

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS AT MOUNT VERNON

AN EFFORT is to be made to have the new congress take up the proposal that means be devised whereby the United States government may acquire title to and assume the management of Mount Vernon, on the Potomac, the home and tomb of George Washington. It was only because the last congress at the session which closed a few months ago took definite action in the matter that there was halted a project to profane the historic precincts of Mount Vernon by the location of a reformatory in the vicinity and it is being argued that if congress has to bestow such fostering care upon the famous mansion and estate why not have the whole management of the institution (which really belongs to the whole people) vested in the elective body closest to the people.

Several unsuccessful attempts have been



MOUNT VERNON MANSION AS IT APPEARS TODAY



REAR OF MOUNT VERNON MANSION SHOWING THE NEW ROOF, COLONNADES, ETC.



THE OUT-BUILDINGS AT MOUNT VERNON



A DRIVEWAY—SHOWING ONE OF THE LATELY REJUVENATED BRICK WALLS



THE OLD KITCHEN AT MOUNT VERNON SHOWING THE "SCREEN WALL"

made in the past to have our national legislature take some action in this matter. There is, however, constant agitation on the subject and a continual increase in the number of people who look upon it as a public shame that our greatest patriotic shrine should be in other hands than Uncle Sam's. This resentment is due in great measure to what the critics are pleased to dub the "dime museum" methods which obtain in the conduct of this tourist mecca. The procedure complained of is the charging of an admission fee for entrance to the grounds and the sale of postal cards, guide books and other commodities. Unfavorable sentiment is attributable especially to the circumstance that most of the money making enterprises conducted at Mount Vernon are on the monopolistic order. Only an approved brand of guide book can be purchased on the grounds and so on through the whole list of articles for sale, even to the circumstance that a simple line of steamers on the Potomac river has the exclusive privilege of landing tourists at Mount Vernon.

The most extensive of the restored walls are the "screen walls," the function of which was to hide from the sight of Washington's guests seated on the lawn the inevitable domestic activities that were carried on around such outbuildings as the kitchen, the smoke house, the spinning house, etc.—adjuncts of the mansion which it was not desired to have obtrude themselves upon the notice of visitors. Almost as interesting as the screen walls, however, are the "Ha Ha" walls, which are depressed below the level of the sloping lawn and are consequently unobservable from the portico of the mansion, but which in Washington's day performed an important function by preventing the stock from wandering on the lawn in front of the house. The name "Ha Ha" as applied to such walls originated in England and is attributed to cross-country riders who were surprised into making the ejaculation when they suddenly and unexpectedly came upon such a hidden wall in their chase of a fox.

The restored walls, although the most important of recent improvements at Mount Vernon, are by no means the only ones that may be noted by the sightseers and tourists who now visit this historic spot in throngs that aggregate 100,000 a year. A new roof has been placed on the mansion house and the public probably has little conception of how much time and labor was required to obtain the desired material for this roof, just as it was no end of trouble to find the bricks for the walls above referred to. About 50,000 cypress shingles were needed for the new roof, but they must needs be "rived" shingles because Washington had that kind and it seemed impossible to find any rived shingles, because nowadays shingles are not made that way, sawing being much easier than splitting. Finally a lumber firm in South Carolina undertook to supply shingles that would duplicate those of Washington's day, but they charged almost a cent apiece for the shingles, which made the roof a pretty expensive one.

Mount Vernon mansion now has one of the most perfect heating systems to be found in any American residence. It was designed especially to prevent danger from fire—and in this connection it may be mentioned that Washington's old home is not built of brick or

stone, as many people suppose, but has a frame of oak, sheathed with pine, cut, painted and sanded to resemble stone. The new system enables the heating of all the rooms in the mansion by a hot water system and yet the boiler room, with the inevitable menace that comes from fire and stored fuel is located 400 feet from the mansion and wholly underground.

Another modern improvement at this rejuvenated estate in old Virginia is found in the provision of a fine water supply obtained from a splendid artesian well. Powerful pumps, operated by electricity, supply water from this well for household purposes and keep filled at all times the emergency reservoirs which would be depended upon in case of fire. Incidentally it may be explained that the score of men including guards, gardeners, laborers, etc., who work and live on the Mount Vernon estate or close at hand, are organized into a well-drilled fire-fighting force and they have chemical and steam engines for fighting the flames, should this destructive agent ever menace the mansion—a remote chance, it would seem, for all the rooms in the house and all the exterior walls have been treated with a fire-resisting paint.

For all that electricity is employed to pump water and perform certain other chores on the Mount Vernon estate, the magic cur-

rent is not allowed in the precious mansion and the manor house is lighted as it was in the days of yore, solely by candles.

There has been another notable undertaking at Mount Vernon in the form of the construction of drainage works which control forces of nature that threatened to play havoc on the famous estate. This new system of sanitary drainage has, first of all, served to reclaim the bogs and swamps which at one time gave the place a reputation for unhealthfulness. Equally serious in possible results were the threatened landslides near the mansion and in the vicinity of the old tomb of Washington, from which, however, the body of Washington was removed some years ago to the new tomb. These slides have been averted for all time by the construction at considerable cost of a tunnel which pierces the hill on which the mansion stands.

NO PLACE FOR FATHER

Bathroom Nook Only Place in Which Family Head May Find Privacy

The English home with its lack of "proper" heating and also its sad lack of ventilation and bathtubs is no more a marvel to the American woman than the American home is to the English woman. The latter freely admits that the conveniences of the American home are beyond compare, but there is one serious defect that is always commented on. This is set forth by Mary Mortimer Maxwell in the National Review (London). There is no place for father. Surely there must be some truth in this, for so many British women have called attention to the fact that they have no privacy in our homes, and have pointed to the shortcomings of pretty strands of beads serving as doors, and to the fact that the bathroom is the only sanctuary, the Indianapolis News remarks. This is borne out by observations in many cities. A former official in Indiana is well read in history. He also has a family. He freely admits that he absorbed his history lying with pillow in the bathtub, safe beyond the reach of the growing children. This is just what Mary Mortimer Maxwell is speaking about when she says:

"But the member of the American family to whom my thoughts turn in greatest sympathy in regard to the lack of privacy and the denial of the opportunity for the cultivation of individuality is the father—he who pays for everything, buys the house with his own earnings or hires it, and yet generally has not so much as a corner that is his very own. It is called 'his house.' It has many rooms. There are the drawing room, the living room, the library. There are numerous bedrooms and dressing rooms, but if he really desires solitude, there would seem to be nothing for him but to lock himself up in the bathroom. Sometimes you hear the members of an American family speak of 'father's den,' to be sure. Why, just before I left America a New York friend, when she was showing me through her new house, said to me, 'This is my husband's den,' showing me into the sunniest and brightest room in the house. My eyes rested upon antimacassars and tea cosies, a copy of 'Poems of Passton,' an embroidery frame, a train of 'choo-choo cars,' and a box of such American confections as my soul delights in and which no manly man could possibly be seen eating. I looked about for rows of curious pipes, for a horribly dusty and disordered writing table, a lounging jacket—out at elbows, but, oh, so comfortable after the workaday coat—a copy or two of a sporting paper; but not a sign of such mute witnesses to masculine ownership of that room did I see.

'It's the sunniest room in the house,' went on that wickedly selfish little American woman, 'so the children and I spend a great deal of time here.'

'I have been shown through other American homes where the husbands had their 'own' dressing rooms, their 'own' hanging cupboards, and have noted with surprise the complexion balms, bodkins with pink bebe ribbon ready for running through lace, bonnet whisks and cut glass powder boxes lying upon the chiffonier along with military brushes and safety razors. 'I do believe in separating dressing rooms and separate dressing tables,' the fond wife would gush, and then she would show me her husband's 'own hanging cupboard,' which, being fitted up with a new kind of patent trouser stretcher which she found exactly the thing for keeping her skirts in nicest order, she had taken possession of up to the farthest and darkest corner, where a pathetic and lonely greatcoat might hang on a solitary peg.'

Does this thing, after all, make the path to the divorce courts popular? Our British critics sometimes think so. Men are brutish folk at the best, and sometimes do like to be alone.

The Miniature

BY DOROTHY DOUGLAS

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Celeste Wheeler bought a morning paper and turned eagerly to the personal column. A little laugh escaped her as her eyes alighted on the ad she had inserted. She read it over still wearing her irresponsible smile.

"A young lady will paint a miniature in return for a few weeks' hospitality in the country. Long Island preferred. References."

"There! The die is cast! If I had any family to judge me insane they might have good cause. Still—it is a very sensible way to get a much needed bit of the country when funds happen to be at low tide and energies depleted."

Celeste looked wistfully down at her rather shabby shoes and the dust-colored velvet of her gown. Luckily for her they were of a shade which neither showed their poverty nor their lack of care. They were artistic in their very shabbiness as was the soft gray hat with its woefully drooping plume. Not so with Celeste's eyes. These great, wonderful eyes assumed all the brightness and depths and happiness of two new born stars. Only occasionally were these eyes permitted to reflect all the inward longing for the man whose love had been ruthlessly cast aside. Celeste had been very young when she had told Hugh Ardale that art must take the place of love. Well, fame was gradually creeping in to fulfill its mission and Celeste Wheeler smiled through all.

She reached her studio and in the hope that answers would soon come from her advertisement, Celeste gave her wonderful artistic treasures a more or less cursory tidying. Also she put a few much needed stitches in the fragments of a wardrobe which she possessed.

When these duties, enormous to the artistic temperament, were over, Celeste went to her little tin box and looked over her wealth. She had exactly ninety-nine dollars. Her studio was paid for for another twelve months and Celeste had orders for nine miniatures, waiting her leisure. She would not touch one of these until she had returned from a much needed rest.

Celeste's face grew suddenly grave. "Ardale—I wonder if there is any connection?" The girl's lips were compressed and her eyes looked straight ahead. If by any chance Hugh Ardale is this child's father—I must go back immediately."

Celeste had no more time for reflection. The wee child had let out a scream of delight and they were driving up the wide arched lane toward "Windyheath" the home of Mr. and Mrs. Staunton.

When Celeste saw the charming elderly couple on the wide porch waiting her arrival, she felt for the first time the rather serious step she had taken in obeying an impulse.

She had not been in the house two days before she felt ashamed for having doubted the sincerity of the hospitality offered by this couple. They had been longing, during the past month for some one who might, in a measure, fill the vacancy made by the great Reaper. Celeste learned much when confidences had been won on both sides.

She learned, with mingled emotions, that the child whom she had grown to love, was the child of Hugh Ardale. He had married Martha Staunton, the only daughter of the dear couple at Windyheath. Hugh's wife had passed away when Martha was given to the world.

"Are you sure—absolutely that he will not be back for another twelve months?" Celeste asked timidly.

"Yes, my dear—Hugh is a civil engineer. They are in the Canadian bush—that is why we have the sunshine of Martha. It is no place for either child or woman, Hugh says. Besides, dear—" the older woman paused then said tenderly, "you love him still—why fear?"

Celeste turned impulsively and Mrs. Staunton's arms closed about her. They were both silent for a moment. Each had succumbed to a deep felt want and love had triumphed over the conventionalities.

Presently Celeste smiled. "You are all too good to me," she said, happily. "Even we Martha is prone to spoil me and pulls the flowers ruthlessly that 'Thella' may have them in her hair. I am afraid her daddy will have to wait a long time at this idle rate for the miniature. I find it difficult to do his baby justice." Celeste turned at sound of an imperious small voice. "Yes, darling, Celia is coming—" She looked whimsically at Mrs. Staunton. "You see! I have promised to pick daisies with Martha."

"All right, my dear—but mind—don't be long."

Celeste ran swiftly down the long-avenue shaded by drooping trees to the open field where the daisies grew bigger and whiter. Martha was on her back, a small elfine creature, screaming with delight.

Down toward the big entrance gate they galloped. Celeste would have turned the corner where the arbor, hanging wisteria marked their resting place, but she stopped.

"Hugh!"

"Celia!"

The man had grown a shade white but nothing could have daunted the brilliance of the girl's cheeks nor the light in her eyes.

In a moment Hugh Ardale spoke. "This is Martha—Martha is my little girl, Celia. Come here, Toddler!" Celeste's ever ready smile came to her lips. Hugh Ardale was far more shaken by the meeting than was she; his words were foolishly inadequate, yet she knew that he was trembling with the joy of seeing her.

"I rather believe she is, Hugh," Celeste laughed. "I am afraid I have stolen her—" She turned to Martha who clung fast to Celeste's hand. "Darling, go to your Papa—don't you remember how Granny told you all about the nice Daddy who was coming back to you?"

Martha needed no second bidding. Delighted, and unable to contain herself with joy, Martha went off to acquaint Granny with the news.

"Celia!" Hugh Ardale's voice would have called her from across the sea. "I only forgot you for the short year in which the child's mother was my wife—you will not take away the only thing in life I want, will you—dear? I had to come. I knew that somewhere in this vast universe—I could find you. I did not expect—"

"Hugh—I am only beginning to be successful but I want you more than all the success in the world."

Later, when Hugh Ardale and Celeste Wheeler approached the wide veranda, Mrs. Staunton arose and tried not to show the tears in her eyes and heart.

"We are not going to leave you, dear," put in Celeste, quickly; "we want to live here."



A More or Less Cursory Tidying.

Her work and name were too precious to impair by trusting to faded facilities.

Now that the die was cast and Celeste ready to journey forth she waited impatiently for such an offer as she could accept.

Three days later Celeste boarded a train for Glen Head, a tiny village on the Sound. She had received a simply worded but winning letter from an elderly couple who were apparently alone in their big estate on the water's edge. The coachman would meet her at the station in a governess' cart.

With eyes sparkling and cheeks aglow Celeste alighted at the Glen Head station. She was the only passenger getting off and this fact prevented any mistake on the part of the coachman in the small cart. Celeste had wondered why an elderly couple should elect to travel about the country roads in this particular style of vehicle. Now she knew. A small child was evidently a part of the household to which Celeste was being driven.

Celeste experienced a peculiar thrill when she looked closely into the baby's face. Here greenish gray eyes with their dauntless expression were much like Hugh Ardale's.

After a series of questions which the small beauty asked of Celeste and which were duly and evidently satisfactorily answered Celeste herself asked:

"And what is your name, darling?"

"Marsa Ardale—" lisped the baby.

Painter of Kings

The state portrait of King George, which Sir Luke Fildes has been commissioned to paint, will not be the first that the famous artist has executed for his majesty, says M. A. P. London. He had the honor of painting both the king and the queen on the occasion of their engagement, and the royal family were so pleased with the picture that Queen Alexandra, then princess of Wales, consented to sit to him. The double portrait of the then duke and duchess of York was a wedding present, and it now hangs in Buckingham palace. Sir Luke Fildes also painted the duke of Clarence's portrait after his death, using photographs and miniatures for the purpose. King Edward's first state portrait was painted by Sir Luke in 1902. Three years later he was responsible for a magnificent Academy picture of Queen Alexandra in her coronation robes and last year he made the beautiful drawing, famous the

world over, of King Edward on his death bed.

No Surprise to Him.

"I was surprised when I heard that Grubbox had joined the church." "I wasn't. I happened to be present when he and his business partner shook dice to see which member of the firm should join."

Illusive.

There is a motion without progress in time as well as in space; where a thing often remains stationary, which appears to us to recede, while we are leaving it behind. — Julius Charles Hare.

Theatrical Change.

"It was Shakespeare, wasn't it, who said, 'The play's the thing?'" "Yes. Perhaps it was in his day, but now the press agent seems to be the thing."

For the Teacher.

In teaching reading there are just two ends to be taught: (1) To make the learner automatic and quick in the recognition of word and letter forms and values; (2) to secure his interest in the content, the spiritual element of the printed forms.

Sharks in Eastern Seas.

Seventeen kinds of sharks inhabit the seas of the far east, the basking shark of the Indian ocean frequently attaining a length of fifty feet.

Where Dynamite Is King

Stupendous Job of Tunneling and Filling Being Done in New Jersey Mountains.

When the grandfather of the present czar found his engineers disputing as to the best route for a railway between two cities in his dominions, the autocrat took rules and pencil and drew on the map a straight line from the one town to the other.

"Build it so!" he commanded. And he was obeyed.

That was the freak of despotism. In this present century, skilled engineers set themselves a like task at a saner bidding. Up in the mountains of New Jersey today a great railway is busy with a cut-off that, when completed, will shorten the right of way by a few miles. Incidentally, this is the largest

railroad contract ever undertaken. The cut-off is being built to save miles—nothing else. To that end, the topography of the country is disregarded as recklessly as the czar disregarded it in Russia aforetime. Simply, the road must run where the company wishes it to run, not where nature offers a path. A mountain in the way must be tunneled, a valley that interposes must be filled.

It is for this sort of work that the god of dynamite girds up his loins and piles miracle on miracle in achievement. About thirteen cars loaded with dynamite are sent to the cut-off from the nearest powder works each week. Allowing four hundred and fifty cases, of fifty pounds each, to a car, we have a total of 292,500 pounds used there in a single month, which amounts to almost ten thousand pounds daily. Just think of it—ten thousand pounds of dynamite exploded in that nook amid the mountains every day! And that has been going on for a year already, and the end is not in vet.