

VACATIONS OF PRESIDENTS

NEARLY ALL HAVE HAD THEM
EXCEPT LINCOLN.

BUT SOME HAVE OBSERVED THE RULES
THAT GOVERN MINOR OFFICERS—
WHERE THEY WENT, FROM WASH-
INGTON TO HARRISON.

The President of the United States is a very important part of the Government machinery at Washington, but that the machinery can run along pretty smoothly without the chief engineer has been very well demonstrated this Summer. William the Restless, Emperor of Germany, is not more of a visitor than Benjamin Harrison, and it is many years since the capital has been so much deserted as it has been this year. Mr. Blaine set the example by his early flight to Bar Harbor, and the President soon afterward stretched his wings and was wafted to Cape May. In the matter of their vacations there has always been a striking difference in Presidential tastes. Some like to place themselves on a par with all the small Government officers and to observe the law that regulates their leave of absence, while others like to transact business at a distance from the seat of Government.

The law which governs leaves of absence in the departments in Washington has been in effect for a number of years. By it no clerk is allowed more than thirty days' leave with pay in a year; but if he should be ill he is allowed extra leave for that, provided it does not extend beyond a period of sixty days. Thus he may, in exceptional circumstances, be absent from his desk for ninety days and be paid as though he had done his work; but if he has a protracted illness lasting longer than this, he must lose his pay. So says the law, and it is probable that it is obeyed in the main, but, of course, the higher officers are subject to no regulation on the subject, and can take as long vacations as they see fit. Nevertheless, it was the custom of Mr. Cleveland, and of Mr. Arthur also, to set the example of adhering to the rule that governs the small Government officers, and neither of them ever took a vacation purely for recreation lasting more than thirty days. But when they did vacate the premises of the White House they did it completely.

President Arthur used to spend his month in camping out and fishing. He and Gen. Sheridan went off together one Summer and explored the region of the Yellowstone National Park. They camped in spots remote from habitations, and were almost as inaccessible to the worries and cares of office as if they were snugly living in the islands of Bermuda before the cable was laid. Mr. Cleveland used to enjoy the same rough life, and loved to bury himself in the mountain fastnesses of the Adirondacks, where he hunted and caught fish. He was not altogether inaccessible there, however, as he found out. It seems to be the sacred right of all free Americans to molest the Chief Magistrate whenever it suits them. He cannot even catch a fish but they insist upon knowing its weight, and he cannot shoot at a deer but sixty millions of people must know whether he hit or missed.

To glance at the lives of the Presidents is to show at once that the farmer President is a thing of the past. Our recent Presidents, to use an expression of the frontier, "live in the settlements." Mr. Cleveland's home was in Buffalo, Arthur's was in New-York City, Hayes lived in a small town, and Grant had no home. Only Garfield, of modern Presidents, was a countryman. His home was a farm.

But, going back to the beginning, it was very different. Washington, Madison, and Jefferson had only one idea when they took a rest. They went as fast as horses could carry them to their plantations in Virginia. Washington had to ride or drive all the way from Philadelphia or New-York to reach his beloved Mount Vernon, but Jefferson had only 120 miles' travel, and Madison not more than 90. John Adams had a most formidable trip to reach his Massachusetts country place, and he consequently took few vacations, and his son, John Quincy Adams, was one of the hardest working Presidents we have ever had.

Jefferson, on the other hand, absented himself from the seat of Government for prolonged periods in the Summer, but the shades of Monticello are so enticing that one can hardly blame him. In order to reach his estate he journeyed almost due south from Washington through a country that steadily grows more beautiful until Monticello is reached. A most wretched road it was that he traveled over, and a wretched road it is now, full of rocks and stones and holes, and barely passable except on horseback, but he was repaid for his journey. About ten miles to the northward Jefferson could see Peter's Mountain overhanging him, but he did not dream then that a Virginia girl would a hundred years afterward make Peter's Mountain quite famous. He had a commanding view on the west, too, a circumstance that stood him in good stead early in his career, when he had spied Col. Tarleton and the British forces coming down on Charlottesville to capture him and the Virginia Legislature. Thomas Jefferson saw them from the porch of his house and very wisely ran away.

Twenty miles nearer the capital was the place where Madison passed his vacations, where he had always lived, and where he finally died. If Monticello is charming, what can be said of Montpelier? No wonder the sage, Madison, loved the spot. From his front porch he had such a view of the towering Blue Ridge Mountains, thirty miles away, as one seldom sees, and about his house and back of it he had a park and lawn and fine old trees such as are rarely met with, except on some of the finest estates on the Hudson River. There was something simple and healthy in the vacation lives of these former Presidents. For them there were no Summer-resort receptions, no long line of handshakers, no incessant speechmaking, no junketing for votes.

Jackson was another planter President, who loved his farm better than any other place, and Monroe was equally attached to Round Hill. But when Old Hickory went home the people along the road went wild with enthusiasm, and they even followed him to the doors of the Hermitage. There he sat and smoked his corn-cob pipes and listened to his flatterers and stormed against his enemies, but the peaceful, philosophical repose that Monroe, Jefferson, Madison, and Washington always craved and partially found when they were on their estates was not for the master of the Hermitage. Liquid fire ran through his veins, and, like the old gentleman in "Nicholas Nickleby," he wanted a meal of thunder sandwiches and bottled lightning. There was no rest for the Iron General, and his vacations seldom lasted long or brought relaxation to his nervous spirit.

President Harrison, like President Arthur, and unlike all of the old-time Presidents, has no country home. He seems to be fond of the Summer resort, and before he acquired his Cape May cottage he spent a vacation at Deer Park, a decidedly gay and festive resort. It is perched upon the top of the Alleghanies. The country round about is wild enough, but Deer Park itself has suffered from many improvements, and the hand of man is more visible there than the hand of nature.

The craving for a rural retreat was manifested early in his Presidential term by Mr. Cleveland, and he bought his charming little place on the Tenallytown Road. It was easy for him to drive out there at any time from the White House, but, unfortunately, it was just as easy for people to follow him, and the roads about Oak View were full every day of curious people. Still, the place was far more retired than the President's cottage at the Soldier's Home. President Arthur was the last President to live there. Hayes had used the spot quite regularly, but neither Cleveland nor Harrison ever made use of it. It is a modest little structure, but it has no advantages of privacy.

Pursuing the subject of Presidential vacations a little further, it will be found that Lincoln never had any. The times were too troubled, and from necessity he was in harness all the time. Nor was he, for that matter, a man who had ever been accustomed to rest. Life had always been a matter of serious hard work with him. His successor also was a busy man, and, while he liked to get back to Tennessee sometimes, he rarely took a genuine rest. His vacations were mere stumping tours.

There is a difference, however, between a Presidential tour and a Presidential vacation. The former is work of the hardest kind. The foreign lecturer, who is brought to America by an enterprising manager, and who lectures in every important city within a given time—who spends his whole time either in traveling or speaking, hardly has a harder time of it than the President who is making a tour. He must eat banquets when he is not hungry, he must make speeches when he has nothing to say; he must move on when he would like to sit still; he must shake hands with crowds of people when he would like to be alone. He must appear pleasant when he is, in reality, in bad humor; he must look well, when in reality he feels ill. Man is tough, and Presidents live through tours, but it is a wonder that they do not sink exhausted by the wayside.

The vacation on the other hand, is different. Its object is to escape from the cares or ceremonies of the Presidential office, to be a plain man once more, and to do what all plain men sometimes like to do—simply loaf.

THE MANHATTAN ATHLETIC CLUB.

The Manhattan Athletic Club held a preliminary and special meeting last night and voted to raise the dues to \$50 a year.

A committee of four was appointed to examine into the accounts of the club, and to report in five weeks. The committee consists of B. S. Halmon, J. M. Tate, J. E. Granniss, and W. A. Taylor. H. W. Cannon was appointed to serve on the committee as an extra man, but his absence from the city may deter him from accepting.

The election of officers takes place to-morrow evening. There are two candidates for Secretary, and a lively contest is expected.