

# The Greatest Show On Earth



### A Presidential New Year Day Reception From a New Viewpoint--Triumph of Toggery in the Blue Room, Gold Lace About a Ton, and a Corridor Full of "Creations," to Say Nothing of the Little Boys in the Sun.

By W. W. AULICK.

Presidential reception is the greatest show on earth. It is a bigger attraction than Buffalo Bill's Congress of Nations, a stronger aggregation of drawing cards than anything ever exhibited under one tent by the late P. T. Barnum.

If Charles Frohman had been at the White House Wednesday noon the chances are he would have tried to sign contracts with every man, woman, and child in sight, from Theodore Roosevelt, President, to the nameless dandy who sat in a corner under the big clock, by the painting of Washington, and looked with all his width and beam of mouth at the passing great.

When you have gathered in one seething swarm the polite and representative bees from every pretentious hive in the world, from Britain to San Salvador, and from white to copper color, you have a collection it isn't possible to ignore.

Nobody that was anybody ignored the first-of-the-year handshake at the Executive Mansion. It was a sight too good to be missed by the resident and the stranger within the gates. It was a triumph of toggery. Good clothes was the trump card, and everybody drew to the extent of his hand. The epaulettes of the gold-lace warrior shook themselves out first, and then the long train of the revolving lady caught the sound of the quivering masses of yellow insignia and was moved to flutter with increased importance. "Hear my crackle, crackle, crackle," breathed the train in conscious pride. And the epaulettes made answer, "None but the brave, none but the brave, none but the brave my cords may wear."

The gold lace ran about fifty pounds to the man, and the glamour you couldn't count up. Pomp and Circumstance were the gods of the day. You couldn't have swung an umbrella at any spot between the front gates on Pennsylvania Avenue and the green. Before the hand plays its summer waltz hitting a uniform of di-

concert—Bingham, and he will pass them along until they have grasped the Presidential fingers and received the Presidential nod.

This little boys are very eager to do. It will be something for them to remember when they are big boys. It is always well to form infantile opinions, if only for the purpose of setting them aside when some long trousers and cigarette. The present historian remembers two things about President. The first President he ever saw in a state of captivity was Mr. Hayes. Or, was it not Mr. Arthur? He is not quite sure, but he opens it was Mr. Hayes. It has been some years ago. Anyway, the little boy was in line, just like the little boys were in line Wednesday, and he reached in course of time the right hand of the great man.

"I am glad to see you, Johnny," said the President, and he patted the little boy on the top of his head. Whereupon the little boy, who was nothing bashful, spoke up: "My name isn't Johnny, it's Willy." He did not say "Please, sir, my name," etc., for he never heard a really and truly boy say "Please, sir," although he has often read that Sanford and Merton and Rollo and others of that ilk made use of the expression. However, he did correct the President, and the only thing he remembers of the career of that great man—either Hayes or Ar-

ing the overcoat of Benjamin Harrison. It was a cruel day, if you remember. Also, it was a cruel day, whether you remember or not. The wind was doing its best to blow the Capitol off the face of the earth, and the rain was coming down with all the enthusiasm of the original Great Flood.

The President walked out from the rotunda onto the east steps, and as he passed he said to the boy: "Will you hold my overcoat, son?" And Son held the overcoat, and was happy. It was just as if the President had said: "Will you accept the post of Ambassador to the Court of St. James, and permit me to double the salary now connected with the berth?" As for General Harrison, the boy was to him only one of sixteen pages, having about as much identity as a pillar on the portico. But the boy didn't know this, and was blissful.

Speaking of little boys—we are getting a bit off the subject of 1902—another little boy wanders over to the grand chandelier and looks inquisitively at the vine display overhead. Later he is heard to ask the sedate policeman where the mistletoe is.

The Fussy Woman is here in the East Room before the big show starts. Somehow the Fussy Woman is everywhere, and we wish she wasn't. Anyway, she was here on Wednesday all right, and she first thing she did was to hunt up a window where the sun came through with a little more force than she thought warranted by the solemnity of the occasion. She immediately declared that this wouldn't do at all. There was too much glare in the room. She reached out into the window recess and laid her hand on the curtain for the purpose of pulling it down. The sedate policeman, gliding noiselessly over the inch-thick carpet, was just in time to prevent an interference with the housekeeping arrangements of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt. He didn't say very much, and he didn't use a loud tone, but what he said must have been sufficient, for the Fussy Woman gave over her endeavor at improvement and sighed deeply at the density of some people.

Speaking of the floor covering, a girl who chews gum and wears high-heeled shoes is there to ask the very bald and very bland young man, her escort, if he doesn't think the Brussels carpet is too beautiful. Whereupon the bald young man responds that the carpet is indeed beautiful, and that in addition it sported Brussels as a high high. He is an awfully mad wag, this young man.

The room is very cold, but later, when it begins to hold the uniforms and creations, it would be more comfortable were the windows open.

Now the hour of reception approaches. A very tall, blonde young man, loaded down with the harness of rank, steps servently from somewhere and in, for a brief minute, the centre of the stage in the East Room. "Oh, colonel!" cries some one, and dashes toward the tall young man, whose long steps are carrying him away in the direction of the holy of holies. "That's Colonel Bingham," whispers some one assiduously, "he's going to make the presentations." The colonel escapes. The man who has captured his attention, a few seconds' conversation drifts unpromptly back to his group, as who should say: "Behold the thing that I have done!"

Unperformed musicians are seen down the long hall looking from the East Room. One band leader sits at the lower end. The other marches proudly up the corridor and sinks into a recess. The crowd in the East Room makes a sudden dash for the corridor. Police policemen guard the

entrance. Gently but firmly the goats are separated from the sheep, and the sheep pass in. These sheep are of many varieties—newspaper sheep, personal-friend sheep, curious sheep, having cards of admission but being disinclined to wait their turn in line and shake hands and bow and scrape.

From out the recess step half a dozen buglers. At the lower end of the corridor other musicians stand out prominently from their fellows. They are to give President Roosevelt the signal to advance. President Roosevelt is used to buglery. He knows what it is and how it should be brought out. The buglers know the President knows this. They stand nervous, fidgety, mouthing their pieces, eager to fry them so that they are in good condition, yet fearful that such a trial might result in too loud a noise and thus be attended with consequences disastrous to the dignity of the occasion. When they do get the word they burst into calls, short, sharp, quick, like the yelps of a dog, without musical.

wears one white dress and very many diamonds, and then the Head of American Things, and his helpmate, together with the others of the party, are inside the Blue Room; and here one who is placed as you add I are placed, my ministers, may not follow. At least not just now. Not, indeed, until the diplomats and the Supreme Court and all the rest of the sombodies are welcomed.

After the bugle call she hands have played a few bars from "The Star-Spangled Banner." Now there is a hub-bub

backs of those in front, and there is no remonstrance. All the women are writing as if the fate of nations depended upon the speed with which descriptions of gowns were rushed out. The "lady reporters" are an interesting part of the greatest show on earth.

Not all of the women in the corridor are reeling off dress talk to a breathlessly waiting world. One little woman, blonde, poutful, altogether charming, steps back from the crowd massed around the door and sighs. "Isn't it a perfect shame!" she says, indignantly. We feel like correcting her and suggesting that "Ain't that a shame?" is the correct rendering. We are thinking in raptures. Well, well, talk about your less majestic! Some one addresses the pretty little woman sympathetically. "Why?" is the question; "couldn't you see the President and Mrs. Roosevelt?" "Oh," she replies, "I wasn't thinking of that. I saw them perfectly. But to think the hand didn't play 'Hail to the Chief,' but that dry old thing, 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'" And she is apparently inconsolable for fully a minute.

Meanwhile, the women inside are still talking. A line has been formed now and extends from the entrance to the Blue Room into the room adjoining the Blue Chamber. In this waiting place it is told that the diplomats are assembled. They cannot be seen from the corridor. But what can be seen is the string of Supreme Court Judges and United States Senators, standing in line like depositors at a savings bank. One big chap, broad as a giant, old, calm, masterful, grizzled, towers above all the rest. "Mr. Justice Gray," someone whispers. The whispers are still the order. Mr. Justice Gray makes no move, while his fellows in line fidget first on one foot and then on the other. It is not every day in the year that the fathers in law and the potent grave and reverend have to wait like common citizens.

Twenty minutes pass and the line is unbroken. The chatter in the Blue Room increases. Mr. Justice Gray stands in line as firm as ever. He is like an ox in a stall. And the rest of the distinguished ones are worrying.

Suddenly there is a movement among the women crowded in the corridor opposite the opening. Peeking over a head here and under a big sleeve there, we see that the procession has started. A little fat woman with a round, Oriental face, fascinating in its oddity, is in sight of the watchers. She smiles and the ladies of the receiving party smile, and then she passes on and someone says "Mrs. Wu." The President is giving each hand a short, sharp jerk, and the owner of the hand is bowing and smiling and passing on.

And so the thing goes for several hours. Occasionally one may catch a comprehensive glance of the proceeding. It is always the same. The women are gazing and smiling upon the visitors, and as the visitors, in this case, are gazing after them, curiously, critically, the "Happy New Years" are so thick you can feel them. And what does it all foot up to? The little Roosevelt boys, playing out in the sun of the east portico, know. Do the others?



"THE BRAVE AND THE FAIR."

thurs—is that he didn't know very much about little boys' names.

The other time the writer brushed against the crime—that is to say, his only other juvenile brush—occurred on the first inauguration of General Harrison. This was at a time when the boy was a page in the Senate. The two facts are not mentioned together in current histories. Nevertheless, they are facts. To the boy was given the honor of hold-



"THIS IS NOT 'FOXY GRANDPA AND THE BOYS.'"

"Please," says a gentle but firm young man, advancing toward the knot of folk in the corridor. All the attaches of the White House are gentle and firm, responsible beings, altogether admirable. The young man clears the way. Between the picture of President Grant and the picture of President Garfield is a three-foot-wide door through which the party is to pass to the Blue Room. The crowd pushes back against the ferocity of the corridor wall. Down the western steps descend the receiving party. They walk very rapidly.

There is just time to note that President Roosevelt is in sober black and has his glasses on and that Mrs. Roosevelt

## HOW THE CHAP WHO ROBS UNCLE SAM'S MAIL IS ROUNDED UP BY THE POSTAL INSPECTORS

WITH the closing of the holiday season comes hundreds of complaints to the Postoffice Department of the losses of articles in the mails, and before many months pass of the trusted employees of the post-offices throughout the country may be in the hands of the inspectors. Mails are easy to rob, but few postal thieves ever escape final detection; they are sure to be entrapped and punished in the end.

While speaking of these numerous complaints, an old detective of the Postoffice Department said:

"No thief is harder to catch than the one who robs Uncle Sam's mail. His methods are ingenious; the plunder is easily hidden or destroyed, and his rascal is well masked by the honesty and integrity of associates. Postoffice thieves are not arrested every day, although valuable letters and other articles are stolen almost daily and an army of street inspectors are on the alert.

"Positive proof of guilt must be in the possession of the inspector before an arrest is made. Circumstantial evidence counts for nothing in this business. It may send a man to the penitentiary for some other offense, but not for robbing the mails. In almost every instance arrest means conviction.

"A postoffice employee never known when he is being shadowed. Even when not under suspicion of theft he may be watched outside of business hours to see if he is spending more money than his salary will permit and if he is galloping with a fast gang. It sometimes happens that an inspector may not be able to prove his man a thief and the man is turned loose with a verdict of 'not guilty' as his certificate of honesty, but he is not certified by the department any more.

"From one point of view it is wonderful that there are so few thieves among the many thousand clerks who work on the mails, first and last, for great temptations constantly rise, as they handle the millions of valuable parcels.

"It is known that these clerks soon learn to tell by the very touch of a letter whether it contains money. If so inclined it would be an easy matter for the dishonest clerk to slip letters into his pocket and open them in the privacy of his room.

"That the cases of dishonesty are comparatively few is a high tribute to the moral qualities of the postoffice clerks.

**Caught by Drugged Muds.**

"Years ago, on one of the old star routes out in New Mexico, hundreds of letters containing money, drafts, checks and

other valuables were stolen. At first letters and all disappeared, but the thieves changed their mode of operations and simply stole the contents, resealing the letters and sending them on. As clerks pass through the hands of many letters, it is difficult to locate the thief.

"Months of faithful work resulted in nothing being discovered as to the identity of the thieves. Finally there was a happy solution of the trouble.

"One of the inspectors procured a quantity of different kinds of drugs and sent other inspectors over the entire route with instructions to make a tour of book investigations, and while thus engaged, to place some of one kind of the drugs in the mudlage bottles at each office, taking care to make a memorandum which would show at what office the drug had been placed.

"It was not long before a registered letter came through with money gone. The inspector put his lips to the seal of the envelope, tasted the mudlage, referred to his book and at once named the office at which the particular drug had been placed in the mudlage.

"Then a lot of dray letters went to the office, and the dishonest postmaster secured the contents, and the inspector secured him. This, I think, was one of

the cleverest pieces of work ever done by the Department. The inspector who put the job into execution was an experienced chemist, and knew what he was doing.

**How to Catch a Thief.**

"There are but two successful ways to catch a postoffice thief—constant watch and dray letters. With these, and a large supply of patience, the game will be landed. It often requires months and sometimes years to accomplish this. It is one of the most annoying and difficult lines of detective work a man ever engaged in, and requires the most earnest application. Not a single circumstance or detail must be overlooked.

"Sometimes help helps us out of our difficulties. I remember once in a city not very far from Washington things were in a fearful state in the distribution division of the office. It appeared as though we would never catch the fellow who was making way with valuable letters.

"One day there came up a terrific rain-storm and with this came a happy thought to the inspector who had the case in hand. He carried a bucket of water into the lot and dashed it on the overboard plastering just over the distribution division. Naturally a leak was sprung and a workman, who was taken into the confidence of the inspector, was sent into the lot to make an investigation.

"Accidentally, on purpose, his foot went through the wet plastering, leaving a hole. Of course, to repair this it would have been necessary to do the work from the distribution room, and, as this was not done, the clerks went ahead with their work, while the inspector looked down at their every movement from the supposed accidentally-made hole.

**Nabbing the Thief.**

Finally he was rewarded by seeing one of the oldest employees of the office slipping letters into his pocket. The inspector got out of his place of hiding, colored the clerk, and found the letters, every one of them containing money. His confession was full, and he went up for a number of years.

"A German, named Namath, gave the inspectors a world of trouble in the same city. Thousands of letters were mislaid, and goodness only knows how much money stolen. It was a case which puzzled the department, and after weeks of the closest investigation it was decided that the crooked work was not done in the postoffice.

"Then an outside campaign was begun, and Namath was arrested while stealing letters from one of the street boxes. He

did not have a key, but used a wire for extracting the letters. His operations were confined to the boxes in the business sections, and he admitted he had stolen not less than ten thousand letters before he was caught. The amount of money he got could never be ascertained, but he must have secured a snug sum. His own confession sent him to the 'pen' for a long term.

**Few Arrests in Washington.**

"Did you ever think about the fact that but few arrests have been made here in Washington? There's a powerful army of postoffice employees here, but they seldom go wrong, and yet inspectors are no more numerous here than in other cities.

"A few years ago we had an inspector who was regarded as a cracking good man. He went wrong, but, thank goodness, it was after he resigned from the service. His daughter received an appointment at a thriving town in Georgia as postmistress, and had been there six or eight months when the father suddenly concluded that he wanted to go to the same place and open up a real estate business.

"Well, he resigned as a postoffice inspector and moved to Georgia. He got the run of the office of which his daughter was postmistress, and pretty soon the

office was robbed of several hundred dollars. It was a bungled job and no difficulty to amount to anything was experienced in saddling the job on the young lady's father. He did time in Columbus penitentiary.

"It always struck me that if this man would steal from his own daughter's office he must have been guilty of crooked work while he was an inspector. There are always plenty of chances to accept hush money from postmasters who are found short."

### POSTOFFICE AS EDUCATOR.

The postoffice in India not only collects and delivers letters, parcels and other articles, but acts to a certain extent as a banker to the general public, sells quinine and salt, pays military pensions and collects the revenue accruing to the Government from land and other sources. But to the fertile brain of one of the oldest officers in the department is due the latest development in the work of the postoffice. The Punjab postoffice has come forward as an elementary teacher. It not only collects letters and delivers them, but teaches boys in elementary schools how to write them and address the covers. —Pearson's Weekly.

### Why the Professor Blushed.

One of the male professors of a girls' college in this State is known as a crank among the girls who come under his instruction, for very much the same reason that some other men and women come to be known as cranks—always knowing more than any one else about everything.

The professor is something of a prude in matters of society, but he does dance once in a while. One of these relaxations on the part of his nobis occurred a few nights ago, when some of the college people attended a party given at a nearby city. Most of the college folks went home about midnight, but the dear professor had met a charming girl, and danced out the last dances with her.

They say that this girl is really a charming girl, just the kind that any one of us men would give our very best for. She has a position of responsibility in a retail dry goods store, and the situation

### A CAT-EGORICAL IMPERATIVE.

ONE TO THE OFFICE CAT.

Whenever cooks with knowing looks Devise confections nice, With nuts galore and sweets in store And every kind of spice, In eager haste to take a taste The hungry little mice With chatter, chatter, patter, patter, Gather in a trice.

So 'tis wise to have a cat— Now, what do you think of that? A roly-poly, furry, contradictory cat, Just to rise up in the way And to rodent callers say, "Please to leave your cards and travel. For this is OUR BUSY DAY!"

There are some sheets devoid of heats, Some journals high—and dry, With no more spice than unshooked rice To meet the casual eye. In truth, indeed, they do not need A mouse-trap on four feet. They are exempt from aught could tempt A well-bred mouse to eat.

But to have an office cat— Now, what do you think of that? A fluffy, buffy, round-plum-duffy, white and yellow around and gurr, Just to sit around and gurr, And comb down a coat of fur, And generally an air of blithe prosperity confer!

Unwary mice must pay the price When note they venture here, Contributors and editors. Most walk in a wholesome fear, Composing room await its doom When they step on a bat, And all go right by day and night— We have an office cat!

Just a round and purry cat— Now, what do you think of that? A wise, sagacious, disputatious, metallic cat! We will do this thing up brown, We will scoop this bloom'ing town, And the catless "ber persons can— Go 'way back and sit down."

### Russia's Real Rulers.

While the Czar is generally credited with being a humane man, he is really governed by his advisers, who use him as the civilized mask for a barbaric government. Four men of great power in the empire are Klegils, Dragomiroff, Kouropatkin, and Vanoffsky.

These are names the Russian thinks of today when he discusses the simmering discontent that every now and then approaches the boiling point and is cooled down by a whiff from the machine guns. These are the men who are brought most often into direct contact and conflict with the people and whom the people fear.

General Klegils belongs to a Scottish family that settled in Riga. The original name was Clayhills, but, as the family became Russified, the name suffered the same fate and became Klegils. The general is prefect of St. Petersburg, and his arrangements for trampling on the students in the recent disturbances were carried out to the letter. Klegils is as

thoroughly Russified as his name, and is detested by the people whom he holds in awe and subjection.