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OLD GEORGETOWN—A SOCIAL PANORAMA.

«THREE MILES FROM THE CAPITOL.»

WHEN the author of «The Star-spangled Banner» emerged from his quiet domicile by the Aqueduct, and went for a pensive ramble, as was his custom of an afternoon, he mounted the winding way to the heights of Georgetown to find a point of vantage there for his more comprehensive contemplation of the prospect. Here his poetic sensibility was soothed and his patriotic foresight flattered by the scene that greeted him riverward and on either hand, and even where the homely little burgh, like a happy country child, strove to spread her narrow skirts between the embowered reveries of Rock Creek and the airy gladness of the college eminence; for the legislature of Maryland, by act of incorporation in 1789, had erected into a town the erstwhile careless thorp that cuddled to the bountiful Potomac, and harbored the fishers of shad, and the fowlers of swans and ducks, and the small skippers of pinnace and pirogue lightly cruising between the Little Falls and the feeding-grounds.

Very dear to the eye of that pensive singer of piety and patriotism were the several landmarks that loomed impressively above the river mists: The Little Falls three miles up the river, whither fishing and picnicking parties resorted for hilarious junketing; Analostan Island, umbrageous and delectable, affording leafy glimpses of the fair

Virginia shore, and of flashing sails that, swan-like, chased each other. Beyond the river the historic heights of Arlington, the friendly spires and homes of Alexandria, the consecrated shades of Mount Vernon; and then the nearer Rock Creek and Piney Branch, melodious haunts of birds and bees piping and humming to their floral friends—a retreat of woodland nooks and grassy glades, where twilight lingered and a parsonage nestled. Eastward of that, «Kalorama,» the once beautiful seat of Joel Barlow, patriot, poet, philosopher, whose congenial friend and guest, Robert Fulton, launched his prophetic kettle on Rock Creek; and here the remains of Decatur reposed after the fatal duel with Barron. Farther eastward showed the bold lines of the Capitol, while in the nearer west, airily seated, were the sedate university—stately memorial of Archbishop Carroll, and alma mater of many distinguished citizens of the republic, as well as of notable scholars native to the South American States, Mexico, and the West Indies—and the Convent and Academy of the Visitation, founded by French ladies of the order of «Poor Clares» when as yet the city of Washington was not.

Between the convent and the creek the heights were crowned with the mansions of prosperous and influential citizens whose names are locally historic now: «Monterey,»

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seat of the Linthicums, occupied by Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of War in the Monroe cabinet; «Tudor Place,» the garden home of Thomas Peter, Esq., notable in the annals of Georgetown; the storied residence of Brooke Williams, once tenanted by Sir John Crampton, British ambassador, and later by the French minister; and other houses of much social celebrity.

Low on the incline, but slowly creeping hillward from the river, the quaint and kindly burgh looked idly out through dormer-windows on a lounging, drowsy world, and sociably shouldered the highway with all its stoops and sloping cellar doors; and comfortable little boys and girls, unembarrassed by considerations of decorum, and careless of rents and maternal rages, slid down the cellar doors, and watched the world go by—a world of shad-fishers, and fowlers of swans and ducks, and pliers of pirogues¹ and pungies; a world wherein the market-master and the hay-weigher, the constable and the town-crier, the watchman and the lamp-lighter, were personages of exalted privileges and mysterious powers; where a black Juliet, gaudily coifed in bandana, and hoop-ringed as to her ears, who dispensed English muffins to the outcry of a bell, and a blacker Romeo, amply aproned, who chanted on street corners the succulent glories of hot corn and baked pears, were ever the chroniclers, confidants, and oracles for the children, white or black, on Key and Congress streets and the Causeway, on Bridge and Falls streets, West Landing and Duck Lane.

A characteristic feature of the time and place was the Conestoga wagon, freighted with farm produce from Pennsylvania, arklie under its long tunnel of canvas, and drawn by five or seven big, benevolent horses, each with a chime of bells making melodious announcement of butter, eggs, and fowls, garden truck, sauerkraut, *schmierkäse*, and apple-butter; and always a hen-coop hung at the stern, and a dog, ill-favored and unsociable, trotted between the hind wheels.

No less characteristic and picturesque was the pier, the landing-place for the lighter craft that flitted between the river-landings in excursions of business or pleasure. Hither came the fishermen to mend their great nets, and the fowlers with their ducking-guns and dogs, and the darkies, old and young, to

lend a hand on the flats, or in the blinds or the boats, or in the fish-houses that flanked the beach at convenient points. Hither came country wagons from all the neighboring counties, to convey the shad or rockfish to inland markets. In April and May of 1828 Potomac shad were sold on the wharves of Georgetown for five dollars a hundred. In the early spring of 1826, rockfish weighing from twenty-five to one hundred pounds were netted in great numbers; on the Virginia side of the river, at Sycamore Landing, thirty miles below Washington, four hundred and fifty of these noble fish were taken at one draught of the seine.² The multitudinous fleet of small craft, bright, brisk, and bustling, that flitted to and fro between the fishing-grounds and the landings,—the boatmen shouting, singing, bantering each other,—imparted to the beautiful river the aspect of a festal panorama.

In the late fall and winter myriads of canvasback ducks, then commonly called «whitebacks,» came to feed on the small white celery that grew so abundantly in the swamps and flats of the Potomac and the Susquehanna. Formerly on James River they were known as «sheldrake»; but their favorite provender failing there, they flocked to the more bountiful fields between Craney and Analostan islands. They gathered in clouds of thousands, obscuring the river, and storming the air with multitudinous clangor, only to be fusilladed from blinds, or «tolled» within range by dogs trained to play and leap, or by the waving of a red-and-yellow handkerchief luring them by their foolish and fatal curiosity. Tom Davis, the trusty fowler of Mount Vernon, with his Newfoundland dog «Gunner,» often brought down at a single discharge of his clumsy British «piece» as many ducks as might serve the larder for a week.

Even so the snow-white swans were tolled as they floated in fleets of hundreds near the shore at the mouth of the Occoquan: superbly silly birds, spreading from six to seven feet of flashing pinions, clanging and trumpeting in melodious clamor that on still evenings might be heard by the dwellers on the creeks three miles away, and lured to their death by the diverting puzzle of a cunning puppy's antics.

Similarly spectacular was the sport that went to the taking of the ortolan³ on dark

¹ G. W. P. Custis, in his «Recollections and Private Memoirs,» describes the «pirogue» in which Washington, with a party of his friends, made the first survey of the Potomac above tide-water, as a canoe «hollowed

out of a great poplar tree, hauled on a wagon to the bank of the Monocacy, and there launched.»

² Elliot: «The Ten Miles Square.»

³ *Sora* of Virginia, *rail* of Pennsylvania.



DRAWN BY B. WEST CLINEDINST.

THE LANDING-PLACE, OLD GEORGETOWN.

October nights on the flats near Georgetown, when the birds had settled to their perches on the reeds and wild oats. Amidships across the gunwale of a canoe stout boards were laid to make a platform, and these were sheathed with clay to form a hearth. Here a fire of lightwood was kindled, and the boat crept noiselessly to the flats, a boy feeding the

«in the whole course of the day he had not seen a blacksmith's nor a baker's shop,» he had been edified, while waiting for his dinner at the «Indian Queen» in Bladensburg, by the contemplation of a plan of the city of Washington that hung over the fireplace in the dining-room, and showed «all the streets, squares, and public buildings of the intended



PAINTED BY GILBERT STUART. BORDER DRAWN BY WILLIAM N. SMITH. ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE. OWNED BY MRS. GOLDSBOROUGH.

ELIZA PARKE CUSTIS.

flame as it glided in among the perches where the birds, stupefied by the glare, incapable of flight or outcry, and in plain sight of the hunters, were clubbed with light paddles, and so killed or captured by scores. Thirty or forty dozen were often taken by one canoe.

When, in 1796, Thomas Twining, British-Indian merchant and official, alighted, cramped and sore, from the «coach with four horses» that had bumped and banged him from Baltimore by way of Bladensburg to Georgetown, he blessed the «Fountain Inn,» where a feather-bed and a bountiful supper afforded tolerable compensation for his beloved bungalow and his mulligatawny, and gave him strength to confront a great American joke; for while

city, minutely detailed.» Next morning he took horse at the «Fountain Inn,» and rode four miles to see those squares and public buildings, and to call on Mr. Thomas Law, formerly of the Bengal Civil Establishment, who had pitched his bungalow by the Potomac, and married Eliza Parke Custis, Mrs. Washington's granddaughter.

His ride was across a level tract like an English heath. The rude beginnings of a road presently assumed the appearance of an avenue, and although no sign of habitation was visible, «I had no doubt,» writes that patient and amiable wayfarer, «that I was now jogging along one of the streets of the metropolitan city.»

Then he came out into a cleared space, where he found workmen tugging and pounding at the framework of two «some-what imposing buildings,» and they informed him that *this* was the Capitol and *that* was a tavern. «Can such things be?» And with the thought he rides on over a trackless plain, and through a wilderness of woods and thickets and a labyrinth of bog and underbrush, until Mr. Law's chariot appears, on its way to Georgetown to meet him, and he is conducted to the bungalow by the Potomac. And immediately the wilderness blossoms like the rose; for there are the comely Mrs. Law, and her delectable sister, the vivacious Nelly Custis, and Miss Westcott of Philadelphia, «distinguished for her talents and literary attainments.» And even Talleyrand, prince, politician, diplomat, wit, was expected; for illustrious Frenchmen were entertained at the Law house from time to time, even as Louis Philippe was regaled by General Mason on Analoetan Island in 1798.

Law had administered in Bengal the affairs of an extensive district, and had been trained to the discharge of important functions implying consequence and the splendor of a rajah. In England his family was opulent and distinguished. His father was Bishop of Carlisle; his uncle, «the brilliant barrister who defended Warren Hastings against the influence of Fox, the eloquence of Sheridan, and the virulence of Burke.» Now his coachman drove through a wilderness in a «trap» provided with spare shoes for the horses and an outfit of blacksmith's tools. To Twining's thinking, such nabobs as Mr. Law would have been more appropriately bestowed at «Belvidere,» the charming villa of Colonel John Eager Howard near Baltimore—a seat of luxurious shrubberies and sloping lawns, «reproducing in the wilderness the cultivated and poetic perfections of a Repton or a Haverfield.» Nor was his enthusiasm abated in contemplating the attractions of the «seat» in company with Mrs. Howard, when she took him in the chariot to make the circuit of the place; for Mrs. Howard was that redoubtable Peggy Chew whose charms of wit and person the gallant but ill-fated André had celebrated with pen and pencil.

In John Adams's time a witty French lady described Georgetown as «a town of houses without streets, as Washington is a town of streets without houses»; and Mrs. Adams, writing to her daughter in November, 1800, says: «Woods are all you see from Baltimore until you reach the City, which is only so in name—here and there a small cot without

a window appearing in the Forest, through which you travel miles without seeing a Human being.» Oliver Wolcott, writing to his wife on the Fourth of July, 1800, says: «There is one good Tavern about forty rods from the Capitol, and several other houses are building; but I do not perceive how the members of Congress can possibly secure lodgings unless they will consent to live like Scholars in a college or Monks in a monastery, crowded ten or twenty in one house, and utterly secluded from Society. The only resource for such as wish to live Comfortably will be found in Georgetown, three miles distant, over as bad a Road in winter as the clay grounds near Hartford.»

But thirty years later a four-horse coach plied almost hourly between Georgetown and Washington for the accommodation of the patres (and matres) conscripti, carrying twelve inside at «a levy» each. From Gadsby's hotel, the «Indian Queen,» and the Mansion House, in Washington, stages ran to Baltimore for a fare of \$2.50; there were daily steamboats to Alexandria, Norfolk, and Fredericksburg, and a «mail-stage» every evening for Pittsburg and Wheeling.

Soon after the Revolution the Conestoga wagons and the «gondolas» brought a brisk and various trade to the wharves and doors of Georgetown. The place had been largely settled by Scotch agents or factors of British houses, and British bottoms consigned to these came annually, laden with hardware, dry goods, and wines, to receive return cargoes of tobacco, or of furs brought down the Potomac by Indian traders, while sugar, molasses, and rum from the West Indies were sold on the wharves.¹ The lumbering Conestoga rolled homeward freighted with dry goods and groceries, salt and fresh shad and herring in the season, for the use and consumption of the farming folk of Maryland and Pennsylvania; and the long, flat-bottomed gondola, bringing corn and flour, pork and iron, was poled down the Potomac to the Great Falls, twelve miles above the town, and thence around the falls and back to the river by the route of a canal.

Meanwhile, Georgetown had grown to be a place of homes and congressmen's lodgings—a town of spindle-legged sideboards, tall clocks, marquetry tables, claw-and-ball chairs, screens and andirons and warming-pans. The «Union Tavern,» a hostelry of fashionable pretensions during the administrations of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, had the honor to entertain many imposing per-

¹ Ben: Perley Poore's «Reminiscences.»



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BORDER DRAWN BY FRANK FRENCH.

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

OWNED BY MRS. BAYARD.

JAMES ASHTON BAYARD.

sonages, such as Louis Philippe and Talleyrand, Volney and Baron Humboldt, Jerome Bonaparte and Lafayette. Georgetown had already become the "court end," a trysting-place and rendezvous for persons of quality, while as yet Washington was but a huddle of booths, taverns, and gambling-houses set round about a political race-course. The more civilized and homelike little burgh had seven thousand inhabitants in 1810, and its social attractions were irresistible. Analo-tan Island was a romantic paradise; there were dim and whispering rambles for lovers on the slopes of the Heights, and endless were the match-making and gossip. The solicitous attention which the idle Strephon

might be beguiled into offering to the idler Daphne, with the aid of much piping, twanging, and tinkling in serenades,—

Sighing and singing of midnight strains
Under Bonnybell's window panes,—

was construed as serious courtship, and news of it was diligently dispensed by the barber, who came on horseback, tooting on his scandalous little horn, and peddling the tattle he had cajoled from the mercenary seamstress who was supposed to be dumb for five dollars a month, or the perfidious chambermaid who vowed to be blind for three dollars and tips.

Sir Augustus Foster, secretary of the British legation in 1805, was a sort of Pepys and

Paul Pry in one for the small-beer chronicles of that time. «No lack of handsome ladies,» says he in pert staccato notes, «for the balls at Georgetown, drawn from the families of Members and others who come for the season. I never saw prettier, more lively, or better-tempered girls anywhere—mostly from Virginia and Maryland. Both Washington and Georgetown are famous marriage markets. Much dancing, much singing of popular and sentimental ditties. Small literature or improving conversation. Excess of small talk, mixed with romance derived from the high-flown novels of the period. Young married women are relegated to the background. Cards for everybody—(do) (pronounced with lingering sweetness) for the girls, (brag) for the men, for whom, likewise, toddy before dinner. Rouge and face-powder in great request.»

After the flippant secretary comes a deferential and sententious chronicler who, with becoming «predilection for the Columbian Fair,» regrets to have observed among the ladies who grace the select circles of Washington and Georgetown «a fondness for the bewitching torment of play, which, when indulged for motives of gain, and the violence of hope, fear, and even baser passions, changes the very features, in effacing that divine impression of the female countenance which is so often irresistible.»

'T is sad to reflect that it took the «Columbian Fair» about six administrations to discover that gambling reddened the nose and spoiled the complexion; but it went out at last with face-powder and the ubiquitous umbrella.

In Washington, between the «Indian Queen» and the Capitol gate, the gambling-houses appealed seductively to the heroic restlessness of members with brag and faro that were brisk, and suppers and sideboards that were free; and private play at social entertainments was eminently fashionable. A Boston matron cooed to Mrs. Clay: «How it must distress you to think that your brilliant husband gambles!» «Sometimes, yes,» replied the guileless child of Kentucky; «but really, he almost always wins.»

With its great swinging sign displaying a gaudy and theatrical Pocahontas, the «Indian Queen» tavern strove to toll strangers within range of the landlord's winning ways, as the wily hunter tolled ducks by the flutter of a scarlet petticoat. In his voluminous white apron, and with familiar cajolements, the landlord greeted his guests at the door of the dining-room, and conducted them to their favorite seats, where Moses and Columbus

received them with a sort of obsequious patronage, and served them with their favorite dishes as infallibly as the barkeeper «set up» their favorite tipples. It cost about \$1.50 a day to live at the «Indian Queen.» A bottle of real old Madeira imported into Alexandria was \$3, and a superior grade of sherry could be had for \$1.50. But the decanters of brandy and whisky that glorified the table represented «the compliments of the landlord,» and were free.

At Christmas, and on Washington's Birthday and the Fourth of July, the guests of the house were invited to partake of egg-nog or apple-toddy brewed in a great punch-bowl that had once adorned the board at Mount Vernon. The landlord's place was behind the bar, where the room bells, hung on coiled springs, rang resoundingly. Letters and cards were received by the barkeeper, who answered a thousand questions as he mixed the beguiling beverages; for he was supposed to know all the notable people, where they lived, and on what days they «received.»¹

With the gaudy but picturesque Pocahontas of the tavern the plainer sign-board of a saddler competed for public admiration in terms of startling patriotism: «Peter Rodgers, Sadler, from the green fields of Erin and Tyranny to the green streets of Washington and Liberty! See Copenhagen; View the Seas! 'T is all blockade, 't is all ablaze! The Seas shall be Free. Yankee Doodle, keep it up!»

Peter had been banished from Cork, at the age of seventy-five, «just for appearing in a green-colored coat, and sighing for the fate of his dear native land.» How must his grateful heart have been wrung by the later satire of his melodious but spiteful compatriot, Tom Moore:

This famed metropolis, where Fancy sees
Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees—
Which travelling fools and gazetteers adorn
With shrines unbuilt, and heroes yet unborn!

Impressive and memorable were the figures of the actors who held the stage at Georgetown in those days—Clay and Webster, Calhoun and Randolph of Roanoke, Luther Martin and Aaron Burr, Robert Fulton and Francis Scott Key, John Quincy Adams, James Ashton Bayard, Washington Irving, and Major l'Enfant.

Living on the Heights (and metaphorically in the heights) was Vice-President Calhoun—tall and gaunt, «grand, gloomy, and peculiar,» wearing his long black hair brushed

¹ Ben: Perley Poore's «Reminiscences.»

straight back like a Drury Lane conspirator, studious of simplicity in dress, but driving four horses and giving elaborate entertainments. And daily on the Heights Calhoun encountered the man who had addressed him in the Senate as «Mr. Speaker—I mean Mr. President of the Senate, and would-be President of the United States (which may God in

«going all over»—gesticulating with arms and hands and head and feet and spectacles and snuff-box. Hither, too, came Daniel Webster, in blue dress-coat with gilt buttons, buff waistcoat, and high white cravat—«Black Dan,» stalwart and swarthy, massive as to his brow and cavernous as to his eyes, at once impressive and prodigal, majestic and



ENGRAVED BY R. A. MULLER.

OWNED BY DR. CRIM, BALTIMORE.

LUTHER MARTIN, «THE FEDERAL BULL-DOG.»

his infinite mercy avert!)»—John Randolph, Lord of Roanoke, precocious and pugnacious, long-limbed and lank, his hair parted in the middle, attired in an English broadcloth coat with high rolling collar and long skirts falling over knee-breeches and white boot-tops; who brought into the Senate-chamber whip and spurs and riding-gloves, and a favorite hound to crouch beneath his desk while «the gentleman from Virginia» waited for an opponent worthy of the steely eyes and the vixenish voice and the nervous forefinger.

Eagerly greeted in every drawing-room from Kalorama to Analostan, where Southern senators held undisputed sway in social functions and affairs, was the magnetic personality of Mr. Clay, whose twinkling eyes and engaging smile were but gentler reflections of that restless vitality which stirred the Kentucky orator in debate, and set him

convivial, heroic and hilarious. The distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts is described by one who hobnobbed with him as not really a large man. «His shoulders were broad, and his chest was burly, but his hips and lower limbs were comparatively slight. Although Clay's head appeared much smaller than Webster's, they wore the same diameter of hat.»

At Christmas, when happy darkies were delivered over to their own rousing raptures, and the generations of Maryland Catholics and Virginia Episcopalians made elegant revel between the supper-table and the side-board, the fashionable tippie ladled from the family bowl was the «Webster punch,» brewed with brandy and arrack, or Medford rum, champagne and maraschino, green tea and lime-juice—very expensive and very neat. In Georgetown, Frederick, and Alex-

andria, Yule logs, Christmas carols, and mistletoe were much affected. At the houses of the cabinet and the wealthier members of the Senate and the House there were endless entertainments and evening parties in the season, with suppers, punch, and cards, and cotillions and contra-dances to the music of harp and violin.

To the assemblies, always exclusive and ceremonious, and managed by a committee who dispensed their complimentary cards with the superfine discrimination of Almack's, officers of the army and navy and members of the diplomatic corps came in regimentals and regalia, while plain citizens disported themselves in pumps, silk stockings, ruffled cravats, two or even three waistcoats of different colors, the dangling fob-ribbon with gold buckles and a big seal of topaz or carnelian, regulation frock-coats of green or claret-colored cloth with huge lapels and gilded buttons, and Hessian top-boots with gold tassels. Certain of the exquisites affected ultra-fashionable full dress, which prescribed coats with great rolling collars and short waists, voluminous cravats of white cambric, and small-clothes or tight trousers.

The costume of the ladies in the administration of the younger Adams was classically scanty; we read of skirts of five breadths, a quarter of a yard each, of the favorite India crape, coquettishly short for the freer display of the slipper and silk stocking matching the color of the gown and fastened with ribbons crossed over the instep and ankle. The low baby waist, ingenuous and frank, came to an end abruptly under the arms, which were covered with gloves so fine that they were sometimes stowed cunningly in the shell of an English walnut. The hair, dressed high, was crowned with a comb of tortoise-shell, while turbans and ostrich-feathers were the peculiar ensigns of wives and matrons.

The ball opened at eight with the *menuet de la cour*, followed by a quadrille or the «basket-dance,» and closed at eleven with a rollicking Virginia reel to the tune of «Money Musk» or «Sir Roger de Coverley» fiddled by proud and happy darkies. Cake in variety, pineapples from the West Indies, and negus of port-wine or sherry, were served to the ladies, with compliments of flowers and flowery compliments, by their cavaliers. In Jackson's administration the widow of Alexander Hamilton introduced ice-cream at the President's receptions, to «Old Hickory's» great delight. It amused him to see the rustic sovereigns «blow on the funny stuff.»

After the Revolution the minuet, which had long held the place of honor in the select assemblies, began to be slighted, fashionable favor turning capriciously to less exacting and more democratic styles of diversion for the fantastic toe. General Washington, whose performance in the stately dance was impressive, appeared in that function for the last time in 1781, at a ball given in Fredericksburg in honor of the French and American officers on their return from the capitulation of Yorktown. The last birth-night ball he attended was in Alexandria in 1798.

John Pendleton Kennedy, author of «Swallow Barn» and «Horseshoe Robinson,» himself a conspicuous personality in the clubs and fashionable gatherings of 1820, was wont to gossip pleasantly concerning the wits and beaux who pranced so gallantly on the streets of Baltimore, Alexandria, and Georgetown in his childhood. «Cavaliers of the old school, full of starch and powder; most of them the iron gentlemen of the Revolution, with leathery faces; old campaigners, displaying military carriage and much imposing swagger; convivial blades, too, and heroes of long stories; all in three-cornered hats and wigs and buff coats with narrow capes, long backs, and hip pockets, small-clothes that barely reached the knee, striped stockings, and great buckles to their shoes; and then the long steel chains that hung half-way to the knee, dangling with seals shaped like the sounding-board of a pulpit!»

These oppressive gentry made the little town fairly jump with the ring of their gold-headed canes on the pavement, «especially when the superfine swashbuckler accosted a lady in the street with a bow that required



ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN. OWNED BY MISS HOLLYDAY.
MRS. SUSANNAH STEUART TILGHMAN.

a whole sidewalk to make it in—the wide scrape of the foot, and the cane thrust with a flourish under the left arm till it stuck out behind along with the stiff cue! And nothing could be more piquant than the pretty coxcombrity of the lady, as she reciprocated the salutation with a deep, low curtsy, her chin bridled to her breast.»

local pride, to induce him to part with his precious fields and orchards, he replied with unseemly flouts and gibes: «If it had not been for the Widow Custis and her niggers, you would never have been anything but a land-surveyor, and a very poor surveyor at that.» But at last, making a grace of compulsion, he yielded, only stipulating that the



PAINTED BY JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY. BORDER DRAWN BY FRANK FRENCH. ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN. OWNED BY COL. F. C. GOLDSBOROUGH.

ANNE FRANCIS.

Memorable in the early annals of Georgetown society is Marcia Burns, daughter of David Burns, that obstinate Scotchman who was General Washington's *bête noire* in the infancy of the national capital. Burns owned a tract of six hundred and fifty acres, known as «the Widow's Mite,» in the heart of the projected metropolis; and to Washington's appeals, addressed to his patriotism and his

Burns cottage should be spared from the encroachments of vulgar streets.

In this cottage Marcia Burns, the heiress, blossomed in a graceful prettiness. Luther Martin, the erratic and brilliant Maryland advocate, received her into his family to be educated and trained for society in the companionship of his daughters Maria and Eleanor, so that when she returned to the

now famous homestead she became, by her beauty, wit, and various winsomeness, the attraction of a notable coterie of Taylors, Laws, and Keys, Lees and Brents, Calverts and Carrolls; and entertained with familiar hospitality Alexander Hamilton, Burr and Blennerhasset, James Ashton Bayard and William Wirt, Gilbert Stuart the painter, and Tom Moore the poet.

With the Mount Vernon group of Custises and Calverts, who were Marcia's occasional guests, came Washington's favorite aide and confidential secretary, Colonel Tench Tilghman, the distinguished soldier who had the honor of bearing to the Federal Congress the glad tidings of the capitulation of Yorktown and the surrender of Cornwallis. Tilghman's mother, Anne Francis, was the handsome daughter of Tench Francis, of a family distinguished in letters. One of his brothers was a barrister, and author of «Maxims of Equity»; another, the Rev. Philip Francis, translator of Horace, was the father of Sir Philip Francis, reputed author of the «Letters of Junius.» Tench Francis removed from Talbot County, Maryland, to Philadelphia, where he became attorney-general of Pennsylvania. His daughter Anne was married to James Tilghman of the «Hermitage,» afterward a member of the Provincial Council in Philadelphia. One of her kinswomen in the Tilghman connection was that beautiful Susannah Steuart, who was so admired and beloved in prerevolutionary Georgetown, also wedded to a Tilghman of the «Hermitage,» and mother of a later mistress of «Readbourne,» the hospitable seat of the Hollydays of Queen Anne's.

At twenty Marcia Burns was married to General Van Ness, member of Congress from New York, «rich, handsome, well bred and well read.» Hard by the moss-roofed cottage they built the famous Van Ness mansion, de-

signed by Latrobe, finished in fine woods and marbles, and decorated with sculptures from Italy. Here their daughter, married to Arthur Middleton of South Carolina, died in 1822. Then Marcia went into seclusion, and in fulfilment of a vow erected an orphan-asylum and devoted her life to works of charity in schools and hospitals. At her death she was entombed with public honors in that classic mausoleum which was afterward removed to Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown, where the author of «Home, Sweet Home» found a home at last. Before that great bereavement converted it into a house of mourning, the Van Ness mansion had been the scene of distinguished entertainments. From its portico ships from Europe could be seen moored in the docks of Alexandria, and West India merchantmen sailed by, bound for the port of Georgetown.

Familiar as well as honored guests in the Van Ness mansion and in the pleasant homes of Georgetown were the several ladies and gentlemen who composed the «Washington group» after the house at Arlington had been built by G. W. P. Custis in 1802. With Mr. Law, already mentioned (son of the Bishop of Carlisle, and nephew of Lord Chancellor Ellenborough), came his handsome wife Eliza Parke

Custis, Martha Washington's granddaughter. Mrs. Law's only child Eliza, afterward noted for her engaging felicities of mind and manner, married Lloyd N. Rogers of «Druid Hill.» I am indebted to her daughter, Mrs. Goldsborough of Baltimore, for the privilege of reproducing the miniature which so happily reflects her beauty.

Nelly Custis, delectable and wilful, ever a diverting perplexity to the household of Mount Vernon, had hardly outgrown her dolls and her Chinese pigs, her audacious rides on the awful back of the first President, and



BORDER DRAWN BY FRANK FRENCH. ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.
OWNED BY MRS. GOLDSBOROUGH.
MRS. LLOYD N. ROGERS.

her tearful struggles with that expensive and hateful spinet, when she wrote the pert and sprightly letter in which she recounts to the stern soldier and sage her trials and triumphs in her first ball at Georgetown, and confesses «the soft impeachment» of her passion for the son of Washington's sister Betty, Major Lawrence Lewis. At her wedding on the general's birthday in 1799, at Mount Vernon, she would have had the Father of his Country attend in the gorgeously embroidered uniform of a commander-in-chief, but he preferred the Continental blue and buff, and the cocked hat with the plain black cockade. The pouting bride was consoled with the white plumes that General Pinckney had presented to him, but which were better suited for the decking of a young matron in the minuet, as when, a few years later, Mistress Lewis graced the ball-room at Arlington.

The turnpike was a diverting novelty and the steamboat a wonder, when Dolly Madison, inspiring sprite of tea-parties and loo, and idol of the common people, warm-hearted and prodigally hospitable, cleverly blending gracious dignity with a frank condescension, queened it so kindly in her spangled turbans, paradise plumes, and rosetted shoes, and ruled her little world of lovers with a snuff-box. It was at one of her receptions in Georgetown that an amusing incident occurred, remembered for the characteristic tact it illustrated. A shy young fellow from the country had come to pay his respects to the star of the hour. Mrs. Madison observed him neglected and embarrassed, and approaching him quickly with extended hand, so startled the abashed and timid lad, who had just been served with coffee, that he dropped the saucer and thrust the half-filled cup into his pocket. «How the crowd jostles!» said the delightful Dolly. «Let me have the servant bring you coffee. And how is your charming mother? We were friends, you know.» Ever «mistress of herself, though china fall,» that dazed, dumfounded boy was not less interesting to her gracious solicitude than the justices of the Supreme Court in their gowns, or the diplomatic corps in their regalia, or distinguished officers of the army and navy in the luster of full uniform—all dancing attendance at those memorable levees on New Year's day and the Fourth of July, when Dolly Madison was «at home» to kings, presidents, and the people, without distinction of persons.

The social throne that Dolly Madison had filled with historic distinction was restored

and adorned by Louisa Catherine Johnson, niece of Tom Johnson, first Republican governor of Maryland, and wife of President John Quincy Adams. Mrs. Adams was born, educated, and married in London when her father was American consul there. As a bride she shared her husband's honors as senator in Washington, envoy to Russia, minister to the court of St. James, and secretary in the cabinet of President Monroe.

She was preëminently mistress of the arts of society, and her entertainments in Georgetown and Washington were events of memorable import in the political as well as in the social world. Sectional rancor or the spites of party had no place at her teas and receptions. A ball that she gave in 1824 is chronicled as the «grand ball» of that time. Webster and Clay, Calhoun, Randolph, and Jackson, were there in their pride of blue coats and gilt buttons, buff waistcoats, silk stockings, and pumps; while her democratic majesty was singular and conspicuous in a suit of steel—her gown of «steel lama,» with brilliant ornaments of cut steel in her hair and on her throat, bust, and arms. Her portrait by Leslie, a reflection from the court of Napoleon, shows an American woman of the republican court in her proper panoply of grace, culture, and distinction.

Among the ladies of honor who graced the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Adams, two daughters of Maryland were expressly admired. One of these, a cousin of «the elect lady,» was Fanny Russell Johnson, granddaughter of the governor. This beautiful young woman was born on the night and almost at the hour of General Washington's death, and that sad association endeared her to the households of Mount Vernon and Arlington. In the political and literary coteries that met at her cousin's house when Mr. Adams was Secretary of State, she was the object of competing compliments; and when Lafayette returned in 1824 to greet his brothers in arms and to salute again the patriotic ladies of whom he had written, «I am proud of my obligations to them; I am happy in the tie of gratitude that binds me to them,» his admiration for Fanny Johnson was expressed with the Gallic ardor he kept for his fair favorites. Rembrandt Peale, who made the portrait here reproduced, was never satisfied with it. He privately painted another, with which he could not be induced to part, reserving it among the happier achievements and souvenirs of his art. Fanny Johnson was married to Captain John McPherson of Frederick, Maryland, where, in her ninety-



PAINTED BY REMBRANDT PEALE.

BORDER DRAWN BY FRANK FRENCH.

ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.

OWNED BY MRS. WORTHINGTON ROSS.

FANNY RUSSELL JOHNSON.

seventh year, she is revered and honored, as aforetime she was courted and serenaded.¹

In those happy days in Washington and Georgetown, Fanny Johnson and Charlotte Graham Nicols were inseparable comrades and confiding rivals. Charlotte Nicols married Joseph Patterson, brother of Mme. Patterson-Bonaparte, another of whose brothers, Robert, married Charles Carroll of Carrollton's

lovely granddaughter Marianne Caton, by her later marriage Marchioness of Wellesley. The portrait by Sully of Mrs. Joseph Patterson is justly coupled with that of the Marchioness by Sir Thomas Lawrence among the «counterfeit presentments» of notable Maryland women. Marianne Patterson, being widowed, went to England, and married the Marquis of Wellesley, brother to the

¹ Mrs. Carlton Shafer writes with filial love and reverence: «In the late autumn of her beautiful and honored life she shows us how gracious and charming must have been the women of her day. This venerable and beloved lady, sitting in almost total blindness, teaches us to regret the passing away of the old régime in Maryland, of which she is almost the last surviving representative.»

Her family, represented by her daughter, Mrs. Worthington Ross of Frederick, Maryland, permit themselves to hope that they may be indebted to some kind reader of THE CENTURY for information disclosing the present whereabouts of the missing Peale portrait, which is supposed to be in Philadelphia.

Duke of Wellington, and viceroy of Ireland. Her sisters (Catoons of Baltimore) were the Duchess of Leeds and Lady Stafford. She was for a time first lady in waiting to Queen Adelaide at Windsor, and her extraordinary beauty was the talk of court circles. The venerable Mrs. Barney, daughter of Samuel Chase, signer of the Declaration of Independence and associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who had been the close friend of Marianne Caton, and was present at her wedding to Robert Patterson, once said to the writer of this sketch: «I saw her while she was living at St. John's Lodge, Regent Square, and I then thought the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence at her father's house in Baltimore did less than justice to her beauty. A singular grace adorned her simplest movements, and her manner was most engaging.»

A daughter of Mrs. Patterson, married to Mr. Charles Gilmor of Baltimore, inherited her mother's social charm; but stricken by the death of her two pretty boys, she died in her young motherhood.

Peale's portrait of Mrs. Rebecca Rogers is an impressive presentation of a typical Maryland matron whose occasional presence served to illustrate the affability and bounty of so-

cial life in early Georgetown. Rebecca Woodward was born at «Primrose,» her mother's estate near Annapolis, and was half-sister to Charlotte Hesselius.¹ She was wedded to Philip Rogers of «Greenwood,» the sylvan home near Baltimore of that branch of the family of Druid Hill. The gracious hospitality of its mistress made Greenwood a mansion of delight to the innumerable kinfolk and friends of the Rogers connection. As one group departed another took its place, and the house was at all times as full as it could hold comfortably or uncomfortably. On one occasion Mrs. Rogers writes: «So crowded is this house with inhabitants of the most noisy sort that I have ranged through every room in vain, seeking a respite from the chatter of children and, as poor L'Argnan used to say, the (chatteration) of grown people.» Postage was high in those days, and the Greenwood bills at one time amounted to five hundred dollars for the postage of guests, whose visits were neither far between nor limited as to duration: a Greenwood visit was commonly reckoned by weeks.

The fine portrait of Mrs. Rogers becomes especially interesting when contemplated in the light of a letter addressed by the lady to her friend Mrs. Walter Dulany in London, and dated at «Baltimore Town,» May 12, 1787:

I have for some time past been trying to get a plain mount of a Fan to paint for you, as I wished to produce something you would wear, and you know my art does not extend to miniature painting. I intend to sit as soon as possible to Mr. Peale. But, my Dear, do you prefer it a miniature? I have been thinking, when I am happy enough to have your dear Resemblance, I should choose something nearer the natural size of your Features. Unless a Face is very remarkable indeed, I think 't is never so striking in miniature; and one leading Feature, by bearing some resemblance to another person's, very often misleads the Judgment. Thus, Mrs. Sophia Carroll's, by having an aquiline Nose, is thought by some as much like me as her; but I presume you would desire something more like your friend than she is like Sophia, tho' it should not possess in a tenth degree so agreeable an Aspect.

¹ See «Certain Worthies and Dames of Old Maryland,» in THE CENTURY for February, 1896.



PAINTED BY BENJAMIN WEST. ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON. OWNED BY MRS. WORTHINGTON ROSS.

MRS. CHARLES GILMOR.



PAINTED BY THOMAS SULLY.

ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN.

OWNED BY MRS. WORTHINGTON ROSS.

MRS. JOSEPH PATTERSON.

Eliza, or Betsy, Hesselius, the youngest of Mrs. Rogers's half-sisters, and her protégée, was married at Primrose in 1792 to the Rev. Walter Dulany Addison, that excellent divine who had the Bible at his fingers' ends, and who in 1794 founded in Georgetown the historic church of St. John, when there was no Episcopal church there nor in the «trackless waste» that stood for Washington. But it was not until 1809 that the faithful and patient founder was called to the rectorship of the completed temple. Then the pews in the galleries were rented at high rates to persons of notable respectability, and the street in front of the church was filled with fine coaches and servants. Mrs. Madison was of the congregation, and Mrs. Calvert from Bladensburg, and the British minister—his excellency followed by two attendants in livery with drawn swords. At that time there was a small church at Rock Creek, but it had

never had a floor, and the building was so out of repair that the rector was driven to holding services under the trees in the yard.

When Betsy Hesselius left school in Baltimore to return to Primrose and thence to Georgetown, her place in the house at Greenwood was taken by that delightful child Mary Grafton, whose letters afford us amusing foretastes of the ingenuous candor and the frank, engaging flings at cant and dullness that so tickled Sir Walter Scott and Dr. John Brown in the diary and letters of Marjorie Fleming. Thus, Mary Grafton to her father:

I went on Wednesday to Madame B's exhibition [a fashionable school]. There were five Crowns: the two principal Crowns for Eminence in lessons and Virtue. They were all Crowned in great style at the Assembly Rooms, in the presence of 500 Spectators. As for Mrs. Groombridge, she has postponed her Exhibition till Christmas. She says



PAINTED BY PEALE.

BORDER DRAWN BY FRANK FRENCH.

ENGRAVED BY HENRY WOLF.

OWNED BY MRS. COMMODORE RIDGELY.

MRS. REBECCA ROGERS.

it will show the People what *her* scholars can do. She was bitterly against Crowns when she first heard of them. When I went there the next day [after Madame B's «exhibition»] she told me she would have a Crown for the most Eminent of every Class.¹

Mary Grafton, desperately wrestling with Rollin and the Peloponnesian war, is but a forecast of Marjorie in the throes of multiplication. «I am now going,» says Marjorie, «to tell you the horrible and wretched plaegge [plague] that my Multiplication gives me you cant conceive it the most devilish thing is 8

¹ «The Life and Times of the Rev. Walter Dulany Addison,» by his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hesselius Murray.

times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself cant endure.»

«Aunt Brice» is delighted with the French officers; she has five or six at her house every evening. But «Aunt Rodgers» does not wish Mary to go while they are there. So that single-minded young person writes to her father:

Nancy Weems has arrived in Town, and tells me Cousin Mary will be hurt if I do not return to Annapolis with her. If I can get ready I don't know but I may, for if I wait for the French Officers to leave I may not get there till next Winter. Besides, I have not such an Invincible Hatred to them as to make me forego Cousin Mary's agreeable society.

P. S. Mrs. Twitchem, with her one eye,
A wondrous length of tail lets fly;
And as she passes through every gap,
Leaves a piece of her tail in the trap.

What do you think of that riddle? Perhaps it may seem of some consequence when I tell you it was produced by the Bishop of London.

Major Grafton's letters to his lively daughter are not lacking in the admonitions and

passage—seeing that she already spelled more correctly than the august personage whose example was commended to her!

The social atmosphere of Georgetown, hitherto placidly respectable and decorous, was sadly vitiated by the recklessness and extravagance of the Jackson period. Wine, women, and high play, social and political intrigue, and Peggy Timberlake, forced their



PAINTED BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE. BORDER DRAWN BY WILLIAM N. SMITH. ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN.
OWNED BY THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THE MARCHIONESS OF WELLESLEY.

petty maxims that were regarded as worldly wise in his time. «It has been remarked upon as a great excellence of General Washington's Writing,» says the major, «that no one c'd substitute a single Word which c'd so well express his Meaning. I have heard that for Seven years of his life he never wrote without having his Dictionary before him.»

What raptures of fun the girl's keen sense of humor most have extracted from that

way into retreats consecrated to sobriety, good manners, discreet deportment, and edifying discourse. Margaret Timberlake, *née* O'Neill, was the widow of a young naval officer whom she had married before she was seventeen. He died by suicide at Port Mahon in 1828, leaving this red-and-white relict, beautiful, unconventional, adventurous, much given to high spirits and boisterous assaults upon the complacent proprieties of the period. Her dark-brown hair curled naturally, and so

did her pert red lip, impatient of «preachments.» She was the spoiled daughter of a rollicking Irishman, landlord of a conspicuous public-house in Washington, who thought nothing too good for his Peggy, and was content if the company that met around his decanters were half as lively and bright as she. It was his boast that Mrs. Madison had crowned his Peggy with «the crown of beauty» at a school exhibition in Georgetown.

General Jackson, with his bosom friend Eaton, had lodged at O'Neill's tavern, where Peggy's pranks had amused them, while her impulsive, defiant temper won their hearts. Especially did she appeal to the chivalrous sentiment in «Old Hickory,» whose beloved wife had been cruelly assailed in the presidential canvass, and now he vowed vengeance against all defamers of women. Presently the widow Timberlake, whose eccentricities were tempered with ambition, became Mrs. Eaton. The respectabilities of the capital, shocked and indignant, opened fire upon her with great guns of scandal, and she gleefully reveled in the bombardment. President Jackson, her formidable champion, had her often, an honored guest, at the White House, and swore: «By the Eternal! the spiteful cats who plagued the life out of my patient Rachel shall not scratch this brave little Peggy.»

His wily ally, Mr. Van Buren, joining forces with the ministers of Great Britain and Russia, made a demonstration in force, and entertained the goddess of discord at dinners, suppers, and balls. On these occasions her audacity was as brilliant as her beauty was bewildering. Staid matrons of the cabinet and congressional set called untimely for their carriages, clergymen denounced her publicly; and Peggy danced for joy, running to the White House every day with fresh stories of delightful insults. Van Buren and Eaton pretended to resign from the cabinet. Of course the President would not accept, but he bluntly signified how willingly he would contemplate the retirement of certain of their colleagues whose sensitive consorts

shrank from calling on the wife of the Secretary of War.

«It is odd,» wrote Daniel Webster, «but the consequences of this desperate turmoil in the social and fashionable world may determine who shall succeed the present chief magistrate.» The senator from Massachusetts foresaw the historical sequence—Peggy O'Neill, the widow Timberlake, Mrs. Secretary Eaton, President Van Buren!

This formidable mistress of social and political coups, who had dismembered the cabinet of a nation, and compelled the recall of a foreign minister whose wife had ventured to snub her, and who had been the bosom friend of Queen Christina at the court of Spain, died in obscure and tragic penury in Washington, in her old age the mocked and discarded wife of a young Italian dancing-master who had eloped with her money and her granddaughter.

Lest the social panorama of old Georgetown should lack aught of its intellectual harlequinade, we may not omit from the motley procession of engaging and diverting ghosts the censorious sprightliness of Mrs. Trollope, deploring the ubiquitous offensiveness of the spittoon, the fatal flimsiness of feminine foot-gear, the absence of «Punch» and the Established Church, and the superfluity of «camp-meetings»; or the sententious and rhetorical deliverances of Charles Kemble's comely daughter, she of the low Greek brow, and, like Juno, «ox-eyed,» whose fine Olympian shoulders Sir Thomas Lawrence so proudly pictured—Fanny Kemble, petulant and portentous, who disposed of the foolishness of snobs and the fate of nations with the identical oracular sweep: «It is my conviction,» said she, «that these United States will be a monarchy before I am a skeleton.»

But the social panorama of old Georgetown had its happier chronicler in N. P. Willis, whose society letters in the New York «Mirror» brewed many a tempest in a teapot: «master of Elegant Gossip, travelled, fastidious, poetic, airy»—Leigh Hunt of the drawing-rooms.

John Williamson Palmer.

THE CELLO.

NOT while the cello hid its tone
 Neath din of viol, harp, and horn,
 But when it rose at last alone,
 Were faith and aspiration born.

Nor printed word, nor golden tongue,
 Nor canvases, nor statues rare,
 Have led me where that last note hung,
 Dying, upon the tranced air.

Meredith Nicholson.