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CHAPTER IV.

THE BEAUTIFUL PHANTOM.

I mechanically sought the door and was startled, indeed, upon suddenly encountering Burton, who was leisurely pacing up and down the north balcony. He noticed my astonishment, laughing, and motioned me to be seated upon the balcony railing.

"Did you enjoy yourself?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, "I did; but whether I enjoyed a dream or a reality I cannot determine. This is an enchanted house where a person is deluded into passing through all these things, or were those actual spirits gathered together on a festal occasion?"

"Those were the shades of the people who once lived here," replied Burton. "They were here to celebrate a popular family anniversary, and also to receive in becoming state a person, who, you have undoubtedly heard, is destined to work out an important mission in connection with the house."

"That means me, I presume," said I. "But what," I asked, "is this mission, this all-saints' mission—that I have heard referred to so many times within the past few hours?"

"It has been ordained that others should acquaint you with the necessary information," replied Burton. "Besides, the most mysterious part of the mission has been studiously kept secret from me. Everything will undoubtedly be made plain to you as you need to proceed."

The glorious prospect of the waking day, as the sun's great orb slowly crept out of the eastern void, fixed our attention and stayed our words for a spell, and we drank in the radiant effect in silence.

When the sun had crept up its length or so along the firmament, Burton arose and said that he must leave me for the day, as he had to go to a neighboring village on a business errand. He informed me that dinner would be ready for me at noon, and that if I got lost some the old family library had a rich store of the wherewith to while away the time. Then he wished me a pleasant morning and left me in charge of my mission.

For an hour or so I walked around the lonely old place. Sadly neglected had it been for years. Becoming tired at length of the dreadful dullness of the place, I sought the library, as Burton had directed. The door had been shut so long that it came open with difficulty, but finally yelched and I walked in.

The room was filled with easy chairs, writing desks and various-sized bookcases. Opening one of the latter, I drew forth a quaint little volume that had attracted my attention through the glass front, and opened it. A small parcel fell to the floor. I picked this up to see what it contained. A large white rose, dried and pressed from having been in the book, and musty with age, was disclosed, but from it even then issued a delicate fragrance that wasarming to the sense. The stem of this rose was unusually attached by a small blue ribbon to a thick piece of pretty note paper, upon the opposite side of which were written some verses headed with the words, "To Zeyna," and signed by Burton Arold. I was so curious as to read these verses. They were as follows:

Of all the flowers, dear, that grow
Upon the fertile sod,
The fragrant white rose is, I know,
Sweet as the smile of God;
As sweet, Zeyna, thy nature true,
As sweet as thou, how few!

Then take this rose and wear it where
Thou calet the hanging sheen
The dair, along thy raven hair,
Or glances bright in eyes,
The lashes of thy tender eyes
And on thy fair cheek lies

Wear it, love, where thy breath, twice
sweat.

Can kiss its fragrant leaves;

Look on them, think my, dear, to meet
Me'neath the hanging eaves

Or the rose, now, now, now,

Prepared for secret flight.

I fell to musing upon this little relic of Burton's courtship which had been cut short so he had told me by the death of Zeyna. But I was disturbed presently by a slight step upon the floor. Started, I looked up at the

Angel of light! Dream of spiritual loveliness! Was heaven at hand, and was the queen thereof standing within the gates? Thus I, indeed, thought for the moment.

I had seen beauty before in this wonderful world, both upon the painter's canvas and in reality; I have seen it since; I had seen it the night before among the apparitions of the spiritual reverie; but may the beings that people paradise be one-half so lovely as the radiant spirit maiden who stood so divinely there in that ancient and dusty library.

My wildest, most indulged flights of imagination were eclipsed in that face and form. I knelt in an ecstasy of rapture, the goddesses of beauty, Maids of Venus and, with a slight halo about the head, long, loosely flowing tresses, a pale, sweet pur- face; tender, luscious eyes, that seemed to melt the very soul with sympathy and rapture; a divinely perfect form, moulded exquisitely within the transparent folds of a great zephyr mantle of pure white—thus stood the spirit before me!

I endeavored to speak but the phantom placed a finger upon her lips and shook her head.

Turning out of the room, and beckoning me to follow, she flitted down the hall, through several bare rooms, then into a small office in a wing of the building. Here she stopped by the side of a narrow door which she motioned me to open. It led us into a vault, set in the side of which was a rusty iron box, with its lid slightly ajar. The phantom signified a desire to have this opened, and with the aid of an iron key, the lid found upon the floor I pried the door back. A roll of parchment fell out. I started to open this, but she shook her head, and placing her finger against the dark side of the vault, traced, in pale phosphorescent letters, that faded away almost as fast as she wrote, this sentence: "My intrusting to you this paper is a part of your preordained fate; it is a part of your mission here; do not open it until you are well acquainted with the object of the mission." With this she bowed her thanks and vanished.

CHAPTER V.

THE INVESTIGATORS.

I hurried back out of the vault, for it was a cold, dismal place, and looking in my traveling valise the document intrusted to me, sought the open air just in time to see a posse of men ride up on

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

INTERESTING INCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE.

Washington and the Spy—How He Subdued a Whole Band of Rioters—The Great Man's Mother—Remembering His Two Pretty Sisters—Portrait of Washington, Etc.

Our Country's Sire.

It has now been ninety-three years since the death of George Washington. During that long period many brilliant reputations have shone upon us for awhile, only to fade away and lapse into oblivion. His name retains all its interest for us, and probably more people have been particularly occupied late with his career, his policies and its records than ever before.

At the great sale of Washington memorials, held in Philadelphia, the prices paid even for trifling objects once possessed by the great man and his family were extraordinary.

A legal document relating to the execution of his will, which his hand had never touched, brought fifty dollars, and an autograph letter eighty-five.

A list of his slaves, written and signed by his own hand, brought four hundred and fifty dollars. Two of his memorandum books closely written brought eight hundred dollars. His family Bible was sold for seven hundred and sixty dollars, and books from his library, containing his signature or that of his wife, commanded prices varying from sixty dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars each.

Pieces of piano music which had been played by Miss Custis brought considerable sums, and a dinner invitation was sold for eighteen dollars.

The sale attracted universal attention, and every one lamented that the whole collection had not been bought by Congress and deposited at Mount Vernon,

Morristown. The adjutant general found out the rogue and asked Gen. Washington if he would not have him arrested.

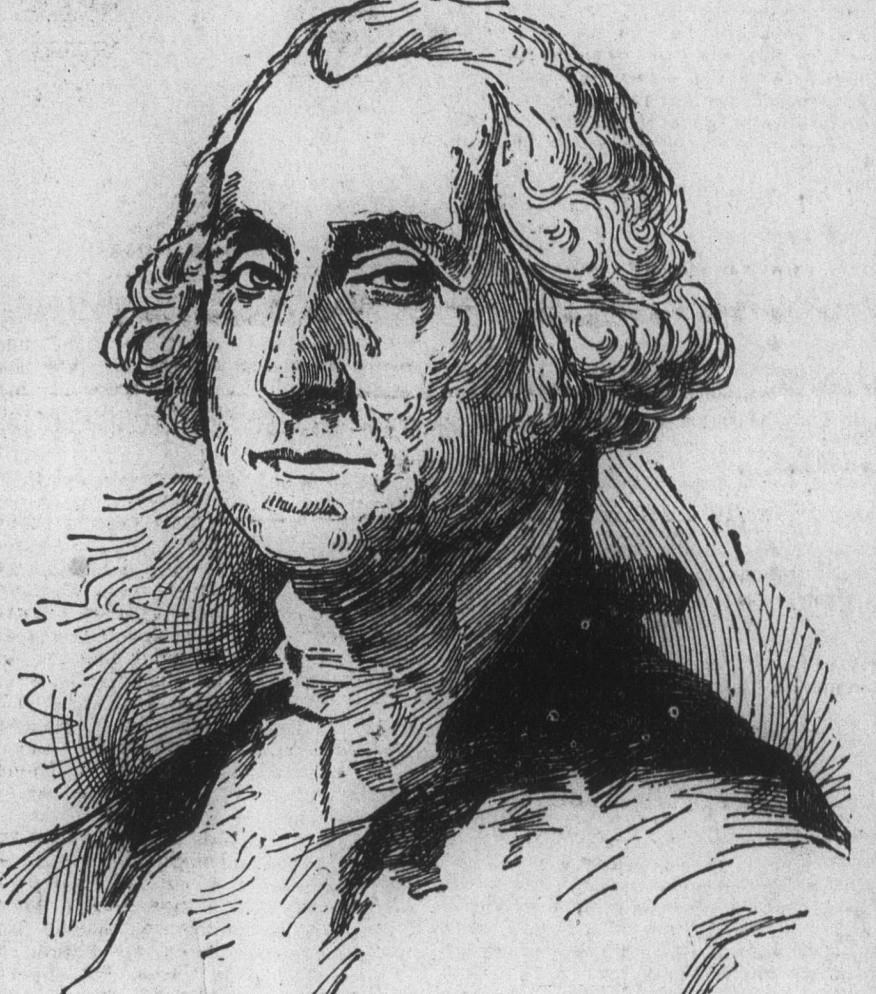
No, said the crafty Virginian—and here I quote from Boudinot—"but ordered him to go home and immediately to draw returns from every brigadier in the army of the number of his brigades, making the army to consist of about 12,000 effective men, etc.; to place these in the pigeon-holes on his desk, and then get introduced to the spy and to invite him to lodge with him—to endeavor to get him to sup with him alone. About 9 o'clock in the evening to have an orderly sergeant to call on him with positive orders that the adjutant should attend the general in haste. That then he should make an excuse to the gentleman suspected as a spy and leave him alone about half an hour. This was done, and in this interval, as was suspected, the spy took a copy of the returns and next morning went off with them to New York. This convinced Gen. Howe that we were too strong to be attacked, and saved us through the winter."

Prof. Hosmer, who has written so well about Sir Henry Vane and Samuel Adams, thinks that Adams and Franklin did not behave quite right in the matter of Gov. Hutchinson's letters, which put Massachusetts in the hands of the patriots. But here is George Washington, who "could not tell a lie," making his brigadiers all tell one.—Boston Advertiser.

The Testimony of Time.

The people of these United States this year celebrate the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of George Washington's birth. Every intelligent and patriotic citizen will recall with pride the influence of his triumphs in war, his accomplishments as the first President of the Republic, his superb character as a man.

The visible results of the policy inaugurated under his executive approval



GEORGE WASHINGTON.

where it could have been seen by every pilgrim to that sacred shrine.

There is a special reason for this vivid survival of his celebrity, apart from his services to his country and his singularly varied and interesting career.

From his boyhood to the last week of his life he was a profuse writer. As soon as he could write well enough, he kept a book into which he copied anything that pleased or impressed him in his reading, and carefully entered his early alphabets and surveys, a book that is preserved to the present day.

During his first journey in the wilderness of Virginia, when he was but 16, he kept a pretty full journal, the entries of which the schoolmaster of the day could not have been easy on such a tramp.

In a similar way, but in greater detail, he recorded his early marches and campaigns, one of which was published both in England and America.

From the day when he took command of the revolutionary army at Cambridge, his own letters and orders, his reports to Congress and other official documents are the imperishable record of his public actions, as well as the most correct exhibition of his character.

His own writings must ever remain the true record of his life. Nothing can refute or supersede them. His confidential letters to his brother, to his secretary, to his steward and to his servants, as well as the more formal epistles addressed to the President of Congress, all tell the same story and exhibit the same man, one who was intent on discharging every trust, and fulfilling every duty with punctuality and completeness.

Presents for Fatty and Folly.

When Washington returned to Philadelphia after his trip to the East, in 1789, he stopped at Uxbridge, Mass., and was entertained at the home of Samuel Taft. The old homestead, with the great oak before the door, remains yet in possession of the family, preserved in commemoration of the distinguished son.

Washington was so well pleased with his reception and entertainment at Uxbridge that he wrote the following letter to Mr. Taft, which is carefully preserved in the family:

HARTFORD, Nov. 8, 1789.

Sir—Being informed that you have given my name to one of your sons, and called another after Mrs. Washington's family (Landbridge) and being moreover very much pleased with the modest and innocent looks of your two daughters, Patty and Lucy, and their manners, I send you each of these girls a piece of chain and to Lucy, who bears the name of Mrs. Washington, and who waited upon us to call on Polly did I send five guineas, with which she may buy herself any little ornaments she may want. I send you also a piece of iron in many manner more agreeable to herself.

As I do not give these things with a view to have it talked of, or even to its being known, the less there is said about the matter the better it will please me; but that I may be sure the chintz and money have got equal to their value, I will send you a bill of exchange to New York, to be paid to you when you receive this letter.

And does it not make you nervous and irritable?" was my next query.

"Not at all," he replied; "on the contrary, a spell of composition exhilarates me like the drinking of champagne. I never feel depressed or gloomy except when idle."

One fancies Sir Walter Scott did not make a bad husband, and he worked about as hard as most men. Depend upon it, the marriage of a literary man is as much of a lottery as any other man is as of a woman.

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Washington and the Spy.

It is painful to find that the father of Washington's character. He actually played a trick on Sir William Howe, and made him believe he had 12,000 men in his army about Morristown, when he had but 3,000.

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