

COURTESY, HOTEL ASSET

IT WAS ONE OF GEORGE C. BOLDT'S MAXIMS

Waldorf Proprietor Demanded Also An Atmosphere of Harmony in His Establishments Being a Rigid Disciplinarian.

The one great thought upon which much of the late George C. Boldt's success was built was well expressed by Fred C. Kelly in a recent article on Mr. Boldt in the December number of the American Magazine:

"The beauty of courtesy is its cheapness—if you make it yourself." "And courtesy, Boldt believes," Mr. Kelly wrote, "does not consist merely in speaking politely to your guests. For instance, he thinks it only courteous that a guest should not have to deal with any hotel employee who is chewing gum, wearing a toothpick or smoking. Even though an employee does not deal directly with guests at all, Boldt will not permit him to chew gum, have a toothpick in his mouth or smoke while on duty. And there must be no hint of alcoholic refreshment on his breath."

Atmosphere of Harmony.

"Another theory of Boldt's is that a guest is entitled to an atmosphere of harmony—that is, the machinery operating for his comfort must be noiseless. For that reason, Boldt will not tolerate loud talk by an employee. A while ago he noticed that in one important department various members of his force had a habit of showing impatience or petulance. He believed there must be some cause for this and watched carefully until he discovered that the chief of that department was the worst offender. The explanation then was simple; nothing is so contagious as inharmoniousness, and the others had caught the disease of impatience from their superior. So Boldt promptly discharged the head of the department—even though he personally was fond of the man—and the difficulty was soon remedied.

"One rule of Boldt's is to set a good example in all things he exacts from others. He himself does not smoke, drink, chew gum or talk loudly while on the job. And he will not take a drink at his own bar.

Born on Baltic Island.

"The sight of a proprietor standing around drinking with guests," he explains might be suggestive of leasure on his part rather than real efficiency. "If I wish to entertain somebody I do it in a dining room in the regular way."

Mr. Kelly traced briefly the rise of Mr. Boldt.

"He was born on an island in the Baltic sea and received a rather good education. His father wanted him to be a merchant. When a mere boy, however, he set out for the United States to make his own way. He had a little money, which he lost in an unsuccessful poultry farm in Texas. Then he came to New York. He became a waiter in Parker's restaurant, only a block or two from where he was later to operate the most famous hotel in the world."

"While a waiter he showed certain qualities which are a noticeable part of his make-up to the present day—modesty, reserve, dignity, industry and a disposition to go to any length to please a customer."

Got Start in Philadelphia.

In due course he won the respect of many men of wealth who were in the habit of eating at Parker's. One of these got him a job as steward at a summer hotel on the Hudson. Boldt then began to realize that he had ability. He gave much careful deliberation to the problem of how to make the most of himself. For one thing, he wanted a hotel of his own; not just a little cross-road affair, either, but something high grade and permanent. Where should this hotel be? The Philadelphia centennial celebration was approaching and it occurred to Boldt that it might be wise to get started in the hotel business in the Quaker City. But he had no money. The logical source of the money for a Philadelphia hotel, Boldt thought, would be one or more Philadelphia capitalists.

Got Acquainted With Capital.

"And so he set about making the acquaintance of that class of persons. The far-sighted way in which he did this is interesting. He went to Philadelphia and obtained a job at the Philadelphia Club, which he had left after careful inquiry was a great gathering place for men having money.

"In a little while he succeeded in making himself so useful about that club that he had ingratiated himself with a great many influential members. From certain of these he was able to get the money for a little hotel which he named the Bellevue. It was not long before the food and cuisine at the Bellevue became famous. Boldt put his restaurant prices high—higher, perhaps, than had ever been heard of thereabouts in those days. And the prices helped to make the hit. For persons of wealth went there not only for the good, well-served food, but in order to show they could afford to eat there.

"Now Boldt, while modest in his demeanor, had the good sense not to be needlessly modest in his estimate of his own potentialities. He felt certain that he had a real future in the hotel business, and that sooner or later he would stand face to face with opportunity.

Met W. W. Astor.

"When the opportunity came—in the person of William Waldorf Astor, and a proposition to take charge of what was to be the finest hotel in the land—Boldt did not fumble the chance. He insisted on a profit-sharing arrangement, which should yield him an income, in case he made good, such as no hotel manager in this country had ever known.

"The Waldorf-Astoria was not long in successful operation before Boldt's income was said to be \$500,000 a year, which made him one of the highest-paid men in the United States.

"A number of years ago Boldt set up a school for employees. On one of the upper floors of his big New York establishment he has fitted up

a hotel desk behind which neophytes learn to receive a guest with proper cordiality and yet without behaving like a country politician. Waiters, bell boys, ladies' maids, salad makers—in fact, every kind of employe needed about a hotel receives training in this school. Employees are instructed to "carry notes" and jot down ideas received from guests and these are taken up for discussion in the school. Head waiters make notes of waiters' mistakes, and these are touched on in lectures by Oscar, Boldt's chief assistant, who is the school's dean. It takes several years says Oscar, to make a really good waiter.

"Boldt always has a good many college men among his employes, and the reason is not alone that they possess a superior mental training. 'In a big hotel like this,' he explains, 'the guest who gets lonesome and wishes to talk to one of our men is entitled to talk to somebody who can converse on a reasonably high intellectual plane.'

Studied The Newly Rich.

"Boldt has found that persons who have been accustomed to luxury are the least likely to complain when they fall to have it. It is the class less used to luxury—the so-called new rich persons—who feel that they must demonstrate their inability to endure anything but the best. The reason is that they are not certain of their pecuniary repute and wish to impress it on all comers, and their acquaintance with good service has been so brief that it is still a novelty which they must exhibit even to strangers—just as a child wishes to show off his first pair of copper-toed boots.

"There seems to be none ready to challenge Boldt's title as one of the greatest hotel men of his time. And yet most of his success is based on little beyond the application of plain common sense."

Painting Farm Implements.

The painting of farm implements for their protection and preservation has apparently received very little consideration by Canadian farmers, if one may judge by the information secured by the Commission of Conservation in the survey conducted on 100 farms in each of four counties in Ontario. In Waterloo, one farmer who painted his implements, was found among the hundred, in Carleton only one, in Northumberland three, and in Dundas eleven. And yet paint is an absolute essential if the full life of an implement is to be secured.

Lumber in Honduras.

Minneapolis Journal. It is estimated that there are in the Mosquitia territory, Honduras, 90,000,000 pine trees, more than 45,000,000 cedar and mahogany trees, and about 14,000,000 trees of miscellaneous varieties.

Valuing the pine tree at 25 cents United States gold each, or \$22,500,000; the cedar and mahogany trees at \$5 each, or \$225,000,000, and the miscellaneous trees at 10 cents each, or \$1,400,000, gives an estimated forestal value of \$248,900,000 for this territory alone.

Plenty of Proof

By D. F. WOODRUFF

Teddy sat upon the top step of the stairs that led to the street and rested his chin in the palm of his hand. Some of the fellows came along and nodded to him, but Teddy didn't answer. He didn't want to play with the fellows just now, for he was battling with a great sorrow.

Tom had said it, so it must be true. For Tom was eight years old and didn't have to go to bed until 8 o'clock. Teddy's hour for retiring was half past 7, and he realized that the extra half hour made a man of the world out of Tom, while it left the unfortunate Teddy still a baby.

Tom had stuck his hands into his pockets—Tom's trousers were lovely and rough, just like his father's—and had swaggered around telling all the fellows that there wasn't any Santa Claus. When questioned further, he had said that there used to be, but that this year there wasn't going to be, and there never would be again.

No Santa Claus! If Teddy had been six years old, he might have cried, but of course one as old as he never cried.

Teddy wondered if he'd better tell his mother. He decided he wouldn't. Why should his mother, whom he loved so dearly, be made to suffer any longer than was necessary? It was hard, though, during the next two weeks, which seemed like years, not to tell, and when Christmas eve came and his mother gayly brought out his biggest pair of stockings and hung them up at the end of the mantel he could hardly keep back the tears. How disappointed he and his mother would be when they got up in the morning and found the stockings empty! She leaned over and kissed him tenderly. "Are you tired, dear?" she asked. "You don't seem as happy as usual."

Teddy assured her as well as he was able for the lump in his throat, that he was perfectly well. His mother, like the wise one she was, didn't press the question. She merely drew up her low rocking chair and sat beside the bed until she thought Teddy was asleep and then crept quietly down stairs.

Teddy lay for a long time after she went, watching the firelight flicker on the walls. He couldn't go to sleep and besides, what was the use, when there wasn't anything to wake up for? A good many tears rolled out of the corners of his eyes, but he didn't care now.

He must have lain there for about four or ten hours, he thought, and had just shut his eyes to rest them from the light, when he heard a sound, a very little bit of a sound. He sat up quickly in bed and listened eagerly, because it sounded, it really did sound, as if it might be sleighbells. In a minute, he didn't know just how, he was leaning out of the window.

He didn't feel as if he had walked there at all, but more as if he had just skimmed along without any effort on his part, as if he had been some sort of delightful fish bird. He leaned away out of the window, not feeling a bit afraid of falling, and looked down upon the street.

Yes, down there on the street, as plain as day, he could see the reindeer shaking their long horns and prancing until the bells that seemed almost to cover them filled the air with their musical jangle. And then there was a gleam of red, somebody was climbing into the sleigh! There was the echo of a jovial voice calling,



the horns of the reindeer quivered joyfully, then the whole turnout seemed to leap into the air, and like a flash was gone!

Teddy rubbed his eyes. It was funny! He thought he was at the window, but here he was in bed. He sat up and looked around the room. The fire in the grate had gone out, but the gray light of the morning was beginning to steal through the curtains. Teddy got out of bed and crept softly to the fireplace.

The stockings were bulging in all directions, as had been their exhilarating wont in other years! He put out his hand and touched one of them gently. It was no dream! The stocking was full to overflowing!

With a little whispering wheeze of joy, and red, Teddy clasped his hands until the knuckles showed as white as the snow outside. Then with a cry of absolute delight he dashed into his mother's bedroom.

She opened a pair of sleepy eyes at the sound of his little feet. Teddy threw himself upon her, laughing and sobbing.

"Oh, mother, mother, mother!" he cried. "He came after all! Santa Claus did come! Santa Claus did come! He did, he did, he did!"

Among Roumanians Roumanian girls can learn, during the Christmas season, whether or not they are going to be married within the coming year. At midnight they enter the stable and strike the foot of the first ox they come across, saying: "This year; next year." If the ox gets up at the first stroke the girl will marry within the year; if it gets up at the second stroke the marriage will take place the year following; if it does not get up at all the gods have not yet decided on her wedding date.

Christmas Spirit Too many of us take mean things on faith and demand proof of good things.

Oxen kneel in the stall at midnight Christmas, says English tradition. They kneel as if in adoration of the Nativity.

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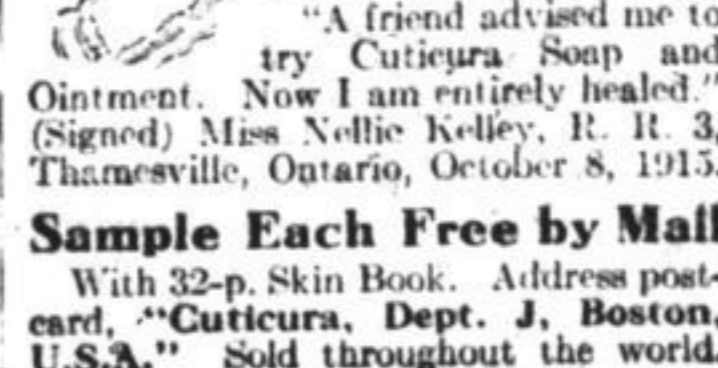
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