

THE KING OF ENGLAND PLACES WREATH ON THE TOMB OF WASHINGTON.

We all owe a great debt to "Our Own Correspondent" of the *Times*, who has given us such glowing and sympathetic descriptions of the brief visit of our King and Queen to the United States. On June 9th he tells us:—

"The King and Queen, with the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, landed from the *Potomac* beneath the steep green slope of Mount Vernon. They went in the summer haze through the lawns, kept as though the owner were still there, under the shade of oaks, cypresses, and sweet-smelling cedars to the General's tomb. The tomb is of red brick, of his own design, as desired in his will. Ivy almost covers the brick. Two American flags stood before the grille, and behind it lie the last remains of the Northamptonshire squire, who defeated the armies of a king whose descendants had now come to him. Washington rests beside his wife Martha, and against the tomb leant a wreath of *Immortelles* from France, whose soldiers assisted him to victory.

"To this wreath the King of England, stepping through the gate into the tomb, now joined his own wreath of white irises and lilies. The Queen, the President, and Mrs. Roosevelt watched him. The scene cannot have lasted more than a few minutes, but it will long remain in the minds of those who saw it, and it has set the crown upon this journey."

MOUNT VERNON.*

A SHRINE OF PATRIOTISM.

It is a materialistic age. Granted; yet all the nations have their shrines, and it is towards these sacred spots the stranger within the gates should turn his steps if he is in search of the inspiration of what is great and lovely in a people. Here in England we have Stratford-on-Avon; we bred Shakespeare the incomparable, and, anomalous as it may appear, we, the most prosaic of peoples, have crowned Literature, and Drama, and Fantasy as King. We are a dominant race, with red blood running hot, and we lust mightily after conquest and gold; and yet deep down in the national consciousness we revere the memory of this immortal man beyond and above all the glory of a thousand warriors, or even the burnished gold from a thousand years of conquest.

A little Elizabethan cottage—a simple place—Shakespeare's home, we love it, that is the secret. Love is good.

We make pilgrimage to Stratford; we go delicately, chastened in spirit; we visit the birthplace and the tomb, and we experience the thrill and throb of emotion in the realisation that, whatever in the future we may win or lose, the genius of Shakespeare is ours, we are of his blood, we are of his people, and our heritage from generation to generation, for all sentient time, is a share in his supremacy and greatness—greatness so inestimable that pride has no part in our triumph; we are conscious only of a marvellous elation of spirit and thankfulness of heart that he is ours, and we are his, for ever and for ever.

"Why are we supreme amongst the nations?" queried a bellicose governess of a ruffy-tuffy-headed little girl of six.

"'Cos of Shakespeare," was the prompt reply. It is immaterial that the child's knuckles were smartly rapped for making "a foolish reply"; the woman, after a lapse of forty years, still thinks the little lass was right.

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So in every State of the Union. What is the influence which dominates the whole American people for good? No research is necessary; it is in the air. Washington! North, south, east, and west, go where you will, the power of this one brave man is paramount and undying. Washington stands for courage, for freedom, for success—an irresistible force with which to enchant the imagination of a generous people. That the dust of George Washington and his Lares and Penates were gathered together and enshrined in his old Virginian home at Mount Vernon was wisely done. One day spent at Mount Vernon—and let 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 for 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

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