WASHINGTON AS A PRACTICAL JOKER

POSTERITY sees a stiff, formal picture of Washington standing in the bow of a boat crossing the Delaware amid floating blocks of ice on that memorable Christmas night, to fight the battle which turned the tide of the revolution in the right direction. But no painter could delineate the heroism of the actual scene. His men were faced—half naked. Besides the running ice in the river, there was a blinding blizzard, and it was so bitter cold that the chief loss on the American side was of the men who, though inured to pioneer hardships, froze to death that awful night.

Did General Washington stand in his boat in that dangerous current during a driving storm and stare pompously at the opposite shore? Not he. Instead of that, he "sat tight" and cajoled the men, using every device that might make them forget their terrible situation; even telling them a facetious story, which, coming from him, startled them, set their blood tingling and made them oblivious to the cold and dangers around them. That was the grandest deed in the military stratagem which made Frederick the Great of Prussia, and, indeed, the whole world, wonder at the genius of Washington.

Nearly every one knows the outside of the story of the siege of Boston by the new commander-in-chief, who had come to the continental congress as a wealthy Virginia colonel, and his nondescript crowd of raw recruits, wholly unused not only to military discipline, but even to military forms. But few know of the transcendent bluff General Washington had to put up when he discovered that there were but a few rounds of gunpowder in the possession of the whole American army, while the British were amply supplied with ammunition and might sally forth any hour against the American "irregulars."

"Some one had blundered." Many a commander would have shown up the improvident officers who had that matter in charge and peevishly thrown up the command as ridiculously impossible. But General Washington did not tell his most trusted officers of the excruciating dilemma he found himself in. He knew the awful secret would spread if known to a few, and the great cause of justice might be lost. He began quietly to scour the country for gunpowder. He soon found that the nearest place at which any quantity could be had was in a magazine on the island of Bermuda. To get that required a secret expedition, much hazard and many weeks; but Washington's nerve was equal to the fearful strain.

During that long, tense interval the American troops were working away upon the fortifications, preparing for a grand attack. Meanwhile the young commander-in-chief was entertaining hospitably at his headquarters, the Craigo mansion, now best known as "Longfellow's Home," in Cambridge. As a pleasant diversion, "Lady" Washington, then one of the wealthiest women in America, came to visit the general, and all the countryside was agog over her coach-and-four with six black postilions in white and scarlet livery. Even the British, cooped up in Boston, were impressed by the resources and apparent confidence of the American generalissimo.

While one expedition was gone to Bermuda for powder, General Knox, with a small force, succeeded in bringing a number of cannon several hundred miles on ox sleds in midwinter from Fort Ticonderoga. In those "times that tried men's souls" it was Washington's iron nerve, supported by his broad sense of humor, sometimes scintillating with a radiance worthy of a Franklin or a Lincoln, which saved the day. This was only one of many occasions on which Washington had to fight out the revolution alone.

A friend of Lincoln's once said of him, "The president's laugh is his life-preserver." This was truer of Washington than any one seems to have realized in a day when strict gravity without levity, was expected of public characters. To laugh or to see the humorous side of an incident was considered the sign of a frivolous disposition.

Washington's early biographers were solemn men. To have told in their books how much their hero laughed would have been, in their opinion, wantonly exposing his weakness to public gaze. Men like "Parson" Weems, renegade preacher and tramp fiddler though he was, had been brought up to think that laughing was "worse than wicked—it was vulgar!" In straining to make their hero appear to have been a demigod, those pedantic biographers related not what George Washington really did, but what they imagined such a boy or man ought to have done under given conditions.

Washington would have laughed heartily at Weems' hatchet-and-cherry-tree story if he had ever heard it—which he never did, for it was not invented till a later edition of the erring rector's juvenile history, six years after Washington's death. Yet the real hero of the cherry-tree fiction would have found it the occasion of gravity as well as mirth. In the stilted story of "Little George and His Pa," Weems was only carrying out the idea of his time; to tell not what the small boy actually did, but what the consummate little prig he conceived little George Washington to have been would have done if he had cut down his father's favorite cherry tree.

If little George Washington had been the insufferable little prig described by Mr. Weems, his half-brothers would not have loved him better than their own brothers, or their own children, for that matter. His early life was fuller of exciting experiences than any fiction. Yet the life of young Washington is yet to be told as an adventure story. Even in his quaint little diaries he early discloses a lively sense of humor—savage humor sometimes, but broad and boyish. He showed this by telling only the jokes against himself. When he was a lad of sixteen he led a surveying party to lay out the lands of his old friend, Lord Fairfax, in the wilderness of the Shenandoah. Here is one of his own experiences as a "tenderfoot," recorded on Tuesday, March 15, 1747-8:

"We got our Suppers & was lighted into a Room, and I, not being so good a Woodsman as ye rest of my company, stripped myself very orderly, & went into ye Bed, as they called it, when to my surprise I found it to be nothing but a little straw—matted together without sheets or anything else but one threadbare blanket, with double its weight of Vermin, such as Lice, Fleas, &c.

"I was glad to get up (as soon as ye light was carried from us) I put on my Clothes and lay as my Companions. Had we not been very tired, I am sure we should not have slept much that night."

The next night he related that they "had a good dinner & a good Feather Bed, which was a very agreeable regale."

In describing an Indian war dance, he went on, "Some liquor elevating their Spirits put them in ye Humor of Dauncing. Ye best Dancer jumped about ye ring in a most comicle Manner!"

Others of that wilderness gang told a story of the boy surveyor which he was too modest to relate about himself—how young George turned the tables on Big Bear, the wily chief, who was in the habit of holding out his sinewy hand with seeming friendly intent and saying, Indian fashion, "How?" Woe to the unsuspecting white man whose hand Big Bear seized in his terrible grasp, while he laughed in savage glee at the pale-face's anguished contortions.

Young Washington had been warned in time. He had a huge, strong hand of his own and knew a trick or two that he thought he would like to try on that Indian's wiry claw if he could just get the right hold. His chance came soon enough for Big Bear, who presented a seemingly amicable paw with an innocent "How?"

The young surveyor seized the Indian's hand with such friendly enthusiasm that Big Bear did an agonizing little dance "in a very comical manner," while the spectators, both white and red, stood by and shouted with glee to see the cruel savage caught in his own trap. Never again did Big Bear show such solicitude for the health of George Washington.

At the age of twenty George was the chosen envoy to carry a "notice to quit" from the governor of Virginia to the French commander encamped in the Ohio region. He wrote in his journal of that expedition concerning the supper given him by the French and Indians at the fort at Venango:

"The wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in the conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely. They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio—and by G——, they would do it!"

At the French fort, while awaiting the commandant's reply, the young envoy from Virginia played a diplomatic game for the friendship of the Indians. When the French plied the Indians with liquor, young Washington promised them guns; and the game of diplomacy, seasoned with savage sauce, went on between the grizzled chevalier, old in the arts of war and duplicity, and the young Virginia major, who possessed common sense and humor—withal.

After the awful slaughter of Fort Duquesne, into which he had rushed from a bed of fever, in a vain attempt to save Braddock and his army, Major Washington was left in command of the scattered forces. At this time he wrote to his brother "Jack" a letter, which at least suggests Mark Twain's attitude toward the "grossly exaggerated" story of his own death:

"Forth Cumberland, 18 July, 1755.

"Dear Brother: As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have not as yet composed the latter.

But by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation, for I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was leveling my companions on every side of me!

"We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you the details, until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon. GEORGE."

War is not supposed to develop the latent sense of humor in a commanding general, but Washington's wit never forsook him. His successful stratagems were little more than practical jokes raised to the highest power. They always "worked," and then he waited, laughing in his military sleeve, while his fat-witted enemies tried to play his own tricks back on him. Even in his retreats and escapes from the British—as at Long Island and before Princeton—he laughed and kicked up nimble heels in the face of the sursuing enemy.

It was while his headquarters were in Jersey that Washington perpetrated the great Jersey joke still perpetuated by so many millions. He told an English traveler named Weld that he "was never so much annoyed by mosquitoes, for they used to bite through the thickest boot."

When the war was over the victorious commander entertained the vanquished general, Lord Cornwallis, at dinner, with some of the leaders among the French allies. Washington presided. In calling for toasts, Cornwallis, with an oblivousness of the changed conditions that was truly English, proposed "The King of England" as a subject for high praise.

The other guests were in consternation. Would the presiding genius, on whose very head King George had set a price, resent this as an insult?

"The King of England," announced the toastmaster general, raising his glass. The guests gazed at him, transfixed with astonishment.

"Long may he," continued Washington. "—Long may he stay there!"

He pronounced the last two words in a stage whisper, with a shrug and a rueful grimace which made all the company, including Lorn Cornwallis, who now saw his mistake, applaud with hearty laughter; and Washington's ready humor had prevented a disagreeable complication.

After the Revolution, Washington was permitted the long-coveted happiness of living peacefully under his "own vine and figtree," as he called it hundreds of times in as many letters. It is a great mistake to think that his life at Mount Vernon was either stale or stilted. Nelly Custis, his adopted daughter, is authority for the statement that retired general was always full of gayety and good spirits, surrounding himself with young people's company, enjoying their lively conversation, "particularly the jokes," as he once said. Nelly went so far as to claim that she found no one quite so willing to keep pace with her own extravagant spirits as her dear, delightful old foster father.

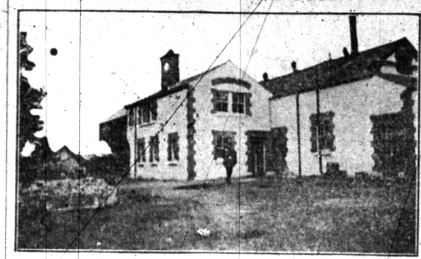
How Washington did enjoy his home when he was finally permitted to stay there! Mount Vernon was a Mecca for pilgrims from all over the world. He once wrote to Tobias Lear, "Unless some one pops in unexpectedly Mrs. Washington and myself will do what I believe has not within the last 20 years been done by us—that is, to sit down to dinner by ourselves."

Co-Operative Farm Products Marketing

How It Is Done in Europe and May Be Done in America to the Profit of Both Farmer and Consumer

By MATTHEW S. DUDGEON.

WHY IRISH BUTTER IS GOOD.



The Omagh Co-operative Creamery.

Omagh, County Tyrone, Ireland.—What the city woman needs is butter that is standardized and always of a uniform excellence—butter which comes as fresh and comes as straight as may be from the cow on the farm to the table in the city dining room. With the husband singing in her ears the song of high cost of living—and what husband is not driven to such songs in these days of high prices—she feels that she must get butter that can be bought at something less than the fancy prices charged in the exclusive delicatessen shops to which she is driven in her efforts to insure her family a good grade of butter. Ask her and she will tell you that if co-operation will enable her to get good butter at a price made somewhat less by the elimination of excessive distribution charges then she is heartily for co-operation.

The city man of course, wants a good butter to eat. The farmer wants to make money from his dairy. They have been telling us in America that direct co-operative marketing will give each what he wants; that co-operation has repeatedly accomplished these results where it has been tried in Ireland, in Holland, in Denmark and in Germany. If co-operation will do this, it is well to look into it for good butter is important—and financial profits are worth while. So some of us are over here in Ireland to see if co-operation really is a benefit both to the city eater and to the rural producer.

The co-operative creamery here is turning out good butter—none better anywhere. We think we have found why Irish butter is good, why it brings to the farmer a good price in this city. The butter is good because co-operative creameries use good methods of butter making; because their patrons get good milk from good cows, take good care of it, and deliver it in good condition to the creamery; and lastly because when once made it is hurried off to a consumer before it can get stale. They get a good price for it because it is good butter.

On the other hand, the city gets it at a reasonable price because co-operative marketing in Ireland is direct marketing; because the butter comes quickly and directly from the creamery to the city home with little added expense for much handling by many middlemen.

Why Farm Butter Is Sometimes Bad.

The writer remembers summer butter made from cream skimmed from uncooled milk and kept on the warm pantry shelf during the long hot days until churning time. It was hardly butter—it was in fact commercially ranked "grease." It brought six cents per pound, and as butter was worth less.

Failure to make good butter was inevitable. Nor were the tired farmers' wives to be criticised for the poor results obtained. They had no facilities for keeping the milk and cream clean and cool, no facilities for making butter, no facilities for keeping it.

Co-Operation Lightens Labor.

What the woman on the farm most needs is to be free from the burden of the endless handling of milk, cream and butter, from skimming the milk, and churning the cream and from salting and working and molding the butter—from all the labor entailed in the production of home-made, hand-made butter. She needs it if she is to have any life outside the kitchen and the milk room.

The laborious weariness of the uneventful existence of the farmer's wife has produced many candidates for the insane asylums. More than one worn out unfortunate has been taken into custody because her household duties have chained her to a maddening monotony unrelieved by opportunity for intercourse, and have made impossible any thought above the churn and the cook stove. One Wisconsin farmer's wife was adjudicated by the county judge to be afflicted with insanity. When the judge announced the decision to the husband he was incredulous. "It can't be she's got insanity or anything else," he said. "She's had no chance to catch it. She hasn't set a foot off the farm for 14 years and no neighbor has stayed at our house long enough to give her anything."

If co-operation in the production and marketing of butter will take off even a small part of the burden of the farmers' wife, if it will give her time to straighten up from her work at table and tub and leave her free to remember that she is a human being with a head and a soul, if it will permit her to get off the farm oftener than once in 14 years—if co-operation will do this or help by ever so little to do it, the woman on the farm is for co-operation.

An Unpatriot Irishman

We have found one man here in Ireland who is opposed to co-operation. Wilkinson, long a country [illegible] of butter. The creamery tests Omagh we came upon a shrewd faced Irishman who was very ready to talk about co-operation. He was evidently a man of some intelligence and, judging from his manner and address, a man of some experience and success in business. So we engaged him in conversation about co-operation and its effects.

"I am against it," he said. "There is no sense in it." And he gave us in forcible and picturesque language the story of how he had been personally injured in his business by co-operation. It developed that he had been a buyer of farm produce—a commission merchant in a small way. "Now there is no money in it," he said, "since the margin between what the city man pays and what the farmer receives is cut down. The farmer sells through the co-operative organization directly to the city merchant." Reluctantly he admitted that maybe it was better for the farmer and better for the city consumer who had little with which to buy food. "But it's hard on us commission men. It's putting us on the rocks. I am not buying butter at all any more. The co-operative creamery here has run me out."

We asked him if co-operative butter making did not make the work of the farmer's wife and daughter easier. "Of course it does," he said. "And little good it is doing them. They don't have to skim the milk and churn and mold and salt the butter now and so they go galavanting over the roads on their bicycles. They don't stay home at all any more. They're worse about gadding than city women," and he shook his head with misgivings.

So, if it be true, as our Irish friend in his self pity proclaimed, that co-operative butter making and butter marketing is going to make it cost the consumer less and net the farmer more, we suggest that both maker and eater will be for it, the ex-commission merchant to the contrary notwithstanding. They will both in city and country be interested in seeing co-operation accomplished. Certainly the country woman who feels the burden of butter making will welcome a process by which she is to get an opportunity to see something besides the top of the cook stove and the inside of the big churn. And we do not believe that the ordinary American farmer will object to co-operation even if it does give his wife and daughter time to get out upon the road in buggy or on bicycles.

The Omagh Creamery.

When we learned that the Omagh Co-operative Creamery system of marketing was cutting down the margin of price between farmer and consumer—was both raising the price to the farmer and lowering the price to the consumer, we concluded that it was a condern worth considering. Even the accusation that made it possible for the farmer's wife and daughter to get out on their bicycles occasionally did not unduly prejudice us against it. The Omagh creamery is capitalized by contributions from 600 members who invested from five dollars, up to $250 each. But the voting is not by shares. It is on the one man one vote plan. The five-dollar man votes just as often and as forcibly as the $250-dollar man.

The members voting thus elect a board of directors. These in turn have the best man they can get as manager. But he must be more than a butter maker. He must be a good business man and an expert in marketing. No matter how much money is made, it must all go back to the members in proportion to the butter fat delivered to the creamery after a dividend not exceeding five per cent. is paid to the stockholders. Five per cent. is the limit of profit to shareholders. This is the rule in all co-operative enterprises in Ireland. It is organized primarily that profits may go to the man who brings in the cream. It is not ranked as a particularly fine investment for the shareholder.

Differs From American Creameries.

We find the mechanical processes of butter making much the same as those in the best up-to-date American butter factories. We do find, however, that this co-operative association has had an output that is of more uniform excellence than that of the American factory. Here each member seems to realize more fully than does the American farmer that the utmost vigilance must be exercised in keeping the milk and cream fresh and free from all impurities, that keeping up the quality of the butter is as much his business as the butter-maker's. Therefore he breeds and feeds and cares for his cows and handles his milk on scientific lines suggested by co-operative instructors and inspectors. The farmer is saving his own interests, of course, for a falling off of quality and reputation means a falling off in the price obtained for butter. The creamery tests carefully, not only for butter fat but for freshness and flavor.

Supervision and Inspection.

Then, too, the Irish Agricultural Organization society, which is the central federation of all co-operative societies, inspects the creamery and its output frequently, points out defects and helps to remedy them. The business side is not neglected. The organization society has complete business supervision of the creameries, which must keep their accounts and records in the way and on forms prescribed by this central body. The creameries report to the organization society and their books and accounts are periodically audited by the organization society's auditor.

Co-Operation Does the Work.

In short, the butter is good because of co-operation. The members co-operate with each other and with the Omagh creamery; the Irish Agricultural Organization society co-operates with the Omagh creamery; the Omagh creamery is federated with hundreds of other creameries and is federated with and co-operates with the Irish Wholesale society through which the butter is marketed. It is co-operation everywhere and the object of it all is to produce good butter, to market it in good shape and to get a fair price for it.

Quality and Brands.

But quality after all is the whole thing. If butter is not good no system of marketing, no business methods, no exercise of federated strength, no co-operative endeavor can do anything for it. The Omagh creamery makes good butter and for years has made good butter. It has a well established reputation for good butter which is worth at least one cent for every pound that it makes. In order to be able to collect this cent on each pound it must mark each pound that it sends out.

And printed upon the wrappers and stamped upon the cases is the guaranty of quality: "Guaranteed Pure Centrifugal Creamery Butter, Finest Quality."

Butter Central Label.

But more important still is the authorized label of the Irish Agricultural Organization society issued from its headquarters at the Plunkett house in Dublin. It goes upon only the best of butter. It goes not upon a case or cake or cover, but upon the butter itself. The label is printed upon thin tissue paper. When it is placed upon the butter it is stamped with a die that fixes the label firmly upon and in the butter and tears the paper so that it cannot be removed and used again. This label is guaranteed as carefully as are the coins of the realm. Each has a series number and can be traced to the creamery to which it was delivered. If by any chance it is found upon a poor quality of butter, the butter is at once sent back to the creamery to which the use of that particular label was entrusted.

What We Need in America.

We have plenty of creameries in the United States. Some of them are owned co-operatively by the farmers. But the farmers stop just short of the highest success. The marketing is generally haphazard. The different creameries do not co-operate in selling. Often good butter goes bad before it is sold. No one knows where the demand is greatest today, when the butter should be sent tomorrow. The quality is seldom uniform. Many a good butter maker with good butter making equipment turns out poor butter because the patrons bring in poor cream. The farmers do not co-operatively work for quality. The creamery does not always discriminate between the best fresh cream and cream that is a trifle stale and old. Butter buyers cannot know what they are getting. The name of the creamery upon a package, stands for no guaranty of quality. It is put on good and bad butter alike.

A Definite Prescription.

What is needed in the United States is, first, creameries supported by farmers working together co-operatively to produce a absolutely uniform, high grade product; second, a brand that is authoritatively fixed only on butter of the highest quality after official tests and grading; and third, a central association or federation of creameries that will perform the functions of the Irish Wholesale society and of the Irish Agricultural Organization society. This central federation should control the branding of butter, possibly under state supervision; it should respect and audit and advise with each separate creamery; it should aid in marketing the butter intelligently and economically.

(Copyright, 1914, Western Newspaper Union.)

Modern Spinster.

She need not be rich, but she must be perfectly dressed; she need not be very wise, but she must certainly be witty. If she is as well equipped with tact, good health, and good humor as she is with becoming evening gowns, has a serviceable knowledge of places and people, and a certain amount of bonne volante, she may be as indispensable at dinner parties or in country houses as the most ornate bachelor-man. For the popular spinster nowadays knows an almost ideal life. She is free to come and go where she likes, without asking anyone's leave; she can choose her own friends, male and female after their kind; she can entertain at her club, at home or at restaurants; and she can travel to the far ends of the earth without anyone being scandalized. A cynic recently suggested that the reason why the modern spinster is often so genial and so cheerful is that she retains all her illusions about man bright and lustrous. At any rate she does not indulge in those querulous complaints which make the society of the married a questionable joy.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Pawnshop Refuses Aeroplane.

There is no money available in the French national pawnshops for loans on aeroplanes. This discovery was made recently by an airman in the south of France. With the idea of saving the expense of garage room for his machine during the winter he made a flight with it to the nearest large town and there sought to pledge it at the communal pawnshop. The economical aviator was informed that aeroplanes were not included in the list of pledgeable articles and therefore no loan could be made.

USE 15,000,000 COBS IN PIPES

Peculiar Missouri Industry Output for the Year 1912 Was Half Million Dollars.

Millions of corncobs discarded by farmers were in 1912 turned into an available and useful commodity worth more than half a million dollars by six factories of the state, according to advance information of the 1912 Red Book of the bureau of labor statistics. The industry is one peculiar to Missouri. The commodity is the ordinary corncob pipe. The six factories produced 28,171,872 cob pipes in 1912. The factories are located three in Washington, Franklin county, and one each in Boonville, Union and Owensville.

Shipments were made to Canada, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, not including the vast quantity sent into every state of the union. Not less than 15,000,000 corncobs were utilized for the output of 28,171,872 pipes, allowing two bowls to each cob and figuring for those which were wasted in the process of manufacture.

Artificial Wood.

French experimenters at work in the city of Lyons have just produced an artificial wood, according to the American consul at that place. The new product has been found after years of study and practical experiments, the most recent of which have given eminently satisfactory results. The process consists in transforming straw into a solid material having the resistance of oak. The straw, after being cut into small pieces, is reduced to a paste by boiling. Certain chemicals are then added. When the paste has been reduced to a homogeneous mass it is put into presses, and planks, beams, laths and moldings of all sizes are readily made. This new material can be sawed like natural wood. As a fuel it emits a bright flame and little smoke. It is further said to be adaptable to the manufacture of match stems