

MRS. COOLIDGE RETURNS TO SIMPLE LIFE: Quiet Summer Days of the ...

By VIRGINIA POPE

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NO trespassing." In black letters the warning is painted on a small signboard that rises six inches above the tops of the swaying blades of grass that make the soft green carpet of the White Court lawn. Nothing on the sign indicates that it is a warning to keep the curious off the property of the Summer residence of the President of the United States, for beneath is the modest statement—"Private property of F. E. Smith."

No trespassing! No two words could better describe the mantle of privacy in which the First Lady of the Land has wrapped herself for the sixty days of vacation which she and the President are taking from the strenuous cares of a Winter in Washington.

Mrs. Coolidge has elected the retired life for a Summer's rest. She has reverted to the days when she was not the wife of the President, and has taken into her own hands the duty of ordering the affairs of

the day at White Court. When the Presidential family moved to the North Shore the mistress of the White House insisted that the housekeeper take a rest. So it is the President's wife who, list in hand, each morning consults the elderly Belgian cook. Perhaps it is because of Mrs. Coolidge's personal supervision of the menu that the President is looking particularly well this Summer.

Breathing the air of their native section of the country, President and Mrs. Coolidge have once more become New Englanders. The traditional simplicity which runs like a motive through the lives of those born in the shadow of Plymouth Rock is the keynote of the White Court Summer. And few places could offer a more harmonious setting than White Court for simple holiday making.

The house is handsome in its simplicity. Its

semi-circular, pillared entrance is concave. To the left is the President's study, through windows of which a stroller in the garden may see the back of Mr. Coolidge's head as he sits at his desk. To the right is the reception room in which callers are welcomed. There is no formal entertaining. Friends, members of the official family, Senators, Cabinet officers, men of high rank in the army and the navy, foreign Ambassadors and Ministers pay their respects to the head of the Government, and are often invited to lunch or dine with the President and Mrs. Coolidge. There is scarcely a meal at which there are not one or more guests, and over these formal affairs presides the gracious spirit of the hostess.

Few women have a reputation which can equal that of Mrs. Coolidge as hostess. Not many are endowed with the charm which she exercises upon those she meets. Whether it be a diplomat, the Italian gardener or the marine doing guard duty at the entrance to her home, all speak first of her smile. There have been a Harding blue, and a Wilson pink, but there is a Mrs. Coolidge smile. It is ready for the

Quiet Summer Days of the Mistress of White Court Are Varied by Swimming and Country Tramps

lowliest and for the most exalted. Mrs. Coolidge envelops all who come near her in the warmth of her personality. It is apparently her desire to please with as little ostentation as possible.

There are few boards around which gather guests of such diverse interests as are brought together at meal time in the Executive Mansion. To lead conversation successfully under such circumstances is like bringing a boat into a harbor in which there are many cross currents, yet in this art Mrs. Coolidge excels.

Above all Mrs. Coolidge is blessed with a sense of humor. Her brown eyes are ever ready to twinkle with mirth, her merry laughter constantly breaks forth with spontaneity.

The first lady of the land passes her days at Swampscott very quietly.

tention to the business of housekeeping. It is whispered by those who have peeped in through half open doors at White Court that sometimes of a morning she may be seen in a pink morning frock, a boudoir cap covering her dark hair, arranging flowers in the vases of the drawing room.

Flowers—yes, there is Mrs. Coolidge's garden, not of her own planting, but hers to walk in and to pick flowers in. It is an old-fashioned New England garden, the kind she lived as a girl in Northampton. It is hidden away behind a green hedge to the left of the house as it is approached and on a somewhat lower level. Here grow hellebore, petunias, larkspur, zinnias and a host of familiar flowers. Once, at least, and sometimes twice a day, Mrs. Cool-

people get who venture into the North Shore surf.

In this yellow cup, filled with sparkling blue water, Mrs. Coolidge takes her swim. Slender and of athletic build, she has a good strong stroke, though she is not what would be called an expert swimmer, for she did not learn the art until after Mr. Coolidge became Governor of Massachusetts. Generally a group splashes about in the "hole," for Mrs. Coolidge is accompanied by some of the neighbors and their children. More often than not Mrs. Andrews (wife of the commander of the Mayflower who has a house for the Summer on Little's Point) and her daughters are among the merrymakers. And always there stands on the shore, a long, lean, dry figure—the private detective detailed to guard the White

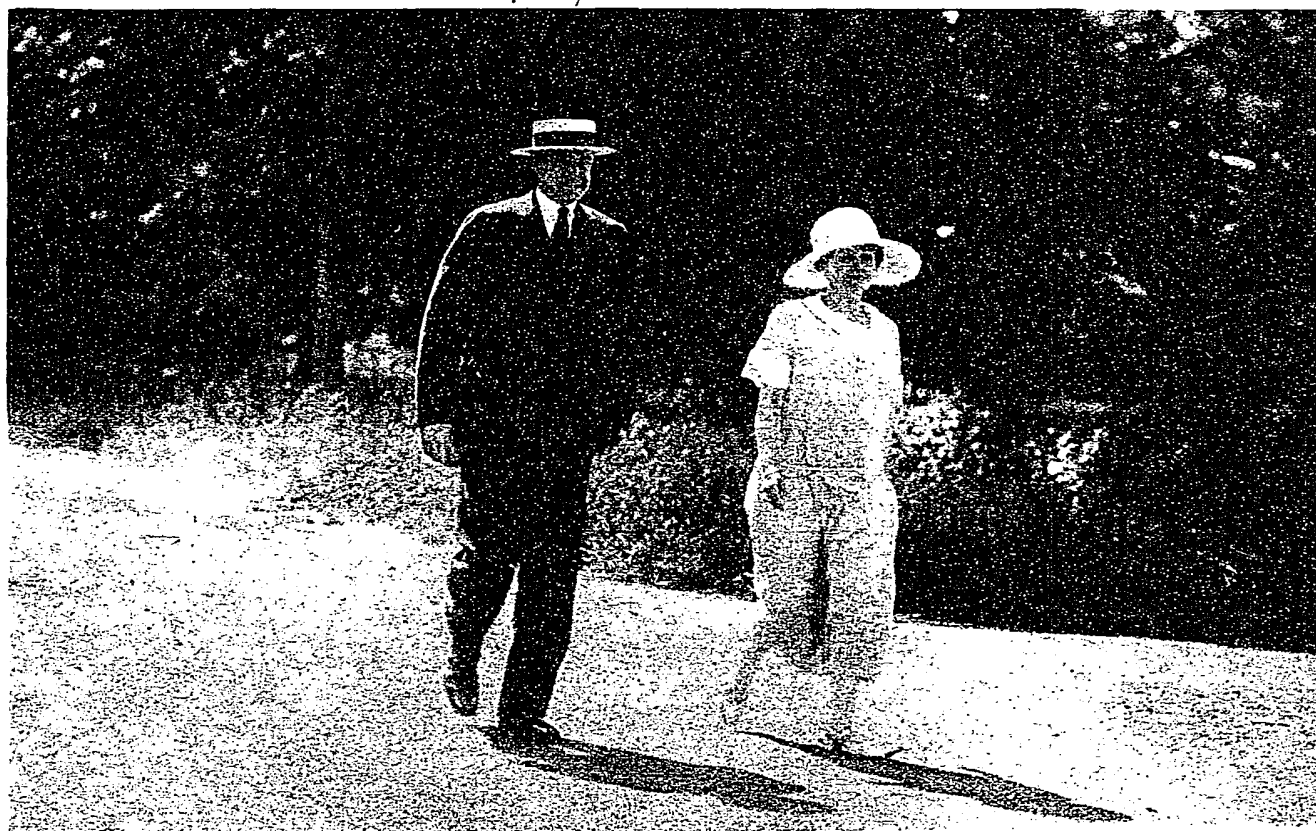
the Frank W. Stearnses, and Mrs. Coolidge is often seen crossing to their house to spend some time with Mrs. Stearns, who has not been well this Summer.

Maybe her afternoon includes a brisk walk. She moves swiftly with a long stride, a rhythmic swing, head erect, shoulders thrown back. The Coolidge walk might well become an example for the generation of young girls that is in the making. The mistress of White Court often leaves the grounds and takes her constitutional down Puritan Road. Always a secret service man accompanies her. Five o'clock is the social hour. Mrs. Coolidge, knitting in hand, sits and talks with her husband, sometimes on the terrace facing the sea, sometimes in the house, again in one of the White House cars whirling along the countryside.

Dinner is at 7. Often in the evening the Coolidge family will look at the films, of which a goodly supply is constantly sent to Little's Point for their entertainment. Dur-

ing the week of July 10 some of the neighbors and their children were invited in for the evening to see the "movies." It was the first time this year that a party had been given at White Court for any of the local people.

Taps sound early. Nine-thirty is the usual hour. So the New England day ends. In the midst of this Puritan atmosphere there is a flavor of the South—the two black faces of the White House butlers, who have served more than one Administration, and who bow in dignified welcome to the entering guests. On Sunday the President and Mrs. Coolidge attend the Congregational Tabernacle at Salem. Mrs. Coolidge, who as a girl sang in the choir, knows most of the hymns by heart. Her clear voice mounts above the congregational singing. As she stands erect and tall at the President's side it is easy to imagine that she sometimes feels herself



Mrs. Coolidge on a Walk in Swampscott Accompanied by James Haley, Secret Service Man. Times Wide World Photo.

In this she resembles her neighbors. The day in the Coolidge family starts betimes. The President is living up to his reputation of being an early riser, and while young John Coolidge was visiting his father and mother, he was even ahead of the former in getting out to see the early sun upon the ocean. He brought with him, so it is said, the habits acquired on his grandfather's farm. In the White House the breakfast hour is seven; this Summer the President has made a concession and waits until eight for his pancakes and maple syrup.

The day has begun. There is a stroll around the grounds, the news is read. It is said that the President's greatest form of Summer sport is perusing the accounts of himself and in posing for the camera men. At the present time he has found a slight variation by sitting for his portrait, which is being painted by Edmund C. Tarbell. At some time in the near future he hopes to have a bust made of himself by Nancy Cox McCormick, introduced to him by the late Senator Medill McCormick.

When the President enters his study Mrs. Coolidge turns her at-

idge walks among the flower beds, plucking blossoms here and there, and it may be said that when she moved to Little's Point she was made Honorary President of the Swampscott Garden Club.

Rob Roy Is Inquisitive

At 11 o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays, the press conference takes place in the President's study, or, if the weather is warm, in the open under the trees. At just about this hour, while Rob Roy sniffs at the trousers of the newspaper men to see if there are any newcomers, or to let an old friend know that he recognizes him, Mrs. Coolidge strides across the lawn and down the path that leads to the swimming pool. One thinks of a pool sunk in a cool green lawn and lined with tiles, but the pool in which Mrs. Coolidge and her friends swim is more like the well-known swimmin' hole. A long and knotted arm of brown rocks extends out into the sea at the foot of Frank W. Stearns's place, and the water that sparkles in the hollow of its elbow has been dammed in by a cement wall, making a safe enclosure and providing a warmer bath for those who dive into it than most

House mistress, even while she swims.

Swimming is a sport which President Coolidge does not share with his wife. In fact, it is the only White Court sport, for neither Mrs. Coolidge nor the President indulges in golf, tennis or riding. The only other diversion is an occasional outing in the Mayflower. If wind blows too hard, sailing orders are called off. There is nothing of the seadog about the President. Mrs. Coolidge is always a member of the Presidential parties on board the beautiful yacht, which spends its idle hours tugging at its moorings in Marblehead harbor. Here again her ability as hostess shines. To the dining saloon, decorated under President Harding's Administration in Mrs. Harding's favorite color, Mrs. Coolidge has added several pretty vases and candlesticks of blue.

To return again to the White Court schedule, luncheon is at 1. After his noon-day meal the President yields to the hour of the siesta. Then more work. Mrs. Coolidge spends her afternoons in a varied manner. Reading, writing, calling upon her neighbors—within almost a stone's throw live their old friends,

once more the chorister singing in the Northampton church.

Mrs. Coolidge has worn white a great deal this Summer, particularly when going to church. Her favorite hat has apparently been one matching her gown, on the rim of which is a soft yellow rose. When walking about the grounds of her Summer home or when seen on the public road she has been seen as often in pink as in blue. Though Mrs. Coolidge is what would be called a very well dressed woman—her clothes are of the nicest materials and of the best American make—she does not follow extreme styles of the present day.

And so Mrs. Coolidge in the dignified simplicity of her life at White Court still manifests the characteristics which, as Grace Goodhue, she had already so well developed. Her every act today, her lively interest in the Girl Scouts of America, in the Salvation Army, in the Volunteers of America, and her gracious manner to all about her, are convincing proofs that in the woman those qualities that led her to teach the deaf children at the Clark School in Northampton after she left college have blossomed to the fullest.