

The business of this country is built upon its farms as a foundation.

Illinois spends at least \$2,000,000 a year in punishing criminals. It spends scarcely anything for their reform.

The Governor of Pennsylvania makes a strong plea for better school facilities in rural districts in order to check the tendency of country youth to remove to the cities.

Sir Lepel Griffin gives the population of the famine districts in India as 41,500,000. The cablegrams say that a million and a quarter are now employed on Government relief work, but such relief seems to be wholly inadequate.

Asbestos has recently been applied by a Massachusetts firm to the manufacture of shoes for workmen employed in foundries and smelting works. It is asserted that the new shoes, besides being more comfortable, cost less than leather shoes and wear indefinitely.

James R. Francisco, who died in Fremont, Ohio, the other day, was one of the oldest engineers in this country. He ran the John Bull engine which was brought from England in 1836 and was put on the Camden and Amboy Railway to take the place of horses that had formerly hauled the cars. That famous engine was exhibited at the World's Fair.

It appears that one of the new countries which are next to surprise the world is Siberia, notes Harper's Weekly. The surveyors and investigators who have been looking into its resources and possibilities along the proposed line of the trans-Siberian railway report, as is no doubt their business, that it has most things that ought to be stored in a great undeveloped country—minerals to burn and others to smelt, great stretches of agricultural land, abundant wood, navigable rivers, and numerous other possibilities of emolument. It is possible that if ever the raw materials of civilization which Russia controls are worked up, the United States will be relieved of the embarrassment of believing itself to be the greatest thing on earth.

The past year has been a momentous one. Important questions have agitated many peoples, battles have been fought, political campaigns have been waged; political policies overturned; discoveries made by daring adventurers and painstaking students; great disasters have wrought ruin and death. Amid the mass of events the following seem to stand out with greatest distinctness as being those that will make the year memorable: The presidential campaign and election; Cuba's revolt and American sympathy; general election in Canada; the Manitoba question; settlement of the Venezuelan dispute; Soudan expedition; Italy's fiasco in Abyssinia; Dr. Jameson's raid; St. Louis cyclone; Nansen's expedition; discovery of X rays.

The changes in dairying during the past fifteen years are not appreciated by one farmer in ten. Then, creameries were almost unknown, but now, as Major Alford says, there are 10,000 creameries in the country. Probably 25,000 cream separators are in use in America and "this one change practically obliterates the limitations of butter making due to climatic conditions, and butter factories can now be operated without ice, about as well in Mississippi and Missouri, as in Maine and Minnesota." The Pacific States, Colorado, Nebraska and other states, lately large buyers from the east, are now supplying themselves with butter, mainly with cheese, and often sending from their surplus to neighboring states, and many of our large dairy markets feel these changes.

In the controversy in Congress over the adoption of a copyright law (a controversy which culminated in the passage of the Draper bill by both branches of Congress) the statement was made that there were 5,000 theatres and opera houses in the United States, representing a cost of \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 each. These theatres employ 50,000 persons exclusive of actors and actresses. Upward of 400 manuscript plays written or owned by citizens of the United States are played nightly. They give employment to from 5,000 to 6,000 actors. The cost of producing these manuscript plays ranges from \$2,000 to \$25,000 each, and the purpose of the new statute is to give judges of the United States courts full jurisdiction over the matter and to make the penalty imposed in one circuit operative throughout the country for unauthorized performances.

## WASHINGTON IN DANGER.

And How He Was Saved by Betsey Ann Blessing.



N the summer of the year of grace 1776, when the American army was stationed in New York, the commander-in-chief, General Washington, was indulging in a brief resting spell after dinner when he was approached by an orderly, who saluted and said:

"A young woman who calls herself Betsey Ann Blessing would have speech with Your Excellency."

"Betsey Ann Blessing," repeated Washington, with a momentary shrug of irritation; "who is she, and why may she not defer her business until to-morrow? I warrant me that her lover is a prisoner of war, and she is ready to swear that he is a loyal Whig. What think you, Holdfast?"

"If you please, Your Excellency, she is well favored, as far as I could know from her crying, for she is in sore trouble.

"Aye! I am a true soothsayer! Crying, is she? Show her in, Holdfast, and see that the guard trouble her not. I misdoubt my own judgment in giving audience to strangers in these troublous times. It mayhap that Mistress Blessing prove a traitor in disguise."

The orderly soon returned, ushering in a girl so young she appeared like a child, and indeed, acted like one, for no sooner did she stand in the presence of the great man than she seized his hand—that hand of stalwart proportions—and dropping on her knees kissed it with the ardor of a devotee. Meanwhile the tears streamed down her face in piteous torrents and her form shook with suppressed emotions.

"Speak, and see that you trifle not with me. Nay, child, do not fear! If what you say be true, not you, but the traitor who planned the dastardly deed shall suffer!"

"No! no?" retorted the trembling girl, "no one must suffer! Is it not enough that I have dared to come into a lion's jaws to tell of the deed, to ensure safety for the designer thereof? Now that I have warned Your Excellency, permit me to retire from your distinguished presence."

General Washington gave a signal and instantly an armed guard of soldiers responded.

"Arrest this girl!" he said sternly, "and keep her under guard until such time as she send for me to confess her fault!"

"That will I never, though I die in prison!" was the defiant reply, as the girl, who had entered bowed and weeping raised her head proudly and walked out with the soldiers like a young queen.

All was tumult in the kitchens at Richmond Hill, and cooks were running about getting into one another's way, when a fair-haired youth in the garb of a serving man loitered in and made his way unobserved to the great fireplace, where he uncovered the skillets in which the vegetables were simmering on the hearth. When he came to that one containing the peas he dropped in a handful of some condiment, and instantly took his departure.

His next appearance was under the window of that room in which Mistress Blessing was incarcerated.

"H-i-s-t! Sweetheart! The dose is ready. Keep heart until the morning, when I will myself release thee to ride pick-a-back on my roan horse. It is



## Washington's Tomb at Mt. Vernon.

Washington had a tender heart and he was greatly distressed by this unusual scene.

"You have something to say?" he asked gently. "Speak on, but I beg, my child, that you cease weeping."

"Oh, Your Excellency you are too kind," said the girl, and rising to her feet, she uncovered a beautiful downcast face, which glowed pink and dewy through her tears like a rain-washed, sun-kissed rose.

"Now, Mistress Blessing," said Washington, in his kindest manner, "tell me what brings you hither and what your errand may be?"

"I came hither to save Your Excellency's life," was the startling response.

Instead of laughing at the apparent presumption of the weeping girl, he bade her tell him everything, promising her immunity from punishment in case her news was not as weighty as she anticipated.

Thus encouraged, she began her story.

"On the morrow Your Excellency is to dine with several officers of your command under guard?"

"How know you that, girl?" asked Washington, much surprised.

"Your Excellency will lay certain plans against the enemy before the company?"

"Proceed!" commanded Washington, sternly.

"Among the dishes set before Your Excellency will be a new vegetable of which you are very fond."

"Ah," laughed the General, "you have lost or forgotten an order from the kitchen. Here is, indeed, a new version of the mountain and the mouse."

"I know not, gracious sir, what meaning that hath of the mountain and the mouse," cried Betsey, "but if a mess of green peas be served at the table on the morrow I beg and beseech you, sir, not to taste of them!"

"Wherefore, Mistress Blessing?" asked Washington in his sternest manner.

"The peas will be poisoned!"

"How know you this?" demanded the general in the tone which made his soldiers quail when they heard it.

told in the town that Betsey Ann Blessing is arrested for an spy. Keep up your courage, sweetheart!"

"If you would befriend me, betake yourself to some safer place," whispered Betsey's voice through the barred window high above him. "A halter will be ready for your neck if you are seen or suspected, and listen—if your dose takes effect, you are no longer a lover of mine!"

The youth went away, grumbling about all being fair in love and war.

If Washington was different from his usual self at that historic dinner, the fact has not been recorded. There was much secret discussion of weighty affairs with his guests, but he gave close attention to the viands set before him. It was not, however, until the vegetables were served that he made any allusion to the food. When his favorite vegetable, a dish of green peas, was uncovered, he demanded attention, and when all were silent remarked in a loud voice:

"There is death in the pot!"

A great excitement ensued; the guests, who were in full uniform, drew their swords and murmurs of "death to the traitor!" were heard on every side.

Then Washington sent for Mistress Blessing, who came with a defiant light in her eye, and was given the seat of honor at her host's right hand. She took it with a dignity that called forth approving and admiring comments. Soldiers are proverbially galling, and those of "76" were no exception to the rule.

A servant was next sent out by the Commander-in-Chief on a peculiar errand. He returned, bringing with him a live and particularly active chicken, which partook eagerly of the dish of peas.

And in five minutes by the watch it lay dead in their midst.

Betsey Ann Blessing married her lover, after turning him into a patriot, and Washington himself gave away the bride. How much he knew remained his own secret, but green peas never afterward graced his table or were alluded to in his conversation.—Detroit Free Press.

## WASHINGTON'S HELPMATE.

Martha Washington Was a Stately and Noble Woman.

All accounts agree that Martha Washington was a noble woman. She was in her youth beautiful, and in her old age was as stately and impressive as Washington himself, though lacking his commanding stature.

Martha Washington was born a Dandridge, and became Curtis by her first marriage. When Washington made her acquaintance she was a widow with small children, and some years older than himself.

It is on this account that many have assumed that Washington married Mrs. Curtis for her wealth. There was



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

no reason to suppose so. Washington was already a wealthy man, as the heir of his dead brother, Lawrence. His estate of Mount Vernon was one of the finest in Virginia, and Mrs. Curtis had children, and was to have grandchildren, to set up in the world. A calculating man might have foreseen these things. It was the custom of the times for a husband to manage his wife's estate, and in this capacity Washington was never niggardly in dealing with the Curtis heirs. For that matter, Mrs. Curtis was herself what is called a "capable" woman.

There is other evidence than the merely negative. Washington wore always about his neck a locket-miniature which served to remind him of the features of his beloved wife. He had her at his side in camp and in his travels, whenever it was reasonably possible.

And she was a woman worthy his affection. Edmund Pendleton traveled with Washington to the Congress which decreed the Revolution in 1775. In a letter to his wife he said: "Mrs. Washington, as we were departing from Mount Vernon, addressed Mr. (Patrick) Henry and myself like a true spartan, she said to us: 'You must stand firm for America. I know that George will.'"

## Early Education of Washington.

Our great President received but a poor scholastic training, as judged by Nineteenth Century standards. He was largely self-taught, and his writings have been so carefully edited as to remove all traces of mistakes in spelling, grammar and rhetoric.

But Washington's education was of



WASHINGTON'S MOTHER.

a higher type than mere book-learning can produce. He was developed into greatness by the molding pressure of stupendous events, which, with rapidly increasing weight, forced out the fire and vigor contained beneath his somewhat calm exterior. He was a general and statesman in the highest sense of those titles, when he drove the British out of Boston in 1776. None disputed him the foremost position after that. And there is many a ripe specimen of knowledge who would find it impossible to achieve Washington's results, even were the opportunity given.

## Times Change.

"I tell you the time in which one lives has a great effect on his career. Take Washington, for instance."

"Well, what of him?"

"What of him? Do you suppose a man who would persist in telling the truth at all times in these days would ever get further in public life than notary public?"—Harper's Bazar.

## Children's Column



THE SNOW BIRD.

When all the ground with snow is white,  
The merry snowbird comes  
And hops about with great delight  
To find the scattered crumbs.

How glad he seems to get to eat  
A piece of cake or bread,  
He wears no shoes upon his feet  
Nor hat upon his head.

But happiest is he, I know,  
Because no cage with bars  
Keeps him from walking in the snow  
And printing it with stars.  
—Frank Dempster Sherman.

## THE JAPANESE NEW YEAR.

The Japanese literally "turn over a new leaf" on New Year's day; the house is cleaned and swept, new garments are made, the family shrines are brightened up. All debts are paid, and even the streets are elaborately decorated with bamboo, pine and other native plants and festoons of tiny oranges. The national flag—the rising sun on a white ground—floats from every house-front; the girls, in their best clothes, powdered and painted, play battledore and shuttlecock, the boys fly kites—great monsters painted on paper stiffened by bamboo strips—and the very small children play with pretty balls made of cotton and wound with various-colored silk threads.

All work stops, and for three days presents are exchanged. These are usually sweetmeats put up in decorated boxes of wood or paper.—Chicago Record.

## SNOW-YACHT OF THE BASSWOOD.

Have you ever seen the snow-yachts of the basswood? Almost any breezy day in early winter they frolic swiftly over the snow in the parks or in the woods. There is a funny little brown sail about three inches long curled at the edges and looking very much like a dried leaf. At the center of this there is a stiff stem with several little green balls hanging at the end of it. When the wind blows it catches the sail and whisks it over the snow or ice, and the balls are dragged along behind, like anchors.

This snow-yacht, sail and all, grows on the basswood tree in the summer. The balls are the basswood's fruit and the sail is a little bract. It hangs fast to the limb until all of the leaves are gone and good sleighing comes. Then the winter winds twist it off, and it falls to the surface of the snow, to be driven far away from the parent tree. In the little balls are the basswood seeds, and when the yacht is finally lost in a drifted fence corner or near a rotten log the balls remain still until the snow melts, and then the seeds fall into the ground and a young basswood sprouts. Nature has provided this marvelous way for the basswood to scatter its seeds, sometimes for miles across the snow.

## THE REWARD OF OBEDIENCE.

An English paper revives the following pretty little "story with a moral." It is really the amplified version of a Persian proverb:

A Persian mother gave her son 40 pieces of silver and made him swear never to tell a lie. "Go, my son," she said. "I commit thee to God's care; and we shall not meet again." The youth left the house and the party with whom he traveled were assailed by robbers. One of them asked the boy what he had, and he said, "Forty florins are sewn in my clothes." The robber laughed, feeling certain that the boy jested. Another asked him the same question and received the same answer. At last the chief called him and asked him what he had. The boy replied, "I have told two of your men already that I have forty pieces of silver sewn in my clothes." The chief ordered the garments to be ripped open, and the discovery of the money proved the boy to be more truthful than most men.

"How came you to tell this?" asked the chief. "Because," said the boy, "I would not be false to my mother, whom I promised never to tell a lie." "Child," said the robber, "are you so mindful of your duty to your mother, and am I so forgetful at my age of the duty I owe to my God? Give me your hand that I may swear repentance on it." He did so

and his followers, impressed by his example, said: "You have been our leader in guilt; be the same in the path of virtue." And, taking the boy's hand, they all took an oath to repent.

## WRITING WITH SECRET INK.

Some of our boys and girls who wish so carry on a secret correspondence with their friends should try invisible or sympathetic ink. A whole page may be filled with writing and still be entirely white, as if there wasn't a word upon it. In this way it may be sent any distance, and no one can find out what it contains. But the person who receives it knows the secret of "bringing out" the writing so that it may easily be read.

One of the simplest of these invisible inks is a very dilute solution of sulphuric acid. Buy five cents' worth of the acid at a drug store and pour in a considerable quantity of water, at least three or four times as much as there is of the acid. Now, write with this solution, using an ordinary pen, and blot the surplus "ink" as you go along. To make the writing show black, all your correspondent has to do is to hold the letter close to a hot stove, when presto! out come the letters and words one by one, so that they may easily be read.

Another good secret ink, more difficult to bring out than the one already mentioned, can be made by using a cheap solution of sugar of lead. To bring out the written words it is necessary to sponge the letter with a solution of sulphuric acid.

Another simple secret ink is made of a solution of ordinary starch. A letter written with this will remain entirely invisible until it is washed with a solution of iodine, which quickly brings out the writing.

In using secret ink it is best to write an ordinary letter telling about the weather and other unimportant things and then between the lines write with the secret ink. This will serve to lead quite astray any one who sees the letter, because there could be no suspicion of anything written between the lines.—Chicago Record.

## A DOG THAT CHEWS GUM.

Black Michael, or Mike, for short, is the name of a little cocker spaniel living in Lake avenue, near 46th street, Chicago. He came all the way from Colorado by express, mailed up in a wooden box with slats across the top. On the side of the box was painted in black letters, "Please give me a drink," so that the baggageman would not forget him.

Since he has lived in Chicago he has acquired the peculiar habit of chewing gum. It took him a long time to learn that gum is not to be treated as food, but it is to be chewed forever and never swallowed. Before he learned the way of it he was very funny in his efforts to dispose of gum as he was accustomed to dispose of everything that found its way to his mouth.

The first time a piece was given to him he chewed quietly at it for a minute or two. When he found that it stayed just the same size and would not separate, he treated it as he would a tough piece of meat, put his head low down and chewed with more energy. But nothing happened, the queer stuff still stuck together and refused to slide down his throat. Then he threw his head back and bit angrily at it, opening his mouth wide and coming down on it with all his might. During this lively process the piece of gum fell out of his mouth, and he lay down on the floor all tired out, and looked at the dentured little wad in disgust.

He is a gritty little fellow and he made up his mind he would get the best of that stuff, whatever it was. So he soon got up, walked all around it as it lay on the floor, sniffing suspiciously, and then pounced on it suddenly. Of course, it stuck to his paw, and then he was angrier than ever. He finally succeeded in getting it off with his teeth, and then he went at it again. He barked loudly, running around it and pushing it with his nose, but he would not give up, and after many trials he began to get the hang of it and to enjoy chewing it. The habit has grown on him steadily, and now he sniffs under the window sills and chairs, and if the small boy who lives in the same house has left his gum sticking around, he is sure to lose it altogether. For Mike knows it off, and putting his little stubby tail down goes off to a corner, and for an hour is perfectly happy.