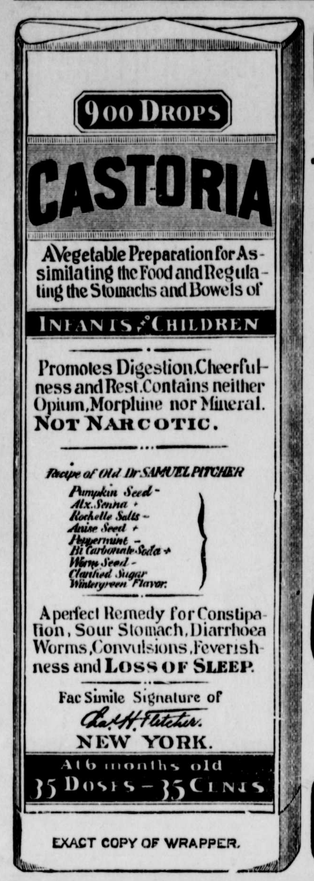


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CHARACTERISTICS AND INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Having several times prepared papers upon my present theme, searching among records for information about the character of Washington, the study invarably results in deepening my love and respect for our truly great citizen; happily enlogised long ago by a gifted orator, as the man "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

I shall not dwell upon the birth and early years of George Washington, but speak briefly upon later events concerning one whose memory sanctifies the 22nd of Februray each recurring year, and whom all nations delight to honor.

In 1751, George Washington accompanied his older brother, Lawrence, to the West Indies. Pulmonary disease had undermined the health of Lawrence and he needed a friend to accompany him on the sea voyage.

The travelers were five weeks making the trip to the island of Barbadoes, where the hope was cherished, the balmy air might recuperate the invalid.

In this they were disappointed and, George himself became very ill with a severe attack of the "small pox," that dreaded scourge of tropical climates lacking sanitary conditions.

After some weeks stay at Barbadoes, George having recovered his health, the brothers decided the younger one should return at once to Virginia, and in the spring accompany Mrs. Lawrence Washington to Bermuda, whither her husband should precede then.

This plan was relinquished subsequently, as Lawrence decided to returh home himself, having received no benefit in health during his absence.

Accordingly, in the early summer the invalid came back to his Virginia home, and soon after died.

George Washington was made one of his brother's executors by the terms of his will, and was also to inherit a large portion of the estate of the deceased brother, should the only child, a daughter, die without children; the widow to have only a life tenure.

We are all more or less familiar with the leading events in the chequered life of our Washington. Dr. Weir Mitchell in an address before a large public audience in Philadelphia some months ago, calls Gen. George Washington "an imperial man by the grace of God and some strange skill of nature, with one great ambition—how best to serve his country;" continuing, Dr. Mitchell said: George Washington's unselfishness was without a flaw; his sense of duty was like a religion. He had in perfection, both morality and courage."

Our hero deserved this high enconium.

Even in early manhood, when serving his country as a militia colonel on the frontier, Washington proved equal to every emergency. The discipline in many a rugged expedition experienced, then tutored him for the sterner demands of the Revolutionary war.

Washington was human; not only a soldier, but a man of tender sympathy and quick appreciation of the graces of humanity.

When sent by the Governor of Virginia upon business of great importance to Boston, a journey of 500 miles on horseback, in the depth of winter, 1751, Washington stopped enroute going and returning, in the city of New York for a few days, being the guest of Mr. Beverly Robinson, between whom and Washington a warm friendship existed.

Miss Mary Phllips, a sister of Mrs. Robinson, a charming and accomplished young lady, soon won the admiration of the gallant southerner.

He lived too far away to visit New York often, and press his suit with ardor, in those days of lack of transportation facilities.

After some months, through the letters of a friend in whom Washington had confided, he learned a rival was in the field to win favor with Miss Phillips, and later learned that the lady had married.

In his early youth, when only 17 years of age, the mischevious God of Love had winged a dart, which penetrated the bosom of our hero; among his manuscripts were found ardent praises of a "Lowland Beauty," written when wandering with his surveyors compass on the rough slopes of the Alleghany mountains.

Some despondent letters have been preserved written at this time to a friend about this same "Lowland Beauty." Also plaintive verses to the same sweet maiden to whom, however, he had not had courage to reveal his love.

On the 6th of January, 1759, Washington was married to Mrs. Martha Custis, only three months younger than himself.

The fame of Mrs. Martha Washington's grace, beauty and accomplishments, has come down to our day and generation, and we all believe Mrs. Washington was a fitting mate for her distinguisued husband.

She was the daughter of Mr. John Dandridge.

Her first husband, Mr. Custis, left large landed estates in New Kent County, Va., and forty-five thousand pounds sterling, in money.

Historians recorded that one third of this estate, Mrs. Custis held in her own right; the remaining two-thirds in trust for her two children.

By his marriage with Mrs. Custis, Washington received an accession of more than one hundred thousand dollars to his own fortune, already large, from the valuable estate of Mount Vernon, and other lands he had selected during his surveying expeditions and afterwards purchased.

He was very happy in the dignified, responsible life of a gentleman planter, and managed his affairs with judgement and success. I have with me a book printed in Alexander in 1803, containing many of Washington's letters to some English correspondents, in which he evinces his intelligent interest in Agriculture and similar pursuits.

Washington took upon himself, a fatherly guardianship of Mrs. Washington's two children; faithfully caring for their interests until the son became of age, and the daughter died in her nineteenth year.

General and Mrs. Washington were spared to each other for forty years.

Mrs. Washington was courteous and exemplary in every respect; given to deeds of charity and pity; adorning her domestic sphere with the virtues of a good woman, such as the wise man describes in the Bible as "one who looketh well after the affairs of her household, rising early in the morning."

When raised to high position through her husband's promotion to the office of President, Mrs. Washington graced her exalted social rank with gentle dignity.

Washington became Colonel of a Regiment during the French and English war in the American colonies, and during the last campaign decided to resign his military commission, but at the earnest soliciatation of friends, consented to become a candidate for civil service in the "House of Burgesses."

As it was the first time his name was before the people for popular suffrage, his friends advised him to obtain a short furlough from his military post, in order to repair to Winchester, to facilitate his cause by his personal presence.

Washington decidedly refused to do this, and remained faithfully performing his military duties, not making the slightest personal effort to influence the election. In this respect, as in all others, Washington set a good example to political aspirants, only desiring the will of the people to be honestly expressed.

There were four candidates for the office of representative in the House of Burgesses, and Washington was elected by a large majority over all other competitors.

From the time of his first election, for a period of fifteen years preceding the outbreak of the Revolutionary War; Washington was continuously returned at each election by a large majority of votes.

These were the happiest days of Washington's life; his residence at Mt. Vernon delighting his heart.

Frequent exchanges of visits with the neighboring gentry, kept up a pleasant social intercourse.

The sessions of the House of Burgesses drew Washington to the seat of government every winter, and gave him opportunity to form pleasant acquaintances and friendships among the cultured class in the Capitol city.

When residing at Mount Vernon Gen. and Mrs. Washington dispensed most generous hospitality to frequent visitors, and it was a happy home to their own large family, including many servants.

His letters and diary give most interesting glimpses of the daily routine there. We are all familiar with the splendid location of the mansion, and the subtle charm of its environment, not thb least, the fine view of the Potomac river and its picturesque banks.

In an issue of the Mount Vernon Record, published in Alexandria in the year 1859, the origin of the name of Mount Vernon estate is given.

In 1741 Lawrence Washington as captain served under the British "Admiral Vernon" in an expedition against Carthagena, in South America.

The land of Mount Vernon estate was at that time known as "Hunting Creek" plantation.

Upon his return from South America, Lawrence Washington called this estate by the more dignified title of "Mount Vernon," in honor of his superior naval officer, and because of its elevated situation upon the high banks of the Potomac river.

Another historical item is of interest concerning the origin of one of our national songs.

A German musician named "Foyles," leader of the orchestra in the old St. Johns theatre in New York city, composed an original air which he called the "President's March," in honor of President's Washington's first visit to the theatre in 1779 by invitation of the managers.

The tune became a favorite one, and was adapted to the words of the song, "Hail Columbia," by the author of the verses, a Judge Hopkinson, who was inspired to write them almost impromptu, one Saturday afternoon for a benefit concert to be given the following Monday.

Both the words and air took the popular fancy, copies were sold all over the country with tremendous rapidly.

Printers could hardly meet the demand for it, and so this stirring song has been one of our national melodies ever since.

After serving his country faithfully as soldier and statesman for many years, Washington at last felt justified in seeking the repose of his rural home for which his heart yearned.

Having resigned his authority as a public officer to Congress, in that ever memorable and unparelled scene which took place in our own city of Annapolis, Washington turned his steps homeward.

Several officers who had formed part of his staff accompanied him, also Compte Rochambeau and another French General, of whose accompanying him Mrs. Washington had been notified.

Our own recollection among my contemporaries, of days in the past, when there was no access to professional caterers, make it easy for us to picture the bustle and diligence in cheerful household labor, preparing to properly entertain expected distiuguished guests in the lavish style common among the wealthy planters of the South.

In Washington's day and much later, the ladies of the house took upon themselves, the making of fine pastry, rich cake and a great variety of table delicacies.

There were eggs to beat, butter to cream, loaf sugar to crack, jelly to strain, plum pudding to mix—keeping the ladies and their willing assistants busy compounding toothsome and savory "good things."

Servants were set to polish with extra care the furniture, silver, brass, crystal and floors; every nook and corner in the entire house to be throughly cleaned; every brass candlestick was to be made as bright as hands could make it, and each must be decorated with a sprig of holly or cedar.

Mrs. Washington, although saddened at this time by the recent death of her only son, prepared to do the honors of her pleasant home as a gracious hostess upon the glad occasion of her honored husband's return to private life that Christmas of 1783.

Mrs. Washington expressed her fervant desire, and hope to remain at Mt. Vernon with her beloved General, to share the peaceful tranquility of their home.

A photograph copy of Washington's private prayer book, in manuscript, the prayers, his own composition, has been presented to me; the original having having been found after his death.

Neither General nor Mrs. Washington allowed themselves to be indolent.

Washington was an axceedinly busy man. Records in his diaries make us wonder how he accomplished so much.

Every day, when at home, he gave earnest attention to his varied farm interests.

His accounts show that he constantly employed two hundred and fifty "hands," as they were then called—meaning negro laborers.

He owned one hundred and forty horses, one hundred and twelve cows, and yet there is this entry in his diary, one day.

"I have 112 cows, yet must needs go and buy some butter today."

There were 226 work oxen, 500 sheep, with quantities of other live creatures, such as hogs, poultry, and etc., belonging to him.

Washington gave conscieutious personal attention to all the sick about his estate, and made entry in his diary, of their exact condition, each by name, as he made his daily visits.

Every branch of labor was systemized, each department of work supervised by competent "overseers," from whom was expected and received faithful accounts.

The amount of mental and physical work Washington accomplished is almost incredible.

His private letters and diaries give us glimpses of the many generous acts he was always doing, constantly helping a succession of poor people in distress.

In an era, when drunkenness was common, Washington drank little, and never used tobacco in any form, although it was raised on his estate for sale.

We cannot be too grateful for the example of our illustrious George Washington, retaining through all the years since his death a powerful moral influence upon our whole nation.

I will close with the words of the immortal Shakespeare:

"His life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world:

"This was a man,
Take him all in all;
We shall not look upon his like again."

H. L. W. HILL.

Startling But True.

People the world over were horrified on learning of the burning of a Chicago theater in which nearly six hundred people lost their lives, yet more than five times this number or over 3,000 people died from pneumonia in Chicago during the same year, with scarcely a passing notice. Every one of these cases of pneumonia resulted from a cold and could have been prevented by the timely use of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. A great many who had every reason to fear pneumonia have warded it off by the prompt use of this remedy. The following is an instance of this sort: "Too much cannot be said in favor of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, and especially for colds and influenza. I know that it cnred my daughter, Laura, of a severe cold, and I believe saved her life when she was threatned with pneumonia." W. D. Wilcox, Logan, New York. Sold by M. A. Tonlson.

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Sept. 17, 1904. CHESTERTOWN, MD.

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