

WASHINGTON PETS.

In Washington the children of prominent public officials are always objects of much interest. On a pleasant day the stables, squares and little parks are full of white-capped horsemen rolling baby carriages and conveying small charges, singly and in families, while those of larger growth stroll alone or in parties. Of course the little folks who attract the most attention are those who bear well known names. We may be very democratic, but we cannot help



STEPHEN B. ELKINS' SONS, RICHARD, BLAINE.

being interested in the children and the domestic affairs of those in high official positions, while our curiosity fairly runs rampant over the aristocratic little folks of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean legations. So much is this true of the general public that these unfortunate foreigners have come to be as shy and difficult of approach as hermit thrushes. They crawl, so to speak, into their legations and pull their legs in after them, refusing to let their children be seen, or even to tell their number.

One of the most charming family groups in Washington is formed by Mrs. Stephen B. Elkins and her five handsome children. Mrs. Elkins herself is a tall, graceful woman, with a perfect complexion and abundance of dark hair, clear Irish gray eyes and the prettiest dimples in the world. Her only daughter and youngest child, little six-year-old Katherine, is a perfect reproduction in miniature of her mother—eyes, dimples, bright, ingenious manner and all. She has the most compli-



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ented and amazing lip, and can tell wild tales of adventures on her pony which, for exciting romance and jaw-breaking patois, fairly outdo the much-praised Canadian dialect story. A charming little hoyden—as befits the only sister of four big, stalwart, rolling brothers—she is already a fearless horsewoman, and just such stuff as beauties and all around belles are made of.

Indeed, she is beginning to turn her attention to society, and deciding the other day, during one of her mother's receptions, that she had lingered quite long enough in the background, she concluded to go downstairs and, as she put it, "atthit." Mrs. Elkins was unaware of the valuable aid she was receiving till some one informed her that Miss Elkins was in the dining-room "theeing that everybody got there," and there she staid until the affair was



MARY LODGE MCKEE.

over; but her governess is now cautioned to keep rather a sharper eye upon her on reception days.

The four boys are fine, straight limbed, deep chested, well developed fellows, fond of athletics and boyish fun, full of health and vitality. Last year when the family were at their beautiful place, "Hallehurst," in West Virginia—Mrs. Elkins is the daughter of ex-Gov. Davis of West Virginia, and elings to her native state—Mrs. Russell Harrison sent the boys some complete Indian war costumes, and they had a great lack playing at prairie warfare. Richard and Stephen have cameras, and they took some fine pictures of these good-looking youthful braves, sporting, tomahawking, shooting from behind their ponies and generally doing up each other in the most approved "Lo" fashion.

The oldest son, who bears his mother's maiden name, Davis, is sixteen, and is in school at Lawrenceville, N. J. The others have tutors and masters at home. Stephen, who has his father's name, but not in full, thus avoiding the use of the "de" after it, has recently passed through a severe illness, and, though perfectly recovered, his brother

Richard, next younger, has outgrown him, and is considerably taller and heavier. The youngest son, Blaine, ten years old, is a thorough republican and a staunch admirer of its great sponsor.

Mrs. Elkins is a lovely mother. Corporal punishment is unknown in her family. She says, smilingly, that solitary confinement for a brief period is the sternest measure she ever resorts to. But she asserts that the greatest factor in her success is the good and amiable disposition which all her children possess, and which makes them require very little discipline.

On most fine days you may see in the white house grounds a big, blonde German or Swede with two and sometimes three little folks in charge. These are the Harrison grandchildren—Benjamin Harrison McKee, Mary Lodge McKee and Martha Harrison.

The president's namesake is a sturdy little man five years old last February. He is all boy, full of rump and fun and entirely satisfied that he is one of the lords of creation. In following out this idea he is apt to be a trifle dictatorial with the weaker vessels, but in the main a very affectionate brother. Mary Lodge, who is three, is a chubby, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl, whom her mother dresses with pleasing quaintness. She is rather fond of running and racing and spoiling those pretty frocks while emulating her brother Benny's pranks, but both of Mrs. McKee's children are excellently well trained and exceedingly affectionate and docile in spite of their fund of animal spirits.

Martha Harrison, who is three and



BENJAMIN HARRISON MCKEE.

a half, is more delicate and spirituelle looking than either of the McKee children, and is the beauty of the group. She is a gentle, quiet little thing, very sweet and winning, closely resembling her pretty mother. Her governess is a Swede, while the McKee children have a German governess. Both governesses are accomplished "kindergardeners," and the children are very fond of the kindergarden songs and games.

I met with a rather curious adventure the other day. Illustrative of the disposition to keep their domestic affairs to themselves at the Chinese and Japanese legations. I called on the Chinese minister, bearing an imposing letter of introduction from an august person in the state department. As my friend and I went up the front steps we received many "nods and becks and wreathed smiles" from what we took to be a couple of young Chinese women at one of the front windows. We were ushered by the negro serving man



MANU TETANO, THE ONLY CHILD OF THE JAPANESE MINISTER.

through a gloomy hall, garnished with a pair of colossal vases of Oriental porcelain, into a parlor furnished of all things—in complete Louis XVII style, gilded woodwork, slim, bowed legs, bulb cabinets and all. There we met the minister (who, by the way, is well worthy a chapter by himself) and transacted the business upon which we had come.

Now I had seen the baby of the household out for an airing one day. A funnier picture than that Chinese nurse, sitting on the step at the side entrance of the legation, with her round, full moon face and her placid smile, her curious, esophony, Chinese garments and the wad of a baby, like a magnified cigar, with a plump, olive face and beady eyes at one end of it, I never saw. So little is really known of these people that several persons who professed to have inside information about the matter informed me that this baby was the minister's only child. This being the case my friend was rampantly curious to know who the two young persons at the front window could be and suggested that I ask the man. Knowing how such inquiries are resented I told her that she could take that pleasant task upon herself if she wanted it done—and she did!

The functionary—who was a surly miserly in his shirt sleeves—looked unamiably over as wondering at our audacity, but as we stood our ground and appeared to be people who would expect a civil reply, he answered, in a monotonous, set of parliament, death warrant sort of tone, that it was the minister's son and one of the attaches. We didn't ask him any more questions, he wasn't a favorable subject for conversation, but we took a good look at that boy who was still at the window when we went out and found him to be quite a sweet faced lad of about fifteen, in a pea-cock blue gown, with a soft dull pink in his cheeks like the golden rose tint of some chrysanthemum. He smiled and smiled, showed his white teeth and waved his pretty taper-fingered hand with its almond nails to us as we got into our carriage.

I am told he is being kept very un-nice—his costume would indicate it—and is getting little good out of his sojourn in this country.

The Japanese minister manages—while equally reserved—quite differently. But then the Japanese are progressive, while the Chinese are tenaciously conservative. Little Manu Tetano, Minister Tetano's only child, who is about ten, wears just such pretty frocks as American mothers put on their little girls, has her heavy black hair in



KATHERINE ELKINS ON HER PONY "DAISY."

the regulation bang and hanging free on her shoulders. She is a very bright and pleasant little maid. Her manners and behavior are so subdued and perfect as to seem almost pathetic to our western minds, but her observant little face looks very happy, and there may be some singular provision in the Oriental child's composition, you know, which enables it to always conduct itself becomingly without experiencing any distress or unwholesome pines.

ALICE MCGOWAN.

Fluorine Gas. Fluorine gas is of a yellow color, with a small resembling bleaching powder. It has not been liquefied, and still remains gaseous at 140 degs. Fahrenheit.

Every precaution has to be taken in studying its action on other bodies, both on account of its dangerously irritating action on the eyes and mucous membranes of the operator and its marvelous and wonderful energy, far exceeding that of anything hitherto discovered. There is hardly a gas, liquid or solid, that it does not attack, usually with the greatest violence; in fact its mere contact with any other substance is nearly always signalized by the sudden evolution of intense heat and light and fierce detonations. It almost realizes the fondest dreams of the alchemists, and might fly by their long sought liquor, alkali, or universal solvent, for even dull, inert flint takes fire instantly it is exposed to the vapor, and the whole mass becomes luminous with a grand incandescence.

As a supporter of combustion it leaves oxygen far behind. Lampblack bursts immediately into brilliant flame and gets red hot in a current of fluorine gas; and charcoal is made to give an interesting exhibition of its porosity by first filling its interstices with the gas and then burning spontaneously with sparkling scintillations. The diamond, however, is able to withstand its action even at high temperatures.—Chambers' Journal.

London Crooks.

At a London park a crowd had collected around a girl sobbing bitterly and accusing a woman of having stolen a shilling from her. The accused loudly asserted her innocence and slowly made her way out of the crowd and disappeared. The crowd is indignant, accusations and curses against the thief and crying and looking for a policeman being indulged in by all of them. At length a matron pushes her way into the crowd, and having been told what has happened, she gives the girl a shilling, receives thanks and the crowd disperses. The matron waits a minute, when a policeman passes by. She tells him of the occurrence and asks him to have his eye on such women as will rob children. "Oh, madam," he says, "I know the woman. I only wish I could meet her in doing the trick. She and the girl work together. They both make a living that way, clever rogues!" And the matron protested she would in future be more careful about her shillings.

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