

THE PATHFINDER

March 27, 1920

p. 20

Muskets Beaten into a Fence.

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks." If guns had been known and used in warfare in his day the prophet Isaiah probably would have added something about converting them to some peace-time use or other.

Our illustration shows a unique fence made of gun-barrels. It stands in front of a venerable house in Georgetown, now incorporated in the city of Washington, D. C. In early days Georgetown was the principal town in the District of Columbia, an important business and manufacturing center.

At the time of the second war with Great Britain, often called the war of 1812, the American government was rather hard pressed for funds and had a difficult time obtaining some of the supplies required for the prosecution of the war. In 1814 when British forces were threatening the capital city the government appealed to the citizens for financial assistance. The people of Georgetown responded generously because they were patriotic and because they realized that they all stood to lose heavily in case the enemy's plans succeeded and Washington fell into his hands.

After the war had been fought to a successful issue Uncle Sam found himself very much embarrassed financially. There was no money to pay off the debts and no-one knew where or when more could be obtained.

In taking stock of supplies at the Navy yard it was found that quite a lot of obsolete guns and other equipment had accumulated and were cluttering up the place. So the secretary of the navy invited Uncle Sam's Georgetown creditors to go in and pick out anything they wanted from the scrapped material and it would be applied to the payment of their claims.

One of these men, Reuben Daw, looked over the discarded stuff and at length selected a quantity of old flint-lock muskets. The barrels were taken off the stocks and forged into "pickets" for a fence in front of his house, at that time one of the finest and most pretentious in those parts. The fence and the house are both standing to this day, in surprisingly good condition, considering their age.