

of everything about the house and its surroundings. All possible effort has been made to restore the mansion, its furniture and its immediate environment to the state and aspect they presented when Washington was alive. This is a problem which, obviously, has been beset with many difficulties. Besides, there has been a fight to be conducted against the tendencies of decay.

Just for example: Before Washington died he expressed a desire and an intention to remove the old family mausoleum a primitive affair, in which relatives and forebears of his were buried. Mostly it was underground and water had seeped into it. The same water has made a whole lot of trouble since. It came from an underground stream and only a few years ago was threatening actually to undermine the foundations of the mansion itself.

The danger became so serious and even alarming that in 1904 the Mount Vernon Association employed an expert engineer to find out what was the matter and make recommendations. He discovered the underground stream and recommended that a tunnel be dug to carry off the water. This was accomplished at an expense of \$7000 and cured the trouble entirely—the really serious nature of the menace being indicated by the circumstance that the tunnel now delivers 50,000 gallons into the Potomac every 24 hours.

On one occasion, many years ago, a gambler located his establishment within a few hundred yards of the estate. The association was anxious to get rid of the nuisance. The property occupied by the gambler was to be bought for a moderate sum of money, but the cash was not available. Here, as usual, lucky chance helped.

It so happened that Jay Gould went up the Potomac on his yacht and paid a visit to Mount Vernon. He had a talk with the superintendent of the estate, and learning about the offensive neighbor, ascertained incidentally what the situation was. "No money?" said Mr. Gould. "Why, I'll attend to that. Here's a check."

The place has become a Mecca of pilgrimage for multitudes of persons from all over the United States. Indeed, if it were possible, it might be said that foreigners hold Washington in even higher reverence than we do, and distinguished visitors from foreign parts invariably find their way to Mount Vernon.

All of this enthusiasm is the direct result of the effort of the association. For the interest attaching to Mount Vernon depends mainly upon the fact that its physical aspect and environment are substantially the same as in George Washington's time. It reproduces the intimate circumstances of Washington's life and doings. Persons who go to Mount Vernon feel that they have done the next best thing to meeting Washington face to face.