

with either human or veterinary pathology, if they will inform me, through the medium of your Magazine, if the horse be subject to the disease termed *Aneurism*, independent of external injury, and if so, in what parts of the animal it has been most commonly perceived, and what has been the most successful method of treatment.

Q.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine

SIR,
I WISH to be informed by some of your chemical correspondents, why it is that the sun's light has the effect of extinguishing the fires in our chambers. Does the union of the solar light with the air, indispose it to part with its *oxygen*, and why?

I am, Sir, yours, &c. C. D.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

LIFE OF GENERAL WASHINGTON, BY
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*Finis vite ejus nobis luctuosus, patria tristis,
extraneis etiam ignotisque non sine cura fuit.*

TACIT. IN AGRIC.

IN delineating the human character, it has been lamented that a warm imagination disregards reality, transforms men into angels, clothed with infallibility, and adorned with every virtue.

Human life is seldom represented in its true colours. The greatest characters are not without failings, which are rarely perceived in the picture of the poet, or in the production of the warm panegyrist: vices are shaded by delicate touches of the pencil, whilst the lustre of certain discriminative traits of character, or the admiration excited by honourable friendship, carefully conceals every forbidding feature. This art is not required in exhibiting the character of the illustrious Washington. Here nature stands forth in her noblest attitude. The eye, filled with admiration, surveys beauties of superior excellence. Each virtue demands its share. Much can the fullness of the heart suggest, but the pen falls from the hand, afraid to injure the original, by an imperfect sketch. Justice demands the pencil of a master. What utterance...What colouring of expression can satisfy a sympathy so keen, and so powerful as that which the death of this illustrious personage has created?

The benefactor of mankind, the deliverer of his country, the first of patriots, equally beloved in private as in public life...Excellence in different shapes crowds into the mind, and delicacy cannot be injured by the fondest oblations of a patriot heart.

Aware of the danger of offending by common-place sentiment, and sensible of the difficulty arising from an attempt at a strongly marked likeness, we shall only aim at a plain statement of facts, which, though fresh in the memory of all, will doubtless interest on this occasion.

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born of respectable parents, in Virginia, on the 22d of February, 1732. A useful domestic education expanded the powers of his mind, while a natural fondness for active life gave strength and vigour to his body; his soul early felt the enthusiasm of virtue, for he was taught morals as he was taught science. An education truly Spartan was his choice and delight. With martial toil, fatigue and danger, he longed to be familiar. Nor was he disappointed. At the age of 17, as a major in the militia, he finds a scene of activity adapted to his genius. On the banks of the Ohio, in 1754, he gained the first breathings of applause. Surrounded by the French and Indians he formed an entrenchment, and unable to sustain the attack, was forced to surrender.

The courage and address which he displayed as aid-de-camp to the unfortunate Braddock, gave no small addition to his fame; he had then reached the rank of Colonel; after the peace of Paris, in 1763, he retired to the shade of private life accompanied with the voice of well-merited applause.

Forgotten or neglected by that country, for which he so bravely fought, he attended to agricultural pursuits until that important era arrived when the authority of England was questioned; when a general indignation against her violent measures roused the colonists to seek redress. Washington again appears on the theatre of public life, and was appointed a delegate to that dignified Congress (assembled in September, 1747)

whose grand design was, to establish a pure representative government, which was to secure and perpetuate the liberties of man.

On the 15th of June, 1775, when measures of resistance were adopted, and the era of the revolution began to dawn, he was appointed Commander in Chief of those forces which were destined to obtain the Independence of America.

His intrepidity, his sound judgment and patriotic attachment to liberty, made the vote in his favour unanimous. He accepts the appointment with that modesty which ever accompanies true greatness, and with that disinterestedness which despises every pecuniary consideration, when the independence of his country is at stake.

He joins the army at Cambridge amidst acclamations of enthusiasm and the shouts of liberty. His courage, his prudence, and his military skill during a seven years' war, are sufficiently known. America was without an army... she had neither arms, nor ammunition, nor discipline. The genius of Washington overcomes every embarrassment, forms to discipline fifteen thousand men, habituates them to the toils of war, and finds stores and supplies at a time when the whole army had of powder but a few rounds a man.

Washington knew how to brave as well as to avoid danger. At Turtle Bay his army suffered a shameful flight, losing the spirit and the very name of soldiers: he hazards his person in the rear, in expectation, at least, of an honourable death. Leonidas-like, with his handful of men, he would convince the Britons that the Americans, like the Spartans, preferred death to slavery.

Retiring beyond the Delaware, with not more than two thousand men, by his serene and firm conduct, he kept alive the spirit of independence; and roused fresh springs of action. Cowards prayed for the opportunity of redeeming their character. The snow was tinged with the blood of those bare-legged Americans, who, inspired by his example, rushed from all quarters to share the immortal glory of the combats of Princeton and Trenton.

By his influence he kept together his little band, and invigorated them to resistance; and, by his well digested plans, he baffled the deep-concerted schemes of the British Cabinet. The reluctant hand of the veteran Cornwallis, is forced to deliver the sword to him, to whom the pride of Britons had refused to give the name of General.

When the military scene was closed,

when peace presented her cheery visage, he resigns that commission he so much honoured (in December, 1783) delivers an account, in his own hand writing, of the money he expended during the war, and hastens to the shades of his chosen retreat.

Here he remained, whilst the new Constitution, the basis of the Laws, agitated the public mind. Altho' he had resolved not to quit his private station, yet, when the Constitution of 1789 was adopted, the love of his Country, overcame his fondness for retirement, and he accepted the office of President under the new form of Government, to which he was called by the general voice of a grateful Country.

It would require the pen of a Tacitus to describe the feelings of American hearts on this momentous occasion. Yet in the midst of the praise of ten thousand tongues he preserves a calmness which scarcely discovers a heart susceptible of that darling passion so natural to man.

A sword, transmitted as a present from the late Frederick of Prussia, with this inscription, "from the oldest to the greatest General in the world," was received with a modest composure of countenance, which no hero in a similar situation ever preserved.

Let us scrutinize the characters of ancient and modern times, and as a skilful general, where shall we find his superior? Genius and prudence were his. Posterity may not rank him with a Condé or Turenne, but we know that it is not in the power of fancy to conceive a train of more imminent dangers, or more dreadful fatigue, than he often experienced. More than once he was deserted by his men; on all sides appeared disaffection and dismay... he often had to seek a retreat in the woods, from the force of superior numbers, yet while his heart was torn with anguish, his coolness and intrepidity supported him under the most trying circumstances. The unshaken spirit of so young a commander gave courage to the weakest and inspired them with a resolution to conquer, or die.

He had ambition, but not the ambition of a Cæsar. His was a subordinate passion, regulated by the principles of political justice. No crime sullies his character. He recalled the unfortunate from banishment, and opened the prison gates when the fear of being enslaved, no longer existed. His humanity is unimpeached; no barbarous punishment recalls him to sad-dening memory. If in one instance he severed the cords of affection, it was demanded

by the laws of war, by the authoritative voice of natural preservation.

It was the love of his country which made him choose the profession of arms, and cherishing this principle, the fairest prospect of aggrandizement could not seduce him from the path of integrity. Guided by principles of invincible probity, he abhorred every illicit means to obtain wealth, and would not suffer his mind to be contaminated by the love of riches.

During the chequered scene of a protracted war, of which he was the very soul and existence, no blood wantonly streamed on his theatre of glory. It was the constant wish and prayer of his heart that the sword might be sheathed, as soon as justice would resume her balance, and freedom be secured. The latter he wished to exhibit in her purest robes, not polluted with the crimson vestments of cruelty. An honourable and defensive plan of operations softened the rancour of the enemy, while the sounds of just complaints unstrung the most flinty heart.

Great as his character is as a warrior, as a statesman it is equally great. According to the opinion of the philosophic Hume, the founders of Empires are entitled to the greatest approbation. In this view Washington has the praise of an admiring world. Trained in the school of experience, and constantly employed in contemplating man as he is, he possessed a quality of the first importance to one in his exalted station... that of discerning the characters and designs of men. It is said by some who knew him well, that he was seldom deceived in a character.

His integrity secured the most perfect confidence. Despotism, though sanctioned by time and legitimated by precedent, was, in his view, the source of the depraved and corrupt morals which blacken the face of human nature. His influence extended to the very bosom of the woods, and reconciled the jarring interests of the States. Revering the government of laws, he knew his trust and the people's rights, and was ready to oppose every attempt on constitutional liberty. When party spirit led to insurrection, his zeal was aroused, he quit his favourite abode to discharge the duties of a public station, and he was known by his grey hairs, at the head of true Americans, securing the unprotected gates of unsuspecting liberty. Unconnected with party, and studying only the welfare of the republic, he gained the esteem of all. Convulsion ceases and faction disappears.

Nor foreign, nor domestic influence could tempt him to sacrifice the interests

of his country. His praise as a senator extends as far as oceans roll. His merit is appreciated in every part of the civilized world, while a cloud of living witnesses glow with the recollection of his valour in the field, and his wisdom in the cabinet.

As the actions of Washington do honour, so his writings do justice to human nature. They discover a mind endowed with strong powers and fraught with great clearness of conception. Little solicitous for fame as an author, he only indulged his reflections on those subjects which so deeply concerned the cause in which he was engaged. An honest zeal adorns his letters. The nature of government was his important study, and from the mutilated ruins of a gothic building, his genius constructed an edifice, which, it is hoped, posterity will long strive to preserve, and keep in order.

If we view him as one of the great family of a common father, his character is still brighter. He equally avoided the wild phrenzy of enthusiasm, and the grovelling spirit of superstition. He had formed the most worthy conceptions of the duty, and his religion was of that pure and practical kind, which tends to increase the wisdom and virtue of man. Who, but a Washington, could have said, that there is but one religion throughout the United States, with some slight shades of difference. He worshipped in the Episcopal church, yet the virtuous man, the good member of society, was dearest to him, whether of this or that denomination. He was deeply convinced of the utility of religion, and his example has shown, that he was its best friend.

In the tented field, before and after the battle's rage, he has been seen to bow the knee, and pour forth grateful effusions to the governor of the universe:—what few warriors have done amidst the strife of arms, he preserved his sincerity to God, and philanthropy to man.

If we view Washington in private life, we find traits of character which all must admire. His virtues were as solid as his talents. His temper was regular and subject to no improper impulses. His house was the abode of hospitality. The unfortunate patriot from a foreign clime, the man of science or of virtue is sure to find a gracious reception. What feelings does it create when we picture to ourselves the conqueror of English valour, the author of the independence of America, like Cincinnatus, at his plough, giving an example of agricultural industry to those brave

soldiers who shared with him the dangers of a seven years' war.

He did not, like Charles the fifth, retire from the theatre of public life, to immerse himself in the walls of a cloister, but to promote the useful arts, and practise those virtues which adorn the man and the citizen.

He regarded agriculture as the basis on which rests the prosperity and happiness of a nation, and considered it his duty, as it was his pleasure, to become a farmer. The cultivation of a large tract of land, the rearing of cattle, the art of improved husbandry, occupied much of his time; no hour passed in inactivity. He rose at an early hour, and spent the day in observing the task of manual labour, in reading, or conversation with intelligent men. In summer the fields are covered with waving corn, the sound of cattle is heard in the woods, orchards of wholesome fruit surround the spot where Washington spent the evening of his days.

Here a circumstance presents itself, which cannot be overlooked. While he was in office, letters were published, said to be intercepted, addressed to his wife and friends; dressed in a plausible garb, every art was employed to make them appear genuine, and thus tarnish his courage and his fame. The dignity of his situation would not stoop to a defence. Secure in virtue, Fabricius-like, he stands on his own ground, and lends a deaf ear to the clamours of prejudice. As soon, however, as he found himself in retirement, as a mere farmer and simple citizen, he convinces the world that the letters are not genuine, silences every breath of suspicion; and calumny at last joins in the burst of general praise.

This benefactor of mankind, although his manners bordered on coldness and reserve, was above resentment: malice itself could not charge his conversation with vanity. If a stranger to the finer feeling, he was ever ready for the exercise of the useful virtues, for removing or mitigating distress. The honest man never solicited his succour in vain.

He was seized with an inflammatory sore throat (cynanche trachealis), and after an illness of twenty-four hours, he terminated his mortal existence, in the sixty-eighth year of his age (15th February, 1799, 24th year of American independence). Having confidence in God, and cherishing the hope of immortality, he looked forward without fear, not a symptom of impatience or of murmur was observed. The consciousness of virtue

was the vital air, which, in his last moments, spread a serenity over his soul.

You have seen...you have felt the burst of sorrow which his death has created. His was like the death of an illustrious Roman, no one in hearing it showed any joy...no one forgets that he is no more. The scholar resigns the amusement of vacation, and gives vent to sorrow. The aged appear to endure the severest stroke of adverse fortune, and the young, the pangs of the most disastrous love.

As Plato thanked Heaven that he was born in the time of Socrates, so we ought to be grateful that we live in the time of this great hero, and breathe the free air of this fortunate land.

If, in heaven, spirits recognize each other; if, there, memory still recalls the scenes of this world, what would it be to associate with a Washington! Until then, may the sharers in his earthly glory reflect lustre on his memory, by imitating his example. The spirit of Washington will smile, from heaven, on his countrymen, bowing before the altar of celestial peace.

The fame of this great man will be transmitted from son to son through distant years, though the verse of the muse should be lost, though the monuments, erected to his memory, be covered with moss.

While suns warm, and oceans roll, this benefactor of the human race shall never be forgotten.

“For if we take him but for all in all,
We ne'er shall look upon his like again.”

SKETCH OF BENSERADE,

THE FRENCH POET.

NOBODY perhaps ever had a quicker wit than the person of whom we are about to speak: this vivacity which broke forth in the first years of his infancy, continue without failing to the end of his life.

Isaac De Benserade was born at Lions, a city of Normandy, near Rouen. His father was grand master of the waters and forests, and we have also been informed that one of his ancestors has been chamberlain to one of our kings, and governor of the castle of Milan. By the mother's side, he was allied to the families of Vignerot and De la Porte. This descent, united with the liveliness of his wit, admitted him to a familiarity with the greatest noblemen of the court, by whom he was tenderly beloved, and who were no less anxious to gain his friendship than he was to pay attention to them.

The day before he was to be confirmed he was introduced to the bishop who was