

Humors of the Week.

Gen. Washington's Negro Body Servant.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The stirring part of this celebrated colored man's life properly began with his death—that it is to say the notable features of his biography begin with the first time he died. He had been little heard of up to that time, but since then we have never ceased to hear of him; we have never ceased to hear of him at stated, unfeigned intervals. His was a most remarkable career, and I have thought that its history would make a valuable addition to biographical literature. Therefore, I have collected the materials for such a work, from authentic sources, and here present them to the public. I have rigidly excluded from these pages everything of a doubtful character, with the object in view of introducing my work into the schools for the instruction of the youths of my country.

The name of the famous body servant of General Washington, was George. After serving his illustrious master faithfully for half a century, and enjoying throughout this long term his high regard and confidence, it became his sorrowful duty at last to lay that beloved master to rest in his peaceful grave by the Potomac. Ten years afterwards—in 1809—full of years and honors, he died himself, mourned by all who knew him. The Boston Gazette of that date thus refers to the event:

George, the faithful body servant of the lamented Washington, died in Richmond, Va., last Tuesday at the ripe age of 95 years. His intellect was unimpaired, and his memory tenacious, up to within a few minutes of his decease. He was present at the installation of Washington as President, and also at his funeral, and remembered all the incidents connected with those noted events.

From this period we hear no more of the favorite body servant of Gen. Washington until May 1825, at which time he died again. A Philadelphia paper thus speaks of this sad occurrence:

At Macon, Ga., last week, a colored man named George, who was the favorite body servant of General Washington, died, at the advanced age of 95 years. Up to within a few hours of his dissolution, he was in full possession of his faculties, and could distinctly remember the second installation of Washington, his death and burial, the surrender of Cornwallis, the battle of Trenton, the griefs and hardships of Valley Forge, etc., etc. Deceased was followed to the grave by the entire population of the city of Macon.

On the fourth of July, 1830, and also of 1834 and 1837, the subject of this sketch was exhibited in great veneration upon the rostrum of the orator of the day; and in November of 1840, he died again. The St. Louis Republican of the 25th of that month spoke as follows: ANOTHER RELIC OF THE REVOLUTION. GEORGE—George, once the favorite body servant of General Washington, died yesterday at the house of Mr. John Leavenworth in this city, at the venerable age of 95 years. He was in the full possession of his faculties up to the hour of his death, and distinctly recollected the first and second installations and death of President Washington, the surrender of Cornwallis, the battle of Trenton and Monmouth, the sufferings of the patriot army at Valley Forge, the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence, the speech of Patrick Henry in the Virginia House of Delegates, and many other reminiscences of stirring interest. Few white men die lamented as was this aged negro. The funeral was largely attended.

During the next ten or twelve years the subject of this sketch appeared at intervals at Fourth of July celebrations in various parts of the country, and was exhibited on the rostrum with flattering success. But in the fall of 1855, he died again. A California paper thus speaks of the event:

Another Old Hero Gone.—Died, at Dutch Flat, on the 7th of March, George, (once the confident body servant of General Washington), at the great age of 95 years. His memory, which did not fail him till the last, was a wonderful storehouse of interesting reminiscences. He could distinctly remember the first and second installations and death of President Washington, the surrender of Cornwallis, the battles of Trenton and Monmouth and Bunker Hill, the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence and Braddock's defeat. George was greatly respected in Dutch Flat and it was estimated that there were 10,000 people present at his funeral.

The last time the subject of this sketch died, was in June, 1854; and until we learn the contrary, it is just to presume that he died permanently this time. The Michigan papers thus refer to the very sorrowful event:

Another Cherished Remnant of the Revolution Gone.—George, a colored man, and once the favorite body servant of General Washington, died at Detroit last week at the patriarchal age of 95 years. To the moment of his death his intellect was unclouded, and he could distinctly remember the first and second installations and death of President Washington, the surrender of Cornwallis, the battles of Trenton and Monmouth and Bunker Hill, the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence, Braddock's defeat, the throwing over of tea in Boston harbor, and the landing of the Pilgrims. He died greatly respected, and was followed to the grave by a vast concourse of people.

The faithful old servant is gone. We shall never see him more, until he turns up again. He has closed his long and splendid career of dissolution, for the present, and sleeps peacefully, as only they sleep who have earned their rest. He was in all respects a remarkable man. He held his age better than any celebrity that has figured in history, and the longer he lived the stronger and longer his memory grew. If he lives to die again, he will distinctly recollect the discovery of America.

The above resume of his biography, I believe to be substantially correct, although it is possible he may have died in obscure places where the event failed of newspaper notice. One fault I find in all notices of his death which I have quoted, and this ought to be corrected. In them he uniformly and impartially died at the age of 95. This could not have been. He might have done this once, or may be twice, but he could not have done this indefinitely. Allowing that when he first died he died at the age of 95, he was 151 years old when he died last, in 1864. But his age did not keep pace with his recollections. When he died the last time, he distinctly remembered the landing of the Pilgrims, which took place in 1820. He must have been about twenty years old when he witnessed that event; wherefore it is safe to assert that the body servant of Gen. Washington was in the neighborhood of two hundred and sixty or seventy years old when he departed this life finally.

Having waited a proper length of time to see if the subject of this sketch had gone from us reliably and irrevocably, I now publish his biography with confidence, and respectfully offer it to a mourning nation. MARK TWAIN. P. S.—I see by the papers that this famous old fraud has just died again. This makes six times that he is known to have died, and always in a new place. The death of Washington's body servant has ceased to be a novelty; its charm has gone; the people are tired of it; let it cease. This well-meaning, but misguided negro, has now put six different communities to the expense of burying him in state, and has swindled tens of thousands of people into following him to the grave under the delusion that a select and peculiar distinction was being conferred upon them. Let him stay buried for good now; and let that newspaper suffer the severest censure that shall ever, in future time, be published to the world, that General Washington's favorite colored body servant had died again.

The following anecdote of the celebrated Anthony Malone, an eminent lawyer of the last century, and a distinguished member of the Irish House of Commons, will amuse many of our readers: "A naval officer having feed him to plead in his cause, when the cause came on Malons was absent. The officer was obliged to plead himself, and in the evening he waited on Malone to demand his fee back again. Malone said he had been engaged in some of the other courts, and by the etiquette of his profession such must be deemed a sufficient excuse.

"O, sir," said the officer, "no person can have a greater deference for professional etiquette than I have, and I shall never trouble you again respecting the fee; but, sir, the profession to which I belong has also etiquette, and of your profession, you shall submit to mine."

The officer accompanied the remark by producing a pair of duelling pistols. It may be unnecessary to say that in this instance Counsellor M. soon waived his professional etiquette and quietly returned the fee.

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Vol. 1. The Farm.

Early Cut Grass for Hay. The question as to the best time to cut grass for hay was discussed at the meeting of the Little Falls Fair-Club on the 1st of May. It will be seen by the extracts from the report on the discussion which we annex, that the members agree with the views so frequently expressed in the County Gentlemen:

Mr. Josiah Small said:—The best time for wintering dairy stock is to cut grass early in the season. I shall not say that the hay should consist of grass dried instead of letting it stand to become hay on the stalk. This practice of curing grass for dairy stock is obsolete, and I think it cannot be too highly commended. Expectations that I have made from early cut grass and its cutting, have satisfied me that the early cutting is the best for the stock. One will cut it up clean, while they will leave a part of that which is about ripe. Place the two kinds before the cattle and they will readily pick out the early cut grass. There is more weight in the late cutting, but it is not so nutritious, the additional weight being made up of woody fibre of little or no value to the stock.

Mr. Whiman called attention to the revolution which had taken place in reference to the cutting of hay, which he believed to have resulted from the action of the Little Falls Fair-Club. Farmers generally were in favor of cutting hay early. He asked the opinion of the club as to whether hay thus cut would keep the cows in perfect condition through the winter. Mr. Van Valkenburgh said that he kept thirty-one cows and cut his hay as recommended by the club. One of his neighbors kept hay, and cut late. His neighbor's cows were in much poorer condition than his, furnishing to the factory only about 50 pounds of milk more than his own.

The editor of the Canada Farmer-Jane, says:—"Timothy" left to ripen its seeds is too often the case, the juices being turned into woody fibre, and although in that state it will perhaps yield a heavier crop of hay, the hay is of a decidedly less nutritious value to the stock than if it had been cut early, when the grass was full of saccharine juices. In this respect, however, fault in a measure lies with the city town consumers of hay, who, knowing about the chemistry of nutritive value, continue to pay the highest price for that article of Timothy hay which contains the most nutritious value to the stock. When the prejudices exist against early cut hay has become dispensed through a better understanding on the part of the general public of nutritive value, as compared with cut woody fibre, we may expect to see a change for the better in the management of hay-making, and in the meantime let the farmer save the seed cut, well cured hay for his own use, and sell the other to city consumers. Chastauqua Journal.

Agricultural.—The poorest farmer the land, if unable to feed his cows, can always graze his shine.

Some Giants. In 1718 a French apothecary named Heron, endeavored to show great decreases in the height of men during the periods of the Crusades and the Christian Era. Adam, he said, was 125 feet 3 inches high; Eve, 100 feet 9 inches; Noah, 27 feet; Abraham, 20 feet; Moses, 18 feet.

Allegation about Adam's mode of burial, who affirm that he was buried in the earth, and that he overtopped the atmosphere, and that he touched the Arctic Pole with one foot, and the Antarctic with the other. Traditionary memorials of the great giants still exist in Palestine in the form of graves of enormous dimensions; as the grave of Abel near Sodom, which is 30 feet long; the grave of Methuselah, which is 20 feet long; and the grave of Noah, which is 70 feet in length.

Play says that by an earthquake Crete a mountain was opened, and was discovered a skeleton standing right, 46 cubits long, which was supposed to be that of Orion or Otus. The same author relates that in the time of Claudius Cæsar there was a man named Gaddaba, brought by that emperor from Arabia to Rome, who was 6 feet 4 inches high; "the tallest man has been seen in our times." The giant was called, he says, Gaddaba, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, whose bones were preserved in a museum in the 8th