

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Some incidents of the home life of George Washington, extracted from "Mary and Martha Washington." Read at a meeting of Purchase Social Literary Circle Dec. 23, 1889.

Yesterday being the 157th anniversary of the birth of Washington, whom we regard as the Father of his country, and of whom it has been said, "Of all men that ever lived he was the greatest of good men and the best of great men." I thought this evening to ask you to turn over the pages of the history of our country at that eventful time and call your attention to some extracts from his life and words, and to those noble traits of character that made him what he was, particularly to the influence of the teachings of his mother and the self-sacrificing and enduring love of his wife. Washington himself attributed his success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education which he received from his mother. Her maiden name was Mary Ball, of whose youth and early womanhood very little is known. Her father appears to have been a well-to-do planter on the left bank of the Rappahannock River, near where its fresh waters co-mingle with the brine of Chesapeake Bay. She seems to have grown to womanhood in the serene and healthful seclusion of a well-ordered home in a sparsely settled country. Like most of the girls in the colony at that time, her attainments at book learning must have been acquired under the paternal roof, for early in the last century schools were almost unknown in that part of our country. Gov. Berkely had half a century before thanked God that there were no free schools nor a printing press in Virginia, and hoped there would not be in a hundred years. But her career indicated that she had secured at home an education for the higher duties of life of greater value and importance than any taught in schools. From her mother, who died in 1728, after a widowhood of many years, she had, doubtless, inherited the noblest quali-

ties of mind and heart, and had been taught all those domestic virtues of which cotemporary testimony and tradition tell us she was a bright exemplar — industry, frugality, integrity, strength of will and modesty, and with deep religious convictions. She was strengthened by an abiding faith in Divine promises, which made Mary, the mother of Washington, a model woman and yet

A creature not too good
For human nature's daily food.

She was married to Augustine Washington at the age of 24 years. His home plantation stretched along the Potomac River more than a mile, containing about 1,000 acres in the northern part of Westmoreland Co., Va.

The dwelling to which he took his young wife was a modest one, yet it ranked among the best of Virginia farm houses at that time.

It was in this modest home, on the banks of the Potomac, that George Washington was born in 1732. Prosperity blessed the happy pair—frugality and industry had prevailed in the household. Augustine Washington had managed his affairs prudently, had added acre to acre, but in April, 1743, he took a severe cold and died from its effect at the age of 49 years. This sad and unexpected affliction tried the character of Mary Washington by a sharp ordeal. She was then 37 years of age. Her brave heart never failed; she submitted to the Divine will with the strength of a philosopher and the trustfulness of a Christian. None knew the depth of her anguish from outward manifestations, nor the poignancy of the grief that assailed her heart and mind from any uttered word. Above all the tumults of emotion she heard the commands of duty and obeyed them. She had five children, the oldest (George) only 11 years old, who were left to her sole care and guidance. They were taught to be obedient and self-reliant, to be industrious, honest, just and truthful, to love God supreme