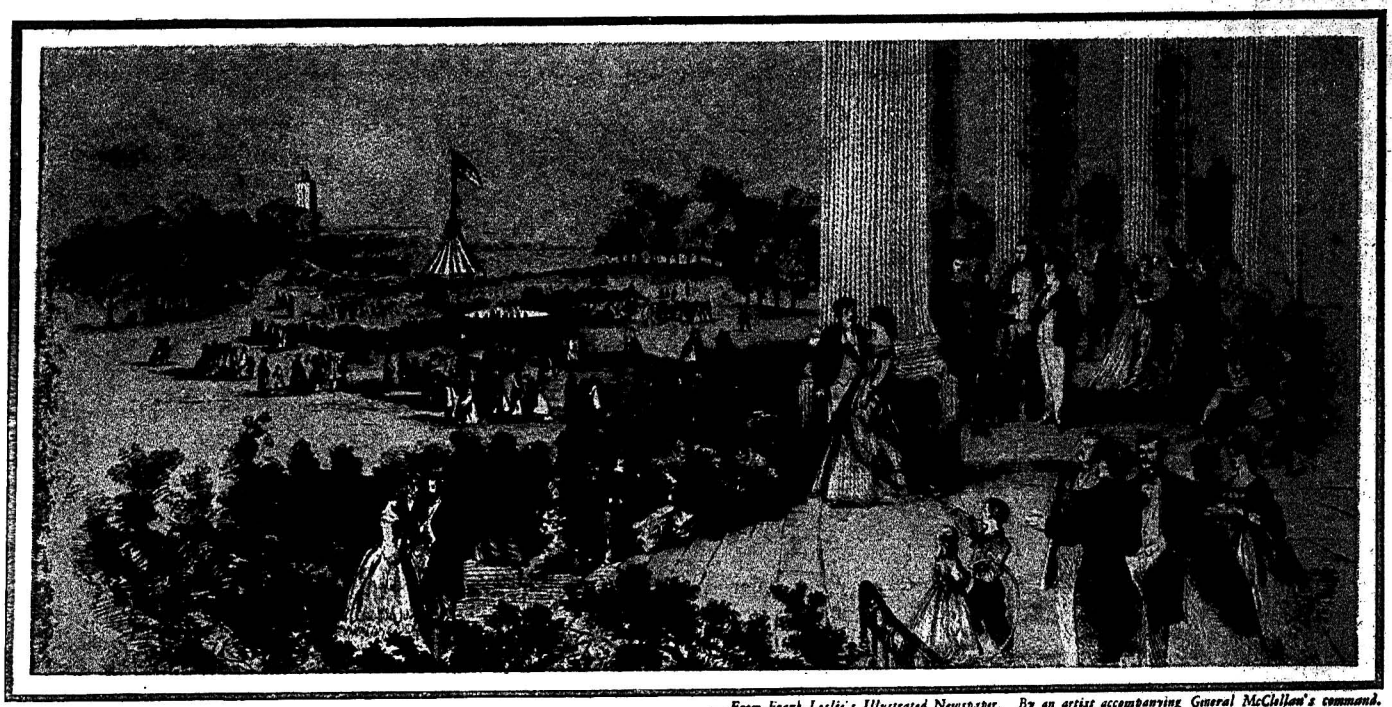


—From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. By an artist accompanying General McClellan's command.

Gay times at the White House in 1861. Scene on the balcony during Prince Napoleon's visit to President Lincoln.

TAD LINCOLN'S SNOWSTORM

By JULIA TAFT BAYNE

ON A Saturday morning in December, 1861, four boys were studying their Sunday school lesson in the small library at 448 L Street, Washington, D. C.

Two of these were the younger sons of the President, Willie and Tad Lincoln, and two were 'Bud' and Hally Taft, my brothers. The four were inseparable companions and playmates.

There were no schools in Washington in 1861. Mrs. Lincoln procured a tutor and invited my two brothers to share his instruction. My father insisted on paying half the tutor's salary, and the four boys daily 'did' their lessons in the state dining room.

Willie and Tad refused to go to the Sunday school of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, where the President and Mrs. Lincoln attended, unless Bud and Hally went there too, and as this was impracticable, they enrolled themselves in the Sunday school of the Fourth Presbyterian, which was our church, and attended quite regularly.

Saturday morning, at our house, was devoted to a study of the Sunday school lesson. Willie and Tad appeared early, as they always did when Bud and Hally did not appear early at the White House. Mrs. Lincoln had expressed to our mother her pleasure that her boys were learning their Sunday school lessons, and hoped we 'would encourage them to keep on.'

To sister Julia, two or three years older, was intrusted the not altogether pleasant duty of inculcating a reasonable working knowledge of two pages of the blue question book, while she embroidered three gold stars on a ruby velvet watchcase, which was to be Bud's Christmas present to his idolized General McClellan.



It was cold, and Willie and Tad had been talking of winters in Illinois, of sliding and sledding and snowballing. My Washington-bred brothers listened with round eyes. They possessed no mittens, no sled, no skates. They had never known the delights of a real snowstorm. Perhaps Washington was farther south 'before the War'; because from 1850 to 1870 there were very few occasions when enough snow was on the ground to justify the appearance for an hour of the nondescript creations known at the Capital as sleighs.

Tad dashed at the Sabbath questions with the cheerful audacity characteristic of him. Willie sighed as he said that there were 'more hard words than ever in it.' He and Bud debated whether Mr. Jordan would require them 'to have it perfect' or would 'let them off easy on the names.'

The very youngest son of the family, Willie Taft, being what Tad called a 'Sunday school infant' and not required to study the lesson, sat curled up on the window seat, where, by craning his neck, he could see a bit of Franklin Square, the barracks of the 27th New York Volunteers, and the end of the guardhouse with Sentry No. 1 appearing



The author at seventeen and in 1926.

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

and disappearing in clockwork regularity.

The older boys studied with set, determined looks. There were several bits of catechism deftly interpolated; and in the Fourth Presbyterian Sunday school these must be recited verbatim. Tad and Hally wriggled and fidgeted, repeating the lines in a loud whisper, each gradually departing from the text, and copying the other's mistakes until they had to begin all over again.

The infant scholar in the window also diverted attention by proclaiming at intervals, 'There's a dwunk man walking the beat with a log,' or 'Here comes the officer of the day; they're turning out the guard,' or 'I fink there's a hundred army wagon mules on 12th Street, fighting right smart.'

Tad paused in the murmur of 'the moral law,' 'the moral law,' 'the moral law,' to ask, 'Julie, what is a mud sill?'

'Never mind, Tad, go on. "The moral law is summarily comprehended." '

'But, what is it?'

'Why a Yankee, Tad.'

'Well, a boy in Lafayette Square said we were 'em and we am not.'

'Of course not,' said Willie Lincoln. 'Everybody knows they come from Connecticut.'

'Bud and Willie wouldn't let me punch him 'cause they said it would be put in the paper, but I will if he says it again.'



—Brown Brothers.

Inside the White House when Lincoln was President.

It was still cold and wet and blustering. Only an occasional officer rode past, his great cape over his head, followed by a dejected orderly. The boys watched the gusts of rain anxiously. They had been promised a 'ride with the staff' if it was not too stormy. General McClellan was very indulgent; his aides held the boys' bridles and sometimes even held the younger boys in their saddles.

Our cousin, a tall young captain from 'Camp Desolation' came and leaned against the doorway, and sympathetically confessed that he had himself to learn the Creed and the Commandments before the morrow's noon.

'What for?' demanded the boys, astonished that the shoulder-strapped six-footer should still be in thralldom to the blue question book.

'Because we have a Sunday school in the defenses, and mind you, the colonel is superintendent. I never saw anything in the *Army Regulations*,' the captain complained, 'about having to drill the men in the Bible as well as in the manual of arms.'

'Snow! Snow!' shouted Tad, as some light flakes flew by the window. 'That's what I like better'n anything. I hope it'll be over the fences.'

Tad's wish was futile. To his great disappointment, the snowflakes grew more and more infrequent, and at last the sun shone out. The boys went off, hopeful of a ride at least.

About dinner time a relative arrived unexpectedly. As he was to go to his command very soon and wished to see the children, I was sent to find the boys and bring them home.

I went at once to the White House and looked outside first: the grounds, the stable, the conservatory; the kitchen, where I learned that the boys had an early lunch and had not been seen since. The Madam had gone for a drive but did not take the boys. And General McClellan was indisposed and did not ride with his staff.

I then ran up to the sitting room and nearly collided with the tall form of the President, who was crossing the room on his way to his office. He had some papers in one hand; with the other he stopped my flight, saying, 'Here, here, flibbertigibbit, where are you going in such a hurry?'

'I am looking for the boys and I cannot find them anywhere. Cousin Sam Andrus is at our house with a colonel. I forget his name but he is awfully nice.'

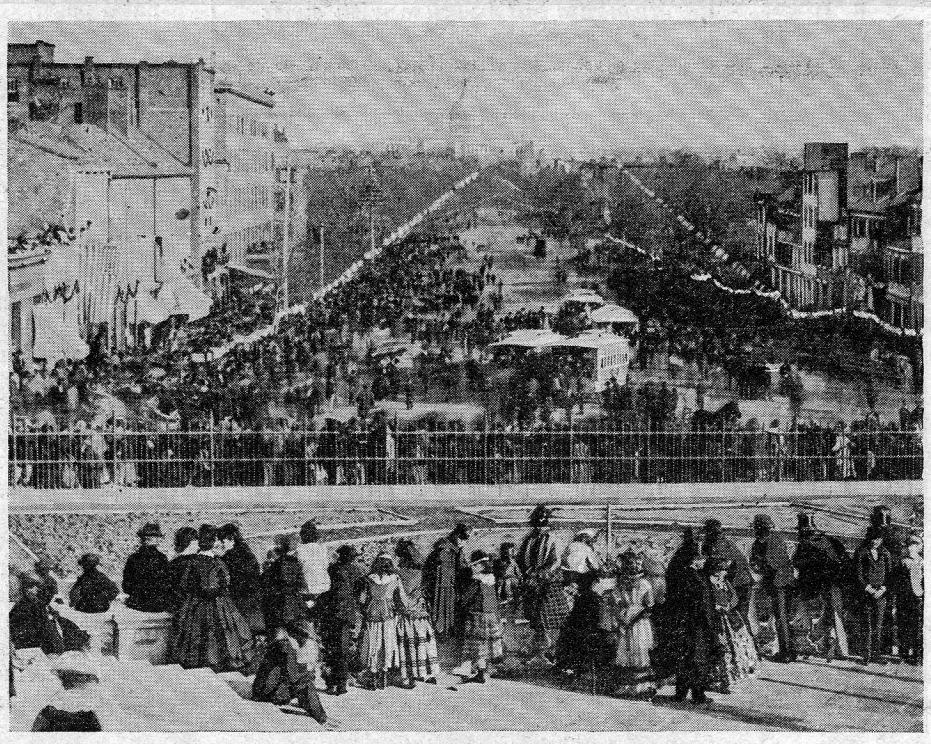
'Awfully nice, is he?' said Lincoln, with the quizzical smile I remember so well.

'Yes, sir, and they want to see the boys, ours, and the President's, Willie and Tad, you know.'

'Yes, I know,' he said. 'Have you looked in the attic, Julie?'

'I'm going there now,' I said, and left him standing there watching my headlong

(*Continued on page 20*)



—Brown Brothers.

Crowds on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, awaiting a parade at the close of the Civil War.

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

The NEWS That's Fit to PRINT

By RUSSELL GARDINER

NEWSPAPER inaccuracies are of three kinds: those due to lack of training, unintentional misstatements, and deliberate misrepresentation.

Unintentional misstatements will appear in the most carefully prepared daily publications. Staff men cannot be at the scene of every event reported. No two persons observing the same incident will give identical accounts. Therefore the reporter must sift the conflicting versions for the story that appears the most logical and truthful. His narrative may not be correct, but his mistakes are unavoidable.

In contrast is the deliberate deception for headline purposes in the sensational press. A complete news item may give a definite impression. A statement taken from it may appear to mean the opposite.

Then there is the matter of 'coloring' news. A youthful reporter is assigned to 'cover' the address of Dr. Germs, a chemist, before the Rotary Club. The young man talks to the scientist over the telephone because he has so many other events to report that attendance at the luncheon, or an interview, is impossible, or perhaps wearisome to his youth. Failing to understand or to find interest in the chemist's outline of his speech, the reporter finally asks whether the doctor regards kisses more deadly than bullets because of the possibility of communicating disease. The question is answered as a matter of courtesy. That's all the reporter wants. He writes his story on the basis of the reply. In his address the chemist does not mention the kisses. The hearers discredit the paper when they read the account of the meeting and fellow chemists wonder whether Dr. Germs is losing his mind to talk such tommyrot.

Most so-called yellow journals, however, are careful not to carry their deception to the point where the danger of libel appears. Generally speaking, small-town papers are more conservative than the metropolitan dailies. Neighbors who call the editor by his first name and who wish to know why he printed such and such an item are responsible for this condition.

In many newspaper offices editors and reporters will tell you that suicides and murders come in series of three. In other words, one act of physical violence suggests a similar act to another person. The person who advises full publicity of crime as a preventive overlooks an important human element—a sort of personal optimism. With that spirit, soldiers are brave in battle as comrades fall about them. Each soldier thinks, 'Well, they're gettin' lots of 'em, but they'll not get me.' The person who is planning a crime is buoyed by that same hope. The prospective criminal reads the details of the deeds and capture of others. He sees the mistakes that led to exposure. Mentally he makes note of their errors and resolves to be so shrewd that his guilt cannot be detected.

Some years ago prominent persons were invited to write for the press when they had something worth while to give the public. Today the surest way of breaking into some of the big dailies with a signed story is to kill a sweetheart, another woman's husband, or a whole family.

A mail train bandit, arrested recently, said he had read of the rich hauls made almost daily and had envied the robbers their easy money. He was thrown out of work. The family was pressed for funds. Then came temptation. Others had done it, why could not he?

A timely example of how newspaper stories may react on weak minds developed in connection with a prediction of the end of the world. Terror-stricken by the prophecy, a Michigan farmer shot and seriously wounded his wife and then killed himself. The press story placed no credence in the authenticity of the forecast. It regarded the preparations for doomsday as the aberrations of fanatics. Yet few editors took precaution to print the story in such a manner as to allay the fears of persons like the unfortunate farmer.

Crime is a part of life. The newspaper is a mirror of mankind's struggles. Therefore it must print crime news. The press, however, can serve its public by telling the bare, cold truth in such a matter-of-fact manner as to rob crime of its glamour and heroics.

Tad Lincoln's Snowstorm

(Continued from page 9)

progress toward the attic, with that same smile on his face.

In the attic was a large bin full of visiting cards, which apparently had been lately disturbed, as there was a nest hollowed out in the center and the cards were scattered all around. But the boys were not there; so I went home and reported.

After dinner, as the men were enjoying their cigars on the veranda, the four boys appeared, dragging a remarkable object, which consisted mainly of an old chair on barrel staves and the cover of a *Congressional Record* nailed to the broken seat. This, they proudly informed us, was a snow sled.

Hally hung back as they were severally presented to the colonel, and Tad triumphantly explained that 'Hally burned an awful hole in his pants with powder out of a cartridge given him by a soldier who said it wouldn't go off.'

BOTH Tad and Hally were very uneasy and continually rubbed against the veranda railing. When questioned by our mother, Tad said, 'I 'spose it's the snowballs we've got down our backs.'

'Snowballs,' said mama, surprised. 'Where could you have found any snow?'

'Up in our attic,' said Tad. 'Handfuls and handfuls and handfuls and bushels.'

But Willie said, 'Why, Mama Taft, Tad's snow is cards. There are bushels in our attic in a big bin and we throw them up and play it is snowing. There are all the cards all the Presidents have had left on 'em since General Washington.'

'General Washington never lived in your house,' said Bud; 'the tutor said he didn't.'

'Well, there's enough to make a snowstorm without his,' said Willie, 'and Tad and Hally stuffed them down each other's backs just like real snow; but I guess they're sharp-cornered and sticky.'

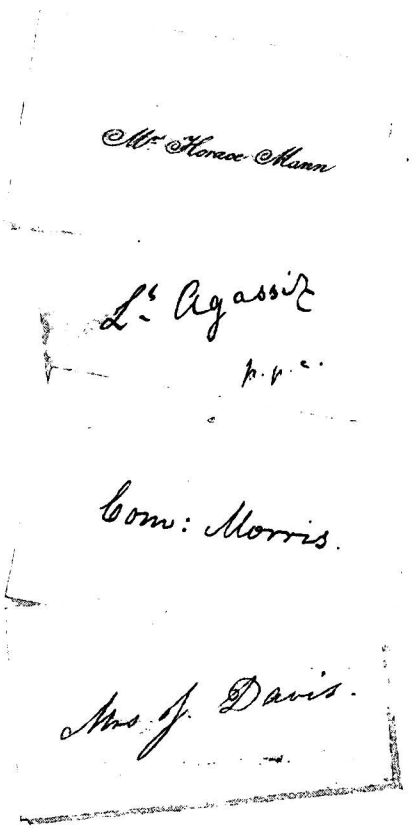
'Yes,' said Tad, 'they stick to you and they stick into you.'

Declaring they couldn't stand it another minute, Hally and Tad went upstairs, Tad calling back that, 'next time they would pour the snow on the attic stairs and slide down on their snow sled.'

The next morning sister Julia, going into the boys' room, saw in the middle of the card-strewn floor, the name of Jennie Lind, the great singer, of whom she had heard from her father and mother.

So she picked up the card, and then another, and another, as they interested her, leaving many to be swept up by the maid.

And here are some snowflakes from Tad Lincoln's 'snowstorm':



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