

The President's Old Guard

The death of Assistant Secretary Prudden of the White House staff has reduced the president's "Old Guard," so called, to four. They are Capt. Montgomery, Executive Clerk, and Disbursing Officer Crook, Capt. Loeffler, whose duty it is to keep undesirable persons out, and Thomas F. Pendle, usher and known best of all the white house attaches to the visiting public.

The youngest member of the "Old Guard," in years and point of service, is Capt. Benjamin F. Montgomery, U. S. A. He was in the signal corps of the army as a young man, and in March, 1877, was detailed for duty at the white house, when Mr. Hayes felt the need of a larger organization.

Being a telegrapher, Capt. Montgomery immediately began the installation of what has grown into perhaps the most complete bureau of confidential communication in the world. He started with a single telegraph instrument—the first ever used in the white house—looped to the regular commercial system, and personally sent and received the president's messages.

Gradually the value of this service demonstrated itself. The connection with the telegraphic system of the world was made closer. In 1878 Capt. Montgomery declined a lieutenant's commission in the signal corps, preferring to remain at the white house. He has filled every post in the office, having acted as secretary in charge at times during the absence of others.

Foreseeing the coming of the Spanish war, he organized and equipped the bureau so completely that, during that struggle, the president received reports from the Cuban battle and from the naval operations all around the globe in record time. In some instances the executive was immediately in communication with the firing line of the army in Cuba.

At the outbreak of the war Mr. Montgomery volunteered his services, and, on the recommendation of Gen. Greely, chief signal officer, was appointed a captain in the regular army. He was afterward commissioned as lieutenant-colonel of volunteers, with which rank he was honorably discharged.

The history of that telegraphic office in the white house has been the history of the United States for the past twenty-five years. During the year of 1877 the president was kept in touch with every phase of the trouble, and he sent orders and proclamations through the medium of Montgomery's key.

The Chicago railroad riots likewise found the president at Montgomery's elbow, giving orders to and receiving reports from Gen. Miles. When disaster occurs, as at Johnstown or Galveston, the president is placed in direct communication.

When elections are being held the white house feels the pulse of the people. With twenty-five wires it is possible to make direct connection with the cables. Thus the world is gripped, and the office never closes.

Capt. Montgomery has now a staff under his command of tried and expert operators. Great secrets have been confided to him. No man can truthfully assert that he has ever broken faith.

Recently he has worked through the night at the white house key, with a president at one elbow and a secretary of state at the other, manipulating the nerves of the world. For twenty-five years he has been in effect, the President's eyes and ears.

William H. Crook, the executive clerk and distributing officer, was detailed from the Washington police force on Jan. 5, 1885, as a bodyguard to President Lincoln. He journeyed with Lincoln in the spring to City Point and Richmond, marching by his side with one hand upon a pistol butt.

When the party returned to Washington no one knew of Lee's surrender until the bonfires were seen gleaming on the hills. Mr. Lincoln himself asked Crook the meaning of the demonstrations.

On the night of the assassination Mr. Crook was detailed to remain at the white house. He feels that if he had gone to the theatre he would have saved the president's life, perhaps at the expense of his own, for he would have guarded the box door of the person.

During President Grant's second term Mr. Crook served for a short time as his private secretary. In 1876, and was made disbursing officer the next year. One of the important tasks formerly entrusted to him was the distribution of the annual messages of the president.

Up to five years ago these printed messages were sent through him to Baltimore, Philadelphia and New

York, where they were taken by the local newspapers and the press associations, and thence distributed throughout the country. So intense has been the desire of commercial interests at time to obtain first inkings of the messages that Mr. Crook has had many interesting, and even exciting experiences, dodging would-be thieves, rebuking attempts at corruption, and evading persistent questioners.

At present the messages are distributed by mail and wire from Washington. Now that Mr. Prudden is dead, Mr. Crook is the medium of communication between the president and congress.

Outside the president's door sits a quiet sentinel, Capt. Charles D. Loeffler, U. S. A., retired. Cabinet officers, senators, representatives, political leaders, commercial giants, titled and distinguished foreigners, great actors, world-famed authors and humorists and lecturers, plain, every-day American citizens—all have gone through that door under Capt. Loeffler's guidance.

He has a wonderful memory for names and faces. Men come and go in the current of affairs; but, once they have been identified at that door, they are marked for life in Loeffler's mind.

For twenty-five years he has been in sole charge of the entrance to the president's room. For eight years previously he was on duty there with two others.

While the cabinet sits Capt. Loeffler also guards the door. Some men might have tried to exclude newly-appointed officers whose features were unfamiliar. But Loeffler has been too adroit for such a blunder. He seems to sniff greatness by instinct, and to identify, afar off the right to enter the door.

Capt. Loeffler is a German by birth. He came to this country while a young man and enlisted in the army. When the civil war opened he was ordered with his regiment to Washington for guard duty at the treasury.

After some later service in the field he was detailed as doorkeeper at the war department and bodyguard to Secretary Stanton the day after the assassination of President Lincoln. Wherever Stanton went, there went Loeffler.

When Stanton resigned Sergt. Loeffler was sent back to the war department from Stanton's house, and was later detailed for duty at the white house as doorkeeper. General Grant, while acting as secretary of war, had observed his faithful performance of duty and recognized his merit.

During his years of service at the president's door Capt. Loeffler has collected many scores of important autographs. His small album has been long outgrown and is now fat with repeated additions. It is beyond price.

During the Spanish war President McKinley appointed his faithful doorkeeper a captain in the regular army, as military storekeeper, and he was placed on the retired list.

Downstairs is the dean of the white house corps, Thomas F. Pendle, the usher, who was detailed for duty Nov. 3, 1884, from the Washington police force as bodyguard to the president, and was later placed on the civil staff of the house. Though far beyond 70 years, Mr. Pendle stands today erect and youthful in appearance.

He is a walking encyclopedia of information about the house and its contents and traditions. He knows the precise date of the purchase of each of the articles of furniture.

Visitors who go through the parlors are highly entertained and instructed by his discourse, delivered slowly and methodically. At times presidents have consulted him as to the record of the housefurnishings.

In later years his duty has been to escort visitors through those parts of the establishment which are open to the public, and his autographs are to be found today in many thousands of American homes as souvenirs of visits to Washington.

In the trying days of assassination Mr. Pendle has proved himself a staunch friend of the presidential family. It was he who on the night of Lincoln's death comforted little "Tad" and quieted his pitiful cries of grief for the father he had just lost.

Thus, during nearly forty years, has Mr. Pendle remained on duty. Out of the fullness of his recollections he recently compiled a valuable volume.

The list of veteran helpers around the white house is not complete without reference to Jerry Smith, the black major domo. Jerry was a waiter in the Baltimore hotel once patronized by Gen. Grant. He attracted the notice of the president by his dignified bearing and good nature. As a result of this acquaintance a hope was born in Jerry's breast that he might some day become identified with the national administration, and he accordingly went to Washington and eventually was taken into the white house ranks as a cleaner and household helper.

Then Mrs. Grant, with an eye to the proportions of a carriage servant, chose Jerry as her footman. Since then Jerry Smith has seldom been away from his duty.

There is no thought of changing these men or retiring them because of their years. Their very age and length of service are the factors of their greatest usefulness. Without them the white house would indeed appear a strange place to the frequenters of that centre of the national activity.—New York Sun.

The Beef Trust and the Jews.

Among the Jews of New York the feeling against the beef trust seems to be something more than a spasm of indignation. It is rather an abiding sense of injury and a constant resolve not to submit. Some time ago certain people in Bloomington entered into an agreement which bound them to abstain from meat. Nothing has been heard of those people since. Their fire seems to have flickered out. The Jews are different. They find it difficult to make up their mind to change their mind. They have decided not to eat meat at 16 cents a pound, and their decision stands.

The fight has had several stages. First the kosher retailers were at outs with the wholesalers and refused to buy meat from them. Then the retailers gave in and agreed to take the meat at the wholesalers' prices. It seemed then that the wholesalers had won. It was not so, however. Victory was as yet far off. The kosher public had not been beaten. There now began a revolt on the part of that public. The deadly earnestness of the revolt is interesting. No other group of people in the country have shown such spirit. It seemed to the Jews of the east side that an injustice had been done and that they had been put on the financial rack by persecutors. This was not a pleasant thought to them. They resented it. And they have acted upon their resentment. For many days now the kosher shops on the east side have been carefully picketed and all possible efforts have been made to discourage prospective purchasers. Women have been intimidated by women. The kosher dealers have been obliged to sell their meat to sausage factories. Trade has been actually—and not, as is often the case, theoretically—thrown out of gear by a combination among consumers.

Finally there has been organized a society which bears the stupendous name of "The Women's Anti-Beef Trust Association." This society has appointed organizers and has established a propaganda. It will endeavor to create a local sentiment which will make the meat business unprofitable until prices come down. It will also take steps toward the formation of cooperative societies which will handle meat for the benefit, financial as well as physical, of those persons who eat the meat. One is reminded of the first modern cooperative society on record, the flour mill in Hull, England, when the "poor inhabitants" of Hull petitioned the corporation of the town that "in consequence of the exorbitant price of flour, and in order to protect themselves from the inroads of 'covetous and mercenary men,' they might be allowed to 'enter into a subscription for the purpose of building a mill, which is to be the subscribers' and their heirs' forever, to provide them with flour.'" This was in 1795. The price-raising trust idea is not in every respect new.

What gives the present movement strength is the character of the people engaged in it. The Jews have a genius for resistance. They showed that at the siege of Jerusalem. They have shown it many times since. As the writer of the book of the Kings says, they can "harden their necks like to the necks of their fathers." The stubbornness of the Teuton is sweet reasonableness compared with the stubbornness of the Hebrew. In this case stubbornness is not unnecessary. He who fights the beef trust must be prepared to contemplate the last ditch. It will be interesting to see what "The Women's Anti-Beef Trust Association" can accomplish. It will be hoped that it may accomplish a great deal.—Chicago Tribune.

OBITUARY.

San Diego, Cal., June 3.—Colonel Dallas Bache, surgeon United States army, retired, is dead at his home in this city. He entered the army as assistant surgeon in 1861 and served

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