

As I pass into the hall I am instantly attracted by a wrought-iron key, labelled "The Key of the Bastille." This fateful instrument was sent by Lafayette to Washington after the capture of the prison; with it came the model of the Bastille which is in the Banquet Hall. Lafayette wrote with the gift: "Give me leave, my dear General, to present you with a picture of the Bastille, just as it looked a few days after I ordered its demolition, with the main key of the fortress of despotism. It is a gift which I owe as a son to my adopted father, as an aide-de-camp to my general, as a missionary of liberty to its patriarch." How highly honoured art thou O Key! wrenched from devil's work, to hang in the Halls of Liberty, side by side with the Swords of Heroes!

In the Library one notes, not without curiosity, the titles of the books which made up the reading of the master of Mount Vernon, as soldier, statesman, and farmer, for, while the books are not those actually owned by Washington, they are for the most part duplicates of such works as were here in his day. Nearly the whole of the original Washington library is now in the Boston Athenæum.

Within the book-case are his silver inkstand and silver snuffers and tray; also the printed copy of the Farewell Address, with corrections in his own handwriting—the reading of which before Congress has been immortalised by Trumbull in one of his four masterpieces hung in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

In the Banquet Hall the central ornament is the priceless mantelpiece of Carrara and Siena marble, carved in Italy. The story goes that on its way to America the mantel was taken by French pirates, who sent it to its destination uninjured when they learned that it belonged to Washington. Here I was greatly interested to find on the splendid mahogany doors the old-fashioned locks of solid blocks of brass, such as we had in our old country home in England, and which I have seen in no other place. Housed in this beautiful room are innumerable most precious relics.

On ascending the wide, shallow staircase from the ground to the first floor we come presently to the South Room, where Washington died. Here one gets very close to the man—has not his hand touched the homely furniture and left it sacred? Here is the very bed—a four-poster—with its simple white dimity hangings, on which he lay a-dying; and close by the chair on which at the supreme moment of

his passing, was placed the Bible from which his devoted wife had been reading aloud.

After the death of Washington this room was closed, in accordance with the custom of the time, to be left vacant for a space of three years, and Mrs. Washington occupied the room directly above, in the attic, choosing it because the dormer window overlooked the grave of her beloved. It was here that she died, and the furniture and hangings now in the room are reproductions of the originals.

In Lafayette's room, the River room, and in many others, one seems to step back into a bygone century—all is realistic and most touching.

Once again in the open, we pass along the colonnade to the kitchen. Here the culinary art is no longer practised, but the crane still hangs in the great fireplace, and the brick oven is well preserved. The old hominy



THE TOMB OF WASHINGTON.

mortar is in the superintendent's office, and we then see the outbuildings which comprised the customary offices of a Virginian home in former days—butter's house, meat-house, wash-house, ice-house, spinning-house, green-house and barn—all beautifully designed, coloured, and fitted in harmony with the central homestead; and at some distance are the "quarters" where lived the happy darkies who served so great a master. The sun-dial on the west lawn was erected by the citizens of Rhode Island to replace the one which stood on the exact spot. *Hores non numero nisi serenos*, runs the motto—"I record but sunny hours."

We pass along the sunny garden path, and going to the right, over mossy grass and under the green-wood tree, come to the tomb of Washington.

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