

Washington's Little Hatchet.

Toward the close of the last century an eccentric bookseller, Weems by name, used to ride about the Southern States with an assortment of literature in his little wagon, and a fiddle under his seat.

He sold, in the daytime, from house to house, and from county to county, and in the evening, when he put up at a plantation house, he was ready with his fiddle, either to amuse the family, or to go into the negro quarters and strike up a tune for the negroes to dance to.

I have called this man a book peddler, but that was by no means the title he gave himself. If he had had such a thing as a card about him, it would have borne the words, Rev. Mason Locke Weems. He had figured in the pulpit in his time, and it has recently been ascertained that he was ordained in Maryland a clergyman of the Episcopal church.

In early manhood we find him a hanger-on, or curate unattached, in Pohick parish, near Mount Vernon, the church which was for many years attended by General Washington and his family.

Bishop Meade, of Virginia, who knew him in his boyhood, intimates that the idea of M. L. Weems being the incumbent of a parish was preposterous. "I acknowledge," wrote the Bishop, "that he was in the habit of having the servants assemble in private houses where he would recite a portion of scripture (for he never would read it out of books) and perhaps say something to them, or, in the prayer, about them; but then it was in such way as only to produce merriment."

The Bishop adds that he had been an eye-witness of Weems's ludicrous exhibitions, both at his mother's house and his own, and he does not think that Weems could have long made any serious pretense to be a settled rector. It is possible he may have officiated in Pohick parish in the presence of Washington, and doubtless he has often gazed upon the general with sincere admiration.

Bishop Meade makes jocular allusion to Weems's "very enlarged charity in all respects." He knew no sect, but, in his preaching days, delighted to preach in any church that would receive him, and in any parish where he could get a chance to recommend his books.

Wherever there was to be an election or a court, Weems was very likely to be found with his stand for books on the piazza of the tavern. On one occasion, when the Bishop found him thus established at Fairfax courthouse, he noticed that he had among his books a copy of Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason."

Among the polite readers of this periodical, I presume there are many who have never so much as heard the name of this singular genius.

The manner in which it was brought to his attention. Rousseau had made this mode of dealing with the youthful mind exceedingly popular, and the story was well calculated to attract the notice of the story-telling Weems. When he began his life in Washington, he evidently resolved to give his readers an abundant supply of such anecdotes.

He said the people had heard enough of Washington "the hero, the demigod, the sun-beam in council and the storm in war;" he meant to present to his countrymen Washington the dutiful son, the affectionate brother, the cheerful school-boy, the neat draughtsman, the widow's husband, the poor man's friend.

For this he had two qualifications: A style of considerable force and an absolute insensibility to the claims of truth, to which we may add the articles of the practiced story-teller. The very opening sentence of the book shows the story-teller's tact. The name that filled the world in 1800, when he wrote the work, was Napoleon Bonaparte.

Weems availed himself of the circumstance in the following manner: "Ah, gentlemen," exclaimed Bonaparte—it was just as he was about to embark for Egypt. Some young Americans happening at Toulon, and anxious to see the mighty Corsican, had obtained the honor of an introduction to him.

Scarcely were passed the customary salutations when he eagerly asked: "How fares your countryman, the great Washington?" "He was very well," replied the youth, brightening at the thought that they were the countrymen of the great Washington, "he was very well, General, when we left America."

"Ah, gentlemen," rejoined he, "Washington can never be otherwise than well. The measure of his fame is full. Posterity will talk of him with reverence as the founder of a great empire, when my name shall be lost in the vortex of revolutions!"

This is a very good specimen of his art. He soon entered upon his series of anecdotes respecting Washington's boyhood, which now appear so ridiculous. When his own invention failed, he did not hesitate to avail himself of the books in his wagon. He laid Dr. Beattie under contribution among others, and turned his garden story into a most preposterous caricature.

The father of the boy, he tells us, desiring to "startle George into a lively sense of his Maker, fell upon the following very curious but impressive expedient."

The Promotion of Marriage.

The "Promotion of Marriage Association" has turned out rather badly. Six thousand persons surged through Inwood Park, Cincinnati, to-day (August 12th) to attend its picnic and found a lot of politicians of the lowest order labelled "managers," and making themselves very conspicuous as the head of the affair.

When R. M. Moore, a well-meaning old gentleman who married a fortune here some years ago, has since devoted himself to the crab elder manufacture and impracticable philanthropy, was Mayor a year or two ago, he was frequently applied to by young women who were in trouble to aid them in obtaining a partial redress for their wrongs, or at least to procure pecuniary assistance for them by process of law.

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There were but three marriages, the contracting parties being Andy H. Miller, a peddler, to Miss Louise Brier; Frank Noel, a saloonkeeper, to Elizabeth Souffle; and Wm. McHugh, a painter, to Sophie Sewell. Ex-Mayor Moore presented each bride with a wedding ring, and each couple will receive \$25 worth of house-keeping goods.

WHAT STANLEY IS DOING.—We have received the following important particulars with regard to the movements of H. M. Stanley, the African explorer, from a correspondent whose sources of information are thoroughly trustworthy: About nine months ago Mr. Stanley suddenly departed for the east coast of Africa.

He is doing a great work for the opening up of commerce; and although the Belgians have taken the lead, we have no fear that our own English merchants will lag behind when the way has been opened up. This country is once more deeply indebted to the King of the Belgians for the energy he has displayed in connection with such an important movement.—Liverpool Post, Aug. 7th.

HOPEFULNESS IN GREAT BRITAIN.—The difficulties in the way of a man in humble circumstances obtaining a homestead of his own in Great Britain are almost insuperable. Land seldom comes into the market, and when it does, it is competed for in an eager way by the wealthy, who wish to add to their holdings.

And the night shall be filled with music, And the fires that infect the day Shall fold their wings until morning, And give the mosquito full play.

Story of the Famous Ship "Princess Mary."

In answer to a letter of a correspondent, the New York Journal of Commerce gives the following particulars regarding this famous ship: A "Shipping Merchant" inquires about the ship that carried William III. (Prince of Orange) to England when he went to take possession of the monarchy, and alludes to "the myth" of her long life.

The Princess Mary, built on the Thames, was more than half a century old when William landed from her at Torbay, November 4, 1688. She was eighty feet, three inches long, twenty-three feet broad, double decked, with two masts, square rigged. Her earlier name was Brill, but this, we believe, is not established.

She was christened the Princess Mary after the King's consort, when she was selected to bear the fortunes of the monarch to his new kingdom. During the whole of her reign, and that of his successor, Queen Anne, she was used as a royal yacht, and was kept in thorough order, some of the repairs being quite exquisite. In 1714, when the vessel came into possession of George I., she ceased by his order to form part of the royal establishment.

LONGEVITY OF PROFESSIONAL SINGERS.—The medical Woehrschrift of St. Petersburg publishes an interesting article on the influence of singing upon the health. It is founded upon the exhaustive researches made by Professor Monassein of St. Petersburg during the autumn of 1878.

STEPHEN GIRARD'S HEROISM.—The fearful epidemic, yellow fever, raged in Philadelphia in 1793. All who could, fled. The horrors of the plague, as described by Defoe in his narrative of London, were realized in this American city.

BRAVING THE OCEAN BLUE.—SEATTLE Washington Territory, August 29th.—Lieutenant Joseph Neuzil left here this morning on his three-log craft Neptune, for San Francisco. He rounded Sandy Point at 12 o'clock before a spanking breeze, and headed away toward Fort Madison.

The French Chamber of Deputies dates from the Empire. It bears an eagle, the letter "N," and the inscription, "Hommage au President de l'Assemblée Legislative; par A. Fichet." The desks and tribune of the Senate come from the Hall of the Council des Anciens, and those of the Deputies from the Hall of Council of the Five Hundred.

A Kite and Pigeon Experiment.

Little Johnny Green of Louisville, Ky., having heard once upon a time that Benjamin Franklin experimented with the kite, resolved to do something in that line himself. His idea was to test the relative strength of the kite and his pet pigeon, with the idea of basing some grand invention upon the result.

The pigeon, feeling itself half free, flew toward home, which was directly against the wind. The resistance of the kite caused his flight to tend upward, and, in turn, the efforts of his wings caused the kite to sail higher in the air. For a while the bird seemed to have the best of the struggle, making slow progress for at least a square, but, in spite of all efforts to take a direct course, flying higher and higher.

A QUEER GEORGIA WIND SPOOT.—William Langley, a cotton planter of Gwinnett county, was standing in a field on his farm. Around him were several men, a woman and three children, all breaking the soil for cotton.

TRANSPLANTING AND REPLANTING TEETH.—Can teeth be transplanted? If recent accounts of operations by dentists are trustworthy, the answer must be in the affirmative. But the question has been formally discussed at a meeting of the Odontological Society, and from this we learn that it was in replanting (which is not the same thing as transplanting) that the foreign dentists, whose names had been cited, achieved their success.

THE PATRIARCH OF TURTLES.—We received a turtle a few days ago on whose back was marked the date 1700, and also the Spanish coat of arms, indicating that this old resident was in existence one hundred and seventy-nine years ago. What changes this old fellow of the deep has seen. The rise and fall of empires, and the continent on which he partly lived, emerged from the thraldom of despotism, with the rise of a republic that has become the great conservator of freedom, the advancement of civilization, and the glory of the world.

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The police of Chicago had occasion to make a raid upon the office of a "ticket scalper" in that city recently, and among the stock discovered were passes and thousand-mile tickets to the value of nearly \$3500, which had been granted by railroad companies to various individuals and by them disposed of for money consideration.

All Fools.

Truth is mighty—mighty scarce. "Have you a mother-in-law?" asked a man of a disconsolate-looking person. "No," he replied; "but I've a father-in-jail."

A wife at Portland, Me., calls her husband home by firing a skyrocket from the roof of the house. When the rocket goes up he goes for home. Religion gives you a creed as a kind of ladder up which you may climb to a noble life. Too many people, however, put the ladder up and then sit on the ground.

A Dresden man owns an old dog that has lately caught butting its head against the bucket as it swung over the well. The act was referred to once by a poet who wrote— "The old dog can buck it. That hung in the well." A European writer asserts that aceto-coryza, or cold in the head, is cured in half an hour by chewing the leaves of the eucalyptus and slowly swallowing the saliva.

A HINT TO LABORERS.—When you have any heavy work to do, do not take either beer, cider, or spirits. By far the best drink is thin oatmeal and water, with a little sugar. The proportions are a quart of a pound of oatmeal to two or three quarts of water, according to the heat of the day and your work and thirst.

A Mad Cure. An old campaigner writes as follows: A letter to the Sun, entitled "Cured by Damp Earth," reminds me of an occurrence which came under my observation during my campaigning days many years ago in old Texas. We were encamped on the north fork of the Rio Concho, where a valuable horse belonging to an officer of our regiment was bitten in the leg by a rattlesnake.

"In the present day it is not always easy to tell who is a clergyman," says the London World, "but according to a witness in the Newman Hall divorce case the other day, there is an infallible sign showing when a man is not a clergyman. This lady, who appeared to have a man's eye for costume, said: 'I thought at first that the gentleman had a High Church curate's face, [laughter], but he went up stairs I saw he was not a clergyman from the cut of his clothes; his trousers were tight about the knee, so I knew he was not a clergyman.' [Laughter.] After this I should think all young persons who come up to the May meetings, and take the theaters and of going the round of the leg with visiting Evans's and places where they sing, will be careful to have their trousers made tight about the knee."

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