

MEMOIRS OF ISABELLA HAGNER
1901–1905

SOCIAL SECRETARY TO FIRST LADY
EDITH CAROW ROOSEVELT

By the time President McKinley was reelected I was well established in the profession of social secretary, if I may so dignify it. I then had among my patrons, dear Mrs. William Sheffield Cowles, sister of Vice President Theodore Roosevelt. I had never met the Vice-President and Mrs. Roosevelt, until the day after the Inauguration, at a tea given in their honor by Mrs. Cowles.

The following summer, 1901, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote me, asking me to help her with the list and invitations for an afternoon tea she expected to give for her daughter's debut, in the autumn. The family had rented the Bellamy Storer house at Rhode Island Avenue and Seventeenth Street, and were to take possession on their return. Naturally, I was much delighted at the prospect of this work, with such an interesting family.

The appalling news of President McKinley's being shot on September 6, followed by those days of nationwide anxiety, and subsequent sadness at his death, put all idea of this work out of my mind.

Washington was plunged into mourning, for though The President had not entered into its life to any extent, except politically, and in his small, official, and friendly circle; still he was much admired and his deep and constant devotion to his invalid wife had caught the public's imagination, and had made him a beloved figure.

The funeral, was, as many of us remember, held in the Rotunda of the Capitol, and owing to the arrangement of public affairs, being rather lax in those days, there seemed no impropriety in my going to the services with Celia Miles, the daughter of General Nelson A. Miles, on her Mother's entrance ticket. There was a good deal of confusion in the arrangements but it was nevertheless an impressive sight, and I remember seeing Mrs. Roosevelt in the distance with some of the children.

You can imagine my surprise when, a few days later, I received a letter from Miss Young, the children's governess, who wrote for Mrs. Roosevelt, asking if I could give her several hours daily, to take charge of her personal mail. She had decided on this plan, even in these first few days, largely I think, because several of her notes, sent to the White House, to Mrs. McKinley had never been acknowledged. Naturally, no blame could be attached to that poor invalid lady, but it showed a lack of system which Mrs. Roosevelt could not countenance.

(I would like to say that ever since this position was created for me, I have always felt very strongly that the job of secretary to the President's wife is one which should not be solicited. I am happy to say that both times in my case, I was asked to take the place, without ever raising a finger to get it.)

I could not imagine how I would manage this daily assignment, as I was then a clerk in the War Department and feared it would probably mean resigning. But, quite undaunted, I quickly wrote, thanking Mrs. Roosevelt, and saying I would be on hand, as she suggested, the morning after her arrival at the White House. I secured two weeks' leave from the War Department beginning September 26th and, at the hour appointed, I arrived. I cannot say that I felt entirely at ease, but I do know that I felt very thrilled; I had had by this time a number of first interviews, but none so momentous as this!

I was evidently expected, and after having been shown into the Red Room and announced, I was taken upstairs. In those days the glass screen reaching from floor to ceiling separated the front of the main corridor from the long hall as we now know it, and the stairway for the family occupied the northwest corner of what is now the State Dining Room. Mrs. Roosevelt met me at the stairway, and began telling me what she thought she would need, though of course, as she said, it was impossible at that time, to really know. She seemed to take it for granted that I was engaged and made it all so easy and friendly. She inquired if I could commence at once and took me into her bedroom, to her own desk and started me in.

The White House Historical Association has reset the following excerpt of Isabella Hagner's typescript memoirs, now in the White House collection in the Isabella Hagner James Papers in the Office of the Curator. Editor Priscilla Roosevelt has corrected the typographical errors, modernized some punctuation, added explanatory endnotes, and made a slight rearrangement of the original text in order to present the author's story in a clear, chronological manner.

My only self recommendation was to tell her that she need never feel any of her affairs would be repeated, or discussed by me with anyone, and her reply, with that lovely smile of hers, was, "If I did not already know that, I would never have asked you to come."

I met The President and the four younger children; Alice was off visiting until later in the Autumn, and it was Ted's first year at Groton School.

The President was very friendly and pleasant and the children and I soon became great friends. I was rather appalled at the long words they used, and I must say I was frequently stumped by their questions. Mrs. Roosevelt had decided to send Ethel to the National Cathedral School, Kermit to a small private school, and Archie and Quentin to the Force Public School. The President always said, boys should at sometime in their life, get the give and take of a public school, particularly if they were going to comparatively small boarding schools and to college.

This little corner in Mrs. Roosevelt's bedroom now became my daily workshop and continued so, until after the house was altered, when I was moved to the West End of the upper corridor. I had a telephone at my elbow, but I have often wondered how Mrs. Roosevelt could have stood having me there, right under her nose most of the day, when she had so many new responsibilities to tire her. If, for any reason, she needed the room, I would move, bag and baggage to a temporary table outside her door. This all seems very primitive now for a First Lady of the Land, when one considers that the present occupant¹ of the White House has three or four secretaries and apparently clerks, typists and telephones galore. In a few days I told Mrs. Roosevelt my complication in regard to my position in the War Department. The President made inquiries and it was arranged that I should be detailed as a clerk to the White House from the War Department, which was and still is, I believe, frequently done. This plan was continued until after The President's election in 1904, when provision was made for me in the regular appropriations for the office force, as a clerk at \$1600 a year. Wouldn't the present secretaries sniff at that meagre salary?

A busy time commenced for me; there was a huge mail, with every kind of request and inquiry, letters of sympathy at President McKinley's death, notes of congratulation on their coming to the White House, and innumerable donations wanted for fairs. Until one has held a position of this kind, it is impossible to realize the ingenuity of the human mind in making their requests and the fantastic articles for which they ask; old clothes and pianos were among the prime favorites. One peculiarity of many of the letters being that the writer usually preferred to ask The President's wife, rather than to apply to their own family or friends. In addition to these letters from strangers, there was much personal correspondence with which I was able to help Mrs. Roosevelt, and our few hours a day began to increase by leaps and bounds.

As I look back, my first important business letters were to Mr. Douglas Robinson, The President's brother-in-law, in regard to securing the proper and vitally necessary carriages and horses, with the proper liveries for the coachmen, footmen and groom. Until the time of President Taft, every incoming President had to purchase his own equipages, the White House having only a wagon for the steward, though Army Quartermaster carriages could be called upon when necessary. A coupe and surrey were provided by the War Department until the vehicles and horses ordered in New York had arrived, but they were rather sad sights for The President and his Lady to use, even as a makeshift. Mr. Robinson got very busy and many letters and telegrams were exchanged. Finally he secured a coupe, laundette, and open surrey with two pairs of carriage horses. The President's and family's riding horses were sent from Oyster Bay, and I cannot remember exactly who had the purchasing of additional mounts later.

The liveries provided were of the same pattern and color, dark blue cloth with striped buff and

blue waistcoat, as always used by The President's father's family in years gone by. The buttons had T. R. on them and the horse blankets, carriage covers, etc., were all marked with his initials.

It has always amused me that when the Tafts came to the White House, thinking these were the regular White House livery, they used them, and in addition put the six colored men who supplanted the ushers at the front door in the same uniforms. The buttons must have been changed and had some national emblem placed upon them. It seems a queer turn of fate which brings another Roosevelt back to the White House, to find their family livery, which I suppose has now become a national one, owing to its use since 1901.

Mrs. Roosevelt had brought her three maids and cook from Oyster Bay as well as William Pinkney, the colored steward from the Executive Mansion in Albany. All these (except Pinckney) as well as the head butler, first coachman and footman were paid by The President. On delving into the customary arrangements in the housekeeping departments, Mrs. Roosevelt found the government provided two colored men who did the heavy cleaning on the bedroom floor; assistants in the pantry and kitchen; and grooms for the horses. All except the coachman and grooms were fed at Presidential expense. It was a strange arrangement which had apparently been carried on for years; when President Taft came in it was very sensibly changed so that all the servants, except his valet and Mrs. Taft's personal maid, were paid out of the government appropriations for the White House. The salary of The President as well as the fund for the White House were at this time both increased. It always amused me to note the articles which were ordered and paid for by the Public Buildings and Grounds: soap and all bathroom necessities, cleaning materials for the kitchen and pantry, and all necessary brooms, dusters, etc., for the whole house. Ice and coal were also furnished; the cost of the extra servants and all decorations for entertainments were met by the government fund, as well as fresh flowers which were daily arranged for all the rooms, which came from the White House greenhouse. All food of every kind was paid for by the President, as well as the viands and all liquid refreshments for official and private entertaining. The only exception to this rule was in the case of expenses incidental to White House entertainments on occasions of visits from foreign potentates or national guests, when requisition was made upon a special fund for this purpose in the Department of State. I may add here that when The Presidential family used the *Mayflower* and *Sylph*, as well as any other trips on Naval vessels, the charge for their food was met by The President.

Very wisely The President and Mrs. Roosevelt made no vital changes in the first few weeks. It was so confusing to know what should be done first, but Mrs. Roosevelt, as always, was serene and apportioned her days so well that she never gave one the feeling of hurry and bustle which is so tiring.

Gradually everyone settled down to their appointed work; Mr. William A. Loeb, who had been with The President when he was Governor of New York, was made Assistant Secretary to The President, but few other changes took place in the office. Pendall, the Chief Usher, was relieved on account of age; and Stone, one of his assistants, had been appointed. Pat McKenna, brother of Mrs. Roosevelt's maid, was given a job as messenger in the office, where to this day he remains, having been door keeper for The Presidents for many years.

Sixty days' official mourning for President McKinley had been proclaimed by The President, so no formal entertainments took place. Old Washington friends came in informally for tea, and The President constantly asked men to lunch, which was a custom all through his administration. He found he could so often discuss things better this way than in his office, as well as enjoy having his friends about him.

Among the first house guests were John Greenway (second husband of Isabella Greenway), and John McIlheny, both of whom had been Rough Riders. The morning after the arrival of Mr.

McIlhenny, the inadequate provision for guests was peculiarly illustrated. One of the bedrooms facing the north portico had been divided by a wooden partition reaching half way to the ceiling, and made into two baths, one of which had to be used by the Roosevelt boys, and the other provided the only accommodation for guests. While Mr. McIlhenny was seated in his tub, he was greeted with a large wet sponge on top of his head!

It was so amusing to see the wonderment and pleasure (though the latter on some occasions was tempered) of the household at the presence of a family of healthy, fun-loving children. Even the office staff had their surprises. One day when I had been there at lunch we found Secretary-to-The President George B. Cortelyou waiting at the head of the stairway to see The President. I am afraid he was much shocked to see The President and the children chasing Mrs. Roosevelt up the steps, and she beating them.

Early in the Administration, President Roosevelt decided the official name should be "The White House," and had all paper stamped for official and family use in this way. Heretofore the stationery had been stamped the "Executive Mansion," but the President quite rightly said that there were Executive Mansions in almost every state, whereas there was only one White House. In the early days, it had various names, sometimes called The President's Palace, later The President's House, but now for all time I believe it will be known as the White House, which gives a distinction no other name could give.

Mrs. Roosevelt had remembered the painting "Love and Life," which George F. Watts, the English artist, had presented to the American Nation during one of President Cleveland's terms. At that time there was such an outcry from some of the women's Societies, on account of the nudity of the figures, against hanging it in the White House that it had been turned over to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. It is a most beautiful picture, ethereal and pure, wonderful coloring, and no suggestion of carnality in the symbolic figures.²

The President and Mrs. Roosevelt felt it should be hung in the White House, and also wanted it, on account of the pleasure of its beauty. Mr. Frederick McGuire, Curator of the gallery, was loathe to give it up, and laughingly told Mrs. Roosevelt he would only let it go if she promised its return on her leaving the White House. To this she agreed, and true to her promise, it was taken back on March 3rd, 1909. During these intervening years it was a joy and benefaction to us all, and I had especial pleasure, as it was hung in the West Corridor near my desk. On the arrival of Mrs. Wilson, I suggested its return to the White House, where I hope it will now always remain.

There were few changes that fall and winter of 1901-1902, except moving the furniture about, to make the living rooms of the family more homelike and to try to dispose of the children in the inadequate quarters. President and Mrs. Roosevelt chose the Southwest suite of a large double bedroom, in which was placed the sets of furniture, always said to have been purchased in President Buchanan's time for the visit of the Prince of Wales, and later known as the Lincoln set. There was a bath and dressing room too. Alice and Ethel had the corresponding rooms on the Northwest corner, and Archie and Quentin, with their old nurse, Mame, in the room adjoining their parents. This left only one spare room, and as I have explained before, the extra bedroom had been divided into two baths. The only quarters for the maids was a space boarded off from the corridor, over the front door. The Oval Room was the family library and sitting room, and between this part of the house and the offices there were large folding doors. Frequently The President had to use the library for conferences, or a waiting room for special visitors. Mrs. Roosevelt used to always say the windows had to be frequently opened in there, "to let out the politicians." But joking aside, one can understand with all the office force, and visitors of every kind arriving all day, it was impossible to keep that end of the house fresh and airy.

Mrs. Roosevelt and I finally evolved some kind of plan and rules for handling the mail. She looked over the first bundle of letters that arrived in the morning, taking out her personal ones; the remainder and all parcels were placed on my desk. On my arrival between nine and nine-thirty I opened and sorted all the mail: the letters which had to be shown Mrs. Roosevelt; anything political put aside to be turned over to the office; requests for donations to fairs; and the begging letters too fantastic to consider. The latter were answered by a form letter, which I composed and had printed, and then signed by me. Mrs. Roosevelt decided it was better to try to send a small memento to many fairs, rather than something elaborate to a few, so as "Handkerchief Showers" were then very popular, she bought dozens of handkerchiefs, and these were dispatched, one by one, accompanied with her visiting card, on which I wrote "Good Wishes" for her. We kept a record book of these donations so that two would not be sent to the same fairs or towns. The President made the rule no presents of any value could be accepted by him or the family, so all parcels were inspected, and only those of no intrinsic value were kept, though everything was acknowledged, and if necessary the articles returned.

After these letters were disposed of, Mrs. Roosevelt would go over with me those claiming her attention and tell me the notes, etc. she wanted written as well as any plans she wished carried out. While I was doing the mail, she was usually interviewing Maggie, the cook, as she always ordered the meals. Frequently we would go shopping or walking after my finishing the most important work. Mrs. Roosevelt was most reticent about making herself conspicuous, so when shopping, she would usually wander away after making a purchase, leaving me to give the address. I remember a new shop girl at one of the shops was particularly dumb, and Mrs. Roosevelt came back to see what kept me and said in a very firm tone, "Don't you know the name of your President?" and then we walked off! Soon the clerks in the shops which she frequented came to know her and would vie with each other to wait upon her, and I don't believe she left many more devoted admirers in Washington than these people who had had the pleasure of serving her.

Even with all of the many engagements and stress of getting settled The President and Mrs. Roosevelt then as always, during their whole occupancy at the White House, saved the hours between the children's supper and their own dinner hour, to read or be read to, by the children. In Alice Longworth's "Crowded Hours," she speaks of this being the time when she so frequently went to see the family.

Several small informal dinners were given in the first few months of the Roosevelts' occupancy, as well as a few tea parties held in the Red Room, where I always poured tea.

Plans were made for beginning the regular official season with the Cabinet dinner, with the usual New Year's Reception, Diplomatic Reception, Diplomatic Dinner, Judicial Reception, Supreme Court Dinner, Congressional Reception, and Army and Navy Reception. Always as soon as these dates were decided upon, the Secretary to The President gave them to the press, and had copies sent to the officials for them to plan accordingly. I remember staying at the White House that Autumn for a few days while The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were absent, I think on their first trip on the small dispatch boat the U.S.S. *Sylph*, which they used so constantly both in Washington and at Oyster Bay.

Mrs. Roosevelt did not want the children alone in their new surroundings, as there was no governess at this time, only their nurse Mame.

I remember working hard over the plans for Alice's dance, which was to be given on January 2nd. No married people were to be invited, but it took a deal of work to compile the list, and not leave out anybody who should be included, as well as keep the list to proper proportions. I had begun to feel rather lazy and ill, but normally being a strong person, I paid little attention, and went to the Army and Navy football game with Secretary of War and Mrs. Root on the private car which was given them

with the compliments of the Pennsylvania Railroad. It was the first time I was ever invited, and though I was so ill I could hardly hold my head up, I was bound not to miss it. I returned that night and went to bed with typhoid fever and was unable to return to my work until the end of February. I would not have gone back even then, except that Ted was ill with a very bad case of pneumonia at Groton, so, feeble as I was, I tried to keep things straight in Mrs. Roosevelt's absence.

I am a little ahead of my story. At the beginning of my illness, dear Mrs. Root asked several of my employers and a few of my intimate friends if they would join in making up a purse for the expenses of my illness and recuperation. This was done and she sent for my brother to tell him, and insist that I should be at once taken to the hospital and given every luxury and care. She also wanted me to be told, so that I would have no worry during illness, a wonderful act of generous kindness and thoughtfulness on her and the other ladies' part. Mrs. Roosevelt very kindly sent word to me at the hospital that my place would be kept for me.

There seemed so little dignity and respect for the office when the Roosevelts went to the White House that both President and Mrs. Roosevelt felt that something should be done about it. Of course, owing to Mrs. McKinley's ill health, this condition had probably increased. At the time there was a good deal of comment, and a number of people rather resented the changes which were gradually instituted and which have now practically become part of the position. One of the things which Mrs. Roosevelt thought did not show the proper courtesy was the question of people seating themselves while The President or she stood. This, after all, was only a common courtesy which most people observe when an older or important person is present. She also felt that The President should be addressed as "Mr. President" and not as Theodore, Teddy, or Roosevelt, so, in speaking of him to everyone, except the immediate family and intimate friends like the Lodges, and even then only in private, she never spoke of her husband by his name. I remember especially that Senator Lodge and Admiral Cowles always observed the custom of saying Mr. President except when with the family. As was customary, The President always arose from the table or went out of a room first, and sat on the right hand side of the carriage when driving. Apropos of this, I remember on my first visit to Oyster Bay standing back when leaving the dining room, after breakfast, waiting for The President to go out. He turned laughingly to me and said, "Belle, go first, I can still be a gentlemen in my own house."

During my illness Mr. Warren G. Young and Mr. Thomas Netherland helped Mrs. Roosevelt in every way. These two gentlemen, before my arrival in the White House, had, between them, been in charge of the writing and sending out of invitations for all entertainments. Of course the lists had been previously passed upon by the Secretary to The President. I am happy to say we three were always good friends, with never any friction, and I don't honestly believe they ever resented me and my position.

The New Year's Day Reception in 1902 was the first formal entertainment of the new Administration. Naturally I have no notes of any kind of this first season. Alice's party, as well as the official dinners and receptions, were carried out following the custom of many years; though at this time, in trying to reduce the numbers at the receptions, the cards were issued for each occasion separately, instead of inviting everyone to all four receptions. An amusing incident of which I heard later was at the Diplomatic Reception. Mrs. William Draper was, with many others, kept standing on the North Portico for a very long time before being able to secure her carriage. Later there was much protest on her husband's part, and from that time until she died, the lady never spoke to me. She had always been most friendly before, and had frequently asked me to her house, so being completely unconscious of any other reason, I have always laid it to this inconvenience at the White House. Poor luck, when I was at the hospital in bed!

Mrs. Roosevelt had intended to give several Saturday afternoon receptions for the general public, and receive informally on Friday afternoons, but as soon as this latter plan was noised abroad, so many people came the affairs became unmanageable, and it was decided wiser to abandon both arrangements. Hereafter Mrs. Roosevelt made appointments or invited small companies for tea. The requests for these personal calls were usually received in notes, or with more informal friends, by telephone messages to me.

The aides on duty at this time were: Lieut. Colonel Theodore A. Bingham, U.S.A., the engineer officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds; Major Charles L. McCawley, U.S.M.C.; and Captain John Curtis Gilmore, U.S.A. Shortly after, Captain William S. Cowles, U.S.N., The President's brother-in-law, was appointed Naval Aide.

All through the ensuing years, constant improvements for entertainments were being made, as I shall tell later, but in those early days, there was so much confusion that, as Mrs. Cowles once said, we could establish a new precedent in a moment!

I have much resented some articles which have recently been published, in which the impression has been given that the Roosevelt children were an unruly and boisterous lot. They were most certainly not, only normal, healthy American children, full of life and fun. I know of no children who knew better and more quickly obeyed the parental "Yes" and "No."

The President and Mrs. Roosevelt always gave much time to their children and thought to their upbringing. Their good comradeship has been so much dwelt upon in books by or about the family that it seems superfluous for me to comment thereupon. The President felt that they were only custodians for the time being of the White House and its belongings, and he impressed very strongly on all the family their responsibility in this direction.

Early in their residence, on the night of one of the Receptions, Kermit, and I think Ethel too, secreted themselves behind some of the palms and decorations in one of the window alcoves. In getting out, some of the plants were broken and pots destroyed. This coming to the President's ear, he summoned Kermit and the gardener in charge of the decorations, and thereupon delivered a good lecture to the boy. Afterwards Kermit told someone that the joke was, the gardener was much more frightened than he! The fact that later, when Archie was ill, the pony "Algonquin" was taken up to his room via the freight elevator for a few moments seems to have given rise to a story that the upper corridor was used as their pets' playground! The children had pets but there was a rule that they were to take care of them themselves, except of course the horses. There were few things, I am sure, that were hurt or destroyed during the Roosevelts' occupancy. They were a happy family and all of them, from the President down, had their friends and relations constantly at the house. Mrs. Roosevelt was always glad for the younger boys to bring their "crowd" to play in the garden, rather than have Archie and Quentin at large. I remember a year or so later our being so amused when we looked out the window to watch Archie's foot ball team, who were practicing in the garden, to see one of the team with the large letters painted across the seat of his jeans, "Push." I don't know which position he held in the eleven, but I should have imagined it must have been center. Often as I sat working at my desk the children would come and play at my end of the corridor, and Ethel and Kermit particularly considered me a fair mark for any joke. One of their most constant pranks was getting under my chair to tickle my ankles when I was in the midst of a most important conversation. I couldn't kick, as I feared front teeth or noses!

This first season Alice had had a wonderful winter, full of engagements at home, as well as in New York and Boston. The festivities incident to her christening Kaiser William's yacht, *The Meteor*, on March 25th, 1902 had added an international flavor. The Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry, had been

received and dined at the White House.

A circumstance which caused much commotion was the withdrawal of the invitation for Senator Ben Tillman of South Carolina to this dinner. He had had a fight with Senator Anselm McLaurin on the floor of the Senate, and The President felt he could not let this breach of dignity go unnoticed. Several changes had taken place in the cabinet; Secretary of Treasury Lyman J. Gage was replaced by Mr. Leslie M. Shaw and later the Secretary of Navy Mr. John B. Long was succeeded by Mr. William Moody.

Soon after Secretary Shaw came to Washington, Mrs. Shaw naturally met Mrs. John Hay, the Secretary of State's wife. The latter was a very handsome, dignified lady, and one of her friends was horrified to hear Mrs. Shaw telling her that they certainly should be good friends, as they were both "so fleshy." Mrs. Shaw was also reported to have been so surprised that they were so frequently asked to eat out.

Many engrossing questions were occupying The President; for several months there had been the very acid dispute in regard to General Nelson A. Miles, anent his remarks in regard to Admiral Schley's case; Attorney General Philander C. Knox instituted the case in Minnesota to dissolve the Northern Securities Companies; and on March 11th The President let it be frankly known he wanted to be elected to the Presidency in 1905. He also took a firm stand, pressing the passing of the Irrigation Bill in Congress. The question of building an Isthmian Canal was much discussed and advocated by The President.

Mrs. Roosevelt's portrait by Cecilia Beaux was being painted this later winter and spring.³ Ethel now has it hanging in her drawing room at Oyster Bay. In the picture she was sitting beside her mother. Her figure is almost like a sketch, while Mrs. Roosevelt's is a finished portrait. Ted's illness and the many other interruptions made it very hard for Mrs. Roosevelt to have the requisite number of sittings. Poor Miss Beaux was distracted, and Miss Bessie Kean, sister of the Senator, being about the same figure as Mrs. Roosevelt, frequently came to the White House and posed in Mrs. Roosevelt's gown, which helped speed the good work.

On Easter Monday the Egg Rolling took place, and on this occasion Mrs. Roosevelt as always asked the children of the Cabinet and Aides, as well as some of the children's intimate friends, to join their elders watching the crowd. This function is always a pretty sight, on a good day, and at first the grounds were kept open all day, but when the officer in charge explained to The President how injurious it was to the whole garden, and particularly to the young grass, and how expensive it was to clean and tidy the grounds, the arrangements were changed to have the White House garden open in the morning and in the afternoon, the Marine Band played on the White Lot,⁴ giving much more space to the company, and saving hundreds of dollars for the government.

Alice had her visit to Governor General and Mrs. Leonard Wood at Havana this spring, and I have always remembered Mrs. Wood telling me of her dignity and poise whenever she had to appear in public as her father's daughter. President and Mrs. Roosevelt went to the Charleston Tercentenary Exposition and later the entertainments for the French Commission sent to unveil the Rochambeau Statue in Lafayette Square.

Several pairs of beautiful vases and, I think, a bust of Benjamin Franklin were presented to the White House and a set of beautiful bisque figures were given to Mrs. Roosevelt personally. (They were frequently used for table decorations at large dinners and are now at Oyster Bay.)⁵ In June the family went to Sagamore.

Many members of Congress had realized the immediate necessity of enlarging the family quarters in the White House, as well as more adequate accommodations for The President and his office

force. The appropriation was finally made, and the famous firm of architects, McKim, Mead and White drew up the plans which were, after much discussion and examination, decided upon. Most of the furniture was moved to storage and Mrs. Richard Townsend's house, 2 Lafayette Square, was rented for temporary offices and one floor reserved for The President's use. The confusion at the White House can be imagined and like all improvements, much more had to be done than was anticipated. It was a stupendous work, but I am sure no one who has seen the results grudges one penny that was spent.

All bills had to be OK'd and paid by Colonel Theodore Bingham, the Engineer Officer in charge of the office of Public Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Charles McKim's artistic temperament and Colonel Bingham's austere and analytical mind caused many clashes. President and Mrs. Roosevelt frequently had to be peacemakers or else all operations would have ceased. No one but Colonel Bingham could ever have realized how Mrs. Roosevelt thought and planned to try and make the appropriations for these improvements be used to the best advantage. She felt very strongly that in The President's House the part used by the public should be kept in as perfect condition as possible. With this in mind, and money running low, she had a great many of the large carpets from downstairs made over for the upper corridors and bedrooms. The Curtains from the lower hall were utilized to recover the furniture in the dressing rooms on the garden floor and the bedrooms. When it was necessary she gave up any little extra comfort for herself and family, rather than sacrifice an improvement in the lower floors. I don't believe the succeeding families who have since occupied the White House can adequately appreciate her care and supervision in this reconstruction.

I may as well here as later give my paean of praise of Mrs. Roosevelt. I can say what I like, as she never knowingly reads anything about herself. She is a descendant of Jonathan Edwards, and of French extraction; so her New England conscience, joined with her innate good taste in art, music and literature, make a remarkable combination. Mr. Frederick B. McGuire of the Concoran Art Gallery (where she spent many happy hours while in Washington) always said she had more instinctive acumen and judgment in regard to things artistic than he had ever known. Her mental processes are more like a man's, though coupled with the greatest femininity and daintiness. By nature and inclination she should probably have had a life of sheltered seclusion among her family and friends, but owing to The President's natural tastes and political associations, she was and is constantly in the limelight, and never did a woman carry herself with more gentle dignity and charm. Her really intimate friends to whom she gives her all have been comparatively few, but her friendliness is always there, to high and humble alike. Her wisdom in never offering advice until solicited is an attribute few women, and not many men, possess. Her real christian spirit in these days of much unbelief is an inspiration to all who know her, as well as her unselfish devotion to family and all who have a claim upon her. Or course, before the family came to the White House their income was small, and demands great, but even now Mrs. Roosevelt hates wastefulness, and believes in proper frugality, in order to be able to lend a hand when right and proper. Her great patriotism and courage were certainly shown to all the country when her four boys went overseas, her "Benjamin" not to return; never a murmur, but an example of fortitude, good sense and foregoing mourning for her boy, so that those who were left would not be saddened. Then too, the Colonel's and her decision to let "the tree lie where it fell" was another inspiring example of unselfishness.⁶

I have told of so many of the sterling qualities, so to speak, of Mrs. Roosevelt, but even with all of them, she might not have the influence she wields, were it not for her delightful sense of humor and fun. She makes the best of companions on any jaunt, indoor or out, full of interest and enthusiasm, and some of our merriest moments have been at the theatre together, seeing some foolish, amusing

play or comic opera. She never knowingly goes to current plays when she hears they are broad or disgusting, but there are few productions of merit that she misses in New York, and she is a constant attendant at the concerts and opera. Her influence is wielded in a rather passive sense as she has the uncanny quality of making those who know her feel her lack of approval and disagreement without a word or action on her part. She has always given the widest range to the individuality of her children, and even when they were quite young, Colonel Roosevelt and she let them decide much for themselves. On the rare occasions when Mrs. Roosevelt "rises in her ire," there is no loud word spoken, but one feels lower than the snake, and more foolish than a dunce! A great and good woman in every sense of the word, keeping to her own right sphere, but thoroughly fulfilling every one of its obligations. She has always, in all the years that I have known her, been equal to every question and emergency and has met them with fortitude and serene self-possession. I cannot bring her charm before you, for only a look into her face, and the winsomeness of her smile, and the timbre of her voice can give that to you, but I hope my readers may realize a little more than before the qualities which went to make up the wife and helpmate of our great president, Theodore Roosevelt.

I had met Mrs. Roosevelt and some of the family in New York in the summer of 1902 at the New York Yacht Club landing, where we took the *Sylph* for Oyster Bay. We embarked quite late, and as we were sailing along, we had dinner on board. On our arrival at Oyster Bay we were taken off in launches and landed at Mrs. West Roosevelt's dock.⁷ I was among the first to land after Mrs. Roosevelt, and then Ethel on one side and Kermit on the other proceeded to lead me to Sagamore. It was very dark, and I had no idea how or where we were going, but they ran me along, through Mrs. West Roosevelt's garden, across the road, and up the path through the woods. I may say I was a very dazed and breathless guest at the top of the hill. Another experience of this first visit was at breakfast next morning, when suddenly out of a clear sky, one of the children exclaimed, "Belle has the bug." I had no idea what they were saying, but finally discovered that one of the butter plates had a golden bug which was the much sought after prize at each meal.

Mrs. Roosevelt realized very strongly the necessity of the secret service men guarding the house at Oyster Bay, but she bitterly complained one day at lunch that she did think when she went out on her upper porch for her afternoon rest, they might not spend their time gazing at her as if she were hatching anarchists. Very often she and The President would steal off down by the barn and through the apple orchard and woods down to their bathing beach on Cold Spring Harbor and take a nice row, all unbeknownst to the guardians of the law. Then too, they would frequently, when The President's work would permit, go off quite alone rowing to some quiet spot and spend the day. These long absences were always explained beforehand to the Secret Service Men, for The President was particularly thoughtful of them and their duties.

I never spent the whole summer at Oyster Bay, but was free to make what visits I chose, having my mail follow me and attending to it wherever I happened to be. Mrs. Roosevelt always asked me for a visit to Sagamore every year, and if any particular thing of interest was going on, she usually planned for me to be there at that time.

The President had been very pleased when Congress had, before adjournment, agreed to the Panama Canal route. He made several visits to Washington, and in late August he started on a speaking tour of New England.

On September 3rd the carriage in which The President was riding was run into by an electric car, and the Secret Service man, Frank H. Tyree, was killed.⁸ This catastrophe, the family felt, was a real personal loss. A few days later the party returned to Oyster Bay, where in the middle of September The President and Mrs. Roosevelt had a public reception for the neighbors, to which over 7000 guests

came. Soon thereafter he started on a trip to the West, which he intended to extend to the coast, but in Indianapolis, his leg, which had been hurt in the accident, had to be operated upon, and Dr. Rixey insisted on his return to Washington, where he was met by Mrs. Roosevelt who had come from Oyster Bay. A second operation was necessary, but nothing deterred him from keeping up the many duties of his office.

He had been immensely worried all summer by the continued coal strike, and realized if the matter was not speedily settled, there would probably be bloodshed and certainly terrible suffering from hunger and cold. After much consultation and thought, in his characteristic way, he took the bull by the horns and invited representatives of the operators and of the labor men to meet him at a conference. This move caused the greatest amount of criticism, some favorable, but much adverse.

The delegates arrived one October morning at the temporary offices, were shown into The President's room, where he sat in a rolling chair, with his injured leg cocked up in front of him. Attorney General Knox was present, and after the conference was over, I remember his coming in to see Mrs. Roosevelt and me in the adjoining room, and telling us of The President's earnest and sensible plea for a commission to arbitrate their differences. This the two parties agreed to do, so forthwith the conferees were appointed and eventually the differences were ironed out. This was, I believe, the forerunner of all conferences between employers and labor. The President always believed in "Rendering unto Caesar, etc.," but he never believed in overriding the rights of one to help the other. After The President had recuperated, Mrs. Roosevelt returned to Oyster Bay, leaving Ethel to go back to school. I was often with The President and Ethel in these few weeks before the family's return, in late October or early November. It had been a most stupendous job doing over the White House, and it was a wonderful thing, I have always thought, to finish it in such a comparatively short period, though at the time there seemed endless delays. At last the family moved in, in order to get the workmen out, and on December 18th, 1902, the Cabinet Dinner was given, when practically everything except the Blue Room was complete.

There was much amusement in the family when it was discovered that a lavatory had been cozily placed in one of the side recesses of the large west window. It was never divulged whose brilliant idea this was, but The President had it speedily removed. In the diplomatic dressing rooms there was a long row of wash basins, which, as Mrs. Root suggested, might be for the Diplomatic Corps to "Wash up!"

"The need for a Smoking Room, Picture Gallery, and Music Room was made very evident," according to Colonel Bingham's notes, but, thank goodness, these have never been added, so the main four walls of the buildings are still unchanged. I note here that the west terrace had been built at the time of the original plans. The improvement consisted in removing the greenhouses therefrom and extending it to the extent of a small staircase connecting with the Executive Offices, and the office building was built at this time. Mr. McKim thought to secure a perfect balance to the White House, an East Terrace should be added, the lower floor of which was to be utilized for dressing rooms. When digging for the foundation of this Terrace, it was a great surprise and delight to him to find the foundations of the original Terrace. The early pictures of the White House show this Terrace. I have an impression that Colonel Bingham had always preferred the plans which Mrs. Benjamin Harrison had sponsored of enlarging the White House or leaving it for state occasions only and building a new home for the Chief Executive.

On Election day, the President went to vote at Oyster Bay, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Later in November he started for Mississippi to go on a bear hunt, but came out a few weeks later from the cane breaks without having bagged his bear.

An amusing incident at one of the receptions, during the following winter, was in regard to Mr. Clifford Berryman, the Cartoonist. He originated in some of his cartoons during The President's trip "The Teddy Bear." The President was immensely amused at these pictures, and it is needless to comment on the popularity of this little fellow in all parts of this country and abroad. Mr. Berryman and his wife had been invited to a reception, and when he was presented, The President stopped the whole line to talk to him and laugh about the "bear." He then leaned across the line and called to Mrs. Cowles, who was in the Blue Room opposite the receiving party, "Bammy, look after this man, he is the Bear Man!" Mr. and Mrs. Berryman were then put behind the line, where Mrs. Cowles met them, and it took some time for her to ascertain which bear man he was. She of course thought it was someone with whom The President had gone hunting, but the matter was soon straightened out, and she had a pleasant talk with the creator of this most popular and cunning figure and his very nice wife.

Later on in the Bull Moose campaign, Mr. Berryman substituted a Bull Moose for the Teddy Bear. Some times the poor little moose was a very sad figure, but even so, Colonel Roosevelt had frequent laughs, even at his own expense.

By New Year's Day, the Blue Room was sufficiently completed to be used for the reception. It had now become possible to plan the entertainments to insure more comfort and dignity. The unsightly platform built from the pavement into the window of the hall near the East Room, in order to provide for the incoming and outgoing guests, was no longer necessary. The unsightly stacks of hats and wraps placed in the front corridors and dining rooms were done away with, I hope, for ever. On the garden floor the long corridor under the East Terrace provided ample space for the wraps of the guests, and the south door was used for the Diplomats, Cabinet, Supreme Court, other officials and special guests. The aides and I at first used this door too, but later, owing to much delay on several occasions, it was decided that the cabinet, Mr. and Mrs. Loeb, the aides and myself should come by the north door, leaving our wraps in the ushers' room.

On the arrival of the guests, under the new arrangements, a line was formed which proceeded up the main staircase turning left across the hall, behind the Marine Band, through the ushers' room, small dining room, State Dining Room and Red Room, to the south door of the Blue Room where The President stood with Mrs. Roosevelt and the Cabinet ladies, according to their husband's rank. After 1905 Mrs. Fairbanks, the wife of the Vice President, took her place next to Mrs. Roosevelt. The Cabinet themselves walked about the drawing rooms, seeing their friends and acquaintances. The special guests at each reception, the Diplomats, the Judiciary, both houses of Congress, and the higher officers of the Army and Navy, were on the nights of their respective receptions shown to the State Dining Room and Red Room in order that they could head the line for presentation to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt.

All the guests entering by the South door used the elevator or the stairs nearby. Usually the guests who were invited to remain for supper, which took place in the upper corridor after all guests had been received, were sent tickets to admit them to the south entrance. The receptions commenced at nine o'clock, but usually a good quarter of an hour before, the Cabinet families arrived and were shown to the library upstairs, where they then had an opportunity of seeing The President and Mrs. Roosevelt before the festivities began. The aides and I were usually on hand still earlier to be sure all was well, and Colonel Bingham and his successors made a real military-like inspection and checkup to insure the full carrying out of the orders given to insure success in the arrangements.

The aides this winter of 1902-03 were: Colonel Bingham, The President's chief Military Aide; Lieutenant Commander Cameron R. Winslow, The President's Naval Aide; Major Charles L. McCawley, of the Marine Corps, Colonel Bingham's chief assistant; Captain Gilmore, United States

Army; and Captain John R. Proctor, U.S.A. The necessity for a large number of aides for duty at all entertainments, owing to the improvements, was clearly shown. The use of aides has been frequently raised and sometimes criticized, but it was found impossible to direct and control the huge numbers at these receptions in any other way. We are not a militaristic people, but the various pacifists will more readily "move on" at the White House when politely asked by an aide, rather than by an usher, policeman, or colored servant.

As far as I know, since the Roosevelts left the White House, all the Administrations have had approximately the same number of aides for official occasions, though naturally their presence at private entertainments has been optional. The cry for "Democratic simplicity" during the Wilson Administration fell on deaf ears; Mrs. Wilson's desire to have the entertainments well done made her quickly realize the necessity of retaining these officers.

In the early part of the Administration, on the occasion of the four official receptions, Alice, Mrs. Cowles, the children of the Cabinet, and "all the sisters, and the cousins, and the aunts" trailed behind the Presidential party consisting of The President and Mrs. Roosevelt, the Cabinet officers and their wives, and Secretary to The President and Mrs. Loeb. The procession formed at the head of the main stairway and, preceded by two aides, the whole company started down stairs as soon as the "Four Ruffles" and "Hail to the Chief" were played, this music always heralding the arrival of The President. This crowd made a motley throng, and later The President and Mrs. Roosevelt decided that only the Cabinet and the Secretary to The President and his wife should be in this procession, the family and other guests having previously been escorted to the Blue Room by an aide. The added dignity consequent to the change was unbelievable, and though at first I fear there was some heart burnings at being left out of the parade, it was shortly accepted as a matter of fact.

I note that Alice's house party for New Year's 1903 included Margaret Dix; Eleanor Roosevelt (Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt); Dick Derby (Ethel's husband); John Saltonstall; and Edward Bowditch. Among the other house guests this season, I notice Mr. and Mrs. Owen Wister, Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid and their daughter Jean, now Lady John Ward; and among the out-of-town dinner guests, Mr. and Mrs. Myron Herrick; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder; Honorable Richard Olney; Mr. and Mrs. James Speyer, and Sir Charles Beresford among those for lunch.

On February 4th, 1903, Mr. Woodrow Wilson arrived for dinner and the night.

Mrs. Roosevelt had a series of three or four musicales this winter, always preceded by a dinner of about thirty or more guests. I remember my carelessness when Mrs. Roosevelt put down the names of Chief Justice and Mrs. Fuller for one of these "Friday Dinners," in not reminding her that the dinner for the Chief Justice and Supreme Court with their ladies was the night preceding. Dear Mrs. Fuller called me up, thinking there was a mistake. There was, but it was mine; and Mrs. Roosevelt kindly made no change, but had me tell Mrs. Fuller all was well, and she and the Chief Justice expected! At the end of those two evenings, those four high officials must have known each other pretty well! By the time for the Diplomatic Reception Admiral Cowles had been made Naval Aide, and Captain Henry Leonard of the Marine Corps and Captain Frank R. McCoy were detailed for duty for the season.

During this winter many changes were made in the method of making up lists for entertainments. All old lists were carefully gone over. The purely social peoples' names were now taken from the cards book of those who had called at the White House. Many officials did not seem to realize this was a necessary courtesy to The President and his wife, so it was decided to include them, even when they had not called.

Rules were made that visiting foreigners should be presented by and vouched for by their Embassies or Legations.

Invitations to the White House, especially dinner invitations, always had been considered a command, but frequently Mrs. Roosevelt had me, when I was writing informal invitations, note that the recipient need not give up a previous engagement though, I believe, few let anything stand in the way of accepting these invitations. I sent out the invitations for the smaller dinners of thirty or forty people. The invitations for the official teas, dinners, and musicales, were sent out under Mr. Young's supervision, from lists which I compiled, subject to Mrs. Roosevelt's approval. The invitations for the official receptions were written and sent under Mr. Netherland's direction, but all lists were submitted to Mrs. Roosevelt before any invitations were issued. The social lists for the official receptions were made up by me, also subject to Mrs. Roosevelt's approval. Usually I seated the smaller dinners, though if any knotty problem presented itself, I always consulted 2nd. Assistant Secretary A. A. Adee, who was the Assistant Secretary in the Department of State, retained through all administrations. The official dinners and official luncheons were usually seated by Mrs. Roosevelt, the Chief Aide and myself, then Mr. Adee would come to the White House, to look the plat over and make any changes he felt necessary. Of course, the officials had to be seated according to certain rules, but if there were any private persons present, and Mrs. Roosevelt could make a more pleasant arrangement for those "below the salt," she did so. Dear old Mr. Adee was a delightful figure, very deaf, but always so interested in his work, and on these occasions he always wore black cotton or silk gloves. He was the only person in those days who could be completely depended upon in regard to official rules of etiquette and diplomatic usage, though even he sometimes gave very wobbly decisions, as no official protocol had ever been drawn up, with exact rules of official precedence. I don't believe there is even to this day, such an official document.

I am sure this custom of having the official and smaller dinners seated was continued during President Taft's administration by Archie Butt. I also know, when I went back to the White House under the Wilsons, this plan was pursued. I cannot, of course, vouch for what happened later, but I never, until reading the reminiscences of "Ike Hoover," thought that the seating of the dinners had been turned over to the ushers!

My only disagreement with the newspaper correspondents who had the reporting of the social work at the White House was on account of Mrs. Roosevelt being unwilling to have given out the list of Alice's engagements for dinners, lunches, dances, etc. The President and she felt most strongly that, because friends had been kind enough to invite their daughter to an entertainment, it was no reason for them to publish this courtesy. If the hostesses themselves wished to give the names of Alice and their other guests, that of course was quite a different matter. The newspaper lady in question could not see this point, and was so insistent as to make Mrs. Roosevelt say that Secretary Cortelyou must withdraw her name from the privileged press ladies. Unofficially my contact with this lady has always been pleasant, but from that time until the end of the Roosevelt administration it was nil officially.

When the Roosevelts came to the White House there was no complete set of china large enough to serve the state dinners, and so an addition was made by Congress to the regular appropriation to supply such a set. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt thought the china should be of American Manufacture but after much inquiry by an old established firm in Albany, it was found no china of sufficiently fine quality was then made in this country. This firm was commissioned to submit estimates and designs of plain imported china, which could be decorated in this country by American workmen. Finally a suitable pattern of white with a gold and white border and the national crest in red, white and blue was chosen and ordered. The design was patented for the White House only to

prevent pieces being sold elsewhere. Thus provision was made for all return breakage. Heretofore practically every incoming First Lady had ordered some china, but I understand this set has been largely sufficient for succeeding administrations. I know the first Mrs. Wilson admired and used it.⁹

Shortly after Mrs. Roosevelt came to Washington, Mrs. Abby Gunn Baker enlisted her interest in beginning a collection of the china of all the preceding administrations. Mrs. Baker made a most difficult and exhaustive study of this question and identified many of the pieces of china in the White House pantries. As soon as it was generally known that Mrs. Roosevelt was interested in having this collection made, a number of people offered, for purchase or as presents, authentic pieces. As there was no fund for buying these articles, some had to be refused, but after many years of unceasing effort, Mrs. Baker succeeded in completing the collection. Mrs. Roosevelt gladly accepted her offer to arrange, and when necessary, rearrange, the collection in the cabinets provided, on the garden floor. There the general public has the pleasure of seeing these interesting mementos of past days. A few other articles have been sent, and have all found a suitable place in this collection. I feel all of us owe a vote of thanks to Mrs. Baker for her conception and carrying out of this plan, under Mrs. Roosevelt's interested patronage. Some of this china has most amusing designs, but I expect many of my readers have already seen the White House. For those for whom the pleasure is awaiting, it is better for them to see for themselves, rather than have me try to describe. I was always interested in the old crested glass bowls, put on the trays with the ice water pitchers, in all the bedrooms. They were shaped like a deep finger-bowl, with two lips opposite each other, but never until after I was married, did I discover their original use—Madeira bowls. This type of glass bowls were (and I am happy to say, in our house as well as in a few other Baltimore homes, are still on rare occasions) used, half filled with water and a Madeira glass, top down in the water on each "lip." When drinking the numerous madeiras served after the old fashioned dinners, in order to distinguish the individual delicate and elusive aromas and flavor, the glasses were dipped into the bowls, and a dry cracker or tiny piece of bread eaten, between partaking of the various vintages and brands. Having been present at a number of these present day parties, I love to imagine the picture of those early Presidents of ours, sitting around the bared mahogany table, at the White House, talking over with those early statesmen public and personal questions, and maybe a little bit of current gossip, sipping and enjoying their Madeira and using those beautiful old bowls, "to keep their palates clean!"

Until the Roosevelts' advent, there seems to have been no complete inventory kept of the furnishings of the White House. When Mrs. Roosevelt discovered this, she had the officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds compile complete lists of everything: furniture, linens, glass, china and silver, as well as ornaments, etc.

It was then ordered that nothing should be replaced, until the original article had been condemned, as unfit for use, by the proper authority, after which the things were disposed of. In regard to the official glass and china wear, it was decided all chipped or broken articles should either be demolished, or if in fit condition, given to public museums, or historical societies, from whom requests had been received.

It is hard to realize the carelessness and dishonesty which must have existed among some of the employees of the White House in earlier days. Apparently some of the stewards felt the china of an outgoing administration was their "meat," and certainly much of the old furniture, which should have been preserved, found odd resting places! The safeguards for the care and preservation of the White House possessions instituted under President and Mrs. Roosevelt have, let us hope, provided adequate means to preserve its present historical furnishings.

In order to have some place near Washington where they could go for a complete rest and private

vacation, Mrs. Roosevelt bought a small tract of land, not very far from Charlottesville, Virginia, on which was a simple frame house.¹⁰ This new possession was tidied up and an arrangement was made with a neighbor, to always clean it before the family's arrival. No servants ever accompanied the party, but after the first few trips, Mrs. Roosevelt decided that one or two of the secret service men should be on guard near by. The latter were very tactful and would be completely out-of-sight practically all the time.

All through the Washington years, this haven of rest was used frequently, sometimes for only a day and a night. Mrs. Roosevelt still owns "Pine Knot," though I do not think she has ever been there to stay, in the latter years.

There was a wonderful spirit suffused through the White House and the Executive Office in those days. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt both had that happy faculty of bringing out intense loyalty in those who served them, whether in high or low capacities.

When the Department of Commerce and Labor was created, early in 1903, Mr. George B. Cortelyou, Secretary to The President, was made its first secretary, and he in turn was succeeded by Mr. William A. Loeb. Mr. Rudolph Forster was the chief clerk of the office, and it is he, who by such unswerving loyalty to his work, has continued through all the succeeding administrations. Many times, by his ability, self possession and omnipotent knowledge of the workings of the Government, I feel sure he has kept that office, so to speak, from blowing up into bits. It must have required iron self-control, for being human, he has had his likes and dislikes; but I know he has met all demands, in the same spirit of unselfish patriotism as when I was so closely associated with him. I before mentioned that Mr. Young and Mr. Netherland were my especial "buddies," but Mr. Smithers, Mr. Holbein and Mr. Montgomery, in charge of the telephone and telegraph office, were naturally my daily associates, by voice if nothing more. I frequently saw Mr. Latta and the other clerks, as I usually went to the office every day on some errand. The last time I met these old friends, still attached to the White House force, was on the occasion when the "Wet" ladies, in session in Washington, went to call upon President Hoover, headed by Mrs. Charles Sabin. Pat McKenna showed me into Mr. Forster's office and there we all had a fine powwow, and how they did laugh at me, as Mr. Forster said, "coming to the White House with a badge on my chest." There was a fine spirit among the ushers and servants; and it was a great personal regret to the family when one of the former had to be temporarily suspended, because he let a cranky man get past him, one evening while on duty. In those days there were also policeman detailed in and out of the building, but some years ago, a special force of police for service at the White House only was created, to which some of the old timers were transferred. In years gone by, when I went to the White House, the greetings of the old friends always warmed the cockles of my heart, and the invariable question was, "How is Mrs. Roosevelt, when did you see her?" My particular messenger was a colored man, Wilson Jackson, and he and his bicycle went many a mile on errands for all the family as well as for me. He was always good natured and willing, with a broad smile no matter how often he had to go out. It was a frequent sight at midday to see him going off on his wheel, leading "Algonquin," the pony, to the Force School, to bring back Archie or Quentin.

I have told so many pleasant things that I did at the White House, that I must tell the grievous mistake I made soon after I took up my work. An old Albany friend of Mrs. Roosevelt had died and the bereaved husband wanted to give her dearest possession, a parrot called "Loretta," to Mrs. Roosevelt. The engagement was made for him to deliver the present in person, but a day or so before, The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were suddenly called away to attend a funeral. In the hurry of departure, I forgot to remind Mrs. Roosevelt, and shortly after, I discovered my mistake; the fool that I was, instead of communicating with Mrs. Roosevelt, I telegraphed the gentleman direct, missed him,

and when he and the bird arrived, like Mother Hubbard's dog, "the cupboard was bare." The sleepless night I spent until I could pour out my story to Mrs. Roosevelt! If she had only lectured me, but I know she understood nothing she could say could make me feel worse! There were letters of abject apology on my part, but to this day nothing can ever dim the awfulness of the moment when I realized my carelessness!

The following official program took place every winter:

The Cabinet Dinner
The New Years Day Reception
Diplomatic Reception
Diplomatic Dinner
Judicial Reception
Judicial Dinner
Congressional Reception
Army and Navy Reception

In addition to these entertainments, Mrs. Roosevelt gave, each season, several large teas; three or four musicales, preceded by dinners; as well as garden parties in the spring.

In the Autumn of 1903, Mrs. Roosevelt decided to receive the Diplomatic Corps "en Masse" instead of separately. We had heard indirectly that so often the younger members of the Missions were most anxious to be presented, but felt themselves too unimportant to ask for "an audience" as termed in diplomatic parlance. A tea party seemed a happy solution, and on the first occasion there were 106 guests present.

Mrs. Roosevelt usually received in the Blue Room, Colonel Charles McCawley, and later Captain Frank R. McCoy, and the last season, Captain Archibald Butt making the presentations. All the aides were present; I always poured tea in the State Dining Room, and Alice, with any house guests, helped to entertain the company. These parties proved most successful and gave an opportunity for the Corps to be seen in a more informal way than possible at the Diplomatic Receptions and Dinners. I believe this entertainment has since then continued to be a part of every official season. The wives of the Ambassadors, after all the guests had been received, were escorted back to the Blue Room, "the rankest first," as Mr. Dooley says, for a little chat. At first this caused too much delay and waiting for all concerned, so it was arranged that each dame should have about four minutes, and then the following lady was brought in by an Aide. Such changes as these, no matter how seemingly insignificant, were being constantly made, all through the administration, in order to improve the arrangements for the entertainments. One which I suppose may have passed unnoticed was Mrs. Roosevelt's thoughtfulness in substituting hangers for the ladies' coats, in the dressing rooms, to prevent the garments being mussed and wrinkled. The second season after the changes in the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt decided we must make the suppers following the receptions more dignified and comfortable. They had been very higglety-pigglety; The President and she each taking a table, and asking someone to sit next to them, and everyone else finding a seat where and how they could, with the aides' and my help. An engraved invitation to supper was now enclosed in the regular invitations with the request for an answer to the Secretary to The President. Mr. Young kept all the lists of these supper invitations and their responses. On the day of each entertainment, he would arrive at my desk about ten o'clock, armed with a large plaque of white cardboard on which were drawn the tables, and a list headed by The President in Men's column, and Mrs. Roosevelt leading the list of the ladies.

After the arrival of the Aide in charge, Mrs. Roosevelt would join us and we four would settle down to the job of seating the company. Sometimes things went smoothly and the guests would soon

be appropriately and pleasantly placed; other days it seemed we would never get through, or be able to find congenial companions for some of the less attractive guests. On these occasions, rank was largely disregarded; The President and Mrs. Roosevelt each presided over a table, and a Cabinet officer was usually placed at the head of the other tables. Everyone's place was designated by a card, just as at dinners, and the large number designating each table, placed in full view.

The Aides and I had alphabetical lists of each guest's name, followed by number of their table, in order to expedite matters. I used to think all the receiving party were quite ready for supper after these long hours of standing and looking pleasant! I may say these parties were among the most delightful given during the Administration.

A number of distinguished out of town guests added a touch of interest, and the informality of the occasion lent an additional charm. The President always enjoyed them, and it was good to hear his laugh above the hubbub of about seventy or eighty voices. After a short course supper, he and Mrs. Roosevelt arose from their tables and the guests made their adieux. Many of us were ready to start off to Mrs. Herbert Wadsworth's "Thursday Evenings," where the Diplomats' and Aides' uniforms lent quite an air. These parties at Mrs. Wadsworth's had become a real feature in Washington.¹¹ When she first started to have the evenings, society generally did not quite know how to take them. A card was issued early in the season to all her friends, and one went as often as one pleased. There was music in the ball room, a continuous supper, and cards or tetes a tetes if one preferred, in the drawing rooms and library. They soon became very popular, and I often wonder if that lady, who has just died, ever realized how much pleasure she gave to so many people.

This was the first administration in my time which counted to any extent in social Washington. Heretofore there had occasionally been entertainments in addition to the official program, but now the White House had become of real importance, and it was a great help to hostesses in making their plans to know the dates of the White House entertainments. Hence it was decided that the dinners given by the Cabinet in honor of The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were to be on Tuesday evenings, the official receptions and State Dinners Thursday, and the smaller dinners and musicales on Friday evenings. The dates for the teas were more elastic, but naturally they did not interfere with other engagements as evening parties would have done. Apropos of this, after The President was elected in 1904 he let it be known that he wished the Cabinet hostesses to ask as guests their social and political friends, instead of their fellow cabinet members. This change was hailed with delight by all concerned, as more dreary and dull parties can scarcely be imagined than the yearly round of Cabinet dinners, which past administrations had suffered. I can't believe any party at which President Roosevelt was present could have been dull, as I never knew any one who more willingly put his shoulder to the wheel and "piped for his supper." The parties of his cabinet had doubtless been better than most, even though sitting time after time by the same person. Even so, the innovation proved very popular, and gave each hostess an opportunity to honor her relatives and friends from out of town, as well as repay any social obligation in Washington. It was deemed expedient not to include any of the Diplomatic Corps for fear of causing jealousy. Before the invitations were issued, the list of guests were sent to Mrs. Roosevelt to be sure no one was included who might be uncongenial. I am sure the ladies vied with each other to make as interesting and amusing a party as possible, rather than grind any social axe! Naturally everyone felt honored to be included in these parties, and I know my invitation to Secretary of Treasury and Mrs. Cortelyou's last Cabinet dinner was greatly appreciated.

Early in the administration, the officers of the Army and Navy were ordered to wear uniforms at all White House entertainments. It was understood on official occasions full dress was required, but when the invitations were issued in Mrs. Roosevelt's name, the designation of "A," "B," etc. uniforms

was written in the lower corner of the invitation; or the War and Navy Department was notified by the Chief Aide which uniforms were required. When Dear Archie Butt was put in charge, in the Autumn of 1908, some of the officers with a sense of humor had a good laugh, and the more serious-minded were provoked. Archie always had an eye to the picturesque, and having come into the Army from civil life, he was not such a stickler for adamant rules. If it was warm weather, he would, for example, give the order for a cloth service jacket and white trousers, with the white caps, or some such combination: all articles, parts of different uniforms, but never before in the memory of man, worn in combination! The general effect was fine to the civilian eye, but rather puzzling and not altogether popular with the wearers! One day Colonel McCawley, talking over the receptions, told Mrs. Roosevelt he thought the Diplomats would consider it a compliment to be asked to wear uniforms at all official entertainments, instead of only appearing in them at the Diplomatic Reception and Dinner. The Naval and Military attaches had, of course, always worn their uniforms at the Army and Navy Receptions. Mrs. Roosevelt spoke to The President and, after consultation with the Department of State, this plan was adopted and the Dean of the Corps notified.

The Diplomatic Reception had taken place, and a few days after this ruling the Judicial Reception was to be held. All seemed in order that evening, but just before the receiving party were to come down stairs, Charley McCawley came to the library with much suppressed excitement in his manner. He asked The President if he could speak to him. Practically all the Diplomats were present, and they had been put in the State Dining Room; the Supreme Court, headed by Justice John M. Harlan (Chief Justice Melville Fuller was ill) were in the Red Room; and who should be presented first? Here was a dilemma, for an Ambassador would be insulted if preceded by a Justice, and the party was in honor of the Supreme Court! After a few moments thought The President said, "Diplomats First," so thus it was. Mr. Justice Harlan and some of the other Members of the Court were evidently furious, and when they were finally presented, their response to The President's greeting was in some cases quite acrid! During the evening Mr. Loeb and some of the rest of us had the benefit of their ire, and early next morning Justice Harlan was at the Executive Office to register his protest to the President. "Wigs were on the green" in all directions, I must say; for the dear old Justice, I don't think it was a protest for himself personally, but an effort to preserve the recognition of the high position of this august body, of which he was temporarily head. Apologies were much in order, and it was then decided that, as usual, at the Diplomatic Receptions, its members would be received first; at all other receptions the individual Diplomats would be shown directly to the Blue Room, as were other distinguished guests, "Behind the Line," and they could later in the evening, after the guests of honor had been received, go through the Red Room into the general line of guests to greet The President and the ladies of the receiving party. Thus the tempest in the tea party was over, and everyone placated and satisfied. This kind of rumpus may sound absurd to those not familiar with Washington official life, but there are, to this day, still some mooted questions not yet settled.

The burning questions in those days were in regard to Speaker and Miss Cannon; Countess Marguerite Cassini, daughter of the Russian Ambassador; and The Admiral of the Navy and Mrs. Dewey.

I note that The Speaker and his daughter once withdrew from a dinner the day of the party, because after inquiry by his Secretary, The Speaker found Miss Cannon was not given as high a position as he deemed necessary. Forerunner of the later Longworth-Gann so called feud!¹² In both cases, may I here say, I think the two Speakers were making the fight for the proper recognition of their exalted positions, and not for their own personal aggrandizement. Alice Longworth was always supposed to have started the argument in regard to Mrs. Gann, but in reality it was Nick who was largely

responsible for upholding his and his wife's official status. It has always seemed to me rather foolish to try to give any public man's "Official Hostess" the position which would be accorded his wife. In most cases the lady would naturally be suitably placed at table, but how unnecessary to expect to take the place of his wife, except when presiding at his own table.

But to return to our "Mouton."¹³ After several rather unpleasant experiences, President and Mrs. Roosevelt decided to give a dinner, with The Speaker and Miss Cannon as guests of honor, as they naturally wished to entertain them for official as well as personal reasons. The date was fixed, and the guests were carefully chosen so no one present could possibly consider that their position should be ahead of the honor guests. This arrangement pleased all concerned, and here again was a precedent made, which methinks is still followed.

The question of Marguerite Cassini was finally settled by the State Department's giving her a place at the Diplomatic Dinners, just after the Ambassadors and before the Ministers' wives, a concession, I am told, she would never have had at any European post.

In regard to the dear Deweys, they seemed to think they should come, I am afraid, immediately after the Vice President and Ambassadors, with maybe a Speaker and Chief Justice thrown in somewhere. Their contention would have made a "Mad Tea Party," for the Admiral had to concede his place to his own superior officer, The Secretary of Navy, and then what became of the Secretaries of State, etc. who outranked the Secretary of Navy! On several occasions, after having sent his Chief of Staff to inquire his status at dinner, The Admiral and Mrs. Dewey either withdrew or were ill! Very frequently on official occasions when foreigners were to be present, and the Navy had to be represented by the Admiral, his place at the table and the reasons therefor would be carefully explained to him, and then his self respect saved! This all sounds as if both he and his wife were most peculiar. In reality they were both delightful friends of mine, but this was a peculiarity which developed after his appointment of "Admiral of the Navy," in honor of the taking of Manila in the Spanish War.

Sometime during the summer of 1903, Colonel Bingham was relieved from duty and ordered away from Washington. I have never inquired but am sure it was in the regular routine of relieving officers, after a certain number of years' detail at the White House. There was much gossiping in regard to his leaving, and one story which was circulated said that it was on account of his having asked Senator Depew not to laugh so loud after one of the State Dinners.¹⁴ An amusing story, but I have never given it any credence. Colonel Thomas Symonds, a very good engineer officer, was ordered to Washington to succeed Colonel Bingham. None of us realized that he would be completely ignorant of what would be required in his social work at the White House, so he was given no particular instructions. The first entertainment after his arrival was given on October 16th to "The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston" and the "Honorable Artillery Company" of London, England. It was certainly a "Mad Tea Party" such as that in "Alice in Wonderland," and the President and Mrs. Roosevelt were much disturbed. The guests were presented and then just wandered around like lost sheep.

The following morning Mrs. Roosevelt sent for Colonel McCawley and inquired if there were any records of previous entertainments which could be used as a guide. Upon inquiry Colonel McCawley found that Colonel Bingham had kept records at the office of Public Buildings and Grounds, but had taken them with him when he left Washington, as he considered them his personal property. Shortly after this The President appointed Charlie McCoy to the position of Aide, in complete charge of all entertainments at the White House, and requested him to write Colonel Bingham for the loan of his records. In due time these were received and copies made for the information of Colonel McCawley and his successors. These records, it would seem, were the first continuous docu-

ments of any kind kept of the entertainments at the White House. The President ordered that after each entertainment a description thereof should be compiled by the Aide in charge and made part of the official papers of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. In these resumes of the entertainments, any comments of omission or commission were noted, with suggestions for the future. I know this plan was continued through the Taft and Wilson Administrations, and I only hope for the benefit of posterity that the practice has and will be adhered to; I realized only too well, when I went back to the White House with Mrs. Wilson, the invaluable help the chronicles of the Roosevelt Administration were to me.

Colonel Symonds was continued as Chief Military Aide and was present at all official entertainments. I am afraid there was naturally some feeling of hurt, though this change was in no way a reflection on Colonel Symonds' professional ability. Charlie McCawley was most tactful in the handling of the matter and naturally his long familiarity with White House affairs, having been Colonel Bingham's Chief Assistant, made him the natural choice for the place. There never could have been a more efficient person in this position, and his tact as well as his charming personality, coupled with his long residence in Washington, made a most efficient combination.

Mrs. Roosevelt, Colonel McCawley, Mr. Young, and myself, and probably Mr. Netherland had long consultations in regard to the necessarily minute plans for official receptions, dinners and all other entertainments at the White House. Finally Colonel McCawley drew up a most detailed set of orders for the police, ushers, servants and all attendants; and he himself issued to all the Aides their full orders in regard to their duties.

I note that the first entertainment given under Colonel McCawley's regime was a dinner on October 26, 1903 when Bishop and Mrs. William Crosswell Doane were house guests. I find among my papers an article written about this time which now seems amusing, but which I remember at the time made me perfectly furious. The Newspaper published a full sheet story headed in the most spectacular way, "The New Hand Makes the Move on the Chessboard of Washington Society"; "The Woman in the case of Colonel Theodore Bingham, and the Real Solution of the Mystery from the Autocratic Position of Social Arbiter in Washington"; "The Woman who vanquished him. She is Isabel Hagner and she is Mrs. Roosevelt's Social Secretary," and then when Colonel Symonds was appointed a few weeks later, another lurid article appeared headed, "What All Washington Is Watching to See—Will Miss Hagner (Mrs. Roosevelt's mighty clever Secretary) Run Major Symonds, the New Master of Ceremonies at the White House?—Or, Will Major Symonds run Miss Hagner?—Or, Will They Fight It Out As Colonel Bingham Did?"

These articles were accompanied by what purported to be pictures of me, Colonel Bingham and his wife; and the later article headed by a picture of Colonel Symonds; and a cartoon of Colonel Bingham and myself, at the gate of the White House grounds, I dragging him out by his ear. These stories were too absurd to notice, but they unfortunately seemed to have been accepted as true by many people. I am glad I did not make the mistake of thinking I had the amount of power therein represented, for if I had had it, and had wanted to use it, my downfall and exit would have been practically simultaneous. These foolish stories have lately been brought to my memory by seeing in the paper the death of Colonel Bingham, at his country home in Nova Scotia. Though of late years I have not seen him, I am sorry to hear the news, for we were always, certainly on my side, good friends and congenial co-workers. Coupled with the announcement of his death, is the fantastic observation that Colonel Bingham, having been such an intimate friend of Colonel Roosevelt's, had directed all of Colonel Roosevelt's funeral arrangements from Nova Scotia by telephone and telegram. How can such utterly false reports be sent to the papers? One begins to think that some of the reporters never

add two and two together, for if one remembers anything about Colonel Roosevelt's death, they would know it occurred in January, and Colonel Bingham would not have been at his summer cottage at that time of the year!

One of the most vivid pictures in my mind of the receptions at the White House during the Roosevelt administration, was the arrival of Colonel Hugh Scott (afterwards Army chief of staff in President Wilson's administration), with a party of about eight or ten Indians, headed by Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés. They had come to Washington on some important errand, probably at the government's solicitation, and on their arrival had gone to Colonel Scott, feeling sure of his sympathy and understanding. (This remarkable man, Colonel Scott, who has just lately died, was the only man in our army, and probably in our whole country, who understood all the sign languages of the American Indians. They as a people had complete trust in his honesty and fair dealings, so he was frequently used by the government to settle any difficulties with these peoples. I remember very well President Roosevelt sending him off on some such important errand.)¹⁵

The party had been presented to the President in his office and at his suggestion Colonel Scott brought them to the reception on that evening. They were dressed in their full regalia, paint, war bonnets and all other appurtenances, and when they were shown into the Red Room, headed by Colonel Scott, they created a great sensation. After their presentation to The President and Mrs. Roosevelt they were brought into the Blue Room, behind the line; the vivid background and blaze of lights made a most startling bit of color. There these dignified warriors stood, surrounded by the elaborately dressed women, and the glitter of uniforms contrasting with the black evening clothes of the men. It made a very remarkable and memorable picture. Chief Joseph was a fine, upstanding man and surveyed the scene with the greatest air of composure. Many people were presented to the party and made pleasant remarks and offered greetings, but the only one who in any way was able to produce the slightest symptom of a smile of welcome or look of amusement on Chief Joseph's face was Baroness Moncheur (the daughter of General Clayton), wife of the Belgian Minister. She was looking particularly handsome that evening in a very stunning maroon velvet gown, and after Colonel Scott introduced her, one could notice a look of interest on Chief Joseph's very immobile face.

A few little items of note took place in 1902. The deal for the Panama Canal property was closed on February 17th: The President made a speech in Chicago on April 2nd at the commencement of his long Western trip. He advocated the building up of the Navy and the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine. At this time he made the statement, part of which has so often been quoted, "There was a homely old adage that runs, 'Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will get far.'"

This trip was a great success and The President was received with unprecedented enthusiasm. He went to the West Coast and on many occasions he received a number of interesting mementoes, presented by organizations, etc. in the various cities he visited. Among them was the gold goblet which he later used in the White House at dinner.

Unfortunately, this cup may have been one of the things which increased the untrue rumors of his drinking, while in reality, when the guests were having champagne, he usually imbibed white wine and seltzer—more of this anon.

A two weeks' hunting trip near the Yellow Stone Park gave The President a little playtime on this tour. I note that on April 23rd Senator Mark Hanna declared against the indorsement of The President by the Ohio Convention. On the 25th The President telegraphed Senator Hanna that he wished the 1904 indorsement. Senator Hanna, replying on the 26th, said he would no longer oppose the indorsement. That was that, and what a pity all political differences cannot be so promptly adjusted!

On June 5th The President returned to Washington and was received by a great ovation.

The family went as usual to Oyster Bay, and there on July 4th The President opened the Pacific Cable, by sending a message around the world. The two other happenings of interest which I have noted during this summer were Secretary Root's resignation and his successor, Mr. William Howard Taft, being made Secretary of War on August 19th. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt, returning to Oyster Bay from New York on board the *Sylph*, were caught in a very dangerous storm a short time before they left for Washington, but fortunately there were no ill effects.

There were a number of musicians who played or sang at the White House, and among them was Mr. Ignace Jan Paderewski in the early winter of 1903. He arrived for dinner and the night, and I will never forget the glory of his music that evening. A few people were asked in after dinner and we sat in the East Room, he, at the piano in semidarkness, at the northern end. His hair, in those days, was like a golden aura, and as he sat there playing, with his marvelous technique and feeling, there seemed a leonine majesty about him. He was pleased by his appreciative audience and played as I never heard him before.

Mrs. John C. Reyburn, wife of the then Congressman from Philadelphia, asked Mrs. Roosevelt if the new Philadelphia Orchestra might play for The President and herself; it would be such a great help to this struggling organization. That makes amusing reading in these days of its supremacy!

Eugene Ysaye, Jan Kubelik, Madame Schumann-Heinck, the Flonzally Quartette, the Quartette of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, David Bispham and many others more or less remembered, came; and Mr. Reginald de Koven, the composer, with his short-lived Washington Orchestra. I wish I had kept a list of all these artists, as I am sure there are many others I should recall.¹⁶ Mr. Cortelyou strongly advised that the plan previously adopted in earlier administrations should be adhered to, of giving the artists no pay for their services, letting the honor of their performances be sufficient compensation. This arrangement was adopted through this Administration, as well as during the period I was with the Wilson family, though I believe in some cases when an impecunious artist friend of Margaret's came, the expenses were kindly taken care of. I do not know what plans have since been in vogue.

The President and Mrs. Roosevelt wished to show their appreciation of the artists' courtesy in performing for their and their guests' pleasure, so at first they presented them with their signed photographs, and later gave them a special photograph, a southern view of the White House, appropriately framed and inscribed. This photograph was kept for this purpose only, but, I am happy to say, before she left Washington, Mrs. Roosevelt gave me one.

Mrs. Roosevelt was fortunate in having a small circle of intimate friends in Washington, for as she always used to say, the White House is a difficult place to make new friendships. Frequently those who would be most congenial hold back from natural modesty, while the less desirable woo too well.

Naturally Mrs. Cowles and Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge were frequently at the White House, as well as that delightful and ever-youthful old lady, Mrs. Joseph Hobson, who had traveled and enjoyed the most interesting society in many parts of the world; Mrs. James Lowndes and her sister, Miss Emily Tuckerman, both childhood friends in New York; and Mrs. and the Misses Kean (mother and sisters of the late Senator John Kean, as well as the present Senator from New Jersey); and Justice Holmes' wife.

These ladies formed a nucleus of the delightful coterie with whom Mrs. Roosevelt was closely associated in her White House days. Naturally the wives of the Cabinet and a few of the wives in the Diplomatic Corps came informally, as well as the families of some of the lesser officials like Mrs. Robert Shaw Oliver and her daughters, Mrs. Beekman Winthrop and Mrs. Bacon, as well as some of the old "Cave Dwellers."¹⁷

Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to have the opportunity of establishing friendly relations with the Cabinet ladies, many of whom were strangers, so she decided to put aside the hours between eleven and one, every Tuesday morning in the season, to be at home to them only. In the Autumn Mrs. Roosevelt had me write notes to these ladies, but made it plain that the engagement was not obligatory, though usually the full circle were present. She would join the first comers with her knitting or embroidery, in the library, and then they would chat for an hour or so.

The family always made great preparations for Christmas; and as Mrs. Roosevelt was very before-handed, she and I would start shopping expeditions early in the Autumn, to provide gifts for the immediate family, ushers, servants, etc. at the White House, as well as for the large list of family and friends who were to be remembered. In this latter list were many quiet and humble old friends and ex-servitors, whose kind were never forgotten in these busy days. There were stockings to be provided for all the children, and the latter in turn, made up a combination one for their parents. The "stocking shopping" was the greatest fun, for all sorts of articles had to be provided for all family jokes, and the likes and dislikes of all recipients were held up to good-natured ridicule. They were happy days and the whole household joined in to make it "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards Men." The President gave away numerous turkeys to the employees, and everyone was remembered in some way. Archie and Norris, the electrician, usually rigged up a tree (which was a surprise); after the family had all opened their stockings in their Mother's and Father's room, this was exhibited. On Christmas morning the Cowleses, Lodges, maybe some other intimate friends and myself used to stop in to see all the presents, and a midday lunch at Mrs. Cowles' was followed by a family dinner at the White House which included the Cowles and Lodge families. It was such a happy time of Merry-making, and such an example to the nation of an unaffected, normal American household, devoted to each other, and all making an effort towards the day's success.

For many years Mrs. Roosevelt, as well as several of his other friends, received a beautiful, tall "American Beauty" rose as a Christmas card, from Senator Albert J. Beveridge.¹⁸

A number of portraits were painted of The President through these years. The one by John Singer Sargent was done for the White House, and I may say that it then, as it must now, stands out amongst most of the others as a real work of art. I was given a photograph of the portrait soon after it was completed, by Mr. V. G. Fischer, the famous art dealer in Washington (more of this gentleman later!). Mr. Sargent signed it, and I then left it at the office for The President's signature. It had always been a joke, ever since I had been with Mrs. Roosevelt, that The President, if he did not call me "Belle," would as often call me "Wagner" as "Hagner." What was Mrs. Roosevelt's dismay, when he brought my picture back, to find the nice inscription was duly addressed to "Miss Belle Wagner." She then with much amusement inquired who was his dear friend to whom he was expressing "his warmest regards"! A skillful erasement was made in the office, and now it hangs near my desk, a much prized possession.

Later Mr. Gari Melchers did a fine portrait of The President, in riding clothes, with his sombrero and short riding coat. It was a very pleasing picture, I always thought, and had such a characteristic costume and pose. When the time came to do the clothes, Fitz Lee (one of the Aides) and Parker, an usher, helped out by sitting for Mr. Melchers. Someone heard Parker explaining, "Captain Lee's the coat, but I'm the legs!"

Colonel Arthur Lee (now Lord Lee) had been British Military Attaché before and during the Spanish-American war and had gone to Cuba, spending most of the time with the Rough Riders. He was a real family friend, and soon after his marriage to Miss Ruth Lee of New York, he and his bride came to the White House. She was a lovely little person, so pretty and charming, and he such a fine,

outstanding-looking man. During this visit, Mrs. Roosevelt and I were, one afternoon, driving out Massachusetts Avenue, to walk through the woods to fetch Ethel at the Cathedral School, and Mrs. Lee was invited to join us. She was delighted, but both Mrs. Roosevelt and I were very doubtful of the outcome when she appeared in a most chic street suit and rather thin shoes. Mrs. Roosevelt explained we would have some rough, hard going, but not deterred, she came along. She was a great social addition, but I have always hated to think of the wreck of that lovely costume!

This is all a preamble to the request which Colonel Lee made to The President during the later years in Washington. M. Philip de Laszlo, the famous Hungarian artist, was in this country to paint portraits of various people, and at Colonel Lee's request The President sat for M. de Laszlo. The picture was destined for the Lee home in England. It was a splendid likeness and a fine picture artistically. M. de Laszlo asked if he might make a sketch of Mrs. Roosevelt, which he then presented to The President.¹⁹ Later, Colonel Lee had the artist make a replica of the Colonel's portrait, which he presented to Mrs. Roosevelt, and it now presides over the Trophy Room at "Sagamore Hill."²⁰ It is such a speaking likeness, that sometimes when I have sat there in the evening, with the light upon it, I felt it was almost himself.²¹

Theobald Chartran, the French artist, painted Mrs. Roosevelt in the White House garden, and this decorative portrait is hung in the lower corridor of the house. He also did a head of Alice which he presented to her, and which she now has in Washington, in her drawing room.²²

After the house was done over, The President decided to use the State Dining Room, except for breakfast. He liked the handsome walnut paneling and enjoyed the fine game heads, which he presented to the White House, with the proviso, if taken down, he would resume their ownership. The room has three large southern windows, so it is always bright and cheerful. The smaller dining room, facing north, was used for breakfast and the children's meals.

The President was never a newspaper reader, but each day a number of clippings pasted on paper sheets were sent over from the office, and Mrs. Roosevelt would look them over, as well as reading about four daily papers, to keep herself posted on all public matters. If there was anything she felt The President should see, the article was drawn to his attention. All the family were great readers, with the widest range of interest in their tastes. I have never known anyone who read as quickly and with as retentive a mind as The President. He did not, like most of us other mortals, have to look for his place; he would pick up a book, begin exactly where he left off, and in a moment be lost in it. Sometimes after dinner when I was at "Sagamore," Mrs. Roosevelt and I would be doing some bit of fancy work or playing our favorite card game, "Piquette,"²³ as we talked, and The President would suddenly look up and ask some pertinent question and chat along with us for a few moments before going back to his reading. He always loved to hear any of our little jokes and took the greatest interest in the simple, homey things in which we might be interested. The life at Oyster Bay was such a wholesome, happy life; The President nearly every day spending some hours with his secretary and stenographer, then going off with Mrs. Roosevelt and some of the children for a ride, swim or tennis, or maybe a good row in Cold Spring Harbor.

Many kinds of people came to see him there on official, political or social errands. Frequently guests were asked to lunch, or for the night; but during the summer there were always a few days saved for family picnics, or the occasions when he and Mrs. Roosevelt would go off, like lovers, alone for a long ride or day's row, with a simple lunch in some quiet nook. The number of cousins and friends of the children were always welcome, and The President was never too busy to stop and enjoy their playmates or talk over any of their knotty problems. All the family naturally wanted as much privacy as possible, and disliked intensely to have their doings chronicled in the daily press. The

President considered his family had this right, and the newspaper correspondents gradually learned and mostly respected their wishes. The Sylph was kept at Oyster Bay a large part of every summer, and was frequently used by all the family.

Alice was at home very little during these summers. She was usually off visiting at Newport and other places, returning for a short time, when her wardrobe would be renovated, and then she would be off again!²⁴

At New Year's Reception one year several men arrived and took their place in line. They looked appropriately dressed, but as they walked out after being presented, there was a large sign on their backs, advertising a well known mineral water. The President was much displeased, and ordered more care in admitting guests.

Some members of the Diplomatic Corps were late for the Diplomatic Reception in 1904, so a change was made to give extra cards for their carriages, in order to expedite their arrival and give them precedence over other vehicles. The Russian Ambassador protested to the State Department that during this reception food was being carried upstairs for the supper in the upper corridor during the arrival and departure of guests; this caused a good raking over the coals for the steward. For the first time this season new plush covers were made for the gilt chairs, in order to avoid spoiling the ladies' velvet dresses.

A rather interesting dinner was given for the Cabinet in 1904 and among the names I find: Senator and Mrs. J. B. Foraker, Senator Nelson Aldrich, Senator and Mrs. T. C. Platt, Governor and Mrs. Benjamin B. O'Dell of New York, Rep. Cannon, Mrs. Hanna, Mr. Morris K. Jessup, President Arthur T. Hadley of Yale, and Mr. and Mrs. William McAdoo.

The Aides in 1904 were: Colonel Thomas W. Symonds, Comdr. C. McR. Winslow, Lieut. Colonel McCawley, Capt. Joseph W. Glidden, Lieut. G. R. Fortescue, Lieut. George R. Spalding, Lieut. Clarence V. Sherrill, Lieut. R. C. Bulmer, Lieut. David F. Sellers. The last mentioned is now Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy. One of our little jokes during his service was the way he would walk around through the rooms after one of the big receptions, saying in a semi-audible voice, "Have they no homes, have they no homes?" when the people wouldn't go home and we wanted to get up to Mrs. Herbert Wadsworth's Thursday Evenings. It was found that if rather quick music was played by the Marine Band on the occasion of Receptions that the crowd moved much more quickly and that the whole entertainment went off with greater snap.

Bouquets of flowers were placed in the upper corridor on the evenings of the Receptions for Mrs. Roosevelt and the ladies of the Cabinet. The former would always try to see that the bouquets were distributed so that the prettiest color schemes would be preserved by the recipients.

Old Colonel Loeffler was always present at the State Receptions, dressed in his army uniforms, with spotless white gloves, looking as spruce as any young Lieutenant. He took his position in the Red Room and stood there by the Secret Service Men no matter how long the line. In order to prevent any mistake, different colored checks were used for all of the Receptions.

A Congressman failed to come to a dinner during 1904, but upon being telephoned the next morning, he seemed completely unconcerned at his rudeness and had no regrets at missing the dinner but urgently requested that his name should be included in the list in the paper, I suppose for home consumption.

I note that Senator Hanna died on February 15, 1904. The Panama Canal Bill was ratified March 30th. On March 30 as well, The President opened by telegraph the Louisiana Purchase Exposition which was to be held in St. Louis. The Diplomatic Corp and Cabinet were present as well as other officials and friends. When The President touched a button, the national salute was fired at Fort Myer,

Virginia by a battery, the signal being given from the roof of the White House. The President made a short speech which ended the ceremonies.

On April 16th, Secretary to The President Cortelyou was made head of the National Committee, and the title to the Panama Canal property was taken over by the United States. On the 30th of April, 1904 Prince von Hohen Lohe, his sister and a party were received at the White House. Later a men's dinner was given for the Ex-Chancellor.

In May, Prince Pu Lun arrived in Washington, having been sent by China, to the St. Louis Exposition. He brought some beautiful gifts to Mrs. Roosevelt and Alice from the Dowager Empress.²⁵

The Republican Convention took place on June 21st and The President was nominated on the 23rd, with greatest enthusiasm. Senator Charles W. Fairbanks of Indiana was nominated Vice President. Then the Campaign commenced, and a busy time it was, though The President announced he would make no campaign speeches.

There were several cabinet changes during the next few months. On June 24th the Attorney General, Philander C. Knox, retired, as he had been appointed by Governor Isaac Pennekaker of Pennsylvania to fill late Senator Matthew S. Quay's place in the Senate. Secretary of the Navy William H. Moody succeeded him as Attorney General. On July 1st, the appointments of Moody as Attorney General, Paul Morton as Secretary of the Navy and Mr. Victor H. Metcalfe, Secretary of Commerce and Labor, went into effect. On October 10th Robert J. Wynne was appointed Post Master General in place of late Henry C. Payne.

On August 8th, 1904 the President approved a report against The Postmaster of Philadelphia for ignoring Civil Service Law in making appointments. This would make good reading and a fine example for the present administration!

The Notification Ceremonies took place at Oyster Bay, during the summer, and on September 22nd, the family moved back to Washington.

On November 8th The President was elected by a huge majority. From reports received by him while dressing for dinner that evening after returning to Oyster Bay, where he went to vote, he was sure of the election, but not until later in the evening was it known of the great landslide. Mrs. Roosevelt had asked some intimate friends and some few of the officials and their wives who were in Washington to come to the White House to hear the returns. I had gone driving down Pennsylvania Avenue as far as the Star Office with Mrs. Garfield, to see what was going on before we went to the White House at eight o'clock. When we arrived there were a number of people before us. We all gathered in the Red Room where a telegraph instrument had been installed, and the bulletins were constantly arriving. I will never forget Mrs. Roosevelt's eyes. They were like two wonderful big stars. Later in the evening champagne and light refreshments were passed and The President's health happily drunk.

On November 9th The President made the statement that he would not be a candidate in 1909. This statement caused a great deal of trouble when he ran in 1913 on the Bull Moose ticket. A great many people felt he should never have made it, but I think in the flush of victory, he did not realize the conditions which might arise, making it obligatory and unpatriotic of him not to run! Of course, what he really meant was that he would not run in 1909; and I don't think he thought further ahead than that.

On November 15th, The President issued an order extending the Civil Service rules to cover the appointments in the Isthmian Canal Service. Here again I should be glad to send a marked copy of this order to the powers that be.

On November 26th The President and Mrs. Roosevelt went to the St. Louis Fair, largely, I believe, on account of the state having gone overwhelmingly Republican in the election. There was a most amusing cartoon, which I remember Mrs. Roosevelt saved, of all the Republican States standing in a long row, represented by tall politicians in their long frock coats, with the stranger at the end, representing Missouri, and the question, "How did you get in here?"

In December a letter was sent out from the office to the Supreme Court, all members of Congress, Assistant-Secretaries, and Army and Navy to inquire the names and ages of their children. The Department of State likewise made inquiries of the Diplomatic Corps. As we would say now, "the reaction" was amusing. The curiosity of the recipients was immense, but after a few weeks, they realized the reason, when the children of the ages between six and seventeen were asked, shortly after Christmas, to an afternoon party at the White House! There were over five hundred present. The first part of the entertainment was a program by the Roney boys (some of whom are still on the vaudeville stage), after which the young folks went to the dining room, where a delightful repast was served. The table was decorated with a Christmas Tree, bright with electric lights; and favors were provided for each child. The President helped to serve the children, and after supper there was dancing in the East Room with music by the Marine Band. The Roosevelt children felt their duties as hosts most keenly, and I can see them now, dancing away and providing partners for all the girls, and busily introducing the beaux. A prettier sight it is hard to imagine, and the thrill of that party is doubtless still remembered by many, as well as the enjoyment at the time. Mrs. Cowles, Miss Wilson, Edith Root, Anne and Margaret Hitchcock, Miss Jones, Mrs. Loeb and I assisted.

Mrs. Benjamin Harrison had several parties for her grandchildren. There is a record of Christmas parties for the Cleveland children; and going back to President Tyler's administration, he entertained the friends of his grandchildren at a Fancy Ball. We read now of entertainment for "Buzzy" and "Sistie";²⁶ and during President Hoover's term their grandchildren had several parties.

Reports of President Roosevelt's drinking to excess are absolutely false. I have never in my life seen a man who ever took anything to drink as completely oblivious of the fact as to whether he had, or had not, any liquid refreshment with a meal. Often Mrs. Roosevelt would tell Duncan, the butler, when The President was a little overweight, not to serve him any wine at table. Only once do I remember seeing The President ask for it, when he saw his glass empty and the other people's full. When The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were alone at lunch, they generally had tea only, but at the White House and Oyster Bay, if anyone were there, they always served sherry at lunch and whatever seemed most appropriate at dinner.

Admiral Cowles once went to Mrs. Roosevelt, and told her that he thought she should give orders to the butler, to offer Scotch or Rye whiskey to the men who came to see The President by appointment, in the evenings after dinner. The President had never thought of this, and did not realize that most men wanted it. Thereafter some Scotch and Rye were kept up in his study, in a small closet, and the butler or his assistant in charge was ordered to always go in and offer it to visitors. For a long time the family, and all of us connected with The White House, rather laughed at these reports, but finally, they were so insistent and apparently so generally believed, that The President felt something must be done. No contradiction of his friends seemed to convince the general public, so he determined, as these reports were still circulating, after his return from Africa, to finish the slander for all time. He said he did not want to go down in History as a drunkard. As a matter of fact, he never took whiskey unless ordered by the doctor, even if for the very simple reason that he distinctly disliked the taste! Finally the opportunity arose for him to bring a suit, which resulted in the Roosevelt versus Nugent case.²⁷ Mr. Roosevelt was completely exonerated of bibulous tastes and the charges complete-

ly disproved. But the strange thing is that to this day, I sometimes meet people who still think he used to get drunk. It has certainly taught me not to believe all I hear!

During the time the Roosevelts were at the White House there was a remarkable spirit among every one in any way attached to the Administration. I think the feeling started with the Cabinet and went thru to the humblest fireman. Of course the family touched so many different ages and kinds of people and, with The President's enormous range of interests, he brought, or else sent for, many people to consult and see. The combinations of guests at lunch were extremely interesting; often when The President left for the office in the morning, Mrs. Roosevelt might think that he and she were to lunch alone, but by one o'clock a party of twenty or thirty might be invited!

I think the aides had a really personal feeling regarding the success of any entertainment, and I certainly know I did. When a reception or musicale was over we would always smile and preen ourselves if it had been particularly successful. If there had been some mistake, we were quick to notice it, and would make suggestions for any improvements.²⁸

The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were so congenial with all ages, that a number of the aides became real friends of the household. Mrs. Roosevelt and the children used to come frequently to dinner or lunch with me; often when The President had a men's dinner, she would engage a box at the theatre and dine with me before. I would ask some congenial guests, and oh what good times we had. The several apartments where I lived were tiny, and I remember one had no dining room. This disadvantage made no difference, for I would put two tables together and my old combination cook and waitress would give us a simple dinner of southern dishes, and the company did not seem to mind the inconveniences. I was especially gratified on these occasions, for Mrs. Roosevelt, following the usual precedent for a President's wife, rarely went out, except to the Cabinet houses, and to the homes of her few old intimate friends. She was always the life of the party, and seemed to enjoy the necessary informality of these occasions.

Mrs. Roosevelt was always particularly thoughtful in giving pleasure to her friends by sending them flowers from the White House Greenhouses. Each year she would have me write a list for the head gardener, for weekly deliveries to the Cabinet and certain friends and relatives; and all through the year, weddings, funerals, and illness in friends' and officials' families were remembered.

One of her particularly tactful and sympathetic acts was on receipt of a telephone message, early one morning of the death of Mrs. Root's mother. A small lunch was quickly prepared, and Mrs. Roosevelt hastened with it to the Union Station, to express her sympathy to Mrs. Root before her train left, and suggest her lunching in the quiet and privacy of her drawing room.

Such kind thoughts and acts were constantly occurring to that dear lady's mind, and if ever anyone acted on the precept of "a light under a bushel," it is she!

NOTES

1. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
2. To read more about the painting *Love and Life*, by George F. Watts, see William Kloss, *Art in the White House: A Nation's Pride* (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, 2008) 37.
3. Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942), born in Philadelphia, was a renowned society portraitist whose work has been compared to that of John Singer Sargent.
4. The White Lot is now known as the Ellipse.
5. For further reading, see Amy Verone, "'The Most Beautiful Things': Gifts from France in the Roosevelt White House," *White House History* no. 23 (Summer 2008): 60–65.
6. Quentin Roosevelt (November 19, 1897–July 14, 1918) was killed during World War I and buried near the village of Chamery in France. After World War II he was reinterred alongside his older brother, Theodore Jr., at the Normandy American Cemetery near Omaha Beach. Theodore, who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions on Utah Beach on D-Day, died one month later in France.

7. Dr. J. West Roosevelt, who died in 1896, was a first cousin of Theodore Roosevelt.
8. The Secret Service agent who was killed was William Craig, Roosevelt's favorite; Tyree was Craig's successor.
9. For further reading, see Betty C. Monkman, *The White House: Its Historic Furnishings and First Families* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2000).
10. Belle refers to Pine Knot, the name Edith gave the modest family retreat. Restored in the 1990s by the Theodore Roosevelt Association with a grant from the state of Virginia, the historic site is now operated by the Edith and Theodore Roosevelt Pine Knot Foundation and open to the public.
11. Mrs. Wadsworth was a social leader of Washington at the time; her Dupont Circle mansion is now the Sulgrave Club.
12. In the Hoover administration Dolly Gann, the sister of Vice President Charles Curtis, a widower, served as his hostess for numerous official events as she had when he was a senator. This caused considerable uproar because of the questions of precedence. Had Mrs. Gann been the vice president's wife she would have outranked Alice Longworth, wife of the Speaker of the House. In 1929 the august Senate Ladies' Luncheon Club decreed that only a wife could be an official hostess, a view Alice and her husband certainly shared. For a detailed account of the feud, see Stacy A. Cordery, *Alice: Alice Roosevelt Longworth, from White House Princess to Washington Power Broker* (New York: Viking, 2007), 341–48.
13. Elsewhere in her memoir, Belle Hagner states, "I note that it is mentioned in 1904 that if Miss Cannon, the daughter of the Speaker, was not accorded the place of his wife, she would be obliged to send regrets to any dinner. State Department records were searched, and it was found that Miss Bayard, when head of her father's household during his service as secretary of state in Cleveland's administration, was sent to the end of the receiving line. Miss Herbert, the daughter of Secretary of Navy Herbert during the McKinley administration, was given her mother's rank."
14. A *New York Times* article of December 29, 1905, on the occasion of Bingham's appointment as New York police commissioner, cites his disapproval of the McKim renovations to the White House as the cause for his removal; it also cites the White House incident with Senator Depew that Belle mentions.
15. Colonel Hugh L. Scott (1853–1934), a West Point graduate, spent twenty years on the Western frontier in campaigns against various Indian tribes, becoming an expert in Indian languages and customs. He served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, as governor of the Philippines from 1903 to 1906, and as superintendent of West Point until 1910, when he returned to mediating Indian and Mexican problems in the Southwest. After retirement in 1919 he served ten years as a member of the board of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
16. On January 15, 1904, Pablo Casals performed at the White House, shortly before his Carnegie Hall debut. In 1961 Casals returned to the White House and performed for the Kennedys.
17. A term for members of old Washington families.
18. Senator Beveridge (1862–1927), a Republican from Indiana, shared Theodore Roosevelt's progressive views and gave the keynote address at the 1912 Progressive Party convention that nominated Roosevelt.
19. Theodore Roosevelt later said that this sketch was "the only picture of her that I have ever liked." See Owen Rutter, *Portrait of a Painter: The Authorized Life of Philip de László* (London: Haddar and Stoughton, 1939), 278.
20. Elsewhere in her memoir, Belle Hagner states, "Mrs. Roosevelt was very much interested in establishing a National Gallery, in order that the government might secure, for all time, pictures which otherwise would not be left to any museum in Washington, D.C.. She was largely instrumental in having a part of the National Museum set apart for that purpose. This was accomplished through Congressional action, after she had appealed to several of the president's friends in Congress, in her quiet way."
21. Four other official copies of the 1908 original were made; they are now owned by the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Roosevelt Birthplace in New York City, the National Defense University, Washington, D.C., and by a descendant of Theodore Roosevelt.
22. This portrait is now owned by a descendant of Alice Longworth.
23. More commonly, piquet.
24. A very pleasant social association was maintained between the President's family and Alice's Lee relations. Mrs. Roosevelt was always particularly courteous in asking them frequently to the White House.
25. Elsewhere in her memoir, Belle Hagner states, "On June 10, 1904 there was a large lunch given for the Philippine commission, who were visiting in this country at that time. It had been intended to follow the lunch by a garden party, but owing to rain, the reception was held inside. Colonel Charles Bromwell, the new Army aide in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, was present for the first time. Twelve extra aides were detailed for the afternoon. This was the first date of Captain Archibald W. Butt's service at the White House. Lt. Adolphus Andrews of the Navy also served on this occasion, and later became a permanent junior Aide."
26. Curtis Roosevelt and Eleanore Seagraves, grandchildren of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
27. George A. Newett had slandered Theodore Roosevelt in the weekly Michigan newspaper he edited, *The Iron Ore*, writing that he lied, cursed, and drank to excess. In late May of 1913 the criminal libel suit Roosevelt brought against Newett was heard, and Roosevelt won. The following year Roosevelt's cousin and close friend, W. Emlen Roosevelt, had the court proceedings privately published.
28. Elsewhere in her memoir, Belle Hagner states, "Seth Bulloch, The President's great friend from the West, was staying at the White House during 1904 and attended one of the musicales. Someone asked him how he liked it and he replied, 'It's most too far up the gulch for me.' The president heard this, and remarked, 'All I've been afraid of was that Bulloch might draw his guns and begin shooting the fiddlers.'"