

“ Neither Mr. Adams, nor Theodore Sedgwick, Speaker of the House of Representatives, were present at the inaugural ceremony; both these gentlemen having left the city at daylight on that morning.”

Since it is plain that Jefferson had only a hundred yards to walk from his lodgings to the Capitol, he had no reason to regret the belated arrival of his coach. He did not give up his lodgings for nearly three weeks after this. While there, we learn how popular he made himself with the other boarders by his self-effacement, refusing to take the head of the table, though impor-

## THE WHITE HOUSE

tuned to do so. He liked the situation, and frequently expressed himself in terms of great admiration of the beautiful view from the house. We have already quoted his indignation at the ruthless destruction of the magnificent timber that clothed the hillsides. He was loath to take up his residence in the half-finished mansion a mile away in the swamp.

Under date of March 20, 1801, a Washington paper publishes the following item: "Yesterday the President of the United States removed from Messrs. McMunn and Conrad's to the President's house." He had not been long in his new home before his thoughts turned to *Monticello*, and family, for on April 11, he writes to Mrs. Eppes: "It is probable I shall come home myself about the last week of July, or first of August, to stay two months during the sickly season in autumn every year." *Monticello* was but three days' journey from Washington, and Jefferson had long been in the habit of visiting his own country-seat during the recesses of Congress, and twice a year at least spending as much time as possible away from Washington. When Vice-President, he had always been so anxious to get away from the Capitol that he seldom remained to preside in the Senate till the end of the session, and as seldom returned until after it was organized.

The departure of ex-President Adams from the President's house with such scant ceremony certainly did not incline Mr. Jefferson to view with a more kindly eye the forms and ceremonies of his predecessors



STATUE OF JEFFERSON BY DAVID D'ANGERS



## THOMAS JEFFERSON

in the office of Chief Magistrate, even if policy had not induced him to "play to the gallery." What Chief-Justice Marshall called "his ardent and undisguised attachment to the Revolutionary party in France" would undoubtedly, in any case, have induced him to cut adrift from the etiquette that had been founded on the observances of foreign courts. He therefore immediately established a new set of rules to suit himself. He abolished the weekly levees, refused to have his birthday celebrated by the customary ball (or indeed be noticed at all), and appointed two days only for public receptions—the first of January and the Fourth of July. On these occasions the doors of the President's house were thrown open to everybody. He received private calls at all times. Among Mr. Jefferson's papers, one endorsed by him reads:

"This rough paper contains what was agreed upon:

### ETIQUETTE

"I. In order to bring the members of society together in the first instance, the custom of the country has established that residents shall pay the first visit to strangers, and, among strangers, first comers to later comers, foreign and domestic; the character of stranger ceasing after the first visits. To this rule there is a single exception. Foreign ministers, from the necessity of making themselves known, pay the first visit to the ministers of the nation which is returned.

"II. When brought together in society, all are perfectly equal, whether foreign or domestic, titled or untitled, in or out of office.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

“ All other observances are but exemplifications of these two principles:

“ I. 1st. The families of foreign ministers, arriving at the seat of government, receive the first visit from those of the national ministers, as from all other residents.

“ 2d. Members of the Legislature and of the Judiciary, independent of their offices, have a right as strangers to receive the first visit.

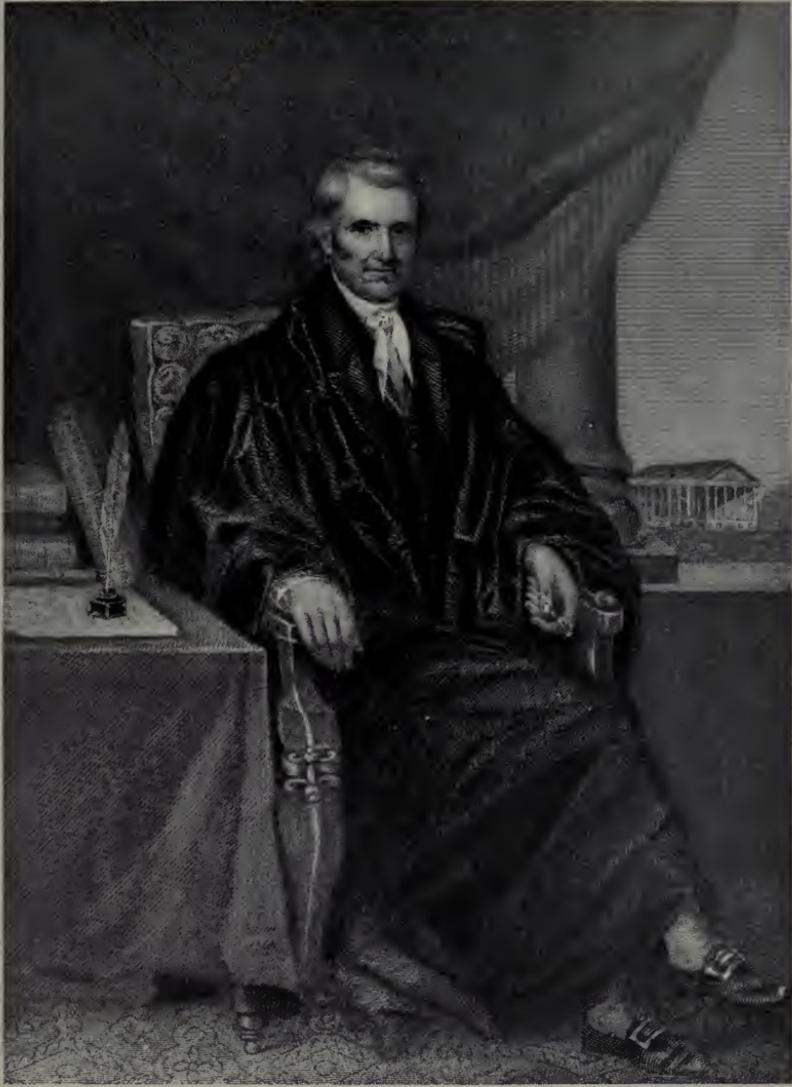
“ II. 1st. No title being admitted here, those of foreigners give no precedence.

“ 2d. Difference of grade among the diplomatic members gives no precedence.

“ 3d. At public ceremonies, to which the government invites the presence of foreign ministers and their families, a convenient seat or station will be provided for them, with any other strangers invited and the families of the national ministers, each taking place as they arrive and without any precedence.

“ 4th. To maintain the principle of equality, or of *pêle-mêle*, and prevent the growth of precedence out of courtesy, the members of the Executive will practice at their own houses, and recommend an adherence to the ancient usage of the country, of gentlemen in mass giving precedence to ladies in mass, in passing from one apartment where they are assembled into another.”

Another ceremony that Jefferson abolished was the formal opening of Congress. This, as we have seen, had been attended with dignity and state. Jefferson would have none of this; and, on the opening of Congress in 1801, to the surprise of every one, he sent a written message—a practice which has been followed by his successors.



J. MARSHALL



## THOMAS JEFFERSON

“Jeffersonian simplicity” raised a great hubbub in Diplomatic circles and in the ranks of the opposition. The bitter feeling engendered by his conduct while in the President’s house is sharply mirrored in memoirs of the Secretary of the British Legation, Sir Augustus Foster, of the day, who also was British Minister in Madison’s Administration. Though tinged with bitterness, the record is interesting as showing the feeling against Jefferson at the time. Among other things of a personal nature, he says that “the Diplomats received intolerable treatment at this raw and rude Court . . . . Considering the respectability that had surrounded General Washington and the elder Adams, but particularly the former, much was expected in the social assemblies of the first Magistrate of a great and cultivated nation.” Mr. Jefferson “seemed pleased to mortify men of rank and station, foreign or domestic, unless they paid him servile court, or chimed in with his ideas on general philanthropy.”

The first to be aggrieved was the Danish Minister, Mr. Petersen; the Spanish Minister also suffered; and the English Minister felt insulted even when he first presented his credentials. As an example of the way in which the Diplomatic Corps was slighted by Mr. Jefferson, we are told: “The President took care to show his preference of the Indian deputies on New Year’s Day by giving us only a bow, while with them he entered into a long conversation.”

The British Minister, Mr. Merry, wrote to Josiah

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Quincy the following account of his reception by Mr. Jefferson :

“ I called on Mr. Madison, who accompanied me to the President. We went together to the mansion-house, I being in full official costume, as the etiquette of my place required on such a formal introduction of a Minister from Great Britain to the President of the United States. On arriving at the hall of audience, we found it empty; at which Mr. Madison seemed surprised, and proceeded to an entry leading to the President’s study. I followed him, supposing the introduction was to take place in the adjoining room. At this moment, Mr. Jefferson entered the entry at the other end, and all three of us were packed in this narrow space, from which, to make room, I was obliged to back out. In this awkward position my introduction to the President was made by Mr. Madison. Mr. Jefferson’s appearance soon explained to me that the general circumstances of my reception, had not been accidental, but studied. I, in my official costume, found myself at the hour of reception he had himself appointed, introduced to a man as President of the United States, not merely in an undress, but *actually standing in slippers down at the heels*, and both pantaloons, coat and under-clothes, indicative of utter slovenliness and indifference to appearances, and in a state of negligence actually studied. I could not doubt that the whole scene was prepared and intended as an insult, not to me personally, but to the sovereign I represented.”

Tom Moore, the poet, had accompanied the Merrys to Norfolk on his way to Bermuda. While waiting for a ship to complete his voyage, he visited Washington, where he was lionized by many of the notabilities there. He was presented to the President by Mr. Merry, and



VIEW OF WASHINGTON FROM THE CAPITOL (1809)



## THOMAS JEFFERSON

the reception he met with drew from his pen biting verses on his return to England shortly afterwards. These are familiar to every reader of the Irish *Anacreeon*. The following short paragraph, from one of his letters, however, is, perhaps, not so familiar:

“ I found him sitting with General Dearborn and one or two other officers, and in the same homely costume, comprising slippers and Connemara stockings in which Mr. Merry had been received by him, much to that formal Minister’s horror, when waiting on him in full dress to deliver his credentials. My single interview with this remarkable person was of very short duration; but to have seen and spoken to the man who drew up the Declaration of Independence was an event not to be forgotten.”

Sir Augustus waxes quite indignant over the trials of the Diplomats, though he attributes Jefferson’s behaviour to policy:

“ His party was founded on the court he paid to the democratical party; and he could not have appeared in a great town as he did at Washington without attendants when he took a ride, and, fastening his horse’s bridle himself to a shop-door, as I have once witnessed, when his nail was torn off in the operation, or in yarn stockings and slippers when he received company; neither could he anywhere else have had the members of the legislature so dependent upon him and the rest of the Administration for the little amusement and relief which they could obtain after public business; his house and those of the Ministers being in fact almost necessary to them unless they chose to live like bears brutalized and stupefied—as one of the Federalists once confessed to me that he felt—from

## THE WHITE HOUSE

hearing nothing but politics from morning to night, and from continual confinement without any relaxation whatsoever. Mr. Jefferson knew too well what he was about—he had lived in too good society at Paris, where he was employed as Minister from the United States previously to the French Revolution, and where he had been admitted to the coteries of Madame du Deffand—not to set a value on the decencies and proprieties of life; but he was playing a game for retaining the highest office in a State where manners are not a prevailing feature in the great mass of the society, being, except in the large towns, rather despised as a mark of effeminacy by the majority, who seem to glory in being only thought men of bold strong minds and good sound judgment. . . .

“ I have now to speak of his change in the established rules of politeness, or even hospitality, as practised all over the globe on the occasion of a first entertainment given to a foreign envoy—to whom even savages would naturally endeavour to make the entertainment agreeable. I conclude Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison were too much of the gentlemen not to feel ashamed of what they were doing, and consequently did it awkwardly, as people must do who affect bad manners for a particular object. I allude to the sudden alteration in the etiquette heretofore practised by General Washington and Mr. Adams on dinner being announced. Mr. and Mrs. Merry were so thoroughly unaware of this intention that they had not had time to think of what they should do on the occasion, and Mr. Jefferson had not requested any one present to look to the strangers; so, when he took to dinner the lady next him, Mr. Madison followed his example, and the Senators and members of the House of Representatives walked off with their respective dames—leaving the astonished Merry—(who was of the old school, having passed a great part of his life at Madrid)—gazing after them, till at last he made common cause with his better half: offering her his arm with a formal air, and giving

## THOMAS JEFFERSON

a hint to one of the servants to send for his carriage, he took her to table and sat by her—the half-ashamed and half-awkward President not even attempting an excuse. And this same scene was for consistency's sake repeated nearly in the same manner at the house of the Secretary of State. Ever afterwards Mr. Merry refused their invitations; messages were sent to beg he would dine with the President as Mr. Merry, putting aside his quality of British minister; but this he could not well do without, as he thought, sanctioning in some sort their previous treatment of the representative of Great Britain, as long as no apology was offered for the past: so he never met his Excellency any more at table, since the President, unlike our social monarchs of the north, keeps his state—neither he nor his wife accepting of invitations. Another mortification Mr. Merry had to submit to was the suppression of the privilege of a chair in the Senate on the right of the Vice-President, which had hitherto been enjoyed by foreign ministers—the question having been debated in the Senate and carried against him by a large majority. . . .

“The above questions of etiquette, it is true, were but of little real importance; nevertheless, they occupied the thoughts of the republicans a great deal more than they need have done, and were consequently a source of considerable annoyance at the time to the mission, because some of the most vulgar of the democratic party took their cue from the style adopted at the great house, and in one way or other, either by remarking on her dress or diamonds, or treading on her gown, worried Mrs. Merry to such a degree that I have sometimes seen her on coming home burst into tears at having to live at such a place—particularly on seeing the affected unpoliteness of those who should have known better, but who, being *ratters from the federal party*, seeking for favour and place, made use of her assemblies in order to render their boorish humours, as well as their concurrence with the systematic manners of Mr. Jeffer-

## THE WHITE HOUSE

son, more conspicuous. Among these was one, of a stern, sour and republican countenance, who had been used to the best society, but who purposely came to her parties in dirty boots, disordered hair, and quite the reverse of what he knew to be the fashion in European capitals. This was certainly difficult for a lady to digest; but I must be just, and add that I found among *the democrats* many highly respectable and worthy persons, and even among the lowest in station of the members of Congress several droll, original, but unoffending characters."

On taking up his abode in the great unfinished mansion, the President declined to have his birthday celebrated by the usual ball, and immediately abolished the weekly levee. This was a great blow to the social life of the young city, and a delegation of ladies stormed the citadel to protest in person. The President was taking his afternoon ride when they called, and on his return was informed that some ladies were waiting to see him. Booted and spurred and carrying his whip in hand, the President hastened to the drawing-room where he received his self-invited guests informally and with great charm of manner. He listened to their complaints and persuasively argued his side of the question. They left in defeat, but with an ardent admiration for the new President.

It was always easy to approach the President: he was accessible to visitors at all times and seasons; and thus justifies Mr. Adams's remarks already quoted that "Jefferson's whole eight years was a levee." His favorite pleasure was in driving behind his splendid bays,

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or in riding his favorite horse, "Wildair." Jefferson was a superb horseman, and accustomed to ride every afternoon. Many stories are told of the chance acquaintances he picked up during these lonely expeditions, who would enter into conversation without the slightest idea that they were talking to the President.

This favorite recreation was satirized by Dennie in the *Imaginary Diary Picked up near the President's House*, and published in the *Portfolio* in 1804. One item reads:

"Ordered my horse—never ride with a servant—looks proud—mob doesn't like it—must gull the boobies—Adams wouldn't bend so—would rather lose his place—knew nothing of the world."

The President lived a somewhat lonely life in the official residence. When the presence of a lady was needed to grace the occasion, such as State dinners and receptions to foreign Ministers, Mrs. Madison, wife of the Secretary of State, presided. In the season of 1802-3, his daughters, Mrs. Randolph and Mrs. Eppes, shared in doing the honors of their father's public home. This was Mrs. Eppes's sole visit; and her death in the spring of 1804 threw a shadow upon the President's house. Mrs. Randolph spent the season of 1805-6 in Washington; and this was her last visit; so that during the eight years of his term, Jefferson enjoyed two visits only from his daughters. His sons-

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in-law, however, lived with him while Congress was in session. The hostess of the President's house, therefore, was Mrs. Madison. Her friendly footing at the mansion can be gathered from the report of a lady who describes in 1803 how she was personally conducted through the President's house by Mrs. Madison, "who seemed quite at home," and took her "from room to room, not excepting the chamber of Mr. Jefferson and his Secretary," where "in her usual sprightly and droll manner, she opened the President's wardrobe and showed his odd but useful contrivance for hanging up jackets and breeches on a machine like a turnstile." On this occasion, Mrs. Madison also showed her the "Mammoth Cheese" that had attracted so much comment; and was, in its way, a Washington celebrity.

This curious offering had been sent to the President in 1802, from a body of enthusiastic followers of foreign birth in Pennsylvania, who rejoiced over Jefferson's discussion of the naturalization laws in his message of 1801. A delegation from a convention that met at West Chester, Penn., on Jan. 1, 1802, was sent to Washington with the gift of a "Mammoth Cheese" that came from Cheshire, Mass. It made its long journey in a wagon drawn by six horses and bearing the label, "The greatest cheese in America for the greatest man in America." The delegation that accompanied it was received at the President's house, where an address was read and presented. The President replied, and



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welcomed the cheese in a manner satisfactory to all concerned.

Jefferson was exceedingly strict in refusing presents, which was sometimes a cause of great disappointment to his daughters (see page 46). On the present occasion he evidently accepted the cheese with a mental reservation, for an entry in his diary in 1802 reads:

“Gave Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Leland, bearer of the cheese of 1235 lbs. weight, 200 D.”

The price for cheese per pound therefore which the Reverend gentleman received was about fifty per cent. above the current market prices.

The cheese lasted a long time, notwithstanding the President's lavish hospitality. It formed a feature of the Fourth of July public dinner in the following year, as we gather from the following report dated July 6, 1803:

“Between twelve and two o'clock the President was waited upon by a large company of ladies and gentlemen; among whom were the heads of departments, foreign ministers, the civil officers of the government, Mayor and the city council, and the officers of the militia.

“Early in the day the uniform companies of militia paraded on the ground in front of the President's House, and, after going through a variety of evolutions, saluted the President at about two o'clock.”

A big dinner was given at Stelle's Hotel at four o'clock when eighteen toasts were made; and to each toast, from one to eighteen guns were fired.

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The reporter continues on July 8th:

“ We omitted to state in our last, that the President had furnished the company at Stelle's with a supply of the Mammoth Cheese, which was also distributed among the ladies and gentlemen who waited upon him in the morning. Good judges are of the opinion that it had greatly improved, and that it only requires time to be an excellent cheese. It is in a state of the best preservation.”

With regard to hospitality, the President's house was indeed Liberty Hall in Jefferson's day, particularly during his first Administration, when he spent about five times as much for “ wine provided at Washington ” as he did in his second term. The total sum spent on wine for the two terms was \$10,855.90, distributed as follows:

1801.....	\$2,622.33
1802.....	1,975.72
1803.....	1,253.57
1804.....	2,668.94
1805.....	546.41
1806.....	659.38
1807.....	553.97
1808.....	75.58

According to his own account, four pipes of Madeira lasted about seven months in 1801. This was the favorite wine, but by no means the only one. In 1801, Jefferson bought three pipes of Brazil Madeira; a pipe of Pedro Ximenes Mountain; a quarter cask of Tent;



MISS HARRIET LANE



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a keg of Pacharetté doux; fifteen dozen of claret; and forty-five dozen of Sauterne. In 1802, he purchased sixty gallons of Malaga (forty-five years old); two dozen of claret; one pipe of dry Pacheretté (fifteen-year-old Sherry); two pipes Sherry; half a barrel of Syracuse; and a hundred bottles of Champagne. The purchases for 1803 consist of five hundred bottles of Champagne; two half pipes of wine of O Eyras (from Lisbon); two pipes of Brazil Madeira; two hundred and ninety-four bottles of Chambertin Burgundy; fifty bottles of white Hermitage; one hundred and fifty bottles Rozan Morgan; and one-quarter cask Mountain, of crop 1747. The wines bought in 1804 included the best brands of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, Hungarian, and French vintages. He got his fine Spanish wines through Mr. d'Yrugo, the Spanish Minister.

As usual, though the Spanish Minister received his wines without paying customs, Jefferson adhered to his punctiliousness and paid the Government duty on his share of the consignment.

According to Jefferson's manager, Edmund Bacon, the house was served by eleven servants from *Monticello*, a French cook, a French steward, and an Irish coachman. He adds:

"Mr. Jefferson told me that the office of vice-president was far preferable to that of president. He was perfectly tired out with company. He had a very long dining-room, and his table was chock full every one of the sixteen days I was there. There were Congressmen, foreigners and all sorts of people to dine

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with him. He dined at four o'clock, and they generally sat and talked until night. It used to worry me to sit so long; and I finally quit when I got through eating, and went off and left them. The first thing in the morning there was to go to market. Mr. Jefferson's steward was a very smart man, well-educated, and as much of a gentleman in his appearance as any man. His carriage-driver would get out the wagon early in the morning, and Lamar would go with him to Georgetown to market. I have all my life been in the habit of getting up about four o'clock in the morning, and I went with them very often. Lamar told me that it often took fifty dollars to pay for what marketing they would use in a day."

In addition to the lavish provisions obtained from Georgetown (and doubtless Baltimore on occasions) the President kept a wagon going constantly between his official home and *Monticello*.

It is evident that Jefferson's open dinner table was run very much on a bachelor basis. He spent as little time as possible in the President's house, living there with his two sons-in-law and secretary, and he occasionally had a flying visit from one of his daughters, and on occasions where female grace was requisite Mrs. Madison played propriety. He had been a devoted husband to his dead wife and spent as much time as possible at *Monticello*, as had been his custom before his election as President.

An amusing story of the democratic nature of the dinner-table is that of a butcher, who, invited to dine at the President's house with several members of Congress, took with him his son, also a butcher, and, going

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up to Jefferson, said that he heard "that one of the guests was ill and couldn't come, so he brought his son, knowing that there would be a spare plate."

John Quincy Adams notes in his diary several dinners at the President's house during Jefferson's two terms. Two or three of these may be quoted here:

"1805, Dec. 9.—I dined at the President's in company with the Tunisian Ambassador and his two secretaries. By the invitation, dinner was to have been on the table precisely at sunset—it being in the midst of Ramadan, during which the Turks fast while the sun is above the horizon. He did not arrive until half an hour after sunset, and, immediately after greeting the President and the company, proposed to retire and smoke his pipe. The President requested him to smoke it there, which he accordingly did, taking at the same time snuff deeply scented with otto of roses. We then went to dinner, where he freely partook of the dishes on the table without enquiring into the cookery. Mrs. Randolph, the President's daughter, and her daughter were the only ladies there, and immediately after they returned to the drawing-room after dinner the ambassador followed them to smoke his pipe again. His secretaries remained after him just long enough to take each a glass of wine, which they did not venture to do in his presence. His dress differed from that of the Turks. He wears his beard long. His secretaries only wear whiskers. His manners are courteous, but we were all unable to converse with him except through the medium of an interpreter. The company was Mr. S. Smith, President of the Senate, Dr. Logan and Dr. Mitchell, Mr. John Randolph, Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Dawson of the House of Representatives, and the President's two sons-in-law, Mr. T. M. Randolph and Mr. Eppes, with Mr. Coles, his secretary, and Mr. Davis, who acted as interpreter."

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In after years, Mrs. Randolph's daughter, above referred to, wrote of this reception as follows:

"I have some recollections of the house as it was before being burned by the British, and as it was rebuilt on the same plan, I have since recognized parts of it most familiar to my eyes. A lasting impression was made upon my memory by the reception in one of the drawing-rooms of the Tunisian Ambassador and suite; the brilliantly lighted room, the odd appearance to my puzzled senses of the rich Turkish dresses, and my alarm at receiving a kiss from the Secretary of the Ambassador, whilst one of my sisters, just two years old, whose Saxon complexion and golden hair made her a beautiful picture, was honored by a kiss from the Ambassador, of which she has no recollection. I heard of the elegant presents brought by them for my mother and aunt, and which were publicly exhibited and sold. My mother wished to purchase one of the shawls intended for her; but when Mrs. Madison went to make the purchase, she found that she had been anticipated by another person. The talk about these presents could not, of course, fail to greatly excite my childish curiosity, but my desire to see them was not gratified. My grandfather did not allow them to be brought to the President's house, as it was then called—a name which, it seems, was too plain English to suit modern notions of dignified refinement, for it has been superseded by the more stately appellation of 'Executive Mansion.' From its being the cause of my disappointment in seeing those beautiful specimens of Oriental luxury and taste, my grandfather's strictness on that occasion served to impress upon my mind, earlier than it otherwise would have been impressed, a trait of his character which afterwards became as familiar to me, and as natural a part of himself, as the sound of his voice—I mean his scrupulousness in conforming to the laws in all things, great or small."

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Jefferson was evidently an accomplished *farceur*. In 1804 he is described by a visitor as "a tall man, with a very red, freckled face and grey neglected hair; his manners good-natured, frank, and rather friendly, though he had somewhat of a cynical expression of countenance. He wore a blue coat, a thick grey-colored hairy waistcoat, with a red under waistcoat lapped over it, green velveteen breeches with pearl buttons, yarn stockings, and slippers down at the heels."

Jefferson's propensity for amusing himself at the expense of his guests is shown very plainly in the diary of John Quincy Adams. The number and quality of the average company in 1803 appears in the following extract:

"Nov. 7.—Dined with my wife at the President's. The company were seventeen in number: Mr. Madison, his lady and her sister, Mr. Wright and his two daughters, and Miss Gray, Mr. Butler and General McPherson of Philadelphia were there; also Mr. Eppes and Mr. Randolph, Mr. Jefferson's two sons-in-law, both members of the House of Representatives. After dinner, Mr. Macon, the Speaker of the House, and Mr. John Randolph and Mr. Venable came in. We came home at about six."

A year later (Nov. 23), we read:

"Dined with the President. Mrs. Adams did not go. The company were Mr. R. Smith, Secretary of the Navy, and his lady, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, Miss Jenifer and Miss Mouchette, Mr. Brent and the President's two sons-in-law, with Mr. Burwell, his private secretary. I had a good deal of conver-

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sation with the President. The French Minister just arrived had been this day first presented to him, and appears to have displeased him by the profusion of gold lace on his clothes. He says they must get him down to a plain frock coat, or the boys in the streets will run after him as a sight."

"He further observed that both French and Spanish ought to be made primary objects of acquisition in all the educations of our young men. As to Spanish, it was so easy that he had learned it, with the help of a *Don Quixote* lent him by Mr. Cabot, and a grammar, in the course of a passage to Europe, on which he was but nineteen days at sea. But Mr. Jefferson tells large stories. At table he told us that when he was at Marseilles, he saw there a Mr. Bergasse, a famous manufacturer of wines, who told him that he would make him any sort of wine he would name, and in any quantities, at six or eight sols the bottle. And though there should not be a drop of the genuine wine required in his composition, yet it should so perfectly imitate the taste that the most refined connoisseur should not be able to tell which was which. You never can be an hour in this man's company without something of the marvellous, like these stories. His genius is of the old French school. It conceives better than it combines. He showed us among other things, a Natural History of Parrots, in French, with colored plates very beautifully executed."

"1805, Jan. 11.—Dined at the President's, with my wife. General Smith and his brother of the navy,<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Smith formerly a member of Congress from Baltimore, Mr. Williams and his two daughters, Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Hewes were there. So was the Vice-President. The President appeared to have his mind absorbed by some other object, for he was less attentive to his company than usual. His itch for tell-

<sup>1</sup> Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy, afterwards Secretary of State under Madison.

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ing prodigies, however, is unabated. Speaking of the cold, he said he had seen Fahrenheit's thermometer, *in Paris*, at twenty degrees below zero; and that not for a single day, but that for six weeks together it stood *thereabouts*. 'Never once in the whole time,' said he, 'so high as zero, which is *fifty* degrees below the freezing point.' These were his own words. He knows better than all this; but he loves to excite wonder. General Turreau and Captain Marin interrupted conversation, and the company took leave."

"1807, 16 Feb.—Dined with President. The company consisted altogether of Federal members of Congress. The President was less cheerful in his manners than usual, but told some of his customary staring (startling?) stories. Among the rest, he said that before he went from Virginia to France, he had some ripe pears sewed up in tow bags, and that when he returned six years afterwards, he found them in a perfect state of preservation—self candied."

The General Turreau who interrupted conversation, and who was "famous for his Vendéan brutalities" and whose gold lace excited Mr. Jefferson's unfavorable criticism, was a picturesque figure in Washington society. If we may believe a doubtless prejudiced British critic, he was a typical *sans culotte* who had risen from the dregs of the people to eminence under Bonaparte. He had married a jailer's daughter, who had helped him out of prison on one occasion; and he had a secretary who played the violoncello. This accomplishment was of the utmost importance to the French general, because he made him play every day while he horsewhipped his wife so that her cries were not

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audible. Finally the authorities invaded France's property and interfered. A collection was subscribed for the wife, who had been allowed no money. "None of us ever saw her tyrant in society," the British Secretary adds, "the First Consul having among other 'gentlemanly novelties' ordered his Minister not to meet the British Envoy 'unless it should be at the President's house.'"

Mr. Jefferson had plenty of opportunity to indulge his French predilections while President. A French general of quite a different stamp from Turreau was a great favorite in Washington society. This was the exiled General Moreau. Napoleon's brother, Jerome, was also a welcome guest at the President's table. The President's daughters had received the finish of a French education, and the atmosphere of the President's house must have been noticeably cosmopolitan. We are informed that the legation that seemed to be on the best terms with the Administration was the Russian. This is comprehensible when, among other things, we remember the French and Russian coalitions against Great Britain.

The great days at the President's house were New Year's Day and the Fourth of July. Before closing this chapter, therefore, a few contemporary press notices of the public receptions in those days will graphically bring the scene before us:

"On Saturday, New Year's Day, the President was waited upon by Diplomatic characters, the officers of the Government,

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the members of the legislature, and the citizens generally. There were also present a large number of ladies." (1803.)

"On Monday in celebration of the New Year, the President of the United States was waited upon by the officers of the Government, civil and military, Foreign Ministers, the members of the two Houses of Congress and the citizens of Washington, who, together with a large assemblage of ladies, partook of a handsome repast, rendered more agreeable by the accompaniment of the Marine and Italian bands." (1804.)

"About twelve o'clock, the President was waited upon by the heads of Departments and the other officers civil and military, foreign Diplomatic characters, strangers of distinction, the Cherokee chiefs at present on a mission to the seat of Government, and most of the respectable citizens of Washington and Georgetown. . . .

"Some time after the company had assembled, Col. Burrows, at the head of the Marine corps, saluted the President, while the band of music played the President's march, went through the usual evolutions in a masterly manner, fired sixteen rounds in platoons, and concluded with a general feu-de-joie.

"The band at intervals during the morning played martial and patriotic airs.

"After partaking of the abundant refreshments that were distributed, and enjoying pleasure which may be truly said to have been without alloy, the company separated about two o'clock, and betook themselves to the various places of entertainment provided for the celebration of the day."

"At twelve o'clock company began to assemble at the house of the President of the United States to congratulate him on the return of this auspicious day; in a short time after which his spacious apartments were filled with a large assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, among whom a liberal supply of refreshments was distributed. The President received the congratula-

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tions on this happy return of the day, commemorative of the splendid event in which he bore so distinguished a part, with a satisfaction evidently increased by the joy exhibited on every countenance. Among those who offered their congratulations were the heads of departments, the officers of the general government, the Mayor and Council of the City, and the officers of the militia of the district. When the troops were discharged, the officers waited on the President. The pleasure of the company was considerably promoted by patriotic and popular airs, played at intervals by the Italian band. Between two and three o'clock the company separated and repaired to various places provided for the ensuing entertainment of the day." (July, 1804.)

"Yesterday being New Year's Day, the President was waited upon by a large concourse of ladies, citizens and strangers of distinction, among whom refreshments were liberally distributed.

"There prevailed throughout the company a lively joy at the return of another year, crowned with it the continued enjoyment of peace, liberty and prosperity.

"On no preceding occasion has the company been so numerous—an evidence of the increasing confidence of the people in the administration of their public concerns." (1805.)

"The President's rooms were as usual opened for the reception of company. On no antecedent occasion has the assemblage been so great. . . .

"A large number of the more respectable Federalists, heretofore in opposition to the administration, made their first appearance at the President's levee, and mingled in perfect cordiality with their republican brethren. While the company partook of a most liberal supply of refreshments, they were entertained by the performance of patriotic airs played at regular intervals by the fine band attached to the Marine Corps, which was placed in the large hall, and whose tones, though

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loud and impressive, did not from the intervening distance in the least interfere with conversation." (July, 1807.)

J. Q. Adams notes in his diary, Jan. 1, 1808:

"At noon I went with the ladies to pay the customary visit to the President. There was a very numerous company of men, women and children; but no Indians. Mr. Monroe and General Wilkinson were the strangers of principal note present. We stayed about an hour and returned immediately home."

It is interesting to learn with what emotions Mr. Jefferson, so long the most conspicuous figure in the United States, left the Presidency and returned to his loved "clover fields." Two days before he again became a private citizen, he wrote to his friend, Dupont de Nemours:

"Within a few days I retire to my family, my books and farms; and having gained the harbour myself, I shall look on my friends still buffeting the storm with anxiety indeed, but not with envy. Never did a prisoner, released from his chains, feel such relief as I shall on shaking off the shackles of power. Nature intended me for the tranquil pursuits of science, by rendering them my supreme delight. But the enormities of the times in which I have lived, have forced me to take part in resisting them, and to commit myself on the boisterous ocean of political passions. I thank God for the opportunity of retiring from them without censure, and carrying with me the most consoling proofs of public approbation."

Jefferson endeavored to transfer his authority with as little ceremony as he had received it. Refusing the

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escort of a body of cavalry, he mounted his horse, accompanied only by his grandson, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, and hurried away. Writing of her father, Sarah Randolph says: "At Madison's first Inauguration he was a lad of seventeen years, and was his grandfather's sole companion as he rode in those days of republican simplicity up Pennsylvania Avenue, from the President's house to the Capitol, where grandson and grandfather dismounted, hitched their horses to the palings, and the latter went into the Congressional Hall to see the Government pass from his hands to those of his friend."

This seems to be the foundation for the story of the Inauguration on page 27.

Mr. Jefferson was among the first to pay his respects to the new President; and was also present at the Inaugural Ball.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### JAMES MADISON

1809-1813

The Inauguration; A Brilliant Ball; Personality of Mrs. Madison; Jean Pierre Sioussat, the first Major-Domo of the President's House; Mrs. Madison's Hospitality; First Fourth of July Reception; A Dinner at the President's; Washington Irving's Account of a Levee, and Washington Gaiety; Mrs. Seaton's Description of Washington Entertainments and Prominent Persons.

**J**EFFERSON remained in Washington to take part in the ceremonies of Inauguration of his late Secretary of State. A brief description of these is given by J. Q. Adams:

"I went to the Capitol and witnessed the inauguration of Mr. Madison as President of the United States. The House was very much crowded, and its appearance very magnificent. He made a very short speech, in a tone of voice so low that he could not be heard, after which the official oath was administered to him by the Chief Justice of the United States, the four other Judges of the Supreme Court being present, and in their robes. After the ceremony was over, I went to pay the visit of custom. The company was received at Mr. Madison's house; he not having yet removed to the President's house. Mr. Jefferson was among the visitors. The Court had adjourned until two o'clock. . . . I came home to dinner, and

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in the evening went with the ladies to a ball at Long's in honor of the new President. The crowd was excessive—the heat oppressive, and the entertainment bad. Mr. Jefferson was there. About midnight the ball broke up."

According to another account, the "little great man," attired in a brown suit of cloth, grown from sheep on the Livingston farm, *Clermont* on the Hudson, drove to the Capitol from his house in High Street, Georgetown, escorted by two troops of local cavalry under Capt. Brent. After the ceremonies within the Capitol, the newly-made President went outside, reviewed the military forces and returned to his home. Here he held a reception. The street was full of carriages, and people came in such crowds that many of the guests had to wait half an hour before they could get in. Every room in the house was filled to overflowing; and punch and cake were offered to all. Mr. and Mrs. Madison stood near the door of the drawing-room to receive the guests; she, as usual, the dominating personality. Her costume met with the approval of her fair contemporaries, one of whom described her as looking "beautiful." She wore a plain cambric dress with a very long train, plain round the neck without any kerchief, and a "beautiful bonnet of purple velvet and white satin with white plumes."

It is doubtful if any preceding event had attracted such crowds to Washington. Stage-coaches, for several weeks and days before the Inauguration, had been whirling along the roads from north, south, east, and



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west, bringing visitors from New England, South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, and Virginia. One tavern-keeper near Washington saw three stage-coaches pass in one day!

Crowded as the Madison reception had been, the first Inaugural Ball brought the visitors out in full force. Every kind of conveyance known to the time and place was represented in front of Long's Hotel on Capitol Hill that night. Stylish private coaches and coaches drawn by mules mingled in democratic fashion with hired carriages and stage-coaches. The Madisons came in their handsome coach drawn by four horses, and with colored coachman and footmen.

Although the admission was by ticket only, these tickets obtainable through the managers, the rooms were so crowded that some of the ladies stood on benches to see the chief figures in the drama make their entrance. The room, too, was so hot that the panes in the windows were smashed in order to give ventilation.

The ball opened at seven o'clock. First the band played *Jefferson's March*, and Mr. Jefferson entered with Mr. Coles. He said to a friend: "Am I too early? You must tell me how to behave, for it is more than forty years since I have been to a ball." Within a few moments the band began to play *Madison's March*, and the President's party entered. Mrs. Madison came first, on the arm of one of the managers, wearing a costume that displayed her beautiful taste. It was a pale buff velvet with a long train, devoid of trimming.

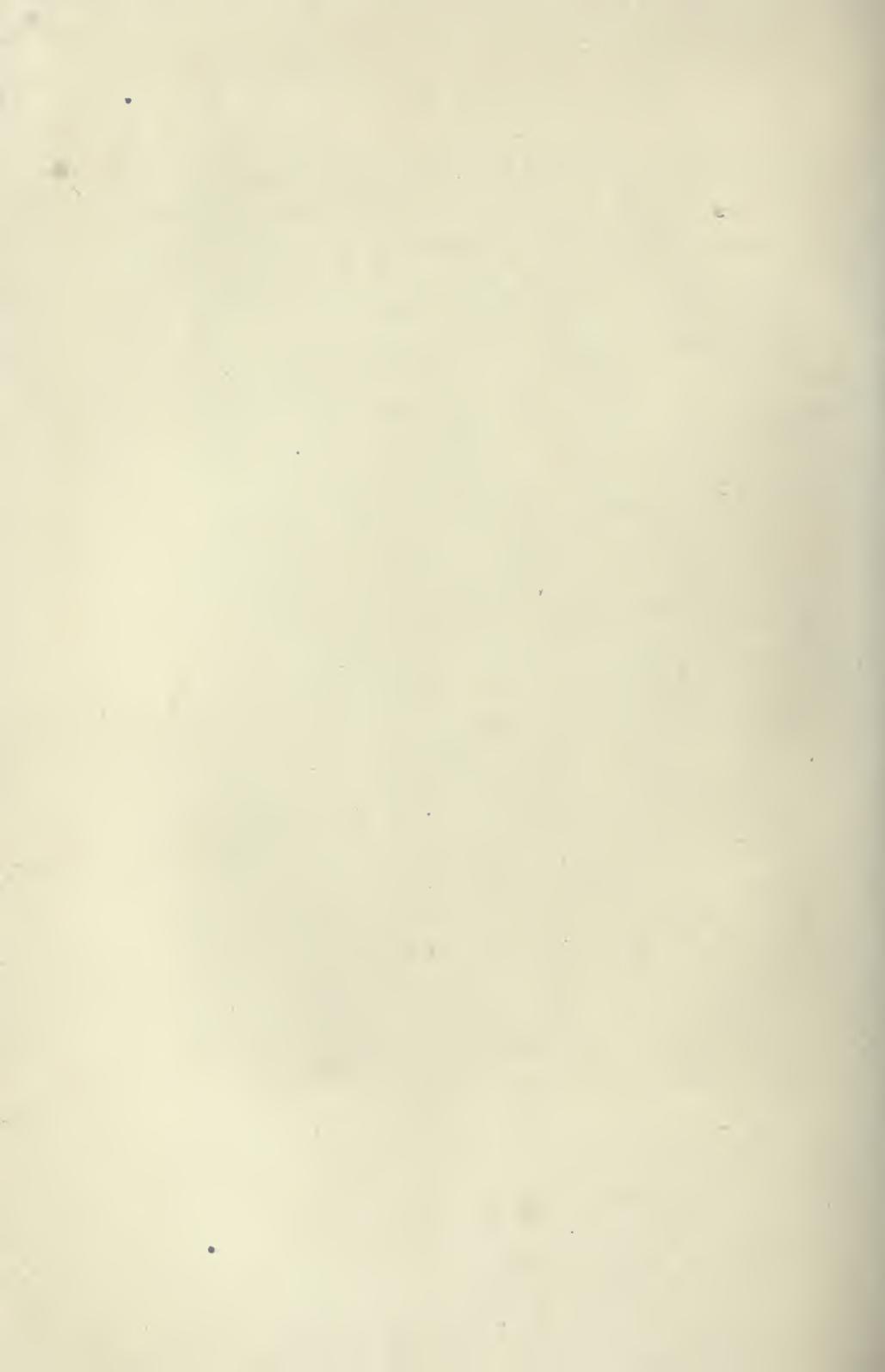
## THE WHITE HOUSE

Her headdress was sent from Paris and made of the same velvet, trimmed with white satin, and two handsome bird-of-Paradise plumes. A pearl necklace, earrings and bracelets completed this rich dress. The President followed with Mrs. Cutts. He was in black, with ruffles at his throat. His stockings were silk, and his shoes were ornamented with silver buckles. His peculiar springing step, as if he were trying to make himself seem taller than usual, was the only indication he gave of the consciousness that he was the most important personage in the assembly.

The only Diplomats present were Gen. Turreau, the French Minister, David M. Erskine, the British Minister, with his American wife (who was Miss Cadwallader of Philadelphia), and Peter Petersen, the Danish Minister. Mrs. Madison was escorted to supper by the French Minister and Mrs. Cutts by the British. The table was set in the form of a crescent with Mrs. Madison in the centre, with the French and English Ministers on either side, Mrs. Cutts on the right and Mrs. Robert Smith, wife of the Secretary of the Navy, on the left. The President sat opposite Mrs. Madison. Mr. Jefferson remained only two hours, but "seemed in high spirits and his countenance beamed with a benevolent joy." Mr. Madison, on the other hand, "seemed spiritless and exhausted." He and Mrs. Madison left immediately after supper. Music and dancing continued until midnight, when everything stopped.



MRS. D. P. MADISON



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The most commanding personality in Washington society through four Administrations was undoubtedly Mrs. Madison. We have seen that she had the run of the President's house during Jefferson's occupancy of it, and there she ruled in regal state until its destruction in 1814. All who came in contact with her socially bore witness to her queenly carriage and charming ways. Her diminutive husband was reduced to utter insignificance in comparison with herself on all social occasions. Though she had never been abroad, her natural talents and social tact enabled her to hold her own with Cabinet ladies and those of the Diplomatic Circle who had had experience of Foreign Courts.

There were considerable changes when she became the mistress of the President's house. The observances of the days of Washington and Adams were restored in large measure, and the public and private receptions and entertainments passed off with smoothness and elegance. To assist her in the regulation of the household, she employed a master of ceremonies — Jean Pierre Sioussat. He had been born in Paris in 1781, and having escaped the dangers of the "Terror," he drifted to Washington and there found employment at the British Ministry under Mr. Merry. He was well educated and possessed of a fine figure, deportment, and personal charm. His natural advantages and agreeable conversation soon rendered him a welcome guest at the President's house, where Jefferson soon made use of his services and appointed him doorkeeper, an office of

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considerably greater dignity than that of a mere hall porter. Thoroughly acquainted with the customs of the house, faithful and punctilious in the performance of his duties, he soon rendered himself invaluable to Mrs. Madison, who was only too glad to find some one on whom she could rely. She entrusted him with the care of all her personal affairs, and he retained her confidence till the day of her death.

Mrs. Madison was fully aware of the fact that to be popular with a man you must "feed him and flatter him." Her hospitality, therefore, was conducted on a lavish scale: in this, following Jefferson's example. No one ever came to her house without having some refreshments offered. In the first year of Madison's Administration, Mr. Jackson, the British Minister, was surprised and delighted to have a conference with the President interrupted, when a negro servant brought in "some glasses of punch and a seed-cake."

The customary receptions on January the First and July the Fourth were continued. The first observance of Independence Day at the President's house under the Madisons is reported as follows:

"About noon company began to wait upon the President and in the course of a short time his spacious rooms were filled with a numerous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, including the officers of the government, strangers of distinction and citizens, among whom refreshments were liberally distributed. The President received the congratulations of his fellow citizens on the return of the anniversary of their freedom with



JEAN SIOUSSAT



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the satisfaction which naturally flowed from a recollection of the interesting scenes through which his country had passed, from realizing in their full extent the blessings of self-government and from a consciousness of his own agency in establishing and securing the national liberties. Everyone present exhibited feelings of lively interest at the return of this great day amid circumstances so honorable to the character, and so conspicuous to the happiness of his country; feelings which were heightened by the happy effect of a powerful band of music, playing patriotic airs at short intervals. At one o'clock the militia passed in review, and saluted the President. About two o'clock, the company separated and distributed themselves in parties arranged for the further celebrations of the day."

An idea of the etiquette observed by the Madisons may be gathered from the lively letters of Mrs. Seaton, the wife of one of the owners of the *National Intelligencer*:

"Nov. 12, 1812.—On Tuesday, William and I repaired to the palace between four and five o'clock, our carriage sitting us down *after* the first comers and *before* the last. It is customary on whatever occasion to advance to the upper end of the room, pay your obeisance to Mrs. Madison, courtesy to his Highness and take a seat; after this ceremony being at liberty to speak to acquaintances, or amuse yourself as at another party. The party already assembled consisted of the Treasurer of the United States; Mr. Russell, the American Minister to England; Mr. Cutts, brother-in-law to Mrs. Madison; General Van Ness and family; General Smith and daughter from New York; Patrick Magruder's family; Colonel Goodwyn and daughter; Mr. Coles, the Private Secretary; Washington Irving, the author of Knickerbocker and Salmagundi; Mr.

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Thomas, an European; a young Russian, Mr. Poindexter, William R. King and two other gentlemen; and these, with Mr. and Mrs. Madison and Payne Todd, their son, completed the select company.

“Mrs. Madison very handsomely came to me and led me nearest the fire, introduced Mrs. Magruder, and sat down between us, politely conversing on familiar subjects, and by her ease of manner making her guests feel at home. Mr. King came to our side *sans cérémonie*, and gaily chattered until dinner was announced. Mrs. Magruder, by priority of age, was entitled to the right hand of her hostess; and I, in virtue of being a stranger, to the next seat, Mr. Russell to her left, Mr. Coles at the foot of the table, the President in the middle, which relieves him from the trouble of serving guests, drinking wine, etc. The dinner was certainly very fine; but still I was rather surprised, as it did not surpass some I have eaten in Carolina. There were many French dishes, and exquisite wines, I presume, by the praises bestowed on them; but I have been so little accustomed to drink that I could not discern the difference between Sherry and rare old Burgundy Madeira. Comment on the quality of the wine seems to form the chief topic after the removal of the cloth, and during the dessert, at which by the way, no pastry is countenanced. Ice-creams, maccaroons, preserves and various cakes are placed on the table, which are removed for almonds, raisins, pecan-nuts, apples, pears, etc. Candles were introduced before the ladies left the table; and the gentlemen continued half an hour longer to drink a social glass. Meantime Mrs. M—— insisted on my playing on her elegant grand piano a waltz for Miss Smith and Miss Magruder to dance, the figure of which she instructed them in. By this time the gentlemen came in and we adjourned to the tea-room, and here in the most delightful manner imaginable I shared with Miss Smith, who is remarkably intelligent, the pleasure of Mrs. Madison’s conversation

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on books, men and manners, literature in general, and many special branches of knowledge. I never spent a more rational or pleasing half hour than that which preceded our return home. On paying our compliments at parting, we were politely and particularly invited to attend the levee the next evening. . . . I would describe the dignified appearance of Mrs. M——, but I could not do her justice. 'Tis not her form, 'tis not her face, it is the woman altogether, whom I should wish you to see. She wears a crimson cap that almost hides her forehead, but which becomes her extremely and reminds one of a crown from its brilliant appearance, contrasted with the white satin folds and her jet black curls; but her demeanor is so far removed from the hauteur generally attendant on royalty, that your fancy can carry the resemblance no further than the head-dress.

“Mr. M—— had no leisure for the ladies; every moment of his time is engrossed by the crowd of male visitors who court his notice, and after passing the first complimentary salutations his attention is unavoidably withdrawn to more important objects.

“It is customary to breakfast at 9 o'clock, dine at four, and drink tea at 8, which division of time I do not like, but am compelled to submit. I am more surprised at the method of taking tea here than any other meal. In private families, if you step in of an evening, they give you tea and crackers, or cold bread; and if by invitation, unless the party is very splendid, you have a few sweetcakes—maccaroons from the confectioner's. This is the extent. Once I saw a ceremony of preserves at tea; but the deficiency is made up by the style at dinner, with extravagant wines, etc. Pastry and puddings going out of date and wine and ice-creams coming in, does not suit my taste, and I confess to preferring Raleigh hospitality. I have not even *heard* of warm bread at breakfast.”

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We have a delightful glimpse of Mrs. Madison and her two sisters, and the President, from Washington Irving, who takes us with him to a levee in 1811. It is interesting to note that he was only fifty-two hours on the journey from New York to Washington, and writes home: "I have been whirled here with such rapidity that I can scarcely realize the transition."

The stage left Baltimore at eight o'clock and arrived in Washington at half-past four. Irving went directly to Georgetown and attended Mrs. Madison's levee on the same evening. But let us turn to his graphic account:

"The ride from Baltimore to Washington was still worse than the former one; but I had two or three odd geniuses for fellow-passengers, and made out to amuse myself very well. I arrived at the Inn about dusk; and, understanding that Mrs. Madison was to have her levee or drawing-room that very evening, I swore by all my gods I would be there. But how? was the question. I had got away down into Georgetown, and the persons to whom my letters of introduction were directed lived all upon Capitol Hill, about three miles off, while the President's house was exactly half way. Here was a non-plus enough to startle any man of less enterprising spirit; but I had sworn to be there, and I determined to keep my oath, and like Caleb Quotem, to 'have a place at the Review.' So I mounted with a stout heart to my room; resolved to put on my pease blossoms and silk stockings; gird up my loins; sally forth on my expedition; and like a vagabond knight errant, trust to Providence for success and whole bones. Just as I descended from my attic chamber, full of this valorous spirit, I was met by my landlord, with whom, and the head waiter, by-the-bye,



WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.  
Author of the "Sketch Book."



## JAMES MADISON

I had held a private cabinet counsel on the subject. Bully Rook informed me that there was a party of gentlemen just going from the house, one of whom, Mr. Fontaine Maury of New York, had offered his services to introduce me to 'the Sublime Porte.' . . . In a few minutes I emerged from dirt and darkness into the blazing splendor of Mrs. Madison's drawing-room. Here I was most graciously received; found a crowded collection of great and little men, of ugly old women and beautiful young ones, and in ten minutes was hand and glove with half the people in the assemblage. Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame, who has a smile and a pleasant word for everybody. Her sisters, Mrs. Cutts and Mrs. Washington, are like the two Merry Wives of Windsor; but as to Jemmy Madison—ah! poor Jemmy!—he is but a withered little apple-John."

Soon after this date one of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," Mrs. Washington, was married to Judge Todd of Kentucky, a Justice of the Supreme Court. The wedding took place on March 11, 1811, and was the first marriage that occurred in the President's house.

Another letter of Irving's, also written to his friend, Brevoort, and dated Feb. 7, 1811, reads:

"You would be amused were you to arrive here just now, to see the odd and heterogeneous circle of acquaintances I have formed. One day I am dining with a knot of honest, furious Federalists, who are damning all their opponents as a set of consummate scoundrels, panders of Bonaparte, etc. The next day I dine, perhaps, with some of the very men I have heard thus anathematized, and find them equally honest, warm and indignant; and if I take their word for it, I had been dining

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before with some of the greatest knaves in the nation, men absolutely paid and suborned by the British government.

“To show you the mode of life I lead, I give you my engagements for this week. On Monday I dined with the mess of officers at the barracks; in the evening a ball at Van Ness’s. On Tuesday with my cousin Knickerbocker and several merry Federalists. On Wednesday I dined with General Turreau, who had a very pleasant party of Frenchmen and democrats; in the evening at Mrs. Madison’s levee, which was brilliant and crowded with interesting men and women. On Thursday a dinner at Latrobe’s. On Friday a dinner at the Secretary of the Navy’s, and in the evening a ball at the Mayor’s. Saturday is as yet unengaged. At all these parties you meet with so many intelligent people that your mind is continually and delightfully exercised.”

Mrs. Seaton’s letters are full of graphic pictures of society in Diplomatic and Executive Circles. She had to learn the minutiae of the etiquette of the day by disconcerting experience. For example, on Jan. 2, 1813, she writes:

“Soon after our arrival here I received a very polite message from Mrs. Gallatin to the effect that as soon as I was established in my own house, she would do herself the pleasure to wait on me. Yesterday, however, I discovered that it is a point of etiquette for all new settlers in the city to make the first visit to the families of the Secretaries. This ceremony I knew was indispensable towards Mrs. Madison; but as Dr. Eustis and Mr. Hamilton have resigned, it is now unnecessary in their case. Mrs. Gallatin’s civility in calling upon me prevented my suspecting that I had failed in politeness to the other officers of the Govt.; and this leads me to describe the brilliancy of her first ball.



ALBERT GALLATIN



## JAMES MADISON

“The assembly was more numerous at the Secretary of the Treasury’s—more select, more elegant than I have yet seen in the city. Ladies of fifty years of age were decked with lace and ribbons, wreaths of roses and gold leaves in their false hair, wreaths of jasmine across their bosom, and no kerchiefs. Indeed, dear mother, I cannot reconcile this fashion to myself, and though the splendid dress of these antiquated dames of the *beau monde* adds to the general grandeur it certainly only tends to make the contrast still more striking between them and the young and beautiful. Do you remember a frontispiece to one of the plays, in the ‘British Theatre’—Bridget in the ‘Chapter of Accidents’? I can only think of this picture in beholding such incongruity of dress; while that of young girls is equally incompatible with general propriety. Madame Bonaparte is a model of fashion, and many of our belles strive to imitate her; but without equal *éclat*, as Madame Bonaparte has certainly the most transcendently beautiful back and shoulders that ever were seen. . . . It is the fashion for most of the ladies a little advanced in age to rouge and *pearl*, which is spoken of with as much *sang froid* as putting on their bonnets. Mrs. Monroe paints very much, and has, besides, an appearance of youth which would induce a stranger to suppose her age to be thirty: in lieu of which, she introduces them to her *grandchildren*, eighteen or nineteen years old, and to her own daughter, Mrs. Hay, of Richmond. Mrs. Madison is said to rouge; but not evident to my eyes, and I do not think it true, as I am well assured I saw her color come and go at the naval ball, when the Macedonian flag was presented to her by young Hamilton. Mrs. C. (Crawford) and Mrs. G. (Gallatin) paint excessively, and think it becoming; but with them it is no deception, only folly, and they speak of it as indispensable to a *decent* appearance.

“But I have digressed from the entertainment. I am sure not ten minutes elapsed without refreshments being handed.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

1st, coffee, tea, all kinds of toasts and warm cakes; 2d, ice-creams; 3d, lemonade, punch, burgundy, claret, curaçoa, champagne; 4th, bonbons, cakes of all sorts and sizes; 5th, apples, oranges; 6th, confectionery, denomination *divers*; 7th, nuts, almonds, raisins; 8th, set supper, composed of tempting solid dishes, meats, savory pasties garnished with lemon; 9th, drinkables of every species; 10th, boiling chocolate. The most profuse ball ever given in Washington. . . . I was engaged to John Law as a partner for cotillions the day before. . . . Governor Turner invited me to dance when I first entered the room, and I was glad of an excuse to plead a prior engagement, as I know the offer proceeded from goodness of heart which manifests itself in kindness to a good Carolinian, and not from a desire to dance in a crowd where I could hardly preserve my equilibrium. . . .

“Miss M—— played at the drawing-room in ‘high style,’ but I think our D. G. could have excelled her. I played once at Mr. Madison’s at a private party, but declined exhibiting at the drawing-room. . . . On New Year’s Day we went to greet Mr. Madison, which ceremony is generally deemed a test of loyalty, and, of course, the terrace was thronged with carriages from 12 till 3 o’clock, with constant streams of visitors. Daschkoff, the Russian Minister, was there, and Serrurier, the French, both apparently uninteresting men, but most splendid in uniform and equipage. The good wishes for the New Year resounded from all quarters.”



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (1811)



## CHAPTER FIVE

### JAMES MADISON

1813-1817

Madison's Second Inauguration; Mrs. Seaton's Description of the New Year's Reception; Mrs. Madison's Head-dresses; Approach of the British Troops; Mrs. Madison Saves the Washington Portrait; Burning of the President's House; Temporary Homes of President and Heads of Departments; Washington Society in 1815; the Crowninshields; General Jackson in Washington; Drawing-rooms, Levees and New Year's Receptions; Arrival and Reception of the Bagots; Furnishings of the President's Temporary Residence.

IT is interesting to see how Mrs. Madison's stature overshadowed that of her distinguished husband, socially as well as physically. His personal insignificance is plainly shown in Mrs. Seaton's account of President Madison's second Inauguration. On March 5, 1813, she writes:

"Mrs. Madison called on me last week, and very politely invited me to attend the drawing-room of Wednesday. Yesterday the most crowded and interesting sight we ever witnessed was presented to our view in the Inauguration of Mr. Madison. Escorted by the Alexandria, Georgetown and city companies, the President proceeded to the Capitol. Judge Marshall, and the associate Judges, preceded him and placed themselves

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in front of the Speaker's chair, from whence the Chief Magistrate delivered his inaugural address; but his voice was so low, and the audience so very great, that scarcely a word could be distinguished. On concluding, the oath of office was administered by the Chief Justice, and the little man was accompanied on his return to the palace by the multitude; for every creature that could afford twenty-five cents for hack-hire was present. The major part of the respectable citizens offered their congratulations, ate his ice-creams and bonbons, drank his Madeira, made their bow and retired, leaving him fatigued beyond measure with the incessant bending to which his politeness urged him, and in which he never allows himself to be eclipsed, returning bow for bow, even to those *ad infinitum* of Serrurier and other foreigners."

A good example of Mrs. Madison's preponderating presence is afforded by Mrs. Seaton's description of the last New Year's Reception in the original President's house:

"Yesterday, being New Year's Day, *everybody*, affected or disaffected towards the Government, attended to pay Mrs. Madison the compliments of the season. Between one and two o'clock, we drove to the President's, where it was with much difficulty we made good our entrance, though all of our acquaintances endeavoured with the utmost civility to compress themselves as small as they could for our accommodation. The marine band, stationed in the ante-room, continued playing in spite of the crowd pressing on their very heels. But if our pity was excited for these hapless musicians, what must we not have experienced for some members of our own sex, who, not foreseeing the excessive heat of the apartments, had more reason to apprehend the efforts of nature to relieve herself from

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the effects of the confined atmosphere. You perhaps will not understand that I allude to the rouge which some of our fashionables had unfortunately laid on with an unsparing hand, and which assimilating with the pearl-powder, dust and perspiration, made them altogether unlovely to soul and eye.

“Her majesty’s appearance was truly regal—dressed in a robe of pink satin, trimmed elaborately with ermine, a white velvet and satin turban, with nodding ostrich plumes and a crescent in front, gold chain and clasps around the waist and wrists. ’Tis here the woman who adorns the dress, and not the dress that beautifies the woman. I cannot conceive a female better calculated to dignify the station which she occupies in society than Mrs. Madison—amiable in private life and affable in public, she is admired and esteemed by the rich and beloved by the poor. You are aware that she snuffs; but in her hands the snuff-box seems only a gracious implement with which to charm. Her frank cordiality to all guests is in contrast to the manner of the President, who is very formal, reserved and precise, yet not wanting in a certain dignity. Being so low of stature, he was in imminent danger of being confounded with the plebeian crowd; and was pushed and jostled about like a common citizen—but not so with her ladyship! The towering feathers and excessive throng distinctly pointed out her station wherever she moved.

“After partaking of some ice-creams and a glass of Madeira, shaking hands with the President and tendering our good wishes, we were preparing to leave the rooms, when our attention was attracted through the window towards what we conceived to be a rolling ball of burnished gold, carried with swiftness through the air by two gilt wings. Our anxiety increased the nearer it approached, until it actually stopped before the door; and from it alighted, weighted with gold lace, the French Minister and suite. We now also perceived that what we had supposed to be wings, were nothing more than gorgeous

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footmen with *chapeaux bras*, gilt braided skirts and splendid swords. Nothing ever was witnessed in Washington so brilliant and dazzling—a meridian sun blazing full on this carriage filled with diamonds and glittering orders, and gilt to the edge of the wheels—you may well imagine how the natives stared and rubbed their eyes to be convinced 'twas no fairy dream."

Mrs. Madison was noted for her wonderful head-dresses, and many of them were foreign creations. At the Inaugural ball she wore a superb turban from Paris, as we have seen. In November, 1811, she writes to Mr. and Mrs. Joel Barlow, then in France:

"I ask the favor of you to send me by a safe vessel large headdresses, a few flowers, feathers, gloves and stockings, black and white, with anything else pretty and suitable for an economist."

When acknowledging them, she said:

"All the articles are beautiful: the heads I could not get on, being a little tight, so I shall lay them aside until next winter, when I can have them enlarged to fit. The flowers, trimmings, and ornaments were enchanting."

On the approach of the British troops, in 1814, the President's house became an unsafe shelter. On Aug. 23 Mrs. Madison wrote to her sister:

"My husband left me yesterday morning to join General Winder. He inquired anxiously whether I had courage or firmness to remain in the President's house until his return on the morrow, or succeeding day, and on my assurance that I had no fear but for him, and the success of our army, he left, beseeching me to take care of myself, and of the Cabinet papers,

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public and private. I have since received two despatches from him written with a pencil. The last is alarming, because he desires I should be ready at a moment's warning, to enter my carriage and leave the city; that the enemy seemed stronger than had at first been reported, and it might happen that they would reach the city with the intention of destroying it. I am accordingly ready; I have pressed as many Cabinet papers into trunks as to fill one carriage; our private property must be sacrificed, as it is impossible to procure wagons for its transportation. I am determined not to go myself until I see Mr. Madison safe so that he can accompany me, as I hear of much hostility to him."

The next day, after the Battle of Bladensburg, she wrote:

"Our kind friend Mr. Carroll has come to hasten my departure, and in a very bad humour with me, because I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. The process was found too tedious for these perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken and the canvas taken out."

Many times has the story been printed of how Dolly Madison cut with her own hands from its frame the valuable portrait of George Washington that had hung in the State Dining-Room since 1800; but the truth is that the ever-ready Jean Sioussat, who took charge of Mrs. Madison's preparations for flight, cut the picture out of the frame with his pen-knife. Mrs. Madison writes:

"It is done, and the precious portrait placed in the hands of two gentlemen from New York for safe keeping! On hand-

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ing the canvas to the gentlemen in question, Messrs. Barker and Depeyster, Mr. Sioussat cautioned them against rolling it up, saying that it would destroy the portrait. He was moved to this because Mr. Barker started to roll it up for greater convenience for carrying."

This story is corroborated by a servant of the President's house, Paul Jennings, who published in 1865 *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, in which he says that the story that Mrs. Madison cut out from the frame the large portrait of Washington (now in the Red Room) and carried it off is "totally false." He says:

"She had no time for doing it. It would have required a ladder to get it down. All she carried off was the silver in her reticule, as the British were thought to be but a few squares off, and were expected every moment. John Suse, a Frenchman, then doorkeeper, and still living, and Magraw, the President's gardener, took it down and sent it off on a wagon with some large silver urns and other such valuables as could be hastily got together. . . . When the British did arrive they ate up the very dinner and drank the wines that I had prepared for the President's party."

Another account by a contemporary is as follows:

"The friends with her hurried her away (her carriage being previously ready), and she with many other families, among whom was Mrs. Thornton and Mrs. Cutting with her, retreated with the flying army. In Georgetown they perceived some men before them carrying off the picture of General Washington (the large one by Stewart) which with the plate was all that was saved out of the President's house. Mrs.

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Madison lost all her own property. The wine, of which there was a great quantity, was consumed by our own soldiers. Mrs. Madison slept that night in the encampment, a guard being placed round her tent, the next day she crossed into Virginia, where she remained until Sunday, when she returned to meet her husband."

The faithful and devoted Mrs. Madison had thus delayed her departure till the very last moment. Within a very few hours of her hasty flight from the home which she had graced for a decade, the President's house was committed to the flames.

The British had come on a mere errand of destruction, and practically no looting was allowed. Admiral Cockburn, on his arrival at the President's house, drank "Jemmy's health"; and, as souvenirs of the occasion, took a *chapeau bras* that he saw hanging on a chair belonging to the President, and a chair cushion. He also allowed an American who was in his company to carry away one of the ornaments of the mantel-piece.

An eye-witness supplies the editor of the *Federal Republican* with a graphic description of the scene on Pennsylvania Avenue, in the following letter:

"Sir—As various reports are in circulation relative to the conduct of the British troops while in possession of our Capital; and as some of these are calculated to impress upon the public mind a belief that plunder and devastation were the order of the day, acting on the old maxim, 'Do Justice even to your enemy,' I deem it not improper to give you a short statement of what passed under my immediate observation.

"About ten o'clock on the night of the 24th ult., while the

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Capitol, the Navy Yard, the Magazine, and the buildings attached thereto, on Greenleaf's Point, were entirely in flames, I was sitting in the window of my lodging on the Pennsylvania Avenue, contemplating the solemn and awful scene, when about a hundred men passed the house, troops of the enemy, on their way towards the President's house. They walked two abreast preceded by an officer on foot, armed with a hanger, and wearing a *chapeau de bras*. In the middle of the ranks were two men, each with a dark lanthorn. They marched quickly but silently. Some of them, however, were talking in the ranks, which being overheard by the officer, he called out to them 'Silence! If any man speaks in the ranks, I'll put him to death!' Shortly after they pushed on, I observed four officers on horseback, with *chapeau de bras* and side arms. They made up to the house, and pulling off their hats in a polite and social manner, wished us a good evening. The family and myself returned the salute, and I observed to them, 'Gentlemen! I presume you are officers of the British army.' They replied they were. 'I hope, Sir,' said I, addressing one that rode up under the window, which I found to be Admiral Cockburn, 'that individuals and private property will be respected.' Admiral Cockburn and General Ross immediately replied: 'Yes, Sir, we pledge our sacred honor that the citizens and private property shall be respected. Be under no apprehension. Our advice to you is to remain at home. Do not quit your houses.' Admiral Cockburn then inquired: 'Where is your President, Mr. Madison?' I replied, 'I could not tell, but supposed that by this time at a considerable distance.'"

After recording further conversation, the writer continues:

"They then observed that they were on their way to pay a visit to the President's house, which they were told was but

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a little distance ahead. They again requested that we would stay in our houses, where we would be perfectly safe, and bowing, politely wished us good night, and proceeded on. I perceived the smoke coming from the windows of the President's house, and in a short time, that splendid and elegant edifice, reared at the expense of so much cost and labor, inferior to none that I have observed in the different parts of Europe, where I have been, was wrapt in one entire flame. . . . The large and elegant Capitol of the nation on one side, and the splendid National Palace and Treasury Department on the other, all wrapt in flame, presented a grand and sublime, but, at the same time, an awful and melancholy sight.

“On the following day, I had occasion to visit Georgetown. On my return home in company with Dr. Ott, we were called to by Mr. McLeod, who keeps the Washington Hotel. He informed us that one of the British soldiers, armed with a musket, had robbed him and threatened to burn his house, and that he was then in the act of robbing the house of Mr. Valetta, aided by a negro man. A message was sent to the British Headquarters, and an officer was immediately detailed to look into the matter. He arrested the soldier, whose hat was found to be full of silk shawls and other articles of value, and profusely apologized to those who had been robbed. The soldier was afterwards shot.”

The British having precipitately retired, the heads of the Government returned. On Sept. 9, 1814, the *National Intelligencer* reports:

“The Public Buildings having been mostly destroyed, the various offices are locating themselves in those private houses that are most commodious and conveniently situated for the purpose. The President will occupy Col. Tayloe's large house, which was lately occupied by the French Minister. The De-

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partment of State occupies the house lately occupied by Judge Duvall. The Treasury Department is fixed at the house formerly occupied by the British Minister Foster; the War Office is in the building adjoining the Bank of the Metropolis. The Navy Office is in Mr. Mechlin's house near the West Market, and the General Post Office in one of Mr. Way's new houses."

The Madisons lived for a year in Col. Tayloe's house, known as the "Octagon House," on the north-east corner of New York Avenue and Eighteenth Street. In this house many entertainments were given; here General Jackson was entertained; and here the Treaty of Ghent was signed, arranging peace between Great Britain and the United States. When the first year was out, the President removed to the "Six Buildings" (see page 11), on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Nineteenth Street.

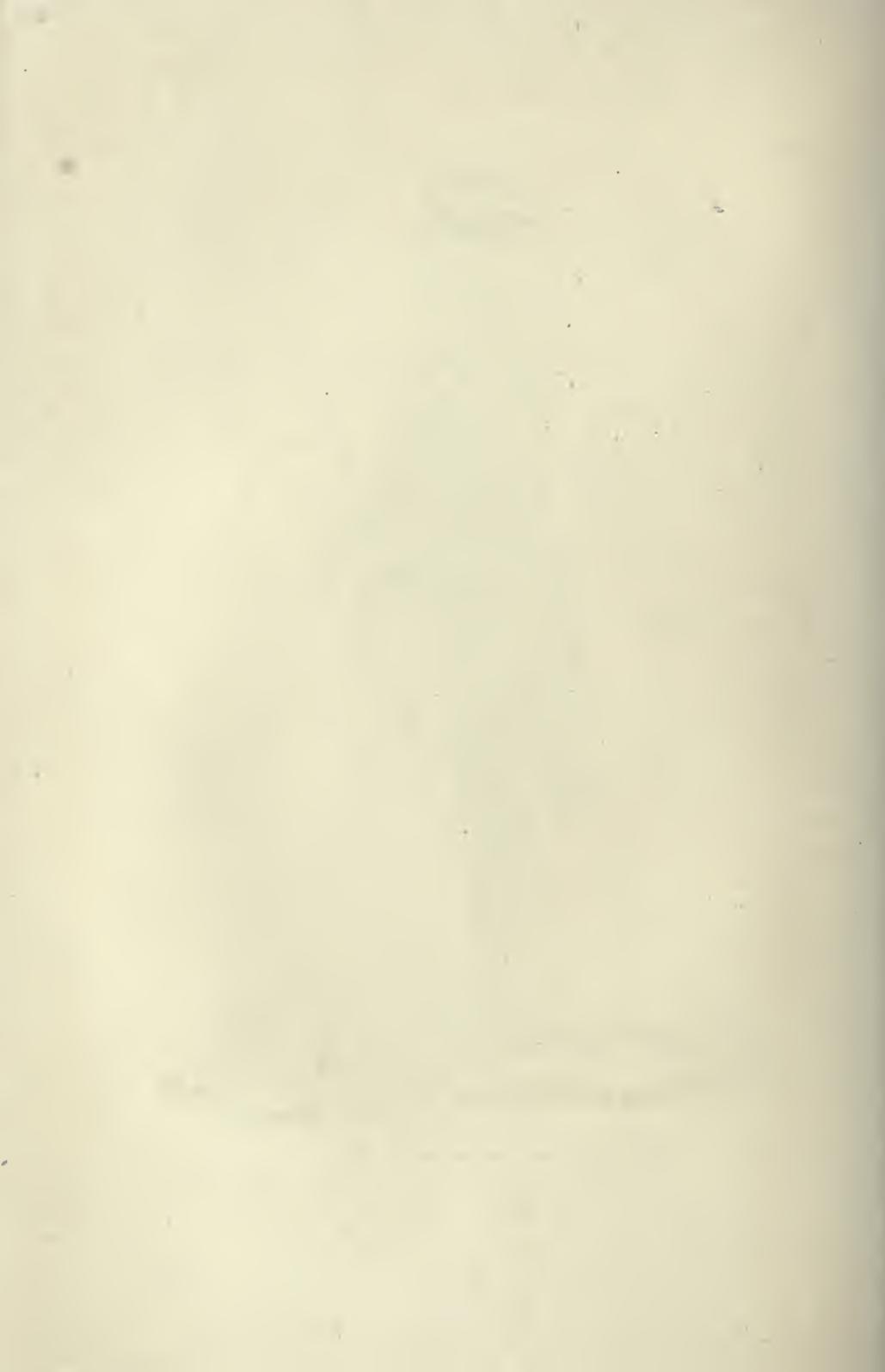
There were many people of sour Puritanical spirit who had looked with disapproval on the state maintained by the Madisons, as is evident from the following extract from the *Washington City Gazette* of September 19, 1814:

"President's House.—The destruction of the President's house cannot be said to be a great loss in one point of view, as we hope it will *put an end* to drawing-rooms and *levees*; the resort of the idle, and the encouragers of spies and *traitors*."

The temporary home of the President while the official mansion was being rebuilt was as full of gaiety and brilliance as had been customary before the con-



ANDREW JACKSON



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flagration. Washington society quickly recovered its tone. In November, 1815, Mrs. Seaton writes:

“*On dit* that the winter will be extremely gay and decked with all the splendour of polished manners, brilliant talent and transcendent beauty, and the drawing-rooms will sparkle with scintillations of wit and fire of genius. Mr. Jefferson’s granddaughter, Miss Randolph, will lead the van in accomplishments and beauty; Miss Law, Miss Harrison of Philadelphia, and Miss Livingston will fill an elevated place in the admiration of every observer, while daughters and nieces of the members will fill up the interstices. There is every reason to expect a crowded and interesting winter, as it will be the first meeting of Congress since the peace. Mrs. Madison tells me that there will be a great many foreigners of distinction here. There was a document received at the State Department in Spanish, which frustrated the talent of all the city to translate. Estimating highly Mr. Jefferson’s knowledge as a linguist, it was sent to him by the President. He called Miss Randolph, and gave her the manuscript for her morning task, and long before the appointed hour, she placed in his hands an elegant and correct translation, which was at once transmitted to the department; and being an important state paper, it has paved the way very handsomely for Miss Randolph. She will stay with Mrs. Madison, and will no doubt be very attractive to the various well-informed visitors at the palace.

“I suppose there have never been in the city so many plain women, in every sense of the word, as are now here among the families of official personages. I have always heard it asserted without contradiction, that nothing was easier than to learn to be a fine lady; but I begin to think differently, being morally certain that many among the new-comers will never achieve that distinction. Among the most amiable and refined of my acquaintances is Mrs. Crawford, of whom I shall probably see

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a good deal. She has received by Mr. Crawford from Paris the most elegant furniture; but she has no disposition for gaiety, and thinks her husband's appointment as Secretary of War the most unfortunate circumstance, inasmuch as it will require her to forsake in a good degree, those domestic habits which have heretofore constituted her whole happiness. . . . You may be sure, my dear mother, that these homespun propensities of our great folks cannot diminish my respect for their intrinsic merit and many excellent qualities."

Among the most interesting records of official life in Washington at the close of Madison's second term when he had been burnt out of house and home are the letters of Mrs. Benjamin W. Crowninshield, whose husband was appointed Secretary of the Navy, Dec. 5, 1814. The latter was a brother of Jacob Crowninshield, who had been appointed to the same office by President Jefferson, but prevented by illness from assuming the duties. Another brother, George, was the famous owner of the magnificent *Cleopatra's Barge*, the first American private yacht to display the wealth and taste of American merchants in European waters.

Mr. B. W. Crowninshield spent the winter (1814-15) in Washington alone. He returned to the capital in November, 1815, accompanied by his wife and two of their children, Mary and Elizabeth. Mrs. Crowninshield's letters paint vivid pictures of her journey to Washington, and of domestic life and Diplomatic and official society there. She writes to her mother, Nov. 11, 1815:

## JAMES MADISON

“About twelve o'clock Mr. C. came in and said I must go immediately to see Mrs. Madison. Our girls went with me. She lives in the same block with us. I did not alter my dress. Well, we rung at the door, the servant showed us to the room—no one there. It was a large room, had three windows in front, blue window curtains which appeared to be of embossed cambric, damask pattern, red silk fringe. The floor was covered with dark gray cloth, two little couches covered with gray patch, a small sideboard with I don't recollect what on it. In about two minutes the lady appeared, received us very agreeably, noticed the children much, inquired their names, because she told them she meant to be much acquainted with them. You could not but feel at your ease in her company. She was dressed in a white cambric gown, buttoned all the way up in front, a little strip of work along the button-holes, but ruffled around the bottom. A peach-bloom colored silk scarf with a rich border over her shoulders by her sleeves. She had on a spencer of satin of the same color, and likewise a turban of velour gauze, all of peach bloom. She looked very well indeed.”

The Crowninshields lived at a boarding-house kept by a Mrs. Willson, which was patronized and inhabited by members of Congress, Commodore Porter and Secretary Dallas, and their families. They arrived just at the moment when General Jackson was paying a visit to Washington and being lionized. The Jacksons were also staying at the Willson boarding-house.

Mrs. Seaton wrote to her mother early in November :

“You will perceive by the papers that General Jackson's visit here has excited a great commotion. Dinners, plays, balls,

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throughout the District. . . . Immediately on Mrs. Jackson's arrival a dilemma was presented, and a great debate ensued as to whether the ladies would visit her. . . . Colonel Reid and Dr. Goodlet, the friends of years of General Jackson, having settled the question of propriety satisfactorily, all doubts were laid aside. . . . Mrs. Jackson is a totally uninformed woman in mind and manners, but extremely civil in her way."

Living in the same boarding-house, the Jacksons and Crowninshields naturally saw a great deal of one another, and established very friendly relations. How intimate was their acquaintanceship, we learn from the following letter, Dec. 24, 1815:

"The Jacksons are gone—set out about eleven. The house was crowded with folks to bid them good-bye. The General sent twice this morning to G. Town to get our girls some little ornament from the jewelers; but no shops open, so could not get anything. It was so rainy yesterday he could not go out. He gave Elizabeth his inkstand and I write this letter with his pen and ink. Mrs. J., little Andrew and black Hannah in the carriage and four horses. The General mounted on sweet Sally, and his servant on horseback by the side of his carriage; then followed Betty, Mr. Donaldson and his servant; Major Reid and his servant; the hostler—all on horseback—and two spare horses; they made quite a dash. I feel it a great loss to have them gone."

Though Elizabeth and Mary were doubtless as disappointed as the General was to find that the Georgetown shops were closed on Christmas Eve, and he could not purchase the presents for the girls that he had

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intended to, doubtless in after years they prized his pen and ink-pot far more highly than the trinkets that were not forthcoming.

The following day Mrs. Crowninshield adds:

“Christmas morn. It seems more like our Independence—guns firing all night. I am going to the Catholic church—it is their great day. Last eve we passed at the President’s—took the girls with us. Found several gentlemen there and a young lady from Kentucky who is come to make a visit there. She had the parrot brought in for the girls, and he ran after Mary to catch her feet. She screamed and jumped into a chair and pulled hold of Mrs. Madison. We had quite a frolic there, returning soon after eight. Tea was brought in after we went.”

To return to Mrs. Crowninshield’s earliest experiences of official entertainments in the capital, we may quote from a letter written on Dec. 7:

“Ball to-night. Last eve I went to the drawing-room. We were not crowded, but one room well filled; all much dressed, but their new dresses saved for this eve. Mrs. Madison’s is a sky-blue striped velvet—a frock—fine, elegant lace round the neck and lace handkerchief inside and a large ruff, white lace turban starred in gold, and white feather. Clothes so long that stockings or shoes are not seen, but white shoes are generally worn. Mrs. Dallas a dark green velvet trimmed with a lace footing half a quarter wide. It was beautiful lace, but did not look well on so dark a color—a green and white turban helmet front and green feathers waving over. Several black velvets, crepes, brocades, satins; any one who has tolerable hair does not care to cover it up—the object is to look as young as you can. The folks here in the house say I must dress my hair, not cover it up, so last eve it was combed up as high on the top

## THE WHITE HOUSE

as I could get it, braided, and a bunch of flowers pinned in with one of my best ornaments—the green and gold one. In the evening Mrs. Madison said, ‘Oh, Mrs. C., your butterfly is too much hidden.’ I asked what she meant. She replied, ‘that elegant ornament in your hair—it is superb indeed.’ I imagine she took a liking to it, for she had neat little ornaments—emeralds set in gold. I had on my plain muslin trimmed with lace over white satin. The newest fashion to make a gown is like my English ones that go down in a peak before and behind. I have just brought in a pretty white silk one that is made in that way, but I have no pretty trimming for it, so think of preparing my gold muslin for this eve; as I got in Philadelphia a beautiful gold trimming for that and we do not have many balls here—perhaps not one again till Washington’s birth-night. I am so sorry I did not take on my feathers, for I have to give nine dollars for two to wear this eve. You cannot get the most ordinary headdress for less than eight, up to fifteen dollars, and you must have a new one almost every time you go into company, so I save much expense by not wearing turbans.

“The gentlemen last eve did not sit to take their tea; those in uniform had their chapeaux under their arms, but others had on their hats. Richard Derby was there. His wife was not well enough [to be there]. He did not choose to recollect me till [we were at] table, then said, ‘I forget, Mrs. C.—are you married or not.’—‘Not.’ So I heard no more of him. He sang and ladies played on the piano. There were three rooms open, so we walked through and through as the company chose. We had tea and coffee on a small waiter, with four plates and a little confectionery; cake, one little frosted cake, fluted. After[wards] we had punch, wine, etc., sent round a number of times. Ice-cream, put in a silver dish, and a large cake—not good—on the same waiter; and saucers instead of plates—very common ones, like your old china cup—all put on the same



MRS. RACHEL JACKSON  
late Consort to  
ANDREW JACKSON,  
President of the U. States.

MRS. ANDREW JACKSON



## JAMES MADISON

one waiter. Then came in another with grapes and little cakes. We returned about nine."

The New Year's reception of 1816 is thus described by Mrs. Crowninshield:

"Yesterday I was at the President's levee. Mary went with us, but Elizabeth would not go. Such a crowd I never was in. It took us ten minutes to push and shove ourselves through the dining-room; at the upper part of it stood the President and his lady, all standing—and a continual moving in and out. Two other small parlours open and all full—likewise the entry. In every room was a table with wine, punch and cakes, and the servants squeezing through with waiters for those who could not get to the table. Some of the ladies were dressed very elegantly, beautiful bonnets and pelisses, shawls, etc. Mrs. Madison was dressed in a yellow satin embroidered all over with sprigs of butterflies, not two alike in the dress; a narrow border in all colors; made high in the neck; a little cape, long sleeves, and a white bonnet with feathers. Mrs. Baldwin, a sister of Mrs. Barlow, was dressed first in a pretty white gown, high and much ruffled, the ruffles worked, which is thought handsomer than lace, and over it a scarlet merino dress made short above the ruffles of her gown, crossed before and behind about the waist, and short sleeves; it looked very tasty, trimmed with merino trimming with fringe; a black velvet hat turned up in front, with a large bunch of black feathers. Mrs. Clay,<sup>1</sup> a white merino dress with a deep border and a shawl to match. Mrs. Brown,<sup>2</sup> an orange dress of the same kind. Mrs. Decatur,<sup>3</sup> a blue lustre trimmed with satin ribbon high like a pelisse, a white hat turned up in front. Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Henry Clay.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of the Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. Army.

<sup>3</sup> Wife of Commodore Stephen Decatur.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Dallas, a light pelisse trimmed round with velvet the same color. Her daughter, who had just arrived from Philadelphia, a brown merino pelisse trimmed with a rich trimming all colors. Matilda, a very young girl, a scarlet merino, a blue hat with a large blue and white feather. In short, the greatest variety of dresses, for all the ladies in the city were there; began to go at one o'clock. At three it was all over and done."

Mrs. Seaton's anticipation of the social success of Jefferson's granddaughter, Miss Randolph, during the winter season 1815-1816 (see page 79), was fully justified. Writing Feb. 16, 1816, Mrs. Crowninshield says:

"I was at the drawing-room on Wednesday—expected to be the only one, as there were so many the last Levee, and there was another party the same eve. Soon after I got in Mrs. Madison said how much we think alike—both with a little blue and flowers. I had on my blue velvet and flowers on my head. Mrs. Madison a muslin dotted in silver over blue—a beautiful blue turban and feathers. I have never seen her look so well. There was a lady there I had never seen—monstrous large, dressed in plain muslin, not even a piece of lace about the neck—just like a little girl's frock. Neck bare, a pink turban with a black feather. All the gentlemen thought her very handsome, but Miss Randolph is the most admired—not pretty but very accomplished. Her grandfather, Mr. Jefferson, has taken much pains in educating her. I can never get a chance to speak to her, she is so surrounded by gentlemen—for here there are half a dozen gentlemen to one young lady."

On the conclusion of peace, the first important event in official Washington society was, naturally, the re-

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ception of the new British Minister, Mr. Charles Bagot. Mr. Bagot, who afterwards became Governor-General of Canada, was a Diplomat of aristocratic birth and breeding, and his wife was a lady of great accomplishments, of fascinating manners, of elegant appearance and personal beauty, who, moreover, was accustomed to the manners of royal courts. She was eminently fitted to assist her husband in the difficult task of making the British Ministry popular in Washington, which had recently suffered so terribly in pride and property by warfare. The first drawing-room, therefore, at which the Bagots appeared was the most brilliant that had ever been held by Mrs. Madison up to that date. Mrs. Crowninshield hurried home from Baltimore, where she was visiting, to be present. Other notables present were the Justices of the Supreme Court, the Ghent Peace Commissioners—Gallatin, Bayard, Clay, and Russell—and the heroes of the war—Generals Brown, Gaines, Scott, and Ripley. The Diplomatic Corps was present in full force.

Mrs. Crowninshield thus describes the event:

“In the eve Mr. Patterson, a brother of Madam Bonaparte, called with Miss Carter, his wife’s sister, one of the most dashing belles in the country. They were going the next day to Washington and called to invite us to go with them in the stage, but we had engaged passages in another and were obliged to take our seats. They said they were desirous to get here early as they wished to be at the drawing-room to see Mr. and Mrs. Bagot. I arrived at sunset, but tired as I was, I dressed for the drawing-room. . . .

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“At the drawing-room they came in late. She was dressed in white, a figured lace over satin, very much trimmed at the bottom, long sleeves. The short ones very full and trimmed below, very close and the same ornaments I had seen before, but round her neck diamond necklace, and earrings. Her hair dressed, a narrow gold band and nine white ostrich feathers. . . . The rooms very much crowded and very warm.”

The next day Mrs. Crowninshield made a morning call on the Bagots and found them out. On her way home she “called in to the President’s—found ladies with Mrs. Madison. They soon went away. I sat a long while with her. She is a very pleasant woman—had really a good talk with her.”

On April 6, the same lady informs her mother :

“We dined at the President’s on Tuesday. The dinner very handsome, more so than any I have seen—the heads of Departments and all the foreign Ministers there. Mrs. Bagot dressed in a light green Italian crepe, striped with folds of white satin about a quarter apart, a roll of satin at the bottom with large braids of satin. It was shorter than the satin dress under it. It stuck out very much at the bottom. Three bracelets on one arm, two on the other—all different. A string of pearls round her neck—dress very low behind. She has the whitest neck I ever saw, for she has black eyes and hair, and her hair dressed very high; wreath of red roses and purple and white flowers round her head, and her hair was above it—a great wave on the top. . . . She is a very agreeable lady—is determined to be pleased with everything. All the other ladies in old dresses. Mrs. King and Mrs. Gore there—two old ladies. I had not seen them before, for they do not visit any in cold weather. We dined part of the time by candle light,

## JAMES MADISON

drank coffee in the drawing-room and came away immediately—almost nine.

“At the drawing-room the next eve Mrs. Bagot was dressed superbly—lace dress embroidered with gold and a turban of the same. I did not go, so cannot tell any more.”

Every one who came in contact personally with Mrs. Madison bears witness to her extreme courtesy and obliging ways. As an example of this we may take a final note from a letter written by Mrs. Crowninshield, Feb. 1, 1816:

“Mrs. Madison has been sick since Sunday—bilious colic. I have seen her once since, and she left her chamber to meet a party in her drawing-room who dined there, but she could not go to table, and has been more unwell since—had no levee last evening.”

It must have seemed strange to Mrs. Madison to entertain in such makeshift quarters and bare accommodations as she had to put up with for the remainder of Mr. Madison's second term. In his report to Congress in 1818, Mr. William Lee, who had charge of the work of refurnishing and decorating the President's house, supplies the following particulars of his investigation of the apartments temporarily occupied by the President:

“When charged with this business my first step was to examine the state of the old furniture and to make a list of such new articles as I thought was necessary.

“In the furniture of the house occupied by President Madi-

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son, there was no recourse; he having purchased, after the Government House was burnt, with the small sum allowed, only some second-hand furniture wherever he could get it, merely for the moment.

“There was not a single carpet in the house. The floor had been covered with green and blue baize, which was so completely worn out as to be of no use, except in lining new carpets.

“The chairs, tables, bedsteads, etc. had been so long in use as to be fit only for servants’ rooms. All we have collected were a few chairs for the dining-room, which have been repaired to accord with the new ones that were ordered, and a set of old French chairs for a chamber, which remain to be repaired.

“There were but two glasses in the house, and those being too small for the lower apartments in the Government House, have been placed in the chambers.

“The two pier-tables and one ordinary sideboard have been placed in the dining-room.

“There were no bed-curtains, and those to the windows were worn out and totally unfit for use.

“There was no recourse in the remnants of glass, earthenware, china, linen, etc., of which scarcely an article would serve; indeed we may say, there remained none of these articles fit for use.

“The few pieces of plate had been so bruised and injured that they could only be considered as so much old silver, and as such be exchanged for new plate; and there were very few articles of kitchen furniture, and most of little use.”

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

Appropriations of Congress; Report of Committee of Public Buildings; Report of Secretary of the Treasury; Extracts from James Hoban's Report; Hoban's Statement of Condition of the President's House in 1816; Price of Materials used in Construction and Decoration; First Reception in the Second President's House; Appropriations of Congress for Furnishings; Mr. Monroe's Furniture and Plate; Colonel Lee's Statement Regarding Orders Sent to France; Early Purchases from Cabinet-Makers, Upholsterers, etc.

**W**HEN Congress met after the burning of the public buildings in Washington, it immediately set to work to repair the damage. A committee was appointed, and in November, 1814, it reported that "the vaulting that supports some of the floors . . . is very little, if at all weakened by the burning, and that parts of the walls, arches and columns are in a state requiring a small expense to preserve them." The committee recommended an appropriation of \$500,000 for rebuilding and repairing the public buildings.

The waste of money on public buildings, with slow and comparatively meagre results, had given rise to considerable dissatisfaction. Congress had already tried more than one plan for the management of this De-

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partment. An Act of Congress (July 16, 1790) had authorized the President to appoint three Commissioners of Public Buildings. This board was abolished May 1, 1802, and the duties of the Commissioners were entrusted to one Superintendent at a salary of \$1,200 per annum. The office of Superintendent was next abolished (April 29, 1816), and the President was required to appoint one Commissioner at a salary of \$2,000 per annum.

The progress of the reconstruction of the President's house was slow and laborious. The disbursements on that account from Sept. 30, 1816, to Oct. 1, 1817, amounted to \$116,945. From Oct. 1, 1817, to Oct. 1, 1818, the sum expended on the President's house and Square was \$48,866.27.

There was great complaint that notwithstanding the great amount of old material on hand, the cost of rebuilding nearly approached the original outlay. It was nearly five years before the new house was really fit for habitation; and even then it had not been completed in accordance with the original plans and specifications. On Feb. 16, 1820, the Committee of Public Buildings reported as follows:

“From the 13th of February, 1815, to the 1st of January, 1820, the expenditures on this building have amounted to \$246,490. The porticos which were to have been erected on the north and south fronts of it, according to the original designs, are the only material parts remaining unfinished. The committee think it unnecessary to erect them at this time.

## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

Annual repairs, incident to every building and some alterations for greater comfort, . . . are the only purposes for which an appropriation will now be necessary."

On March 11, 1816, A. J. Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury, reported to Congress that "From the commencement in 1791 to Jan. 1, 1816, \$334,482.19" had been spent "on the President's house and appurtenant grounds."

The report of the committee of 1820 showed the following expenditures:

From the beginning to Jan. 1, 1820:

Erecting the President's house . . . . .	\$333,207.04
Repairing the President's house . . . . .	246,490.00

The work of reconstruction was under the immediate supervision of James Hoban, the original architect. He received a salary of \$1,600 per annum. His assistants were Peter Lenox, clerk of the works, who received \$4.00 a day; Robert Brown, foreman of the stone-cutters, \$3.75 a day; Nicholas Callan, overseer, \$2.00; and George Blagden, who was inspector of stone, and superintendent of the stone-cutters and setters, at both the Capitol and the President's house; he received \$1,500 per annum.

Mr. Hoban, in December, 1816, submits a report to Samuel Lane, the new Commissioner, concerning the state of the building and its progress during the year.

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From this, we make the following extracts:

“Of the Carpenter’s Department.—The roof has been framed and raised on the building, and the gutter carriages all around the building have been laid. The internal gutters are nearly completed. The body range of the roof has been covered with shingles until the balustrade is finished and the chimneys are carried up, after which it will be covered with copper.

“The trussed partitions and the trussed girders, with the binding joists throughout the building, are all framed and raised, and all the thorough joists of the building are in place, and the ceiling joists are put up in part.

“The trimmings of all the doorways of the house, as jambs and soffets, are all framed and panelled, and the doors of the principal story are framed; the ornamental parts of the panels are in progression—all mahogany.

“The framing of the doors of the chamber story and panelling are in a state of forwardness, and will progress through the winter; they are all of mahogany. The trimmings of all the windows of the house are framed and panelled, as linings, shutters, backs, elbows and soffets. All the window frames of the house are finished and primed, and all the sashes of the principal and chamber stories are of mahogany, finished and ready for glazing. The ornamental decoration of the doors and windows of the interior of the building are in a state of progression.

“Of the Cut Stone and Brick-Work.—All that part of the stone and brick-work of the north front of the President’s house, to the west of the centre of the building, has been taken down to the level of the floor of the principal story; and all that part of the north front, to the east of the centre of the building, has been taken down to the level of the floor of the chamber story; the whole of the walls have been rebuilt, and the entablature of that front has been finished.

## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

“At the west end of the building, the centre part has been taken down from the circular window in the chamber story, to the floor of the basement story, the whole of which has been rebuilt, including the Venetian doorway and the Venetian window, with one Ionic capital for the angle pilaster cut and set, as also the entablature of the northwest angle of the building.

“All that part of the east end of the building south of the centre has been taken down to the level of the floor of the principal story; the centre part, including the Venetian doorway, Venetian window, and circular window, has been taken down to the level of the basement floor, the whole of which has been rebuilt, including seven Ionic pilaster capitals, which have been cut and set, as are also the architrave and frieze, and the dentil bed of the cornice.

“All the parts of the windows of the basement story that were found to be any way defective in point of durability have been cut out, the whole of which have been rebuilt and are now finished.

“The brick arching of the kitchen and cellar, which had progressed, but had been suspended until the building was covered in, will be carried on as the season may permit. The interior walls have been repaired as far as the scaffolding extended. The injury they received did not materially affect the stability of the building.

### “Of the Materials on Hand.—

24,000 feet	5-4 yellow pine plank.
10,000	“ 4-4 “ “ “
10,000	“ 4-4 Susquehanna clear pine plank.
2,000	“ mahogany.
20,000	“ yellow heart pine, in stocks.
10,000	“ 5-4 flooring plank.
85 kegs	of white lead, 25 lbs. each.

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250 barrels of lime.

50 “ “ sand.

327 tons of freestone.

10 “ “ plaster of Paris.

Copper for gutters and inclined planes; all the nails, brads and sprigs; Boston glass for glazing the sashes. All the ironmongery is ordered, and copper for the body of the roof.”

James Monroe was inaugurated President in March, 1817; and the authorities were anxious that his official home should be ready to receive him by the time Congress opened in the autumn. In pursuance of this plan, James Hoban wrote to Samuel Lane (Dec. 12, 1816) showing exactly what still had to be done, and what in his opinion should be immediately undertaken. He says:

“Should it be directed to proceed with the work of the President’s house with a view to the accommodation of the President of the United States in that building by October next, I would suggest that the following portion of it, comprising the centre and west end, should be carried on, and which part I think might, with considerable exertion, be got ready, viz.:

“All the basement story.

“Of the principal story—

The elliptic saloon . . . . . 30 by 40

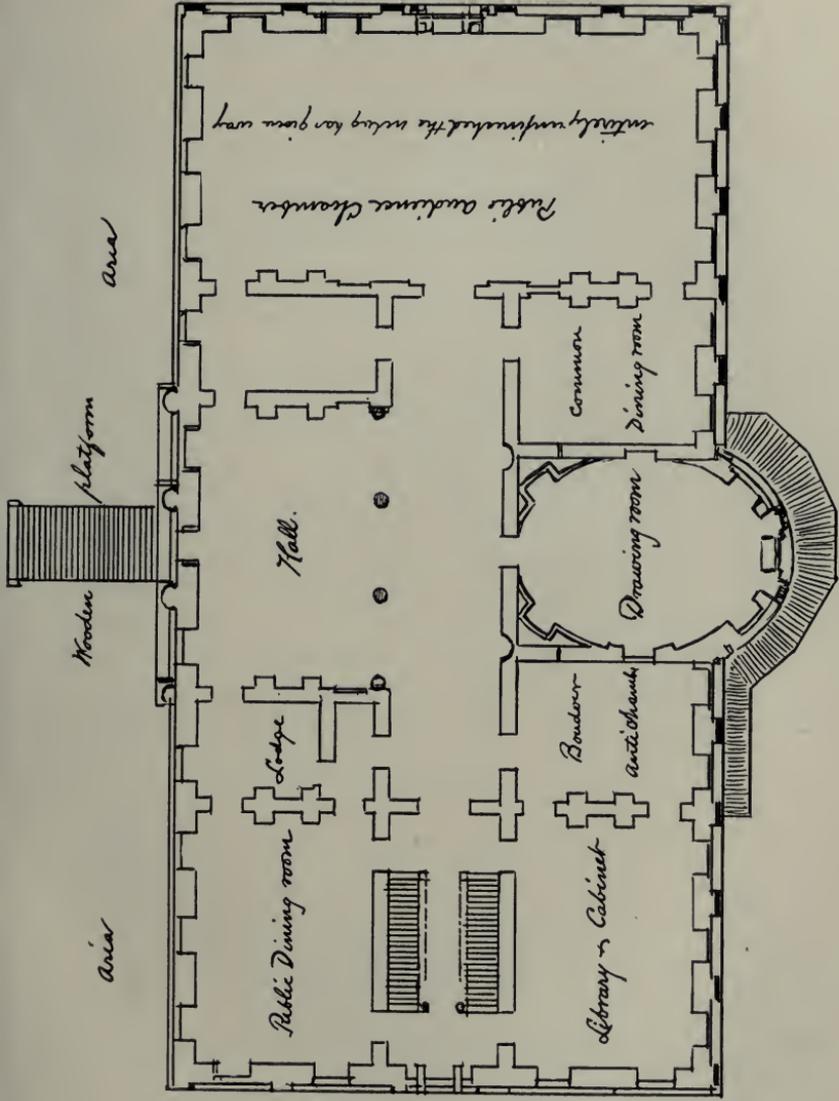
The hall or vestibule . . . . . 45 by 48

Two rooms . . . . . 22 by 28

Two rooms, dining and drawing. . . . . 28 by 38

One room . . . . . 14 by 18

Exclusive of staircase, passage, etc., which will be ready.



HOBAN'S ORIGINAL PLAN OF WHITE HOUSE



## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

“Of the Chamber Story—

The elliptic drawing-room . . . . .	30	by	40
Two chambers . . . . .	22	by	28
Two chambers . . . . .	25	by	28
Two chambers . . . . .	18	by	28
Two dressing-rooms . . . . .	13	by	28

Exclusive of the passages and staircases.

“N.B.—The principal staircase was put up after Mr. Jefferson came to the President's house, and much of the carpenter's work and painting were to be done to the hall and rooms.”

Two months later he sends in a detailed estimate of the work still to be done on the house, and its cost. Among the items we notice nine hundred panes of glass 18 by 27 inches, and three hundred and ninety 13 by 21 inches; which is interesting as showing how the windows looked. For the basement story, 1,444 yards of brick-paving was required. On the principal story, ten marble chimney-pieces at \$300 each were required; and one in the Elliptic Room, costing \$400. The second story was to be provided with eight more, costing \$200 each, five of Aquia stone at \$50 each, and two others of marble at \$150 each. The marble columns for the hall were estimated at \$1,100; and the stone and workmanship for balustrading at \$21,839.97. The estimate for the South Portico was \$27,301.44; and for the North Portico, \$26,286.72. The total estimate amounted to \$152,230.30.

By great efforts, the work considered absolutely

## THE WHITE HOUSE

necessary was finished by the end of the summer. On Sept. 20, 1817, J. Q. Adams notes in his Diary:

“The President, James Monroe, returned last Wednesday from a tour of nearly four months to the eastern and western parts of the United States. He is in the President’s house, which is so far restored from the effects of the British visit in 1814 that it is now for the first time habitable. But he is apprehensive of the effects of the fresh painting and plastering, and very desirous of visiting his family at his seat in Virginia. He is therefore going again to leave the city in two or three days, but said his absence would only be for a short time.”

During the autumn the President and his family took up their residence in the new mansion, and it was thrown open to the public on Jan. 1, 1818. The *National Intelligencer* reports on Jan. 2:

“The charming weather of yesterday contributed to enliven the reciprocal salutations of kindness and good wishes which are customary at every return of New Year’s Day.

“The President’s house, for the first time since its re-ædification, was thrown open for the general reception of visitors. It was thronged from twelve to three o’clock by an unusually large concourse of gentlemen and ladies, among whom were to be found the Senators, Representatives, heads of Departments, foreign Ministers, and many of our distinguished citizens, residents and strangers. It was gratifying to be able once more to salute the President of the United States with the compliments of the season in his appropriate residence; and the continuance of this truly Republican custom has given, as far as we have heard, very general satisfaction.

“The Marine Corps turned out on the occasion and made a fine appearance.”

## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

Having now followed the reconstruction of the President's house to its approximate completion, our next inquiry is as to the fashion of its furnishing.

The Monroes were people of wealth and good breeding. They were used to kings' courts and the elegances and luxuries of life. Their tastes were thoroughly in harmony with the prevailing vogue of the Empire style in interior decoration. It is said that during his residence in Paris, Mr. Monroe had picked up quite a number of fine pieces of furniture of the Louis Seize style which were part of the loot of the royal palaces at the outbreak of the French Revolution.

We have seen that the house was completely gutted by fire, and that the Madisons' apartments subsequently were exceedingly bare and cheerless. On the day before Mr. Monroe's Inauguration as President, Congress appropriated \$20,000 for furnishing his house, which, as we have seen, was to be ready for occupancy by the opening of Congress in the autumn. Mr. Monroe, thereupon, sent to France for some new furniture and sold his own to the Government.

The money he received is shown in detail in the following document:

“At the request of Colonel Samuel Lane, Commissioner of the Public Buildings in Washington, and assisted by the opinions of Mr. Charles A. Burnett, manufacturer and dealer in plate and ornamental furniture, Mr. William Worthington, cabinet-maker and upholsterer, and Mr. Alexander L. Joncherez, dealer in glass and China wares, who examined with us

## THE WHITE HOUSE

all the articles enumerated in the annexed schedule, we have estimated each at the value set against them respectively.

Washington,  
May 15, 1817.

J. MASON,  
JOHN P. VAN NESS.

“ Estimate of furniture in the President’s house:

1 large sideboard, dining-room .....		\$165.00
1 “ “ “ .....		100.00
1 “ tea table .....		14.00
9 chairs at 7 dollars .....		63.00
1 large press .....		35.00
2 window curtains .....		40.00
4 curtain pins .....		2.00
1 pair butler’s trays .....		12.00
1 carpet, 50 yards, at one dollar .....		50.00
1 platteau box .....		5.00
1 set of dining-tables .....		100.00
1 table set of French china, white and gold:		
13 $\frac{3}{8}$ dozen plates .....	159 pieces	
12 oval dishes, assorted sizes .....	12 “	
13 round dishes .....	13 “	
2 soup tureens .....	6 “	
4 fruit baskets .....	4 “	
3 sauce boats .....	6 “	
2 bowls .....	2 “	
2 sugar dishes .....	4 “	
4 butter boats .....	8 “	
4 stands .....	4 “	
16 fruit dishes .....	16 “	
20 custard cups .....	40 “	
12 oval fruit dishes .....	12 “	
		286 pieces 600.00



STANDING CANDLESTICK. MONROE  
PERIOD



ONE OF A PAIR OF CANDELABRA  
BOUGHT BY MONROE; ORIGINALY  
IN THE OVAL ROOM



## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

2 pair decanters at \$8 .....	16.00
18 claret glasses at \$8 per doz.....	12.00
49 wine glasses at \$6 per doz.....	24.00
6 tumblers at \$6 per doz.....	3.00
4 pair salts, \$6 .....	24.00
1 set white and gold tea china, broken.....	20.00
20 cups and saucers, tea-pot, sugar dish and cream pot, best French china .....	60.00
1 glass plateau, silver plate on rim.....	200.00
1 set ornaments (biscuit porcelain).....	250.00
Table cloths and napkins .....	600.00
Passage lamp and fixture .....	27.00

### *Front Drawing-Room:*

14 chairs, damask cushions, at \$12.75 each.....	\$178.50
1 elegant sofa (damask) .....	160.00
3 window curtains, do., 87 yards } 21 yards wide fringe }	450.00
3 window cornices at \$10 .....	30.00
1 Brussels carpet, 96 yards, at \$3.....	288.00
1 hearth rug .....	10.00
1 pair of handsome fire screens .....	32.00
6 curtain pins .....	4.50
1 lamp bracket .....	4.00
1 pair looking-glasses .....	600.00
1 pair bronze lamps .....	60.00
1 pair japanned lamps .....	25.00
1 " " " with glass globes .....	40.00
1 " bronze gilt andirons (elegant).....	180.00
1 brass mounted grate, fender, shovel, tongs and poker .....	45.00
1 pair claw-footed tables .....	50.00

## THE WHITE HOUSE

### *Back Drawing-Room:*

15 chairs at 9 dollars .....	\$135.00
1 pair of card tables .....	35.00
1 sofa .....	27.00
14 yards wide fringe for curtains } .....	200.00
2 damask curtains, 24 yards }	
2 dimity window curtains .....	24.00
1 Brussels carpet, 70 yards at \$2 .....	140.00
1 pair of book racks .....	30.00
1 pair of window cornices .....	20.00
4 curtain pins .....	4.00

### *Front Bed-Room:*

1 large bureau .....	\$24.00
1 small do. ....	20.00
1 mahogany bedstead, best quality .....	65.00
1 large bed, bolsters, pillows, etc., complete.....	140.00
1 suit bed curtains and cornice .....	65.00
1 wash stand .....	6.00
2 pine tables .....	3.50
2 window curtains at 7 dollars each .....	14.00
1 arm chair .....	25.00
1 looking-glass .....	15.00
1 fender .....	7.00

### *Back Room, upstairs:*

1 high field post bedstead .....	\$28.00
1 suit of bed curtains .....	27.00
1 bureau .....	25.00
1 wash stand .....	6.00
1 toilet table .....	2.00
1 window curtain .....	7.00
1 bed and furniture, complete .....	110.00

## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

1 low post bedstead .....	9.00
1 cot bedstead .....	10.00
1 small table .....	1.50
12 plain chairs at \$1.50 each .....	18.00
(The kitchen stuff was appraised at \$282.50.)	

### *Plate*

	<i>Oz.</i>	<i>Dwt.</i>	at		Price
2 dishes with covers.....	211.	5	at 2.25		\$455.31 $\frac{1}{4}$
4 do., smaller size .....	253.	1	" 2.25		569.36 $\frac{1}{4}$
1 waiter .....	67.	0	" 2.25		150.75
2 do., smaller size .....	25.	5	" 2.25		56.81 $\frac{1}{4}$
4 cassaroles .....	179.	2	" 2.25		402.97 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 bread basket .....	33.	5	" 2.25		74.81 $\frac{1}{4}$
1 tea pot .....	21.	0	" 2.00		42.00
1 coffee pot .....	25.	10	" 2.25		57.37 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 sugar dish .....	23.	18	" 2.00		47.80
1 cream pot .....	11.	7	" 2.00		27.70
1 mustard pot .....	4.	5	" 2.25		9.56 $\frac{1}{4}$
2 soup ladles .....	18.	7	" 2.00		36.70
8 gravy spoons .....	32.	9	" 2.00		64.90
23 table spoons .....	59.	10	" 2.00		119.00
23 forks .....	64.	12	" 2.00		129.20
20 dessert spoons .....	38.	16	" 2.00		77.60
20 do. forks .....	40.	0	" 2.00		80.00
20 do. knives .....	31.	10	" 2.50		78.75
12 coffee spoons .....	11.	18	" 2.25		26.77 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 fish knife .....	4.	14	" 2.25		10.46 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 pair asparagus tongs.....	4.	0	" 2.25		9.00
6 salt spoons, gilt bowls.....	20.	0	" 2.50		5.00
1 pair sugar tongs .....	1.	7	" 2.50		3.37 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 set castors, silver mounted .....					80.00

---

\$2,610.22 $\frac{1}{2}$

## THE WHITE HOUSE

1 pair branches .....	\$35.00
1 pair large sticks to match .....	24.00
4 plated wine coolers, at \$10.....	40.00
2 pair bottle castors, at \$6.....	12.00
2 large plated dish skimmers, at \$20....	40.00
4 large plated dish skimmers, at \$18....	72.00
1 large case for plate, lined with buckskin	100.00
4 ladles, 2 oz. 10 dwt., at \$2.50.....	6.25
1 sugar ladle .....	1.75

---

\$331.00

Add for short extension of the plate 211 $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. at

\$2.25 ..... \$9,071.22 $\frac{1}{2}$

“ Rec’d of Samuel Lane, agent for the purchase of furniture for the President’s house, the sum of \$9,071.22.

“ May 15, 1817.

JAMES MONROE.”

The Commissioner of Public Buildings agreed with the President that the latter’s furniture should be taken over by the Government, and that the sumptuous furniture for the state rooms should be procured abroad. Mr. Monroe knew all about Parisian shopping; and, therefore, was able to give an exact estimate of the cost of the articles required. As is so often the case, however, when the bills came in the money appropriated was not sufficient to pay them. This appears from the statement of Mr. Lee already quoted (page 89) :

“ On this careful and thorough examination with the Commissioner of the Public Buildings, we concluded it was impossible to furnish the house in season for the reception of the



SÈVRES VASE



## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

President in the fall, without having recourse to his private furniture, in the house he lately occupied, to which he consented, that the sum appropriated might be laid out to greater advantage to the public.

“Concerning the furniture ordered from France, which so far exceeded in price the expectation formed of it, I beg leave to observe that, in making up the order, particular care was taken to specify the articles and fix the price of each, according to direction of the President; but Messrs. Russell and Lafarge, who were charged, were not able to complete it at those prices, and knowing how necessary it was for him to have the furniture here in the fall, they procured it on the best terms in their power. It must be acknowledged that the articles are of the very first quality, and so substantial that some of them will last, and be handsome for twenty years more.

Furniture from France cost .....	\$18,429.26
Charges paid thereon in Alexandria and Wash- ington .....	1,286.82
	\$19,716.08
Furniture purchased by Mr. Yard of Philadelphia.	3,360.44
Sums disbursed for furniture and incidental ex- penses at Washington .....	6,742.70
To which may be added for cut glass from Pitts- burg, some chairs and some unfinished articles here, the amount of which has not come in...	1,000.00
	\$30,819.22
Total amount of cost of furniture.....	\$30,819.22
Total amount paid by the President of the United States towards furnishing his house .....	\$22,199.90
To which add what remains to be paid.....	8,619.32
Making an exceedant over and above \$20,000 ap- propriated by Congress of .....	\$10,819.12

## THE WHITE HOUSE

“ A circumstance which will not appear extraordinary if we consider that every article of the former furniture was totally destroyed when the house was burnt.”

In conclusion Mr. Lee draws attention to the economy of plate, which is “ never out of fashion: the older it is, the more respectable it appears.” He also advocates “ heavy substantial furniture, which should always remain in its place, and form, as it were, a part of the house; such as could be handed down through a succession of Presidents, suited to the dignity and character of the nation.”

Having sold his furniture to the Government and sent orders abroad for the furnishings of the reception rooms on the principal floor, Mr. Monroe set a whole army of carpenters, upholsterers, and cabinet-makers to work, dismantling his own residence and getting the President's house ready for habitation. The bills submitted to Congress cover every kind of work necessary in good housekeeping. For example, Isaac Cooper, of Georgetown, in April, renders a bill “ for repairing chairs and sofa,” and during the summer other bills include such items as “ for framing four portraits, \$36.00,” and for framing the large portrait of Washington that Mrs. Madison had saved, \$150.00.

Kitchen utensils to the value of \$94.00 were purchased in April, and the following bill was also rendered by René de Perdreauxville, a fashionable upholsterer and cabinet-maker:



HANNIBAL CLOCK AND ORNAMENTS, PURCHASED BY MONROE; EMPIRE  
CLOCK AND BRONZE ORNAMENTS, THE LATTER SELECTED BY  
MRS. GRANT



## THE SECOND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

1 pair crimson curtains for the <i>Yellow Room</i> , with all the iron rods, gilt bronze ornaments and trimmings .....	\$450.00
1 pair of green silk curtains for the <i>Green Room</i> , with all the iron rods, gilt bronze ornaments and trimmings .....	450.00
1 pair crimson silk curtains for the North-East Chamber, with all the iron rods, gilt bronze ornaments, etc. ....	300.00
	\$1,200.00

Another bill of \$440.50 includes the following items: "To repairing piano, etc., for the President's house, \$1.25; one pair of large dining tables, complete, \$85.00; 16 mahogany chairs, complete, \$16.00; to altering 20 mahogany chairs and covering them with hair-cloth, \$105.00; to repairing Windsor chair, .50; to putting looking-glass in frame and repairing glass, \$4.00; to one large table, \$42.50."

From the bills rendered in November, we learn that the President bought carpets, curtains, blankets, sheeting, table-linen, china, plate, fenders; and paid goodly sums to upholsterers, carpenters, and other workmen to repair and hang lamps, lay carpets, fit stair-rods, adjust cornices, etc., etc. The carpets bought consisted of 77½ yards Brussels, \$177.38; 257 yards of Brussels, \$591.10; 21 yards Brussels, \$48.30; 14 yards carpeting \$32.20, to match that in the Green Room; one piece of green baize, 22 yards, \$19.80; six pieces ditto, \$119.80. This was intended for the Elliptical Room.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Four large mats, \$6.00, is another item. On Nov. 25, a bill is rendered for "ten cases to fill up recesses for books at \$20 each, \$200.00." On December 16, a bill is sent in for six brass fenders, \$270.50, one of which costs no less than \$86.00; and another \$82.00; and in November \$100 each was paid to Mr. B. L. Lear for three marble busts of "Washington, Columbus, and Americus Vespuccius." These had been at *Mount Vernon*, and had come into Mr. Lear's possession after the death of Mrs. Washington. The busts of Columbus and Vespucci are still to be seen in the lower corridor of the White House; and that of Washington on one of the mantel-pieces in the East Room.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

Arrival and Description of the French Furniture; The Oval Room and its Famous Carpet; A Fine Piano; Furniture of the Card Room; Furnishings of the Dining-Room; the Porcelain; the Plate; Upholsterers and Cabinet-Makers; the President's Message; Cut-Glass Ware and other Purchases; Bedrooms and Boudoirs; the President's Square.

**E**ARLY in the autumn the French furniture arrived. Messrs. Russell and La Farge, writing from Havre (Sept. 15, 1817), advise:

“Sir: Our Mr. Russell having been detained at Bordeaux by business, transmitted us the orders he received from your Excellency for the purchase of the furniture for the palace of the President at Washington. . . . Our Mr. La Farge went to Paris in the beginning of June for this purpose, when the result of his inquiries soon convinced him that there was no possibility of purchasing anything ready made, and in order to comply with the instructions of your Excellency of 23 April, he was under the necessity of ordering the whole of the furniture to be made, that he might be sure to obtain such articles as united strength with elegance of form, and combining at the same time simplicity of ornament with the richness suitable to the decoration of a house occupied by the first Magistrate of a free Nation.

“It is only a few days since he returned from Paris, where

## THE WHITE HOUSE

he had been a second time to assure himself that the articles had been executed agreeably to the orders and to every (*sic.*) the packing and the expedition. Everything, with the exception of the *Tapis d'Aubusson Velouté*, which will not be ready before November next, has arrived here, and has been shipped on board the ship *Resolution*, Captain Jewett, bound to Alexandria. . . .

“There are many articles bought under the price which your Excellency had fixed, but one of the most important is the furniture for the large Oval Room, which costs a great deal more than what your Excellency had calculated, and which is caused by the change which we have been obliged to make of gilt wood instead of mahogany. The result of that substitution has been an increase of expense for the trimmings of the *Fauteuils*, etc., and the draperies of the curtains, which must be richer, that everything might be in harmony. We should also add that mahogany is not generally admitted in the furniture of a Saloon, even at private gentlemen's houses.

*Francs*

Bill of lading for 5 cases of paper hangings amounting as per invoice to .....	6,185.5
Bill of lading for 39 cases containing 1,200 bottles Champagne and Burgundy wine as per invoice.	5,962.47
And bill of lading for seven cases, of which six are for Mrs. Monroe .....	9,056.30
And one for Mrs. Decatur .....	803.00
9,120.00 still due for the carpet <i>d'Aubusson velouté</i> .	

“We have handed Captain Jewett the drawing of the three windows and of the *Tapis d'Aubusson*.”

Eight months later the same firm writes:

“The christal and gilt bronze Lustre is of superior workmanship, had originally been ordered by the French Govern-

## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

ment; and if it was to be made again would cost 5,000 *frs.* We had great difficulty in getting Pendules without *nudities*, and were, in fact, *forced* to take the two models we have bought, on that account.

“The furniture, for the large Oval Room, is much higher than the prices limited; it must be ascribed to the gilt-wood and the crimson silk trimmings, fringes, etc., which is 50 per cent dearer than other colors. The gilt-wood was made by the first *Ébéniste* in Paris, of the name of Bellanger. The silks were bought by us of Cartier  *fils*, and we had the whole made up by Laveissier, a very good *tapissier*.

“Being obliged to take piano of Erard, we could not get any other ready made but the one sent. He allowed us a very large discount on account of the many purchases we have made of him. The Surtout is very handsome—it has been made by the best manufacturers in Paris, who lost by it near 2,000 *francs*.

“The dessert set of Porcelain has been manufactured by Dagoty. All the manufacturers competed for this and Mr. Nast would not make it for less than 50 per cent more; and instead of four vignettes, they have made five.

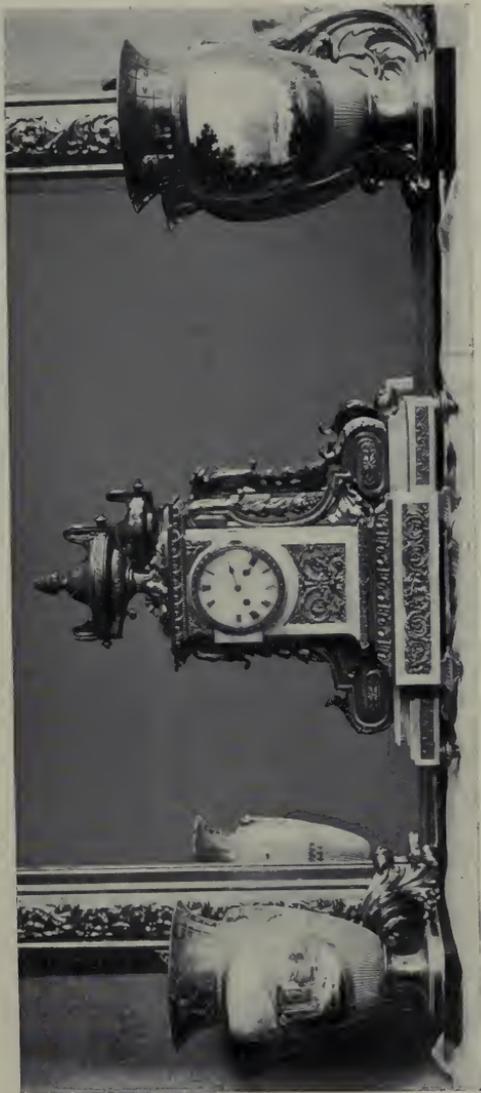
“The Plate has been manufactured by Fauconnier, an excellent artist, and honest man; the tureens will, we hope, be found of the highest finish.”

The bills rendered by Messrs. Russell and La Farge are written in French, being evidently transcripts of the accounts of the firms from whom the goods were purchased. They describe with great minuteness the several articles.

The contents of the forty-one packages received at Alexandria from France were:

## THE WHITE HOUSE

- "1. }  
 2. } 1 gilt bronze and crystal lustre for large oval room.  
 3. }  
 4. 1 do. do. do. for the sitting-room.  
 5. 1 do. do. do. for the card-room.  
 6. 1 pendule for the card-room.  
 7. 1 pair candelabres for do.  
 11. The curtains for the three windows and the Escharpe for the lustre in the large room.  
 12. 3 eagles and ornaments for the draperies of the curtains.  
 13. 2 gondoles, 4 X and 6 *tabourets* or foot-stools.  
 14. 2 fire-screens.  
 15. 1 pendule, a pair of candelabres and candlesticks for the parlour.  
 16. 3 lamps for the dining-room.  
 17. 12 bronze gilt branches for the four rooms.  
 18. }  
 19. } The surtout.  
 20. }  
 21. The flowers, the surtout and a pair of candelabres for the card-room.  
 22. 3 fire fenders.  
 23. 2 mirrors for the card-room.  
 24. 2 do. for the large room.  
 25. The cornishes of two mirrors for the large oval room.  
 26. 1 console and marble for the large oval room.  
 28. 1 piano.  
 29. 1 round table for the parlour.  
 30. 1 console and marble for do.  
 31. do. do. for card-room.  
 32. The marble of the two consoles.  
 33. 1 sofa.  
 34. 1 do.



MONROE VASES AND CLOCK



## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

- 35. }  
36. } 18 Fauteuils.  
37. }
- 38. }  
39. } 18 chairs.  
40. }
- 41. 3 pair porcelain vases.
- 42. }  
43. } The set of table china.
- 44. }  
45. } The dessert set of porcelain.
- 46. }  
47. } The Plate."

The furniture imported for the large Oval Room consisted of a gilt bronze *lustre* garnished with crystals with trophies, for fifty lights. It had four arms in the form of an eagle very richly gilded, and had branches of fruit decoration for six lights: this cost 2,800 francs. "A clock representing Minerva leaning on a shield, the shield containing the face and works." It stood on a square base, the front and sides of which were decorated with bas-reliefs of military trophies, the whole being carved and gilded (*fr.* 2,000). "A pair of bronze candelabra with female forms standing on a square base, also decorated with military trophies (*fr.* 1,400). A pair of carved gilt bronze chandeliers, a pair of porcelain vases richly decorated with landscape subjects (*fr.* 600), a gilt set of hearth furniture with trophy decoration; a gilt wood console (5 feet 10 inches long, 3 feet 4 inches high). The legs were double balusters,

## THE WHITE HOUSE

carved and gilded, the back framing a mirror, and the top was of white marble (5 feet 10 inches long and 22 inches wide).

“ A mantel mirror (91 inches by 49) ; another one to go over the console (91 by 47) ; cornices and frames for the mirrors richly gilded.

“ A set of drawing-room furniture of gilded wood carved with branched olive leaves and covered with a heavy satin material of a delicate crimson color, with a pattern of laurel leaves in two tones of gold.”

The sofas, or *canapés*, had curved ends. They were nine feet long. Each *canapé* was supplied with two soft down tasselled pillows of the same material as the sofas were covered with. The sofas cost 1,684.37 francs.

The two *bergères* or *gondolas* (399.14 francs), of gilt wood and similar upholstery, had their seats and backs stuffed with down; the eighteen arm-chairs, or *fauteuils*, eighteen chairs, four X-shaped *tabourets*, and six foot-stools were similarly decorated and upholstered, as were also two fire-screens. The *fauteuils* cost 271.84 francs; the chairs, 191.91; the *tabourets*, 234.77; and the screens, 255.71.

The curtains for the three windows, fifteen feet high, consisted of drapery thrown over a gilt arch with an eagle in the centre. The gilded eagle held an olive branch in one claw and a bunch of arrows in the other. The gilt wood work cost 240 francs. The curtains were of taffeta of the same tint as the upholstery of the furniture. They cost 3,243.92 francs.



MINERVA CLOCK AND VASES, BOUGHT BY MONROE



## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

A fringed silk scarf of the same color draped the big chandelier.

It will be noticed that the Oval Room, now called the Blue Room, was a red room under Mr. Monroe: it was beautifully furnished with console-table, sofas, arm-chairs, chairs, stools, hearth-furniture, chandeliers, hanging and standing, clock, vases, mirrors, and curtains. It glowed with rose and glittered with gold. The only thing lacking was the carpet. Whether there was any covering on the polished floor when the President first received his guests there, we do not know. The carpet did not arrive till early in February: it was shipped for New York in the *General Hamilton* on Jan. 12, 1818. It cost 9,059.55 francs. If any one desires to form a clear idea of this carpet, he must go to *Mount Vernon*. where what is practically its twin may be seen.

Messrs. Russell and La Farge reported in May as follows: "The carpet was ordered from Roger and Sallandrouze of Paris. An Aubusson velvet carpet, oval in accordance with the plan that you sent to us, 27 feet 8 inches, French measure, by 37 feet. The background green with a beautiful border, and in the centre the arms of the United States of America, colored according to the design sent us. The whole carpet is woven in a single piece forming seventy-six square ells."

The furniture imported for the Sitting Room, or Parlor, consisted of a round mahogany table with three

## THE WHITE HOUSE

columnar supports on a triangular socle, the capitals and other ornaments being of carved and gilded bronze. It had a white marble top,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter (*fr.* 500). Next came a mahogany console-table, 4 feet 11 inches long, with a mirror at the back and marble top, the ornamentations of the columns being also in gilt bronze (*fr.* 500). The third conspicuous object was an Erard piano, supported by three columns with bronze ornaments. It had four pedals and a *tambourin* attachment (*fr.* 2,200). The other furnishings consisted of a gilt bronze clock representing Hannibal after the Battle of Cannæ (*fr.* 900); a pair of candelabra of human figures on square pedestals for six lights, gilt bronze (*fr.* 850); a gilt bronze and crystal chandelier for thirty lights of female figures and bust of Diana with branches of heads of Minerva (*fr.* 1,500); two sconce-arms with lion heads, gilt bronze, for five lights (*fr.* 250); dogs and andirons in the form of eagles, bronze (*fr.* 500); two porcelain vases richly decorated with vignettes of Homer and Belisarius (*fr.* 500).

The furniture for the Card Room consisted of a mahogany console-table with glass back and marble top (*fr.* 500); a gilt bronze and crystal chandelier for thirty lights with branches and ivy-tendrils and women blowing trumpets (*fr.* 1,000); a pair of candelabra on a circular base with a figure on a globe holding a palm and five lights (*fr.* 600). Two arms of gilded bronze with lions' heads (*fr.* 250); dogs and andirons, bronze

## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

antique, lions (*fr.* 350); a pair of porcelain vases richly decorated, representing views of Passy and Franklin's house (*fr.* 460); a mirror, 85x44 inches (*fr.* 618); another, 84x46 inches (*fr.* 728); mirror frames (*fr.* 153.75); gilding (*fr.* 289.85). The chairs, tables, etc., were supplied by native workmen, or came from Mr. Monroe's original belongings.

The French furnishings for the Dining-Room included a carved and gilded lamp with ball and swans for nine lights (*fr.* 800); two green bronze lamps with balls ornamented with stars and swan necks with eight lights (*fr.* 1,000); four sconce-arms with lions' heads and six lights (*fr.* 900); a table centre-piece (*surtout de table*), of carved and gilded bronze, the decorations being garlands of fruits and vines with figures of Bacchus and Bacchantes. This stood on pedestals on which were sixteen figures holding crowns for the reception of candles and sixteen cups which could be changed at will. It was composed of seven separate pieces, and was garnished with mirrors. Other features of the decoration in this beautiful specimen of the goldsmith's art consisted of three rich baskets, each with three figures on a circular base, decorated with ivy leaves and with flowers, having six lights each, and two rich tripods after the antique and two vases of Etruscan form all gilded and decorated with flowers. This artistic centre-piece, with its three-score wax candles reflected in the mirrors, must have thrown a brilliant glow on the assembled company. The beautiful chandeliers also

## THE WHITE HOUSE

helped adequately to light the elegant Dining-Room. The *surtout* cost 6,000 francs, and we have already seen (page 111) that the manufacturers underestimated its cost, and lost 2,000 francs by making it. When set up on the table, it covered a space thirteen and a half feet long and two feet wide.

For the Dining-Room came also from France a table-service of gilded porcelain for thirty persons. This cost 3,636 francs. It consisted of two soup tureens, thirty-two oval dishes of various sizes, eight square covered dishes, three dozen soup plates, twelve dozen dinner plates, four sauce-boats, four deep dishes, thirty-six custard-cups, four fruit stands, four octagonal salad bowls, four mustard pots and thirty-six egg-cups.

The dessert service made by Dagoty (see page 111), also for thirty persons, was beautifully decorated with an amaranth border and five vignettes representing Strength, Agriculture, Commerce, Art, and Science, and the centre of the plate, or dish, bore the arms of the United States. It cost 2,424 francs and consisted of three dozen deep and seven dozen flat plates; twenty-four preserve jars and dishes of various forms; four cheese dishes and four others on raised feet, two chestnut bowls, four sweetmeat dishes, four bowls for candied fruits, and four fruit baskets.

The silver plate, made by Fauconnier (see page 111), consisted of two tureens with dishes and covers (*fr.* 3,174.35); six dozen knives and forks, six vegetable spoons, two gravy spoons, thirty-six knives with



JAMES MONROE



## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

silver-gilt blades, thirty-six silver-gilt coffee spoons, thirty-six silver-gilt-blade knives with mother-of-pearl handles, inlaid with gold shields. The engraving of 304 pieces with the national arms cost 456 francs. A special trunk for the two soup tureens cost 210 francs; a mahogany box for the table cutlery, 280 francs; and another for the silver-gilt ware, 192 francs.

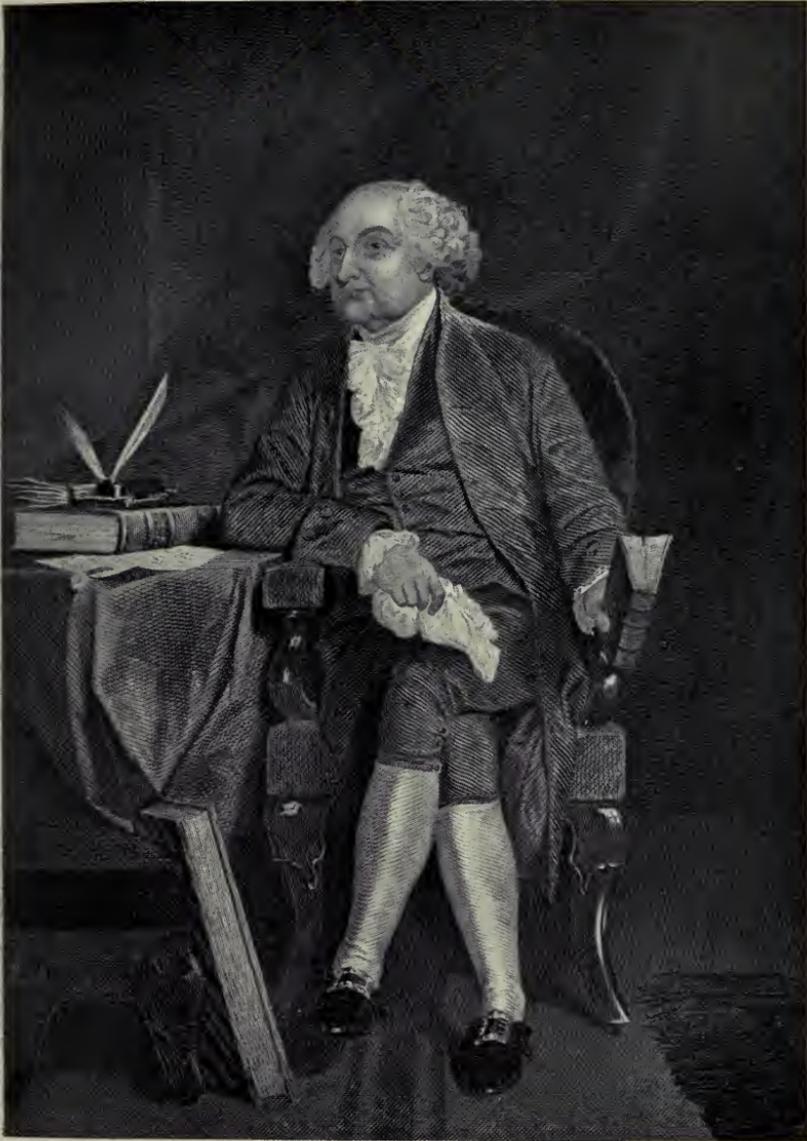
Thus we see that the table service and lighting apparatus of the Dining-Room were imported from France, and the tables and chairs were made here, or were supplied from Mr. Monroe's original household goods. The room was furnished with two large mahogany dining-tables, and thirty-six mahogany chairs covered with hair-cloth (see page 107). The curtains must have been very handsome in this room, since the bill for "fringe for curtains for dining-room," bought in 1818, cost \$155.00. The Dining-Room does not seem to have been finally carpeted till about the same time that the Oval Room was; for in 1818 the President buys 177½ yards green and brown Brussels carpeting for the Dining-Room, \$443.75.

On the arrival of the furniture from France, upholsterers and cabinet-makers were immediately put to work to arrange the rooms to the best advantage. The work consisted principally in putting up cornices and hanging the curtains, putting up the great chandeliers and sconces, and making covers for the furniture when not in use in order to preserve its brilliancy and prevent the delicate shades of the satin from fading too quickly.

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Two bills rendered in December by C. Alexander contain the following items: " Making and putting up two window curtains of green silk, \$22.00; making and putting up a green silk scarf for the chandelier, \$2.00; making and putting up a crimson scarf, \$1.50; making and putting up a scarlet ditto, \$4.00; paid blacksmith for two supporters for the drapery of the Green Room, \$1.00; putting up the curtains of the eating-room, \$3.00; finishing the carpet of the Secretary and making a small carpet, .75; laying three oil-cloth carpets, \$9.00; laying three smaller carpets, \$7.50; finishing the saloon carpet, \$1.50; making and laying the staircase carpet, \$18.00; cutting and polishing the thirty-six brass rods for the stair carpet, \$9.00, and fixing the little conductor, \$2.00."

Perdreauville's December bill came to no less than \$1,559.98. He supplied a mahogany bureau for cabinet, \$70.00; and three yards of green cloth for bureau, \$21.00. He also supplied 750 feet of mahogany, \$187.50; and charged \$28 for sawing this into slabs. He was paid \$15.00 for designs and sketches of *fauteuils*. His charges include: "lengthening twelve iron rods and hoops to suspend lustres, \$4.00; 69 $\frac{1}{4}$  yards of scarlet cloth, \$311.62; 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  yards black cloth to trim, \$86.00; fashion and putting up of three pair of scarlet curtains with trimmings, \$18.00; ditto, two pair of crimson damask curtains, \$12.00; furnished four white curtains with fringe, \$42.00; fashion and furnishing of two pair of crimson curtains, \$12.00;



ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF JOHN ADAMS



## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

furnishing four muslin curtains for cabinet, etc., \$38.00; furnished fourteen muslin curtains for the large apartments, fringe, etc., \$157.50; furnished twenty-two muslin curtains for eleven windows, \$111.00; repairing lustres, \$31.50."

Every curtain in the house had an under pair of muslin, sometimes heavily fringed, and in most cases very costly, as the above prices prove.

The President's executive offices consisted of an ante-chamber, audience-room, and cabinet. We have seen above that his council table was a mahogany bureau covered with three yards of green baize. It was, therefore, about ten feet long, and would accommodate twelve people. This was quite large enough for the seating of the President, his Cabinet, and Secretary. It will be noticed that, so far, the rooms on the principal floor have not been richly carpeted by any means. The funds voted by Congress had been more than exhausted, and the President had to leave the carpeting to the next appropriation. When this was forthcoming, we see that the necessary orders were immediately given, and in due course the following bills were presented:

"93 yards Brussels carpeting (73 yds. body, 20 yds. border), \$258.12; 101 yards Brussels carpeting (83 yds. body, 18 yds. border), \$252.50; 177½ yards green and brown Brussels carpeting for dining-room, \$443.75; 93 yards yellow and brown ditto, \$232.50; 24 yards carpeting (13½ yds. body, 10½ yds. border), \$59.37; two Imperial rugs, \$44.00; floor-cloth

## THE WHITE HOUSE

for large hall and entry, \$1,222.94. The new bill for the floor coverings totalled \$3,431.68."

A bill in May, 1818, charges \$117.38 for a carpet for Secretary's room, and \$642.40 for carpet for the President's cabinet, audience-room, and ante-chamber. Floor-cloths for small entries came to \$295.00. In February, 1818, five cases of painted oil-cloths arrived from Philadelphia.

Another bill presented by George Bridport, of Philadelphia, Oct. 19, 1818, contains items of carpeting as well as general upholstery.

On February 12, 1818, the following Message was received from the President of the United States:

"As the house appropriated for the President of the United States will be finished this year, it is thought to merit the attention of Congress in what manner it should be furnished and what measures ought to be adopted for the safe keeping of the furniture in future. All the public furniture provided before 1814 having been destroyed with the public building in that year, and little afterwards procured owing to the inadequacy of the appropriation, it has become necessary to provide almost every article requisite for such an establishment; whence the sum to be expended will be much greater than at any former period. The furniture in its kind and extent, is thought to be an object not less deserving attention than the building for which it is intended. But, being national objects, each seems to have an equal claim to legislative sanction. The disbursement of the public money, too, ought, it is presumed, to be in like manner provided for by law. The person who may happen to be placed, by the suffrage of his fellow-citizens, in this high

## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

trust, having no personal interest in these concerns, should be exempted from undue responsibility respecting them.

“For a building so extensive, intended for a purpose exclusively national, in which, in the furniture provided for it, a mingled regard is due to the simplicity and purity of our institutions, and to the character of the people who are represented in it, the sum already appropriated has proved altogether inadequate. The present is, therefore, a proper time for Congress to take the subject into consideration, with a view to all the objects claiming attention, and to regulate it by law. On a knowledge of the furniture procured, and the sum expended for it, a just estimate may be formed, regarding the extent of the building, of what will still be wanted to furnish the House. Many of the articles being of a durable nature, may be handed down through a long series of service; and being of great value, such as plate, ought not to be left altogether, and at all times, to the care of servants alone. It seems to be advisable that a public agent should be charged with it during the occasional absences of the President, and have authority to transfer it from one President to another, and likewise to make reports of occasional deficiencies, as the basis on which further provision should be made.

“It may also merit consideration, whether it may not be proper to commit the care of the public buildings, particularly the President’s house and the Capitol, with the grounds belonging to them, including likewise the furniture of the latter, in a more especial manner, to a public agent. Hitherto, the charge of this valuable property seems to have been connected with the structure of the buildings, and committed to those employed in it. This guard will naturally cease when the buildings are finished, at which time the interest in them will be proportionably augmented. It is presumed that this trust is, in a certain degree at least, incidental to the other duties of the superintendent of the public buildings, but it may merit con-

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sideration whether it will not be proper to charge him with it more explicitly, and to give him authority to employ one or more persons under him, for these purposes.

“Washington, Feb. 10, 1818.”

In reading books on Washington, one frequently comes across references to the niggardly appropriations of Congress for the President's house; but when one carefully examines the accounts, one forms a totally different opinion. We have already seen the great sums that had been expended on the original house and its rebuilding up to this date, and now Congress appropriates another \$30,000 to complete the furnishing, although, as we have seen, Mr. Monroe had incurred unauthorized debts in buying “the best and latest.” Fifty thousand dollars would not go very far to-day, perhaps, in furnishing an elegant mansion; but it was a very respectable sum in the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century.

Being now supplied with the necessary sums, the President proceeded to buy what was lacking in his establishment. This, as we have seen, consisted principally of carpets for the principal floor. “On the chamber story,” there was a great deal to be done in decorating the boudoirs and bedrooms. The table-service also does not seem to have been sufficient, for the President sent in the autumn to Pittsburg for some fine cut glass.

Bakewell, Page and Bakewell's bill amounted to \$235.75: “6 pair cut quart decanters with the United



PARTS OF THE *surtout de table*, BOUGHT BY MONROE; CANDELABRA AND  
EMPIRE TRIPOD VASES, BOUGHT BY MONROE



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States arms engraved on each, \$180.00; 12 doz. cut tumblers, \$180.00; 8 doz. cut wines, \$96.00; 4 doz. clarets, \$54.00; 6 doz. tumblers fluted down, \$48.00; 6 doz. wine glasses, \$30.00; 2 doz. champaign glasses, \$18.00; 2 pair quart decanters, \$36.00"; and also 2 pair carvers and steel, \$10.00, and 8 doz. table knives and forks with ivory handles, \$92.00, are the chief purchases.

On Feb. 16, 1818, more glass was purchased, the bill amounting to \$518.00, and including 6 pairs of water decanters, \$240.00; 2 pairs of oval 13-inch dishes; 6 pairs of 9-inch ditto, and 6 pairs of salts. In this year he also bought from A. Joncherez in Washington: "18 flowered bowls, \$2.25; 2 doz. B. E. plates, \$2.00; 3 doz. large china ditto, \$13.50; 3 doz. smaller do., \$10.50; 4 pitchers, \$1.18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; 4 blue ewers and basins, \$12.00; 8 B. P. cups and saucers, \$2.00; 2 ditto bowls, \$1.50."

In addition to the china and plate already described on pages 118 and 119, the President also purchased in Baltimore from J. S. Skinner "two sets of china of 24 cups and saucers and 16 plates, \$76.00"; and from C. A. Burnett, in Washington, "six silver dishes, wt. 356 oz. 1 dwt., \$712.00; 1 plated tea-tray with silver handles, \$96.00; 1 ditto, \$56.00; 1 ditto, \$34.00; 1 silver sugar dish, 26 oz. 1 dwt., \$59.16; 1 cream-pot, 13 oz. 6 dwt., \$30.70; 1 pair of sugar tongs, \$4.00; 6 salt spoons, \$6.40." Burnett also charged \$5.00 to mend two plated urns. and \$2.50 to mend a sugar dish

## THE WHITE HOUSE

and cream-pot. His bill amounted to \$1,006.86. Messrs. Rasch and Willig, Jr., silver-plate manufacturers of Philadelphia, supplied in February, 1819, a goblet and waiter for \$49.00.

Table-linen to the value of \$420.35 was purchased in Philadelphia. The table-cloths measured 6 ells by 4, and the napkins  $\frac{1}{4}$  ell by  $\frac{5}{8}$ . They were of the finest damask.

It may be interesting to the reader to be conducted rapidly through the accounts and have some of the more important items noted.

The house was warmed with open fires: seven brass fenders cost \$270.50; seven sets of brass fire irons and six sets of polished steel cost \$178.75; the ornate andirons in the Oval Room were provided with protecting tin-covers when not in use at a cost of \$5.00. James Yard's bill for household sundries bought in Philadelphia amounted to \$3,346.59, and Perdreauxville's bill for curtains for the upstairs rooms, purchased in the same city, totalled \$1,200.00. Cabinet-makers and upholsterers were busy all day long throughout the year. The bills contain charges for all kinds of turnery and joiners' work, much of which was evidently done on the premises. There are charges for mahogany of various lengths and thicknesses, plain and veneered. Mahogany for one bed cost \$4.08, and \$2.50 was charged for turning the four bed-posts, and \$65.88 for 35 days' work making mahogany benches. Lewis Salomon received \$131.35 for two looking-glasses, and

## THE FURNITURE OF THE RESTORATION

William Mechlen, \$38.00 for a round mahogany table with gilt claw feet. A bill of \$473.75 contains: one mahogany sideboard, \$65.00; one mahogany French bedstead, fluted posts, \$45.00; five large dressing-tables, at \$50.00 each, \$250.00; five large mahogany washstands, at \$13.00 each, \$65.00; four butler's trays, at \$5.00 each, \$20.00; four boxes octagon tops (knife-cases), \$22.50. Waters and Belt were paid \$75.00 for "one large glass stand for Mr. Monroe's room."

In his purchases the President did not confine himself to new furniture. At an auction sale at Kalorama, Oct. 19, 1818, he bought a bedstead and curtains, \$200.00; four window curtains, \$116.00; one secretary, \$130.00; one bureau, \$80.00; one washstand, \$35.00; one bowl and pitcher, \$6.50.

A good idea of the bed and its bedding may be gathered from William Camp's bill (Baltimore, Oct. 5, 1818): two mahogany bedsteads, \$300.00; two feather-beds, 180 lbs., \$225.00; 2 hair-mattresses, 167 lbs., \$167.00; two cotton ditto, 120 lbs., \$72.00.

George Bridport's bill, Oct. 19, 1818, amounting to \$1,182.31, included 3 pairs plated chamber candlesticks on ball feet, with snuffers and extinguishers, \$36.00; 1 set of 4 japanned trays, \$22.00; 193 yds. super chintz, \$241.25; 100 do. rich colored do., \$150.00; 265 do. fine colored cambricks for linings, \$132.50; 4 large swing toilette glasses, \$40.00; and 4 rugs.

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Good care was taken of the furniture and decorations: at the approach of summer precautions were taken against the ravages of flies, moths, and dust. Alexander renders a bill for \$91.35 in July for taking down the curtains of the Green Room, Circular Room, Audience Hall, and Yellow Room; taking up the carpets of the Green Room, Saloon, Stairs and Entry, President's private room, the entry and the Dining-Room; making cambric cases for lamps and looking-glasses and making one chair-case. His next bill is \$72.00 for making 12 arm-chairs, and \$25.00 for 2 *bergères*.

In December, William King charges \$792.00 for twenty-four chairs; and \$792.00 more for four sofas. This suite must have been exceptionally handsome. J. F. Folk also charges \$144.00 for twelve "*fauteuils*, or arm-chairs"; \$48.00 for one sofa, and \$32.00 for two "*bergers*, or easy chairs." This suite must also have been unusually rich and handsome.

An exceptionally fine piece of furniture that was specially made was a wardrobe: for the mere "finishing" of this, Robert Howison received \$55.00.

Special pains were devoted to making the bedrooms and boudoirs of the ladies of the family comfortable and luxurious. Mrs. Hay's room, for instance, was furnished with eleven arm-chairs and a settee, a crown-bed draped with nine yards of cambric trimmed with red and yellow fringe. The windows were of the same. The North Bedroom had also a crown-bed with dra-

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peries and also window curtains, the draperies hung by rings. To make the curtains for the beds and four windows of these two rooms, the upholsterer charged \$100.00. The window and bed-curtains in Mrs. Monroe's room were of green cambric trimmed with fringe. The bedstead was a square four-poster. Under curtains of muslin also draped the windows. The dressing-tables, washstands, tables, etc., were of mahogany, purchased at auction sales, made in the house, or belonging originally to Mr. Monroe.

We also find charges for 3 pairs of large mahogany window cornices, \$78.00; 2 crowns for bedsteads, at \$22 per crown, \$44.00; 2 urns for ditto, at \$5.00 each, \$10.00; 23 yds. rich figured satin, \$103.50, and 20 yds. broad and narrow binding, \$15.00; a work-table, \$10.00; 8 yds. embroidered French silk, \$36.00; 3½ yds. green silk velvet, at \$4.00, \$14.00, and 6 yds. green silk cord, \$3.00; a charge for making 5 arm-chairs covered with hair-cloth, \$42.17; and in August, 1819, \$20.00 to William Thompson for a bath. In February, 1819, four marble tables (\$75.00) are imported from Leghorn. Other charges include making chairs, screens, settees, hanging wall-paper, recovering furniture, polishing tables, hearths, etc., laying carpets, taking down and hanging curtains, etc., keeping clocks in order and repairing lamps, etc., etc.

The surroundings and approach to the President's house were not in keeping with the mansion and its furnishings; and therefore, in 1818, Congress made

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an appropriation of \$10,000 for graduating and improving the President's square. Measurements and plans were carefully made, and a gardener, Charles Bizet, was employed at \$450.00 a year. Work was begun in 1818, and by 1821 the square was ready to be sown with orchard grass seed and clover seed. Bizet still remained in employ, and the exterior began to assume something of its present appearance.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### JAMES MONROE

1817-1825

Mrs. Monroe; Questions of Etiquette; M. de Neuville; Mr. John Quincy Adams on Precedence and Etiquette; Mrs. Monroe and Mrs. Adams Offend Washington Society; a Dinner-Party at the President's House; the Great East Room and Condition of the House; Maria Monroe's Wedding and Reception; a New Year's Reception at the President's House; Gay Washington Society; Monroe's Second Inauguration; Indian Chiefs at the President's House; a Dinner to General Lafayette; J. Q. Adams on the President's Transactions Regarding the Appropriations for Furniture.

THE new house was thrown open for public reception for the first time on Jan. 1, 1818 (see page 98). Mrs. Monroe and her daughter, Mrs. Hay, assisted the President in doing the honors of the occasion; and the great crowd of interested, or merely curious, people gaped and marvelled at the splendors they saw, and retired satisfied.

On taking up his residence in his official home, however, Mr. Monroe had been confronted with one of those thorny questions of etiquette in diplomatic circles which had troubled more than one of his predecessors. J. Q. Adams was his Secretary of State; and, therefore, to him the President naturally turned for

## THE WHITE HOUSE

advice. The foreign Ministers had always demanded special recognition; and they had not let this opportunity slip. We read the following entries in Mr. Adams's diary:

"29 Dec., 1817: At the President's. He told me that his house would be opened on New Year's Day at noon to receive company. I enquired if a short time sooner should be appointed for the foreign Ministers. He at first objected, but afterwards said he would have a Cabinet consultation upon it to-morrow between eleven and twelve.

"30th. I rode to the President's, where I found Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun. They had agreed and the President determined to receive the foreign Ministers at half-past eleven on New Year's Day, half-an-hour before the general company, and I sent notifications to the foreign Ministers to that effect."

After the demands of the Diplomats had been satisfactorily settled, the Secretary of State had more trouble on the female side of the house. Mrs. Madison had been so readily accessible to everybody, and so willing to please by calling on people who had no real claim to the honor, that the residents of Washington and those people of importance who arrived there, either on a visit or for a term's residence, had come to expect a call from the wife of the President as a right. This entailed an enormous expenditure of time and energy which Mrs. Monroe, who was quite a different kind of woman from Mrs. Madison, was absolutely unwilling to undergo. Three weeks after the first New



MRS. HAY



## JAMES MONROE

Year's reception in the new house, Mr. Adams notes (Jan. 22, 1818):

“ My wife received this morning notes from Mrs. Monroe, requesting she would call upon her this day, at one or two o'clock, and she went. It was to inform her that the ladies had taken offence at her not paying them the first visit. All ladies arriving here as strangers, it seems, expect to be visited by the wives of the heads of Departments, and even by the President's wife. Mrs. Madison subjected herself to this torture, which she felt very severely, but from which, having begun the practice, she never found an opportunity of receding. Mrs. Monroe neither pays nor returns any visits. My wife returns all visits, but adopts the principle of not visiting first any stranger who arrives, and this is what the ladies have taken in dudgeon. My wife informed Mrs. Monroe that she should adhere to her principle, but not on any question of etiquette, as she did not exact of any lady that she should visit her.”

Mrs. Monroe adhered to her resolution, though it made her temporarily exceedingly unpopular. She had the strong support of her daughter, Mrs. Hay, who relieved her of the social tax of calling, and pleaded her mother's ill health as an excuse. Writing in March, 1818, Mrs. Seaton says:

“ It is said that the dinner parties of Mrs. Monroe will be very select. Mrs. Hay, daughter of Mrs. Monroe, returns the visits paid to her mother, making assurances, in the most pointedly polite manner, that Mrs. Monroe will be happy to see her friends morning or evening, but that her health is totally inadequate to visiting at present! Mrs. Hay is understood to be her proxy, and there this much-agitated and important ques-

## THE WHITE HOUSE

tion ends; and as there is no distinction made, but all treated alike, I suppose it will eventually go down, though this alteration in the old *régime* was bitter to the palate of all our citizens, especially so to foreign Ministers and strangers."

Mrs. Monroe was eminently qualified for her position. The daughter of Lawrence Kortright, a captain in the British Army and afterwards a citizen of New York, she had had the best society that New York afforded; and, after her marriage, as the wife of the Minister to France, and later President Madison's Secretary of State, had received a thorough training in matters of court etiquette. Her contemporaries speak of her as "an elegant, accomplished woman," possessing "a charming mind and dignity of manners which peculiarly fit her for her elevated station." Even the few social duties that she performed must sometimes have proved a trial. The curious medley of guests at the weekly drawing-room is described in a newspaper report that says:

"The secretaries, Senators, foreign Ministers, consuls, auditors, accountants, officers of the navy and army of every grade, farmers, merchants, parsons, priests, lawyers, judges, auctioneers and nothingarians—all with their wives and some with their gawky offspring, crowd to the President's house every Wednesday evening; some in shoes, most in boots, and many in spurs; some snuffing, others chewing, and many longing for their cigars and whiskey-punch left at home. Some with powdered heads, others frizzled and oiled, with whose heads a comb has never touched, half-hid by dirty collars, reaching far above their ears, as stiff as pasteboard."

## JAMES MONROE

An interesting glimpse of the Monroes is afforded by Mrs. Crowninshield in a letter dated December 1, 1815:

“I think I told you we were to dine at Mrs. Monroe’s the day before yesterday. We had the most stylish dinner I have been at. The table wider than we have, and in the middle a large, perhaps silver, waiter, with images like some Aunt Silsbee has, only more of them, and vases filled with flowers, which made a very showy appearance as the candles were lighted when we went to table. The dishes were silver and set round this waiter. The plates were handsome china, the forks silver, and so heavy that I could hardly lift them to my mouth, dessert knives silver, and spoons very heavy—you would call them clumsy things. Mrs. Monroe is a very elegant woman. She was dressed in a very fine muslin worked in front and lined with pink, and a black velvet turban close and spangled. Her daughter, Mrs. Hay, a red silk sprigged in colors, white lace sleeves and a dozen strings of coral round her neck. Her little girl, six years old, dressed in plaid. The drawing-room was handsomely lighted—transparent lamps I call them; three windows, crimson damask curtains, tables, chairs and all the Furniture French; and andirons, something entirely new.”

The knotty question concerning whether the President and his family should pay calls, or attend entertainments given by members of the Diplomatic Corps, was a burning one throughout Mr. Monroe’s first Administration. Mr. Adams distinctly says that Mrs. Hay was “one of the principal causes of raising this senseless war of etiquette visiting.” His diary shows that the poor old President was a mere puppet in the hands

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of his dashing and dominant daughter in matters of social observance and domestic concerns.

In December, the French Minister gave a grand ball; and was very anxious for the honor of the attendance of the President and his wife. The *fête* was to be in honor of the evacuation of France by the allied troops of Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and Austria. Mr. Adams again affords us a view of a tempest in a teapot:

“ Dec. 10, 1818. At the President's. I mentioned to him Mr. Hyde de Neuville's extreme desire to have him and Mrs. Monroe attend his ball next Monday. The President was disposed to gratify him, if there had been an example since the existence of the present Constitution of a President's going to the house of a foreign Minister. He said he would send to ask Major Jackson, who had been President Washington's private Secretary, what his practice had been, and he would consult the gentlemen of the Administration concerning it, for which he appointed a meeting at one o'clock to-morrow. Mr. de Neuville came to the office in high anxiety concerning it, and I appointed to-morrow at three o'clock.

“ 11th. At the President's, where I met Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun.

“ The President found, upon enquiry of Major Jackson, that President Washington never had been at the house of any foreign Minister; nor had any other President. He determined, therefore, not to break through the established usage. Next came the question with regard to Mrs. Monroe, upon which we could have no deliberation, and which was therefore left to her own decision. The President went and consulted her, and she said she did not think it proper for her to go to any

## JAMES MONROE

place where it was not proper for her husband to go. The President said he should request his daughter, Mrs. Hay, to go."

De Neuville next tried to do what he should have done in the first place, viz., get Mrs. Hay on his side. Mr. Adams intimates this, and shows how worried he is by the whole question of Diplomatic etiquette. He says: "Among the numberless questions of etiquette and precedence here which the want of established rule has occasioned, one has arisen between the ladies of the foreign Ministers and Mrs. Hay, the consequence of which is they do not visit." Mrs. Hay, therefore, was bitterly opposed to the President's attendance at any of her social enemies' entertainments.

On Dec. 12, while sitting at breakfast, Mr. Adams received a note from Mrs. Hay requesting him to come and see her, and, if possible, before calling upon Mr. de Neuville. He complied, and found her and Mrs. Monroe sitting in council. Mrs. Hay desired Mr. Adams to inform Mr. de Neuville that she would attend the ball at the particular request of her father, but that this in no wise affected her position with regard to the wives of the foreign Ministers—that position would remain as it was; in attending, no rank nor station was to be assigned to her as the President's daughter, and there was to be no mention of her name in the newspapers as being present. Mrs. Monroe seized the opportunity to talk to the Secretary of State on the question of first visits, and, among other things, told

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him that the ladies of some Senators did not visit her because she had adopted the rule of not returning visits; however, they accepted invitations to her house.

Four days later, Mr. Adams thinks that he himself has got into hot water; he notes (Dec. 19): "There was published two days ago in the *Washington City Gazette* a card, anonymous, to the heads of Departments, reproaching them for not returning visits. I have been in this respect so remiss, that I believe this card was meant principally for me."

There seems to have been no special Fourth of July celebration at the President's house this year, for on June 30 the following intelligence was published in a Washington paper: "The President left the city on Saturday on a visit to his farm in Virginia."

When Congress opened in the autumn, the President's house was, as we have seen, far more complete in its appointments than the year before. It must be remembered, however, that only the north-front and west wing had been finished; the East Room was still awaiting an appropriation.

The New Year's reception was attended in full force. Mr. Adams says, Jan. 1, 1819:

"Went with Mrs. Adams to pay the New Year's visit at the President's. One of our horses was vicious, so that it was with difficulty we got there. The President's house was also more crowded than I ever saw it on a similar occasion."

Questions of precedence seemed to have caused the Secretary of State more trouble in settling than even



MRS. JOHN Q. ADAMS



## JAMES MONROE

the Government's foreign relations. On March 13, 1819, he writes:

"The President has determined to set out the last week of this month upon a tour of three or four months to the South and West. As the Ministers of France, Spain and England are all going to Europe on leave of absence before he will return, and it is very doubtful whether either of them will ever come back, and as the Russian Minister Daschkoff is finally recalled, they were all desirous of some occasion upon which they might take leave of the President and his lady. After some consideration whether it should be by an extra drawing-room, or a dinner, he concluded upon the last, and invites the whole Corps Diplomatique to dine with him next Tuesday. The former Presidents, particularly Jefferson and Madison, have admitted to a certain extent social visits from the foreign Ministers. Mr. Monroe, upon principle, has excluded this sort of intercourse, and receives them only:

"1. At private audiences requested by them; 2. at the drawing-rooms; 3. at diplomatic dinners, once or twice a winter. But here arise certain questions of etiquette and precedence which it has become necessary to settle. Heretofore it has been invariably customary for the Secretary of State to be invited by the President to all the dinners given by him to the Diplomatic Corps, and, as there are no Ambassadors among them, but only Ministers of the second order, they have acquiesced in the principle adopted here, that the Secretary of State takes precedence of them. Since the commencement, however, of the present Administration, Mr. Monroe has been given to understand that the other heads of Departments expect an entire equality with the Secretary of State and would consider it as an offensive distinction in his favor if he should alone of them be invited to the diplomatic dinners. On the other hand, the

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foreign Ministers, though willing to yield precedence to the Secretary of State, are not willing at dinners of professed ceremony given to them to be thrown at the bottom of the table by postponement to four or five heads of Departments and their wives. To avoid these difficulties, Mr. Monroe last winter invited the foreign Ministers, without any of the heads of Departments, and to fill up the table, invited with them the Navy Commissioners and some respectable private inhabitants of the city. But this did not escape remark. The foreign Ministers were not pleased at being invited with persons of inferior rank and private citizens, nor at the absence of the Secretary of State, with whom they had usually been associated on these occasions heretofore. The slight to the Secretary of State himself by the omission to invite him as heretofore was also noticed, not by me, for I knew nothing either of the usage or of the departure from it till a year after, but by the foreign Ministers and by all the gossips of the District, who have drawn many shrewd conclusions from it. Soon after the commencement of the late session of Congress, the President informed me that he meant to give the foreign Ministers a dinner, and to invite me and my wife to it. But he delicately alluded to the punctilious pretensions of the other heads of Departments to equality, and to the objections of the foreign Ministers to being crowded down to the bottom of the table, and he asked my advice. It was at a time when I went into no company, and I requested the President, on that account, to put me out of the question and not include me in the invitation. This answered for that time; but now the questions again recurred, and again the President asked my advice. I know not whether he had considered it as I did, but, with my sentiments of delicacy, to ask the question was to dictate the answer. I advised and requested him again to omit sending an invitation to me, and, with a view to reconcile all parties, herëafter to invite me to his diplomatic dinners with one of the heads of Depart-



MRS. MONROE



## JAMES MONROE

ments only—taking them alternately; to which he acceded; and such is hereafter to be the practice.”

The President with his wife and two daughters entertained his friends and political supporters at many elegant dinners and hospitable “drawing-rooms.” The ladies of Washington society, however, had practically boycotted the Monroes. On Dec. 18, 1819, Mrs. Seaton writes:

“The drawing-room of the President was opened last night to a ‘beggarly row of empty chairs.’ Only five females attended, three of whom were foreigners. Mrs. Adams, the previous week, *invited* a large party which we attended, at which there were not more than three ladies. In a familiar, pleasing manner, the sprightly hostess made known to each of her visitors that every Tuesday evening during the winter, when they had nothing better to do with themselves, it would give her great pleasure to receive them. The evening arrived, and with it two other guests besides her sisters! Don’t you think we must be reforming? Some wise distinctions in etiquette were, however, probably the cause of the defalcation.”

Poor Mr. Adams was evidently at his wits’ end to straighten matters out and make peace between the warring women. It would never do for the President to become unpopular with Washington society, with the exception of his immediate supporters! The Secretary of State thus describes one of the President’s dinners at the close of the year:

“Dec. 21, 1819. I dined at the President’s with a company of twenty-five persons—ladies and gentlemen. The heads of

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Departments and their ladies, excepting Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun, were there; the President of the Senate, Barbour the Speaker of the House, Clay and several members of both Houses. Clay told over again his story of the bottle of Kentucky wine that he once brought as a present to Mr. Madison, and of Robert Smith's saying it tasted of whiskey; of his (Clay's) disposition at the time to cut off Smith's head for the remark, and of its afterwards turning out that there really was whiskey in the wine—identically the same story which I heard him tell at the President's table once before."

The next day, his diary records that he called at the President's and left a letter with him which he had written upon "the etiquette visiting affair."

The subject was deemed of such importance that it was brought up for discussion in the Cabinet, and on Dec. 29, at the President's request, his Secretary of State wrote a letter dealing with the matter to the Vice-President. The sum and substance of what Adams wrote to Monroe on Dec. 25, 1819, is as follows:

"The rule which I have thought it best to adhere to for myself has also been pursued by my wife with my approbation. She has never considered it incumbent upon her to visit first ladies coming to this place *strangers* to her. She could draw no line of discrimination of strangers whom she should and strangers whom she should not visit. To visit all, with the constantly increasing resort of strangers here, would have been impossible. To have visited only the ladies of members of Congress would have been a distinction offensive to many other ladies of equal respectability. It would have applied even to the married daughter of the President. The only principle of

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Mrs. Adams has been to avoid invidious distinctions; and the only way of avoiding them is to visit no lady as a stranger. She first visits her acquaintance according to the usual rules of private life, and receives or returns visits of all ladies, strangers, who pay visits to her. We are aware that this practice has given offence to some members of Congress and their ladies, and we very sincerely regret the result. We think, however, that the principle properly understood cannot be offensive. To visit all strangers or none appears to be the only alternative to do justice to all."

"May 19, 1820. The President mentioned to me that he wished to give a dinner to Mr. and Mrs. Hyde de Neuville before their departure for France; and also to General Vivés and the members of his Legation, with all the Diplomatic Corps. He wished also the heads of Departments and their families to attend; but Mrs. Monroe has been some time very ill, and will not be able to appear, and Mrs. Hay has not been in the habit of visiting with the families of the foreign Ministers. I observed to him that, as this was an occasion of particular compliment to Mr. and Mrs. de Neuville, it would be best to set aside all question of precedence, and that it should be conceded for the day to Mrs. de Neuville. Mrs. Adams would be pleased to have this attention shown to that lady.

"The day is to be fixed to-morrow.

"Nov. 21, 1820. I dined at the President's with a company of about thirty-five persons, members of Congress principally—all men. The state of Mrs. Monroe's health not admitting of her attendance at numerous dinner-parties. There was a reappearance of the jealousies about precedence at this dinner. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives sat on the two sides of the President, and Mr. Macon, a Senator from North Carolina, opposite to him, the President sitting at the centre of the table."

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The following graphic account of a dinner at the President's house is furnished by James Fenimore Cooper:

"On this occasion we were honored with the presence of Mrs. Monroe and two or three of her female relatives. Crossing the hall we were admitted to a drawing-room in which most of the company was already assembled. The hour was six. By far the greater part of the guests were men, and perhaps two-thirds were members of Congress.

"There was great gravity of mien in most of the company, and neither any very marked exhibition, nor any positively striking want of grace of manner. The conversation was commonplace and a little sombre, though two or three men of the world got around the ladies, where the battle of words was maintained with sufficient spirit. To me the entertainment had rather a cold than a formal air. When dinner was announced, the oldest Senator present (there were two, and seniority of service is meant) took Mrs. Monroe and led her to the table. The rest of the party followed without much order. The President took a lady as usual and preceded the rest of the guests.

"The drawing-room was an apartment of good size, and of just proportions. It might have been about as large as a better sort of Paris *salon* in a private hotel. It was furnished in a mixed style, partly English and partly French, a custom that prevails a good deal in all the fashions of this country. It was neat, sufficiently rich, without being at all magnificent, and, on the whole, very much like a similar apartment in the house of a man of rank and fortune in Europe.

"The dining-room was in better taste than is common here, being quite simple and but little furnished. The table was large and rather handsome. The service was in china, as is uniformly the case, plate being exceedingly rare, if at all used. There

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was, however, a rich plateau, and a great abundance of the smaller articles of table-plate. The cloth, napkins, etc., etc., were fine and beautiful. The dinner was served in the French style, a little Americanized. The dishes were handed around, though some of the guests, appearing to prefer their own customs, coolly helped themselves to what they found at hand.

“Of attendants there were a good many. They were neatly dressed, out of livery, and sufficient. To conclude, the whole entertainment might have passed for a better sort of European dinner-party, at which the guests were too numerous for general or very agreeable discourse, and some of them too new to be entirely at their ease. Mrs. Monroe arose at the end of the dessert, and withdrew, attended by two or three of the most gallant of the company. No sooner was his wife’s back turned, than the President reseated himself, inviting his guests to imitate the action. After allowing his guests sufficient time to renew, in a few glasses, the recollections of similar enjoyments of their own, he arose himself, giving the hint to his company that it was time to rejoin the ladies. In the drawing-room coffee was served, and every one left the house before nine.”

In February, 1820, we learn from Mrs. Seaton that “Maria Monroe is to be married on Tuesday to her cousin, young Gouverneur. The following day, a brilliant drawing-room will be held, and the immense ball-room opened. The marriage to be entirely private.”

Though the decoration of the East Room had not yet been taken in hand for lack of the necessary funds, it was used on occasions when the President had to entertain an unusually large number of guests. As early

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as Nov. 21, 1818, Mr. Hoban had reported progress to his superior, Mr. Lane, as follows:

“The principal drawing-room has been floored, and the walls and ceiling plastered. The cornice, frieze, and architrave, with the centre-pieces in the ceiling, are nearly finished, all in stucco ornament; and the decorations in woodwork of the doors and windows are nearly completed.

“Early last spring, the arcade of the circular portico to the south front of the President’s house, to give a communication from the house to the grounds to the south, had been carried up to the height of the plat band, or to the level of the principal floor of the house. Without this portico, the President could have no access to the south but by the cellar story. A part of the balustrade for the south portico is also prepared; and the upper work of the building to the south, the place of the portico, is insecure from the weather until the portico is completed.

“All the doors, doorways and windows of the offices east and west of the President’s house, and attached to that building, containing a temporary stable and carriage-house, ice-house, coal-house, etc., have been finished, with the exception of the plastering, which is in part done.

“All the painting and glazing of the President’s house and offices attached thereto, inside and outside, has been completed.

“A temporary fence has been put up to enclose the area to the north of the President’s house. The pedestal wall of granite stone has been built to receive the coping. The piers for gates, of cut stone, and the coping are preparing. The gates, braces, and lamp-brackets, of wrought iron, and the upright bars, of cast iron, are in a state of preparation.”

From the above we gather that the East Room was in habitable, if not decorative, repair; and could readily



MRS. GOUVERNEUR



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be made available for the entertainment of a large company with temporary decoration by housefurnishers and caterers.

Its large area was required on the occasion of the second wedding celebrated in the official home of the President of the United States. The wedding, however, was deprived of much of its gaiety and brilliancy by the apparent jealousy of the marplot, Mrs. Hay, the old question of Diplomatic etiquette, and the shadow cast by the death of Decatur in a duel.

The chief reason the marriage is "to be entirely private," as Mrs. Seaton asserts, is to be found in the perennial question of precedence and etiquette. Mr. Adams writes, March 9:

"Samuel Lawrence Gouverneur of New York was this day married to Maria Hester Monroe, the President's youngest daughter. The parties are cousins by the mother's side, and Gouverneur has been nearly these two years in the President's family, acting as his private Secretary. There has been some further question of etiquette upon this occasion. The foreign Ministers were uncertain whether it was expected they should pay their compliments on the marriage or not, and Poletica, the Russian Minister, made the enquiry of Mrs. Adams. She applied to Mrs. Hay, the President's eldest daughter, who has lived in his house ever since he has been President, but never visits at the houses of any of the foreign Ministers, because their ladies did not pay her first calls. Mrs. Hay thought her youngest sister could not receive and return visits which she herself could not reciprocate, and therefore that the foreign Ministers should take no notice of the marriage; which was accordingly communicated to them."

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Mrs. Seaton's lively pen tells us :

“The New York style was adopted at Maria Monroe's wedding. Only the attendants, the relations, and a few old friends of the bride and groom witnessed the ceremony, and the bridesmaids were told that their company and services would be dispensed with until the following Tuesday, when the bride would receive visitors. Accordingly, all who visit at the President's paid their respects to Mrs. Gouverneur, who presided in her mother's place on this evening, while Mrs. Monroe mingled with the other citizens. Every visitor was led to the bride and introduced in all form. But the bridal festivities have received a check which will prevent any further attentions to the President's family, in the *murder* of Decatur! The first ball, which we attended, consequent on the wedding was given by the Decatur! Invitations were all out from Van Ness, Commodore Porter, etc., all of which were remanded on so fatal a catastrophe.”

Mr. Monroe was elected for a second term and inaugurated in 1821. We learn that his New Year's reception in that year was more numerously attended than ever before. A vivid glimpse of the ladies of the family is afforded by a contemporary letter written by a Mrs. Tuley of Virginia. In describing the reception she says :

“Mr. Monroe was standing near the door, and, as we were introduced, we had the honor of shaking hands with him and passing the usual congratulations of the season. My impressions of Mr. Monroe are very pleasing. He is tall and well formed; his dress plain and in the old style—small clothes, silk hose, knee-buckles and pumps fastened with buckles. We passed on



STEPHEN DECATUR



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and were presented to Mrs. Monroe and her daughters, Mrs. Hay and Mrs. Gouverneur, who stood by their mother and assisted her in receiving. Mrs. Monroe's manner is very gracious, and she is a regal-looking lady. Her dress was superb black velvet, neck and arms bare and beautifully formed. Her hair in puffs and dressed high on the head and ornamented with white ostrich plumes; around her neck an elegant pearl necklace. Though no longer young, she is still a very handsome woman. Mrs. Hay is very handsome, also tall and graceful, and I hear very accomplished. She was educated in Paris at the celebrated boarding-school kept by Madame Campan, and among her intimate school friends was the beautiful Hortense de Beauharnais, step-daughter of the Emperor Napoleon. Her dress was crimson velvet, gold cord and tassel round the waist, white plumes in the hair, handsome jewelry, bare neck and arms. Mrs. Gouverneur is also very handsome—dress, rich white satin, with a great deal of blonde lace, embroidered with silver thread, bare neck and arms, pearl jewelry and white plumes in the hair. . . .

“All the lower rooms were opened and they were warmed by great fires of hickory wood, and with the handsome brass andirons and fenders quite reminded me of our grand old wood fires in Virginia. Wine was handed about in wine-glasses on large silver salvers, by colored waiters dressed in dark livery, gilt buttons, etc. I suppose some of them must have come from Mr. Monroe's old family seat, *Oak Hill*, Virginia.”

A month later, Mrs. Seaton gives us another lively picture of life in Government and Diplomatic circles:

“The city is unusually gay and crowded with agreeable and distinguished visitors. Mr. Canning's initiatory ball seemed to rouse the emulation of his neighbors, and we have had a

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succession of fêtes. The British Minister's rout was unique. The English are half a century before us in style. Handsome pictures, books, and all sorts of 'elegant litter' distinguish his rooms, the mansion being decorated with peculiar taste and propriety.

"Mr. Canning is himself a most unpretending man in appearance and manners; modesty appears to be his peculiar characteristic, which for a foreign Minister is no negative praise. . . . The birthnight ball was brilliant. The contrast between the plain attire of Mr. Monroe and Mr. Adams, and the splendid uniforms of the Diplomatic Corps was very striking; the gold, silver and jewels donned by the foreigners in compliment to the anniversary festival of our patriot and hero certainly adding splendor to the scene. The captivating D'Asprament made his *début* in brilliant crimson indispensables laced with gold, an embroidered coat, stars and orders, golden scabbard and golden spurs. Poor girls! perfectly irresistible in person, he besieged their hearts, and not content with his triumphs there, his sword entangled their gowns, his spurs demolished their flounces in the most attractive manner possible—altogether he was proclaimed invincibly charming."

The fourth of March happening on a Sunday, there was an interregnum during which the office of President was vacant. The Inauguration took place the following day. At the request of the President, the heads of Departments assembled at the President's house and accompanied him to the Capitol. Mr. Adams says:

"A quarter before twelve I went to the President's house, and the other members of the Administration immediately afterwards came there. The Marshal and one of his deputies was there, but no assemblage of people. The President, attired in a

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full suit of black broadcloth of somewhat antiquated fashion, with shoe- and knee-buckles, rode in a plain carriage with four horses and a single colored footman. The Secretaries of State, the Treasury, War, and the Navy followed, each in a carriage and pair. There was no escort, nor any concourse of people on the way. But on alighting at the Capitol, a great crowd of people were assembled, and the avenues to the hall of the House were so choked up with people pressing for admission that it was with the utmost difficulty that the President made his way through them into the House.

“After the departure from the House, there was a cheering shout from the people in the galleries, and the music of the Marine Band played both at his entrance and departure. I returned home with my family, and immediately afterwards went to the President’s house, where there was a numerous circle for congratulation. I then passed a couple of hours at my office, and in the evening attended a ball at Brown’s Hotel. The President and his family were there, but retired before supper. We came home immediately after, and finished a fatiguing and bustling day about midnight.”

During Mr. Monroe’s second Administration the friction caused by the establishment of the new rules of etiquette gradually wore away. The public receptions were largely attended, and the drawing-rooms and dinners were enjoyed by many guests who have left on record their appreciation of their entertainment. A picturesque incident at the President’s house during this Administration was the reception of a party of Indian chiefs; and another still more noteworthy was the arrival of General Lafayette, who visited the President incognito for Diplomatic reasons. A description of the

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reception of the Indians on July 31, 1824, is given by Mr. Adams as follows:

“At eleven o'clock I went with Mr. Everett to the President's, who half an hour afterwards received the deputation of Indians who have recently arrived in the city. They are of six tribes, among the most savage of the desert, part of them all but naked. They were Saukeys or Sturgeons, Musqukeys or Foxes, Piankeshaws or Miamies, Pah-a-geser Ioways, the people seem in a fog, Monomone, or Wild Oats, Chippeways and Nacatas or Sioux, the amiable people. They speak five languages, and the discourse between the President and them was rendered by as many interpreters.”

The Foxes and Sturgeons had to be translated first into French and then English. The President made a short speech, which was answered by the chief of each tribe. There were also three squaws among the delegation and a little girl of five or six.

All of them were painted red, and one chief had his face stained with yellow ochre. Among others present were old Mrs. Calhoun, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Southard, Mr. Wirt, C. B. King, the painter, and Mrs. Southard and Mrs. Wirt with their daughters. These Indians had a second conference on August 4, when they were dressed in clothing that had been furnished them. The President suspended medals around the necks of the chiefs and gave presents to the squaws and children.

On Jan. 1, 1825, both Houses of Congress gave a dinner to General Lafayette, at which the President was present. The dinner took place at five o'clock.



JAMES FENIMORE COOPER



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“The whole range of front rooms at Williamson’s extensive establishment (now occupied by private families) was thrown open for the reception of the company; and at six o’clock, the company, in number exceeding two hundred, sat down to a sumptuous and elegant dinner prepared in Mr. Williamson’s best style.”

Eighteen toasts were drunk.

The accounts of the money expended on the President’s house and furniture seem to have been kept in a very slipshod fashion; for when Mr. Samuel Lane, the commissioner, died, and Congress wanted an accounting, the President was placed in a very embarrassing position. In the diary of Mr. Adams this is explained as follows:

“The President then adverted to another subject, of which he had never before spoken to me, but which for years has given him trouble. On the 3d of March, 1817, there was appropriated twenty thousand dollars, and on the 20 of April, 1818, thirty thousand dollars, for furnishing the President’s house, to be expended under his direction. He charged Colonel Lane, Commissioner of the Public Buildings, chiefly with it. Lane died about a year and a half ago, a defaulter for several thousand dollars, and rumors have since been in obscure circulation that the President himself had used large sums of the money and thereby occasioned the defalcation. At the last session of Congress, John Cocke, member of the House from Tennessee, instituted in the House an enquiry concerning the state of Lane’s accounts after his decease, and, finding upon examination that the President had received a part of the money, sent him a message to enquire if he would appear before

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the Committee, to answer interrogatories or give explanations concerning these expenditures.

“He desired the person who brought him the message to tell Cocke that he was a scoundrel, and that was the only answer he would give him.

“Cocke again raised the question, and Cocke was also charged with having embezzled moneys entrusted to him as agent for certain pensioners. He was attacked in the *Washington Republican* and the President was attacked in the *Gazette*.

“April 11. I read this day the President’s memoir upon the transactions relating to the appropriations for furnishing the President’s house. It enters into details of a very humiliating character, and which ought never to have been, or to be, required of him. The principal difficulty appears to have sprung from his having used his own furniture until that provided for by the appropriations could be procured, and having received for it six thousand dollars, to be repaid upon the redelivery of his furniture to him. This produced an intermingling of Lane’s public and private accounts with him, which, by Lane’s sickness and death, remained unsettled at his decease.”

In conclusion, Mr. Adams deeply regrets that the President should be forced to thus expose the details of his household.

## CHAPTER NINE

### JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

1825-1829

John Q. Adams's Early Life and Marriage; Ball to General Jackson; Poem on Mrs. Adams's Ball; the Adams and Jackson Contest; Adams's Description of his Inauguration; Mr. Crawford's Plate; Removal to President's House and Daily Life; Fourth of July Celebration; Visit of General Lafayette; Daily Life; New Year's Reception; Summer Holidays; Mr. Ringgold Suggests Order for Carriages at Drawing-Rooms; Mr. Adams's Love of Gardening; New Year's Reception of 1828; the President's Simple Tastes; New Year's Reception of 1829; Last Days in the President's House.

**M**R. MONROE'S successor in the President's house was John Quincy Adams. He may be said to have been trained for the position from his birth; and he spent the whole of his life in harness. In his early youth, his father, the second President, had taken him on his embassy to Europe, where he received the best educational advantages that the period could afford in Paris, The Hague, and London. On his return, he was graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty-one, and then studied law and wrote for the newspapers. At the age of twenty-seven, Washington appointed him Minister at The Hague; and three years later he married Louisa Catherine, the daughter of

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Mr. Johnson of Maryland, who was Consular agent in London, where she was born and married. Mrs. Adams was well educated, and proved a worthy wife and a brilliant ornament to her husband's household.

During the Monroe Administration their home was only second in importance to the President's. One of the most brilliant entertainments in the early days of Washington was given there on the 8th of January, 1824, in honor of General Jackson, on the anniversary of his victory of New Orleans.

The excitement that this ball created is shown by the fact that on the morning of Jan. 8th, the *National Intelligencer* published the following poem by John F. Agg:

### MRS. ADAMS' BALL

“Wend you with the world to-night?  
Brown and fair, and wise and witty,  
Eyes that float in seas of light,  
Laughing mouths and dimples pretty,  
Belles and matrons, maids and madams,  
All are gone to Mrs. Adams’.  
There the mist of the future, the gloom of the past,  
All melt into light at the warm glance of pleasure,  
And the only regret is, lest, melting too fast,  
Mammas should move off in the midst of a measure.

“Wend you with the world to-night?  
Sixty gray, and giddy twenty,  
Flirts that court, and prudes that slight,  
State coquettes and spinsters plenty.



J. Q. ADAMS



## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Mrs. Sullivan is there,  
With all the charm that nature lent her;  
Gay McKim, with city air;  
And winning Gales and Vandeventer;  
Forsyth, with her group of graces;  
Both the Crowninshields in blue;  
The Pierces, with their heavenly faces,  
And eyes like suns that dazzle through.  
Belles and matrons, maids and madams,  
All are gone to Mrs. Adams'.

“Wend you with the world to-night?  
East and West, and South and North,  
Form a constellation bright,  
And pour a blended brilliance forth.  
See the tide of fashion flowing;  
'Tis the noon of beauty's reign.  
Webster, Hamiltons are going,  
Eastern Lloyds and Southern Hayne;  
Western Thomas, gayly smiling,  
Borland, nature's *protégée*,  
Young De Wolfe, all hearts beguiling,  
Morgan, Benton, Brown and Lee.  
Belles and matrons, maids and madams,  
All are gone to Mrs. Adams'.

“Wend you with the world to-night?  
Where blue eyes are brightly glancing,  
While to measures of delight  
Fairy feet are deftly dancing  
Where the young Euphrosyne  
Reigns the mistress of the scene,  
Chasing gloom, and courting glee,  
With the merry tambourine.

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Many a form of fairy birth,  
Many a Hebe, yet unwon,  
Wirt, a gem of purest worth,  
Lively, laughing Pleasanton,  
Vails and Tayloe will be there,  
Gay Monroe, so debonair,  
Hellen, pleasure's harbinger,  
Ramsay, Cottringers, and Kerr.  
Belles and matrons, maids and madams,  
All are gone to Mrs. Adams'.

“Wend you with the world to-night?  
Juno in her court presides,  
Mirth and melody invite,  
Fashion points, and pleasure guides!  
Haste away, then, seize the hour,  
Shun the thorn, and pluck the flower.  
Youth, in all its spring-time blooming,  
Age, the guise of youth assuming,  
Wit through all its circles gleaming,  
Glittering wealth and beauty beaming.  
Belles and matrons, maids and madams,  
All are gone to Mrs. Adams'.”

Mr. Carter, editor of the *New York Statesman*, wrote the following account for his paper, from which we gain a delightful glimpse of Mrs. Adams:

“At nine o'clock General Jackson entered the room, and with great dignity and gracefulness of manner conducted Mrs. Adams through the apartments. He was in a plain citizen's dress, and appeared remarkably well, saluting and receiving the congratulations of his friends with his usual urbanity and affability.

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

“Mrs. Adams was elegantly but not gorgeously dressed. Her headdress and plumes were tastefully arranged. In her manners she unites dignity with an unusual share of ease and elegance; and I never saw her appear to greater advantage than when promenading the rooms, winding her way through the multitude by the side of the gallant general. At the approach of such a couple the crowd involuntarily gave way as far as practicable and saluted them as they passed.

“Mr. Adams, who is known to be proverbially plain, unassuming and unostentatious in his manners, received his guests with his usual cordiality and unaffected politeness.

“At about ten o'clock, the doors of a spacious apartment were flung open, and a table presented itself to view loaded with refreshments of every description, served up in elegant style, of which the company were invited to partake without ceremony.

“Conviviality and pleasure reigned throughout the evening, and I never saw so many persons together where there was apparently so much unmingled happiness.”

On Washington's written advice, John Adams appointed his son Minister to Berlin, where he added to his linguistic and literary accomplishments. Being recalled by Jefferson, he appeared in the Senate at the age of thirty-six. He soon resigned, and accepted a professorship at Harvard in 1806. Three years later, Madison sent him as Minister to Russia. In 1813, he was one of the Commissioners who negotiated the Treaty of Ghent, and in 1815 was made Minister to England, but was soon called home by Monroe to be Secretary of State. In 1824, he received 84 votes for President, while Jackson received 99, Crawford 41,

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and Clay 37. The decision being left to the House of Representatives, Adams was elected, by the influence of Clay, who was made Secretary of State. This engendered much bitterness in the hearts of Jackson and his supporters, by whom Adams was overwhelmingly defeated four years later.

Though Adams was exceedingly punctilious in matters of etiquette, as we have already seen, he was remarkably easy of access to everybody. His doors were open to all. No one in the Government worked harder than he; and, though willing to meet the demands made upon him as head of the Government, he loved to live the life of a simple country gentleman. He was exceedingly considerate to all, and does not seem to have been in the least disturbed by the fact that the Monroes were in no hurry to move out of the Presidential Mansion on account of Mrs. Monroe's real, or feigned, illness.

In describing Mr. Adams's occupancy of the President's chair, it is unnecessary to do more than to transcribe passages from his own diary in which he scrupulously recorded his doings day by day. To begin with his Inauguration:

"March 4, 1825.—About half-past eleven o'clock I left my house with an escort of several companies of militia and a cavalcade of citizens, accompanied in my carriage by Samuel L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy, and William Wirt, Attorney-General, and followed by James Monroe, late President of the United States, in his own carriage. We proceeded to the



ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF MRS. J. Q. ADAMS



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Capitol, and to the Senate Chamber. The Senate were in session and John C. Calhoun presiding in the chair, having been previously sworn into office as Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate. The Senate then adjourned, and from the Senate Chamber, accompanied by the members of that body and by the Judges of the Supreme Court, I repaired to the hall of the House of Representatives, and, after delivering from the Speaker's chair my inaugural address to a crowded auditory, I pronounced from a volume of the laws held up to me by John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States, the oath faithfully to execute the office of President of the United States, and, to the best of my ability, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. After exchanging salutations with the late President, and many other persons present, I retired from the hall, passed in review the military companies drawn up in front of the Capitol, and returned to my house with the same procession which accompanied me from it. I found at my house a crowd of visitors, which continued about two hours, and received their felicitations. Before the throng had subsided, I went myself to the President's house, and joined with the multitude of visitors to Mr. Monroe there. I then returned home to dine, and in the evening attended the ball, which was also crowded, at Carusi's Hall. Immediately after supper I withdrew and came home."

"1825, March 8.—Dickins came to make definitive arrangements respecting Mr. Crawford's plate. The usual appropriation of fourteen thousand dollars for refurnishing the President's house was made by an Act of Congress at the close of the session. Mr. Crawford being desirous to dispose of his plate, and as there was no probability that he could dispose of it here, I agreed to take it for the public service and pay for it from this appropriation. There were during Mr. Monroe's Administration fifty thousand dollars appropriated for furnish-

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ing the house. He had placed the fund under the management of Colonel Lane, who, two or three years since, died insolvent, with twenty thousand dollars of public moneys unaccounted for, which has given rise to much obloquy upon Mr. Monroe. I have determined, therefore, to charge myself with the amount of the new appropriation, and to be myself accountable to the Treasury for its expenditure. The plate, by Mr. Crawford's desire, has been appraised by two silversmiths: one, Mr. Burnett of Georgetown, named by Mr. Crawford; the other, Mr. Leonard, of this city, named by me."

Mr. Adams was naturally solicitous as to when he might take possession of his official residence. In the evening of March 9, we read: "I visited Mr. Monroe at the President's house. He is making preparations for his departure with his family, but is somewhat delayed by the illness of Mrs. Monroe."

The President's daily routine is frankly stated in an entry two months later:

"Sunday, May 1.—Since my removal to the Presidential Mansion, I rise about five, read two chapters of Scott's Bible and Commentary, and the corresponding Commentary of Hewlett; then the morning newspapers and public papers from the several Departments; write seldom and not enough; breakfast an hour from nine to ten; then have a succession of visitors, upon business in search of a place, solicitors for donations, or for mere curiosity from eleven till between four and five o'clock. The heads of Departments, of course, occupy much of this time. Between four and six I take a walk of three or four miles. Dine from half-past five till seven, and from dark till about eleven I generally pass the evening in my chamber, sign-

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ing land-grants or blank patents, in the interval of which, for the last ten days, I have brought up three months' arrears in my diary index. About eleven I retire to bed."

Again, early in June, he notes that he rose between four and six, spent two morning hours swimming in the Potomac, and that the interval between breakfast and dinner was filled with "incessant and distractingly various occupations," while the evenings were "filled with idleness or at the billiard-table."

From an entry in July, we learn that he rose from 4 to 5.30, bathed in the river and then read; breakfasted from 8 to 9; received visitors till 4 or 5; dined from 5 to 6; played billiards from 6 till 7 or 8; and retired about 8 or 9 o'clock. He constantly complains of feeling the heat terribly.

He celebrated the Fourth of July as follows:

"The procession to the Capitol was formed only of one company of cavalry and a school of young girls, one of whom represented the Union. . . . Four or five of the new States were represented by boys in the costume of Indians and painted.

"Governor Barbour and my son John went with me to the Capitol, where a prayer was made by Mr. Hawley; the Declaration of Independence was read by Mr. Daniel Brent, and an oration was pronounced by Mr. Asbury Dickins. We returned home, and at the gate found a company of cavalry from Prince George's County, Maryland, commanded by the late Governor of the State, Sprigg. For about two hours we received the crowd of visitors, of both sexes and of all conditions. About three o'clock the company were all gone."

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Mr. Adams maintained the open hospitality of his predecessors, as is shown by the following contemporary account:

“At sunrise, noon and sunset the usual salutes were fired at public stations, and besides these, there were a number of salutes fired during the day by the artillery and infantry companies of the city.

“About ten o'clock the several volunteer companies of the City formed in line on the Avenue in front of the entrance to the President's house, and having received him, with his Secretaries, the Reader of the Declaration of Independence and the Orator of the Day, proceeded in procession to the Capitol. The day was remarkably fine, and the troops looked well. Mr. McLeod, with his usual spirit, had prepared a stage, mounted on wheels, on which were four and twenty States, represented by so many pretty female scholars, which formed part of the procession, being followed in it by his male scholars, some of them painted and habited as the aborigines of our country and the remainder in uniform.

“After the ceremonies at the Capitol, the mansion of the President was thrown wide open for the reception of those whom friendship, respect, or curiosity attracted thither. An immense concourse thronged the spacious halls, and were kindly and frankly received by the President and his family. The occasion was enlivened by the cheering notes of music from the Marine Band, and refreshments were liberally distributed.”

Mr. Adams scrupulously adhered to the time-honored observances of his predecessors, and was unwilling to make exceptions even in extreme cases. For example, he notes, Aug. 1, that he had to refuse to attend a party in honor of General Lafayette at General



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, SOUTH FORTICO (1823)



## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Gaines's: "Following the example of all my predecessors, none of whom ever attended at private parties."

The great event of this year was the visit of Lafayette, who was welcomed enthusiastically here, and made a sort of triumphal progress through the country.

The General was universally entertained as the Nation's guest. He was a constant visitor at the official mansion during his stay in Washington, as he and the President were on the most intimate terms. Mr. Adams even accompanied him on a visit to the ex-President. This is evident from the following entries in his diary:

"Aug. 1.—My son John went out to Ross's to meet General Lafayette, and they arrived here between 4 and 5 o'clock P.M. The General was accompanied by Colonel Howard and Colonel Randall, member of a Baltimore Committee of arrangements. Mr. George Washington Lafayette and Mr. Le Vasseur came in the stage which the General and his two companions from Baltimore had quitted."

On the following day President Adams escorted his distinguished guest to the Navy Yard to see the frigate *Brandywine*, and on Aug. 6, after an early dinner, at four o'clock the President,

"General Lafayette, his son, George Washington Lafayette, Mr. Tench Ringgold, Marshall of the District, Mr. Le Vasseur and John went on a visit to Mr. Monroe at *Oakhill*. The General's *valet de chambre* Bastien and Antoine Michel Giusta in a carryall with one horse took the baggage. William the groom followed us on horseback."

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Nathan Sargent says that on the 7th Sept., 1825, General Lafayette took leave of this country. The banks were closed in Washington, and all business was suspended.

About twelve o'clock the authorities of Washington, Alexandria, and Georgetown, officers of the government—civil, naval, and military—members of Congress and distinguished strangers, assembled in the President's house to bid farewell to the guest. The President delivered a fine address, to which General Lafayette replied. Immediately after, he left the mansion; and went down the Potomac to the mouth, where the *Brandywine*, that had been specially fitted out to take him home, awaited him.

At the end of the year the President indulges us with another description of his daily life. In December, 1825, he writes:

“The life that I lead is more regular than it has perhaps been at any other period. It is established by custom that the President of the United States goes not abroad into any private companies; and to this usage I conform. I am, therefore, compelled to take my exercise, if at all, in the morning before breakfast. I usually rise between five and six—that is, at this time of the year, from an hour and a half to two hours before the sun. I walk by the light of moon or stars or none, about four miles, usually returning home in time to see the sun rise from the eastern chamber of the House. I then make my fire, and read three chapters of the Bible with Scott's and Hewlett's Commentaries. Read papers till nine. Breakfast, and from ten till five P.M. receive a succession of visitors, sometimes without

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intermission—very seldom with an interval of half an hour—never such as to enable me to undertake any business requiring attention. From five to half-past six we dine; after which I pass about four hours in my chamber alone, writing in this diary, or reading papers upon some public business—excepting when occasionally interrupted by a visitor. Between eleven and twelve I retire to bed, to rise again at five or six the next morning.”

His first New Year’s reception is described as follows:

“The Mansion of the President of the United States was yesterday thrown open, not to his particular friends only, but to his fellow-citizens generally, in conformity to the custom which invites all who are so disposed to pay their respects to the Chief Magistrate of the Nation and his family on the first day of the New Year. The concourse was vast, but orderly, their reception kind, and their deportment frank and decorous. All the apartments on the first floor were thrown open; and, spacious as they are, were crowded. The Band of Music attached to the Marine Corps attended. The Vice-President, the heads of Departments, and other Civil Officers, the Members of Congress, and the Military and Naval Officers of the Seat of Government, with the Foreign Ministers and their Suites were generally present. An unusual number of ladies graced the occasion. Among the persons who made up the company were the Indian Chiefs, who are now in this city, and who were far from being the least striking objects in the scene.”

Mr. Adams, following the custom of his predecessors, stayed in Washington through the heat of the

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summer. He never left the capital till after the Fourth of July celebrations. His diary has many an entry complaining of his suffering from the heat. The illness of his aged father afforded him an excuse to visit his ancestral home in Massachusetts in 1826, and this visit he repeated in the succeeding years of his Administration. He stayed away from Washington through the second half of July, and the whole of August and September. On July 9, 1826, he notes in his diary that his father is ill, and he immediately took his departure from the capital, not returning till October 19, when he was met by his son, Charles, at Baltimore with a coach and horses. His absences from the seat of Government gave rise to many paragraphs of carping criticism in the opposition papers.

He had doubtless benefited by the change of scene and climate, for, on October 26, he gave a dinner-party; and on the two following days attended the races. Later in the year, he notes:

“I am resuming my regular habits of the last winter.”

He rises between four and seven, walks four miles, and on his return sees the sun rise from the north-eastern window. He breakfasts at nine, dines at five, receives visitors in the intervals; and also writes letters, or official papers, reads despatches and newspapers, and goes to bed at ten.

We have seen that Mr. Monroe was worried by a certain amount of disorderly conduct at his drawing-

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rooms, which Mr. Adams, as Secretary of State, had quietly pooh-poohed. It seems that he himself needed a Marshal to maintain order in the court-yard when Mrs. Adams held her drawing-rooms. On Dec. 15, 1826, he writes:

“ Mr. Ringgold, the Marshal, came to ask if I should wish his attendance here at the drawing-rooms for the preservation of order among the coachmen and carriages in the yard, as has been usual. I desired that he would. He had lately lost his wife, and said he did not generally go into society, but that he would very readily attend here, considering it in the line of his duty. He did accordingly attend this evening, when Mrs. Adams held the first drawing-room for the season, a week earlier than usual, for the sake of the members of the Canal Convention, many of whom were here. The attendance was full, but not crowded.”

In the following year, he returned from his old home on Oct. 17, after an absence of eleven weeks. The next day he received a committee of mail contractors who were introduced by Mr. Clay. He received them in the winter parlor, shook hands with them all, and at suggestion of Mr. Clay showed them the rooms on upper floor with the exception of the bedchambers. Cake and wine were served, and he “ drank success to them all through highways and byways.”

Before going away, Mr. Adams had helped to celebrate the Glorious Fourth in the old style. His description of the day ends as follows: “ I returned home, escorted by Major Andrews and his troop of horse,

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and received visitors—that is the whole population—from one to three.”

Mr. Adams had the tastes of an English squire. During the June heat in Washington, of which he so feelingly complains, he delighted in gardening in the dew of the dawn, as appears in the two following extracts:

“In this small garden of not less than two acres there are forest and fruit-trees, shrubs, hedges, esculent vegetables, kitchen and medicinal herbs, hot-house plants, flowers and weeds to the amount, I conjecture, of at least one thousand. . . . Ouseley, the gardener, knows almost all of them by their botanical names. . . . From the small patch where the medicinal herbs stand together I plucked this morning leaves of balm and hyssop, marjoram, mint, rue, sage, tansy, tarragon and wormwood, one-half of which were known to me only by name—the tarragon not even by that.”

“June 13, 1827.—The attractions of the garden and the objects of curiosity constantly multiplying upon my attention there, have rendered my walks abroad for mere exercise tedious and irksome, so that I have omitted them the last three days. But this morning, after planting in my eastern seed-bed eighteen whole red-cherries and visiting the southern bed, where the casual poppies are now all (six) in flower, the mustard and anthemis in full bloom, the althæas still coming up and the wild cherries apparently stationary, I remarked that the strawberries are ceasing, and the currants, red and black, becoming ripe. The catalpa trees are in full and beautiful blossom, and Holyoke’s bladder senna, and other flowers, are blossoming. The rue, sage, and hyssop are also in bloom. I remarked that the honey-bees had keen relish for the poppy-flowers, and the wasps for the wormwood, though not in

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blossom. The border of thyme is still in full bloom. I walked, after leaving the garden, half-way to College Hill."

With the simple tastes of a country-gentleman, the indulgence of which satisfied all his cravings for recreation, and his devotion to official routine, which was dominant with him to the very end of his life, we are not astonished to find that he regarded entertainment at the President's house in the light of a necessary bore. To this, however, he submitted with sufficient grace. He thus describes his New Year's reception of 1828 :

"From noon till three o'clock the New Year's drawing-room was held, and as numerously attended as on any former occasion. About two-thirds of the members of both Houses of Congress and all the foreign Ministers now in the city were present. The scruples of the late Ministers from France and Russia seem to have been personal, and not sustained by their Governments. Baron Krudener, Mr. Vaughan, and the Chevalier Huygens, with their families and Legations, were all here; also Mr. Obregon, the Count de Menou, Baron Stackelberg and Mr. Rebello; all the heads of Departments and their families, the subordinate officers of Government—civil, military, and naval—and many hundreds of private citizens of this place and all the neighboring regions. All the open rooms were crowded and overflowing. The day was uncommonly fine and the weather temperate."

From an entry (Feb. 20, 1828), we see how he chafed under his duties as the host of the Nation :

"This evening was the sixth drawing-room. Very much crowded; sixteen Senators, perhaps sixty members of the House

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of Representatives and multitudes of strangers—among whom were the Institutors of Deaf and Dumb from Philadelphia, New York, and Hartford. The heat was oppressive and these parties are becoming more and more insupportable to me.”

On July the Fourth he held no formal reception, but spent the day in the public service nevertheless. On this occasion, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was begun, and the President broke the ground. The party started away at seven o'clock in the morning, returning at half-past two in the afternoon. Mr. Adams writes:

“I was landed at Davidson's wharf, where my carriage was waiting; and, after taking Mr. Rush home, I returned to mine. The Marshalls of the day escorted me home on horseback, came in and took a glass of wine and took leave with my thanks for their attentions.”

It is very plain that the fads and fancies of Mr. J. Q. Adams were horsemanship, swimming, gardening, and statesmanship. In April, May, and June, his diary affords evidence of his activities.

On April 28, we read that he “visited the garden and found in the eastern seedling bed a tree which had shown itself last week—a white oak”—and in the western enclosure he found “several oaks, peaches, cherries, plums, apricots, and rows of apples planted last month by Antoine coming up.” In May, he notes black walnuts and other nuts, eighty-two trees along the northern border; twenty-one chestnuts, thirty oaks,



PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, SOUTH PORTICO (1824)



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twenty-five black walnuts, and eight cork oaks. Mr. Foy, he says, planted several rows of white mulberry trees, and "I planted twenty rows of shellbarks, pignuts, black walnuts and cork oak acorns in the nursery westward of the row of transplanted cherries."

On May 23, he tells us that he rose before daylight and wrote two hours; then rode two hours with John; then he visited the nursery, where he found fifty Spanish cork oaks up. "I discovered," he says, "several black walnuts planted on March 22, several almond trees, the kernels of which were also then planted, ash and ash-leaved maples planted last November by Mr. Foy." On May 26 he writes: "I visited the garden and nursery this day, and noticed in the nursery the shellbark hickories planted last autumn. . . . In the garden the black walnuts are still coming up."

In June he counts ninety-seven Spanish cork oaks, watches the plants in his pots and boxes, reads Evelyn's *Sylvia*, and describes his routine as follows:

"I rise generally before five—frequently before four. Write from one to two hours in this diary. Ride about twelve miles in two hours on horseback, with my son John. Return home about nine; breakfast; and from that time till dinner between five and six, afternoon, am occupied incessantly with visitors, business and reading letters, despatches and newspapers. I spend an hour, sometimes before and sometimes after dinner in the garden and nursery; an hour of drowsiness on a sofa, and two hours of writing in the evening. Retire usually between eleven and midnight."

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The President's account of his last New Year's reception is contained in the following brief notice: "Jan. 1, 1829. Our last New Year's drawing-room was crowded beyond all former example, and passed quietly off."

Others, however, described in much greater detail what was practically the fall of the curtain on the Adams *régime*. The correspondent of the *New York Spectator* writes:

"The first thing on New Year's morning is the fellow who brushes your clothes, wishing 'massa happy New Year,' and you yawn out, 'hand me my vest,' which is thereupon lightened of a dollar, or if you feel economist, of a half; but a dollar is very small change here. While picking your teeth, and looking into the street, a number of sable and mahogany-coloured peripatetics accost you with 'Do, good massa, give me a fip!' Beau Brummell would have said, 'Fellow, I do not know the coin.' I tried it upon one of them; and, though it was no old joke to him, he immediately replied, 'Then, massa, give me a dollar!' He got something for his wit, though not to the full amount of it.

"There are many calls made, and much driving about. The hackmen are busily employed—by the way, they are more civil than yours, and less extravagant in their demands. Let me observe that I think a person might live in New York for ever and meet with no insolence or rudeness, nothing but the kindest and most civil treatment from all classes, except those fellows. I am sure that hundreds of fellows besides myself would occasionally employ the survivors were the corporation to hang up two-thirds of them.

"The President's house was the great mart of compliments

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from twelve to three o'clock to-day. There all the world has been, shaking hands, making bows, and exchanging greetings. You would suppose there had never been any such thing as a Presidential canvassing. There is little in this ceremony to interest one, except you see all the world together. The squeeze was tremendous to-day; and after one o'clock, people began to retire as fast as others came in to fill their places. There is no ceremony, except that you do your utmost on your first entrance to make your bow to the President and his lady. If you are introduced by some public character so much the better. After that you may go about the rooms, if you like, or go home, as most people do.

“The foreign Ministers called soon after twelve, in the court costumes of their respective nations, servants in livery, etc. They take no precedence, and, in fact, there is nothing in the whole proceeding to shock the delicacy of a republican. Every one goes in or out whenever he pleases, and can do so without inconvenience to others.”

The *National Journal* gives the following additional particulars:

“On no former occasion have we witnessed a greater crowd, nor have we ever seen the annual tributes of good feeling offered with more apparent sincerity on the one hand, or received with more evident satisfaction and cheerfulness on the other. Mr. Adams seemed to be in excellent spirits, and the slight shade of pensiveness on the countenance of Mrs. Adams was the necessary, although to be regretted, consequence of the almost incessant indisposition by which she has been for some time afflicted. Mr. Calhoun occupied a prominent situation in the principal room; while Mr. Clay stood in the centre of the East Room, and Mr. Southard in the intermediate apartment, to receive the greeting of their friends. The other Secre-

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taries, the Postmaster General, the Commanding General, the Clergy of the District and the Members of both Houses, with only a few exceptions, were present; and it was near three o'clock before the last of the visitors had retired. The Marine Band stationed in the vestibule played frequent airs; and refreshments, consisting of wines, punch, lemonade, cakes, jellies, ice-creams, etc., were handed round in profusion."

Another report of the New Year's reception speaks of the "great concourse of gentlemen and ladies," who "were received with cordiality and grace by the President and his family; and the music and refreshments liberally supplied, whilst they befitted the occasion, hardly added to the cheerfulness of the scene."

The burden of social duty required of the Chief Magistrate had, as we have seen, weighed very heavily on the shoulders of Mr. Adams. He loved office and power; but cared little for the glitter of the salon. When, after a bitter Presidential campaign, he had to resign the reins of the State coach to other hands, it was fated that he was to be forced to do so with apparent ill-grace and with extreme reluctance, as had also been the case with his father. Just before his successor was inaugurated as President, he wrote:

"My rising hour has ranged from four to quarter past seven, the average being about half-past five, and the changes regulated by the time of my retirement to bed, which has varied from half-past ten to one A.M., which happened only once—the day of the last drawing-room. My usual time of retirement is half-past eleven; giving six hours to the bed. On rising, I light my lamp by the remnant of fire in the bed-

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chamber, dress and repair to my cabinet, where I make my fire, and sit down to writing till between nine and ten. After breakfast I read the morning *National Intelligencer* and Journal and from eleven A.M. to four P.M. receive visitors, transact business with the heads of Departments, and send messages to one or both Houses of Congress. My riding on horseback has been interrupted almost the whole month by the weather and the snow and ice. From four, I walk an hour and a quarter, till half-past five; dine and pass one or two hours in the bed-chamber or nursery; then write again in my cabinet till the time for repose. This routine has now become so habitual to me that it forms part of the comfort of my existence, and I look forward with great solicitude to the time when it must be totally changed. I never go abroad, unless to visit a sick friend. But a large dinner-party once a week, a drawing-room once a fortnight, occasional company of one, two or three to dine with us in the family, and the daily visitors, eight or ten, sometimes twelve or fifteen, keep me in constant intercourse with the world, and furnish constant employment, the oppressiveness of which is much relieved by its variety. This is a happy condition of life, which within five weeks more must close."

We have seen the splendid furniture that the Monroes selected for the White House at the beginning of their *régime*. The following inventory made when John Quincy Adams was about to move in shows the arrangement and condition of the rooms and their furnishings.

The "Third Room" on the upper floor is evidently the family sitting-room, or parlor, over the Oval Room; and it is interesting to note that what is now the Red

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Room was then known as the Yellow Drawing-Room, although the curtains and furniture covers are red.

This inventory was taken on March 24, 1825. Beginning at the northeast room of the upper story and proceeding west, we find:

“ First Room: empty.

“ Second Room: one mahogany bedstead, with cornices complete; one cherry ditto, with ditto; two sets chintz bed curtains; one feather bed, bolster and pillow; one fender; one pair brass andiron ornaments; one pair elegant bronze gilt andirons; two sets gilt ornaments for windows; one set window curtains, elegant; four gilt eagle brackets, old; four sheet iron hearth covers; one small low post pine bedstead; one glass passage lamp, not complete; one fire poker; one close stool, one painter's easel.

“ Third Room: two book presses, defective; one large pine clothes-press; one mahogany table with green cover; five old flag-bottom chairs, one broken; one chamber looking-glass, injured; one Brussels carpet more than half worn; one washstand, with basin and ewer; one brass fender, very old; one pair tongs, shovel and poker.

“ Fourth Room: one elegant mahogany gilt mounted bedstead; one husk mattress, feather bed, bolster and pillow; one pair blankets; one set yellow silk dome bed curtains; one set yellow silk window curtains; one mahogany dressing-table; one gilt frame dressing look-

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

ing-glass (large); one mahogany bureau; one mahogany washstand with marble top; one basin and ewer; one elegant mahogany gilt mounted close stool; six mahogany hair cloth bottom chairs; one pair bronze and gilt lamps (fractured); one Ingrain carpet, much worn; one wire fender; one pair tongs and shovel.

“Fifth Room: one elegant mahogany bedstead, gilt eagle mounted; one hair mattress, feather bed, bolster and pillows; one pair sheets, one pair blankets, Mar-seilles quilt; two sets chintz window curtains; one set chintz dome bed curtains; one pine wardrobe, mahogany doors; one mahogany secretary; one mahogany dressing-table; one toilette looking-glass; one large mirror, mahogany frame, injured; one mahogany washstand, with marble top; one basin and ewer (fractured); one chintz covered sofa, old; six chintz covered arm chairs; one Ingrain carpet more than half worn; one wire fender, one shovel; two ostrich egg mantel ornaments on silver stands; one screen.

“Sixth Room: empty.

“Beginning at the southeast corner and proceeding west:

“First Room: empty.

“Second Room: one large pine clothes-press; four door screens; one sheet iron hearth cover.

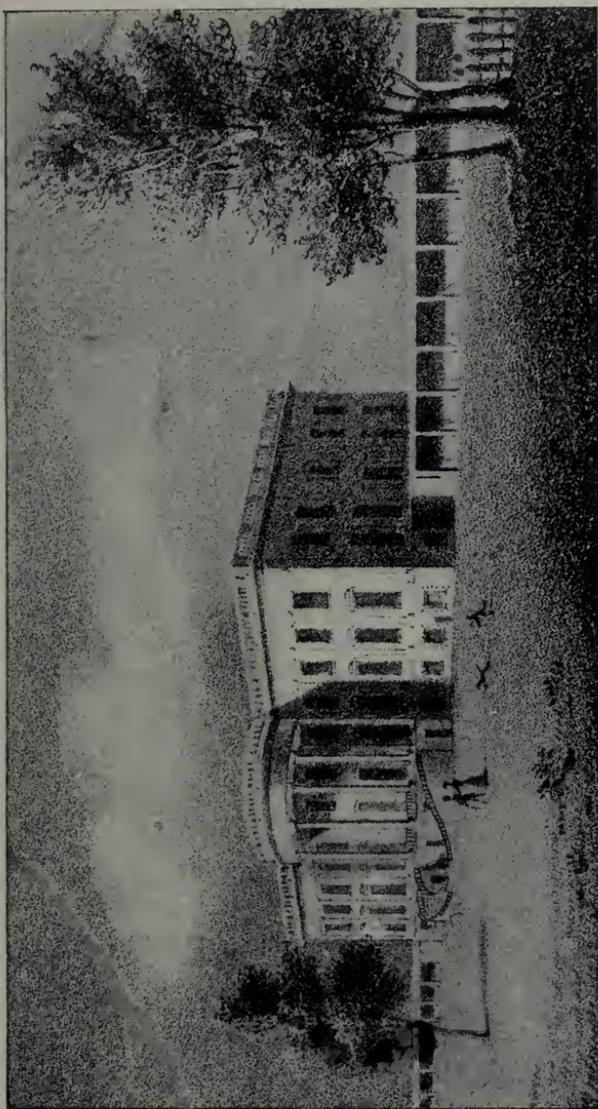
“Third Room: one gilt mounted pianoforte, injured; one sofa, figured silk cover, with backs and rollers; one dozen gilt chairs with satin covers, much worn; two arm-chairs, gilt, with ditto; two card-tables,

## THE WHITE HOUSE

one clawfoot card-table, with castors; two fire screens, broken; one large door screen; one large brass fender; one pair tongs, injured; one pair mantel lamps, injured; two sets elegant figured satin window curtains; one Brussels carpet (more than half worn); one old work table.

“ Fourth Room: one mahogany and oak patent bedstead (English) with curtains and cornices complete; one mattress, wool, feather bed and pillow; three sets window curtains to match; one pair blankets and counterpane; one large wardrobe, mahogany front; one mahogany dressing-table; two mahogany bureaus, injured; one dressing-glass, large and elegant; one washstand with marble top; one basin and ewer, fractured; one clawfoot table, broken; one pine clothes-press; five rush bottom chairs, injured; one Brussels carpet, surrounded with green baize, much worn; one wire fender, one pair tongs and poker; one pair bronze mantel lamps, injured; two large door screens.

“ Fifth Room: one mahogany bedstead (French); one mattress, feather bed, bolster and pillow; one pair mantel lamps, injured; one mahogany dressing-table; one small toilette glass; one mahogany bureau; one pair tongs, shovel and poker; two cane bottom settees, old; two sets crimson silk window curtains, new; five rush bottom chairs, old; five card-tables, broken; one door screen; one carpet, composed of Brussels and Scotch carpeting, and green baize, much worn; one common washstand.”



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, SOUTH PORTICO (1826)



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A little household linen was kept here, including twenty-five large and "elegant" damask table cloths, and ninety-five "elegant damask napkins."

"Sixth Room: one superb mahogany wardrobe, one pillar pine; one elegant mahogany gilt bronze mounted secretary; one elegant gilt mounted bureau, with marble top; one mahogany dressing-table, with dressing-glass damaged; one large panelled mahogany wardrobe; one large mounted bedstead; one set dome curtains, chintz, for ditto; two sets window curtains, with cornices complete; one elegant mahogany washstand, with marble top; one China basin and ewer; one Spanish chair; five arm-chairs covered with haircloth, damaged; one mahogany table; one Ingrain carpet and hearth rug, worn out; one wire fender; one door screen; one pair tongs, shovel and poker, injured; one pair bronze mantel lamps, injured; one elegant mantel time piece (French); two old damaged spy glasses; one mattress, feather bed, bolster and pillows.

"Seventh Room: one large wardrobe; one Ingrain carpet, worn out; one painted pine table, large; four pairs dimity fringe curtains.

"Passage and Staircase: one long passage carpet, much worn; one Turkey ditto; one Brussels stair carpet with rods complete, much worn; one passage lamp."

Turning now to the "Principal Story" we find that the East Room, or "Large Levee Room," was still unfinished and contained a heterogeneous collection of articles. The account reads as follows:

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“ Entrance Hall: four mahogany settees; two marble ‘ consul tables,’ two elegant brass fenders, one oil cloth carpet, one thermometer and barometer, one lamp with branches, wants repair.

“ In the Large Levee Room: twenty-four large mahogany arm-chairs and four large mahogany sofas, all unfinished; eight pine tables; one door screen; one paper screen partition; book-shelves in three pieces; one mahogany map stand; one common washstand, basin and ewer; one pine clothes-press.”

Next comes the Green Drawing-Room. Here we find: “ one elegant chandelier, glass and gilt; two ditto gilt framed mantel glasses; one ditto gilt mounted consul table, marble top; fourteen ditto gilt green silk-bottomed chairs; two sets elegant green silk and white dimity window curtains, worn; one pair mantel lamps, old and damaged; one large mahogany writing-table with worn green cover; one mahogany clawfoot card-table; one ditto common ditto; one Brussels carpet and hearth rug, much worn; one brass fender; one shovel, tongs and poker; one pair elegant bronze and gilt candelabras; one ditto lion head ditto; four gilt curtain pins and cornice; one pair French China vases.

“ Elliptical Drawing-Room: one large glass and gilt chandelier, elegant; two ditto gilt framed mirrors; one gilt consul table, with marble top; two China vases; one bust of Washington; one elegant French gilt mantel time piece; one pair elegant bronze and gilt mantel

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branches; four bronze and gilt candelabras, eagle-head; one pair bronze and gilt andirons, one shovel and tongs; two elegant gilt and satin fire-screens; two ditto sofas and pillows; twenty-four ditto chairs; four ditto settees for recesses; five ditto foot-stools, one broken; one pair gilt bronze candelsticks; three sets of double silk window curtains; three elegant gilt eagle cornices; six small curtain pins; one large elliptical French carpet.

“The Yellow Drawing-Room: one large elegant and gilt chandelier; two ditto gilt framed mirrors; one ditto gilt consul table, with marble top; two China vases; one marble bust of Columbus; one elegant French gilt bronze mantel time piece; one pair elegant bronze and gilt mantel branches; two bronze and gilt candelabras, lion heads; one large gilt framed portrait of Washington; two sets of elegant red silk and dimity curtains, dimity injured; two sets gilt cornice; four curtain pins; one elegant mahogany gilt mounted piano-forte; one elegant mahogany gilt mounted circular table, marble top; one mahogany crimson cloth sofa (cover damaged) and fourteen ditto arm-chairs (covers damaged); one brass fender; one brass shovel, tongs and poker; one Brussels carpet and a hearth rug, both much worn.”

The large Dining-Room was furnished with “one large mahogany sideboard, and two small ditto; two consul tables with marble top; one large mahogany dining-table in four pieces; one bust of Americus

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Vespucius; two small chandeliers, injured; three sets crimson cloth curtains, damaged; three sets gilt cornices for ditto; thirty mahogany chairs, haircloth covers, one broken; one elegant brass fender; one elegant shovel and poker; one fire screen, injured; one common side table; four butler's stools; one door screen; one Brussels carpet, very much worn."

In the China Closet were 270 pieces of French China for the "first service," consisting of 2 large soup tureens, 4 large dishes and 31 dishes of various sizes; 8 vegetable dishes, 2 sauce boats, 4 celery dishes, 4 mustard pots, 12 dozen and 6 plates (150 altogether), 4 stands for custards, 27 custard cups, 32 egg cups and 2 tureen stands.

For the second service—Dessert—there were 157 pieces of crimson and gilt china, including 4 large elegant ice-cream urns, 28 stands for preserves, 4 fruit baskets, 6 shells, 4 sauce boats, or sugar stands, 9 dozen and 3 plates.

The white and gilt china consisted of 232 pieces: 2 large soup tureens; 2 large dishes, 15 dishes of various sizes, 1 large round dish, 14 fruit dishes, 16 oval dishes; 3 stands for custards, 16 custard cups, 7 sauce boats, 2 sugar ditto, 4 fruit baskets, 2 shells, 2 bowls, 10 small round dishes, 11 dozen and 4 plates (136 pieces).

The white and gilt French tea service comprised 156 pieces: 22 tea plates, 1 teapot, 2 dozen and 9 tea saucers (33 pieces), 4 dozen and 1 coffee ditto (49

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pieces), 1 dozen and 3 tea cups (15 pieces), 3 dozen coffee cups (36 pieces).

The Blue China Dining Service: 1 soup tureen and stand, 1 large dish, 6 variously sized dishes, 20 plates, 16 small dessert plates, 1 bowl, 13 tea saucers, 8 cups—66 pieces altogether.

Then there were 6 carving knives and forks, 5 dozen and 3 table knives, and 3 dozen and 5 dessert knives, all much worn.

There were 207 pieces of glass: "12 large elegant cut water decanters; 12 ditto for wine and 4 plain ones; 3 large preserve dishes and 9 smaller ones; 16 salt cellars; 23 cut-glass tumblers; 39 champagne glasses; and 89 wine glasses."

There were 44 pieces of silver: "2 elegant large silver dishes (solid); eight ditto of smaller size; 4 castor rolls; 1 coffee pot; 1 teapot; 1 urn, needing repair; 1 sugar dish; 1 pair sugar tongs; 1 cream pot, injured; 1 set of castors; 5 nut crackers; 2 large soup tureens, elegant, with buckskin cases; 6 plated bedroom candlesticks, worn out; 1 large plated waiter; 2 ditto smaller; 1 large water urn; 1 smaller ditto, injured; 5 salt spoons; 1 bread tray, solid, wants repair."

In the large Plate Chest: "4 wine coolers, plated; 4 decanter slides, ditto; 1 teapot, solid; 1 sugar dish, ditto; 1 ditto tongs, ditto; 1 cream pot, ditto; 4 candlesticks, plated; 2 branches, ditto; 4 castor rolls, solid; 2 soup ladles, ditto; 1 fish knife, ditto; 4 gravy spoons, ditto; 22 table spoons, ditto; 22 forks, ditto; 1 mustard

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pot, ditto; 3 ditto spoons, ditto; 4 labels for wines, ditto; 1 pair asparagus tongs, ditto; 2 large dish heaters, plated; 4 second size, ditto; 4 large dishes, solid; 8 smaller ditto; 6 dish handles, solid; 1 bread tray, ditto; 1 large waiter, ditto; 2 small, ditto; 1 elegant set of castors, ditto, injured; 18 dessert spoons, solid; 18 ditto forks, ditto; 20 ditto knives, ditto."

The French Plate Case contained 2 large silver soup ladles; 6 gravy spoons; 72 table spoons; and 72 table forks—152 pieces. There was also 1 large elegant gilt Plateau, with 7 pieces and 7 ornaments, and 19 branches for candles, damaged; and 1 plated rimmed Plateau, with biscuit ornaments, damaged.

In the Pantry: 2 common tables; 6 old candlesticks; 4 butler's trays (wood); 4 knife boxes; 8 plated hand trays; 4 wood and tin slush boxes; 3 old Japan trays; 5 ditto smaller; 1 table in the passage; and 1 set of fixtures for mahogany tables.

In the Small Dining-Room: "one large mahogany sideboard; one ditto writing table; one settee; twenty-four rush bottom chairs, much worn; four door screens; one Brussels carpet, much worn; one elegant brass fender; one pair tongs and poker, injured."

The Porter's Room contained a cot, a door screen, and a chair.

In the "Basement Story" were situated the Steward's Back and Steward's Front Room; Kitchen; Cook's Room; Servants' Hall; four servants' rooms; wash-room and meat kitchen.

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To this the following note describing the condition of the furniture is added:

“The furniture in the President’s house, having been seven years or upwards, in use, is of necessity more or less injured and defaced, notwithstanding the utmost care and attention that has evidently been paid to its preservation. A large portion of it, hastily collected for Mrs. Madison in 1814, at auctions, etc., never was suited to the house in which it is placed, and where it has become altogether useless.”

An accurate idea of the appendages to the President’s house at the close of the Adams Administration can be gathered from Charles Bulfinch’s report to S. van Rensselaer. In this he says that the offices are contained in a long line of one-story buildings extending east and west from the mansion house. He also writes:

“I find that the carriage house is conveniently situated at the end, about 20 feet square. The stable for eight horses accommodates the number now kept by the family; it is airy and well ventilated. . . . The west wing is divided in the same manner as that on the east, and a number of cows for family use are kept here. . . .

“These buildings have never been finished; the ceiling of the colonnades is lathed but not plastered; and it was intended to cover the whole exterior with hard stucco in imitation of stone. The appearance is certainly not in conformity with the style of the house, and is such as no gentleman of moderate property would permit at his own residence.

“I also examined the unsightly sheds built against the enclosing wall near the Treasury office. I find that there are twelve of them, and that they have been put up, by indulgence,

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by those clerks in that and the State Department who reside at a distance, for the purpose of sheltering their horses.

“The old building which you called my attention to is an encroachment, but the Government is the aggressor: it is occupied by the gardener who has the care of the grounds, and particularly of the kitchen garden.

“Convenient accommodations may be had for the hay and straw by raising a part of each wing used for stables one story higher, as is shown in a pencil sketch on the drawing; and this might be done, and the repair of the wings, for \$2,000.”

On Jan. 10, 1829, James Hoban writes to Joseph Elgar regarding the portico and other improvements:

“I have to state that a portico to the north front is part of the original plan of the President’s House, according to my design, approved by General Washington.” (Owing to lack of funds the house was finished without the porticoes.) “That to the south front has since been constructed, and the one intended for the north is the only part of the entire design remaining unexecuted.

“As regards the proportions of the building, the want of the portico to the principal front is a material defect, making the extension appear too great for the elevation; and one which nothing but its addition would cure.”

His estimate for finishing the President’s house and appurtenances, dated Jan. 24, 1829, is as follows:

North portico, per detailed estimate formerly submitted .....	\$24,769.25
Stables, per plan and estimate annexed.....	8,023.15
Gates and piers to the southwest entrance.....	1,275.00
Gates to the southeast entrance .....	400.00

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900 feet of coping for south wall, at \$2.....	1,800.00
1000 feet of pedestal wall and iron railing fence at \$5 .....	5,000.00
Improving grounds, including salary of \$450 to the gardener .....	1,400.00
	_____

N.B. Stone posts and chains will not make a fence sufficient to protect the grounds. I have substituted the pedestal wall and iron railing as better calculated to answer the purpose of a permanent fence.

106 stone posts and setting for chain fence at \$9.31 .....	\$986.86
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Mr. van Rensselaer's report from the Committee on the Public Buildings, dated Feb. 4, 1829, enables us to fix the date of the construction of the north portico. He writes:

“The committee concur entirely in the opinion of the architect of the President's house, Mr. Hoban, that the construction of the portico on the northern front is essential to the finished appearance of the building. That portion of the building to be covered by the portico was left incomplete on rebuilding the edifice, in expectation of this addition, the absence of which is consequently an important defect. It is also absolutely required by a regard to the health and comfort of the residents or visitors at the house.

“No other than a temporary provision (subject to considerable inconvenience) has ever been made for stabling at the President's house. A plan was submitted

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to the committee by Mr. Hoban for the erection of a permanent stable, on a scale conformed to the style of the building, at the extremity of one of the wings. But as this would require a corresponding building at the other end, and as the existing inconveniences admitted of a simpler remedy, which the committee have preferred, they have not recommended that item in Mr. Hoban's estimates. Conceiving that stone posts and chains will furnish a more suitable enclosure for the grounds in front of the house than the pedestal wall proposed, they also make the deduction of the latter item of the estimate.

“ A part of the President's house never having been furnished, and other parts of it being deficient in many articles of necessity and comfort, the committee have recommended the appropriation of the usual sum for this object.”

## CHAPTER TEN

### ANDREW JACKSON

1829-1833

Jackson's Career; Reign of Andrew the First; the "Kitchen Cabinet"; Mrs. Jackson; Popularity of General Jackson; the Inauguration; Mob at the President's House; Mrs. Donelson; Mrs. Andrew Jackson, Jr.; Public Receptions; Mrs. Eaton; Levees and Receptions.

WITH General Jackson in the President's house, a new era began. There had never been such a bitter contest as that which resulted in his triumph, by which he supplanted the mild-mannered J. Q. Adams as First Magistrate. He had long been a picturesque figure in public life with a commanding, rough, and even brutal personality. He had won the great victory of New Orleans, successfully conducted Indian wars, fought several duels, ridden rough-shod over the laws when they conflicted with his own ideas of what was advisable, and was quite ready to hang his political opponents as he had not hesitated to hang his foes. He did not scruple to arrest a judge for daring to issue a writ of *habeas corpus*, and threatened to cut off the ears of Senators who had the temerity to criticize his high-handed proceedings. Such a character was

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not likely to be a mere figure-head in an Administration. Those who expected lively times during his two terms had no cause for disappointment. His Cabinet Ministers had to be his obedient servants. If they ventured to disagree with him, they immediately were discharged. During his tenure of office, he had four Secretaries of State, five Secretaries of the Treasury, three Secretaries of War, three Secretaries of the Navy, three Attorney-Generals, and the two Postmaster-Generals. On his death-bed, when asked by a clergyman whether there was anything in his life for which he would like to express contrition, he said he was sorry he hadn't hanged Calhoun. This was presumably because Mr. Calhoun had resigned the Vice-Presidency, and opposed his Chief's measures.

A contemporary satirist, writing *The Voice of Future History* (1834), in reviewing "The Reign of Andrew the First," says:

"As one evidence of Jackson's judicious selection of his constitutional advisers, I shall barely mention the fact that during both his terms of service no change whatever was made in his Cabinet. This speaks well for the amiable disposition which the President was said to possess. All seemed to have but one object in view and but one object to accomplish. The utmost harmony prevailed in his councils; and the Chief who permitted the members of it to advance opinions that sometimes conflicted with his own was never known to be the least ruffled in temper, or to allow a harsh word to escape him. Mild as a summer's morn, he commenced the duties of the day with a smile upon his lips; and when the shades of evening



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admonished him to discontinue his arduous labors he retired into the quiet of his drawing-room, to which he was always glad to give his friends a hearty welcome, and to afford them the happiness of listening to his admirable and instructive conversation."

A long description of the "Coronation" ends with the following paragraph:

"In the open space about the throne were collected all the general officers and those persons, to the number of three hundred, whom by an imperial edict the Emperor had lately created Lords and Princes of the Empire. All were arrayed in the most gorgeous dresses, but the officers of the household, Martin, Prince of Kinderhook, Arch-Chancellor; Amos, Lord Scullion, the Emperor's favorite Cup-bearer; Lord Lewis, the Groom of the Chambers; Taney, Prince of Baltimore, Arch-Treasurer, and others equally illustrious, far outshone all the rest."

Jackson was naturally a figure of commanding interest in Washington society long before he unsuccessfully contested the election of 1824. On the eighth of January of that year, Mrs. Adams gave a very brilliant reception, which was ordered as she so well knew how to do. Fourteen hundred cards were issued, and a company of about eight hundred were present. The ladies were so anxious to get a good look at the hero of New Orleans that they stood up on the chairs and rout-seats. Mrs. Adams took his arm and paraded around the apartment, so that the general curiosity might be thoroughly gratified.

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Running affairs with such a high hand, it is not surprising that his advisers became generally known as "The Kitchen Cabinet." We shall see that life in the President's house under "Old Hickory" was simple, and lacking in the elegance that had characterized the terms of Monroe and Adams. It recalled the days of Jefferson in its frank democracy.

By her death, Mrs. Jackson doubtless escaped many humiliating experiences. The effects of Jackson's marriage to the divorced Rachel Robards under unusually peculiar circumstances were felt by him on many occasions while he was President.

It may readily be imagined that there was more than one lady in the land who was willing to preside over the widowed President's household. Many newspaper paragraphs of the day comment on the attentions the General received in his early days of mourning. Thus we read (Feb. 19, 1829):

"Many ladies went yesterday to call on the General. Most of them were over forty, and a number in the advance of sixty. Many of them were widows; a few were those who had *scorned previous offers.*"

Gifts and attentions of all kinds were showered upon the President-elect by his admirers of both sexes, as is evident from the following paragraph (Feb. 25, 1829):

"General Jackson continues to receive, at his lodgings, strangers, citizens, members of Congress, etc., without distinc-

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tion of party. He also gives, occasionally, large dinner-parties, which are the more acceptable to our gourmands, as canvas-backs, venison and champagne were becoming scarce at Gadsby's, after the retreat of the New York anti-auction committee. The General is not likely to lack stores for the maintenance of the Republican hospitality of the palace. His supplies are daily coming in from every quarter in the shape of voluntary and gratuitous tribute. A great cheese, for instance, has been sent to him from New England; whiskey from Pennsylvania; beef from New York; and the Kentuckians, they say, are to send him 'a whole hog.'"

The bitterly contested Presidential campaign had apparently engendered extreme animosity towards Mr. Adams in the mind of General Jackson; for, although he took up his residence in Washington two weeks before his Inauguration, he did not call at the President's house. Therefore, it was well understood, several days before the Inauguration, that the retiring President would not grace the occasion with his presence. The friends of the General said that the ordinary courtesies due to Mr. Adams, which had been studiously and avowedly withheld, were omitted under the dictation of the Washington committee of arrangements. The following card was inserted in the *National Intelligencer* on March 2:

"The citizens of the District of Columbia and others, friends of Mr. Adams, who might be disposed, conformably to the usage heretofore, to pay him a friendly visit, after the Inauguration of the President elect, on Wednesday the 4th

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inst., are requested by Mr. Adams to dispense with that formality, which the distance of his residence from the Capitol would render inconvenient to them. He thanks them for all the kindness which they have constantly extended to him, and prays them to accept the assurance of his best wishes for their health and happiness."

The editor comments on the above as follows:

"It is a matter of sincere regret that political animosities should have been carried to such an extent as to interfere with the courtesies of life. So far as Mr. Adams is concerned, General Jackson has been treated with respectful delicacy throughout the whole of the late bitter and trying conflict; and it argues ill for the boasted magnanimity of the new President that he should have suffered a political club to prevent his paying a visit to the distinguished citizen whom he was to succeed in the highest office in the nation. It was such a mark of indignity that self-respect forbids Mr. Adams to overlook it."

Mr. Adams left the President's house on March 3, early in the morning; and joined his family at his new residence on Meridian Hill. His absence from the Inauguration naturally excited remark. It was editorially explained in the following paragraph:

"The President-elect was inaugurated to-day. Mr. Adams did not attend. General Jackson came here a citizen; and has never called on the President since he arrived. This marked disrespect to the President and the office could not be otherwise than intentional. No explanation has ever been given by himself or his friends. The more moderate of them disapprove of it, and consider it as an insult to the office as to Mr.

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Adams personally. They appear to regret sincerely that General Jackson should have taken that course to gratify his private resentments."

From a news letter, describing General Jackson's first Inauguration, the following extracts are worthy of quotation :

"The rush of people to this place is unprecedented. Where the multitude slumbered last night is inconceivable, unless it were on their mother earth, curtained by the unbroken sky. The morning was ushered in by a salute of 13 guns. At 11, the breathing mass were around the Capitol, dense and wide. At about 12, a rending shout announced the presence of the General. He appeared in the eastern portico, which, from its elevation, rendered the ceremony extremely conspicuous and imposing. Order being reclaimed, the oath was administered, when another shout went up from the multitude. After a dignified, sweeping bow, the President commenced his address. His manner was simple and emphatic. His voice was distinct and audible at a considerable distance. The address being finished, another acclamation rent the air. There was now a general rush among the foremost to reach the President's hand. But his Excellency, withdrawing into the Capitol with his suite, the crowd was soon seen moving down the Avenue towards the President's house. Here followed a scene of the most nondescript character. High and low, old and young, black and white, poured in one solid column into this spacious mansion. Here was the corpulent epicure grunting and sweating for breath—the dandy wishing he had no toes—the tight-laced Miss, fearing her person might receive some permanently deforming impulse—the miser hunting for his pocketbook—the courtier looking for his watch—and the office-seeker in an

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agony to reach the President. The press of flesh and blood was so cogent that every man, as he came away, seemed to question his identity. The ladies probably said nothing about the matter, or congratulated themselves upon their patriotism, at the expense of their delicacy. The foreign Ministers were out on this occasion in full dress; but the insignia of their rank and royalty were noticed as little as the gewgaws of children."

An eye-witness informs us that a rabble and mob of negroes, boys, women, and children took possession of the house and scrambled, romped, and fought in the rooms both for refreshments and "to shake hands with Old Hickory." After a time, he, having been nearly crushed to death and suffocated, "retreated through the back way and escaped to his lodgings at Gadsby's. Several thousands of dollars' worth of cut glass and china were broken in the attempt to get at the refreshments; punch, lemonade, and other articles were carried out of the house in buckets and pails; women fainted; men were seen with bloody noses; and no police had been placed on duty." The narrator concludes that it was the People's Day, and the People's President; and the People would rule. It is estimated that 20,000 were present.

Another writes:

"A profusion of refreshments had been provided. Orange-punch by barrels full was made; but as the waiters opened the door to bring it out, a rush would be made, the glasses broken, the pails of liquor upset, and the most painful confusion prevailed. To such a degree was this carried, that wine

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and ice-creams could not be brought out to the ladies, and tubs of punch were taken from the lower story into the garden to lead off the crowd from the rooms. . . . It was mortifying to see men with boots heavy with mud, standing on the damask-satin-covered chairs and sofas."

Judge Story said: "The President was visited at the palace by immense crowds of all sorts of people, from the highest and most polished down to the most vulgar and gross in the nation. I never saw such a mixture. The reign of King Mob seemed triumphant."

Nathan Sargent, better known as "Oliver Old-school," says that "I was then in the city, and the reports of those present confirmed the above accounts."

General Jackson walked from his lodgings at Gadsby's to the Capitol for his Inauguration, and afterwards rode to the President's house on horseback.

The ladies who helped the President to entertain at the necessary social functions were Mrs. Donelson and Mrs. Andrew Jackson, Jr. Mrs. Donelson's maiden name was Donelson: she had married a cousin. She was a relative of General Jackson's wife, whose maiden name had also been Donelson. Mrs. Andrew Jackson came to the President's house and took up her residence there as a bride soon after the Inauguration. She was a Miss Yorke of Philadelphia. These two ladies maintained their station with dignity and grace. Mrs. Donelson is especially praised by contemporary scribes. Her husband acted as the President's private secretary. She died just at the close of Jackson's second term. The

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*Washington Globe* prints the following obituary on Jan. 4, 1837:

“This most estimable lady went to Tennessee during the summer and expected to return with her uncle on the first of October. For the most part since the beginning of this Administration, Mrs. Donelson has presided at the President’s Mansion; and all who have visited it know with what amenity of manners, with what engaging and unpretending kindness, she welcomed the guests to its hospitalities. She was destined not to share the affectionate farewell greetings with which the country is prepared to salute the close of the President’s residence in Washington; with which, in all its private and social relations, she was identified.”

A pleasant glimpse of domestic life at the President’s house in 1832 is supplied by Mrs. Ellet:

“The large parlor was scantily furnished; there was light from the chandelier, and a blazing fire in the grate; four or five ladies sewing round it; Mrs. Donelson, Mrs. Andrew Jackson, Mrs. Edward Livingston, etc. Five or six children were playing about, regardless of documents or work-baskets. At the farther end of the room sat the President in his arm-chair, wearing a long loose coat and smoking a long reed pipe, with a bowl of red clay; combining the dignity of the patriarch, monarch and Indian chief. Just behind was Edward Livingston, the Secretary of State, reading him a despatch from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. The ladies glance admiringly now and then at the President, who listens, waving his pipe towards the children when they become too boisterous.”

We may add here that several christening parties were given in the President’s house during this Ad-

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ministration; and that two weddings took place—one General Jackson's niece, Miss Easten, to Mr. Polk of Tennessee; the other Miss Lewis of Nashville to M. Paqueol, afterwards the French Minister to this country.

The custom of holding public receptions on New Year's Day and July the Fourth was maintained. The following is a description of the first Fourth of July celebration under Jackson:

“At one o'clock on the Fourth, the doors of the President's house were thrown open; and, notwithstanding the falling weather, almost unexampled for this season, the public officers and foreign Ministers generally, and a number of citizens and strangers, paid their respects to the Chief Magistrate. The visitors were received by the President and his Family with the courtesy and affability which befitted the place and the occasion. The Marine Band enlivened the occasion with its fine music, and refreshments were bountifully provided.”

Another newspaper correspondent adds the following details:

“Our 4th of July was a dull anniversary. The incessant rains prevented the public ceremony of laying the first stone of the Eastern Lock of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and circumstances operating quite as fatally prevented any respectable assemblage—I speak of numbers—from attending the President's levee. There is very little disposition among the old and settled population of the city to mix in the present political circles. Some there will always be found, who, like the gaudy and silly butterfly, will be fluttering where the blaze is, but from these the feeling of society is no more to be derived than

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the tone to society is to be given by such. There will always be strangers too, brought by business or pleasure to the city who would deem it the most damnable of heresies not to be found at the levees of the President, and the evenings of the Cabinet, basking in the meridian beam, or offering their adorations to what they deem the rising sun.

“There are now very generally known to be three distinct parties in the Cabinet—1st, the Jackson party, consisting of General Jackson, Messrs. Eaton, Branch and Barry; 2dly, the Van Buren party, consisting of Messrs. Van Buren and Berrien; and 3dly, the Calhoun party, consisting of Mr. Ingham *solus*.”

Of the above gentlemen, the elegant and luxurious Martin Van Buren was always General Jackson's devoted follower, and at the close of the General's second term reaped his reward in his Chief's support to his claims to the Presidential mantle.

Mr. Eaton, who had been a close friend of General Jackson for many years, had been Senator from Tennessee since 1829. Five days after the President's Inauguration, he was appointed Secretary of War. He had been married on the first of January in that year to a notorious character named Margaret O'Neil, the daughter of a hotel-keeper in Washington, who had been married to a purser in the U. S. Navy. A note of Senator Eaton's wedding appears in the *New York Spectator* in its correspondent's account of the Washington New Year's Day festivities:

“There was a great show of fashion at Georgetown, and a western frolic at the wedding of Senator Eaton. What the



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peculiarities of a western frolic are, other than an exuberance of good cheer and warm feeling, we do not know. General Jackson's Boswell is entitled to enjoy himself, now that his hero has been elevated. May his union be auspicious."

The union was far from an auspicious one for the new Secretary of War, and it was the means of causing his Chief no end of trouble. The other ladies of the Cabinet refused to visit, receive, or associate with Mrs. Eaton. She was beautiful and fascinating, and the President espoused the cause of his "little friend Peg," as he called her. Opposition to Mrs. Eaton extended to the Diplomatic Circle, and for more than a year the social war waged. The President demanded of his Cabinet immediate recognition of Mrs. Eaton; and all refused except Van Buren. Her name was then coupled with the President's, and the lady was scorned and shunned. The President then wrote a note to the Vice-President; but Mr. Calhoun called it a "ladies' quarrel," and refused to be drawn into it. The President at this juncture (1831) asked Mr. Van Buren to send in his resignation. This was done; and the rest of the Cabinet and foreign Ministers followed suit, not giving, of course, the real reasons for their withdrawals. Margaret Bayard Smith tells us:

"The papers do not exaggerate, nay do not detail one half of his imbecilities. He is completely under the government of Mrs. Eaton, one of the most ambitious, violent, malignant, yet silly women you ever heard of. You will soon see the recall of the dutch minister announced. Madm Huygen's spirited

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conduct in refusing to visit Mrs. E. is undoubtedly the cause. The new Cabinet if they do not yield to the President's will on the point, will, it is supposed, soon be dismissed. Several of them in order to avoid this dilemma, are determined not to keep house or bring on their families. Therefore, not keeping house, they will not give parties & may thus avoid the disgrace of entertaining the favorite. It was hoped, on her husband's going out of office, she would have left the city, *but she will not*. She hopes for a complete triumph & is not satisfied with having the Cabinet broken up & a virtuous & intelligent minister recalled, & many of our best citizens frowned upon by the President. Our society is in a sad state. Intrigues & parasites in favour, divisions & animosity existing. As for ourselves, we keep out of the turmoil, seldom speak & never take any part in this troublesome & shameful state of things. Yet no one can deny, that the P.'s weakness originates in an amiable cause,—his devoted & ardent friendship for Genl. Eaton."

In 1836 Eaton was sent as Minister to Spain, where Mrs. Eaton was liked, and became a great friend of Queen Isabella. The remainder of her life was tragic. After Senator Eaton's death, she again was married—this time to an Italian adventurer, who taught in Marini's dancing-school in Washington. Her young husband subsequently ran away with one of her granddaughters, a Mrs. Randolph (one of the Timberlake children); and they lived abroad, and finally in Montreal and New York. Mrs. Eaton spent her last days in Washington, where she died in 1879, at the age of eighty-three.

Though the President was willing to hold an occa-

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sional reception, his house was dull in comparison with that of his immediate predecessors. He scarcely entertained at all during his first year of office. On Dec. 16 a reporter writes:

“The gaieties of the winter season have not yet commenced. There is some doubt among those who are not admitted to court secrets whether there will be any Presidential levees. Some contend that the discontinuance of these *soirées* is to be among the reforms of the day; while others contend that they are to commence after the introduction of the New Year. Mr. Van Buren is expected to rank as the highest saint in the *almanach des gourmands*; and it is believed that he will devote his time equally between Vatel and the ladies, and that his most brilliant productions will savour of the drawing-room rather than the lamp.”

Early in January all doubts were set at rest by the President opening his house weekly and holding a levee to which practically all were welcome. On Jan. 11, 1830, it is reported:

“The Mansion of the President was opened on Thursday evening last to receive guests generally, and is to be open every Thursday fortnight during the Session for the same purpose. We learn that a large Company of Ladies and Gentlemen assembled on the occasion.

“There was a numerously attended Ball at Carusi’s Assembly Rooms on the Evening of Friday, the 8th Inst., in commemoration of the Victory of New Orleans, at which the President of the United States was present by invitation and also the heads of Departments, etc.”

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On the first day of the year, the President had held his first New Year's reception. From all accounts, this was a very democratic and even boisterous affair.

“A great concourse of people of every rank and condition in Society availed themselves of the usage of the day to pay their respects to the President of the United States, by whom and his family they were received with that courteous demeanor which it seems to be the General's pride to show alike to the opponents and the approvers of the course of his administration. The members of the foreign Legations, the several heads of Departments, members of both Houses of Congress, Officers, Civil, Military and Naval, from the General-in-Chief to the Cadet, and from the oldest Commodore to the youngest Midshipman, numerous as they were, formed but a small proportion of the gathered multitude. The Marine Band lent its aid to harmonize the scene, and the day went off pleasantly, with the exception of a little too much rushing after refreshments, and the total contempt of all ceremony, and indeed of all propriety, by a portion of the younger persons who were admitted into the mansion, but who ought never to be admitted there again unless accompanied by elders who will be responsible for their good behaviour. We are satisfied that the humblest individual amongst us would have been scandalized to see his son behave as some of these boys did. It is, indeed, a reproach to our city that the common decencies of civilization are so much neglected, as we see them of late among the rising generation. It is an evil which requires reform and to the reformation of which it is in the power of every individual to contribute something if he will.”

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### ANDREW JACKSON

1833-1837

A Follower of Jefferson; Van Buren's Tastes; Infirmities of the President; New Year's Day, 1834; Mrs. Fremont's Reminiscences of Jackson and the White House; Levees and Receptions; the "Mammoth Cheese"; N. P. Willis at the White House; Old Hickory's Hickory Carriage and the "Constitution Phaeton"; Luxurious Furnishings.

**J**ACKSON seems to have modelled himself on Jefferson in more ways than one. In his social intercourse, he was more sociable, familiar, and democratic in his dealings with the common people than his predecessor Adams had been, just as Jefferson had been more approachable by ordinary citizens than Adams's father, or Washington, had been. It had been the custom before Jackson's time for the President to spend by far the greater part of the year at the seat of government, only absenting themselves for very short intervals, for necessary private business, or for making a tour northwards or southwards. We have seen, however, that Jefferson spent as much time as he could on his own estates even while he was President, and Jackson did not hesitate to absent himself from Washington on

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what may be called political progresses; even if he thereby was unable to celebrate the Glorious Fourth at the National Capital. Thus on July 8, 1830, a carping critic complains:

“The Secretary of State left this city on Monday for the northward; the Secretary of the Treasury left the city at some time previous to that day; a majority of the Cabinet, as well as the President of the United States, are now absent from the Seat of Government. The President and his family arrived at Cincinnati on Monday, the 28th ultimo. The Secretary of the Navy has left this city on a visit to N. C., his native state. It is believed that there remains now not one of the heads of Department at the Seat of Government. We do not complain of the absence of the President and all his Cabinet, though so general an absence of the high officers of the government is unusual, if not unprecedented. We know that occasional absences are unavoidable and justifiable; but we feel for the distress which this aberration must cause to the Editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, and its New York Coadjutor, and others of the same family, who uttered such bitter denunciations a year or two ago whenever the President, or one of his secretaries, found it necessary to visit his domicile to look into his private affairs. If we remember right, one of these Editors carried his patriotic indignation to such an extreme as to offer a reward for the apprehension of the fugitive, when President Adams, after the decease of his father, retired for a few weeks to the shades of Quincy; and no member of the cabinet was allowed to leave this city for a day, even to visit his sick family, without a hue and cry being raised upon his trail.”

Jackson was impervious to criticism. In 1833, he was again *en tour* early in June and July, and arrived

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in Washington late in the afternoon of July the Fourth, thus shocking many patriots by his negligence of established usage. The following year he sinned even more deeply in the eyes of many; for, on July 5th, a Washington paper contains the following report:

“The President did not yesterday, according to the practice in better times, open his doors to receive the congratulations of the people on the return of our great anniversary and holiday. He and his cabinets probably have no objection to see this day sunk into oblivion; and if such be his disposition, or such his policy, so much the more ought the people to rejoice and show their gladness by their public actions and acclamations.

“I saw nothing stirring except at the door of the boarding house of the new Secretary of State, where there were assembled Mr. Woodbury and Mr. Van Buren and others who had apparently gathered at that spot for the purpose of abducting the new Cabinet Minister, as a barouche was in waiting for that purpose. Mr. Van Buren, although a Republican of the democratic species, according to himself and friends, has no predominating taste for republican habits and fashions. His dinners have been the frequent as well as the most aristocratic of any which have been given during the session; and he drives no republican carriage but an autocratic vehicle built either in Russia, or in the latest Russian model, drawn by a pair of superb trotters, which carry him to the Capitol, or any similar distance from his residence (about a mile and a half) in four minutes.”

It may be that the true explanation of the lapses complained of lies in his increasing years and infirmities. It is known, at least, that he had long suffered from a complication of diseases, which, in all proba-

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bility, accounted in a great measure for his extreme irascibility and violent behavior towards many of those with whom he came in contact. For instance, we are told on March 8, 1833:

“The ceremonies of the Inauguration and the Levee in the evening were too much for the shattered constitution of the President. His attendants were obliged to take him abruptly from the drawing-room, and carry him to bed.”

The New Year's reception of the following year also found the President ailing, though he did his best to entertain his numerous visitors. One reporter writes:

“Jan. 7, 1834.—The city is full of strangers from all quarters. Some for pleasure—more for office—and many to examine for themselves and learn, as far as they can, the truth of matters and things in general about the ‘White House,’ and especially in particular about the ‘Kitchen Cabinet.’”

Another correspondent writes to his paper as follows:

“A happy new year to you and all—even down to the ‘Kitchen Cabinet.’ . . . According to custom, the President's house was opened at 12 o'clock to-day for the reception of the multitude—a sort of hotch-potch day—and the palace a kind of ‘salmagundi’—that is a jumbling together of honest men and knaves—men with coats and men without them—men of all principles—and men of no principles—dandies—cockneys—hostlers and animals ‘dyed in the wool.’

“The Diplomatique Corps paid their court to the Chief Magistrate and departed before the crowd arrived. The old

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President seemed to stand the siege pretty well—though he looked thin and much worn. On entering the East Room, I was at once reminded of the famous East Room letter said to have been written by Senator Benton to Mr. Ritchie, which described this room as gorgeously furnished—and denounced the late President, Mr. Adams, for his extravagant and wasteful expenditure of the public money—when in fact the room was without a carpet, chandeliers, curtains, or anything else I believe save only a few old massy chairs and those with no bottoms. But the present economical administration has fitted up this same room with a costly carpet, costly chandeliers, window curtains, tables and glasses, and what attracted my attention not a little, was some of the very men in the crowd who then assisted in imposing the falsehood of the East Room better upon the American people but who were *now* bowing and fawning about the President as spaniels do about their master. Shame on such men! They and patriotism have no fellowship.”

It will be noticed that the above writer refers to the President's house as the “White House,” and puts the title in quotations, as he does also the “Kitchen Cabinet.” It would seem, therefore, that the term “White House” was applied to the Presidential mansion as a nickname during Jackson's Administration, and as late as 1834 was not yet thoroughly established in polite parlance. Hitherto in these pages, we have seen that in all letters, newspaper paragraphs and official documents, the building was referred to as the President's house, or, sometimes, mansion, or even, half-humorously, as by Mrs. Seaton, as the palace.

On account of the President's ill health, we are told

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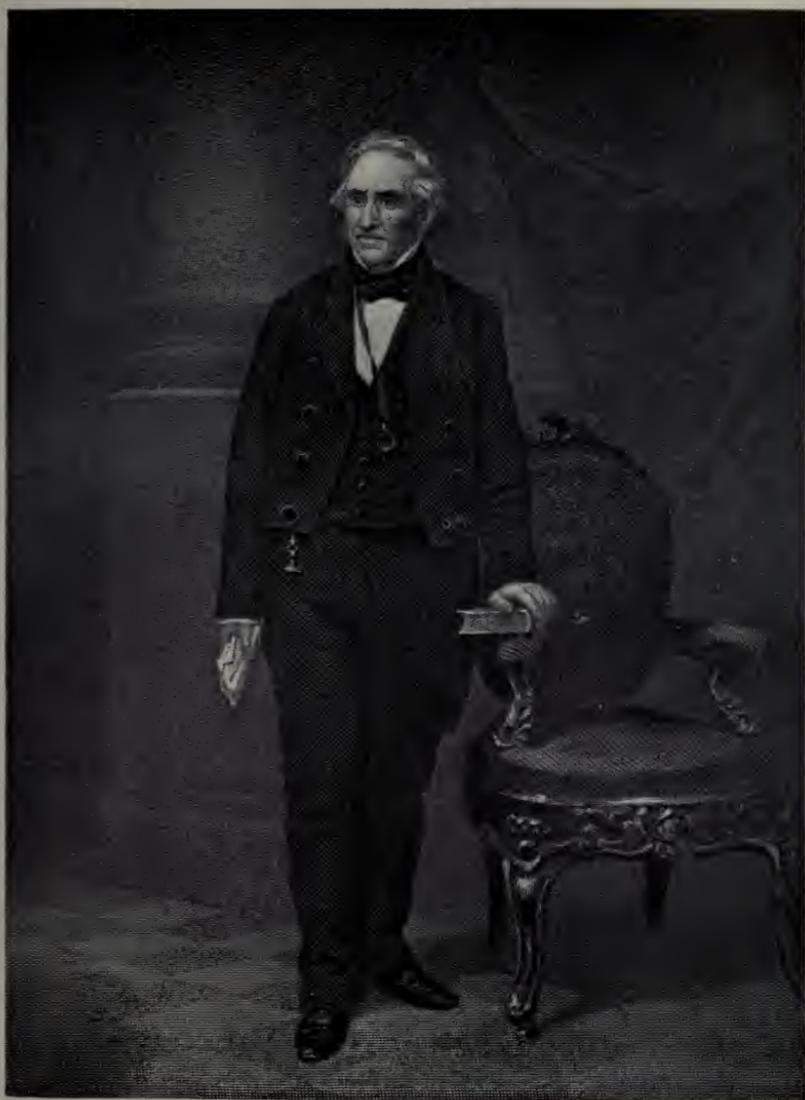
that the first levee of the season in 1834 was not held until Feb. 6:

“They began to assemble about eight o'clock and the multitude continued coming and going till 10 o'clock and after. The concourse of people was very great. There were many ladies present—but all the beauties and belles did not make their appearance. 'Tis not fashionable the first night. So, at least, say the dandies—and the ladies, dear souls, always have, at least, an ear and eye for them. The old President looked quite well, and seemed to enjoy himself. Mrs. Donelson is a charming woman—and fills her station with credit to herself and the country.”

General Jackson was greatly beloved by his supporters and friends, and bitterly hated by his political opponents. The notes, therefore, we have of his personality often strongly contrast with one another. Mrs. Fremont, the daughter of Mr. Benton, who was Senator from Missouri for thirty years, says:

“Among my earliest memories of the White House is the impression that I was to keep still and not fidget, or show pain, even if General Jackson twisted his fingers a little too tightly in my curls; he liked my father to bring me when they had their talks, and would keep me by him, his hand on my head—forgetting me of course in the interest of discussion—so that sometimes his long bony fingers took an unconscious grip that would make me look at my father, but give no other sign. He was sure to praise me afterward if I did not wince, and would presently contrive my being sent off to the nursery to play with the Donelson children.

“We would find the President in an upper room, where the



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tall south windows sent in long breadths of sunshine; but his big rocking-chair was always drawn close to the large wood-fire. Wounds and rheumatism went for much in the look of pain fixed on his thin face.

“President Jackson at first had suppers at the general receptions, but this had to be given up. He had them however for his invited receptions of a thousand or more. It was his wish I should come to one of these great supper parties; and I have the beautiful recollection of the whole stately house adorned and ready for the company—(for I was taken early and sent home after a very short stay)—the great wood-fires in every room, the immense number of wax lights softly burning, the stands of camelias and laurestina banked row upon row, the glossy dark green leaves bringing into full relief their lovely wax-like flowers; after going all through this silent waiting fairyland, we were taken to the state dining-room, where was the gorgeous supper-table shaped like a horse shoe, and covered with every good and glittering thing French skill could devise, and at either end was a monster salmon in waves of meat jelly.”

It seems that at Jackson's New Year's receptions there was no distinction of persons: it was first come, first served. We have an interesting description of Jan. 1, 1835:

“A cloudless sky and a broad surface of shining white have rendered the first day of the New Year a very bright one in Washington. . . . On this day, as you well know, the Yankee King holds a levee for the democracy of his dominions—and all the world (*viz.*: the top and bottom of the community in striking distance) go to see the President. Accordingly at an early hour all the hacks and other vehicles, both rolling and

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sliding, were put in requisition for this important enterprise; but on this occasion, notwithstanding Washington is usually so well stocked with hacks that the Orator of Roanoke once dubbed it 'Hacktown,' the supply fell much short of the demand, and many dependent pedestrians were obliged to trudge to the palace on foot, or forego the pleasure of the motley spectacle of royalty grouped and compounded with Democracy.

"Time and chance, which happen to all men, threw me into a division of footmen; and we made our way in the best order we could, sometimes in the open ranks on the broad surface of the well-cleared sidewalks, and sometimes in single file through the crooked and narrow defiles of the snow-path footways to the President's square. . . . But some thousands had arrived there, before us, of all ages and sexes and shades and colors and tongues and languages. There met the loud and whiskered representative of kingly legitimacy, with the plumed and painted untamed native of the western forest. The contrast was interesting and amusing. In the midst of the crowded assemblage, tall and stately, stood the commanding figure of the venerable President, for the present the centre of attraction and seemingly the centre of motion—for all motion seemed to be directed to that centre. Each new-comer took the old Hero by the hand, courtesied or bowed, wished him a 'happy New Year,' and then passed on to give place to others to participate in the same privileges. When I seized the old gentleman's hand, it seemed to have lost, through fatigue, the power of giving the friendly shake. The celebrated East Room was crowded to a real jam—and there at one extreme of the room stood like so many statues the aforesaid natives of the western wilds, hemmed in by a dense mass of gazing and wondering spectators. One was an old man, tall and venerable as the President himself. He was dressed in the Indian costume, painted and jewelled—and wore on his head the favorite plume. There were six or eight of this group of Indians—and after

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keeping their position awhile, they were persuaded to take the circuit of the room, and I was most agreeably surprised by the dignity and majesty of the old Chief's movement. He seemed to rise in stature and overtop the multitude that surrounded him.

"I put myself under the escort of Col. Crockett, and passed from the palace of the President to the residence of Mr. Adams."

Jackson's last public reception was held on Washington's birthday, 1837. Like Jefferson, he had been the recipient of a "Mammoth Cheese" made by Mr. T. S. Meacham, a dairy farmer of Sandy Creek, Oswego County, New York, who wanted to bring the excellence of the dairy products of his neighborhood prominently into notice. He, therefore, presented enormous cheeses of various sizes to the President, Vice-President, and other officials. His cheese was very conspicuous at this reception. An interesting report tells us:

"It had been officially given out that the President's mansion would be thrown open to the people on this day, and that they would be entertained with a cheese, sent from your own state, my dear editors, four feet in diameter! two feet thick!! and weighing fourteen hundred pounds!!! a cheese which, according to the official organ, beats quite hollow the great cheese that was made an offering to Mr. Jefferson, as the most appropriate present the farming class could tender to the President. . . .

"The whole city was on the move; and as the morning was mild and sunny, Pennsylvania Avenue was quite gay and animated with the various groups rapidly wending their way to

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the White House, or as sounds more pleasantly to royal ears, the Palace. . . .

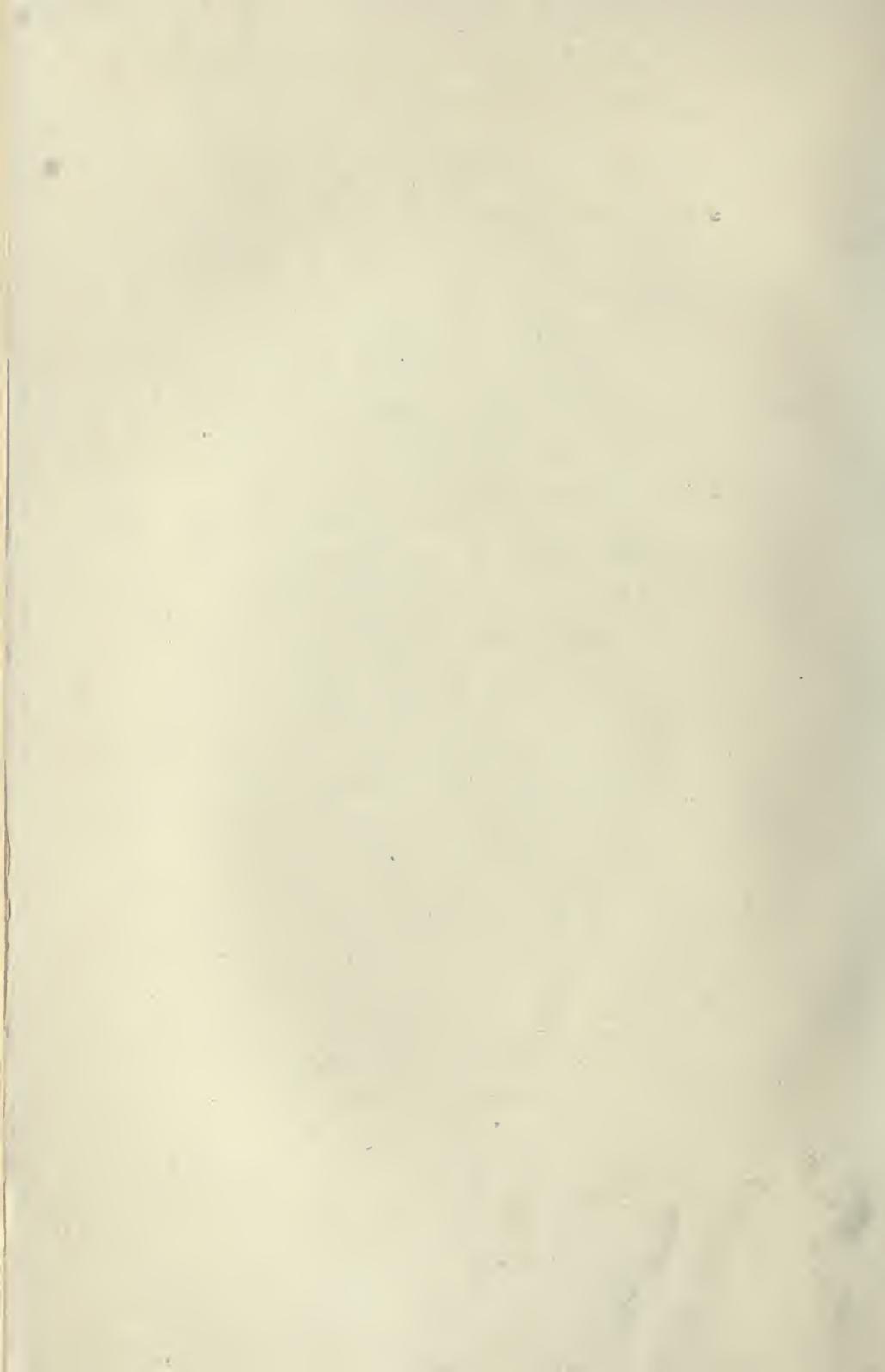
“The spectacle at the President’s house was a strange one. The rooms were not only crowded to overflowing, but the hall, the doorway, and every vacant place around were filled. People had poured in from Baltimore in the railroad cars, from the country in all sorts of vehicles, and the steamboats and stages from Alexandria were so crowded as to render passage by any of them extremely hazardous. The company reminded one of Noah’s ark—all sorts of animals, clean and unclean. There was quite a superabundance of the latter for the rag-a-muffins of the city had got into the gardens—thence clomb to the terrace—and thence entered by the windows into the East Room. The marshall of the city and his deputies did their best to keep the *canaille* from entering by the front door, but ‘the boys’ were too clever for them and got in by the windows!

“The President looked thin, pale and emaciated. He maintained his place in the audience room for upward of an hour, and then retired, leaving the honors of the mansion to be performed by the President elect, who received with his accustomed ease and grace, those who came ‘booin’ and booin’ to the ‘great mon.’ Mr. Woodbury and his lady stood in the apartment between the audience room and the East Room. This apartment might be called the *green room*, from the color of the walls and the furniture, and is odious to the ladies from the sallow look it imparts. Mr. Forsyth flitted through the crowd, now here now there, with his countenance expressing mingled pleasure and disdain, whispering in the ear of many a fair lady, but resolutely fleeing from the *boredom* of any political conversation. Mr. Benton paraded himself through the East Room about which he wrote the famous letter, in which there was not a particle of truth.

“I forgot the Cheese. It was served up in the *salle-à-manger*, and the whole atmosphere of every room, and throughout the



N. P. WILLIS



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city, was filled with the odor. We have met it at every turn—the halls of the Capitol have been perfumed with it, from the members who partook of it having carried away great masses in their coat-pockets. The scene in the dining-room soon became as disagreeable as possible, and I gladly left it, after a brief observation, and mingled with the beauteous and brilliant throng in the East Room.

“The city is full of gayety to-night.”

A delightful description of this last reception is given by N. P. Willis:

“I joined the crowd on the twenty-second of February to pay my respects to the President and see *the cheese*. Whatever veneration existed in the minds of the people toward the former, their curiosity in reference to the latter predominated, unquestionably. The circular *pavé*, extending from the gate to the White House, was thronged with citizens of all classes, those coming away having each a small brown paper parcel and a very strong smell; those advancing manifesting, by shakings of the head and frequent exclamations, that there may be too much of a good thing, and particularly of a cheese. The beautiful portico was thronged with boys and coach-drivers, and the odor strengthened with every step. We forced our way over the threshold, and encountered an atmosphere, to which the mephitick gas floating over Avernus must be faint and innocuous. On the side of the hall hung a rough likeness of the General emblazoned with eagle and stars, forming a background to the huge tub in which the cheese had been packed; and in the centre of the vestibule stood the ‘fragrant gift,’ surrounded with a dense crowd, who without crackers, or even ‘malt to their cheese’ had, in two hours, eaten, purveyed away *fourteen hundred pounds!* The small segment reserved for the President’s use counted for nothing in the abstractions.

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“Glad to compromise for a breath of cheeseless air, we desisted from the struggle to obtain a sight of the table and mingled with the crowd in the East Room. Here were Diplomats in their gold coats and officers in uniform, ladies of secretaries and other ladies, soldiers on volunteer duty and Indians in war-dress and paint. Bonnets, feathers, uniforms and all, it was rather a gay assemblage. . . . Great coats there were and not a few of them, for the day was raw, and unless they were hung on the palings outside, they must remain on the owner’s shoulders; but with the single exception (a fellow with his coat torn down his back, possibly in getting at the cheese), I saw no man in a dress that was not respectable and clean of its kind, and abundantly fit for a tradesman out of his shop. Those who were much pressed by the crowd put their hats on. . . .

“The President was downstairs in the Oval reception room, and, though his health would not permit him to stand, he sat in his chair for two or three hours, and received his friends with his usual bland and dignified courtesy. By his side stood the lady of the mansion, dressed in full court costume, and doing the honors of her place with a grace and amenity which every one felt, and which threw a bloom over the hour. General Jackson retired, after a while to his chamber, and the President-elect remained to support his relative and present to her the still thronging multitude, and by four o’clock the guests were gone, and the ‘banquet-hall’ was deserted. Not to leave a wrong impression of the cheese, I dined afterwards at a table to which the President had sent a piece of it, and found it of excellent quality. It is like many other things, more agreeable in small quantities.

“Some eccentric mechanick has presented the President with a sulky, made entirely (except the wheels) of rough-cut hickory, with the bark on. It looks rude enough, but has very much the everlasting look of Old Hickory himself; and if he

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could be seen driving a high-stepping, bony old iron-gray steed in it, any passer-by would see that there was as much fitness in the whole thing as in the chariot of Bacchus and his reeling leopards. Some curiously-twisted and gnarled branches have been very ingeniously turned into handles and whip-box, and the vehicle is compact and strong. The President has left it to Mr. Van Buren.

“In very strong contrast to the sulky, stood close by, the elegant phaeton made of the wood of the old frigate *Constitution*. It has a seat for two, with a driver's box covered with superb hammercloth, and set up rather high in front; the wheels and body are low, and there are bars for baggage behind; altogether it would be a creditable turn-out for Long Acre. The material is excessively beautiful—a fine grained oak, polished to a very high degree, with its colors brought out by a coat of varnish. The wheels are very slender and light, but strong, and, with all its finish, it looks like a vehicle capable of a great deal of service. A portrait of the *Constitution*, under full sail, is painted on the pannels.

“The accompanying motto was: ‘*Patria victisque laudatus.*’”

The condition of the interior of the White House and the amount of money expended on its furniture and decorations is plainly set forth in a *Report of the House Committee on Expenditures on the Public Buildings*, dated April 1, 1842. This document, although chiefly devoted to a savage attack on Jackson's successor, Van Buren, gives facts and figures that show us that the appointments of the White House under Jackson were anything but simple.

The Committee report that they have examined the

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Acts of Congress since March, 1829, and herewith give an abstract:

Act of March 3, 1829, " for furnishing the President's house, under the direction of the President of the U. S." .....	\$14,000
Act of March 2, 1831, " for furniture and repairs of furniture " .....	5,000
Act of March 3, 1833, " for furnishing the President's house, to be expended under the direction of the President in addition to the proceeds of such decayed furniture as he may direct to be sold "....	20,000
Act of June 30, 1834, " for completing the furniture of the President's house ".....	6,000
Act of March 3, 1837, " for furniture for the President's house " .....	20,000

In addition to all this, it appears that the net proceeds of sales of old furniture, from December, 1833, to December, 1837, amounted to \$5,680.40.

The " proceeds of decayed furniture " were directed to be expended in other furniture by the Act of March, 1833, and by the Act of April 6, 1838.

By the Act of May 22, 1826, it was enacted " that all furniture purchased for the use of the President's house shall be, as far as practicable, of American or domestic manufacture."

" So far as the committee are advised, this provision is in full force; but how little it has been adhered to will be apparent by reference to the bills.

"The furniture was purchased by agents of the Presi-

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dent's own selection, and in part by a member of his own family (Abraham Van Buren, Esq.).

“We have been recently told, by one in high authority, that in order to avoid a national debt, ‘*severe economy is necessary*’; and also: ‘This is the surest provision for the national welfare, and it is, at the same time, the best preservative of the principles on which our institutions rest. Simplicity and economy in the affairs of State have never failed to invigorate republican principles, while these have been as surely subverted by national prodigality, under whatever specious pretexts it may have been introduced or fostered.’ Further from the same source: ‘These considerations cannot be lost upon a people who have never been inattentive to the effect of their policy upon the institutions they have created for themselves; but at the present moment their force is augmented by the necessity which a decreasing revenue must impose.’ Again: ‘These are circumstances that impose the necessity of a rigid economy, and require its prompt and constant exercise. With the Legislature rest the power and duty of so adjusting the public expenditures as to promote this end.’

“The committee fully concur in the above sentiments, and they only regret that practice has not accompanied profession. How little they correspond will be apparent by reference to the papers.

“We are all prone to follow the examples of those in high places; and hence it seems to be imperatively

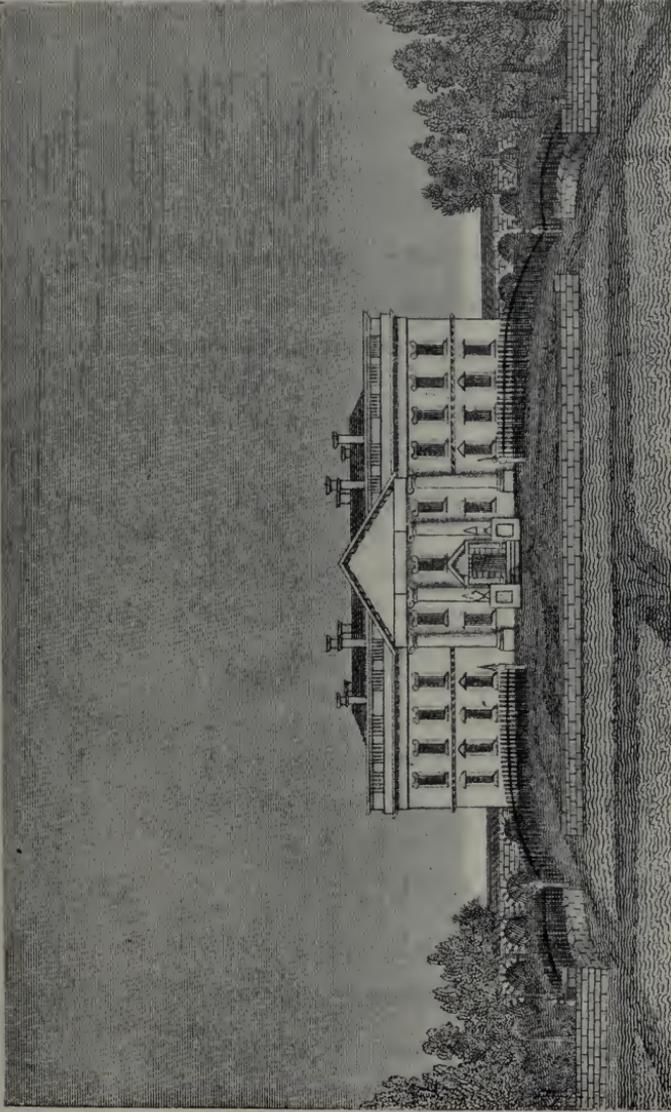
## THE WHITE HOUSE

the duty of men occupying them to be especially careful to furnish no other than such as may with propriety be acted upon by persons in inferior stations.

“It is useless to speculate upon the effects of simplicity and economy in chastening and invigorating republican institutions, while men in the prominent official places of the land practise the reverse of what they preach.”

The above arraignment of Mr. Van Buren's lavish outlay by the House Committee at the close of his Administration is entirely in sympathy with the Log Cabin campaign. By their own showing, however, Mr. Van Buren had not been as extravagant in furnishing the mansion as his predecessor, plain General Jackson, had been. In his two terms, the latter had spent \$45,000 of the Nation's money; whereas, in his one term, Mr. Van Buren had spent only \$25,680; and, of this, \$5,680 was the proceeds of the sale of “decayed furniture.” The furniture turned out by Mr. Van Buren to make room for other stuff more to his taste must have been large in quantity and fairly good in condition to realize any such sum as \$5,600 at public auction; but still the fact remains that he spent less of the public money on the White House than his predecessor had done.

If we now cast a glance at some of the bills rendered during Jackson's terms, we shall see that the General by no means neglected the interior decoration of his official residence.



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, NORTH FORTICO (1834)



## ANDREW JACKSON

The bill of L. Veron & Co., of Philadelphia, for furnishing the East Room (Nov. 25, 1829) amounted to \$9,358.27½. The document affords a clear vision of the decorations of the room at that period. Among the items are "three 18-light cut-glass chandeliers, \$1,800; three sets heavy bronzed chain and hooks for ditto, \$75; one 3-light centre lamp supported by female figures, \$65; 2 astral lamps for round table, \$65; 4 pair light mantle lamps, with drops, \$356; 4 pair vases, flowers and shades, fine paintings, \$200; eight 5-light bracket lights, bronzed and gilt, \$300; 4 bronzed and steel fenders, new style, \$120; 4 sets fire brasses, with pokers, \$40; 4 pair chimney hooks, \$12; 4 astral lamps on pier tables, \$100; 4 pair vases, flowers, and shades, \$120; 3 round tables, black and gold slabs, \$335; 4 pier tables with Italian slabs, \$700; 4 mantle glasses, rich gilt frames, French plates, 100 by 58 inches, \$2,000; 6 blue and yellow window curtains, \$630; 1 large window curtain, \$210; 498 yds. fine Brussels carpet and border, \$1,058.25; 4 Imperial rugs, \$68; 24 arm-chairs and 4 sofas, stuffed and covered, mahogany work entirely refinished, and cotton covers, \$600.40; ornamental rays over the door, \$25; 84 gilt stars, \$17.50; white curtains inside the blue and yellow, \$75; 20 spittoons, \$12.50."

On the same date, Messrs. Veron rendered another bill of \$211 for "2 pair plated candlesticks and branches, \$85; 2 pair plated chamber candlesticks, \$18; 2 sets of fine green tea-trays, real gold leaves, five in each set,

## THE WHITE HOUSE

\$70; 13 extra cut lamp glasses, \$26; 24 extra chimneys, \$6; and 6 gross wicks, \$6." Two years later, the same firm supplied for the East Room two 3-light lamps, \$150; and J. Boulanger was paid \$200 "for two very large size French bronze gilt lamps, surmounted with two cristal globes for the President's house."

Expenses were also incurred for other rooms, as well as for carpeting halls, stairs, and passages. The most important items were 88 yds. Brussels carpeting with 19 yds. border for sitting-room, \$214; hearth rug to match, \$25; 66 yds. Imperial Saxony, \$214.50; blue cloth for the stairs, \$105; one large door rug, \$19.12; one small ditto for the stairs, \$4.00; 36 brass stair rods and eyes, \$36; 6 pairs plated chamber candlesticks, \$57; 6 pairs plated bottle stands, \$48; 9 pairs plated table candlesticks, \$76.80; 4 pairs plated 12-inch waiters, \$48; 18 pairs plated snuffers and trays, \$53.25; 9 hearth brushes with brass handles, \$18; 6 side lamps for the lower passage, \$15; 2 3-light lamps for the lower hall, \$150; 1 2-light lamp for the upper hall, \$57.50; 12 bunches artificial flowers, \$27; one 4-col. black marble clock for the audience room, \$75; one pair marble lamps for ditto, \$20. For reframing 2 looking-glasses, \$100 was charged; and repairing and partially gilding the 14 chairs in the green room cost \$35. Finally there was a charge of \$500 for repapering the President's chamber, and the public dining-room, private dining-room, sitting, elliptic, and green room.

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There was music in the President's house during Jackson's occupancy. On Nov. 21, 1831, the following bill was received:

1 piano forte of rosewood, 6 octaves.....	\$300
By second hand piano exchanged.....	100
	<hr/>
	\$200

On May 30, 1831, Martin Van Buren bought at auction, "for the use of the President's house," a chintz-covered sofa, \$60; and two pair of plated candlesticks, \$20. It is interesting to see Jackson's Secretary of State taking interest in such small matters.

Under Jackson, there is no hint of total abstinence in the White House. On Jan. 27, 1830, the sum of \$1,451.75 was paid for glass to the Pittsburg firm of Bakewell, Page and Bakewell. The items were: 12 doz. richest cut tumblers, \$240; 6 pair cut decanters to match, \$168; 5 doz. cut wines to match, \$90; 1 elegant cut centre bowl and stand, \$40; 2 elegant smaller bowls and stands, \$60; 6 cut Islam floating dishes, \$90; 7 doz. cut wines to match, \$126; 6 doz. cut clarets to match, \$120; 6 pair cut pint decanters, \$120; 3 pair cut celeries to match, \$60; 6 pair cut pitchers to match, \$180; 6 pair salts and stands, \$60; 2 pair 11-inch cut dishes to match, \$40; 2 pair 9-inch ditto, \$30; 2 pair 7-inch ditto, \$24.

The bill of L. Veron & Co. (Feb. 14, 1832) amounted to \$2,952.90. It included 4 pier mirrors in

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rich gilt frames, 108 by 54 inches, at \$600 each; 4 pier table lamps, at \$45; one pair bracket lamps, \$60; one 4-light hall lamp, \$117.90.

In 1834, \$6,000 was appropriated, of which \$5,953 was spent with the above firm. They charged \$3,300 for 3 chandeliers for the East Room; \$700 for 2 mirrors for the Green Room; \$700 for 2 mirrors for the Dining-Room; \$1,200 for oil-cloth for the great passage; and \$53 for sundries.

The glass bought in December (1833) for the service of White House hospitality cost \$924. This was also supplied by Lewis Veron & Co., and was presumably imported by that firm. The set comprised 12 doz. wine glasses; 12 doz. claret; 12 doz. champagne; 6 doz. wines, straight stem; 12 doz. tumblers; 6 doz. goblets; 2½ doz. cordials; 9 pairs quart decanters; 6 pairs claret ditto with handles; and 48 water bottles.

The cutlery supplied for the Presidential table by Messrs. Veron cost \$585.74. It consisted of 4½ doz. knife blades for silver handles; 4½ doz. new handles for old blades; 10 doz. table knives, plated on steel, silver ferrule, and transparent ivory handles; 6 doz. dessert to match; 6 doz. table knives, steel blade, with silver ferrule; 6 doz. dessert to match; 2 doz. knives and forks, with French fork; 6 pairs guard carvers, same; 3 pairs round of beef ditto.

In addition to the things already mentioned that were purchased this year for the East Room, Messrs.

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Veron supplied 4 steel fire sets, \$20; and 2 pairs polished steel tongs and shovel, \$17.00.

In addition to the beautiful table service of glass, china, and cutlery bought this year (1833), we have also an "Invoice of a dinner and dessert set of French sterling silver plate, purchased for the use of the President's house." This weighed 2,693 oz. in all, and cost \$4,308.82. The service comprised 2 soup tureens, 4 vegetable dishes, 2 sauce-boats and plates, 8 large and 12 small round plates and 6 oval ditto, 2 sets casters, 2 baskets, very rich work; 18 bottle stands, 12 skewers, 1 large and 1 small coffee pot, 1 cream jug, 1 fish knife, 8 double salts and two mustard stands, 36 tablespoons, 60 table forks, 8 long gravy spoons, 2 soup ladles.

The gilt dessert service, weighing 204 oz., consisted of 36 spoons, 36 forks, 36 fruit knives, silver blades; 4 sweetmeat spoons, 2 sugar spoons, 48 tea or coffee spoons, 8 small spoons, 2 mustard spoons.

In addition to the above, there were 60 table knives with silver handles, 36 dessert knives, silver handles and blades; 36 do., silver handles and steel blades; 3 large carving knives and forks—2 silver, 1 steel; 11 silver ladles, 4 silver ladles, gilt, and 2 trunks to contain the whole service.

Though President Jackson bought his glass in Pittsburg in accordance with the expressed wishes of Congress in the Act of 1826, he did not hesitate to send to France for his fine silks and porcelains. These he imported through L. Veron & Co. One of their

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invoices of certain silk stuffs purchased in Lyons by Messrs. Perrot and Mulot (Aug. 25, 1833) totals 12,183.25 francs. The items are:

168	ells	7-inch fringe.
38	"	heavy silk cord fringe.
36	"	heavy cotton cord fringe.
168	"	embroidered curtains, eagle.
37 $\frac{3}{8}$	"	satin border, blue and yellow.
58 $\frac{3}{8}$	"	" " " yellow and blue.
157 $\frac{3}{8}$	"	yellow silk, heavy.
105 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	blue " "
133 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	white " "

Veron's account covering the months from April to December, 1833, inclusive, came to \$12,728.23. The most important items were \$1,545 for 515 yards of Wilton carpet for the East Room; 4 French bracket lights for ditto, \$300; "one set of French China, for dinner, with the American eagle," \$1,500; a dessert set, blue and gold, with eagle, \$1,000; a suit of curtains for the East Room, of heavy silk and fringes, muslin curtains, made to order, with eagles, \$3,875.35; and table and household linen, \$882.14. The dinner set consisted of 440 pieces "made to order" and included 32 round and 32 oval dishes, 6 doz. soup plates, 20 doz. flat plates, 4 long fish dishes, 12 vegetable dishes with covers, 8 sugar covers and plates, 6 pickle shells, 6 olive boats, and 4 octagon salad bowls. The dessert set contained 412 pieces, also "made to order," consisting of 6 stands for bonbons,

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3 stages, 8 tambours for do., 3 do., 12 sweetmeat  
compotiers on feet, 6 round sugars and covers, 6 large  
fruit baskets on feet, 4 ice-cream vases and covers  
with inside bowls, 18 doz. plates, 6 Greek form cups  
and saucers, 4 oval sugar dishes, 4 cream jugs.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### MARTIN VAN BUREN

1837-1841

Tastes and Character of Martin Van Buren; Inauguration and Ball; the Bodisco Wedding and Entertainment of M. and Mme. Bodisco at the White House; Martin Van Buren as a Host; Mr. Ogle's Reproaches on the President's Luxury; Expenditures on the President's Mansion and Grounds; Elliott's Description of the President's House; the East Room; the Blue Elliptical Room; Luxurious Table Service; Lamps and Mirrors; Rich Furniture; Discomforts Described by Mrs. Fremont; James Silk Buckingham's Description of the President's First Drawing-Room; the President at Church; Captain Marryat's Description of Van Buren; Mrs. Abram Van Buren; New Year's Receptions; a Monster Cheese; Van Buren leaves the White House.

**M**R. VAN BUREN, with the strong aid of General Jackson, succeeded the latter in the Presidency at a very inopportune moment. Business was in a panicky condition, and "hard times" were charged up to the Administration. Mr. Van Buren was a courtier by nature with luxurious tastes. His contemporaries in the opposite camp bitterly reproached him for his elegance; and, as they called it, effeminacy. We shall see that he was made to suffer in the eyes of his countrymen for his taste for everything that was elegant, luxurious, and polite. His

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enemies had animadverted on his liking for fast horses and high living during the previous Administration (see page 209). An appreciation of Mr. Van Buren's character and abilities is afforded by an intimate acquaintance, William Allen Butler, who says:

“ According to a popular view of it, Mr. Van Buren's Presidency was a prolongation of General Jackson's term. It was twelve years, instead of eight, of the same Administration. The old issues had been settled, and no new issues were developed. Mr. Van Buren ‘ followed in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor.’ The predecessor had been too illustrious and his footsteps had so shaken the whole social system that a great shock was inevitable. . . .

“ Mr. Van Buren in his personal traits was marked by rare individuality. He was a gentleman, and he cultivated the society of gentlemen. He never had any associates who were vulgar or vicious. He affected the companionship of men of letters, though I think his conclusion was that they are apt to make poor politicians and not the best of friends. Where he acquired that peculiar neatness and polish of manner which he wore so lightly, and which served every turn of domestic, social and political intercourse, I do not know. As far as my early recollections go, it was not indigenious in the social circles of Kinderhook. I do not think it was essentially Dutch. It could hardly be called natural, although it seemed so natural in him. It was not put on, for it was never put off. As you saw him once, you saw him always—always punctilious, always polite, always cheerful, always self-possessed. It seemed to any one who studied this phase of his character as if, in some early moment of his destiny, his whole nature had been bathed in a cool, clear and unruffled depth, from which it drew this life-long serenity and self-control.

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“If any vulnerable point was left, I never discovered it. It has been conjectured that Aaron Burr, who was in great social as well as professional repute at the time Mr. Van Buren first came to New York as a student of law, and whose hands were as yet unstained with the blood of Hamilton, was the model after which he copied. If this be so, he improved on the original, for Mr. Van Buren’s manner had in it nothing that was sinister, or which roused suspicion.”

His imperturbability was most remarkable, for he was not disturbed “when he repeated the oath which inaugurated him in the Presidency”; nor when “at the close of the day which decided the election of Harrison, he heard the urchins of Washington repeating about the White House, the favorite Log Cabin refrain, ‘Van, Van is a used-up man.’”

One of the charges against him was that he was no Democrat. “He dressed too well, he lived too well, the company he kept was too good, his tastes were too refined, his tone was too elegant.”

President Van Buren was honored by the escort of General Jackson to the Capitol for his Inauguration. After the ceremonies, they both returned in the *Constitution* phaeton drawn by four grays (see page 219) to the White House, where a multitude of carriages and a mob of enthusiastic citizens made ingress and egress almost impossible. The carriage folk had the utmost difficulty in penetrating the throng to the reception-rooms.

N. P. Willis says:



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“Mr. Van Buren held a levee immediately afterwards, but I endeavored in vain to get my foot over the threshold. The crowd was tremendous. At four the Diplomatick body had an audience, and in replying to the address of Don Angel Calderon, the President astonished the gold coats by addressing them as the *democratick corps*. The representatives of the crowned heads of Europe stood rather uneasily under the epithet, till it was suggested that he possibly meant to say *diplomatick*.”

He continues:

“The ball in the evening at Carusi’s saloon was the most magnificent thing of the kind that has ever taken place in Washington. Many of the most beautiful and accomplished women who have resorted to the metropolis were present, and gave grace and lustre to the scene. . . . About half-past nine, President Van Buren entered the rooms, attended by the heads of Departments. He took his stand on an elevated platform and there received the devoirs of the company. General Jackson did not attend. The tables were spread with the utmost profusion and luxury; and champagne flowed most bounteously.”

General Jackson not only graced his successor’s Inauguration with his presence, but also accepted his hospitality for nearly two weeks. On March 6, we learn from a newspaper paragraph that he is “still an inmate of the President’s mansion. He will leave on Wednesday, March 15, for *The Hermitage*, by way of Charlottesville, Virginia.”

Mrs. Fremont (see page 212), bears witness to Mr. Van Buren’s graces as a host and talents as an

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entertainer. Perhaps the most striking figure in Washington Diplomatic society for many years was the Russian Minister, Bodisco. He married a girl of sixteen, the daughter of a comparatively obscure resident of Georgetown. He had a great eye for theatrical effect and Mrs. Fremont describes the wedding, at which she, a girl of fourteen, was a bridesmaid, in considerable detail. The other bridesmaids were also in their teens. Mr. Van Buren, who had shortly before given a dinner to his young son, Smith, which was also a children's affair, soon afterwards tendered a hymeneal feast to the elderly bridegroom and youthful bride. Mrs. Fremont says:

“Here again Bodisco prepared his tableau. He gave us our directions, and our little procession crossed that windy hall into the drawing-room. Mr. Van Buren had it, later, somewhat protected by the glass screens that now extend across, but many a cold was taken there after wraps were laid aside.

“We were grouped either side of the bride, our bright white dresses serving as margin and setting to the central figure. This night her dress was of pale green velvet, its long train having a border of embroidery in gold thread not brighter than her yellow hair, and pearls and emeralds were her ornaments.<sup>1</sup>

“Mr. Van Buren brought over from London a fine *chef*, and his dinners were as good and delicate as possible; but his was a formal household—none of the large hospitality of General Jackson, who held it as ‘the People's House,’ and himself

<sup>1</sup> Madame Bodisco, whose maiden name was Harriet Williams, was, perhaps, the most important figure in Washington diplomatic society for a quarter of a century.

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as their steward; and still less of the 'open-house' of the Tyler *régime*, where there were many young people who kept to their informal cheery Virginia ways. . . .

"Mr. Van Buren had great tact and knew how to make each one show to advantage. He was also very witty, though he controlled this, knowing its danger to a man in public life. . . ."

When Mr. Van Buren took possession of the White House there was a great house-cleaning and renovation of the interior. Nearly \$27,000 was expended under the directions of the new President. He had no sooner been inaugurated than the work began, as is shown by the following bill for work done and goods supplied by C. Alexander from March 11 to March 20. The total was \$1,037.35, and the changes in the mansion are shown by the following entries:

"Removing the furniture of the audience-room to the Major's room, and from the Major's room to the audience-room; taking off the large dining-room carpet, cleaning it, and removing all the furniture; taking off the four passage carpets and cleaning them; putting down the carpets for the dining-room and up-stairs passage."

The President's private office was entirely redecorated and furnished. The articles and materials supplied included "screen for the room and serge; 22 pieces of paper; 3½ pieces baize; putting up 22 pieces paper; putting up 3½ pieces baize; 72 yds. scarlet damask; 22 yds. silk fringe; 50 yds. silk binding; 3

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sets of cornices; 36 yds. muslin; 25 yds. cotton fringe; 21 gilding rings; taking down and putting up 3 windows; a bell pull; 51½ yds. Brussels carpet; 15½ yds. baize; making carpeting and baize and 4 window curtains; 15 yds. matting; 3 iron rods; brass rings; a sofa; hearth rug."

In the "Book Case" the upholstery work comprised 43 yds. of green merino, 4 iron rods, brass rings, binding and making 8 curtains, \$29.

The dining-room was ornamented with three sets of window curtains, \$135.

The decorations of the "Green Room" cost \$355.68. The items of the bill are: 30 pieces silver paper, 4 pieces border, putting and setting up ditto ditto, 96 yds. green silk, 33 yds. muslin, 16 yds. cotton fringe, making and putting up window curtains, etc., 75 yds. matting, putting down ditto, 3 pieces green worsted binding.

Mr. Alexander rendered a bill for \$1,135.47 for work done also in May and June. The principal work done was taking up, cleaning, and packing carpets and curtains for the summer, moving the furniture, papering rooms, making curtains, "preparing the President's office," supplying a circular table, laying green broadcloth (3½ yds.) on it, altering another, supplying bell pulls, tablecloth covers, washing, making, and repairing 34 chair covers, 2 new screen covers, 2 bureau covers, 28 yds. brown Holland, and repairing chair, arm-chair, sofa, and stool.

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For similar upholstery work in June, Edward Burke received \$585.16½.

Zachariah Nicholas, of Alexandria, was paid \$150 in July and \$800 for work done in August. This consisted principally of "cleaning, repairing, and relacker-ing 7 chandeliers, 3 pairs of pier tables, French figures, 1 pair of column velvet lamps, 4 pair cornucopia bracket branches; 1 pair mantle branch lamps, 1 pair candlesticks, 1 passage lamp and chain; 1 plateau" (see page 117); and taking down and putting up such ornaments.

The charges for repairing old furniture in some of the bills show that Mr. Van Buren did not condemn it just because it was old-fashioned and not suited to his taste. He seems to have tried to have made the White House, however, as splendid as could be managed with the money allowed. One of the early bills is that of A. F. Cammeyer, New York, for \$2,000, "for gold leaf, gilding materials, labor, and expenses."

For new furniture, the President paid C. H. and J. F. White (Phila.) \$1,599.50. The charge for boxing this was considerable, amounting to \$97.50. We may be sure, therefore, that it was very choice. The items were: 1 elegant dressing bureau, 1 pair double-jointed sconces for do., 3 dressing bureaus, 18 mahogany chairs, 1 elegant statuary centre table, 1 elegant dining-room common do., 1 statuary marble top for do., 1 elegant enclosed washstand with marble

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top, 3 marble top washstands, 1 large elegant French bedstead, 1 palliasse, 1 hair mattress, 1 feather bed, bolster, and 2 pillows in linen tick, 1 large French bedstead with furnishings as above, 1 French bedstead, 1 set large French castors.

Bills, in 1837 and Jan. 1838, for napkins, towels, table-cloths, bed, and other household linen came to \$2,460.29.

Jas. Paton & Co.'s bill for \$4,316.08 (Dec. 12, 1837) evidences other new decorations, especially in the bedrooms.

"Bed Room No. 1, 112½ yds. furniture chintz, 116 yds. muslin lining, 4½ yds. silk cord, 6 silk tassels, curtain ornaments, etc.

"President's Chamber, 110¼ yds. furniture chintz, 114 yds. muslin lining, 4½ yds. silk cord, 29 yds. chintz for sofa, 6 silk tassels, curtain ornaments, etc." (Thus, with the sofa, elegant dressing bureau, mahogany chairs, marble-top washstand and French bed, the President's bedroom was very luxuriously furnished.)

"Room No. 4, 31 yds. blue and white cotton, 40 yds. bordering, 3 yds. cord, 4 silk tassels, ornaments, etc."

Room No. 6 was similarly upholstered.

"Room No. 8, 48 yds. scarlet cotton, 60 yds. yellow galloon, 4½ yds. cord, 6 tassels, ornaments."

For bell-pulls, 79½ yds. silk cord, 14 tassels, and 10 pussetts were used.

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“Ladies’ Room: 4½ yds. crimson taffeta, 90 yds. muslin, 16 yds. cord, 6 tassels, ornaments.”

The sum spent on the “Circular Room” on the second story was \$1,041.00; and \$1,085.55 on the “Circular Room” on the first story. For the latter, the curtains with cords, tassels, including satin, galloon, and gauze, for three windows cost \$409.30. In addition to this, in this room, 14 chairs, 2 sofas, 4 tabourets, 2 screens, 5 footstools, 4 silk pillows, and 1 music stool were repaired and covered.

The paper for covering the walls of Rooms Nos. 1, 2, 4, 8, Ladies’ Room, and Circular Room was supplied on June 12, July 26, and Aug. 8 by Messrs. Pares and Faye. The total cost was \$706.50.

In other rooms also 14 chairs, 1 sofa, and 2 pillows were re-upholstered with drab cloth, silk cord, gimp, and tassels at a cost of \$140.27.

“President’s Room. Repairing and covering 16 chairs, cleaning carpet, 29¼ yds. satin, 49½ yds. galloon, 59½ yds. cord, 62 yds. gauze, 10 silk tassels, 4¼ yds. cotton tick, 14¾ yds. brown Holland, 2 rosettes.”

Another bill, rendered by A. Lyambur, for \$170, was for “6 French comfortables, made of extra materials and extra covers”; and P. Valderon received \$100 for one divan and cushions.

New carpets for the house, 364 yds. of Wilton, 170½ of Saxony, and 430 of Brussels were purchased;

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these together with 8 rugs cost \$4,050.81. This is additional to the carpeting already noted.

John Williams, in March and April, 1837, supplied, for \$57.50, "dining-table with 2 tops; covering table with cloth, finding knobs; repairing secretary's desk, finding glass knobs; repairing book-case, finding lock; and letter box."

We have seen that General Jackson bought a goodly supply of cut glass of foreign manufacture (see p. 226). What was left when Mr. Van Buren came in did not suffice, however, for his table. To I. P. Drummond, of Maiden Lane, New York, importer of China, glass, and earthenware, he paid, June 8, 1837, \$220.75 for 6 qt. and 12 pt., all fluted decanters, cone stoppers, barrel shape; 6 doz. claret wines, cut pillar stem; 6 doz. green finger cups; 6 doz. cut wine coolers; 2 doz. cut champagnes; 18 pint water bottles, flint and fluted; and 2 casks.

On Sept. 2, 1837, also, C. W. Spileker, of Baltimore, collected \$36 for 33 doz. glass dishes.

It would seem that the beautiful china dinner service bought by Jackson (see p. 228) had not yet gone the way of all earthenware in the hands of careless scullions. Mr. Van Buren, however, had occasion to spend \$201.21 for various crockery during the first year of his term. Among the items we find a fancy toilet set, 5 blue printed foot tubs, a white China glazed toilet set, 24 blue printed mugs, 24 hard China glazed bowls and saucers, 2 rosette pitchers, 9 stone

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milk pans, 48 blue printed plates, one-half soup, 6 blue printed dishes, 6 blue edged dishes, 3 blue printed ewers and basins, 6 cream colored chambers, 2 printed sugars, 1 printed pitcher, 2 printed oval baking dishes, 6 printed bowls, 12 purple printed handled bowls and saucers, 1 cut-glass cruet, 36 glass chimneys, 72 rich cut tumblers, 4 large edged dishes, 12 China gold band coffees, 1 bowl, 24 lamp glasses, 3 white China pitchers, 2 peg lamps, 2 yellow bowls, 2 blue printed beakers, 1 blue printed soup tureen, 1 blue edged ditto, 6 large cream colored bowls, 198 cream colored jars, 12 knob tumblers, 12 yellow covered jars, 30 yellow jars, 1 fancy toilet set.

In 1839, the same tradesman supplied the White House with 24 rich cut tumblers, 12 gold band China plates, 24 willow plates, 36 blue printed bowls and saucers, 30 ditto mugs, 6 ditto bowls, 24 ditto pitchers, 2 pairs salts, 6 willow dishes, 2 sets black-handled knives and forks, 6 edged dishes, 12 China gold band bowls and saucers, 12 ditto slop, 12 wooden spoons, 4 lemon squeezers, 6 stone milk pans, 12 baffled tablespoons, 24 ditto teaspoons, 4 large cream colored wash basins, 12 glass chimneys, etc.

The elegance of the appointments of the White House was made the most of as party capital by the opposition during the bitter "Log Cabin" campaign of 1840. The most savage attack was made by a Mr. Ogle, who was a member of Congress from Pennsylvania and a strong Harrison man. When the general

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appropriation bill came up for consideration in the House (July 11, 1840), he moved to strike out an item of \$3,665.00 for additional furniture for the President's house, on the ground that there was sufficient furniture there already, or, at any rate, money enough had been spent in purchases since Mr. Van Buren had taken possession. In support of his contention, he produced an array of figures, bills, vouchers, etc., to show how much money had recently been spent on the President's house and grounds, inside and out. He bitterly reproached the President as the chief apostle of retrenchment and reform for not showing his faith by his works. Apostrophizing the absent offender, he exclaims:

“You say the People's prodigality has involved them in trouble: why do you not set them a better example? You say, excessive importations have plunged the Country in Embarrassments: why do you not buy the furniture of your house—its carpets, its sofas, its curtains, etc., etc.—from the products of American artisans instead of crowding it with the costly fripperies of Europe? . . . Your house glitters with all imaginable luxuries and gaudy ornaments; you set an example which your subordinates are eager to imitate; and the result is shameful and ruinous prodigality in every branch of the public service.”

The critic quotes the Act of May 22, 1826, which ordained that “All furniture purchased for the use of the President's house, shall be, as far as practicable, of American, or Domestic Manufacture.” Mr.

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Ogle's indignation is consequently aroused by the fact that in 1837 four bills for carpeting were rendered, amounting in all to \$4,050.81, and these were for Brussels, Wilton, and Saxony carpets and Imperial rugs.

Mr. Ogle, undoubtedly, expressed the feelings of the plain people during the Log Cabin campaign. He objected to the appropriation for alterations and repairs of the house and furniture, for purchasing trees, shrubs, and compost, and for superintendence of the grounds as anti-democratic. He says:

“ I put it to you, sir, and to the free citizens of this country, whose *servant* the President is, to say whether, in addition to the large sum of \$100,000 which he is entitled to receive *for a single term of four years*, they are disposed to maintain for his private accommodation, A Royal Establishment *at the cost of the nation!* Will they longer feel inclined to support their chief servant in a Palace *as splendid as that of the Cæsars, and as richly adorned as the proudest Asiatic mansion?* ”

He continues:

“ Previous to its destruction by the British . . . there had been expended in building the palace \$333,207, and since that period the further sum of \$301,496.25, in rebuilding the interior, and in erecting the two splendid porticoes; making together the large amount of \$634,703.25 laid out on the *palace* structure alone, to say nothing about the very liberal sums that have been expended from time to time on the furniture, on alterations and repairs, on the garden, grounds, stone walls, iron fencing, and for the ‘ stalls of the Royal stable steeds.’ . . . All the disbursements for iron fencing, stabling, and the superb

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porticoes at the north and south fronts of the palace, have been incurred since the Administration of John Quincy Adams went out of power—the porticoes alone costing \$24,769.25. Great improvements have been made within a few years past in the President's Garden. It is believed to correspond in its general arrangements with the style and fashion of some of the most celebrated royal gardens in England. It has a choice collection of both native plants and exotics, many of the latter having been gathered from almost every clime. Ornamental trees and beautiful shrubs have been 'selected with great care' from the most celebrated specimens, and are now growing luxuriantly. The orangery, though not as yet on a very extensive scale, is fast improving. Rich and charming shrubbery and parterres greet the eye in every direction. Nor should I omit to mention that, in addition to the numerous families of the tulip, lily, pink, rose, and many other sweet flowers and shrubs, the garden contains some exceedingly rare botanical and medical specimens: false foxglove, golden mad, golden club, enchanter's nightshade, dragon's head, lizard's tail, lion's foot, adder's tongue, monkey flower, virgin's bower, heartsease, touch-me-not.

"But there are some other varieties that address themselves more immediately to the palate than to the eye, such as fine Neshanock potatoes, honest drumhead and early York cabbages, white and red sugar and pickle beets, marrowfat peas, carrots, parsnips, &c., &c., with an abundance of the strawberry, dew-berry, raspberry, &c. In short, the President's garden, in all its arrangements and beauties, its trees, shrubs, vines, plants, flowers and esculents, is in perfect keeping with the sumptuous and magnificent palace. In December last we were informed that 'the public grounds have been faithfully attended to by the public gardener and the hands under him. The trees have been skilfully pruned and trained; many choice ornamental trees and shrubs have been planted; and the plats, borders, and gravel walks have been kept in superior order.'

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“ Before the Administration of J. Q. Adams, the appropriations for improving the President’s grounds had been very trifling. During his term, however, two considerable sums were voted by Congress for that purpose. The first of these grants (Feb. 25, 1825) was \$5,000 for leveling, grading and improving the President’s square; the second (May 22, 1826) was \$5,865 for finishing the fences, graduating and improving the President’s square. Prior to the disbursement of these appropriations, the grounds presented a rude, uneven and shapeless appearance; not a few of the pristine sandy knolls and small hollows still remained. The fencing too was quite imperfect; but, by the exercise of a commendable economy and by the application of the money in the most beneficial manner to accomplish the objects contemplated by the laws, the grounds were brought into fine condition, the fences were put into excellent order, the high hills were made plain, and the deep valleys were made smooth, and the entire grounds, by the close of Mr. Adams’s Presidency, wore a style and finish quite acceptable to the taste and judgment of our plain, respectable farmer.

“ Here we have the enormous amount of \$88,722.58 squandered in erecting stables, building dwarf walls and coping, constructing fountains, paving footways, planting, transplanting, pruning and dressing horse chestnuts, lindens, Norway spruce, and balm of Gilead; hauling and depositing rich soil for top-dressing flower-beds and borders, training and irrigating honeysuckles, trumpet creepers, primroses, lady slippers and dandelions, cultivating sweet-scented grass, and preparing beautiful bouquets for the palace saloons. The President’s grounds contain about twenty acres. Our pseudo reformers have, therefore, expended on what they are pleased to call *improvements* an average of \$4,436.10 per acre, or \$8,065.68 per annum since ‘retrenchment and reform’ have come into successful operation.”

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In his zeal for the people's cause, Mr. Ogle conveniently forgets Mr. Adams's love for landscape gardening; and that, perhaps, Jackson and Van Buren were only carrying on what Mr. Adams had so beautifully begun. It seems that Mr. Adams's expenditures in this line had aroused criticism which the speaker denounces as follows:

"A large majority of the American people about this time were incautiously led to believe that Mr. Adams was a lavish spendthrift, and that his Administration was not only wastefully extravagant, but that it was rapidly verging to the very confines of monarchy, in the magnificent decorations of the Presidential palace, and by the studied introduction of court ceremonials. You will doubtless well remember the voluminous reports and the indignant denunciations on the fruitful themes of extravagance and aristocracy that were spread before the country by the renowned champions of economy in both Houses of Congress during the never-to-be-forgotten winter of 1827-8. You, sir, cannot fail, too, to recollect the lugubrious homilies which were then addressed to all pious and devout Christians in relation to the purchase by President Adams of a billiard table, billiard balls, cues and chessmen. . . . Ever since 1829, this doctrine of 'Retrenchment and Reform' has been the order of the day. . . . Be good enough to turn to a book of the United States statutes for the last eleven years and you will there discover not less than ten several acts of Congress, appropriating large sums of money to improve the President's grounds, etc.

Mch. 3, 1829. Work on the house and enclosures.	\$6,361.86
Mch. 2, 1831. Alterations and repairs.....	500.00
Painting inside and out.....	3,482.00

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Planting trees, improving grounds and gardener's salary .....	4,000.00
Mch. 2, 1833. Alterations and repairs.....	500.00
Planting trees, etc., etc.....	4,660.00
Pedestal, wall coping, railing and footway.....	10,000.00
Constructing reservoirs and fountains, and enclosing and planting fountain square.....	6,723.00
Jun. 30, 1834. Alterations and repairs, flooring the terraces and erecting stables.....	6,670.00
Gardener's salary and labor.....	2,850.00
Paving footways and making gravel carriage-way	13,744.00
Mch. 3, 1835. Alterations and repairs, gardener's salary, trees and shrubs.....	4,200.00
July 4, 1836. Do., do.....	3,460.00
Constructing dwarf wall and fence.....	1,165.50
Mch. 3, 1837. Alterations and superintendence...	7,300.00
Wall and fence .....	1,300.00
Apr. 6, 1838. Alterations, etc.....	4,815.00
Apr. 7, 1838. Labor, etc.....	2,015.00
Mch. 3, 1839. Alterations, repairs and furniture..	3,465.00
Special repairs and deficiency.....	1,511.22
	\$88,722.58

Descending now to details, the speaker describes the house, with which his hearers were doubtless well acquainted, considering its propinquity.

“The site of the Presidential palace is perhaps not less conspicuous than the King's house in many of the royal capitals of Europe. It is situate at the intersection of four spacious avenues, which radiate from this point as a centre. The ‘palace pile’ is 170 ft. front and 86 deep, and stands about the centre

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of a plot of ground containing 20 acres, the whole whereof is surrounded by firmly built stone walls and lanceolated iron-railing, with imposing portal abutments and well barred iron gates. The main entrance front faces north upon Lafayette square, and the garden front to the south opens to an extensive view of the river Potomac. Mr. Elliott says in his '*Picture of Washington*':

“ ‘It is built of white freestone, with Ionic pilasters, comprehending two stories of rooms, crowned with a stone balustrade. The north front is ornamented with a lofty portico, of four Ionic columns in front, and projecting with three columns. The outer intercolumniation is for carriages to drive into and place company under shelter; the middle space is the entrance for those visitors who come on foot; the steps from both lead to a broad platform in front of the door of entrance. The garden front is varied by having a rusticated basement story under the Ionic ordonnance, and by a semi-circular projecting colonnade of six columns, with two flights of steps leading from the ground to the level of the principal story.’ ”

The rest of Mr. Elliott's description, which Mr. Ogle did not quote, but will be of interest to the modern reader, runs as follows:

“ In the interior, the north entrance opens immediately into a spacious hall of forty by fifty feet, furnished simply, with plain stuccoed walls. Advancing through a screen of Ionic columns, apparently of white marble, but only of a well executed imitation, in composition: the door in the centre opens into the Oval Room, or saloon, of forty by thirty feet—the walls covered with plain crimson flock paper, with deep gilded borders. The marble chimney-piece and tables, the crimson silk drapery of the window curtains and chairs, with the carpet of

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French manufacture, wove in one piece, with the arms of the United States in the centre, two large mirrors and a splendid cut glass chandelier, give the appearance of a rich and consistent style of decoration and finish. On each side of this room, and communicating therewith by large doors, is a square room of thirty by twenty-two feet. These three rooms form the suit of apartments in which company is usually received on parade occasions. To the west of these is the *company dining-room*, forty by thirty, and on the northwest corner is the family dining-room. All these rooms are finished handsomely, but less richly than the Oval Room; the walls are covered with green, yellow, white and blue papers, sprinkled with gold stars and with gilt borders. The stairs, for family use, are in a cross entry at this end, with store-rooms, china closets, etc., between the two dining-rooms. On the east end of the house is a large banqueting-room, extending the whole depth of the building, with windows to the north and south, and a large glass door to the east, leading to the terrace roof of the offices. . . .

“The principal stairs on the entrance hall are spacious and covered with Brussels carpeting. On ascending these, the visitor to the President is led into a spacious ante-room, to wait for introduction in regular succession with others, and may have considerable time to look from the south windows upon the beautiful prospect before him; when in course to be introduced, he ascends a few steps and finds himself in the east corner chamber, the President’s cabinet room, where everything announces the august simplicity of our government. The room is about forty feet wide, and finished like those below. The centre is occupied by a large table, completely covered with books, papers, parchments, etc., and seems like a general repository of everything that may be wanted for reference; while the President is seated at a smaller table near the fireplace, covered with the papers which are the subject of his immediate attention; and which, by their number, admonish the visitor

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to occupy no more of his time, for objects of business or civility, than necessity requires. The other chambers are appropriated to family purposes.

“ . . . It hardly equals the seats of many of the nobility and wealthy commoners of England, and bears no comparison with the residences of the petty princes of Germany, or the grand dukes of Italy: it exhibits no rich marbles, fine statues, nor costly paintings. It is what the mansion of this Republic should be, large enough for public and family purposes, and should be finished and maintained in a style to gratify every wish for convenience and pleasure. The state of the grounds will not meet this description; they have an unfinished and neglected appearance; we hope they will not long remain so rude and uncultivated.”

In the course of his speech, Mr. Ogle gives us much valuable information regarding the condition of the rooms under the Adams, Jackson, and Van Buren Administrations. Thus he quotes from what he calls the Court Journal (December, 1829), the following description of the famous East Room:

“The (East Room) paper is of a fine lemon color, with a rich cloth border; four new mantels have been placed in the room, of black marble, with Italian black and gold fronts; each fireplace has a handsome grate fixed; there were, however, in the house before new bronzed and steel fenders, and sets of brass fire irons, and chimney hooks have been added; each mantel is furnished with a mirror, the plates of which measure 100 by 58 inches, framed in a very beautiful style; and a pair of rich ten-light lamps bronzed and gilt, with a row of drops around the fountain, and a pair of French China vases, richly gilt and painted, with glass shades and flowers. There are three

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very splendid gilt chandeliers, each for eighteen candles, the style of which is entirely new; the color of the glass and cutting perhaps exceed anything of the kind ever seen. A small bronzed and gilt work, corresponding with the mantel lamps, the niches and recesses of which are supplied with eight French bronzed and gilt bracket lights, each for the candles. The carpet, which contains near 500 yards, is of fine Brussels, of fawn, blue, and yellow, with a red border. Under each chandelier is placed a round table of beautiful workmanship, with Italian black and gold slabs; on the centre table is placed a beautiful thin light lamp, supported by female figures; on the end tables are gilt astral lamps. Each pier is filled with a beautiful pier table, richly bronzed and gilt, corresponding with the round tables, each table having a lamp and pair of French China vases, with flowers and shades agreeing with those on the mantels. The curtains are of blue and yellow moreen, with a gilded eagle represented as holding up the drapery, which extends over the piers. On the cornice is a line of gilded stars, and over the semi-circle of the door, besides gilded and ornamented rays, are 24 gilded stars, emblematic of the States, and corresponding with those on the cornice. The stars have a very fine effect. The sofas and chairs are covered with blue damask satin. All the furniture corresponds in color and style."

It seemed to be impossible to please either party with regard to finishing the "East Room." Mr. Adams (or "Mr. Clay's President," as opposition papers contemptuously designated him) was abused by one party for his extravagance, and by the other for his niggardliness. Thus, on Aug. 1, 1829, what Mr. Ogle called the "Court Journal" noted: "It is well known that through Mr. Adams's aristocratic pride this ele-

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gant room was left unfurnished." Three months later, a correspondent of a New York paper announces:

"The coalition papers tell us that the East Room is going to be furnished, . . . we are happy to hear it. The manner in which Mr. Clay's President kept the East Room was disrespectful to the office of President of the United States. Instead of it looking neat, and clean, and tidy, and being decently furnished, as the mansion of the President of a great Republic ought to be, it was full of cobwebs, a few old chairs, lumbering benches, broken glass, and exactly like one of the apartments in Windsor Castle, Holyrood Palace, or the Tower of London, those appendages to kings and monarchs. The head of a Republic ought to give an example of the thriftiness and virtuous habits of the people who put him there. Every plain Republican, when visiting Washington, will now find a chair to sit down upon in the 'East Room.' They won't be kept standing upon their legs as they do before kings and emperors, and as practiced by Mr. Clay's President, till they are so tired as scarcely to know whether they have any legs to stand upon. Unless Gen. Jackson put good, sound, substantial furniture into the 'East Room' the reform is not complete in that quarter."

Ten years later, Mr. Elliott's description of the house shows that no changes had been made, but in December, 1839, we read "the East Room has been greatly improved by being newly painted and papered with a rich, chaste, beautiful paper." Henry Snowdon, July 1, 1839, had been paid \$16.00 for taking off the old lemon-colored paper; and S. P. Franklin's bill (Aug. 20, 1839) amounted to \$300.00 for 60 pieces of paper and \$30.00 for hanging the same in the East Room. It was a silver paper with golden



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borders. This was another of Mr. Van Buren's extravagances, of which Mr. Ogle complained. He continues:

"Having paid our respects to the 'East Room' let us take a view of what is, the present day, called the 'Blue Elliptical Saloon,' though in former times it was known as the 'Green Circular Parlor.' This apartment is nearly oval in form, and is forty feet long by thirty wide. In its beautiful shape, rich French furniture, showy drapery, costly gilded ornaments, and general arrangements the 'Blue Elliptical Saloon' has frequently been pronounced the choicest room in the palace." (Mr. Ogle then proceeds to enumerate the original furnishings.) (See pp. 114-115.)

"Mr. Van Buren expended \$1,805.55 within ten months after he had gone into possession in making improvements in this room. The bill and receipt of Messrs. Patton & Co., New York, dated Dec. 12, 1837, amounts in all to \$4,316.18.

"The articles for this room were:

3 window curtains .....	\$1,307.50
Satin medallion .....	176.37
Silk cord .....	24.65
Plain satin .....	38.12
Galloon .....	74.50
Silk tassels .....	42.00
Gimp .....	54.65
Repairing and covering 14 chairs.....	24.00
do.                           2 sofas.....	24.00
do.                           4 tabourets.....	8.00
do.                           2 screens.....	4.00
do.                           2 footstools.....	6.25
do.                           4 sets pillows.....	16.00
do.                           music stool.....	1.50

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“Curtains for the seven windows of the East Room, \$3,875.35. The curtains that were there at the retirement of General Jackson were merely crimson damask double silks that had been bought from Mr. Perdeauville for the modest sum of \$450.

“On each side of the Blue Room and communicating therewith by very large smoothly varnished doors is a parallelogram drawing-room of 30 by 22 ft. These are called the ‘green’ and ‘yellow’ drawing-rooms. . . . These three parlors were formerly used for the reception of company on a stated day (Wednesday) in every week, when the palace doors were thrown wide open for all the citizens of the Republic who were disposed to enter and pay their respects to the Chief Magistrate of the nation. But the good old usages and liberal practices of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe are no longer of authority at the palace; economy is now the order of the day. Hence, instead of those old and well appointed weekly visits and greetings, when all the People were at liberty to partake of the good cheer of the President’s house, there has been substituted one cold, stiff, formal and ceremonious assembly on the first day of every year. At this annual levee, notwithstanding its pomp and pageantry, no expense whatever is incurred by the President personally. No fruits, cake, wine, coffee, hard cider, or other refreshments of any kind are tendered to his guests. Indeed, it would militate against all the rules of court etiquette now established at the palace to permit vulgar eating and drinking on this Grand Gala Day. The only entertainment there served up consists in profound bows, stately promenades, formal civilities, ardent expressions of admiration for the pageant passing before your eyes with anxious inquiries about the weather. This admirable course levies no unwilling contributions on the private funds of the President. The Marine Band, however, is always ordered from the Navy Yard, and stationed in the spacious front hall, from whence they swell the rich saloons of

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the palace with 'Hail to the Chief,' 'Wha'll be King but Charlie,' and a hundred other airs, which ravish with delight the ears of warriors who have never smelt powder."

All this splendor was as nothing, however, in comparison with the iniquitous display of the President's dinner-table. We have already seen that Mr. Van Buren was a *bon vivant* of the first water; and excelled in giving elegant little dinners. At these, his Congressional critic had been present on more than one occasion; and, therefore, spoke with authority, when he denounced the table-service, as follows:

"How delightful it must be to a real genuine Loco Foco to eat his *paté de foie gras, dinde desosse* and *salade à la volaille* from a silver plate with a golden knife and fork. And how exquisite to sip with a golden spoon his *soupe à la Reine* from a silver tureen.

"I will in the next place call the attention of the committee to the bill for the splendid French china for dinner service, and the elegant dessert set of blue and gold with eagle; all made to order in France, and imported by Louis Veron & Co., celebrated dealers in fancy China, &c., Philadelphia.

"The Set of French China for dinner service has 440 pieces, consisting of olive boats, octagon salad bowls, pickle shells, long fish dishes, &c., &c., and cost \$1,000.

"The Dessert Set, blue and gold with eagle, composed of 412 pieces, including six stands for bonbons, with three stages; eight tambours with three stages; twelve sweetmeat compotiers on feet; eight compotiers on feet; six large fruit baskets on feet; four ice-cream vases and covers, with inside bowls; 60 Greek-form cups and saucers, &c., &c., cost \$1,000. . . .

"The next piece of democratic 'furniture' on the Presi-

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dent's table to which I would call your very particular attention is the 'Surtout,' or bronze gilded Plateau, a large ornamented or pictured tray, which stands on the centre of the table. The Plateau, with the richly-gilded baskets, tripods and Etruscan vases which accompany it, cost in Paris 6,000 francs, and is the only piece of table 'furniture' which has not been purchased since the Democratic days of retrenchment and reform. Some four or five months after Mr. Van Buren took possession of the palace, he paid \$75 of the People's cash to Mr. Zachariah Nicholas for dressing up the Plateau, and it now looks quite new. (See pp. 117, 237.)

"Having disposed of the *pictured tray*, I will direct your attention for a few minutes to the magnificent set of Table Glass contained in three several bills. The first bill is for Champagne Glasses, Clarets, Goblets, Cordials, Water Bottles, &c., bought from Messrs. Veron & Co. for \$924. The second bill is for richest cut Tumblers, cut Centre Bowls and Stands, cut Floating Island Dishes, cut Pitchers, &c., purchased from Bakewell & Co. for \$1,451.75. The third bill, for \$220.75, was rendered by James P. Drummond (June 8th, 1837) for decanters, claret wines, cut pillar stem, green finger cups, cut wine coolers and water bottles. These three bills for table glass make the clever sum of \$2,596.50. What will honest Loco Focos say to Mr. Van Buren for spending the People's cash in *foreign Fanny Kemble green finger cups*, in which to wash his pretty tapering, soft, white lily fingers, after dining on *fricandeau de veau* and *omelette soufflé*? How will the friends of temperance relish the foreign 'cut wine coolers' and the 'barrel shape flute decanters with cone stoppers'?"

Mr. Ogle next waxes wroth over \$100 that was paid to John Thomas of Baltimore (Nov. 13, 1837) for a set of artificial flowers for the President's table.

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“ The remaining bill, which makes up the sum of \$11,191.32, before mentioned, consists of various articles of cutlery, bought from Messrs. Louis Veron & Co. for \$568; among which are table knives plated on steel, silver ferule and transparent ivory handles, \$300. Dessert set to match, guard carvers, &c., &c. . . .

“ The Court Banqueting room also possesses a great variety of very rich and valuable furniture, such as mirrors, mahogany sideboards, mahogany chairs, gilt cornices, window curtains, bronze bowl lamps, antique patterns, gilded, carved and garnished with stars and swan necks (see p. 117), mantel ornaments, Brussels carpets, butler’s stools, &c., &c. Indeed, there is scarcely anything wanting to make the Court Banqueting room resemble in its style and magnificence the banqueting halls of the Oriental monarchs. . . .

“ I will next call your attention to a schedule which I have prepared from ‘ official vouchers.’

“ Articles bought from Messrs. Lewis Veron & Co.:

4 Mantel glasses, rich gilt frames, French plates, 100 by 58 inches.....	\$2,000.00
4 Pier Looking-glasses in rich gilt frames (108 by 54) .....	2,400.00
2 Mirrors for Green Room.....	700.00
9 Mirrors for Dining Room.....	700.00
Reframing 2 looking-glasses.....	100.00
3 Chandeliers for the East Room.....	3,300.00
3 18-light cut-glass Chandeliers .....	1,800.00
3 sets heavy bronzed Chairs and Rockers for do..	75.00
4 pairs 2-light mantel Lamps with drops.....	356.00
8 5-light bracket lights bronzed and gilt.....	300.00
4 Pier-table lamps .....	180.00
2 3-light lamps for East Room.....	150.00
1 2-light lamp for the Upper Hall.....	57.50
2 3-light do. Lower do.....	150.00

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4	Astral Lamps on pier tables.....	100.00
1	4-light Hall Lamp .....	100.00
1	pair Bracket Lights .....	60.00
1	3-light Centre Lamp, supported by Female Figure	65.00
2	Astral lamps for round tables.....	65.00
2	pairs plated Candlesticks and branches.....	85.00
2	do. Chamber.....	18.00
6	do. do. ....	57.00
9	do. Table.....	76.50
18	extra cut Lamp Glasses.....	26.00
4	French bracket lights for East Room.....	300.00
1	pair mantel lamps for Audience Room.....	20.00
3	hall chandeliers .....	150.00
1	octagon hall lamp .....	14.00

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\$13,405.00

Mr. Ogle next lashes himself into fury over a bill (May 30, 1831) for "a chintz covered sofa, \$60; and two plated candlesticks, \$20"; and continues: "What do you opine of the following specimens?"

2	sets of green tea-trays, <i>real gold leaves</i> , 5 in each set	\$70.00
	Ornamental rays over the door.....	25.00
7	dozen gilt stars .....	17.50
4	pier tables with Indian slabs.....	700.00
1	round table, blue and gold slab large.....	135.00
2	do. do. ....	100.00
4	bronzed and steel fenders, new style.....	120.00
24	armchairs and 4 sofas, stuffed and covered, mahogany work, entirely refinished and cotton covers.....	600.00

The orator also froths at the mouth over the bills for kitchen stuff, and the expenditure of \$2,460.29,

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from March 17, 1837, to Jan. 19, 1838, for hucka-back towels, Irish linens, Ticklenberg, damask diapers, table-cloths, Irish sheeting, Mars quilts, flushing, green gauze, slip thread, spools, tapes, and dry goods.

A great deal of Mr. Ogle's fulminations were doubtless intended for campaign purposes exclusively; and at this distance of time it is difficult for us to arrive at the exact facts. One would think that members of Congress, who met only one mile from the White House, were acquainted with its condition and were in no need of information; and yet they listened to Mr. Ogle's arraignment and to his opponents' statements in rebuttal with the attitude of mind of a person who was ignorant of the facts.

In reply to Mr. Ogle, Levi Lincoln, of Massachusetts, a member of the House Committee that had the matter in charge, said that he had reported a bill giving Mr. Van Buren \$700 for increasing the furniture. The condition of some of the rooms was deplorable. In the receiving-room, there was not even a mirror of any kind, not even a table, except an old pine one in one corner, and an old worn-out sofa. The whole lot would not realize \$5, and yet this was the ante-room into which foreign Ministers and visitors of every description were introduced to see the President. Therefore, the Committee designed to supply it with good, substantial furniture of home manufacture, including a plain mirror at which ladies

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might adjust their bonnets before being introduced to the President.

“When the committee visited the White House before Andrew Jackson vacated it, one room was found to be occupied by the President’s private secretary, with his wife and family. In this there were three old chairs, a stained wash-stand, and a shabby, old-fashioned mahogany turn-up table that President Monroe’s waggoner had absolutely refused to remove.” Mr. Lincoln added: “If any gentleman doubts it, let him inspect the chamber itself!”

Notwithstanding all the money that had been spent upon it, the White House was neither a comfortable nor sanitary abode, according to the reports of several witnesses. It was probably responsible for the deaths of two Presidents—General Harrison and General Zachary Taylor. Mr. Van Buren spent some of the money voted by Congress on internal improvements, as well as on mere decoration. Mrs. Fremont says:

“Mr. Van Buren had the glass screen put quite across that windy entrance hall, and great wood fires made a struggle against the chill of the house, but it was so badly underdrained that in all long rains the floors of kitchens and cellars were actually under water.”

She adds:

“No summer residence was then provided for the President. They stayed on through heat and cold. Mr. Fillmore, after the

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death of President Taylor, was the first to avoid the house where the marshes between it and the river made malaria inevitable; he rented and lived in a pretty place on Georgetown heights, known as 'the English cottage.'

"There was of course the routine of formal dinners and the many informal ones to more intimate friends. Mr. Van Buren especially gave charming little dinners, always in the more homelike family dining-room. The regular receptions, both day and evenings, were for ceremonious visits; but on any evening the family of the President was to be found at home—with their needlework and books and intimate friends—in short, living as other people do. I only write here of those up to '55."

An English traveller, James Silk Buckingham, founder of *The Athenæum*, Member of Parliament, and an enthusiastic advocate of the temperance cause, affords us the following description of the President's first drawing-room:

"On Thursday, the 8th of March (1838) we had an opportunity of attending the first drawing-room held by the President since his accession to office. . . .

"We went about nine o'clock with the family of Colonel Gardiner, who is attached to the public service here, and found the company already assembled in great numbers. The official residence of the President is a large and substantial mansion, on the scale of many of the country-seats of our English gentry, but greatly inferior in size and splendor to the country residences of most of our nobility; and the furniture, though sufficiently commodious and appropriate, is far from being elegant or costly. The whole air of the mansion and its accompaniments is that of unostentatious comfort, without parade or display, and therefore well adapted to the simplicity and economy which is characteristic of the republican institutions of the country.

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“The President received his visitors standing, in the centre of a small oval room, the entrance to which was directly from the hall on the ground-floor. The introductions were made by the City Marshal, who announced the names of the parties; and each, after shaking hands with the President, and exchanging a few words of courtesy, passed into the adjoining rooms to make way for others. The President, Mr. Van Buren, is about sixty years of age, is a little below the middle stature, and of very bland and courteous manners; he was dressed in a plain suit of black; the marshal was habited also in a plain suit: and there were neither guards without the gate, or sentries within; nor a single servant or attendant in livery anywhere visible. Among the company we saw the English Minister, Mr. Fox, a nephew of Lord Holland, and the French Minister, Monsieur Pontoi, both of whom were also in plain clothes; and the only uniforms, in the whole party, were those of three or four officers of the American Navy, officially attached to the Navy-yard at Washington; and half a dozen officers of the American Army, on active service. The dresses of the ladies were some of them elegant, but generally characterized by simplicity and jewels were scarcely at all worn. The party, therefore, though consisting of not less than 2,000 persons, was much less brilliant than a drawing-room in England, or than a fashionable soirée in Paris; but it was far more orderly and agreeable than any party of an equal number that I ever remember to have attended in Europe.

“There being no rank (for the President himself is but a simple citizen, filling a certain office for a certain term), there was no question of precedence, and no thought, as far as I could discover, of comparison as to superiority. Every one present acted as though he felt himself to be on a footing of equality with every other person; and if claims of preference were ever thought of at all, they were tested only by the standard of personal services, or personal merits. Amidst the whole party,

## MARTIN VAN BUREN

therefore, whether in the small receiving-room, and around the person of the President, or in the larger room of promenade, where 500 persons at least were walking in groups, or in the small adjoining rooms, to which parties retired for seats and conversation, nothing approaching to superciliousness or rudeness was seen. The humbler classes—for of these there were many, since the only qualification for admission to the morning levee, or the evening drawing-room, is that of being a citizen of the United States—behaved with the greatest propriety; and though the pressure was at one time excessive, when it was thought that there were nearly 3,000 persons in the different apartments, yet we never heard a rude word, or saw a rude look, but everything indicated respect, forbearance and perfect contentment; and when the parties retired, which was between eleven and twelve o'clock, there was not half so much bustle in getting up the carriages, which were very numerous, as is exhibited at a comparatively small party in England; nor was any angry word, as far as we could discover, exchanged between the drivers and servants in attendance.

“This drawing-room, from which we retired about midnight, as we were among the last that remained, impressed us altogether with a very favorable opinion of the social character of the American people.”

He also writes:

“The President walked into the church unattended by a single servant, took his place in a pew in which others were sitting besides himself, and retired in the same manner as he came, without being noticed in any other degree than any other member of the congregation, and walking home alone, until joined by one or two personal friends, like any other private gentleman. In taking exercise, he usually rides out on horseback, and is generally unattended, or if accompanied by a servant, never by more than one.”

## THE WHITE HOUSE

About the same time, another English traveller, Captain Marryat, says:

“Mr. Van Buren is a very gentleman-like, intelligent man; very proud of talking over his visit to England and the English with whom he was acquainted. It is remarkable, that although at the head of the Democratic party, Mr. Van Buren has taken a step striking at the very roots of their boasted equality, and one on which General Jackson did not venture—*i. e.* he has prevented the mobocracy from intruding themselves at his levees. The police are now stationed at the door, to prevent the intrusion of any improper person. A few years ago, a fellow would drive his cart, or hackney coach, up to the door, walk into the saloon in all his dirt, and force his way to the President, that he might shake him by the one hand, whilst he flourished his whip with the other. The revolting scenes which took place when refreshments were handed round, the injury done to the furniture, and the disgust of the ladies, may be well imagined. Mr. Van Buren deserves great credit for this step, for it was a bold one; but I must not praise him too much, or he may lose his next election.”

During President Van Buren's first season, there was no mistress of the White House; but in November, 1838, his son and private secretary, Abraham, brought there a bride who graced all future entertainments. This was Angelica Singleton, the daughter of Richard Singleton, a wealthy planter of Sumter County, South Carolina. The young lady had been educated in Philadelphia and spent a winter in the home of her relative, William C. Preston, Senator from South Carolina. Another relative, Dolly Madi-



CAPTAIN MARRYAT



## MARTIN VAN BUREN

son, introduced her to the President and she soon became a great favorite at the White House. She was married at her father's home, and made her first appearance as hostess of the White House on Jan. 1, 1839.

The *Boston Post* says of this reception:

"The Executive Mansion was a place of much more than usual attraction in consequence of the first appearance there of the bride of the President's son and private secretary, Mrs. Abram Van Buren. She is represented as being a lady of rare accomplishments, very modest yet perfectly easy and graceful in her manners, and free and vivacious in her conversation. She was universally admired and is said to have borne the fatigue of a three hours' levee with a patience and pleasantry which must be inexhaustible to last one through so severe a trial. A constant current set in from the President's house to the modest mansion of the much respected lady of ex-President Madison. Ex-President Adams and his lady were also cordially greeted at their residence by a number of friends."

In the spring of 1839, Mr. and Mrs. Van Buren paid a visit to Europe. Mrs. Van Buren's uncle, Andrew Stevenson, was Minister to Great Britain, and entertained the Van Burens. Mrs. Van Buren was presented at Court and was much admired in English society. She was also presented at the French Court. The Van Burens returned to Washington in the autumn, Colonel Van Buren to resume his duties as secretary to his father, and his wife to preside over the White House. The portrait of Mrs. Van Buren,

## THE WHITE HOUSE

which is now in the lower corridor of the White House, was painted by Henry Inman in 1842. She is in Court costume, wearing a dress of white silk, with a scarf thrown loosely around her arms and feathers in her hair. Her necklace is of pearl and a jewelled band ornaments her head with a pendant on her forehead. Mr. Van Buren always held a New Year's reception in accordance with the custom of his predecessors; but was not particular about keeping the Fourth of July in Washington. For example, in 1839 he arrived in Jersey City on July 3, and paid a visit to New York, receiving an address of welcome at Castle Garden. After reviewing the troops, we are told that he rode up Broadway on a fine black charger with a royal air, managing his steed like a cavalier. He alighted at the City Hall, where further ceremonies had been arranged in his honor. He stayed in New York till July 9.

It was customary for some of Mr. Van Buren's country friends to send him a monster cheese every year. This on one occasion he caused to be distributed to his callers at a public reception. The crumbs were trodden into the carpet of the East Room and ruined the upholstery of the splendid furniture, so the practice was discontinued.

In 1839 the President had a monster cheese sold for charity. The advertisement in the *National Intelligencer* reads:

“A cheese weighing 700 pounds is now at the store of Mr. William Orme, near the corner of 11th street and Pennsyl-

## MARTIN VAN BUREN

vania Avenue, where it will remain entire for one day, and will afterwards be sold in quantities to suit purchasers. It is from the dairy of Colonel Meachem of Orange County, New York, by whom it was presented two years ago to the President of the United States, and has been preserved with great care. Having been made expressly for the President and by a gentleman whose cheeses are in high repute, it may be supposed to be of the very best quality."

Mr. Van Buren left the White House with as much apparent unconcern as he entered it. The *Albany Argus*, March 13, 1841, tells us:

"On Monday, March 1st, a large number of the Democracy called upon Mr. Van Buren, and were received by him in the celebrated East Room, where he bid them farewell. He walked down the Avenue to-day (March 4th), as unconcerned as the most humble spectator in the crowd."

In 1840 N. P. Willis describes the White House as follows:

"The residence of the Chief Magistrate of the United States resembles the country seat of an English nobleman, in its architecture and size; but it is to be regretted that the parallel ceases when we come to the grounds. By itself it is a commodious and creditable building, serving its purpose without too much state for a republican country, yet likely, as long as the country exists without primogeniture and rank, to be sufficiently superior to all other dwelling houses to mark it as the residence of the nation's chief.

"The President's house stands near the centre of an area of some 20 acres, occupying a very advantageous elevation, open to the view of the Potomac and about 44 feet above high water,

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and possessing from its balcony one of the loveliest prospects in our country—the junction of the two branches of the Potomac which border the District and the swelling and varied shores beyond of the States of Maryland and Virginia. The building is 170 feet front and 86 deep and is built of white freestone, with Ionic pilasters, comprehending two lofty stories, with a stone balustrade. The north front is ornamented with a portico sustained by four Ionic columns, with three columns of projection, the outer intercolumniation affording a shelter for carriages to drive under. The garden front on the river is varied by what is called a rusticated basement story, in the Ionic style, and by a semicircular projecting colonnade of six columns, with two spacious and airy flights of steps leading to a balustrade on the level of the principal story.

“The interior of the President’s house is well disposed and possesses one superb reception room and two oval drawing-rooms (one in each story) of very beautiful proportions. The other rooms are not remarkable, and there is an inequality in the furniture of the whole house (owing to the unwillingness and piecemeal manner with which Congress votes any moneys for its decoration) which destroys its effect as a comfortable dwelling. The oval rooms are carpeted with Gobelin tapestry, worked with the national emblems, and are altogether in a more consistent style than the other parts of the house. It is to be hoped that Congress will not always consider the furniture of the President’s house as the scapegoat of all sumptuary and aristocratic sins, and that we shall soon be able to introduce strangers not only to a comfortable and well-appointed, but to a properly served and nicely kept, Presidential Mansion.”

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### HARRISON AND TYLER

1841-1845

Excitement of the Whigs; the Inauguration and Balls; the New President at Home; Illness and Death of General Harrison; the Impressive Funeral; Tyler Removes to the White House; John Quincy Adams Visits and Dines with the President; Charles Dickens's Description of a Visit to the White House and a Levee; Visit of the Prince de Joinville; President Tyler's Advice to His Family; Mrs. Robert Tyler; Entertainments at the White House; Elizabeth Tyler's Wedding; Death of Mrs. Tyler; New Year's Reception, 1844; the Accident on the *Princeton*; the President's Wedding and Fourth of July Receptions at the White House; the Second Mrs. Tyler as Mistress of the White House; New Year's Day, 1845; Farewell to the White House; the Tylers' Exit.

WHEN General William Henry Harrison, whose campaign had been attended by an unprecedented enthusiasm, arrived in Washington a few days before his Inauguration, the city was in a whirl of excitement. A New York correspondent writes on March 1:

"General Harrison arrived in this city last evening from Richmond. He stays until his Inauguration at the residence of the Mayor of the city.<sup>1</sup> The city is crowded with strangers to overflowing—all the hotels and boarding-houses have been filled

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Seaton.

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for days past. Half a dozen in one room and three in a bed are common arrangements."

A Baltimore reporter was one of a hundred that slept on a pallet in the dining-room of Gadsby's Hotel.

We also learn that the "General looked exceedingly hale and hearty" and "walked uncovered along Pennsylvania Avenue, bowing to the ladies who thronged the windows and balconies."

The Whigs had not been in power for sixteen years; and there was general rejoicing; and "Pennsylvania Avenue was as full as Broadway on a gala night." The President-elect, however, urbane and cordial to all, had the courage to give out the following mandate:

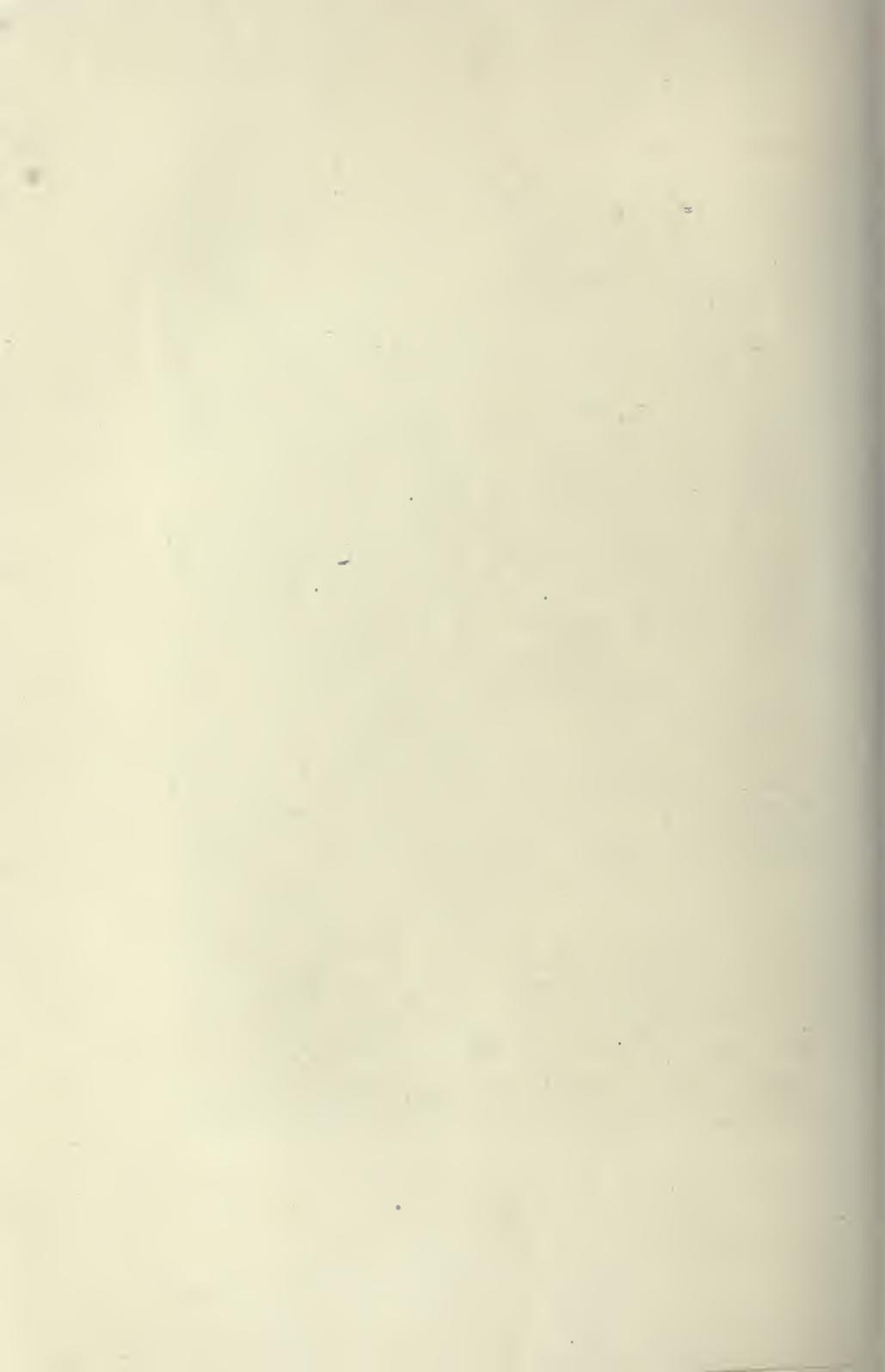
"He has had so much fatigue to go through in shaking hands during the last five or six months, and more especially since his departure from home that his arm has become painfully affected by it and he is obliged to decline that mode of saluting his visitors."

Washington never saw such a procession as formed and called for the new President at Mr. Seaton's, to escort him to the Capitol.

The General—the observed of all observers—was mounted upon a white steed, without extra trappings, and himself clad in the simple attire of a country citizen. He was everywhere cheered as he passed, and thousands of white handkerchiefs were waved as he passed by the ladies at the windows.



WILLIAM H. HARRISON



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He read his inaugural address from the eastern portico of the Capitol. Before delivering the final paragraph, he paused and took the oath of office from the Chief Justice. Then, amid resounding cheers, he descended from the portico, remounted his charger, and the procession renewed its march through the Northern gate in the same order as it had entered the enclosure, around the Northern circle of the Capitol yard to Pennsylvania Avenue, and then up the Avenue to Fifteenth Street, to the Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the public offices and the President's house, and then through the Western gate in front of the President's to his house, into which it passed by sections through the front door, where they were received by the President, and passed out, without halting, at the South door and were dismissed.

“The crowd at the President's house was immense, and the marvel is that serious accidents did not occur.

“In the procession was one huge car, drawing a log cabin filled with people, and bearing upon the logs outside the names of the whig states and the majorities cast by each. There was also another car of great size, containing a cotton-mill and a loom in actual operation. As fast as the cloth was woven, slips were cut off and thrown to the people.”

The log cabin was, of course, in allusion to the “Log Cabin Campaign.”

Witnesses speak of the President's excellent health and of his strong and popular Cabinet. Rockets were blazing throughout the evening, fire-balloons were sent

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up and two balls were given. The *Intelligencer* reporter says:

“The Inauguration balls were all well attended and went off with great *éclat*. The first I attended was the Democratic Tippecanoe Ball, which was got up in superb style by the managers. If it was not the most fashionable as respects the company, nor so thronged as it ought to have been, there lacked nothing to make it delightful in the highest degree. So thought General Harrison, and the members of the Cabinet, and foreign functionaries who went early and stayed late.

“The ball at the New Assembly Room was a magnificent affair. The two great saloons were filled to overflowing; and among the company were the most beautiful and distinguished of the land.

“To-day, President Harrison received the ladies. There was a large and splendid assemblage.”

An interesting little touch regarding the President is given by a friend who writes:

“General Harrison at first did his own marketing, but only for a few days, for the worry of office and the importunities of office-seekers seriously interfered with his domestic activities, and drove him to depend solely on his steward.

“The Lady of the White House was the President’s daughter-in-law, an attractive young widow.”

Harrison was accompanied to Washington by his widowed daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jane F. Harrison, and her two sons. She was a woman of refinement and a very popular hostess during her brief residence in the White House.

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The next excitement was the sudden illness of the President, who caught a heavy cold that soon gave cause for alarm. Daniel Webster had no hope from the first. Mr. Tyler, the Vice-President, was visiting his home in Virginia. On April 4, just a month after his Inauguration, the President died. The body lay in state for two days in the East Room; and the funeral, which took place on April 7, occasioned even a greater concourse than the Inauguration. Every steam-boat, train, coach, and carriage poured crowds into the city, where bells were constantly tolled and minute guns fired. The religious services were conducted in the East Room by the Rev. Dr. Hawley, who, after reading the service, delivered a eulogy. An eye-witness writes:

“ On one side of the coffin sat President Tyler and the members of the Cabinet. Next to them sat ex-President Adams, and below him four members of the last Administration, viz., Messrs. Forsyth, Poinsett, Paulding and Gilpin. The foreign Ministers with their respective suites were also present in full costume. On the other side of the coffin, the members of the late President's family and household, including his favorite aides-de-camp, when in service, Colonels Chambers and Todd, were ranged. The Senators and Representatives in Congress yet remaining in the capital, and many ladies were likewise present. Two of the late President's swords were placed upon the pall which was decorated with flowers. At the foot of the coffin, upon a table, were the Bible and prayer-book of the deceased.

“ The pall-bearers, numbering twenty-six—one for each State in the Union—wore white scarfs and black crape. Various

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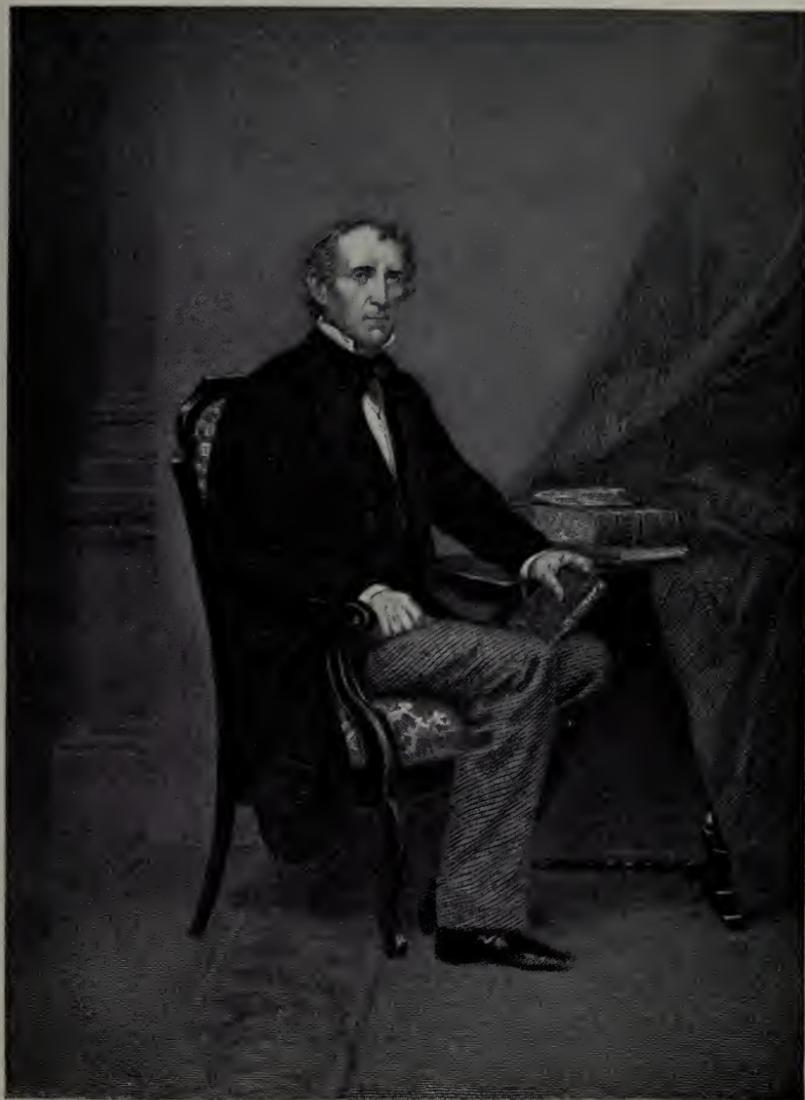
military companies and members of the Maryland legislature took part in the procession, which left the President's house at half-past twelve. This, the largest procession yet seen in Washington, extended more than two miles, and is said to have contained 10,000 persons.

"It was more imposing and better arranged than that of the Inauguration. The military escort, under the orders of Major-General Macomb, was composed of United States Corps, of the militia officers and volunteer corps of the District, of Baltimore, Annapolis, Virginia, etc. The houses and stores on Pennsylvania Avenue, and also the public buildings were hung with black, and all business was suspended during the day.

"The corpse was placed on a magnificent funeral car drawn by eight white horses, attended by grooms dressed in white. The car was covered entirely with black velvet. The coffin was placed on it, covered also with a pall of black velvet, embroidered with gold. Immediately behind the corpse came the family of the deceased in carriages, and after them President Tyler in a carriage with Mr. Webster. The other heads of Departments and public officers then followed, and after them the foreign Ministers and suites in full diplomatic dress in their carriages of state. Ex-President Adams and Mr. Forsyth walked arm-in-arm."

The body was placed in the public vault.

For the first time in the history of this country, the Vice-President suddenly found himself President. He removed to the White House on April 14th. The office of Vice-President had been so little desired that it went practically by default; and on the death of President Harrison the politicians were in dismay. The Cabinet were frankly hostile to Tyler; and he aroused



JOHN TYLER



## HARRISON AND TYLER

bitter criticism by insisting that he was President instead of acting President. The position he assumed, however, formed a precedent which was fully sustained by his successors under similar circumstances. The opposition he met with throughout his Administration is well described by the popular saying that "he was a President without a party." He had every reason to feel this, and good-humoredly acknowledged it. Thus, at the very end of his term, he gave on Feb. 19, 1845, a party at the White House which was attended by more than two thousand guests; and when one of them congratulated him on the brilliant gathering, he replied: "Yes, they cannot say now that I am a President without a party." This jest went the round of the papers.

The bitter feeling on the subject is clearly evidenced in the diary of Ex-President John Quincy Adams:

"I paid a visit this morning (16 April, 1841) to Mr. Tyler, who styles himself President of the United States, and not Vice-President acting as President, which would be the correct style. But it is a construction in direct violation both of the grammar and context of the Constitution, which confers upon the Vice-President, on the decease of the President, not the office, but the powers and duties of the said office. . . . He moved into the house two days ago and received me in the old South-east Chamber. He received me very kindly and apologized for not having visited me without waiting for this call. To this I had no claim or pretension. My visit was very short, as there were several persons in attendance, and among them Mr. Southard, now President of the Senate."

## THE WHITE HOUSE

On April 24, President Tyler received the Diplomatic Corps, who in the absence of the British Minister, Mr. Fox (who was ill), were led by Mr. Bodisco. The latter delivered the customary address to the President, who replied.

Little gaiety, of course, marked the close of the season; but on July 4, President Tyler gave a dinner, which is thus described by John Quincy Adams:

“I came home and at five o'clock went and dined with President Tyler and a company chiefly of members of the House of Representatives. William C. Rives of Virginia and Reuel Williams of Maine were the only members of the Senate present. Major-General Winfield Scott with his Aide-de-Camp, Captain Robert Anderson. Scott has just received the appointment of Major-General in the place of the deceased General Macomb. . . . Lawrence of the Treasury Department, commonly called Beau Lawrence, was present and the President and his private secretary, John Tyler, Jr.

“There was turtle soup from a turtle weighing three hundred pounds, a present from Key West. The President drank wine with every person at table in squads. He gave two toasts and called on me for one. I gave: ‘The application to our political institutions of that principle of the law of nature, by which all nature’s difference keeps all nature’s peace.’

“After dinner I called to see Mr. Badger; but he was out on the square of the President’s house, viewing the fireworks, as I did.”

For a pen-picture of the White House, its visitors, and occupants during the first year of Mr. Tyler’s Ad-



CHARLES DICKENS



## HARRISON AND TYLER

ministration, we cannot do better than quote Charles Dickens:

“The President’s mansion is more like an English club-house, both within and without, than any other kind of establishment with which I can compare it. The ornamental ground about it has been laid out in garden walks; they are pretty, and agreeable to the eye; though they have that uncomfortable air of having been made yesterday, which is far from favourable to the display of such beauties.

“My first visit to this house was on the morning after my arrival, when I was carried thither by an official gentleman, who was so kind as to charge himself with my presentation to the President.

“We entered a large hall, and having twice or thrice rung a bell which nobody answered, walked without further ceremony through the rooms on the ground floor, as divers other gentlemen (mostly with their hats on, and their hands in their pockets), were doing very leisurely. Some of these had ladies with them, to whom they were showing the premises; others were lounging on the chairs and sofas; others, in a perfect state of exhaustion from listlessness, were yawning drearily. The greater portion of this assemblage were rather asserting their supremacy than doing anything else, as they had no particular business there, that anybody knew of. A few were closely eyeing the moveables, as if to make quite sure that the President (who was far from popular) had not made away with any of the furniture, or sold the fixtures for his private benefit.

“After glancing at these loungers; who were scattered over a pretty drawing-room, opening upon a terrace which commanded a beautiful prospect of the river and the adjacent country; and who were sauntering too about a larger state-room called the Eastern Drawing-room; we went up stairs into another chamber, where were certain visitors, waiting for

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audiences. At sight of my conductor, a black in plain clothes and yellow slippers who was gliding noiselessly about, and whispering messages in the ears of the more impatient, made a sign of recognition, and glided off to announce him.

“We had previously looked into another chamber fitted all round with a great bare wooden desk or counter, whereon lay files of newspapers, to which sundry gentlemen were referring. But there were no such means of beguiling the time in this apartment, which was as unpromising and tiresome as any waiting-room in one of our public establishments, or any physician’s dining-room during his hours of consultation at home.

“There were some fifteen or twenty persons in the room. One, a tall, wiry, muscular old man, from the west; sunburnt and swarthy; with a brown white hat on his knees, and a giant umbrella resting between his legs; who sat bolt upright in his chair, frowning steadily at the carpet, and twitching the hard lines about his mouth, as if he had made up his mind ‘to fix’ the President on what he had to say, and wouldn’t bate him a grain. Another, a Kentucky farmer, six-feet-six in height, with his hat on, and his hands under his coat-tails, who leaned against the wall and kicked the floor with his heel, as though he had Time’s head under his shoe, and were literally ‘killing’ him. A third, an oval-faced, bilious-looking man, with sleek black hair cropped close, and whiskers and beard shaved down to blue dots, who sucked the head of a thick stick, and from time to time took it out of his mouth, to see how it was getting on. A fourth did nothing but whistle. A fifth did nothing but spit. And indeed all these gentlemen were so very persevering and energetic in this latter particular, and bestowed their favours so abundantly upon the carpet, that I take it for granted the Presidential housemaids have high wages, or, to speak more genteelly, an ample amount of ‘compensation’: which is the American word for salary, in the case of all public servants.

“We had not waited in this room many minutes, before the

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black messenger returned, and conducted us into another of smaller dimensions, where, at a business-like table covered with papers, sat the President himself. He looked somewhat worn and anxious, and well he might; being at war with everybody—but the expression of his face was mild and pleasant, and his manner was remarkably unaffected, gentlemanly, and agreeable. I thought that in his whole carriage and demeanour, he became his station singularly well.

“Being advised that the sensible etiquette of the republican court, admitted of a traveller, like myself, declining, without any impropriety, an invitation to dinner, which did not reach me until I had concluded my arrangements for leaving Washington some days before that to which it referred, I only returned to this house once. It was on the occasion of one of those general assemblies which are held on certain nights, between the hours of nine and twelve o’clock, and are called, rather oddly, Levees.

“I went, with my wife, at about ten. There was a pretty dense crowd of carriages and people in the court-yard, and so far as I could make out, there were no very clear regulations for the taking up or setting down of company. There were certainly no policemen to soothe startled horses, either by sawing at their bridles or flourishing truncheons in their eyes; and I am ready to make oath that no inoffensive persons were knocked violently on the head, or poked acutely in their backs or stomachs; or brought to a standstill by any such gentle means, and then taken into custody for not moving on. But there was no confusion or disorder. Our carriage reached the porch in its turn, without any blustering, swearing, shouting, backing, or other disturbance: and we dismounted with as much ease and comfort as though we had been escorted by the whole Metropolitan Force from A to Z inclusive.

“The suite of rooms on the ground-floor were lighted up; and a military band was playing in the hall. In the smaller

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drawing-room, the centre of a circle of company, were the President and his daughter-in-law, who acted as the lady of the mansion: and a very interesting, graceful, and accomplished lady too. One gentleman who stood among this group appeared to take upon himself the functions of a master of the ceremonies. I saw no other officers or attendants, and none were needed.

“The great drawing-room, which I have already mentioned, and the other chambers on the ground-floor, were crowded to excess. The company was not, in our sense of the term, select, for it comprehended persons of very many grades and classes; nor was there any great display of costly attire: indeed, some of the costumes may have been, for aught I know, grotesque enough. But the decorum and propriety of behaviour which prevailed were unbroken by any rude or disagreeable incident; and every man, even among the miscellaneous crowd in the hall who were admitted without any orders or tickets to look on, appeared to feel that he was a part of the Institution, and was responsible for its preserving a becoming character, and appearing to the best advantage.

“That these visitors, too, whatever their station, were not without some refinement of taste and appreciation of intellectual gifts, and gratitude to those men who, by the peaceful exercise of great abilities, shed new charms and associations upon the homes of their countrymen, and elevate their character in other lands, was most earnestly testified by their reception of Washington Irving, my dear friend, who had recently been appointed Minister at the court of Spain, and who was among them that night, in his new character, for the first and last time before going abroad. I sincerely believe that in all the madness of American politics, few public men would have been so earnestly, devotedly, and affectionately caressed, as this most charming writer: and I have seldom respected a public assembly more, than I did this eager throng, when I saw them

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turning with one mind from noisy orators and officers of state, and flocking with a generous and honest impulse round the man of quiet pursuits: proud in his promotion as reflecting back upon their country: and grateful to him with their whole hearts for the store of graceful fancies he had poured out among them. Long may he dispense such treasures with un-sparing hand; and long may they remember him as worthily!"

The *Madisonian* (March 17, 1842) gives the following report of the evening reception attended by Mr. Dickens:

"The levee held by the President on Thursday evening last was a brilliant affair, and gave satisfactory evidence of the esteem in which that high functionary is held in social circles.

"Among the visitors of peculiar note were the distinguished authors of the *Sketch-Book* and of the *Pickwick Papers*, in addition to whom almost all the Ministers of foreign Powers to our Government were in attendance in full court dress. The rooms were filled to overflowing with the talent and beauty of the metropolis, whilst Senators and members of Congress, without distinction of party, served to give interest and to add animation to the scene. It seems to us that these levees, as at present conducted, are peculiarly adapted to the genius of our Republican institutions, inasmuch as all who please may attend."

A distinguished visitor at the White House also during the first year of President Tyler's Administration was the Prince de Joinville, the third son of Louis Philippe, who had been entrusted with a mission

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of bringing to France from St. Helena, the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a gallant youth of twenty-three, and was naturally greatly lionized.

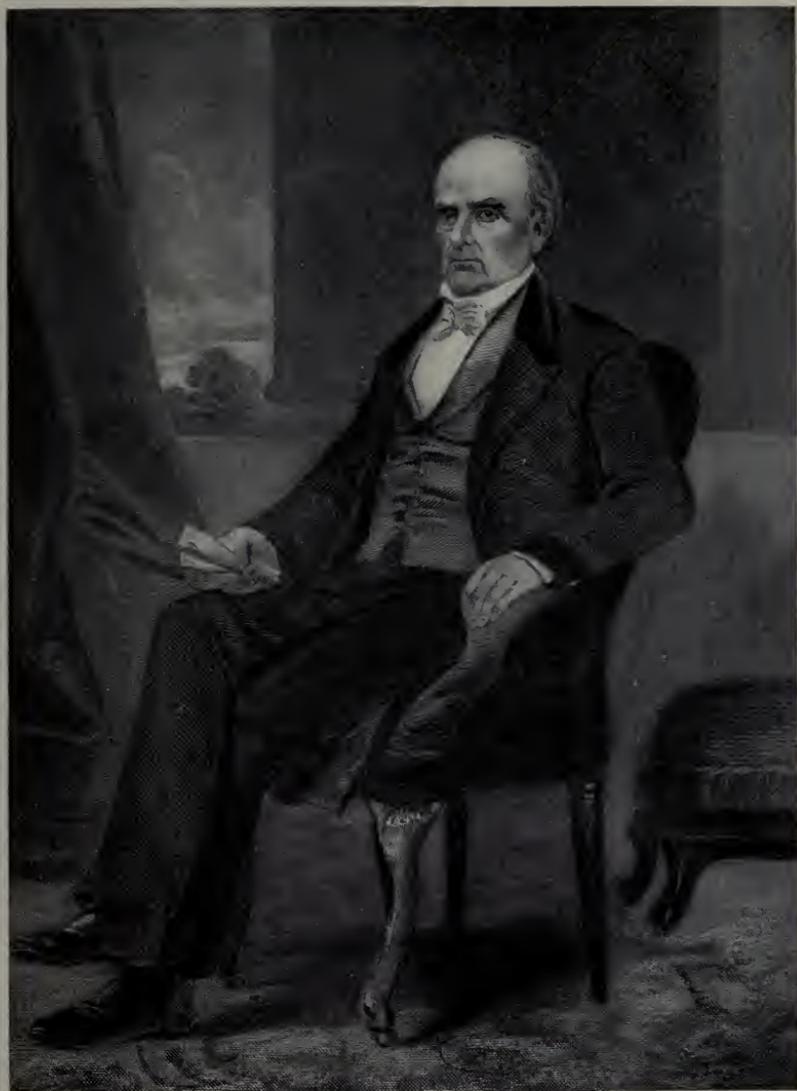
Mrs. Fremont says:

“The President gave for him not only the official dinner of ceremony, but a ball also. It was said there was Cabinet remonstrance against dancing in the White House as a ‘want of dignity,’ but Mr. Tyler rightly thought a dance would best please a young navy man and a Frenchman, and we had therefore a charming and unusually brilliant ball. All our army and navy officers were in uniform as the Prince and his suite wore theirs, and, for the son of a king, the Diplomatic Corps were in full court dress. Mrs. Tyler was an invalid, and saw only her old friends; but Mrs. Robert Tyler, the wife of the eldest son, was every way fitted to be the lady of the White House. From both her parents, especially her witty and beautiful mother, she had society qualifications and tact, while the President’s youngest daughter was beautiful as well as gentle and pleasant.

“Mr. Webster as Secretary of State, was, next to the President, the chief person. For fine appearance, for complete fitness for that representative position, both Mrs. Webster and himself have never been surpassed.

“The Prince was tall and fine looking, and Miss Tyler and himself opened the ball, while those of us who knew French well were assigned to his officers.

“We had remained in the Oval reception room until the company was assembled, and then, the President leading, the whole foreign party were taken through all the drawing rooms, ending by our taking places for the *Quadrille d’honneur* in the East Room; that ceremony over, dancing became general, and we were free to choose our partners.”



DANIEL WEBSTER



## HARRISON AND TYLER

President Tyler's first wife was an invalid, who suffered from paralysis; and died during the second year of her husband's Administration. She was a very beautiful and attractive woman; and was devotedly cared for in the last three years of her life by her eldest daughter, Letitia (Mrs. Semple). She saw none but her intimate friends; and the honors of the White House were performed for a time by her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Robert Tyler. Mr. Tyler had a very high idea of the social duties of his position, and on his succession to the Presidency is reported to have admonished his family as follows:

"Now my children, during the next few years we are to occupy the home of the President of the United States. I hope you will conduct yourselves with even more than your usual propriety and decorum. Remember you will be much in the public eye. You are to know no favorites. Your visitors will be citizens of the United States, and as such are all to be received with equal courtesy. You will not receive any gifts whatsoever, and allow no one to approach you on the subject of office or favors. These words you will kindly remember, and let it not be incumbent upon me to speak them again."

Mrs. Robert Tyler was the daughter of Thomas A. Cooper and Miss Mary Fairlie of Philadelphia, a belle, and famous for her wit. Washington Irving called her "the fascinating Fairlie," and perpetuated her in his *Salmagundi* as "Sophy Sparkle." Mrs. Tyler inherited the talents of her parents. We cannot gain

## THE WHITE HOUSE

a clearer view of her nature than that afforded by one of her own letters written at this period to her sister:

“What wonderful changes take place, my dearest M——! Here am I, *née* Pricilla Cooper (*nez retroussé* you will perhaps think), actually living in, and, what is more, presiding at—the White House! I look at myself, like the little old woman, and exclaim, ‘Can this be I?’ I have not had one moment to myself since my arrival, and the most extraordinary thing is that I feel as if I had been used to living here always, and receive the cabinet Ministers, the Diplomatic Corps, the heads of the Army and Navy, etc., etc., with a facility which astonishes me. ‘Some achieve greatness, some are born to it.’ I am plainly born to it. I really do possess a degree of modest assurance that surprises me more than it does any one else. I am complimented on every side; my hidden virtues are coming out. I am considered ‘*charmante*’ by the Frenchmen, ‘lovely’ by the Americans, and ‘really quite nice, you know,’ by the English. . . . I have had some lovely dresses made, which fit me to perfection—one a pearl-colored silk that will set you crazy. . . . I occupy poor General Harrison’s room. . . . The nice comfortable bedroom with its handsome furniture and curtains, its luxurious arm-chairs, and all its belongings, I enjoy, I believe, more than anything in the establishment. The pleasantest part of my life is when I can shut myself up here with my precious baby. . . . The greatest trouble I anticipate is paying visits. There was a doubt at first whether I must visit in person or send cards; but I asked Mrs. Madison’s advice upon the subject, and she says, return all my visits by all means. Mrs. Bache says so too. So three days in the week I am to spend three hours a day driving from one street to another in this city of magnificent distances. . . . I see so many great men and so constantly that I cannot

## HARRISON AND TYLER

appreciate the blessing! The fact is, when you meet them in every day life, you forget they *are* great men at all, and just find them the most charming companions in the world, talking the most delightful nonsense, especially the almost awful-looking Mr. Webster, who entertains me with the most charming gossip."

Mrs. Robert Tyler represented the wife of the President on state occasions till the death of her mother-in-law in 1842; then the fourth daughter, Letitia, Mrs. Semple, became the so-called mistress of the White House.

While Congress was in session, two dinner-parties were given every week, one of twenty male guests, and one of forty ladies and gentlemen of official and Diplomatic circles. Informal "drawing-rooms" were held every evening, the doors being closed at 10 P.M. Up till the date of the first Mrs. Tyler's death, there was an occasional private ball, to which admission was gained by special invitation only. These balls were not especially gay, and always terminated at 11 P.M. On the authority of Major Tyler, who was private secretary to his father and Major Domo of the White House, we learn that the custom was introduced of having the Marine Band play on fine evenings in the White House grounds, to which the general public was admitted. In addition also to the public receptions on New Year's Day and the Fourth of July, a public levee was held once a month.

Mrs. Tyler died in the White House on Sept. 10,

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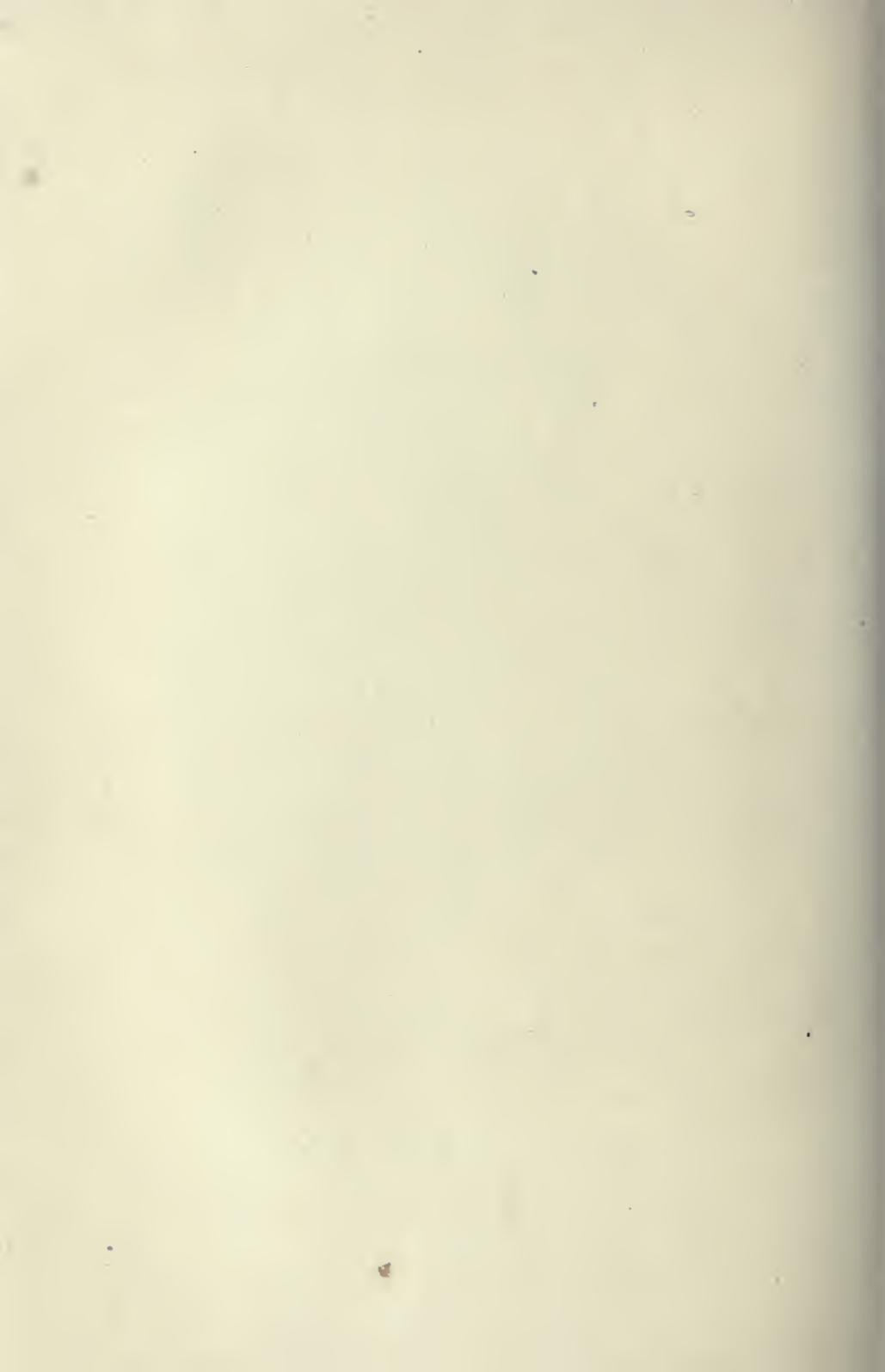
1842, not long after her youngest daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Mr. Waller of Virginia. Mrs. Tyler was present on the occasion of this marriage, which took place in the White House, and it was her first appearance at any large gathering there. Mrs. Robert Tyler speaks of her attractive appearance in a quiet gown of faultless taste, her "face shaded by the soft lace of her cap," and her gracious and self-possessed manners that charmed every one. The bride, we are told, was radiant in "her wedding dress and long blonde lace veil." The wedding was a grand affair and the guests included the Cabinet officers and their families, foreign Ministers, relatives, and personal friends of the family, not the least important of whom was Mrs. Madison.

The funeral services of Mrs. Tyler were held at the White House at four in the afternoon, Monday, Sept. 12, 1842. The remains were taken to Virginia the next day and interred in the family burying-ground. After her death, as was natural, there were no festivities at the White House during the next year, only the necessary formal receptions being held.

The New Year's Day reception took place as usual in 1843, and was fully attended. According to the *National Intelligencer*: "The Diplomatic Corps and a large concourse of citizens, resident and transient, civil and military, paid their respects to the President and his family, and were received with his characteristic cordiality."



MRS. JOHN TYLER; ORIGINAL IN THE WHITE HOUSE



## HARRISON AND TYLER

On June 9, 1843, the President started on a northern tour by way of New York, for the celebration of the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument, on June 19, arriving in Washington on June 23.

Since the election of President Harrison the White House had already been the scene of two funerals, a wedding, and the entertainment of a scion of royalty. However, the measure of alternate mourning and gaiety was by no means yet full.

At the beginning of 1844, the most captious critic could not maintain that the period of what might be termed official mourning had not passed. If the President still grieved for his deceased partner, he had to do so in secret and fulfil his official duties towards society. The New Year's Day reception of 1844 is thus described by N. P. Willis:

“New Year's Day has passed, and never was a brighter and gayer anniversary seen in the metropolis. The sun shone out in unusual splendour, and the day was mild and refreshing as a morn in early spring. The whole population was in the streets, and Pennsylvania Avenue, with its throng of gay and animated faces, would have reminded you of a time of carnival. The boarding-house messes turned out their complement of members of Congress; the fancy shops were filled with lively, merry hearts; and the masses, in their holiday suits, were on their way to the President's house, to see and be seen in the great levee.

“We went to the President's, early, before twelve o'clock; and, even at this hour, the long line of carriages in front, dotted here and there with the liveries and cockades of the

## THE WHITE HOUSE

*cortèges* of the foreign Ministers, foretold that a goodly company had already arrived. We made our entrance through the crowd at the front door, unresisted by guards or bayonets, and passed on to the receiving rooms, without any ceremony, and shook the hand of the President of the United States. The President was surrounded by his cabinet; and, giving to each guest, as he approached, a very bland salutation, he handed them over to the ladies of his family on his left. The receiving-room is the centre Oval Room; and passing from thence into another adjoining apartment, following in the train of the crowd, you find yourself in the far-famed East Room, where the sovereigns of the land make their circuit. The dimensions, garniture and hangings of this room have been often described. It was crowded on this occasion, and every class of society was fully represented. The room presented a bright and gratifying scene; all seemed to feel at home, and each face bore an abandon of care. The number of ladies was unusually large, and some were very beautiful, in full morning-dress, with hats and feathers and glittering gowns, standing in one position. While the company made the evolution of the room, you saw all that passed. The officers of the army and navy in full dress, made a fine appearance. Among the latter were seen Major-Generals Scott, Gaines, Gibson, Towson, Jessup—all the heroes of the last war. Many Senators and members of the House were present; and this being the first levee of many of the new members, they were particularly attracted by the brilliant court costumes of some of the foreign Ministers. The dress of the Mexican Minister, General Almonte, seemed to carry the day, in the rich profusion of gold embroidery. The dress of the French Minister, of blue and gold, was rich and unpretending. The Spanish Minister and suite, in light blue and silver, looked well. The Brazilian, in green and gold, the white Austrian and Swedish uniforms, were very handsome. The Portuguese Minister and suite, the Belgian, Russian, Danish and Sardinian

## HARRISON AND TYLER

*chargés* were also present. Mr. Fox, the British Minister, was absent, from indisposition.

“We looked around in vain for Mr. Bodisco, who was wont to appear in such state on presentation days, in his silver coat, and whose kind manners made him so many friends. He has gone to Russia on leave of absence, but will soon return again. . . . We are still in the East Room; the crowd is still pouring in without cessation, old and young, men, women and children, belles and maidens, brides and matrons, from the broadcloth coat to the homespun, from the silk brocade to the calico gown. For two hours there seemed to be no diminution in the crowd; the President’s hand must have been in a sad way about two o’clock.

“The Marine Band was playing in the hall, and the music and the hilarity of the people made it altogether a very gay and brilliant affair. As there is but one front door, the ladies were handed out of the windows in departing. The greatest decorum was preserved throughout; and even in front of the house, in the confusion of the crowd and carriages, no guard was visible or necessary. . . . The company on leaving the President’s, immediately repaired to pay their respects to Mrs. Madison, who lives in the square opposite.”

Two months later, a terrible accident cast a gloom over the White House and the nation. The *Princeton*, under Captain R. F. Stockton, on a trial trip down the Potomac, had a brilliant assemblage on board, the guests including the President and his Cabinet, a large party of ladies and many notabilities. In exhibiting the power of the ordnance, one of the big guns burst, scattering death and destruction around. Between thirty and forty people were killed and injured. The Presi-

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dent fortunately was below, entertaining the ladies, all of whom escaped injury; but among the killed were Mr. Upshur, Secretary of State; Mr. Gilmer, Secretary of the Navy; Commander Kennon, U. S. N.; Mr. Maxcy, ex-Minister at The Hague; and Mr. Gardiner, ex-Senator from New York. The bodies of these gentlemen were conveyed to the White House, where they lay in state in the East Room, and whence they were carried to their last resting-place with imposing ceremonies in a procession including all the officers of the Government on March 2.

Mr. Gardiner's two orphaned daughters were well known in Washington society, having spent two seasons there. The dreadful circumstances of their loss naturally attracted the sympathy of the President, who did everything possible to assuage their grief. This intimate acquaintanceship resulted in a marriage with Julia, the elder, three months later. The wedding took place in New York, on June 26. The President returned with his wife to Washington a few days later.

The romantic character of the circumstances attending this wedding naturally attracted great attention and a considerable amount of friendly and unfriendly comment. Of the second Mrs. Tyler, Mrs. Fremont says that Miss Gardiner was very handsome and long retained her health and youthful appearance. She was undoubtedly a woman of elegance, refinement, education, and strong character. The ill-natured gossip of

## HARRISON AND TYLER

the day is reflected in the diary of J. Q. Adams, who on July 4, 1844, writes:

“Morning and evening visitors, chiefly military officers, had been in grand costume to pay their devoirs to the President. The wedding visit last Saturday and that of Independence Day came so close together that the attendance this day was thin. Captain Tyler and his bride are the laughing-stock of this city. It seems as if he was racing for a prize banner to the nuptials of the mock-heroic—the sublime and the ridiculous. He has assumed the war power as a prerogative, the veto power as a caprice, the appointing and dismissing power as a fund for bribery; and now, under circumstances of revolting indecency, is performing with a young girl from New York, the old fable of January and May.”

The wedding-visit above referred to is reported in *The Madisonian* of July 2, as follows:

“President Tyler returned with his fair bride to the capital on the evening of last Thursday.

“On Saturday the Bride received company. Though there was no announcement in the papers, it was generally known that on that day the White House would be open to those who wished to pay their compliments to the Chief Magistrate and his Bride, and during the hours of reception the rooms were thronged.

“The heads of Departments, the foreign Ministers in their court dresses, and the officers of the Army and Navy in uniform, in company with the ladies of their acquaintance, made a brilliant show, and the Mayor and his lady, and most of the *élite* of the capital, whether in public or private stations, offered their congratulations, and bade the lady of the Mansion welcome.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

“The Bride, when Miss Gardiner, had, with her fair sister, who is now her guest, spent part of two winters with us, and delighted all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance by the attractions of her person and mind—gifted as she has been with every advantage of education and foreign travel—and by the charms of her graceful manners, which shone, as every one felt, in their appropriate sphere on Saturday.

“A most magnificent Bride’s cake and sparkling champaign awaited the welcoming guests, and the distinctions of party and of opinion were all forgotten, and kind feelings and generous impulses seemed to gladden the hearts of all.

“In the afternoon, the President’s garden, in which the band from the Navy Yard play every Saturday afternoon, was more thronged than we ever remember to have seen it. On the portico of the White House the President and his Bride again received the welcome of their friends, and not until the shades of evening were gathering around and the music had ceased did the throng disperse, so great was the desire to see and welcome the beautiful and accomplished Lady who is hereafter to preside in the Executive Mansion.”

The new Mrs. Tyler assumed a good deal of state in her entertainments and receptions at the White House, which was naturally made the most of by her husband’s opponents. Many paragraphs appear in the newspapers of the day ridiculing her ostentation. A typical one reads:

“We understand by private letter from a Washington belle, that the lovely lady Presidentess is attended on reception-days by twelve maids of honor, six on either side, dressed all alike; and that her serene loveliness ‘receives’ upon a raised plat-



MRS. JULIA G. TYLER; ORIGINAL IN THE WHITE HOUSE



## HARRISON AND TYLER

form with a headdress formed of bugles and resembling a crown."

Mrs. Fremont says:

"There was a little laughing at her for driving four horses (finer horses than those of the Russian Minister), and because she received seated—her large armchair on a slightly raised platform in front of the windows opening to the circular piazza looking on the river. Also three feathers in her hair, and a long-trained purple dress were much commented upon by the elders who had seen other Presidents' wives take their state more easily."

It is also said that Mrs. Tyler was the first to introduce the European custom of announcing the names of the guests at the door on entering. She may have revived this custom, but Jean Sioussat had made the presentations in Mrs. Madison's day (see page 59), and President Van Buren had guests announced (see page 262).

A good idea of Mrs. Tyler's appearance may be gathered from the portrait of her now in the White House.

This was painted by Fanelli and represents her in a low-necked gown of white tulle with white satin girdle and shoulder knots. She wears a pearl necklace and carries a feather fan.

Mrs. Tyler seems to have enjoyed everything that occurred during her short reign as mistress of the

## THE WHITE HOUSE

White House, as is shown by her sprightly letters to her mother. On Nov. 27, she writes:

“The Democrats are going to have a grand time to-night. All the Democrats in town are going to illuminate their dwellings. *We* shall merely light the lamps at the gates. The drums are beating in every direction as I write. They are going to surround and salute our mansion this afternoon and evening. Did you see the account of the Charleston (S. C.) procession? where the portrait of John Tyler was introduced, with the motto beneath,—‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant!’ and then his vetoes, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4. I enjoyed the dinner at Mr. Mason’s yesterday very much. It was the most thoroughly social one I have yet attended. Mr. Pakenham<sup>1</sup> was there,—the only one not of the Cabinet. We talked across and all around the table, and it was very witty and merry. Mr. Calhoun sat on one side of me, Mr. Nelson the other. They were both so exceedingly agreeable I cannot tell which was the most so, but I *like* Mr. Calhoun the best. I believe he never was so sociable before. He actually *repeated verses to me*. We had altogether a pleasant flirtation.”

On Nov. 29, 1844, she also writes:

“The procession the other evening was quite a fine affair, though of course in no way comparative to the one in New York. John Tyler was cheered with burst upon burst. We had lights in the East Room, in the dining-room, the hall and the circle out of doors. The other day Dr. and Mrs. Niles, to whom we had letters in Paris, called upon me. She is the mother of ‘Eugene Sue,’ the celebrated author. They are rather an odd couple, I think.”

<sup>1</sup> British minister.

## HARRISON AND TYLER

She also describes one of her receptions as follows:

“President’s House, December 6, 1844. Last evening I had a most brilliant reception. The British Minister Pakenham was there with his Secretary, and devoted to me. At least fifty members of Congress paid their respects to me, and all at one time. I did not enter the room until they had assembled. It really presented an array, and it was imposing to see them all brought forward and introduced one by one.”

The New Year’s reception took place as usual on Jan. 1, 1845, and a newspaper account of the affair shows that the interest in the coming tenants of the White House is already strong.

“Mr. Polk, the brother of the President-elect, was at the President’s house yesterday. He appeared to be quite a centre of attraction in the East Room; and appeared to be the observed of all observers, particularly on the part of the fair, whose Eveishness seemed to be more excited in relation to his whereabouts than that of the President and other members of his family who received company in the Elliptic Room.”

The first levee was held on Jan. 7.

“At the last drawing-room the Polka was danced in the Tyler presence by a gentleman and his wife from New York—the first introduction to the East Room of the connubial coupling (for waltz or polka) exacted at present by the ameliorated morals now gaining ground in New York.”

A few drawing-rooms and a ball on Feb. 19, at

## THE WHITE HOUSE

which more than 2,000 persons were present, brought the White House season to a close. This ball is graphically described in a contemporary letter as follows:

“The closing Drawing Room at the Executive Mansion took place about two weeks since, and every one was surprised at the elegance of so general an assemblage. Compared with the GRAND BALL of last night (Mrs. Tyler’s final entertainment), it was a farthing rush-light to the noon-day sun. Washington had never seen the like before, and it may be long ere it sees the like again. This affair had been the prevailing topic of the social metropolis for ten days. During all this time the greatest anxiety was manifested to obtain invitations, and it was understood that the number given out to select guests eventually reached upwards of two thousand. . . .

“The eventful night came, and the heart of many a *demoiselle* and many a *preux chevalier* leaped with delight as the appointed hour approached. At about nine o’clock the roll of carriages could be heard in every street and along every road; for not only Washington, but the neighboring cities and surrounding country, contributed chosen guests to MRS. TYLER’S FAREWELL BALL. From the Court of the Executive Mansion down the long avenue to the President’s square and far away in the distance stretched the unbroken line of vehicles; and it was not until after a long and tedious delay, in slow advances, that I at length found my way into the ante-room, where a hundred others were divesting themselves of their outer garments and devoting a moment to the toilet.

“The high and spacious halls, usually cold and sombre, wore a warm and cheerful aspect, and no longer returned an empty echo. From the ante-room to the reception-room, poured a constant stream of beauty and elegance; the scene reminded one of the *Concerts à la Musard*, for at the same time the inimitable strains of the Marine Band in full force filled the

## HARRISON AND TYLER

apartments. Entering the Blue Room, the names of the guests were announced, and they then passed on, exchanging congratulations with the President, his bride and the ladies of his household, who stood in line at the side of the room. I'll have nothing to do with his politics, but John Tyler always discharges the duties of such occasions with high bred propriety, and never was the dignity and urbanity of his manners more conspicuous. As to his *beautiful bride*, whom I saw from time to time in 'foreign parts,' I can scarcely trust my pen to write. Burke apostrophized the Queen of France, whom he saw 'just above the horizon'; but I have seen this lady above many horizons; have seen the wigged and gowned barristers of the Queen's Bench desert the Court and follow her and her lovely sister in silent apostrophe; have seen the audience of the Grand Opera at Naples rise in subdued admiration as they entered the box of ——; have seen, in the Zoological Gardens of Paris, crowds follow them and impede their progress. To-night she looked the Juno, and with her step-daughter, sister and cousins, constituted a galaxy of beauty, and I am told equal talent, which no Court of Europe could equal. She was dressed in embroidered satin, partly covered with looped lace and wore a Shepherd's bonnet, with ostrich feathers and diamond ornaments.

"I stepped aside and noted the in-comers. Among them were all the members of the Cabinet and their families, the Judges of the Supreme Court, Senators, Representatives and many distinguished strangers. The foreign Ministers appeared in court costume *de rigueur*, in accordance with the order of Mrs. Tyler. Here was the quiet Pakenham; and here were Pageot, Bodisco, Calderon, etc., whose ladies, particularly Mrs. Bodisco, attracted much attention.

"But let us follow the current: from the Blue, the Washington, the Green Rooms, let us pass to the East Room. The carpets had been taken up and the floor was polished and

## THE WHITE HOUSE

chalked. In the recess of the great window was placed the orchestra draped with blue damask and covered with the American flag. In this splendid hall a thousand candles shed from the immense chandeliers and brackets a flood of light; and the spacious mirrors redoubled in reflection the surpassing beauty of the spectacle. Shortly after the door was opened, the East Room could scarcely have contained less than a thousand persons, but the crowd gradually dispersed through the other apartments and left room for three large quadrilles.

“Mrs. Tyler opened the ball with the Secretary of War and afterwards danced with the Postmaster General and the Spanish Minister. I should like to name the many beautiful ladies conspicuous on this occasion. In every part of the room were officers of the army and navy, in full uniform, adding to the brilliancy of the scene. The gigantic figure of the general-in-chief who may yet, if his friends stand by him, preside over the destinies of the nation, was very observable; and the brave old commander of Ironsides memory, could by no means, though of less portly stature, escape remark. Here also were General Lamar, Dallas, Buchanan, Walker, and I know not how many more eminent men.

“The supper was got up with great magnificence, but in the general rush was soon demolished. Wine flowed like water, but everything seemed to be enjoyed in moderation: evident enjoyment and dignified demeanor were united. The ladies were generally attired with elegance and taste—too expensively attired! More diamonds sparkled than I have seen on any occasion in this country. It is said that this entertainment cost the President *near two thousand dollars!* When will Washington see the like again? The family of Mr. Polk was present, but he and his lady were detained by the illness of the latter. *Vale.*”

## HARRISON AND TYLER

The Tylers took no part in the Inauguration of their successors, with the exception of giving a dinner-party to Mr. and Mrs. Polk on March the first. They left the President's house at five o'clock on March the third and drove to Fuller's Hotel. Two contemporary accounts very graphically describe the exit of the Tylers. The first is by Mrs. Tyler herself. She writes to her mother:

“The last word has been spoken—the last link is broken that bound me to Washington, and I should like you to have witnessed the emotions and heard the warm expressions that marked our departure. Let me see—where shall I begin? I will go back to Saturday, though I shall have to be very brief in all I say. Saturday then, the President approved the Texas treaty, and I have now suspended from my neck the immortal golden pen, given expressly for the occasion. The same day we had a brilliant dinner party for Mr. and Mrs. Polk. I wore my black-blond over white satin, and in the evening received a large number of persons. On Sunday, the President held a cabinet council from compulsion; on Monday a Texas messenger was dispatched; on Sunday evening Mrs. Semple arrived; on Monday, in the morning, we concluded our packing, Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Mason came up to my bedroom, and sat a little — while I made my toilette — offering their services in any way. At five in the afternoon, a crowd of friends, ladies and gentlemen, assembled in the Blue Room, to shake hands with us and escort us from the White House. As the President and myself entered they divided into two lines, and when we had passed to the head of the room, surrounded and saluted us. Gen. Van Ness requested them to stand back, and himself stepped forward, and delivered ‘on behalf, and at the

## THE WHITE HOUSE

request of many lady and gentlemen citizens of Washington, a farewell address. I saw before he concluded, a response of some kind would be almost necessary from the President, and I felt a good deal concerned, for I knew he had prepared none, and had not expected to make any; but I might have spared myself all and every fear, for as soon as the General finished, he raised his hand, his form expanded, and such a burst of beautiful and poetic eloquence as proceeded from him could only be called *inspiration*. His voice was more musical than ever; it rose and fell, and trembled, and rose again. The effect was irresistible, and the deep admiration and respect it elicited was told truly in the sobs and exclamations of all around. As they shook us by the hand when we entered our carriage, they could not utter farewell.

“The Empire Club, *en costume*, was present, and cheered again and again. They followed in the procession which was formed to the hotel, and cheered as we alighted. Among the ladies present whom you know, besides the cabinet ladies, were Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Beeckman—but I have not time to think and enumerate. At the hotel our visitors did not fall off. We did not attend either the Inauguration ball; and the next morning we determined to depart from Washington, adopting ‘French leave’; but when we reached the wharf at nine o’clock in the morning, the boat had gone, and we had to return, almost, to our regret. All that day, which was yesterday, our parlor was thronged.”

Another account reads:

“Hearing President Tyler had appointed this afternoon to receive his friends at the White House for the last time, I went there. I found he had engaged a suite of rooms for his family at Fuller’s Hotel, to which he expected to repair about five or five-thirty o’clock. When I reached the White House,

## HARRISON AND TYLER

the doors were wide open, and the receiving room already densely crowded with people, among whom were a great many beautiful and fashionable ladies. Mrs. Tyler was looking charmingly beautiful. She was dressed in a neat and beautiful suit of black with light black bonnet and veil. I never saw any woman look more cheerful and happy. She seemed to act as though she had been imprisoned within the walls of the White House, and was now about to escape to the beautiful country fields of her own native Long Island. Among those near the President, I noticed a large number of the most respectable families all belonging to the District. Captain Tyler, during his four years' residence here, has, by his social and hospitable habits, endeared a large circle of private friends to him. They now assembled to express their regret at having the ties of neighborly friendship broken. As time progressed, the scene became very affecting. Several who approached him, on taking him by the hand, were seen to shed tears. Mr. Tyler stood cool and collected, receiving all who approached him with great cordiality and politeness."

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

JAMES K. POLK

1845-1849

Inauguration and Balls; the Shabby White House; Mrs. Polk; Henry Clay at a Dinner-Party; Typical Drawing-Rooms; Thanksgiving Day; New Year's Reception; Levees; the National Fair of 1846; Reception at the White House; Portrait of Mrs. Polk; New Year's Day, 1848.

THE Inauguration of President Polk was almost entirely ruined as a spectacle by a deluge of rain; but the usual festivities in the evening were maintained. N. P. Willis writes:

“Have you heard the droll history that has created a deal of talk here, all about the Ball, or Balls, and the Diplomatic Corps and—but stop! I will tell it you over again. Now you must know that there was a \$10.00 ball and a \$5.00 one. The highest price was meant to secure a more *recherché* company, and which would have been the natural result—but for a gross oversight of the *aristocratic* committee in *neglecting to invite the Diplomatic Corps!* This breach of good manners towards this distinguished body was in a degree repaired by the committee of the ‘rank and file’ of the Democracy; and the Diplomats acknowledged it by going to the \$5.00 *out and out Democratic Ball and cutting the other altogether.*”

“This led to the most curious and comical results. Many



JAMES K. POLK



## JAMES K. POLK

of the most fashionable people followed their example, indignant at the indecorous slights the *Corps* had received, and there surely never was seen since the time of the Ark such a strange mixture, jumbling and *mélange* of ranks, classes and conditions, as were grouped together at the Theatre last night in Washington. The strangest illustration of it was the droll fact of a foreign Minister's lady dancing in the same quadrille with her gardener. Doesn't that 'bang banagher'? . . .

"For the greater part of the time, however, a very exclusive quadrille was danced in the upper part of the area thrown open for that purpose. . . .

"Of ladies, the largest representation was from New York, and the most conspicuously graceful and beautiful of them all was the lovely Mrs. S. W. Nothing could be more *recherché* and elegant than her toilette. It would have made the fortune and renown of a Parisian *modiste* to have been its author. Miss H.—Mrs. Governor V.—and the bright-eyed Miss I.—sister of Madame Calderon, were all and each greatly admired. The wives of the foreign Ministers were all present; and as usual Madame Bodisco attracted great attention by her singular beauty. Her *costume*, for such it was, was showy and rich, and by many was considered too theatrical; but it is not known, perhaps (as I learn from fair authority), that it is the dress prescribed by the Court of Russia for all formal State occasions. Madame Pageot looked exceedingly well, and Madame Calderon de la Barca was followed by troupes of admirers."

The economy of Mr. Tyler's housekeeping, which, so far as furnishing is concerned, was not altered during the half year's *régime* of his second wife, had left the White House in a deplorable condition. His friends in the press defended the condition of the house on the score of inadequate allowance, while his

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enemies jeered at his parsimony. Thus, we have the two following contrasted paragraphs; one before, and one immediately after, the Inauguration:

“*The White House to Let.* We heard from good authority yesterday that Mrs. Polk is making arrangements for a *private residence* in Washington. The six thousand dollars appropriated by Congress for the repair and re-furnishing of the Public Shabby House will barely repair and carpet it; and Mrs. Polk prefers something habitably furnished, even if smaller and at her own expense.”

“Many persons believe that the President’s salary, \$25,000 per annum, is very abundant; but when the great mass of visitors is recollected—when the frequent levees, dinners, entertainments, etc., are considered—it soon dwindles away, and there is absolutely nothing left for the Presidential chair but empty honor. President Tyler’s expenses in sixteen months were over \$38,000, and he left yesterday for his farm on James River, Virginia, with barely enough out of his last year’s salary to pay expenses. General Jackson came here with \$10,000 of his own money, and after eight years’ service in the Executive Office, left for the *Hermitage* with less than his travelling expenses. These are the facts which I aver to be true; and they are very painful facts.”

The new mistress of the White House was a great contrast to the lady she superseded. A native of Tennessee, she had been married to Mr. Polk at the age of nineteen. She was of a religious and charitable turn of mind, having been educated at a Moravian Institute. Naturally, therefore, she frowned upon cards, dancing and all such vanities. Mrs. Fremont says that she was



MRS. POLK; ORIGINAL IN THE WHITE HOUSE



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very proud, dignified and handsome. She neither needed assistance, nor would she have been pleased to have had it offered in performing her duties as a hostess. She held herself erect, was attentive and gracious to her guests and played her part well. As a housekeeper, she was admirably fitted to bring order out of the chaos that existed. During her tenure there were no children in the Mansion and no foreign guests of special distinction. Towards the end of this Administration, John S. Jenkins describes her in the following terms:

“Mrs. Polk was well fitted to adorn any station. To the charms of a fine person, she united intellectual accomplishments of a high order. Sweetness of disposition, gracefulness and ease of manner and beauty of mind were highly blended in her character. A kind mistress, a faithful friend and a devoted wife,—these are her titles to esteem. . . . Affable, but dignified; intelligent, but unaffected; frank and sincere; yet never losing sight of the respect due to her position, she won the regard of all who approached her. Her unflinching courtesy and her winning deportment were remarked by every one who saw her presiding at the White House.”

He also tells the following story:

“Shortly before his departure from the Capital, Mr. Clay attended a dinner party, with many other distinguished gentlemen of both political parties at the President’s house. The party is said to have been a very pleasant affair—the viands were choice, the wine was old and sparkling—good feeling abounded, and wit and lively repartee gave zest to the occasion, while

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Mrs. Polk, the winning and accomplished hostess, added the finishing grace of her excellent housewifery in the superior management of the feast. Mr. Clay was, of course, honored with a seat near the President's lady, where it became him to put in requisition those insinuating talents which he possessed in so eminent a degree, and which are irresistible even to his enemies. Mrs. Polk, with her usual frank and affable manner, was extremely courteous to her distinguished guest, whose good opinion, as of all who share the hospitalities of the White House, she did not fail to win.

“‘Madam,’ said Mr. Clay, in that bland manner peculiar to himself, ‘I must say that in my travels, wherever I have been, in all companies and among all parties, I have heard but one opinion of you. All agree in commending, in the highest terms, your excellent administration of the domestic affairs of the White House. But,’ continued he, directing her attention to her husband, ‘as for that young gentleman there, I cannot say as much. There is,’ said he, ‘some little difference of opinion in regard to the policy of his course.’

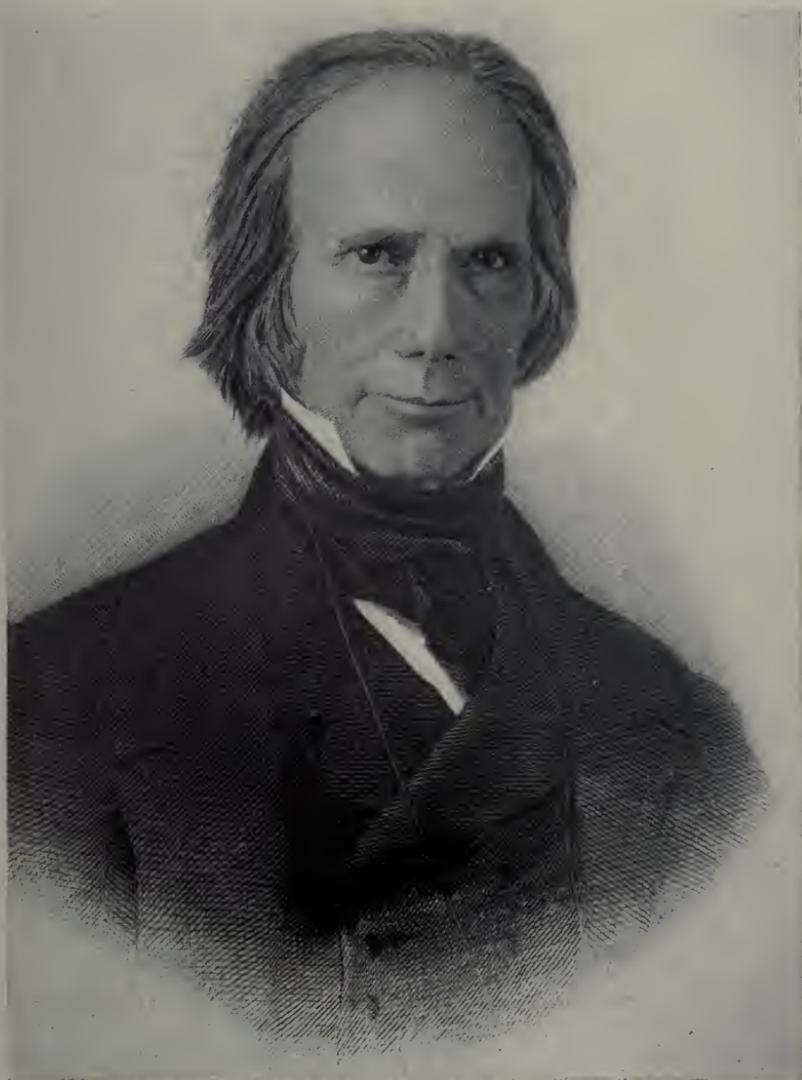
“‘Indeed,’ said Mrs. Polk, ‘I am glad to hear that *my* administration is popular. And in return for your compliment, I will say that if the country should elect a Whig next fall, I know of no one whose elevation would please me more than that of Henry Clay.

“‘Thank you, thank you, Madam.’

“‘And I will assure you of one thing. If you do have occasion to occupy the White House on the fourth of March next, it shall be surrendered to you in perfect order from garret to cellar.’

“‘I’m certain that——’

“But the laugh that followed this pleasant repartee, which lost nothing from the manner nor the occasion of it, did not permit the guests of the lower end of the table to hear the rest of Mr. Clay’s reply. Whether he was certain that he



HENRY CLAY



## JAMES K. POLK

should be the tenant of the President's mansion, or whether he only said he was certain that whoever did occupy it would find it in good condition, like the result of the coming contest for the Presidency, remains a mystery."

A paragrapher, in July, 1845, says:

"Mrs. Polk dresses in a style rich but chaste, and becoming her character, her position and her person. Captain Polk is so spare that if his clothes were made to fit, he would be but the merest tangible fraction of a President. He has them, therefore, especially his coat, generally two or three sizes large, which imparts something of a loose and easy dignity to his Excellency you know. We think a visit to the salt water, Piney Point, Old Point, or any other point accessible or convenient for sea-bathing, soft crabs and oysters would fatten him up a little and be a great help to him. . . . We want him to live out his term."

The Polks lived at the White House through the summer, and gave the usual dinners and receptions, the nature of which may be gathered from three typical paragraphs during the first year:

"The President received his friends at the White House as usual." (July 20.)

"At the 'drawing-room' of the President and Presidentess last evening there was a very goodly company present. Secretary Walker was there, and alongside of General Scott, who was also there, he cut a remarkably small figure. . . . Secretary Bancroft presented Mrs. Polk with an enormous bouquet of flowers when he came in." (Aug. 15.)

"The President held last evening one of his 'drawing-

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rooms' (the name given to the mere opening of the doors of the White House to the public). Crowd thin,—conversation stiff, frigid, hard, affected, and altogether so-soish." (Sept. 6.)

The President and his wife went once to *Mount Vernon* and twice to the outskirts of Georgetown: these are the only trips, if such they may be called, that they took during the summer.

In the autumn there was an innovation: it seems that hitherto Washington had been unaccustomed to Thanksgiving Day:

"The President had some friends to dinner. . . . This new idea of a Thanksgiving in Washington was well observed and gave such general satisfaction as to lead to the deduction that it will be an annual custom hereafter."

The first New Year's Day reception (1846) was fairly well attended:

"The foreign courts were well represented in the imposing splendor of official costumes and uniforms shining with gold. The Audience room was nearly filled. Many ladies, beautifully attired, stood near the wife of the President; but among them all I should have selected her as fitly representing, in person and manner, the dignity and grace of the American female character. Modest, yet commanding in appearance, I felt she was worthy of all the admiration which has been lavished on her. She was richly and becomingly dressed, and easy and affable in deportment; looking, indeed, worthy of the high station which Providence assigned her."

The first levee for 1846 was held on Jan. 21:



GEORGE BANCROFT



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“This evening the President for the first time received his friends at the White House, and if a large and highly respectable assemblage could gratify him, he had no cause of complaint. . . .

“The President and his lady received the numerous visitors in the most courteous manner, and after the company had generally assembled, he took the arm of Mrs. Madison and went into the East Room followed by the Vice-President and Mrs. Polk. The Cabinet Ministers followed, and then, intermixed, were Navy and Military officers, foreign Ministers, Senators, members of Congress, etc.

“It is not possible for me to give you any thing like a correct estimate of those who were present, but the line of carriages when I came out extended a great distance outside the gates of the President’s residence.

“It was one of the most interesting incidents of the evening to see Mrs. Madison promenade the East Room, with the appearance of almost youthful agility.

“Among the hundreds that I saw were Dr. White and his lady from Oregon. They were the lions of the evening. The Doctor informed me that he was soon to depart for Oregon by way of Mexico, that being the nearest way for him to reach the mouth of the Columbia.”

The Marine Band supplied music, but there was no dancing.

A gentleman who attended this levee, or another one during the year, writes a full account of his experiences and observations:

“Will the reader be kind enough to imagine himself alone with a single male companion who has volunteered to introduce him, about nine o’clock on some dark, cheerless, moonless,

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lampless night, set down at the portico of the White House, whither he has been conveyed in a rheumatic cab after having made a prolonged tour through rural streets sparsely inhabited by unlighted houses belonging to the city. (It is a remarkable fact that most of the houses in Washington have a predilection for a country life and reside out of town.) He will find a few lamps—which appear to have spent all their lives in damp vaults—lit up in the court-yard of the President's mansion. He will dimly perceive a long array of cabs and carriages of various descriptions,—and a dejected herd of white cabmen with musk-rat caps drawn down over their eyes and their hands and whips thrust into their coat pockets. If his eyes are good, he will see a few colored people of every variety of shade, from the aged specimen of intense blackness to the less polished snuff-color of the adolescent of mongrel hue. But he will *not* see that he is entirely surrounded by a silent army of their brethren in the background, because in the darkness a negro is of course invisible.

“After having observed, or passed unobserved, these human phenomena, he will enter through a large handsome door into a spacious unfurnished hall—a perfect wilderness of an apartment—in which he will perceive a seriously-inclined policeman in a private citizen's dress, with the letter A upon his coat collar, by way of branding him with dignity—a dozen young peripatetics of the ‘Young Democracy’ species walking leisurely about—one or two aristocratic coachmen in livery lounging round the stores, and two small mahogany colored samples of human personal property keeping guard over a pile of coats, cloaks and hats.

“The sudden transition from the darkness outside to the brilliant glare within is not without its effect in impressing one with a magnificent idea of the ceremony through which he is about to pass; and these grand anticipations are considerably heightened by the spirit-stirring music, proceeding from an

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entire band of the U. S. Marines, who are endeavoring to split the roof with clamorous harmony. I am supposing that the reader, whom I am introducing into these court mysteries, is an unsophisticated gentleman from New York or some other "country parts" of the nation, who may have dreamed of the splendors of the ordeal, or formed ideas of its grandeur from printed accounts of similar scenes. It is therefore in some trepidation that—after having surrendered his cloak and hat to the safe keeping of one of the animated images aforesaid—he enters the reception room.

"This feeling is by no means lessened by his introduction into a room glittering with chandeliers and mirrors all on fire. Ranged in an irregular group all at one end stands a bevy of beautiful women whose milliners have sent them forth in fit trim to challenge the rainbow for the exquisiteness and variety of colors in which they are decked, while on their heads and bosoms glittering brilliants recline like nestling glow-worms darting forth rays of light in dazzling emulation. A loud hum of conversation and a continual peal of laughter add somewhat to the confusion of your mind, and it is some minutes before you are sufficiently collected to note all around. Then on the right side of the room you will perceive fifty or sixty gentlemen standing up in silence, and looking on the busy group around the ladies; these gentlemen have no particular business there—they look upon the whole affair as a national show got up for their express gratification—admission gratis. In the centre of the room stands the President, willing to shake as many people by the hand as may be presented to him while his strength lasts; and a fine gentlemanly man he is, Democrat or no Democrat.

"At his right hand you will probably discover Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of War. There is also Mr. Dallas, performing acts of civility with the air of a perfect courtier to every one. Behind the President stands Mrs. Polk, whom I will uphold

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on any and every occasion of your attending the levee to be one of the finest women in the room. You will probably find her supported by an elderly lady in a black turban, who you will know at once is Mrs. Madison; behind them will be twenty or thirty young ladies standing at ease, laughing and flirting with young M. C.'s among whom not the least conspicuous for gallantry and gentlemanly deportment will be Judge Douglas of Illinois.

“Presently your friend will present you to a gentleman standing near the President, who will introduce you. Mr. Polk will shake your hand, ‘be happy to know you’ and all that kind of thing, and although his opponent to the death in politics, you leave him with a favorable impression after all. Having gone through this important ceremony, you fall back among the crowd of lookers-on, and watch the entrance of visitors. There is considerable amusement attending this, and much information to be obtained in the art of shaking hands politely.

“It is not necessary to be informed to which party a member of either house belongs when you see his presentation. Some with a kind of stately humility touch the Presidential fingers and smile in languid respect. These belong to the discomfited and heart-broken Whigs, who have no great love for James K. Polk but much regard for the President of the United States. Others grasp the Executive dexter hand with a Democratic heartiness and an air of merry complacency which proclaim them belonging to that fortunate class, the ‘ins’; and a few wring the magisterial right hand in an imploring manner—look earnestly in the President’s face and stay to converse with him for a few minutes, to let the assembled crowd learn that they are on terms of intimacy with so great a man. These belong to that predestined class who go for ‘the whole or none,’ and are in doubt that his Excellency is veering from the track marked out for him.



MRS. D. P. MADISON



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“A few also will attract attention by their obsequiousness of manner, their ready smiles and the reverential love with which they caress the President’s hand—as if it was a piece of holy porcelain, not to be profaned by familiar usage. These are the patriots who have left their hearths and homes to seek the turmoils of office—who are willing to submit to the martyrdom of a slothful competence for the good of their native land.

“While noting all these things and dreaming that you may one day become that great ‘fixed fact,’ a President, you have been elbowed by the crowd to a doorway, where the solemn policeman whom we noticed at first (what business has the unhappy creature there?) seizes you by the elbow and says in a slow, effective manner: ‘Gentlemen who have been presented, will please walk forward to the East Room,—don’t stop up the passage,’ and as you will be by this time somewhat stunned by the fierce gnashing of trumpets outside and the loud hubbub in the room, it is no bad change.

“To the East Room you repair, then, and find a spacious apartment splendidly furnished and brilliantly illuminated. There is comparative stillness here; the conversation is more moderate, but the ferocious trumpets and clarionets are outside the folding-doors, and the least provocation in the world will arouse their anger. The great amusement of the evening now commences; all before has been merely preparatory. This popular court pastime consists in solemnly promenading round the room in pairs. . . .

“Senators, Ministers, Congressmen, mechanics, clerks, and would-be clerks are there, leading ladies belonging to every stage in society, from the fashionable belle of the higher circles to the more fashionable seamstress. Solemnly and without pause, they perform their slow gyrations, while a group of young men in the centre survey their motions, quizzing their dresses and general appearance. The whole affair seems to

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have been got up for the amusement of this knot of spectators, some of whom are preparing mental notes descriptive of the satin of Miss A., the beaming eyes of Miss B., the gallantry of Gen. C. and the stateliness of Col. D., for the papers throughout the Union.

“The dresses of the ladies form a subject for abstruse study. Half an hour’s contemplation is sufficient to distract any man of common mind. . . .

“Some men parade in gravity, some are merry and others are foppish; there is a good sprinkling of military and naval uniforms, and there are a few horny-faced strangers who are—Ah ye narcotic gods!—chewing tobacco. Soon the company increases; a few ladies, exhausted by their peripatetic labors, seat themselves on sofas; groups of gentlemen congregate around them to talk nonsense and look killing. Count Bodisco holds a private levee at one end of the room, and all the world is introduced. The French, British and other Ambassadors cluster together, glittering in uniforms and the crosses of foreign orders and frightful moustaches and beards. Mr. Polk is forgotten—the gold lace and brilliant swords usurp all attention. Such introducing, such scraping, such curtseying, such jabbering of foreign compliments and violent efforts of some of our people to do the polite in uncouth tongues—such a wild clamor of conversation rages—the band, too, has become insane and the room is oppressively warm, when the President enters leading a lady—probably Mrs. Madison, and followed by Mrs. Polk and all the great people of Washington.

“The noise increases, the complimenting and bowing go on worse than ever; the band has taken matters in its own hands and the instruments have become ungovernable; the promenading ceases. The President has a word for every one, and all mingle together in irregular groups chatting and laughing and coquetting, until unable any longer to bear such tumult you rush distractedly from the room, and give the young ‘nigger’

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who has charge of your hat and cloak a shilling for his trouble, which generosity he gratefully repays by presenting you with an ancient *chapeau* in the last stage of existence."

On entering upon her duties, Mrs. Polk had announced her intention of attending no public balls, or places of public general amusement, during her residence in Washington. This custom, however, did not prevent her from attending the great National Fair, held in the spring of 1846, which attracted to Washington crowds even greater than those of Inaugural times. The Fair opened on May 23, and in the afternoon the President and Mrs. Polk, as well as members of the Cabinet, visited the building. Mrs. Madison was also among the visitors, "a circumstance which did not diminish the crowd."

In this month, also, the Baltimore volunteers, consisting of six companies and six hundred men, summoned to Washington by the order of the President, paraded and visited the White House.

A glimpse of a reception at the White House on Christmas Eve, 1847, is afforded by a Washington correspondent:

"Last evening I had an opportunity of seeing the members of the royal family, together with some choice specimens of the Democracy in the 'circle room' of the White House. It was reception night and the latch-string in the shape of a handsome negro was 'outside the door.' On entering I found a comfortable room full, with a little man, whom I would have taken in any other place for a Methodist parson, stand-

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ing before the fire, bowing and shaking hands in the most precise and indiscriminate manner. He is affable and ordinary enough in conversation to prevent one from feeling that he is in direct communication with the concentrated Majesty of the whole United States and Territories. Mr. Polk is not a man to inspire awe.

“The *better half* of the President was seated on the sofa, engaged with some half a dozen ladies in lively conversation; and though ill and clumsy at millinery, yet I will try to describe what she ‘had on.’ A maroon-colored velvet dress, with short sleeves, and modestly high in the neck, trimmed with very deep lace; and a handsome pink head dress was all that struck the eye of the general observer. . . . Mrs. Polk is a handsome, shrewd and sensible woman—better looking and better dressed than any of her numerous ‘female acquaintances’ on the present occasion.

“Among the ‘guests of distinction’ were the Hon. Cave Johnson, P. M. G., who bears a strong resemblance about the head to Mr. Greeley, of the *Tribune*; Mr. Vinton, of Ohio; Commodore de Kay, Mr. Rockwell, of Connecticut, a Wall Street financier, who can draw a larger draft on London than any other man in the country; two or three pairs of epaulettes; a couple of pretty deaf and dumb girls, who talked with their fingers; and scores of others who only talked with their eyes; while a whole regiment of the ‘raw material’ of the Democracy, in frock coats, stood as straight as grenadiers around the outer circle of the room, gazing in silent astonishment at the President and the chandeliers. . . .

“I left these spacious public apartments, in which all of us own, perhaps a niche—but not without promising the sable Prime Minister at the door, a share in the ‘good time that’s coming,’ and being quite as much amused by his honest reply, as at all that passed within. He ‘wished Ole Massa Rough-and-Ready would come soon.’”



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, SOUTH PORTICO (1842)



## JAMES K. POLK

The dress worn by Mrs. Polk on this occasion and described by the above visitor at the White House may have been the same that appears in her portrait presented to the White House by the ladies of Tennessee, and now hanging in the lower corridor. Here Mrs. Polk is represented in a red velvet gown with short black lace sleeves. She wears a necklace and bracelets.

A week later Mr. Polk held his New Year's reception, which was more brilliant than usual:

“The New Year came in gloomily in clouds and tears; but they were soon brushed away, and a little after eleven o'clock the whole District of Columbia and the Hotels came pouring along the Avenue in the direction of the White House. The four horse equipages of our ‘Foreign Relations’ were the only notable feature in the undistinguishable throng. The ladies also turned out *en masse* to wish Mrs. Polk a happy New Year; and it is probably safe to say that all the beauty and fashion of the city, as well as all the dignity and democracy honored the Chief Magistrate with the compliments of the season. There were no refreshments, of course, and nothing to animate the crowd but the beauty of the women and a splendid band of music composed of clarionets, fifes, brass instruments and bass drums. Mr. Polk was dressed in a seedy suit of solemn black, while the ‘Presidentess,’ as she is called here, was radiant with smiles and diamonds. The officers of the Army and Navy appeared in full uniform; and none of the Mexican lions attracted more attention than the handsome and dashing General Shields. He is quite a young man, apparently not over thirty, with black hair and moustaches and a flashing black eye. He can talk as well as fight, and makes

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a first-rate dinner speech. He still carries his left arm in a sling and the ladies have provided him with ribbons enough to keep it tied up for half a century."

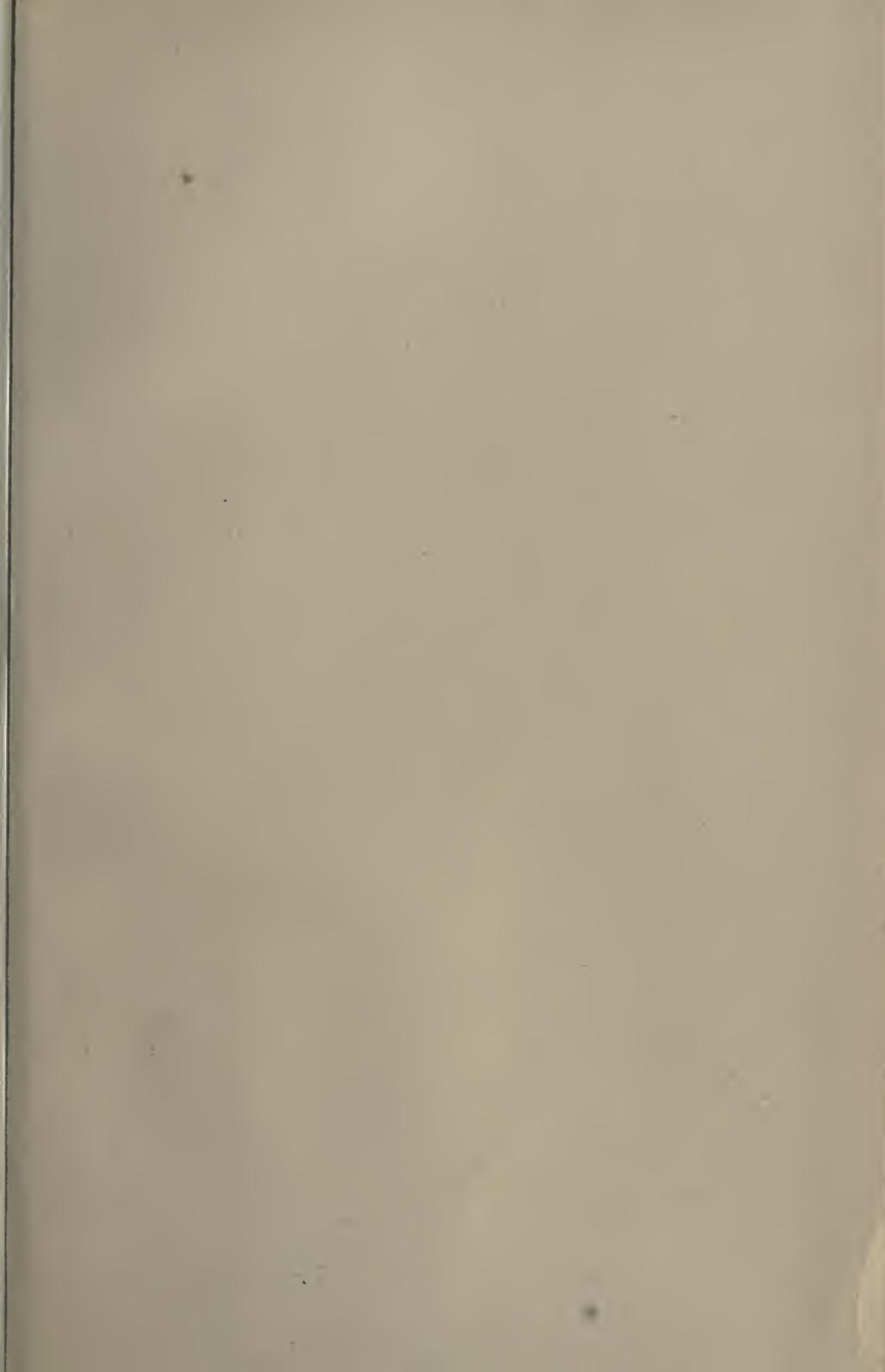
Another lion of the occasion was Midshipman Rogers, famous for his hair-breadth escapes from prison, and his deeds of bravery. He was described as "quite a dandy in citizen's dress."

In February, the President received a delegation of Chippewa chiefs; and a few days before the Inauguration, the Polks gave a dinner-party to General Taylor, and held a levee the same evening to enable their friends to bid them farewell.

END OF VOLUME I.









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