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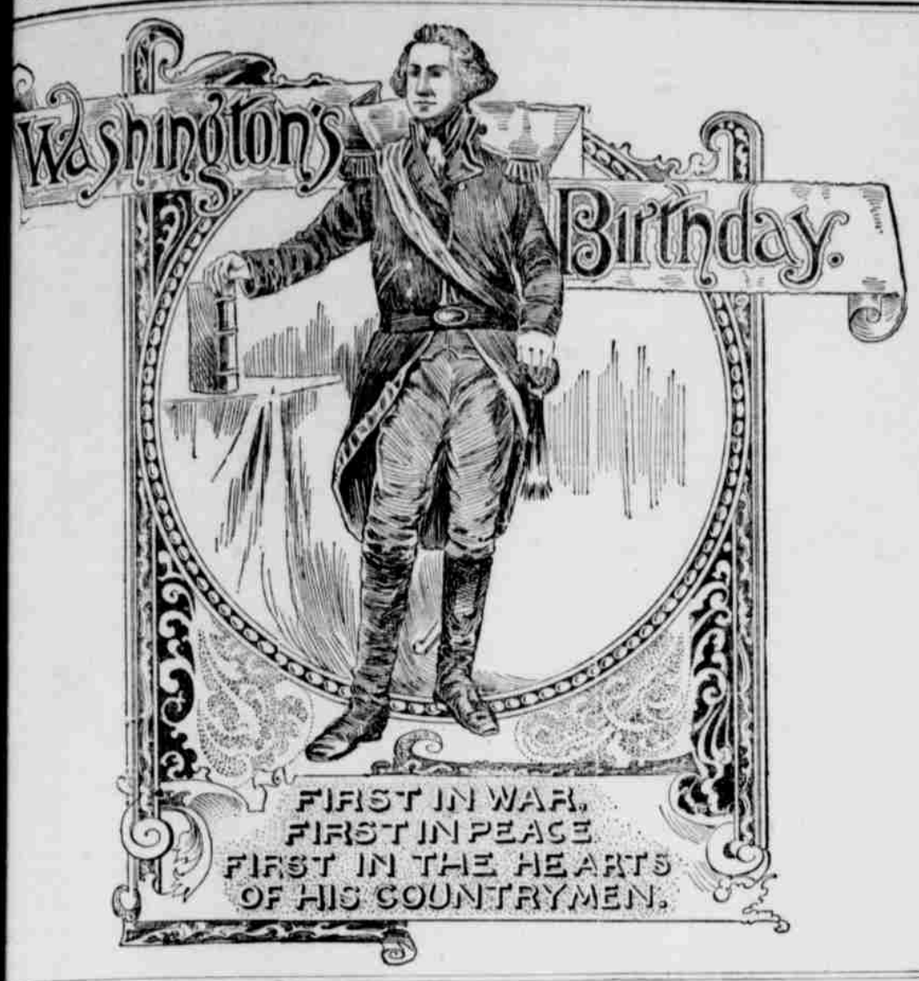
Part Two.

THE COPPER COUNTRY EVENING NEWS.

PAGES.....5 TO 8.

Vol. VI. Calumet, Houghton County, Michigan, Saturday, February 22, 1896. No 82.



VALLEY FORGE.

VALLEY Forge is a rough piece of ground on the banks of the Schuylkill, twenty-one mile from Philadelphia and six from the nearest large town. As mere land, it is not worth much. But if the Pass of Thermopylae is classic ground, Valley Forge is classic. If there is one spot on this continent more fit than any other for national and sufficient monument to the patriotism and to the men of the American revolution, it is Valley Forge. I do not refer merely to the hunger, thirst and cold endured there by eleven thousand soldiers, after an exhausting campaign in the field. The worst of all that misery was over in six weeks. The suffering was acute while it lasted, but it was followed soon by comparative abundance; then by the cheering news of the French alliance; then by the flight of the enemy from Philadelphia, and the swift pursuit of them by Gen. Washington. What the troops endured there would alone make the place forever interesting to posterity. But Valley Forge means more than that. It witnessed some of the most important and striking scenes in the war. It was there, too, through the constancy and tireless energy of the commander-in-chief, that the cause was saved and final victory made possible. The selection of the ground was itself a piece of noble generalship, as daring as it was wise. The occupation of Philadelphia by the British had filled every other town of Pennsylvania with refugees. The middle of December had passed before the army had repulsed the last demonstration of the British, and afforded the American commander a breathing time to consider the questions of his winter quarters. Then he said, in substance, to the troops: Since there is no town for us to retire to, let us create a town for ourselves, here, close to the enemy, limiting his range, curtailing his supplies, protecting Pennsylvania and holding ourselves ready to resume the aggressive as soon as he abandons the city, in which he will be by us practically besieged. He chose Valley Forge, a deep cleft in a fifty hill, with a stream at the bottom of it emptying into the Schuylkill. There was nothing in this valley for human use except the primeval forest that densely covered it and the streams of water that flowed by and through it. But Washington, himself well skilled in woodcraft, commanded soldiers most of whom had built or inhabited log-cabins. When he told them that log huts could be quickly made warm and dry, he said what they all knew to be true. He also knew precisely what was necessary for the construction of the huts, what tools were needed and what materials. His order of December 18, 1777, transformed the whole army into a cabin-building set. Every man had his place and duty, from the major-generals to the drummers. All the tools were fairly divided; each regiment had its ground assigned it; the streets and intervals were marked out, and when the work was begun the valley was alive with busy builders.

VALLEY FORGE TO-DAY.

Each colonel divided his regiment into parties of twelve, gave them their share of axes and shovels, and let them know that they were building a home for themselves. A cabin was to be occupied by twelve men. Gen. Washington added the stimulant of a reward to the party that should build the best hut. An order of the day had this interesting passage:

"As an encouragement to industry and art, the general promises to reward the party in each regiment which finishes its hut in the quickest and most workmanlike manner with twelve dollars. And as there is reason to believe that boards for covering the huts may be found scarce and difficult to be got, he offers one hundred dollars to any officer or soldier who, in the opinion of three gentlemen that he shall appoint as judges, shall substitute some other covering that may be cheaper and more quickly made, and will in every respect answer the end."

The huts were fourteen feet by sixteen, and six and a half feet high. The officers' huts were ranged in a line behind those of the soldiers, and only generals were accorded the convenience of having a whole house to themselves. Gen. Washington inhabited a cabin of one room until later in the season, when a second was added for the accommodation of Mrs. Washington. He said, in another order of the day, that "the general himself will share in the hardships and partake of every inconvenience."

It does not appear that any one invented a better roofing than slabs, nor has any one recorded what company of soldiers won the twelve-dollar prize. We only know that the cabin-building was begun early in the morning of December 19, and that most of the army would have eaten their Christmas dinner in their cabins if there had been any Christmas dinner to eat. It was just then that the worst of the starving time began. While the men were building their cabin city they lived chiefly upon cakes made of flour and water, and there was a lamentable scarcity of all the most necessary supplies—shoes, clothes, blankets and straw. Nothing saved the army from dissolution but the fiery remonstrances and energetic action of the commander-in-chief. There is preserved at Philadelphia a hand-bill issued by him while the army was building its huts. In this he notified the farmers to thrash out their grain with all convenient speed, on pain of having the sheaves seized by the commissaries and paid for at the price of straw. The conduct of the commander during these agonizing weeks can only be estimated aright by persons familiarly acquainted with the circumstances. No man ever gave a higher example either of fortitude or wisdom; and it was directly through the exercise of those virtues by him that the army was saved. While the men were busy building, news was brought to the camp that a force of the enemy was approaching. The troops were in such dire need of food and shoes that they were unable to stir. There was not a pound of meat in the camp, and not a ration of flour per man. It was while he was contending with such difficulties as these that the intrigue to supplant the general was most active and the clamor loudest for a winter campaign.

"I can assure those gentleman," wrote the general, "that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow without clothes or blankets."

This dispatch to the president of congress abounds in force and pathos, and shows how much better a writer its author was than any man who ever wrote for him. If I were asked to mention the finest exhibition that a commander has ever given of great qualities, both of heart and mind, I should answer: Washington at Valley Forge. One unexpected consolation that he enjoyed at this period was the affectionate enthusiasm of Lafayette, then just recovering from his wound received at Brandywine. The young and ardent Frenchman, in his letters to his wife and family, gives the warmest expression to his love and admiration. He speaks of Washington as a man expressly "made for" the work he was doing, he alone having the patience and tact to conciliate the discordant elements.

"Every day," wrote the marquis, "I admire more the beauty of his character and of his soul. Jealous intriguers wish to tarnish his reputation, but his name will be revered in all ages by every one who loves liberty and humanity."

Many such passages, written in one of the log-cabins of Valley Forge, I notice in the family letters of the youthful enthusiast. In such circumstances, the American army was reconstructed, reinforced, becomingly clad, well drilled, and at last abundantly supplied, while the English were circumscribed so closely that it required two regiments to escort a foraging party, if it went more than two miles into the country. Valley Forge it was that rendered the possession of Philadelphia a trap instead of a capture. June 18, 1778, Gen. Washington received information that the British had secretly and suddenly evacuated Philadelphia. He was in such perfect readiness for the news, that, within an hour, six brigades were on the march for the Delaware river. The next day, he himself joined the advance. Ten days after the first troops left their cabins in Pennsylvania, he fought the battle of Monmouth, which turned their retreat into a flight and shut them up in New York. If neither congress nor Pennsylvania shows an inclination to possess the scene of so many memorable events, then let some patriotic capitalist convert it into a summer resort,

WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT VALLEY FORGE.

carefully restoring the old camp roads, marking all the sites and making the place an object-lesson in history.—James Parton in New York Ledger.

Washington's Farming Operations.

Washington inherited Mount Vernon in 1759 from his half-brother, Lawrence Washington, who died in 1757. This brother had a daughter Sarah, who was heiress to the estate, but she died two years later and the property then reverted to George, who was then just 27 years old. The estate then comprised less than 3,000 acres, but soon after he came into possession he added 5,500 acres by purchase, which gave him ten miles of river front. Then began the system of improvements and cultivation which subsequently made Mount Vernon the most valuable landed property in Virginia. He drained the land wherever needed, he rotated crops, got the best farm implements then in existence, built and repaired fences, had his grist mill, his own distillery, had his own smithy for repairing tools, his own carpenter shop, looms, and he built scores of houses and cabins for his slaves. His five farms ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 acres each, and each farm had its overseer and its allotment of negroes and stock.

HIS LAST HOUR.

Tobias Lear's Narrative of How Washington Died.

The most interesting chapter of Washington Irving's "Life of Washington" is the narrative of the last hours of the hero, detailed by his faithful private secretary, Tobias Lear. Dec. 12, 1799, Gen. Washington rode over his estate and exposed himself to the severity of an unusual winter storm. On the night of Dec. 13 he was taken ill with ague, sore throat, and difficulty of breathing. The next morning he sent for his family physician, Dr. Craik of Alexandria, and, pending his arrival, he ordered his overseer, Rawlins, to bleed him. This task Rawlins performed very reluctantly, but the general insisted, and a half-pint of blood was taken from his arm. In addition a gargle was prepared for his throat and external applications were made to the throat, and a warm foot bath was given, but no relief came. Dr. Craik arrived between 8 and 9 o'clock and with him came Drs. Dick and Brown. Additional bleeding was resorted to by the doctors and other remedies given. Washington told his wife to get his two wills and ordered her to burn one of them, it being revoked by the other. Mr. Lear then continues his narrative as follows:

"After this was done I returned to his bedside. He said to me: 'I find I'm going. My breath can not last long. I believed from the first that the disorder would prove fatal.' He told me to arrange his accounts and settle his books. I told him I hoped he was not so near his end. He observed, smiling, that he certainly was, and as it was the debt which we must all pay he looked to the event with perfect resignation.

"In the course of the afternoon he appeared to be in great distress from the difficulty of breathing, and frequently changed his position in the bed. I endeavored to raise him and turn him with as much ease as possible. 'I am afraid I fatigue you too much,' the general would say. Upon being assured to the contrary he observed gratefully: 'It is a debt we must pay to each other, and I hope when you want aid of this kind you will find it.'

"About 5 o'clock his old friend, Dr. Craik, came to his room. 'Doctor,' he said, 'I die hard, but I am not afraid to go. I believed from my first attack that I should not survive it. My breath can not last long.' The doctor pressed his hands in silence, retired from the bedside, and sat by the fire absorbed in grief. Between 5 and 6 the other physicians came in and he was assisted to sit up in bed. 'I feel I am going,' said he. 'I thank you for your attentions, but I pray you to take no more trouble about me, but let me go off

WASHINGTON AND LAFAYETTE.

quietly. I can not last long.' All retired except Dr. Craik and myself. The general continued uneasy and restless, but without complainting, frequently asking what hour it was.

"Further remedies were tried without avail in the evening. He took whatever was offered him, did what was desired by the physicians, and never uttered a sigh or complaint. About 10 o'clock he made several attempts to speak to me before he could effect it. At length he said: 'I am just going; have me decently buried and do not let my body be put into the vault in less than three days after I am dead.'"

Washington's Firmness.

Washington belongs, as a soldier, not with the brilliant military geniuses, like Marlborough, Frederick and Napoleon, but with the safe and solid commanders like Wellington, Scott and Grant. If he was not quick to comprehend a situation or devise his enemy's intention, and was sometimes a little puzzled, as when Howe sailed from Staten Island and ascended the Chesapeake, or on the field of Brandywine, he was never rash, and no general ever completely surprised him. We can only surmise what he would have done with larger opportunities on the great fields of action in European warfare. I believe that under such circumstances he would have been a great commander of the solid, safe and enduring order. His firmness, persistence and tenacity have rarely been excelled.

Washington's Quick Intuition.

As Washington journeyed to Boston to take command of his hastily gathered and ill disciplined army of continentals, the news of Bunker Hill met him on the way, and when he heard of the desperate valor of that militia which had three times driven the British regulars down the bloody slope, he exclaimed that the cause was safe. It was the quick intuition of a great commander. The pluck, the courage, the endurance; it was these he wanted to know, and upon these, under God, he could rely for ultimate victory. Yes, it was these which won at last, won against the splendid discipline and steady valor even of that famous British infantry which could climb that bloody slope of Bunker Hill again, and again, and even once more, in the face of that murderous fire from those blazing patriot breastworks; that same splendid infantry upon whose earth-rooted squares on a later day the greatest soldier of modern times dashed his once invincible cavalry and his empire to pieces. We sometimes forget in our Fourth of July felicitations and vauntings about how we made the British "red coats run," that they did finally drive out the brave continentals and take Bunker Hill, and that it was such soldiers as these that Washington finally conquered.

BATTLE OF PRINCETON.

Fierce Butchery by British Bayonets Fittingly Avenged.

The Revolutionary battle of Princeton was fought on January 3, 1777. After capturing the British forces at Trenton, December 26, 1776, Washington found himself confronted by the British army, under General Cornwallis. Cornwallis concentrated his forces at Princeton January 2 and marched with

FOUGHT DESPERATELY.

nearly his entire army against Trenton. At nightfall the British encamped on the west bank of the Assanpink, a small fordable stream, which was crossed by a bridge held by the Americans. Cornwallis postponed his attack until the next day. Finding himself opposed by an army superior in discipline and in numbers and cut off from retreat by the Delaware, which was filled with ice, Washington determined to make a night march around the British army and attack Princeton, which was held by three regiments of infantry and five troops of dragoons. A large quantity of supplies and munitions were stored there, and after destroying them Washington intended to march to Brunswick, where the British magazines were defended by only a few soldiers. The rear guard of the British army was at Maidenhead, about half way between Trenton and Princeton. Washington determined to attack the troops at Maidenhead first by making a detour through the Quaker road, which joined the main road within two miles of Princeton. As the road was in bad condition, the Americans did not reach the bridge at Stony Brook, about three miles from Princeton, until sunrise. Here they took a short cut while Gen. Mercer took possession of the bridge at the main road. The American army began this movement under cover of night, and by leaving a few men to keep their camp fires along the bank of the Assanpink going, kept the British in ignorance of the movement until daylight. At daybreak the British forces at Princeton, under Col. Mawhood, began their movement toward Trenton, when they came upon the American forces under Gen. Mercer at the bridge. A sharp fire was opened on the enemy, which was vigorously returned. The British then charged with the bayonet, a weapon of which the Americans were destitute. After a short struggle, in which Gen. Mercer was mortally wounded the British put this division of the American army to flight. The enemy were soon checked, however, by the American regulars, under the command of Washington, who distinguished himself by his personal daring. The British then opened with their artillery and attempted to capture two pieces of cannon. Col. Mawhood fought desperately, and by the aid of his bayonets forced his way to the main road and retreated toward Trenton. The Fifty-fifth British regiment was completely routed, and a portion of the Fortieth Regiment took refuge in Nassau Hall, where it surrendered on the approach of the Americans. Not more than thirty Americans were killed or wounded in this battle, while the British lost two hundred killed and wounded, and two hundred and thirty prisoners.

Washington's Greatest Glory.

The transcendent glory of Washington as a soldier is that when the war was ended he surrendered his victorious and stainless sword to the civil authority. For eight long years he had carried that great trust without salary or pecuniary compensation of any kind, never but once seeing his beloved Mount Vernon. A pliant army, smarting under grievances, would have made him king or dictator. He crushed the very suggestion with indignant rebuke. Cromwell and Napoleon, after successful revolutions, had held on to power. There is hardly another case in history where, under like circumstances, power has been voluntarily surrendered. Washington set for all successful generals, in all ages after him, a noble and immortal example, when he sought out that weak and migratory congress at Annapolis and in such dignified and manly words as these closed his impressive speech of resignation:

"Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theater of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

Fourteenth Daughter.

A girl baby born the other day Kokomo, Ind., is the fourteenth daughter of a fourteenth daughter of a fourteenth daughter—a record which is thought to be unprecedented.

Mount Vernon.

(The following lines were written on the back of a picture at Mount Vernon by Rev. William Day.)

There dwelt the Man, the flower of human kind,
Whose visage mild bespoke his nobler mind.

There dwelt the Soldier, who his sword ne'er drew
But in a righteous cause, to Freedom true.

There dwelt the Hero, who ne'er killed for fame,
Yet gained more glory than a Caesar's name.

There dwelt the Statesman, who, devoid of art,
Gave soundest counsels from an upright heart.

And, O Columbia, by thy sons caressed,
There dwelt the father of the realms he blessed;
Who no wish felt to make his might a praise,
Like other chiefs, the means himself to raise;
But there retiring, breathed in pure renown,
And felt a grandeur that disdained a crown.

—From Gen'l Carrington's "Beacon Lights of Patriotism."

The Patriotic Spirit.

Every boy and girl in America may well be proud of the bright flag which waves above so many school houses today; and the youth of other countries also love their national flag and their native land, so that the patriotic spirit is not confined to any one people nor to any one period of human history.

Just because that spirit is sweetest where the people are most earnest to seek the happiness of all their countrymen, it is right that we study the history of other countries and peoples, to see if we can learn from them that which will make us more blessed and prosperous.

Sometimes we think that there never was a country where everybody had so much cause for being happy as in these United States. And sometimes we forget that nearly all the laws, maxims and incentives to patriotism which move our own hearts and bless mankind had their real origin long before Greece and Rome were known to history.

The trials of our forefathers when they first landed upon these shores and during their gradual attainment of national independence never fail to awaken sympathy. And yet the most noteworthy adoption of a new country by a wandering people was that of the Hebrew. The devotion of his Hebrew ancestors to their native land when they were captive exiles, far away from home, is a sublime type of the patriotic spirit in its noblest and best expression: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"—Gen. Henry B. Carrington, U. S. A.

Letter Written by Martha Washington.

A copy of the only letter and signature of Martha Washington is in possession of the United States Government, says Kate Field's Washington. This letter lay for more than ninety years hidden among some musty archives at the Capitol, and was lately discovered by Walter H. French, clerk of the department of files, House of Representatives. The spelling and punctuation are carefully reproduced:

Mount Vernon, Dec. 31st, 1799.

Sir

While I feel with keenest anguish the late Disposition of Divine Providence, I cannot be insensible to the mournful tributes of respect and veneration which are paid to the memory of my dear deceased Husband—and as his best services and most anxious wishes were always devoted to the welfare and happiness of his country—to know that they were truly appreciated and gratefully remembered affords no inconsiderable consolation.

Taught by the great example which I

MARTHA WASHINGTON.

have so long had before me never to oppose my private wishes to the public will—I must consent to the request made by congress—which you have had the goodness to transmit to me—and in doing this I need not—I cannot say what a sacrifice of individual feeling I make to a sense of public duty.

With grateful acknowledgment and unfeigned thanks for the personal respect and evidences of condolence expressed by congress, and yourself,

I remain, very respectfully,
sir,
Your most obedient & humble
servant
MARTHA WASHINGTON.

Now that Bar Harbor has succeeded in putting an end to rum selling, roller skating is coming into vogue.

CURRENT READING.

NEWEST BOOKS FOUND ON SALE AT BOOK STORES.

"The Master Mosaic Workers," by George Sand—"The Battle of Dorking" of Current Interest—Art and Romance—Notes.

THE strained relations of America with England growing out of the Venezuelan boundary dispute on the one hand, and of England with Germany due to complications in South Africa on the other, will give a peculiar and timely interest to this reprint of "The Battle of Dorking." It was a famous tract twenty-five years ago, and made a profound sensation in England and America, both by reason of its bearing on current European events and politics, and from its remarkable blending of military knowledge and literary skill. It appeared originally in Blackwood's Magazine for May, 1871, and purported to be the recollections of events disastrous to England in 1875, narrated fifty years after by an eye-witness. That England heeded this "plain warning," which may almost be looked upon in the light of a prophecy, is evidenced by her majestay's recent naval display. Whether or not its lesson will be heeded elsewhere as well, remains to be seen. The Battle of Dorking would be possible to-day only on American soil.

An Art Romance.

"The Master Mosaic Workers." By George Sand; translated by Charlotte C. Johnson. (Cloth, $1.25. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.) This book has been and will be read with much pleasure as the author tells us she found in the writing of it. It is a story of Venice, and the events are woven around the restoration of the mosaics in the cathedral of St. Mark, a task in which most of the characters were engaged. It is seldom that so many excellent character sketches are found in a single volume. The sterling qualities of the Zuccati Brothers and their affection for each other, the mingled pride, love and disdain of old Sebastiano Zuccati, the pictures of Titian and Tintiretto, the jealousy of Bianchini and Bozza are all depicted with exquisite delicacy or great force, as the occasion or subject demanded. The descriptions, apart from the characters, are also especially good. This applies particularly to the account of the celebration of the Feast of St. Mark.

A Literary Gem.

"Metaphors, Similies, and Other Characteristic Sayings of Henry Ward Beecher." Compiled from discourses reported by T. J. Ellinwood, with introduction by Homer B. Sprague, Ph. D. (New York: Andrew J. Graham & Co., 744 Broadway. Price, $1.)

This is a new and attractive compilation of some of Mr. Beecher's brightest utterances, selected from his unpublished sermons.

The introduction by Dr. Homer B. Sprague contains an interesting analysis of Mr. Beecher's genius, and particularly of his imagination.

The book should be of special interest to every public speaker, and invaluable to preachers.

Teachers of rhetoric and all who are called upon to write good English may here find choice illustrations of how to do it.

The busy man or woman, who can give but a few minutes daily to reading will find it just the book to snatch up at odd moments; healthful and stimulating.

It abounds in wit, mirth, pathos, eloquence, sound sense, splendid imagery and lofty morality. There is not a dull sentence in its 217 pages.

Zola's Latest.

"The Fat and the Thin." Emile Zola, is a story of life in and around those vast central markets which form a distinctive feature of modern Paris. Even the reader who has never crossed the channel must have heard of the Parisian Halles, for much has been written about them, not only in English books on the French metropolis, but also in English newspapers, magazines and reviews; so that few I fancy, will commence the perusal of the present volume without having, at all events, some knowledge of its subject-matter. This work will be found one of the most original and happiest inventions of French genius. (Chicago: F. Tennyson Neely.)

Abridgement of Alison's History.

To meet the demand for Napoleonic literature, A. S. Barnes & Co. (New York) have brought out a one-volume student's edition of E. S. Gould's abridgement of Alison's great ten-volume "History of Europe from the French Revolution, 1785, to the Fall of Napoleon, 1815." This Mr. Alison called the Napoleonic era of Europe. Gould's abridgement, on the whole the best condensation of Alison's work, has been before the public for more than half a century, and has gone through many editions. The present edition is of fair print, good paper and binding, and price. (Cloth, 532 pages, $2.)

Literary Notes.

Never is a dull line to be found in The Youth's Companion. Not satisfied with making its every issue the very best family paper, the publishers of The Companion are continually doing all that liberality and enterprise can suggest to make it better still.