

The Ragamuffins and General Washington.

In the month of October, 1789, General George Washington, who was then President of the United States, and residing in New York City, made a tour, attended by his secretaries, Messrs. Lear and Jackson, to the States of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

History tells us how in every part of the country through which he passed, the citizens embraced the opportunity then offered to testify their respect and even veneration for this man, in whose character whatever was great and good, whatever dignified and adorned human nature, was so happily blended.

Whenever he approached a town or village the roads were lined with the inhabitants who had turned out to bid him welcome; and, in many instances, he was escorted by local companies of militia from point to point.

The whole community was now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement in regard to the presence of the distinguished visitor, and hardly anything else was talked of in the towns and villages through which he was to pass.

Esquire Samuel Dunton came home from a trip to Norwich to Willington, a little township nestled among and almost hidden by the hills of eastern Connecticut, and set all the men, women and children into a blaze of enthusiasm with the news that the Presidential party were to pass over the Hartford and Providence "turnpike," and would arrive at a point in the south part of Willington, near Mansfield, at about eleven o'clock next forenoon.

The Willington folks immediately set about organizing a company to go down and join the Mansfield people in giving General Washington a suitable reception.

Of course there was plenty of wide awake girls and boys who wanted to go with the older people and get a glimpse of the great man; but in those days children were taught that they were "to be seen and not heard," and on all important occasions were kept rather in the background.

The October morning opened bright and beautiful and the Prestor family at the tannery were early astir, and with their neighbors, the Hols, the Westons, the Allens, the Pearls and the Duntons, started in the early rosy morn, in holiday array, down the woolly Mansfield road.

A group of eager, active, bright-faced boys were gathered on the bridge to see them off. They watched the cavalcade men and women all on horseback, each horse carrying a man with a woman behind him on a "pillion," until it disappeared in the gray mist rising over Fenton river.

There were a few moments of silence, and the lugubrious faces of the boys were growing longer and longer over their disappointment, when Timothy Pearl, the oldest and most daring of the group, said:

"I'll tell you what it is, boys, if General Washington is to pass so near us to-day, I intend to get a sight of him. Esquire Dunton said he'd likely be along down on the cross-roads about eleven o'clock. I'm going to run away down to the turnpike. How many of you will go with me? If we go 'cross lots, and run down all the hills, and step pretty spry the rest of the way, there's no doubt that we can get there in time to see him."

Half a dozen of the boys caught off their hats and, swinging them high in the air, gave three rousing cheers for General and President Washington. Little eight-years-old Amos Preston jumped up and down, swinging his tasselled hat and shouting as enthusiastically as his older comrades. When, with a "one, two, three" start, they were off with a leap-frog jump, they found him bringing up the rear.

"Amos, you can't go," Zebadiah

Marcy shouted back at the little fellow; "your legs are too short!"

"Try me and see," said Amos, stoutly. "I think it's too bad if General Washington is to come so near and I not see him as well as the rest of you. I want to see him just as much as if my legs were longer."

"Let him go," said David Glazier, who was only a little older than Amos, but very much taller. "He's a pleasant little fellow, and never complains nor whimpers when he is tired. We big boys can give him a lift if he tuckers." And reaching out he took Amos by the hand, and the boys started once more.

Away they went, striking out across the fields and woods gay with the variegated leaves, not stopping to disturb the squirrels laying in their store of nuts, nor taking time to pause in the shadowy orchards to fill their wide pockets with the fragrant fruit that lay thickly strewn on the turf. First one and then another of the boys took Amos by the hand for a run, or to help him jump over the huge fallen trees or the brooks that intercepted their way.

Just before the boys came upon the turnpike, they paused under a group of maples to take breath.

"How like ragamuffins we do look with our old clothes on, and they all so torn and muddy," said Zebulon Crocker. "What will the General think of us if he should happen to spy us?"

"Let's trim ourselves up," said little Amos. "Here's lots of bright leaves; and there's a thorn bush with plenty of thorns to fasten them on with."

"Sure enough, and well thought of," said Elijah Elbridge. "Amos knows a thing or two if his legs are so short."

When the boys again resumed their running march, decked out from head to foot with the golden and scarlet leaves, they presented a fantastic sight, indeed.

"O see, see! hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" shouted Jeduthun Rice, as the tired company of boys reached the crest of a hill that overlooked a wide expanse of the section that embraced portions of the towns of Ashford, Willington and Mansfield. And away in the distance, coming down the Ashford hills, the excited group saw a long line of vehicles, among them two large coaches-and-fours, preceded by a company of militia, their muskets glistening in the sun, occasionally a strain of martial music reaching the erect ears of the Willington boys.

Soon they emerged into the highway. And when they came to the turnpike which intersected it and made what was known as the "Cross-roads," they found the Presidential party had alighted, and were resting under the shadow of an immense oak tree near by.

There was quite a crowd of people gathered about General Washington and his party, and at first the rather venturesome boys thought it would be impossible for them to get a sight of the great man. But they perseveringly edged their way along, and at last reaching the large coach in which the General rode, and upon the box of which sat the liveried and pompous negro driver, boy-like they edged in under it, and found themselves in the immediate vicinity of General Washington.

The slight movement that the coach horses made as the boys ensconced themselves beneath the vehicle, caused the General to look around for the cause of the disturbance, and presently he was looking into sweaty, dusty faces of these fantastically garlanded boys.

A quiet smile lighted up the President's countenance as he pleasantly said:

"Come out, boys, and let us see what you are."

The boys scrambled out and with

admirable presence of mind arranged themselves in line along the side of coach and removed their hats while the General stood in front of them evidently amused at the very queer appearance they made, at the same time pleased with their respectful attitude.

"Well, well, my boys, you must have been running quite hard in order to see me, and have, I suppose, bedecked yourselves with these beautiful autumn leaves in my honor. I bid you a very good morning."

"O dear me!" cried little Amos, impulsively, "you are nothing but a man after all, sir!"

"You are quite right my fine little fellow," said the general, laughing, and doubtless touched by the entire boyish tribute; and, stepping forward patting little Amos' head, he continued: "You are right and, if I mistake not your character, I am no more of a man than you will be some day. That is something for you all to remember. You who are boys now are soon to be the men upon whom our country must depend."

The boys bowed and, dodging again under the great coach, made place for a party of country magnates who were approaching.

The Willington folks were horrified when they beheld the fantastic array of runaway boys; and the oldest grandfather of them all, who had not known of the little passage between them and General Washington, shook his long cane at them and, in a trembling voice, said:

"We will settle with you, you young rascals, when you get home."

"If you horsewhip us to death, sir," said Timothy Pearl in reply, "you can't help it that we've seen General Washington. Besides, sir, our parents didn't say we shouldn't come. They only thought we wouldn't dare think of coming down here, we are so young."

The boys went back into the woods and across lots as happy as any little party of boys could be; and twisting a triumphant litter of slender saplings, they gaily bore little Amos on their shoulders back to the quiet Willington valley, proud of him as being the only boy they knew of who had been patted on the head by General Washington.

This little Amos, who was my husband's grandfather, took great pride in this incident to the day of his death, and often related it to his grandchildren. Many of them, as well as some of his own children now living, will vouch for the truth of this story; and the old oak tree is yet standing in the locality described.—MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON, in *July Wide Awake*.

Summer-Fallow.

Fallowing land was practiced by the Romans and has been practiced, more or less, ever since their time by every nation that has made any pretense to a knowledge of agriculture. Last century, it was the practice, in Europe, to raise two crops of grain and then let the soil lie fallow, plowed and cultivated but not sown, for one year. That rest and recuperation was considered necessary to prevent the too rapid exhaustion of the soil, and also to subdue the weeds and grass. The meaning of fallow, is plowing land, thereby giving it a light, yellow color, the color of the fallow-deer.

Farmers sometimes speak of two kinds of fallow, naked and green, by the latter meaning any kind of crop fed off or plowed under to increase the next crop, instead of being removed from the field. For many years in England and some other European countries, turnips have been sown and fed off by sheep on the land, for the benefit of the following crop. In this country, the clover crop is the important green manure for plowing under to improve the land, but in the way we treat it, we can hardly call it a green fallow. We usually raise it for one or two years for a crop of hay

or pasture and then plow it under when it has attained full growth, keeping the surface clean and mellow till seeding time, with harrow, cultivator, gang-plow or some other agitator of the soil.

We suppose farmers have, at least, two ends in view in plowing their land and allowing it to remain a naked fallow, during the hottest, driest season of the year; first to destroy weeds; secondly to accumulate material for the sustenance of the next crop.

The views, and consequently methods of farmers have changed somewhat since forty years ago. Then we aimed to put our teams to breaking up the fallow as soon as possible after they got through plowing for planting, so as to give the sod as long a time as possible to rot before plowing the second time, or otherwise the second plowing would turn up tough pieces of sod that would remain on the surface till after the wheat was harvested, and the ground plowed for another crop. The farmer also has in view the possibility of a severe summer drouth when the dry ground would become so hard it would be almost impossible to break it. We have known the ground to become so dry and hard that it was necessary to have a boy or man to ride the beam in places, to keep the plow in the ground and we have known dry stony ground to wear off a point in a single day.

A summer-fallow does afford an unusual opportunity for subduing weeds, such as Canada thistles, quack, dock, &c., as it gives us such a chance to tear them up by the roots, break them off, bury them under, and otherwise mangle them, when the sun is the hottest and the soil the driest. The farmer in his old methods of managing summer-fallows, evidently had some idea of mixing up the soil by his repeated plowings, as well as of subduing the weeds, and undoubtedly it did have that effect, as inverting the soil, three or four times in a little more than three months, must stir it up some, but we doubt whether the fallows were so thoroughly pulverized and intermixed under the old system as the new.

It seems to us that the modern system of summer-fallowing accomplishes the ends of a fallow much better than that of our fathers. As there is no intention of again inverting the sod, breaking it may be deferred until the clover has attained its full growth to turn under for green manure, or, if the clover-tops are considered more valuable for fodder, than manure, it may first be mowed, and the roots turned under for manure. After the sod is once inverted, the best of the various inventions for stirring and pulverizing the soil may be employed. None of them go so deep as the plow, but all work more rapidly and stir up the soil finer.

There is another purpose gained in summer-fallowing which we think is not generally considered, and that is the decomposition of chemical compounds in the soil for succeeding crops. To what extent this process goes on under the action of heat and moisture, stirring up the soil, and the contact of gases, we cannot tell, but that it must accomplish a considerable we can not doubt. The elements of plant-food, especially the inorganic elements, are so locked up in combination with other elements in the soil, that it takes time—centuries—to disintegrate and decompose them, and thus, when a field is lying through the summer season in fallow, some material must be accumulating for future crops. The question is, whether those materials would not accumulate as rapidly. If not more so, under the effects of a growing crop to be plowed under for manure, and waste much less. This question we may recur again.—*Rural Home*.

—Man may study nature, science and art, but he can never learn from them all what is the soul.

A Very Queer House.

There are few pleasanter places in Summer than the great square of Et-Meidaun at Constantinople. The tall gray pointed monument in the middle like a sentry watching over the whole place, the white houses along either side, the polished pavement, the high white walls and rounded domes, and all, slender towers, and cool shadowy gateways of the Turkish mosques make a very pretty picture, indeed.

Halting to look around, I suddenly espy a pair of yellow Turkish slippers a good deal worn, lying at the foot of a huge tree which stands alone in the midst of the open space. They are not flung carelessly down, either, as if their owner had thrown them away, but placed neatly side by side; just as an orderly old gentleman might put his slippers beside the fire before going out. And, stranger still, although at least half a dozen bare-footed Turk (who might think even an old shoe worth picking up) have passed by and seen them, not one of them ventured to disturb them in any way.

My Greek companion notices my surprise.

"Aha, Effendi! Don't you think he must have been a careless fellow who left his slippers there? See anything odd about this tree?"

"Nothing but that piece of board on which I suppose covers a hollow."

"That's just it," chuckles the Greek. "It covers a hollow, sure enough—look here Effendi!"

He taps thrice upon the "piece of board," which suddenly swings back like a door, disclosing to my astonished eyes, in the dark hollow, the long blue robe, white turban, and flowing beard of an old Turk.

"Peace be with you," says the old gentleman in a deep hoarse voice, nodding to my companion, whom he seems to know.

"With you be peace," answers the Greek. "You didn't expect that, did you, Effendi? It's not every day you find a man living inside a tree?"

"Does he live here, then?"

"To be sure he does. Didn't you see his slippers at the door? Nobody would touch the slippers for any money. They all know old Selim. He has a snug house, after all: and don't pay rent either."

In truth, the little place is snug enough, and certainly holds a good deal for its size. On one side is an earthen-water-jar, on the other a huge blanket-like cloak, which probable represents Mr. Selim's whole stock of bedding. A copper stew-pan is fixed to a spike driven into the wood, while just above it a small iron funnel neatly fitted into a knot-hole of the trunk, does duty as a chimney. Around the sides of the hollow hang a long pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a leathern wallet, and some other articles, all bearing marks of long service, while to crown all, my guide shows me, triumphantly outside the door, a wooden shelf with several pots of flowers—a garden that just matches the house.

Having given us this sight of his housekeeping, the old gentleman, who had been standing like a statue during the whole inspection, silently holds out his hand. I drop into it a double piastre (ten cents) and take my leave, reflecting that if it is good to be content with little, this old hermit is certainly a bit of a hero in this way.—DAVID KER in *Wide Awake*.

—The eighteenth anniversary of the Howard Mission and Home for Little Wanderers was held at the Academy of Music, which was densely crowded as usual on this anniversary. During the past year \$14,504 were expended by the institution in aiding outdoor poor and the parents of the mission children; 145 children were admitted during the year, and of this number 142 were placed either at business or in good homes; 4,360 families were visited, and assisted rendered to 3,000 needy children; 873 young men, women and children were also enrolled in the mission Sunday school.