

MISCELLANEOUS.

AT THE HOME OF WASHINGTON.

Down the Potomac just sixteen miles from Washington is the old home of the "Father of our Country." The house and barns, the gardens and fields are almost the same as when they were looked after by Washington himself. Only time has somewhat toned the surroundings, and many of the interesting old objects are gradually being worn away by the action of the elements. One may go by railroad or boat, and the ride down the river is a most delightful one.

The storied hills of Maryland and Virginia are seen to the east and west, rising gradually from the river, and losing themselves in the gray uplands beyond. The Potomac is a grand stream, and ever since Captain John Smith explored it in 1609, it has been the scene of many historical events; and famous did it become when, during the civil war, the message was flashed every night over the wires to Washington "All is quite on the Potomac."

Before reaching Mt. Vernon, the stream passes Arlington, the old home of Robert E. Lee, and one of the most beautiful spots on earth. Soon the tolling of bells and the dipping of the national colors announce Mt. Vernon. As the traveler steps on land it is with deep feelings of reverence and awe. The simple quietude of the surroundings, the peaceful influence which pervades the air, the thoughts that one is walking over the same grounds and seeing the same scenes as our Washington, all combine to make the occasion most charming. The house is beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the river. It is built of wood; is two stories high, but has an attic with dormer windows. On the roof is a cupola, and above an antique weather vane, which still turns with the soft breezes from the river. In front is a large piazza with columns supporting the roof of the porch. The house was built in 1743 by Lawrence Washington, who was a half brother of George. The name Mt. Vernon was given to the place in honor of Admiral Vernon, under whom Lawrence had served as a soldier. Washington inherited the estate, where he came to live in 1759. He was here until called to the field to take part in the great struggle for independence. At his home, both before and after the war, Washington lived a peaceful and happy life. The beautiful surroundings, combined with the ever watchful training of his mother, went to develop a nature of sympathy and kindness of heart, which even the humblest slave under him could not help but feel. He loved his home, he respected all his workmen and "he wept and prayed for all."

As one strolls through the rooms and halls, and then walks on to the piazza, and sees the beauty stretching out in an endless vision before him; the river in all its calmness flowing on so tranquilly to the ocean; the forests and fields, and the hills and ravines, in their summer garb he cannot but ask, "Has he left the place forever?" In the quietude of the day, when all the trees and the insects are beating to the pulse of nature; when the sun is pouring his life-giving rays into every nook, and the sky smiles sweetly on all things, one wonders if the spirit of him who loved the spot so well ever comes back, and wanders over the paths and through the fields? The answer comes with force, "The spirits of the children of God come to earth sometimes to direct and influence us to something grander and nobler in life."

Many interesting things can be seen in loitering through the rooms. In the main hall is the key to the Bastille, that old prison of Paris, which was a source of so much terror to the people, and which was destroyed by the mobs in 1789. The key is seven inches in length and was given in Washington by Lafayette, who wrote with the gift: "Give me leave, my dear general, to present you with a picture of the Bastille, just as it looked a few days after I ordered its demolition, with the main key of the fortress of despotism. It is a gift which I owe as a son to my adopted father, as an aide-de-camp to my general, as a missionary of liberty to its patriarch."

In the parlor is a genuine old harpsichord, which was imported from London and given by Washington to Nellie Custis. In the library are the books, long since laid aside, yet exhalting an influence of inspiration to the beholder. The books that Washington read! What a flood of thoughts and emotions come over one. There in the glass case is the old family Bible and kindred books, and above are the shelves are his note books and papers. As one looks at them they seem to be whispering the knowledge and wisdom of centuries ago into the ear of the listening present. Near the fire place is the famous tribute paid to Washington by Dr. Reed. It is:

"Washington—The brave. The wise. The good.

"Washington—Supreme in war, in council and in peace.

"Washington—Valiant without ambition, discreet without fear, confident without presumption.

"Washington—In disaster, calm, in success, moderate, in all, himself.

"Washington—The Hero; the Patriot; the Christian; the Father of Nations; the Friend of Mankind, who when he had won all, sought in the bosom of his family and of nature, retirement, and in the hope of religion, peace."

On the second floor, overlooking the south lawn, is the room in which Washington died. The bed stands as it used to with its old fashioned curtains, and on a chair near by is the Bible, which he had been reading on the day of his death. As was the custom at that time, the room was closed for three years after his death, and Mrs. Washington occupied the one just above in the attic, which has a dormer window looking out to the peaceful tomb. A beautiful story is told of her. After the general had died she chose the room in order to watch over the last resting place of her loved one. What a noble act. I dare say that she often looked from this window at night to the lonely and silent tomb, and with the stars and the light of the moon kept vigil watch over it until the darkness had given way to the gray shades of the morning. In the last room, which overlooks the river, are three chairs. One belonged to Benjamin Franklin, the other two to Washington, one of them having been brought over in the Mayflower. One could loiter for hours in this quaint old house and never tire. The rooms, the pictures on the walls, the chairs and tables, all are left as they were when its owners walked and talked here. But we must hurry on to the tomb.

Just south of the house along a path which is gradually lost among the trees is the spot where Washington lay until removed to the present tomb in 1837. It was this grave which Lafayette visited in 1824. The new tomb is a few rods to the west among the trees. It is a simple structure of brick, with two large iron gates, above which on a marble

slab is inscribed, "Within this inclosure rest the remains of General George Washington." Above the door of the tomb are the words of John, the Apostle: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." In the ante-chamber are the two marble sarcophagi, into which the remains of Washington and his wife were put for their final keeping. After the tomb was locked, the key was thrown into the Potomac. Near by are monuments in honor of different members of the Washington family. As one looks at this consecrated spot, the words of Irving come to him:

"Time is ever silently turning over its pages; we are too much engrossed with the stories of the present to think of the characters and anecdotes that give interest to the past; and each age is a volume to be thrown aside and to be speedily forgotten. The idol of today pushes the hero of yesterday out of recollection; and will in turn be supplanted by his successor of tomorrow."

There is a lesson to be learned from a trip to Mt. Vernon. Many poor, worthy and honorable ambitious young men, just entering the arena of active life, but are faint, weary and disappointed, will remember the humble infancy and youth of our Washington. Time has produced many sages and heroes, but none have surpassed him in true worth. The American boy learns the lesson of honesty, perseverance, and patience, which make men truly great and noble in the affairs of life. Mt. Vernon is a sacred spot, and as one bids farewell to its surroundings, he feels as if a wave of influence and power had overtaken him to direct him to the good, the noble and the true.

LEVI EDGAR YOUNG.

ASSESSMENT OF STOCK.

Deputy Attorney General Benner X. Smith, has transmitted an opinion to Edward Pike, county attorney of Juab county, on the following questions:

1. "In the matter of assessing transient herds, where the ownership of said herds are bona fide residents of a county of this State, and where there is and can be no claim by the assessor of any other county of this State, that said herds are to be driven out of the State or otherwise disposed of in order to avoid taxation, and where said sheep herds either winter or summer in the county in which the owner resides, can said herds be legally assessed by the assessor of any county other than that in which the owner is a resident?"

2. "Is there any authority of law, under the above state of facts, that will warrant the assessor of any county where such herds are transient, at the time of making such an assessment, in exacting or extorting a note or other security from the owners of said sheep for the payment of the tax?"

3. "Can a legal assessment of transient herds under any circumstances, where the owners are residents of the State, and where, as stated, there is no attempt to evade taxation, be made prior to noon on the first Monday of February?"

In answer to the first question Mr. Smith says it is the duty of the assessor of a county where horses, mules, cattle or sheep are transient to list the same and transmit it to the assessor of the county where the stock is owned.

On the second and third questions Mr. Smith states that section 2516 of the revised statutes makes it the duty of the assessor, before the first Monday in May of each year, to ascertain the names of the taxable inhabitants and all property subject to taxation, except such as is assessed by the States board