

RIPON LODGE
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THE RAMBLER WRITES MORE OF RIPON LODGE, ONE OF THE OLD VIRGINIA HOMES

THE Rambler is still on the subject of Ripon Lodge, and you are told this because you will have no other means of knowing it until you have read far down this column or the next. It is very important that a story be finished when it has been begun. That is, it seems important to the storyteller, even though nobody else cares a whoop, a hurrah, a picayune or anything else that suggests itself to you.

More important is it that the Rambler correct an error than that he should hurry along the road to Ripon Lodge. The Rambler makes mistakes and when they are called to his attention he makes correction. If no one notices the mistake he lets it pass uncorrected, this being the customary way of dealing with mistakes. Very few persons correct their own mistakes without having them forced upon their attention, and even then they are apt to insist that it was not a mistake and will set up half the night looking for references in the dictionary, or some other little-used book, to prove that they were right. But when the Rambler makes a mistake, and is found out, he likes to make the correction cheerfully; that is, he likes to appear cheerful about it, although you must know that a human being who makes an admission of error cheerfully is not common. The mistake which the Rambler made was perhaps not a serious one, and he cannot charge himself with full responsibility for it. You understand that when a man is confessing a mistake he tries to be as easy on himself as possible and to shift the blame on some one else. The mistake was really committed by another—I will not say by another person—but by one who was once a person.

YOU remember the aristocratic ghost who, or which, the Rambler talked with in his narrative of two or three Sundays ago? She seems to have made the mistake, though she was really not conscious of it. Ghosts who make mistakes consciously are few. The Rambler's mistake was in quoting her, though he quoted her accurately. She said, discussing a ghost who lived in a less exclusive section of the cemetery, and who in life had done her own housework, "I have also heard that her parents were engaged in trade; that her father ran a merchant mill on Rock Creek or Cabin John or Pimmit Run; that her grandfather was a tollgate keeper on the Marlborough pike, and that her great-grandfather at one time had something to do with a tavern on the Leesburg turnpike, somewhere between Difficult Run and Sugarland, or it may have been between Sugarland Run and Goose creek. I have also heard that her husband was engaged in real estate, or journalism, or some such humble calling. The lady takes the air along this pebble path at midnight, when the moon is shining, and I positively believe she makes her own shrouds—at least, they look homemade."

The mistake the Rambler made was in casting a reflection on—or slurring—persons who were in trade. It is rather a common error that is made by aristocratic descendants whose ancestors skinned their fellowmen so well as to relieve their children and grandchildren from the need of using their hands in trade and from the necessity of having brains for any other form of enterprise.

The mistake which the Rambler truly laments having made was called

A MEETING With an Aristocratic Gentleman in the Woods—His Discourse on the Profiteers of Another Day—The Iron-Barred Window of Ripon Lodge—Some Little-Known Facts About Col. Blackburn, Who Cared for a Regiment of Colonial Soldiers During One Winter.

knee and instep. His hair and clothes were gray and his form was thin, his hands yellow, his cheek bones prominent and his eyes sunken, but luxurious. He walked over and sat down by the Rambler, and the joints of his bones creaked and grated as though his gears did not mesh. "You are rheumatic," said the Rambler, "and I am troubled with the same affliction." "Yes," replied the gray and rusty man. "I have haunted this damp woodland so many score of years, and so rarely do I indulge in a daylight outing that I really rattle as I walk."

"I have haunted historic places for many years myself, but I never needlessly expose myself to the night air," answered the Rambler. "Night air," said the stranger, "is a weakness with me. Sunlight dazzles me. Besides, there is more good company in these woods when everybody living around here is in bed."

"I never found much enjoyment in the company of owls, bats and whip-poor-wills," said the Rambler. "We have better company here at night than the creatures you name," replied the odd old man, with just a trace of impatience.

Then he seemed to see something down the woodland path by whose edge we were sitting, and, rising to his feet with a great deal of effort and the aid of his cane, he took off his three-cornered hat, baring a hairless skull. He bowed to some one the Rambler did not see and said: "I did not anticipate the pleasure of meeting you, Sir Hugh, it being not your custom to stroll while the sun shines. This is our estimable friend, the Rambler, whose informing pen is giving instruction to the giddy worldlings of today in the manners and customs of our times." He bowed low to the person he thought he was talking with.

"A nut," said the Rambler to himself, stuffing his pipe full of sweepings wrapped in tinfoil and labeled tobacco.

The stranger resumed his seat and put one of his yellow, bony hands on the Rambler's knee in a friendly, confidential way. And this is what he said:

"You were wrong in quoting the spectre of Mrs. Antoinette Fontenoy Per-simmon Bonaparte in last Sunday's ramble. You quoted her words, but you mis-presented her meaning. She did speak slightly of persons in trade, but she did not mean that persons in trade were inferior to us—the old plantation aristocrats—just because they worked. That is not the point. We aristocrats worked in supervising our plantations just as your executives work in the offices of their mills and factories, though I believe we held learning and the practice of the social amenities in higher regard than they do, and we did not allow a mere clock to regulate our lives. Our prejudice against persons in trade arose not from the fact that they worked, but from the fact that there were so many scamps in business that it was not safe and proper to be on too intimate terms with them. By that ancient word 'scamps' I mean men who would misrepresent the character of the goods they sold, who would represent that they were selling goods below what they cost them, whereas they were making an extraordinary profit, and

dergone a magnificent uplift. You now have laws against misbranding, adulteration and some other forms of falsification. It is not now believed to be exactly legitimate business to sell glucose for maple syrup, or kerosene for pure olive oil, and to put up apple parings and apple cores and cider mill refuse in fancy jars and sell it for pure raspberry jam. It is unethical, besides, or because, you can't get away with it. It may still be possible, however, to get a plentiful admixture of cotton in all-wool goods.

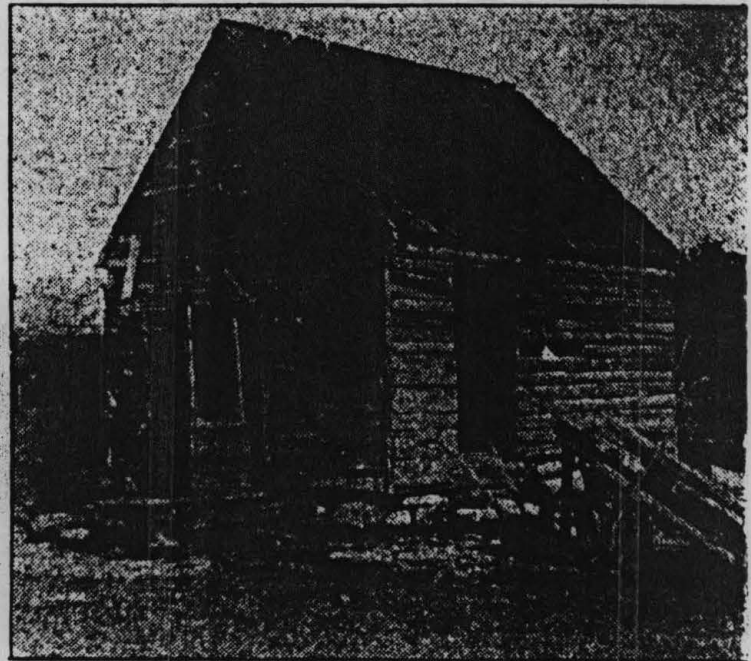
"So, you made a mistake in quoting

forces to be used in defense of the colony of Virginia."

Col. Blackburn's name is found as one of the trustees of the town of Dumfries (through which the road from Washington to Fredericksburg passes), in 1776, and he was appointed a trustee for the new towns of Newport, in 1787, and Centerville, in 1787.

Col. Blackburn died at Ripon Lodge in 1807, and was buried in the little cemetery about three hundred yards south of the house and on the tip of the ridge which looks down on the Potomac. His grave is not marked though it once was. The American Register, in 1807, printed the following obituary sketch of Col. Blackburn, written by Charles Brackett Brown:

He was one of the firm and unshaken patriots who fought and bled for that independence which we now enjoy. At an early period of the revolution he took a decided part in favor of the rights and liberties of his country and at the battle of Germantown received a severe and dangerous wound. Distinguished for his generosity, his bravery and nice sense of honor, he was no less eminent for his hospitality, benevolence and charities. For these domestic virtues which adorn and dignify the human character he was equally conspicuous; an affectionate husband, an indulgent parent and a humane master. He has finished a well spent life, he has left an un-



RIPON LODGE DISTILLERY.

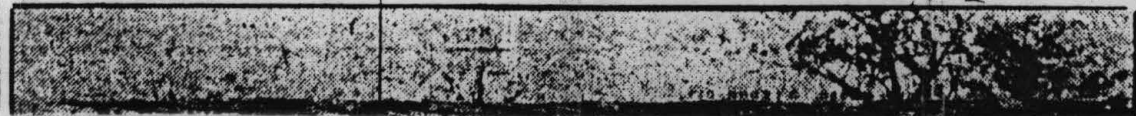
the ghost of Mrs. Marie Antoinette Jasmine Fontenoy. She was not slurring persons who work, but only those who try to make a fat living by working others. In your next 'ramble' I hope you will make the proper correction. We read your 'rambles,' and we consider your photographs of tombstones the liveliest and most authentic that are published.

"I must now bid you adieu because night is coming on and I have an appointment to attend what promise to be very diverting revels of some kindred spirits at Mount Moriah, which, as you know, is an abandoned and almost forgotten cemetery about a mile further down in the woods. Oh, yes, it is a private cemetery! In my time it was not considered the proper caper to be put to rest in a public cemetery."

And as the queer old man arose, his hands looked boffer and his coat seemed to hang very loose and his long hose seemed to have only leg

skilled reputation and has removed from world of trouble to the mansion of labor and eternal bliss. ****

SOUTHEAST of the house and on the hill on which it stands one sees today the gray stone foundation of a ruined barn. In the foundation wall are two small, iron-barred windows. In the lower story of that old barn there was a place of confinement for men. Most of the old plantation, of any considerable size were little settlements or principalities and they nearly all had a "lock-up" of one kind or another. These places came in handy very often for confining slaves as punishment, for holding slaves who had run away and been recaptured, and for confining that class of white servant, called the "indentured man," who was held to service for a term of years. Slaves indentured men and even apprentices often ran away from those to whom they were bound. Many of these poor people, feeble-minded, simple-minded, wandered off without thought of running away. Coming into a strange country, and if their answers were no satisfactory answers probably be as



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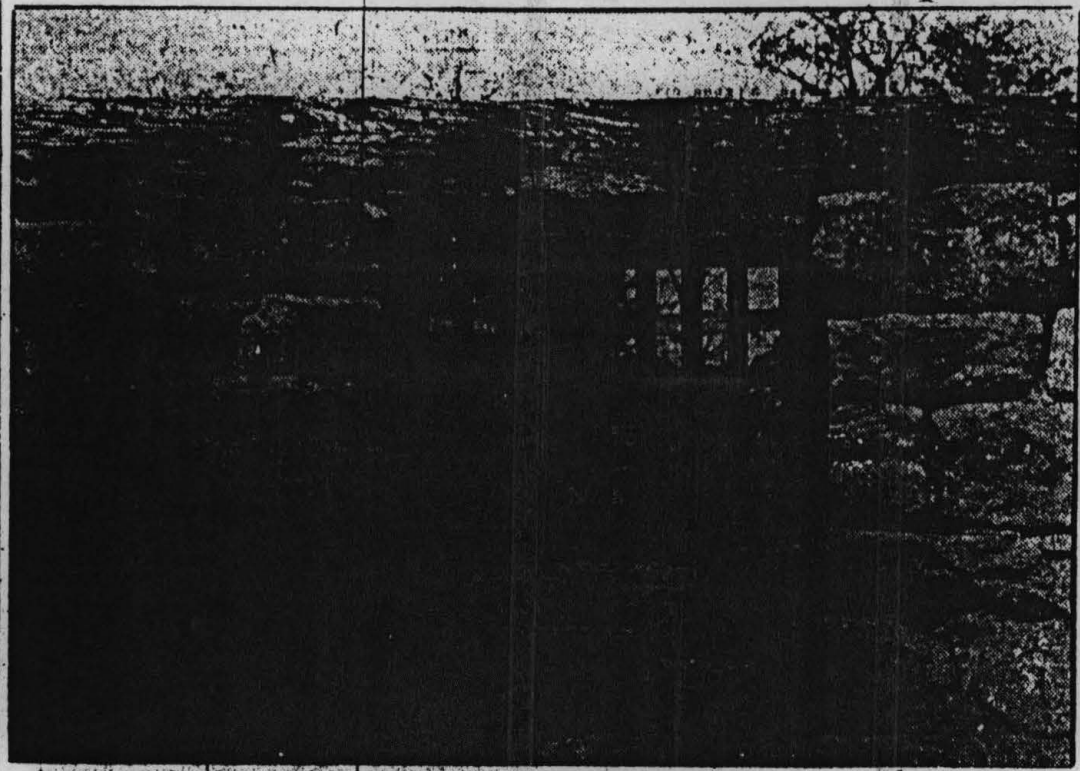
they sold, who would represent that they were selling goods below what they cost them, whereas they were making an extraordinary profit, and

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"indentured man," who was held to service for a term of years. Blasted, indentured men and even apprentices, often ran away from those to whom they were bound. Many of these poor people, feeble-minded, simple, wandered off without thought of running away. Coming into a strange land, and if their answers were not satisfactory, they probably were assumed that they were runaways. The plantation had the fiddle lock-up in which these stragglers could be kept until the owner of the slave or the master of the indentured servant or apprentice could be found, and could come or send to "prove his property and pay costs."

There is nothing especially significant, therefore, in finding cell windows in the stone walls of a barn on an old plantation in the Potomac country. One of the stories about the iron-barred windows in the ruined barn at Ripon Lodge is that it was a prison for revolutionary soldiers. Certain facts and probabilities fit that story. If a regiment of Continental troops was quartered on the Ripon Lodge plantation one winter it is quite likely that some of the men had to be confined in that lock-up. No doubt many of them got drunk, and very likely some of those who got drunk became so untidy that it was considered best to let them cool off in the lock-up. Perhaps some of those ancestral soldiers of ours would now and then "help" themselves to some of the treasures of the smokehouse or the tobacco house and would be put behind the bars which you see in the picture. With a regiment of troops, even though they were Continental troops, quartered on a farm all winter, there is no doubt that the lock-up room in the old barn had a number of patriot tenants.

A short way from the ruined barn is a little gray house. That was the plantation distillery, when Ripon Lodge was owned by the Blackburns, and also when, some time in the 40s it became the home of the Atkinson family. The distillery building is pretty well preserved for its age, but seems now to be a little wabby. In the little old building millions of the apples, peaches, cherries and grapes of Ripon Lodge were turned into brandy and wine.



IRON-BARRED WINDOW AT RIPON LODGE.

round peace that about Uncle pet I'll says I ng but lid you up and ceiling, ng the face. y. "And wish-just key. New in the in, as g with rks up But so k-fine l ladies urglars doors, d-and h poor hat all Duluth.

es had Also, in ad put nd un- flash- k room nd dis- k the- s now, mind, double wound d, and was a d with screen, all true, out she angels re than one for he was ight to would r from deraline n there, manage old and fourth t, with thought kay ad- was to know ry jest you're getting, en for Dodge's stump. That life job anyway, strikes ing on y which is high- is. I'm out you re's no where k there te, who te woo- wait- ainous and the crimp I can't he cur- because t need a case em the

to his notice in a way which some persons may think unusual. He was walking through a bit of din woodland, because in a lonesome place like this, one not only gets away from crowds of people, but from those signs which tell that things we used to buy for a dollar have been reduced to four dollars, and the things that used to cost a quarter, have had their price cut down to a dollar. It is also a good place to get away from those writers and speakers on political economy who tell us how prices have busted and how much more we can buy with our salary than we could six months ago, when beefsteak and rents were high. It is really worth going into the woods to get away from this.

The Rambler sat down on the ground, rested his back against a pine tree and began to smoke, and to let the ants crawl over him, and to enjoy the other beauties of nature. Not far away was a man who was half leaning against a tree and half supporting himself with a thick stick having a gold head, though the gold seemed dull and tarnished. I had not seen him there when the Rambler sat down to rest and smoke and had not heard him come up. This seemed a little strange, but there are so many strange things in the world, in society and in Congress that one more matters not.

THE stranger was looking at the Rambler intently and kindly. He wore a cocked hat, long coat, knee breeches, long hose and low shoes. There was a glint of buckle at his

cue that you're here. I've brought you on and we are listening for the cue. As for my part of it, I feel just as much at home as if I'd been appointed guardian to a trick elephant with the sleep-walking habit. All the same, I'm going to stand by you, and if anything like you've got on your mind is going to be pulled off you'll be on hand. Only, Inez, it may take a little time."

And Inez, sitting on the edge of a sagging cot bed, with a picaresc, simple expression, fluttering across her big pink-and-white face, nods solemn and satisfied.

"Oh, yes-a-!" says she. She had been in New York nearly two hours and no tall, dark hero in a shiny limousine had claimed her as yet. But she's a patient soul, Inez. And then, she has her gum.

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who in other ways sought to deceive one.

I CAN remember that when I was a young man—something near 300 years ago—we had a great war. Prices rose to extraordinary heights. They went up beyond precedent, and money lenders advanced the rates for loans secured by collateral in the holding of which the lenders took no risk—that is, if the government was to endure. These gentlemen talked a great deal about the law of supply and demand. They said, "the immutable law of supply and demand." Yet, we old plantation aristocrats knew that since history began it had been necessary to make laws against men who would artificially or artfully limit supply and then charge higher prices because the supply was not equal to the demand. The Romans made laws against men who would buy up great amounts of food, hold it, create an artificial shortage and then exact high prices.

When we complained that prices were too high the tradesmen would cross their hearts that they were making no profit, and that because of the high freight rates on sailing vessels, and canal boats and Conestoga wagons they could not sell their goods at a lower price. Besides, they said, the 'hands' making the goods were being paid such high wages that they were actually buying silk shirts and eating choice cuts of beef. The gentlemen of trade and commerce said they were threatened with poverty, and might have to give up their villa at Newport or their shooting lodge in the Adirondacks, or their winter home on Lake Worth, or Bay Hiscayne, or sell one of their numerous cars, or let go some of their entourage of butlers, footmen or chauffeurs, or make some other unheard-of retrenchments. It was because of such practices that we old plantation aristocrats rather looked down on trade and commerce. We did not look down on these gentlemen because they worked, but because they 'worked' us. Of course, all this was in the long ago, and is of little interest to people who live today, besides business morals have un-

bones in them. He looked at the Rambler, smiled—or grinned—and, was gone.

NOW, as the Rambler was saying about Ripon Lodge. One of the interesting things about this place is that a regiment of Continental troops was quartered here one winter. It has been written of Col. Thomas Blackburn, who inherited the farm from his father, Richard Blackburn, the immigrant, that "he was a man of large estate and quartered a regiment of Continental troops on his place all winter, clothed, fed and sent them back to the army in the spring without cost to the colonies." It would be interesting to know the designation of that regiment and the winter when it was quartered at Ripon Lodge, but there is no doubt that Col. Blackburn performed this service to his country. One gets a number of glimpses of this man in Virginia annals. In 1771 he was appointed by Virginia one of the commissioners for disposing of tobacco damaged in public warehouses and for granting relief to tobacco owners for such damage. On December 3, 1774, he was elected a member of the committee of safety for Prince William county, in pursuance of resolutions of the Continental Congress. This committee resolved that "it is the opinion of this committee that no persons or person whatsoever in this county ought to make use of East India tea until American grievances are redressed and that all public balls and entertainments be discontinued in this county from this time as contrary to the sentiments of the Continental Congress."

Col. Blackburn was a member of that committee which was sent to thank Capt. Patrick Henry "for extorting 330 pounds sterling from the receiver general for the powder which Lord Dunmore removed from Williamsburg." He was elected by Prince William county as a member of the Virginia convention of 1775. With Richard Lee, Henry Lee, Francis Peyton and Josiah Claphom he was one of the commission "to examine, state and settle the accounts of pay, provisions, arms, etc., furnished for the militia of certain counties in Virginia." The assembly in 1775 appointed him a member of the committee to settle the accounts of militia lately employed against the Indians and to provide for raising

The Pious Settlers.

THE early settlers in Maryland were usually a pious-minded and to a large extent, a pious-spoken people. The names of the rivers, bays, creeks and headlands along the Potomac river on the Maryland side give testimony of this. The Catholic pilgrims impressed upon scores of the main features of the county names which had a sacred import. To begin, there are St. Marys county, the St. Marys river and the City of St. Mary.

Of the city no vestige remains, but its site has been accurately determined and a beautiful monument has been erected there, besides the foundation of the first capital has been outlined with granite markers. Then there is St. Ingoes, which is the name of a civil subdivision of the county of St. Marys, of a settlement, of a creek and of a church. It is the place of one of the very early missions of Maryland. St. Georges Island and St. Georges creek, and St. Jerome point on St. Jerome creek, are among the landmarks, and the watermarks of the Potomac river. Across the St. Marys river from the site of the old City of St. Marys is Pagan point. That was an Indian settlement. As you come up the river and leave behind the places already named, you pass Parsons creek, though most likely this little waterway bears its name because a family named Parson or Parsons lived along its course. It is just a "branch" of a little "brook" and branches in Maryland were generally named after persons who lived on them or through whose land they ran. St. Clements bay is familiar to all travelers up and down the Potomac river, but St. Patricks creek, flowing into the Potomac, is not so well known. There is the island of St. Margaret in the mouth of the Wicomico river, where that wide stream, joins the Potomac. Nearby are St. Catherines Island and St. Catherines sound. Protestant point is one of the headlands on Bretons bay. At the junction of the Port Tobacco creek and the Potomac river is Chapel point, and there is a creek called St. Leonards, which flows into the Patuxent. Priests bridge is one of the very old crossing places of the Patuxent.