

THE FIRST AND LAST WRITINGS OF WASHINGTON.

BY S. M. HAMILTON.

It will be the duty of the Historian and the Sage in all ages to omit no occasion of commemorating this illustrious man; and until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and in virtue be derived from the veneration paid the immortal name of Washington.—LORD BROUGHAM.

TO-DAY historical precedent is an acknowledged and potent factor in our national life. Security in action based on that authority can be obtained by research in original sources only.

To all those other attributes of a well-balanced intellect George Washington added wise forethought in the appreciation of the value to posterity of authentic records of the days in which the foundations of our nation were laid. By that method of perfect order and system, developed in the days of his boyhood, and continued throughout his well-occupied life, he gathered and preserved the most complete and accurate manuscript and documentary testimony of the thoughts and deeds of the men of his times; and in his own correspondence, diaries, notes, and observations, as well as in the rich collection of letters addressed to him, he has placed the man of public affairs, as well as the student and scholar, under an unpayable debt of gratitude.

By the terms of Washington's will his nephew, Bushrod, inherited these treasures. It was from Bushrod's heir, George Corbin Washington, that the National Government bought the "Washington Papers," as the entire collection, now preserved in the national archives in Washington, is familiarly known. They were sold in two separate lots: the first, in the year 1834, under an act of Congress appropriating \$25,000; the second, in 1849, for a further sum of \$20,000. Thus the people secured a property to which it is not possible to affix a commercial value at the present day, and which, as time goes on, will increase to one beyond all calculation.

It is beyond the limit of these notes to attempt to describe the varied character and great extent of the manuscript papers and record-books of American history left by General Washington, or to do more than refer to the essential part that they form.

The two interesting examples that are given in this number of *THE CENTURY* convey some idea of their wide range. A moment's thought will give some conception of the varied character of the enormous mass of historical material existing between the date of the school copy-book of the lad of fourteen and the little diary closed the night before December 14, 1799,—Washington's last day on earth,—the latter being probably the most valuable Washington manuscript in existence.

Not only are these valuable papers and historic relics well cared for, but, what is of equal value, they are being made accessible to historical students. Not many years ago the manuscripts were bound and stitched together in a manner that would have been a miserable way to keep even newspaper clippings. This, however, has been changed; and at the present time nothing but the highest praise can be bestowed on the manner in which they are preserved, under the direction of the Bureau of Rolls and Library in the Department of State. In the examples before us, for instance, each sheet has been carefully fortified and restored, and set in on old-style cartridge-paper; the pages are bound in full levant, the cover inside finished in full gilt and watered silk in shades of blue and gray, the waste paper or fly-leaf being also faced with silk. They are then finally boxed in book form, which effectually excludes dust and protects the manuscripts from handling. The school copy-book has for title-page: "Washington's School Copy-Book, 1745."

An enumeration of its contents gives us an insight into the course of his education and the inclination of his mind. As seen by the facsimile, the first subject is geometry, which is followed by examples in geometrical definitions, geometrical problems, surveying, solid measure, mensuration of solids, gauging, mensuration of plain superficies, such as plank, wainscot, painting, glass, etc.; a

December 1799

- 8th Morning perfectly clear, calm and pleasant; but about 9 o'clock the wind came from the N. W. and blew fresh. Mer 38 in the morning. - as at night
9. Morning clear & pleasant with a light wind from N. W. Mer at 33. - pleasant all day - afternoon Calm Mer 39 at Night - M^r. Honell Lewis & wife set off on their return home after breakfast - and M^r. Law Lewis and Washington Custis on a journey to N. Kent
- 10 Morning clear & calm - Mer at 31 afternoon covering - Mer at 22 and wind brisk from the Southward - A very large hoar frost this morn^g.
11. But little wind and Raining - Mer at 24 in the morning and 38 at Night. - About 9 o'clock the wind shifted to N. W. & it ceased raining but was cloudy. - Sent Fairbairn his son Tho^s. and daughter - M^r. Warner Washington & son Whiting - and M^r. In: Herbert dined here & returned after dinner. -
- 12 Morning Cloudy - Wind at N. E. & Mer 33. - a large circle round the Moon East Night. - About 1 o'clock it began to snow - soon after to hail and they turned to a settled cold Rain - Mer 28 at Night.
13. Morning Snowing & ab. 3 Inches deep - Wind at N. E. & Mer at 30. - cont^d Snowing till 9 o'clock - and ab. 5 it became perfectly clear - wind in the same place but per hard - Mer 28 at Night. -

description of the leap-year, dominical letter, golden number, cycle of the sun, Roman indiction, epact, etc.; memorial verses, the description and use of the globes, geographical definitions, and geographical problems. Such were the practical and useful lines of study of the boy Washington, and his early proficiency is shown by this, the earliest of his school-books, preserved from the time he was fourteen years old.

The diary is lettered: «Meteorological Record, 1799,» and has this simple inscription on the title-page: «This Diary probably contains the last words that General Washington committed to writing. On the night of the 13th he was attacked by the disorder of which he died.»

The diary is mainly devoted to recording the state of the weather, but other items of a more personal interest occur. The following are extracts:

«February 11. A little lowering in the Morning wind Southerly and Mer. at 27. Went up to Alexandria to the celebration of my birthday. Many manœuvres were performed by the Uniform Corps—and an elegant Ball & Supper at Night.»

Under date of February 22:

«Morning Raining—Mer. at 30—Wind a little more to the northward—Afterwards very strong from the N° W^t and turning clear & cold. The Rev. Mr. Davis & M^r Geo: Calvert came to dinner & Miss Custis was married at Candle light to Mr. Laurence Lewis.»

FLOWERS IN THE PAVE.

BY CHARLES M. SKINNER,

Author of «Nature in a City Yard,» etc.



SPeaking of inheritances, would n't it be surprising if we could know just how much of our thinking and doing were thought and done for us centuries ago? We see England in America every day, not merely in the fad of Anglomania, but in law and manner. It is exhibited in the country whenever a man puts up on waste ground a sign that cries, «This part of God's earth is mine—all mine! Therefore, all common and unlanded persons keep off from it.» It is found in the courts whenever a man is set free after beating his wife or put into jail for trapping a rabbit. It endures in our love of theaters and books, in our harshness to animals, in our honesty, strength, and courage. Puritan ancestry asserts itself whenever we meet a man who lives for pleasure. He is repellent to us, and we cannot understand his satisfaction with himself. The busy man who is taking recreation may be a delightful fellow; generally he is, because there is in his case a glad rebound from the sordid and practical to the sanitary, the genial, the humorous, the ideal.

The man who lives for pleasure deserves none, and has n't any. He looks it. How and why is it that the average society person, so called, has such a faint personality? Is it because of even—therefore slight—development? Compared with the usual woman whose

picture is printed in the society columns of the newspapers,—startling taste that puts it there!—the shop-girl, the actress, the woman who writes, or who thinks without writing, the good mother, has a distinction that is eminent. Society lives to enjoy. To enjoy solely by consuming, without continuing or creating, is hard. In its upper grades, society smiles and talks softly. The lower grades laugh and yell, especially when they can attract attention in a theater box. What a frightful fate would be a «jolly» life to him who is still, in constitution and brain, a Puritan! One understands natural gaiety, high spirits, fine animal condition, and all that; but the make or state of mind that turns everything to a laugh, while it has its use of refreshment, would be intolerable if it lasted. The humor that smiles rather than the joke that roars, the deeps of healthful calm, the joys of mind and spirit that are almost told in sadness,—as the joy of autumn and the joy of love,—these are normal, and to have them for a year is worth a life of jollity. Yet, spite of its jolly ideals, I like the human race pretty well. It has proved that it can get more out of the air and the earth than any other creature can, though we do not know what the oyster will do after he has been through college.

Another tribal trait of ours is the habit of putting other people under discipline for not thinking as we do, or being so lucky. What

August 1745

George Washington

Geometry

One of the Seven Sciences and a very useful and Necessary Branch of the Mathematicks, whose Subject is greatness: For as Numbers is the Subject of Arithmetick, so that of Geometry is Magnitude, which hath its beginning from a Point, that is a Thing supposed to be indivisible, and the Original of all Dimensions. By it is explained the Nature and Property of continued Magnitude that is a Line, a Superficies and a Solid, of which in their proper Order

Geometrical Definitions

- 1 A Point is void of Length, Breadth and Depth as the Point A
- 2 A Line is made by the moving of a Point and has length only as A B, which is the first kind of Magnitude
- 3 A Superficies is made by the moving of a line and has length and breadth as A B C D, which is the second kind

