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

A Search Among Tombstones for Data and Names—The Value of Grammarians to the World at Large—The Writing of Pure English—A Visit at Ripon Lodge.

THE Rambler came out of the woods of Leesylvania into a hard but not wholly smooth road which connects the ancient village of Occoquan and the older town of Dumfries. As I look on that phrase, or clause, "not wholly smooth," the doubt oppresses me whether or not I should pass it along to a reader. I cannot tell whether the adverb "wholly" should be employed, because I do not know whether I should modify or qualify the adjective "smooth."

A road or any other thing is smooth or it is not smooth, and I wonder whether I am warranted in suggesting that there are degrees of smoothness. I would not worry about this if I felt that the eyes of intelligent persons were the only eyes that would follow these lines. But there are other kinds of persons called "grammarians" who read not for information, but to pick out words employed or related in some way not prescribed by a rule of grammar and about which rules of grammar the grammarians probably differ. The grammarian may be useful in some way, but in what way the Rambler is unable to tell. The grammarian may be able to put up some kind of an argument or excuse for being, but there never was a bad cause for which some kind of an argument could not be put up.

There is one thing of which the Rambler feels sure—one among the many things which he is sure of—and that is that a grammarian cannot write. That is, a grammarian cannot write in the way which constructs with words pictures or images which the reader can see. A grammarian never wrote a line of literature. His work in the line of writing is about as happy, as graceful, as cheering as a table of phases of the moon in an almanac, or a list of the kings and queens of England with the dates of their reigns. A grammarian never wrote a line that had more poetry or humor or human nature in it than the multiplication table. And this may also be said with truth of the writing of a horde of "professors of English." Their style is so cold that it never warms a reader; so hard that it never softens a reader into a smile or a tear. The mechanics are so obvious and so audible that a good reader can see the wheels go round and hear the axle creak. It is stiff. It lacks all grace of line. It lacks spontaneity of harmony. The reason is, or the reasons are, that a writer of that kind is self-conscious, that he feels he must write by rule and keep the rule on the table at his elbow, and that readers are interested in his "technique" and his style, rather than in his thought or his message.

A Man may know all the rules of poetry and never write a poem; know all the rules of art, and never paint a picture; know all the laws of harmony, thorough base and counterpoint, and never write or sing a song that touches a man's soul and starts him drifting on gay dreams or reveries that are sad.

The reason is that these people never progress farther than rules. Knowing rules is but the beginning. Perhaps a man cannot write without having learned his rules, though this is debatable, but a man to write well must have passed so far beyond the rules that he seems to have forgotten them.

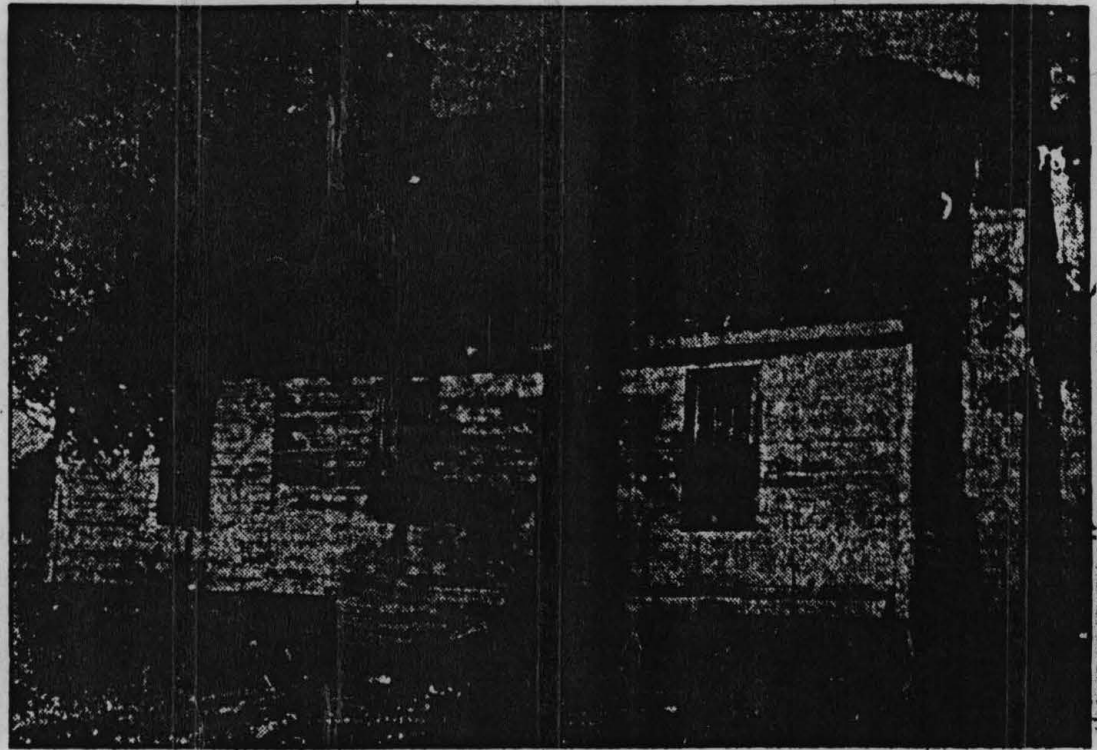
touch," and this is not that kind of a road. Literally, it is a rough road, but the Rambler must not say that because the people living along that road are proud of it and the Rambler must go down that way again, and dinner time comes around once a day. He must have friends. But, really, you would call it a smooth road. It is one of the good roads around Washington and is infested with autos. It is such a good road that a fellow cannot walk on it without danger of being run over.

Coming out of the woods of Leesylvania and turning to the right, you may see near the left side of the road a long, thick slab of freestone, carved: "Heere lyes ye bodey of Will-

house stood. Below lay wide Neasco creek and on its yonder side rose the hills of Leesylvania.

All around in the woods at the tip of the ridge were graves. A few were marked by inscribed stones, some were marked by rude country rock and many were not marked. Two wide, long, heavy slabs of brown stone lay side by side on the ground. On one was an epitaph, but not a letter could be deciphered. Tom drew from his pocket a small whisk and swept the flat stone clear of the coating of earth, thin in places, thick in places, which covered it. Still the epitaph could not be read. Tom then

was a carpenter and contractor and built many houses in Virginia. There is a tradition that he built the Mount Vernon mansion for Lawrence Washington in 1743. One of his sons, Col. Thomas Blackburn, who was born at Ripon Lodge in 1740 and died there in 1807, married Christine Scott, a who was a son of the Rev. John Scott, who was a son of the Rev. John Scott and Gov. Horner was descended from that Scott family. But it is a long story which the Rambler has to tell, with many names of the Scotts, Blackburns, Washingtons, Elseys, Peytonons, Claphams, Crawford, Turners, Harrison, Sinclairs, Balls, Fauntleroy, Browns, Wallaces and



A VIEW OF RIPON LODGE, PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE RAMBLER.

iam E. Herries, who died May 16, 1698, aged 65 years. By birth a Britaine—A good Soldier. A good husband, A Kinde Neighbour.

NOT a line has the Rambler been able to learn of this man more than is written on his tomb. Yet he may have been a prominent citizen. Perhaps he was wealthy and his poor neighbors laughed at his poorer jokes till their sides ached; or, perhaps they sat silent and charmed while he gave his opinion, which he got out of a newspaper, as to what laws were needed to save the country from ruin and disgrace, for no doubt the colony of Virginia was threatened with disaster just as the United States has been facing the greatest crisis in its history ever since it was born.

Perhaps this man who had succeeded as a farmer was often called upon by the directors of the Dumfries Lyceum and the trustees of the Occoquan Academy, if there were such institutions, to talk to the students on "How to Succeed," or to deliver an address on the "International Relations between the Hindoostances and the Cherokee," or "The Relation Between the Red Rays of Mars and the Fiscal Policy of the Athenians," or "The Influence of the Poetry of Bryon on the Hate of Foreign Exchange," or "A Comparison Between the Rich Colors of Raphael and the Pallid Marbles of Phylas." Probably, being a successful farmer, it never occurred to the people to call upon him for advice as to how to keep potato bugs from chewing up potato vines or how to keep cabbage worms off the cabbage. You know today that when a man becomes eminent in making steel rails,

took from his pocket a piece of chalk and rubbed it over the stone. Again he swept the slab with the whisk. The chalk filled the carved markings in the stone and most of the letters stood out white against the dark background. And this is what the old stone told:

"Here lieth the body of Collo, Richard Blackburn, who departed this Life July the 15th, 1757, in the 52nd year of his age. He was born in Rippon in England, from whence he came to Virginia, where he acquired a reputable character. Intro (inscription chipped and eroded). Preferred by the Governor to the Eminent Stations and Command in the (eroded), but the word is most likely 'Colony' as well as by the People who made (him a) Representative in the General As (sembly) of this Colony, where he discharged his (duty) with Honour to Himself as well as to his Constituents who reposed in him this Important Trust. He was a man of Consummate Prudence, Frugality and Indefatigable Industry Whereof he made a large Fortune in (word illegible) years. He was followed to the grave by his inseperable friend the Honourable William Fairfax and other Gentlemen of Distinction together with his Disconsolate Relatives who mourned the loss of so worthy and usefull a man. To them and to the Country This monument is dedicated in his memory by his friend John Baylis (s)."

NEXT to this stone lies a similar one, but there is no inscription on it. Not a word, not a name, not a date. It, no doubt, covers the grave of the wife, or the widow of Richard Blackburn. There are the

many other related families, and he does not want to try to tell it all in one story. It took too much work to get the facts.

Precious Stones Found North and West of City

IN the seams of the gray rocks around Washington men have found various beautiful crystals which are classed as precious stones. They may not be very precious in the commercial sense, but they are of use in jewelry, and perhaps a better name for them would be "jewel stones" or "gem stones."

The gray rocks that underlie the region north and west of Washington are gneiss. At some time they were opened to such pressure that clefts opened in them. These clefts were wide in some instances and narrow in others. The crevices at a later period were filled with quartz, and it is in these seams of quartz that the gem stones have been found. Mineralogists will probably tell you that yellow, green and ultramarine crystals of beryl have been found. Beryl is not uncommon in many parts of the United States, but specimens without fractures or other flaws and therefore suitable for jewelry, are not common. Topaz has been found in the rocks near Washington, and tourmaline specimens have, now and then, rewarded the patient and sharp-eyed prospector. Tiny garnets have been found in the rocks. No diamonds have been found, but some mineralogists

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Pardon this digression. You have all heard men and women say, giving an upward tilt to the nose or brow, "It is newspaper English!" or "No, I do not write for the newspapers; I contribute to the magazines!" Dear hearts, the best English today is written for newspapers, much of the worst is written in books and the very worst is often found in magazines. A big newspaper spends more money for good English in a day than a magazine spends in six months. There is a wider and a deeper knowledge of the English language in a newspaper office than in any other kind of an office.

But somehow we seem to have slipped off the road that connects the ancient village of Ocoquan and the older town of Dumfries. It is not a smooth road because a fair dictionary meaning of smooth is "having a surface so even that no roughness or points are perceptible to the

der and gummy to Louise. How about it?"

HE tamps his pipe down carefully and seems to be thinking the proposition over. But at last he shakes his head decided. "I—I don't think I'd care to send any word to Louise," says he.

"You won't go even half way, eh?" says I. "Then I expect Vee'll have to do it for you. She'll make a thorough job of it, believe me."

"How's that?" says he. "What—what will she do?"

"Oh, she'll draw it strong probably," says I. "How you're livin' here all alone and yearnin' your heart out for her to come back. And I'm bettin' Vee gets her started with in a week."

"That does seem to stir him up," "Louise?" says he "Back here? Say, I hope she doesn't suggest anything like that. Please don't let her. I—I trust she doesn't."

"What?" says I. "You don't mean to say that you don't want your wife to come back, do you?"

Hadley nods emphatic. "I guess you don't know Louise very well," says he. "I do. She—she has rather a sharp tongue, Louise. And just remember that we lived here, practically alone with each other, for nearly two years, watching our money slip away and my grand scheme go to pot. Of course, I was some to blame. So was she. We had plenty of time to thrash all that out. And we did—day and night, week after week, month after month. It—it wasn't pleasant. In fact, it was hell. And since she left I've been sort of resting up. Everything has been so quiet and peaceful, you know. It—it has been almost like heaven. I'd like to have it keep on; for a few years longer, anyway. Of course, it's very good of you folks to want to send her back and all that, but—well, you understand, don't you?"

"I get a glimpse here and there," says I. "When it comes to conversation from Louise you're overstocked, eh?"

"I'm afraid I am," says he. "But don't you get lonesome?" I asks.

"You'd be surprised," says he, "to know how much company Muscovy ducks can be. They—they have so little to say."

"Far be it from us, then, to crash in," says I. "So long, Max."

And he shakes hands like old friends.

"Well," asks Vee, when I'd ploughed back through the sand.

"Scratches the fond reunion stuff," says I. "He prefers ducks."

And even when I've sketched out the details Vee can hardly believe it. "But he can't like living a hermit existence such as that," says she. "I'm sure he must be wretched and lonely."

"I wouldn't be too sure," says I. "Remember, all you've heard from Louise was when she was sellin' you a hat."

How to succeed, or to deliver an address on the "International Relations between the Hindoostanes and the Cherokee," or "The Relation Between the Red Rays of Mars and the Fiscal Policy of the Athenians," or "The Influence of the Poetry of Bryon on the Rate of Foreign Exchange," or "A Comparison Between the Rich Colors of Raphael and the Pallid Marbles of Phyllas." Probably, being a successful farmer, it never occurred to the people to call upon him for advice as to how to keep potato bugs from chewing up potato vines or how to keep cabbage worms off the cabbage. You know today that when a man becomes eminent in making steel rails, or mining coal or picking pigs' feet, hosts of us sit enthralled, while he gives us his opinions on government and art.

But we really must travel along the road if we want to get to Ripon Lodge, the American ancestral hall of the Blackburn family and a place about which the Rambler hopes to tell many facts that will interest you, if you are interested in people who passed to the skies long, long ago, or perhaps whose spirits may not be floating joyously at such great heights, but are still dwelling among the scenes they loved before there came to them that strange translation we call death.

The Rambler crossed Neabasco creek, where it is narrow—that is, about two miles west of the Potomac. Straight ahead points an old road which the Rambler believed to be that road which the early Virginians traveled in passing between Dumfries and Ocoquan. The good road turns to the right, passes east along the north side of the creek, climbs to high land and turns north. Follow that road about a mile from the bridge over the narrow part of Neabasco creek and you come to a private lane, which strikes off from the left side of the road. Tall walnut trees stand there and one side of the lane is bordered by an apple orchard.

It was not this spring, but last November, that the Rambler came to this lane and stopped to rest. A long walk was behind and ahead of him and some walnuts and apples, both of which fruits were scattered on the ground, promised a good lunch—and kept the promise. It was a Waldorf salad in the rough. Being refreshed, the Rambler thought he would try the old lane for adventure. He reasoned that it must lead somewhere, because that is a habit lanes have. So, speaking to the old lane, the Rambler said: "Lead on, thou pretty lane, and I will follow thee! And if those will bring me to a spot which furnisheth a story I will sing thy praise in print."

THE lane led up a hill, turned this way and that, and when the Rambler had followed it a sufficient distance and to a sufficient height he saw a big frame house, gray with age and bearing some of those marks which years put on houses as well as on men. Old garden shrubs grew around, a good-natured horse browsed and the place afforded a view so fine of the Potomac, Neabasco, the intervening lands and the wooded hills across the shining water that such weariness as the Rambler had felt was now not weariness at all.

Out of the front door of the old house came a man. He had left his hat hanging on a wooden peg in the broad hallway and his head was covered with a shock of gray hair. The Rambler spoke and he spoke. The man with the grayer hair told the stranger with the camera that the place was called Ripon Lodge, and he said his name was Thomas Marron.

"Not Tom Marron of the post office, the old 1st Regiment and the battery? Well, well, how glad I am to see you! Funny that we should run into each other down in this neck of the woods, ain't it? You're looking well, Tom. I had lost track of you and I know that great numbers of the old boys up town will read of this happy meeting with interest."

And so forth. But the long and pleasant talk which Tom and I had as we sat on the grass under the boughs of a big Kentucky coffee tree is not a part of this story. You turned to this column to read about Ripon Lodge and you are going to get it if you hold on long enough and don't tire. Tom led me along a path which ran south from the house and through woods of oak and pine to the southern tip of the ridge on which the

He was followed to the grave by his inseparable friend the Honorable William Fairfax and other Gentlemen of Distinction together with his Disconsolate Relatives who mourned the loss of so worthy and useful a man. To them and to the Country this monument is dedicated to his memory by his friend John Bayliss (2)."

NEXT to this stone lies a similar one, but there is no inscription on it. Not a word, not a name, not a date. It, no doubt, covers the grave of the wife, or the widow of Richard Blackburn. These are the only Blackburn graves in the woods of oak and pine at the south tip of the ridge, which can be identified. Back from the tip of the ridge and nearer the old house is a newer graveyard. It adjoins the older. A number of graves are there. Those who became owners of Ripon Lodge after the property had passed out of the Blackburn family, rest there. One stone is inscribed: "Sacred to the Memory of George Atkinson, who departed this life at Rippon Lodge, Prince William County, Va., on the 30th of January, 1844, in the 59th year of his age. A native of Clifton, Nottinghamshire, England. Another stone, standing within an iron picket fence, is inscribed: "The Memory of George R. Atkinson, born December 23, 1850, died September 26, 1901. 'An Honest Man is the Noblest Work of God.'"

Some of the descendants of George Atkinson of Clifton, England, and Ripon, Va., live near Ripon, at a pretty place called Edgewood, once a part of the Ripon Lodge property. Sallie, the oldest child of George Atkinson, married Dr. Milton Ish (if the Rambler can read his notes) of Loudoun county, and Dr. Ish built Edgewood. The daughter of Sallie Atkinson and Dr. Ish, Mrs. L. E. Strother is the owner of Edgewood. The Rambler stopped there for water and talked long with Mr. and Mrs. Strother, other friends, and particularly with Miss L. S. Chamberlin, teacher of the school at Woodbridge. (The Rambler has always had a weakness for school teachers, actresses, trained nurses, cashiers, telephone operators, stenographers, waitresses and other classifications of ladies, but there is no news in that.)

Before we leave Ripon Lodge let us take note of the difference in the spelling of the name. On the tombstones it is "Rippon Lodge." In many of the old records which the Rambler has seen it is Rippon Lodge and in others it is Ripon Lodge. In the epitaph of Col. Richard Blackburn, who named the place, it is "Rippon," and it is inscribed that he was born in Rippon, England. That epitaph was evidently written by John Bayliss, who dedicated the memorial to Col. Blackburn. Turning to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, you will find what follows, and much more if you want: "Ripon, a cathedral city and municipal borough in the Ripon parliamentary division of the West Riding Yorkshire, England, 314 miles N. N. W. from London on the North-eastern railway. Population (1901), 8,230. It is pleasantly situated at the confluence of the streams Laver and Skell, with the River Ure, which is crossed by a fine bridge of nine arches. The cathedral was founded on the ruins of St. Wilfrid's Abbey about 680."

There is a line of earls of Ripon in England and there is a city named Ripon in Fond du Lac county, Wis. For these reasons the Rambler spells the old Virginia home "Ripon Lodge."

Here is a little note of interest. The site of the city of Ripon in Wisconsin was purchased in 1838 by John Scott Horner, who was born in Virginia in 1802, was secretary and acting governor of Michigan territory in 1835 and the first secretary of Wisconsin territory in 1836-37. The village of Ripon was established in 1849, and Gov. John Scott Horner named it "Ripon" after the village of his ancestors in Yorkshire, England. This governor, John Scott Horner, who founded the city of Ripon, Wis., was a relative of the Blackburns of Ripon Lodge.

Richard Blackburn was born at Ripon, Yorkshire, and so, also, was his wife, whose maiden name was Mary Waitis, who was related to the noted hymnologist, Dr. Watts. These good people were living in Prince William county in 1734. Col. Richard

were filled with quartz, and it is in these seams of quartz that the gemstones have been found. Mineralogists will probably tell you that yellow, green and ultramarine crystals of beryl have been found. Beryl is not uncommon in many parts of the United States, but specimens without fractures or other flaws, and therefore suitable for jewelry, are not common. Topaz has been found in the rocks near Washington, and tourmaline specimens have, now, and they rewarded the patient and sharp-eyed prospector. Tiny garnets have been found in the rocks. No diamonds have been found, but some mineralogists have been heard to say that they believe such a discovery might be made. No one should become excited about this. So far as reported or recorded, no one has ever made any money by finding precious stones in the rough in the District of Columbia. Precious stones have been found in many parts of the United States, and yet corn and hog raising remain safer ways of making a living than hunting for precious stones. There is a diamond-bearing area in Arkansas, the finding of diamonds has been reported on Sycamore creek in Indiana, and numerous red, green and blue tourmaline crystals are taken from the rocks of Maine. Southern California sends out tourmaline gems, North Carolina and Georgia send out golden beryl and amethyst, Montana sapphires are famous, fine opals come from Humboldt county, Nevada, and turquoise from Colorado. Maryland and Virginia oysters give up pearls, Virginia produces amethysts and gold, gold nuggets have been gathered along Rock run and other creeks in Montgomery county, Maryland, and diamonds have been found in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, California and Texas.

Facts About Salt.

WHETHER a man's taste for salt is acquired, hereditary or elemental is a matter for discussion, and for discussion that comes to no conclusion, but that all so-called civilized men and nearly all so-called uncivilized men eat salt is a fact. That man can live without the salt that is taken from mines or from the sea by evaporation seems to have been established, but to take salt from a man who has used it all his life is to give him considerable trouble. That trouble may be mental or physical and it may be both. Doctors, as usual, will not agree.

One may consider salt as a food or merely as a condiment which gives savor to food, and in one sense it seems to be a medicine, for some authorities say that salt is of great benefit in the animal economy as an antiseptic and as a preventive of intestinal worms. It seems to be established that domestic cattle are the better for it and it has come to be considered a necessity for horses. No stock-raiser would neglect to "salt" his animals.

Stephenson, the arctic explorer, telling of his meeting with blonde Eskimos in Coronation gulf, said that the natives of the far and frozen north, who have had no contact or slight contact with whites, do not like food flavored with salt. He also said that the habit of taking salt, like the habit of taking a narcotic poison, is hard to break, but that after going without salt for a month or more one ceases to pine for it, and that in his case, after being without it for six months he found that the taste of meat, boiled in salted water, was agreeable.

Ferrous who have the salt-taking habit insist that they require it. Some insist that they need more pepper, mustard, vinegar and sugar than other persons do. Perhaps this is true and perhaps these persons confuse the meaning of the words "need" and "desire." Many wild animals seem to have taken naturally to salt. The "salt-licks" of this country were the places where herds of buffalo, which roamed the land east of the Alleghenies as well as the region west of the Mississippi, traveled in order to lick the ground that was covered with the mineral. The aborigines of the land which came to be the United States knew the uses of salt and it was a common practice with some of the tribes to eat hickory nuts with their food, those nuts containing quite a high per cent of saline matter.