

## WASHINGTON RELICS.

### MEMENTOES RECENTLY GIVEN TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM.

Among Them is a Complete Set of Papers, Documents and Household Accounts in the Handwriting of the Father of His Country.

[Special Washington Letter.]

The memory of George Washington is dear to the hearts of his countrymen. The steamboats plying the Potomac always toll their bells as they pass Mount Vernon, and the excursion steamers not only toll their bells, but their bands of music slowly play "America," or sweetly waft across the water the notes of that beautiful Sunday-school hymn, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus."

Every article which ever belonged to Washington is highly prized as a relic, and the government has expended considerable money in the purchase of household goods and personal property of the "Father of His Country." Fortunately, however, the men and women who have come in possession of valuable relics



A VIEW OF MOUNT VERNON.

have donated many of them to the government, for public exhibition at the Smithsonian institution. The old homestead at Mount Vernon is kept in practically the same condition it was when the great patriot and his widow passed away from the scenes of earth. Recently a clump of trees which had grown tall and umbrageous has been trimmed down so that a good view of Mount Vernon can be obtained from the river. The ladies in charge of the historic and sacred place keep it in excellent repair and make it attractive. Every visitor carries away with him from the place a pleasant memory. Fifty thousand people have visited Mount Vernon during the present year.

The mementoes of Washington are regarded as of such importance that they are given an entire section of one of the halls of the National Museum, where they are kept in one collection. The entire list could not well be accurately described in detail, save in a large volume. Everything, from an old-time miniature of Washington to his revolutionary war medicine chest, are grouped together.

One of the later exhibits added to the collection by donation is a complete lot of papers and documents which were kept by Washington, nearly all of them being autographic work. These papers are the property of Lawrence Washington, who generously made the donation with the proviso that they should be exhibited in his name. Bushrod Washington, the nephew of George Washington, after the death of his distinguished uncle, received all of the papers which had belonged to the general. Bushrod Washington was an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. He had no descendants, and when he died the papers went, by his will, to his brother, Corbin Washington, the great-grandfather of Lawrence, who has recently offered them for exhibition in the museum. Ever since the death of Corbin Washington, these papers were stored away in obscurity, and have recently, for the first time, been brought before the public. They are regarded by those in charge of the collection as one of the most valuable parts of the Gen. Washington exhibit, and are kept in separate cases.

One of the valued treasures of the collection is the will of John Washington, George Washington's great-grandfather, who, with his brother Lawrence, came to this country from England. He was a man of considerable wealth and large landed possessions, and owned many boats and large sailing vessels. In the early days of the settlement of America, John Washington and Nicholas Spencer brought to this country a large number of settlers, providing passage for them on their own ships. In compensation for their services they received 5,000 acres of Virginia land from Lord Culpeper. This land all bordered on the Potomac River, and included Mount Vernon, which afterwards became the home and last resting place of the Father of his Country. The original deed of this tract of land is among the papers, and there is also a memorandum as to the nature of the document indorsed on the back by George Washington. This indorsement is as follows: "Thos. Culpeper's patent to Col. N. Spencer and Lt. Col. John Washington for 5,000 acres of land." This deed is ancient, as is shown by the date which it bears, March 1, 1674.

Before the land came into the hands of the Washingtons a survey of it was made on the order of Lord Culpeper. A copy of this order is among the papers in this collection. There are also numerous deeds, dated from that time on, relating to transfers and re-surveys after the Washington family had control of it. There is a deed from William Harri-

son, an ancestor of ex-President Benjamin Harrison, transferring 200 acres of woodland in the year 1708. From 1690 to a century later are other deeds recording transfers to and from prominent Virginia gentlemen.

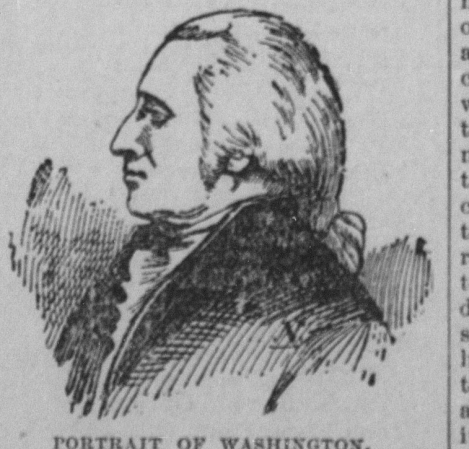
George Washington was not only a successful soldier and a superior executive, but it can be said that he was a fairly good artist. He early learned to make his own sketches of surveys of land and afterwards drew maps and plans of battle. When he retired to private life at Mount Vernon he found it pleasant work around about the estate and make plans for improvements which he could make. Included in the Lawrence Washington collection are quite a number of maps of Mount Vernon and adjacent lands, some of them representing the Potomac river. These maps were all drawn by George Washington and the lettering was put on by his own hand. To show how artistically and aptly he handled the pen there is a deed from William Whiting to George Washington of 200 acres of land in Stafford county. This is executed in Washington's handwriting and is a fine specimen of work. There is another deed, dated 1617, by which the "Right Honorable Catherine, Lady Fairfax, sole proprietor of the northern neck of Virginia," conveys 162 acres in Stafford county to Sampson Darrell. This land afterwards went to George Washington. A document which has attracted a great deal of attention is one concerning negro slaves which belonged to Major Lawrence Washington. This document bearing date of November 20, 1773, is signed by Richard Henry Lee, to which he adds an apology for not returning the paper sooner.

The following letter, dated October 23, 1776, was written by Martha Washington to the General's private secretary, Lund Washington: "Sir: please to give to Milly Posey the sum of five pounds, Virginia money. I am your most humble servt., Martha Washington." On December 23, 1778, Washington's mother wrote the following letter to Lund Washington: "Dear Sir: Gest as I had wrote to you not to send the cash by the overseer Col. Bassett came in and delivered the forty pounds cash to me from you. I am, dear sir, your most humble servant, Mary Washington."

Of course, there are a number of letters and orders which were connected with the calling out of the militia at the beginning of the revolution. Among these there is indorsed by Washington a printed order addressed to his brother directing him to call out the militia of Stafford County, the date being Aug. 20, 1776. The order reads: "You must be particularly careful to procure good powder horns and shot bags, with as much powder, lead and flints as you can."

There are at present only a small number of the Washington family seals extant, and about the only perfect one remaining is that attached to the will of Lawrence Washington, the older brother of John Washington, great-grandfather of George Washington. The design for the American flag was taken from the stars and stripes of this seal.

It is a well-known fact that Washington was always thrifty and had minute methods of bookkeeping. The accounts kept by him, in good-sized blank books, are in the collection at the museum, containing the record of the receipts and expenditures for provisions for the estate for every day of the month. In his own handwriting there is a minute account of the property and chattels at Mount Vernon, from which it appears that there were 216 negroes—sixty-four of them men, and sixty-two women. While he was president of the United States, George Washington kept an expense book which is now very interesting. Visitors to Mount Vernon have seen an ancient harpsichord; and in this account book it appears that Washington paid \$13.50 for "freight on the harpsichord for Miss Nellie Custis," his stepdaughter. From this it is fair to infer that it was not a modern politician, but George Washington who originally "paid the freight" in this country. His stepdaughter cost



PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON.

the old man considerable money, but he was rich and could afford to settle the bills. In his expense book there are numerous items showing amounts paid for music lessons for Miss Nellie Custis on that harpsichord. He also paid for lessons in embroidery for the young lady.

Either George Washington was an epicure, or his wife, Martha, was a dainty housekeeper; for, although they had slaves galore, they paid \$30 per month for a cook. He must have been a French cook, but his name is not given. Mrs. Washington must have been very particular about her household and family linen, for, instead of having her washing done by a slave, she paid \$12.50 per month for a washerwoman. Her husband has so declared in his expense book. There is a prevailing opinion among

students of the history of those times that Martha Washington was the real manager and boss of the household, and that George Washington was allowed to issue very few orders at home. SMITH D. FRY.

## REIGN OF THE BICYCLE.

The Passion for the Wheel Not Likely to Die Out.

What may be called, not improperly, the bicycle passion has full possession of several leading countries of the world. England and France, notably those parts of them in and about London and Paris, have been so given over to it for some time that a large proportion of their population come and go on their errands of business or pleasure "on a wheel." Americans who have recently traveled abroad have been astonished at the general use of the bicycle there, and have been still more astonished, on returning to their own country during the last year, to discover what headway the passion has made here. It is said to be a conservative estimate by competent authorities that during the year now closing a quarter of a million bicycles have been sold in this country, and that the number of riders approaches a million. There are said to be over 50,000 in New York and its neighborhood, and fully half that number in and about Boston. The latter city caught the passion from Europe some time before New York did, and has a larger proportion of its population, male and female, regularly devoted to it.

Observers of the phenomenon are wondering whether it is merely a passing whim, or whether it "has come to stay"; whether those who have taken it up will continue it after the novelty has worn off, or whether they will drop it for the next new fad that shall come along. There are many reasons for thinking that its stay will be permanent. Undoubtedly many of those who take it up because of its vogue will tire of it after a while, but these will not constitute a large proportion of the whole number. The great body of riders find in the bicycle a new pleasure in life, a means for seeing more of the world, a source of better health through open-air exercise, a bond of comradeship, a method of rapid locomotion either for business or pleasure, and many other enjoyments and advantages which they will not relinquish. The bicycle has, in fact, become a necessary part of modern life, and could not be abandoned without turning the social progress of the world backward. Few who have used it for a tour through the country would think for a moment of giving it up and returning to pedestrianism instead. Aside from the exhilarating joy of riding, which every bicycle devotee will assure you is the nearest approach to flying at present possible to man, there is the opportunity of seeing a constantly changing landscape.

The bicycle is indeed the great leveler. It puts the poor man on a level with the rich, enabling him to "sing the song of the open road" as freely as the millionaire, and to widen his knowledge by visiting the regions near to or far from his home, observing how other men live. He could not afford a railway journey and sojourn in these places, and he could not walk through them without tiring sufficiently to destroy in a measure the pleasure which he sought. But he can ride through twenty, thirty, fifty even seventy miles of country in a day without serious fatigue, and with no expense save his board and lodging. To thousands of men and women the longing of years to travel a little as soon as they could afford it is thus gratified, virtually without limit; for a "little journey in the world" can be made on every clearing holiday or vacation.—[The Century.]

## His Arm Failed Him Twice.

A N. Auburn (Me.) hunter, who is a crack shot, tells the following story about himself: He says that while out hunting the other day he came upon a fine large deer, not over two rods away. He attempted to raise his rifle to his shoulder, but his arm became suddenly paralyzed. At that moment it would have been as much of an impossibility to lift a feather as a thousand weight of iron. All he could do was to stand there and watch the deer disappear in the distance. Then his arm resumed its normal condition and he started on the trail again. After a while he came upon the deer a second time, the game being less than twenty rods away. Again the hunter attempted to raise his rifle to his shoulder, and again his arm refused to serve him. He gave up and went home. This man is a veteran hunter, and he says that he never had any trouble of this kind before. "If it had been a gray squirrel," said he upon his return, "I could have shot its head off without half trying."

## Insomnia as a Commodity.

Brooklyn has a lawyer who understands his business. In a bill for services which he presented to a client was one item for "lying awake nights and thinking over the case." This is the first case on record, we believe of a man trying to convert insomnia into coin of the realm. If this lawyer succeeds in selling his sleeplessness at the rate asked, there will probably be a rush of insomniacs to court to compel employers to pay them for the time spent in bed, wondering whether they were going to lose their jobs or not—for by the slightest use of metonymy it can be made to appear that the employees were "lying awake nights, thinking of their employers' business."

## A DAY IN OLD BERLIN.

### QUAINT AND CURIOUS SPOTS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY.

The Old Jewish Quarter--Venerable Inn of the "Eye of God"--Cobbler's Alley and Other Remnants of a Past Civilization.

Comparatively speaking, Berlin is a new city. Its dignity as one of the great capitals of the world and its phenomenally rapid growth are both of recent date. And when contrasted with Paris—the old Lutetia Parisiorum of the Romans—or London (referred to as Ludgynun in Agricola's campaign notes), and even Vienna (the Vindobonum, where one of the Roman emperors was residing about 250 A. D.), the imperial city of modern Germany seems but of yesterday. Yet even Berlin dates back many centuries in its nucleus—that small portion of the town lying on the Werder island and in its immediate vicinity, and since these ancient fragments no longer fit in with the general appearance of the



A BIT OF BERLIN'S OLD CITY WALL.

capital, and actually prove a hindrance to the enterprise of the speculative builder and of the progressive merchant of to-day, it naturally follows that they have to go; make room for wide, straight streets, tall, massive, architecturally perfect houses, with plenty of air and light in them. For there is no denying the fact—the Berliner of to-day and, more especially, the municipal government of Berlin are quite progressive, almost American-like in this respect. Utilitarian principles carry the day in this city, as they are similarly triumphant in American cities. Thus it is that at this writing the oldest, dingiest, but most interesting, streets of ancient Berlin are being torn down to make room for modern palaces of trade, for the site these quaint old streets and alleys have occupied is among the choicest for business purposes, and within a couple of years every square yard of ground there will be worth thousands.

With the natural love of the journalist for the quaint and odd and musty, I have strolled through the most curious of these old lanes just before they were given up to destruction—through the Reizen Strasse, where cobblers have held forth for five hundred years, and where each tiny shop has been handed down from generation to generation through the Kosen Strasse, where in centuries past the wealthy citizens resided on account of its safety, being nestled in the shadow of the thick fortification wall, and through a network of sheer inextricable little alleys and lanes, each of which shows an individual physiognomy of its own. Even now, while the pickaxe and shovel of the destroying angels—vulgar brick masons—are at work demolishing what so long has withstood the tooth of time, a number of these queer little houses, charming to the eye in their outer and inner irregularity, with their creaking, worm-eaten stairs that lead nowhere in particular, and their rough-hewn sculpturings or gable and portico that portray saints and sinners of long ago, are still intact and their denizens have not yet left these places of their birth. While the dust



IN THE INN OF "THE EYE OF GOD."

from the falling walls close by fell in showers, and while an army of workmen toiled a few yards from their hearth tearing out the half-crumbled foundation stones from the fourteenth century, deaths and weddings occurred and babies were born among the few hundreds remaining in these ruins till driven elsewhere. Within this narrow district of barely two American blocks there have been living and dying, for centuries, a human life counting into the thousands, swarming and almost stumbling over each other in their narrow abodes.

Of them all, the Rosen Strasse was of greatest interest to me. A sort of ghetto—for here the Jews found their first privileged resting-place in Berlin under the mild sway of the Great Elector, who, in 1671, after the children of Israel had been driven out of Vienna by the bigoted mach-

## NETTING SHAD.

### Catching the Toothsome Fish in New York Harbor.

The shad begin to go up the Hudson early in April. Then fykes and fish-pounds fill the shoals, and driftnets and gill-nets the deeper water. For over a month everything of the shape of a net is at work night and day to prevent the fish from reaching the spawning grounds.

Driving a pole, from sixty-five to eighty-five feet long, ten feet into the harbor bottom, is no easy task, especially as the top of the pole must bend enough to enable a ton to pass over it without doing damage. The poles are of hickory, usually are in two pieces spliced together, as a tree of the required length is generally too heavy at the butt. The finished pole is from ten to twelve inches in diameter, sharply pointed to go into the mud. A favorable day is taken advantage of; the poles are loaded on the macking boats (two heavy boats made for the purpose, lashed together with strong timbers) and taken to the desired position in the stream. When the soundings the exact spot is found, the double boat is anchored, bow and stern, and on either side. Then, shad-pole is run out and lowered when the pointed end rests on the bottom the setting-machine is screwed on firmly. This is a bar of wood about twelve feet long, to the middle of which is fastened a linged collar which can be closed and screwed fast to the pole. Ten or twelve men take hold of this cross-piece, and a first raised and lower it gently until a hole is started in the mud; then they raise it higher and higher, bringing it down with increased force each time, until at last it is bedded so deeply in the mud that the "devil" alone can pull it out. But the "devil" referred to is a tool used for the very purpose, and very hard work it is to manage it.

The men must work well together and the captain's cry of "Uh-uh-uh-Down!" serves to keep them together. The poles are twenty-four feet apart, the width of a net. As one pole is put down the side anchor is carried along another twenty-four feet to the aid of a tender, then the large boat moves up to its new anchorage. In this way they move along, planting their poles at regular intervals. A hickory hoop with a weight attached to one side and a gill-net to the other is slipped over the poles, thus keeping the nets in place, and enabling them to be raised and lowered. Every tide, in storm or fog, they are carefully looked after.

In the shoal water along the Jersey coast may be seen what appears to be hedges of brush sticking out of the water. These are part of the fence erected for catching shad, "fykes." As the shad travel along these fences hunting for an opening they find the entrance to the "fykes," which are really nothing more than traps placed at intervals along the fence. The "fyke" is visited at every tide, lifted into the boat, and the fish taken out.—[Harper's Weekly.]

## The Vitality of Seeds.

How long will seeds preserve their vitality? So many fables have been and are still being promulgated on this subject that a few facts may not be unacceptable, says a writer in Science for All. The seeds of the willow will not germinate after having been once dry, and their germinating power is lost in two weeks even if during that interval they have been kept fresh. The seeds of coffee and various other plants do not germinate after having been kept for any considerable length of time. The grains of wheat usually lose their power of growth after a lapse of seven years, though wheat over two centuries old has been found quite capable of being used for food. The stories of "mummy wheat" sprouting after having laid dormant in Egyptian tombs for thousands of years are, to say the least of them, very dubious. Nowell authenticated instances of such finds are extant while among other articles sold by the Arabs to credulous travelers as coming out of the same tomb as the ancient wheat, have been dahili bulbs and maize, the deposition of which is the receptacle from which they were said to be extracted necessitates the belief that 2000 years ago the subjects of the Pharaohs were engaged in commerce with America. Rye and wheat only 185 years old could not be induced to germinate the place of the embryo being occupied by a slimy, putrefied fluid. It is, however, excluded from light and air, and, above all, from damp seeds have been known to keep for lengthened periods. Seeds of the bean and pea order have sprouted after 100 year's storage in an herbarium, and many similar instances have been recorded. Seeds disinterred from the soil taken from under very ancient buildings and other situations have also sprouted, though the estimates of their age have been all the way from 500 to 2000 years. They cannot, however, be considered beyond the range of skepticism.

The whaling industry has recently been revived in Tasmania with very hopeful results. This country used to be the principal centre of the Antarctic whale fisheries; but the scarcity of the animals—a fact which was rendered evident to the members of the Antarctic expeditions which started from Dundee a couple of years back—caused it gradually to be relinquished. This enforced "close time" has had a favorable effect upon the whales, which have been seen by three at a time on the Tasmanian coast.



OLD SYNAGOGUE.

close inspection, one sees a long row of handsomely-decorated casks, once filled with choice wine, now containing cheap "schnapps," and oddly-carved chairs and tables of solid oak, black with age, and on the cupboard yonder bright pewter pots and cut-glass goblets and flasks. The rosy-cheeked lass behind the counter, however, deals no longer with knights and squires, but with thieves and other riff-raff of modern civilization.

Another six months, and those few surviving witnesses of a past age will have disappeared, too, and walls of bright sandstone will rise up in their stead. One by one they go, these silent remnants of the days when Berlin was an unimportant small inland town in Germany, nothing but one of the burghs in that wilderness of sand and pine which was habitually referred to in derision by the writers of past centuries.

WOLF VON SCHIERBRAND.

## The Flame as a Witness.

It is interesting to know that the burning lamp or the flame of any fire is still largely used throughout the Orient in confirmation of covenants or agreements. It is one of the most ancient modes of ratifying covenants, and is mentioned in several places in the Bible as having been in vogue in the time of the patriarchs. In Corea, farther India, Hindoostan and in parts of China and Japan it is the custom, when making a solemn promise, especially should the other doubt sincerity, for the one making the promise to point to a flame and say: "The flame is my witness." On occasions of greater importance, when several join in a compact, where the fidelity of one or more is questioned, the company repair to some mosque or temple, form in a circle around the "lamp of the temple," and in the presence of a mandarin or priest each solemnly agrees with the other, pointing each time to the flame as a witness. The Tartars, in taking oaths or making covenants, use the liver of a sheep, goat or horse, run their fingers in the blood and then make circles on their foreheads, the whole proceeding having the same symbolic meaning that the flame has in the Orient.

The Congo Railroad in Africa has cost \$62,000 per mile to construct.