

to religion must have been a great trial to his father: his mother would look at him with a half-mournful admiration and exclaim, "O Washington, if you were only good!"

The father conducted family prayers at nine o'clock in the evening; and Washington, in company with James K. Paulding, whose sister was his sister-in-law, used to steal away to the John-street Theatre, conveniently near, return in time to be present at the devotions, and then, retiring to his room, climb out through the window, down a roof to a back alley, and thus regain his place in the theatre before the "after-piece" was played.

He made slow progress in the regular studies at the schools, where the teaching seems to have been dull and perfunctory. At the age of ten he took the part of Juba in Addison's tragedy of "Cato," given at a school exhibition. When eleven he showed an absorbing passion for books of travel and voyages. "Robinson Crusoe," "Sindbad, the Sailor," and the collection of twenty volumes published under the title of "The World Displayed," were his special delight; and he used to carry them, one at a time, to school, and read them under his desk. When he was detected he was reprimanded, though his teacher praised him for his good taste in selection. He had no liking for mathematics, and frequently exchanged tasks with his schoolmates. He would write their compositions while they performed his problems. He had a great longing to see the world. He himself says:

"I was always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child, I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city, to the frequent alarm of my parents and the emolument of the town-crier. As I grew into boyhood, I extended the range of my observations. My holiday afternoons were