



Rules of conduct, Diary of adventure, letters, and Farewell Addresses (1916) [SPECIAL ILLUSTRATED EDITION]

George Washington

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THERE are many biographies of Washington, and every history of the United States gives prominence to the facts in the life of the great leader in the war for independence, and the first President of the Union. The city where the Congress of the nation meets is named after the greatest American, and every year on the twenty-second of February the people are given a holiday to remind them of the man whose birth meant so much to the nation. It is of prime importance that a democracy, which recognizes the worth of the person, has for its great exemplar a man so wise, so noble, so unselfish as its first citizen. Character makes character, and the figure of Washington as it looms up in the past is a rebuke to all that is mean and ignoble in American public life.

The birthday of Washington, coming in the middle of winter, offers a capital opportunity for schools to take a little rest and enjoy a special celebration. This pamphlet gives in convenient form the most striking passages in Washington's life, told in his own words, with such preliminary notes as are needed to make the circumstances of the writing clear. There is material, therefore, for a celebration, and by a little ingenuity it can be used in a variety of ways. Thus, as part of the exercises, each member of the class may choose one of the rules to recite and to take as a motto for practical conduct. If the school is situated near any point visited by Washington, some one of the scholars may prepare an essay upon the local associations with Washington, or there may be a written newspaper, edited by one of the class, and containing contributions from various members. It will often be possible to borrow from some museum in the neighborhood the dress of a continental soldier to use in an effective tableau.

Mr. Lowell's poem, "Under the Old Elm," has some noble lines characterizing Washington. The fact that Longfellow's home was the headquarters originally of Washington in Cambridge, gives an opportunity for a pleasing connection between the statesman and the poet. As Washington is so closely identified with the war for independence, the children may be encouraged to bring in revolutionary relics, and a temporary museum can be made with talks about the different objects. Even if nothing else is done, this little volume can be read by turns in the class, and a geographical exercise connected with it.

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