

it be a golden summer's day—fires a greater heat of patriotism than the reading of many books, and the stranger can also enter into this glorious kingdom and worship at the shrine of the most noble dead.

Sixteen miles out from the city of Washington one comes to Mount Vernon; to reach it one takes the electric car through the quaint old city of Alexandria, Virginia's first capital, and over a skeleton rail thrown across the placid Potomac, just a rib of metal between one and a watery grave! Travelling in the States one gets used to these American death shavers, and to enjoy their risks.

A September day in Virginia is not altogether unlike a September day at home, only the sun seems so much happier, the air more subtly exhilarating, and life more ethereal. Yet, life—death—of what significance is either? Always sweetness and light, and lovely thoughts, and noble deeds, and purity, and truth are vital through all the spheres, and nowhere more potent than at Mount Vernon.

We alight at a tiny terminus station, and, passing through picturesque lodge gates, find ourselves on hallowed ground—we go over the very paths where the feet of Washington have passed; a turn to the left brings us in view of the house.

The Mansion House of Mount Vernon is beautifully situated overlooking the Potomac river. It is of wood, cut and painted to resemble stone; the walls white, with green jalousies; and a rose-coloured roof, which is surmounted by a cupola with an antique weather vane. In front extends a piazza, 15 feet deep, with square pillars and a floor tiled with flags from the Isle of Wight. Curved colonnades connect the central building with the kitchens, and nestling around are all the outbuildings for domestic uses on a Virginian farm, such as were necessary for home-making on the old plantations where life was lived on patriarchal lines.

In front of the house are shaded lawns, a deer park sloping to the river's bank, and in the rear are gardens, orchards, and spacious meadows—surely a bit of Elizabethan England!

The house was built in 1743 by the half-brother of Washington, who inherited the estate and came to live here soon after his marriage in 1759. Here he conducted his farm until called to the field, and to Mount Vernon he returned after Yorktown, and again after his tenure as President; and here he lived as a private citizen until his death in 1799. The associations of Washington with the place during his lifetime, and the presence of his tomb here, have made Mount Vernon a shrine of patriotism.

Half a century later, the owner, being without means to maintain the estate, offered it for sale. I learned with a thrill of delight that a patriotic daughter of South Carolina, by name Ann Pamela

Cunningham, resolved to save the Washington home to her country as a national possession. With high courage she devoted herself to the tremendous task of raising the sum of 200,000 dols., which she accomplished; later the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union was organised, with Miss Cunningham as Regent, and in 1860 this historic place became the property of the nation. And splendidly well the women did their work. Portions of the original estate which had been sold have been acquired again; buildings which had fallen into ruin have been restored; the deer park under the hill has been re-stocked; the mansion has been repaired; many articles of furniture and adornment have been restored to the several rooms; and numbers of valuable relics and mementoes of George and Martha Washington and of their times have been deposited here. The restoration, equipment, and keeping of the respective rooms have been entrusted to the pious care of the women of the different States represented in the Board of Vice-Regents. The privilege of visiting Mount Vernon, and the satisfaction of knowing that it is a possession of the nation for all time, we owe to this Ladies' Association, and beyond it to Ann Pamela Cunningham. The home and the tomb of Washington will have for us added interest if thus we see in them a monument of the patriotic impulse, courage, and achievement of the women of America.

It has been well said:—"No gilded dome swells from the lowly roof to catch the morning or evening beam; but the love and gratitude of united America settle upon it in one eternal sunshine. From beneath that humble roof went forth the intrepid, unselfish warrior, the magistrate who knew no glory but his country's good; to that he returned, happiest when his work was done. There he lived in noble simplicity, there he died in glory and peace. While it stands, the latest generations of the grateful children of America will make this pilgrimage to it as to a shrine; and when it shall fall, if fall it must, the memory and the name of Washington shall shed an eternal glory on the spot."

The main hall of the house extends through from front to back, and six charming rooms, all furnished as they were in the eighteenth century, are on the ground floor—the banquet room, music room, west parlour, family dining-room, Mrs. Washington's sitting room, and the library. The several rooms all over the house have been assigned to the care of twelve States, and by others various restorations have been made; and how life-like has been this labour of love, only those who visit this spot, and go reverently from room to room, can realise.

It would take a volume to describe in detail the beauty and charm of Mount Vernon, and all the homely and historic treasures it contains; to lovers of the heroic it is sublime.

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