The Story of George Washington

By Joseph Walker

Preface

There have been so many stories written about "The Father of His Country," that a word of explanation, if not of excuse, seems necessary in presenting this additional book. Our reason is threefold. No series of "Famous Americans for Young Readers" would be complete without the story of this foremost American. Washington logically heads the list.

A second reason rests in the fact that too many of the biographies of Washington are either written for older readers, or else go to the other extreme of hero worship. Washington is placed upon a pedestal, as a cold, aloof, blameless figure to be worshiped. Boys and girls do not like that sort of hero; they want him to be flesh-and-blood.

The third reason is that a new generation of young Americans is on its way to the control of state affairs, and no better training in citizenship can be placed in their hands than the plain, unvarnished story of each of our great leaders. This we have tried to give in the case of George Washington — going carefully back to the early documents, trying to paint a faithful portrait, and supplementing the facts of history with just enough color of imagination to give a glow of life to the canvas. Treated as a human being, Washington becomes a good comrade and friend whom every boy and girl should know and love.

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I. Early Home Life

"Do any of you children know what happened to my thoroughbred colt?"

The dignified-looking woman who asked this question looked down the table at her children and awaited a reply. Her eyes could be stern at times, and now they had a look which boded no good for some one.

One of the group, a boy in his early teens, looked up and met the questioning glance.

"Yes, Madam, I think I do," he answered quietly, but still meeting her eyes.

"And what, sirrah?" The tone was sharp as a whiplash.

"If you are speaking of the filly that no one could tame," the boy answered, "I am afraid that I am at fault. The colt is dead."

"And how did that happen, pray?"

"The colt was useless unbroken, as you know. So yester eve I went down to the pasture lot with a halter, mounted the colt and rode it."

"He did, Madam, indeed he did!" interrupted a little maid with shining eyes. "George stayed on the colt in spite of its prancing, and rode it all around the pasture lot. None of the slaves could master it!"

"Silence!" commanded the mother sharply. "Maids should not speak until spoken to. I want George to tell his own story. What killed the animal?"

"I' faith, Madam, I fear it killed itself," replied the boy. "Its struggles

were so tremendous that I sought only a good opportunity to quiet it down and dismount, when suddenly blood gushed out of its nostrils and it fell over dead."

Mrs. Washington looked at her son for a full minute. Then her voice softened a trifle.

"It was an ill loss, for 'twould have made the finest steed in my stables. But I can more readily lose the colt, than my confidence in my children."

Nothing more was said of the incident, but each child took the moral personally to heart. Their mother might be stern at times — she was an overworked widow with a large plantation to look after — but she was just, and she could tolerate only the truth.

Virginia in those days before the Revolution was very different from the Virginia of to-day. To begin with, it was not a state at all — only a colony and a very sparsely settled colony at that. The plantations where they raised tobacco and corn were merely cleared spots hemmed in on all sides by dense forests, and connected with the outside world by mere trails of roads. More often the means of transportation was by river, and the back country not so reached was left an undisturbed hunting ground for the Indians.

The Washington family had been identified with the Virginia colony almost from its start. Jamestown, you will remember, was founded in 1607 — thirteen years before the Pilgrim Fathers sighted the Massachusetts shore. In 1657, John Washington and his brother came over from England, leaving the ancestral home at Sulgrave Manor with its honored family record dating back to Henry the Eighth's time, and earlier.

John Washington (who was the grandfather of George) obtained a grant on the Potomac River at Bridges Creek, and built a house there. It was not pretentious — just a plain, old-style southern farmhouse, with steep, sloping roof, a big porch in front, a huge chimney at each end with its

promise of big roaring fires in the winter time, and good things to eat dangling from cranes or baking in Dutch ovens almost any time. Around the house, stretching along the river and running back up into the hills was the plantation of nearly a thousand acres. Here as the land was cleared, tobacco was planted for shipment in huge bales down the river and thence to England.

At John Washington's death the big prosperous plantation was handed down to his son, Augustine. By his own first marriage, Augustine had two sons, whose mother died when they were five and seven years of age; they were Lawrence and Augustine. Then the father married again, his second wife being Miss Mary Ball of Lancaster Comity, Virginia. To them was born, February 22, 1732, a boy whom they christened George.

The old farmhouse on Bridges Creek must have been a happy spot for the children. Besides the two half brothers, George had brothers and sisters of his own to make the high-peaked attic roof ring with laughter. But the family was not to enjoy the homestead long; for in 1735, when George was only three years old, it caught fire and burned to the ground. To-day not a stick or a stone of it remains, but a memorial shaft has been placed there to indicate the spot where the "Father of his Country" first saw the light of day.

George's father did not rebuild the house, but moved into another farmhouse on another plantation of his, in Stafford County, bordering on the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg. This house was similar in type to the one that had burned. It stood on a little knoll, with an inviting stretch of green sloping down to the water. Here George lived until he was sixteen years old; and many a pleasant memory must have gone with him through life. With his brothers and sisters he wandered over the place, building boats and rafts, fishing in the stream, or hunting in the woodland. Virginia in those days was a paradise for game, large and small, and many a squirrel, pheasant, quail, wild pigeon and duck must have graced the family board, thanks to the prowess of George and his older brothers.

To-day the old homestead has become only a memory. It was destroyed, like the first home, and nothing remains except descriptions to tell us what it was like. It was big and roomy, but very simple in its furnishings. While George's father was well-to-do in lands and servants and stock, he had little ready money; and the finer things of life such as dress and furniture must still be brought from abroad.

When George was eight years old he was given a pony, named Hero, and Uncle Ben, one of the old family slaves, taught him to ride it. Before long he was trying to ride, one after another, every horse on the place; and we have already seen how his mastery of the unbroken colt brought him to grief. As a youngster George was also the proud possessor of a "whip top," brought over from England and evidently a rarity; for in a letter to a chum, Dick Lee (who was afterwards to grow up into the famous Richard Henry Lee) he invites him to come over and play with it. "You may see it and whip it," he says in a burst of true generosity.

When George was eleven years old, he lost his father. The boy's half-brother Lawrence was then going to school in England; so the boy was left very largely on his own resources. His mother had the management of the large estate, as well as her household, and the children were expected to assume their share of the duties. This does not mean that she neglected them. We know that the tie between George and his mother was very strong. He resembled her more than his father. She taught him much of his somewhat scanty education. And after he was grown he always addressed her as "Madam," after the courtly fashion of Colonial days.

In those days, it is well for us to remember, etiquette for children was as strict as for their elders. They arose when older folks entered the room, remained standing until the latter were seated, and bowed or curtsied to guests in a delightfully formal way.

George Washington was noted all through life for his quiet courtesy, dignity, and charm of manner — for much of which he was indebted to his

stately mother.

As for other education, there was not funds enough to send him abroad. His brother Augustine had rebuilt the home at Bridges Creek, and George went to live with him for three or four years and attend a district school taught by a ^Ir. Williams. The school did not take him very far, but it gave him a fair grounding in the "Three R's" — reading 'riting, and 'rithmetic. Beyond these fundamentals, Washington was largely self-taught; but, like the Lincoln of later years, he acquired by reading and observation a culture which was distinctly his own.

There were four younger children in the Washington family, for which reason the mother could not afford to send George even to the home college, "William and Mary." He must perforce get what he could from the district school. One schoolmate relates of him that he was much given to indoor study and to solitary walks. "His industry and assiduity at school were very remarkable. Whilst his brother and other boys at playtime were at bandy and other games, he was behind the door ciphering. But one youthful ebullition is handed down while at that school, and that was romping with one of the largest girls; this was so unusual that it excited no little comment among the other lads."

One other memento of his school days has been handed down to us. It was his exercise book in writing, wherein he set down in a good round hand a series of "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation." This old school copy-book of 1745, when George was thirteen, is the earliest of his manuscripts that has come down to us. In spite of its somewhat damaged state, it enables us to trace out some of his work at school. Here are items of bookkeeping, and accounting, evidently worked out painstakingly so that he would be able shortly to aid his mother in that vexatious branch of her business. Scattered among these labored exercises are pen sketches of some of the children who sat around him, and birds that he had seen on his walks to school. Then come the "Rules of Behavior," some 110 in all. For a long time they were thought to be Washington's own,

but they have since been traced back to a foreign work. Nevertheless, the care with which George copied them shows that they were making their impress upon his character. Here are two or three random selections, which we hope, are not out of fashion to-day:

"Be not immodest in urging your Friends to discover a secret.

"Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others stand, Speak not when you should hold your Peace, walk not when others Stop.

"Read no Letters, Books, or Papers in Company but when there is a Necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave.

"Talk not with meat in your mouth.

"Labor to keep alive in your breast that little Spark of Celestial fire called Conscience."

II. The Young Surveyor

"Are you willing for me to go, dear Madam?" It was the boy who finally broke the silence. George and his mother were discussing the dearest wish of his heart — his first big ambition. He wanted to go to sea.

His brother Lawrence had lately returned home telling glowing tales of campaigning; for after school he had entered His Majesty's service. Then the boy had watched many a sloop glide down the river; he had talked with many a tar in the tobacco warehouses at Fredericksburg. And when Lawrence told him he could get him a berth as midshipman in the navy, the boy was all on fire with eagerness and packed up his kit to be gone.

His mother had almost yielded to his entreaties, when a letter from her brother in England painting life at sea in the darkest colors reached her. It was only a night or two before he was to sail. Again the stern glance with which the lad was so familiar greeted him as they sat by the evening fire. The boy met it as always respectfully, but without wavering — a true chip of the old block.

"I will not say you must not go, as you are rapidly growing to be a man, but you will never go with my approval," she replied.

"Then I will not go at all," said George quietly, and went upstairs and unpacked his kit.

Thus His Majesty's navy lost a recruit, who, however, was saved to enter a larger arena.

Back to Mr. Williams' school he went for another year to study surveying, and when nearly sixteen he went to visit his brother Lawrence, at Mount Vernon. Now for the first time the name of this fine old place became associated with his own — a link that history will never break.

Lawrence Washington was nearly twelve years older than George, but had always been very fond of the boy and eager to help him along. Lawrence had lately returned from a varied experience overseas. After leaving school in England, he had seen active service under the Union Jack with the gallant Admiral Vernon, against the Spaniards, in the West Indies. When the wars were over he got an honorable discharge and returned to Virginia, settling down on the plantation which his father had left him, on the banks of the Potomac. Here he built a house which he called Mount Vernon, in honor of his old naval commander. And here he brought home a bride. Miss Fairfax, daughter of Lord Fairfax, a choleric old nobleman who lived "next door."

A word about this gentleman will be of interest, as he was to exercise a considerable influence upon George Washington's later fortunes. He was the sixth Lord Fairfax, and was a descendant of a famous Lord Fairfax who helped depose Charles the First, and restore Charles the Second. All the line of Fairfaxes were rich and powerful, and to a later one King Charles gave an immense tract of land in northern Virginia. It might have lain fallow for many a long day, but for the fact that the sixth Lord Fairfax got jilted by an English sweetheart. In high dudgeon he turned his back upon England and every petticoat in it, and set sail for America and his Virginia estate. He found it indeed a tremendous possession, taking in nearly one-fifth of the entire state (as it is bounded to-day). But the trouble was, he did not know where it began, nor where it ended, and "squatters" were settling upon it. He needed an accurate survey and map of the tract. Where he would find a man to undertake such a task was a perplexing question.

It was about this time that he met young George Washington, a lad of sixteen, at Lawrence's home. The introduction may have run something like this:

"Lord Fairfax, allow me to present my brother George."

"Humph!" said the old nobleman critically surveying the six-foot stripling, who stood straight as an Indian before him. "Do all you colonials run up like bean poles?"

Lawrence laughed.

"Your lordship, I think you may well keep an eye on this youngster. He can show you how to find more foxes than you ever dreamed were in Virginia."

The nobleman snorted.

"I've hunted foxes in two continents, but if the young blood wants to come along we'll see what's in him."

Lord Fairfax was a devoted fox hunter, but he had already found that following them in the American wilderness was no pink tea affair; and he was soon to learn that George could ride with the best of them, and that he did know where to find the brushes. So it was not long before George became an indispensable fixture at all the hunting parties.

As the friendship between the old Englishman and the young Virginian deepened, we can imagine another conversation between them on their ride home with the hounds.

"What do you intend to make out of yourself, George?"

"I don't quite know, sir. I desired to enlist in the navy, but my mother was unwilling. So if there's no active service at home, I may just settle down as a planter."

"Humph! What are you studying now?"

"I have studied surveying under Mr. Williams. You see, sir, there are a

lot of lands near-by which require bounding."

"Humph! Tried your hand at any of it yet?"

"Yes, some in an experimental way. And Lawrence says I have mapped out some of his bounds very correctly." (1)

"The very thing! I believe I could use you myself. When you are ready let me know and I'll send you over the hill yonder to mark out where Fairfax starts and where he ends. My cousin, George Fairfax, will go with you."

George Fairfax was a young man slightly older than Washington, but of congenial tastes. When he heard of the plan, he was eager to taste the adventure of it, and they set to work at once to arrange details.

In the spring of 1748, accordingly, when George Washington was just turned sixteen, behold him embarking on his first "job." He was a full-fledged surveyor, setting out with transit and level to conquer one of the toughest assignments that any surveyor, even of mature years, ever tackled.

(1) There is in fact an early survey of Mount Vernon, made by George Washington as a boy.

But Washington at sixteen was by no means green or immature. The outdoor life which had been his from early youth had hardened him wonderfully. He is described as a well set-up young fellow, already six feet tall, and well-shaped although a little long as to leg and arm, and a little narrow as to chest. His face was handsome but for a rather prominent beak of a nose, which he was later to "grow up to." He was somewhat reserved and bashful, but with a frank, open face, set off by a straight, firm mouth, grayish blue eyes, and light brown hair. Although quiet, retiring, and not much of a talker, there was something about him that inspired confidence. This was strikingly shown in the willingness of Lord Fairfax to entrust a mere lad with so important a task as surveying his estate.

The two Georges set about their task in high spirits. The Virginian mountains were just budding out in the first freshness of spring when they started out by way of Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge, entering the Shenandoah Valley. For five weeks during March and April, 1848, they worked in what is now Frederick County, struggling to run their chain through virgin forests, over swollen streams, down precipitous slopes, and across swampy valleys. To the natural obstacles were added the uncertainties of weather, prowling wild beasts, and wandering Indians. The latter were as a rule friendly, but suspicious, and had they but dreamed that this innocent-looking transit and chain were staking off the field and forest against their future use as hunting grounds, the red men would have made short shrift of these youngsters.

We are given an insight into the perils and adventures of the trip, through a note-book which Washington kept. He did not dwell upon the danger, but "had such a good time" that he was ready to try it again. As for his work, Fairfax was so pleased with it, that he induced the Governor of the colony to appoint him a public surveyor. It was the beginning of three years of hard pioneering, but it gave the young man the finest possible training for his later career. He learned to depend absolutely upon himself; to endure hardship without complaint; and to stick everlastingly to a thing until it was done. Best of all it inured him to hardship, and rounded him out into vigorous manhood.

A glimpse of what he endured is given in a letter to a friend: "Since you received my letter of October last, 1 have not slept above three or four nights in a bed, but after walking a good deal all the day, I have lain down before the fire upon a little hay, straw, fodder, or a bearskin, whichever was to be had, with man, wife, and children, like dogs and cats; and happy is he who gets the berth nearest the fire. Nothing would make it pass off tolerably but a good reward. A doubloon is my constant gain every day that the weather will permit of my going out, and sometimes six pistoles."

As to the value of these early surveys made by Washington, it is said that his maps and measurements were so reliable that they have been accepted ever since. In fact they are about the only correct ones that date back to that period. A pretty good record for a boy surveyor!

III. The Budding Soldier

At nineteen the young surveyor was fully grown — a tall, powerful fellow standing six feet, three and a half inches in his moccasins, bronzed and hardy.

Then came opportunity number three, and he was ready for it.

A society called the Ohio Company was formed for the purpose of settling the lands immediately to the west of Virginia. Trade routes were to be planned and opened; and new families were to be induced to make their homes there. Both of Washington's brothers were interested in the project, as also were other well-to-do proprietors of Virginia and the mother country. What they needed was a man to take charge of their field work — one who knew the back country and its people, and whose physique was equal to the task.

Who but George Washington could fill this requirement?

The task was fascinating, but it called for military training as well. For the French were disputing the claim to this western country, and were already building forts along the Ohio River.

Despite Washington's youth and inexperience in military matters, he was appointed adjutant general of this district. He at once sought out some military officers whom he knew, one of whom was Major Muse, and learned the manual of arms. The broader school of tactics he was to acquire later under old General Hard Knocks.

In reviewing the life of Washington one cannot help but marvel at the way that Fate — or an All-wise Providence — led him step by step to his larger destiny. The boy surveyor plunging into the trackless wilderness was not turning his back upon opportunity, but was even then taking the first

steps in the direction of leadership of the American Army!

But now came a new experience, and one totally foreign to anything that had gone before, or was to come afterward. George took his longed-for sea trip. His brother Lawrence wanted to go to the West Indies for his health, and needed a companion. So George laid aside his military aspirations for the time, in order to take care of the invalid. But after a winter in the Barbadoes, Lawrence grew steadily worse and was brought home to die. George himself was seized with the small-pox, and had a hard tussle with it, bearing the marks of the dread epidemic the rest of his life.

The loss of his brother was a hard blow, for Lawrence had been like a father to him. George though only twenty was made one of the executors to the estate, Mount Vernon, which was thenceforth to be his home.

Meanwhile the French were making so much trouble in the western frontier, by their fort-building and inciting the Indians to hostilities, that something had to be done to stop them.

"We must send someone into the Ohio Country to see and talk with these Frenchmen," concluded Governor Dinwiddie. "We must find out what they' mean by coming into our king's dominion, building forts on English land, interfering with our settlers, and stirring up the friendly Indians. Whom shall we send?"

One of the Governor's advisers was Lord Fairfax, and we can see this crusty old man shake his head and say:

"Humph! There's only one man who is fit for the task. Send George Washington!"

So George Washington was sent.

He was made a Major and also given the high-sounding title of

Commissioner. He commanded a party of six men, and it was their duty to go more than one thousand miles by horseback through a wild or sparsely settled country, to deal with an enemy and his treacherous allies, the lurking Indians.

They set out from Williamsburg, the capital of the colony of Virginia, on October 30, 1753, just before the approach of winter. On his way he stopped to say good-by to his mother, who was still living in the old house on the Rappahannock. Her fears for his safety led her to try to dissuade him from the journey, but this time it was not the callow youth intent on going to sea with whom she dealt.

"Madam," he said, "I would be untrue to my profession as a soldier, if I betrayed this trust."

And looking up at her big son who towered above her, she realized with a sigh that he was a man indeed.

One of his little party was an old Dutch soldier, named Van Bram, who had taught him to fence, and who could speak French — for Washington could not speak this language. Another was a guide named Christopher Gist; and the others were frontiersmen who knew the country and the Indians.

Washington's faithful diary has given us many details of this adventurous journey — how they worked their way across mountains, forded streams, met Indian tribes, some of whom they won back to the English side.

On the twelfth of December they reached their destination. Fort LeBoeuf, near where the city of Pittsburgh now stands, and delivered their letters to the French Commander, St. Pierre. He was courteous but evasive, and entertained the travelers a few days. Then he gave Washington a written reply to Governor Dinwiddie, and the party started back eastward.

It was Christmas day when Washington and his little party started back home across the wilderness. If the first part of the journey was arduous, the return in the dead of winter promised to be doubly so. Snow had begun to fall, and soon the weary horses were stumbling along helplessly.

Washington was impatient to deliver his report to the Governor, so decided to leave his men and horses, take only one companion and push on ahead on foot. He and Gist accordingly took only light packs and set out by a short cut through the woods. It was a hazardous thing to do, as the Indians all around that region were allies of the French and therefore treacherous.

They soon had the chance to prove this. They hired an Indian guide to show them the nearest way through the forest. He pretended to do so, but marched them steadily on in the hope of tiring them out. Washington finally decided to make camp for the night, but the Indian demurred, saying it was not safe.

"If you are tired," said the crafty redskin, "I will carry gun."

"No," said Washington; "we will go on."

They had marched only a mile or two further, when suddenly, without warning, the guide wheeled, leveled his own gun directly at Washington, and fired. His aim was too hasty, however, and the bullet fortunately missed both the other men. They sprang forward and seized him, and Gist was for putting him to death, hut Washington spared him.

The next day they got rid of the guide, traveling by compass. When they reached the Ohio River a new danger threatened them. The stream was filled with tossing cakes of ice.

"There was no way of getting over," Washington says in his diary, "but on a raft, which we set about, with but one poor hatchet, and finished just after sun-setting. This was a whole day's work; we next got it launched, then

went on board of it, and set off; but before we were halfway over, we were jammed in the ice in such a manner that we expected every moment our raft to sink and ourselves to perish. I put out my setting-pole to try to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by, when the rapidity of the stream threw it with so much violence against the pole, that it jerked me out into ten feet of water; but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the raft logs. Notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not get to either shore, but were obliged, as we were near an island, to quit our raft and make to it. The cold was so extremely severe that Mr. Gist had all his fingers and some of his toes frozen, and the water was shut up so hard that we found no difficulty in getting off the island on the ice in the morning, and went to Mr. Frazier's."

Here they paused only long enough to thaw out poor Gist, then they procured fresh horses and went on. Washington reached Williamsburg on January 16, and delivered his letter to the Governor.

The Virginia House of Burgesses was in session, and the young Commissioner's report, even more than the Frenchman's letter, showed the weakness of the western frontier. Something must be done besides talk. One of Washington's recommendations was that a fort be built at the fork of the Ohio River. Accordingly a small force was sent under a Captain Trent, that spring, to build it. But before it was completed, the French surprised the building force and seized the work. Nearby they built a still larger fort of their own, which they called Fort Duquesne, (1) and which is the site of Pittsburgh.

It could mean only one thing — War. It proved, in fact, the beginning of a seven-year struggle between the English and colonists on the one side, and the French and Indians on the other.

The budding soldier, Washington, was again meeting a destiny that was ready and waiting for him.

(1) Pronounced DuKane.

IV. In The French And Indian War

As soon as news reached the colonists of the building of Fort Duquesne, they began preparations to send a force against the French. Joshua Fry was made colonel, and George Washington lieutenant colonel, with direct command of the first expedition. All that winter he drilled his little volunteer army, and in April, 1754, set out on the march westward with 150 men, traveling the same route he had taken the year before.

While still some distance from their objective, the scouts whom Washington had sent on ahead reported a French force in ambush waiting to surprise them. The young Virginia commander at once decided that two could play at surprise parties. Taking a force of forty men, he set out at dead of night and in a pelting rain, on a roundabout march to come upon the enemy's rear.

"The path," he writes, "was hardly wide enough for one man. We often lost it, and could not find it again for fifteen or twenty minutes, and we often tumbled over each other in the dark."

They pressed on nevertheless, and at daybreak crept up behind the ambushed enemy.

"Fire!" commanded Washington, as the bewildered Frenchmen sprang to their feet.

It was the opening shot of the Seven Years' War that answered him. The French commander, Jumonville, was killed, with nine others, and the rest easily taken prisoner; while the surprise party lost only one man. This little skirmish, called the battle of Great Meadows, made a stir on both sides of the Atlantic, since it marked the opening of actual hostilities, and the young commander began to come to public attention.

The fight was important in another sense. It was Washington's baptism of fire, and it taught him as it were overnight that he was cut out for a soldier. In a letter to folks at home, he confessed: "I heard the bullets whistle; and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

Knowing that this little victory would set the French and their Indian allies swarming about him like hornets, Washington decided wisely to press forward no further until he could get reinforcements. He built a rude fort of logs and dirt, which he called Fort Necessity, and asked for more troops. His total muster, however, was less than three hundred, even after additional companies were finally sent him.

Meanwhile, the French and Indians came down nearly a thousand strong. They would not risk an open fight, though Washington dared them to do so. Instead, they lay in ambush, waiting to starve the English out.

There could be only one outcome to this — surrender. The French offered liberal terms. The English were permitted to return home, with their side arms and under pledge to build no more forts in that country for at least a year.

So Washington marched his men home again, feeling the sting of defeat. He tendered his resignation, and asked to be relieved of command. The House of Burgesses, however, publicly thanked him and his staff "for their bravery and gallant defense of their country": and the Governor urged him to head another expedition against the enemy. But Washington declined.

"We must not try to fight the French until we are ready," he said. "When enough men have been raised to make such an expedition wise, you can depend upon me to do my share; but there is no sense in marching to certain defeat."

The colonists thereupon decided to await promised reinforcements

from England before beginning another campaign. Within the twelvemonth they came — two crack regiments of redcoats under the command of Major General Braddock. The whole countryside turned out to see them in review, wheeling and marching, their bright equipment glittering in the sun.

They made a brave display indeed, but seasoned Indian fighters, among whom was Washington, silently shook their heads at this pomp and parade. The redcoats would make too plain a target for the skulking enemy.

But Braddock laughed all these doubts to scorn, when they reached his ears.

"We'll give them a taste of real powder, my lads," he promised.

And the General was no braggart, but a fine old seasoned soldier, who had led his men abroad through many a tight place. The only trouble here — and it proved a fatal blunder — was his ignorance of the present enemy's methods.

Braddock made one wise move, however. He had heard of Washington as the leader of the earlier expedition; and he now invited the young Virginian to join his staff, as an aide-de-camp. Washington had gone to Mount Vernon to look after the estate, but willingly dropped his personal affairs to accept the post. He saw that Braddock with all his mistaken notions meant business. If he could only learn the American wilderness ways!

But Braddock would not learn. He marched his men constantly in the open, to the tune of fife and drum, and with colors flying. He stopped to construct roads and bridges for his cannon. And he could scarcely be persuaded to send scouts ahead. Washington advised him to send a light scouting force constantly in advance, but to no purpose.

"This prospect was soon clouded," he reports, "and my hopes brought

very low indeed, when I found that, instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding,' a little rough road, they were halting to level every molehill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles."

Washington himself had worked and worried so much at the outset, that he fell sick of a fever. He recovered sufficiently in a few days to rejoin the troops, thanks to their slow progress. He caught up with the vanguard at a ford of the Monongahela River, about fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne.

As the well-drilled troops marched in close formation down the winding road to the river, Washington was struck with admiration at the sight. But at the same time, he was filled with dismay. Spurring his horse he caught up with his superior officer and saluted the old General,

"Sir," he said, "if you will permit me, you are exposing your troops to hidden danger. We are now close on the enemy's country, and at any moment they may attack."

"Enough" retorted the General impatiently, "shall I who have been in many campaigns go to school to you raw colonials who have never even seen a real battle?"

The young officer colored, but stood his ground.

"Will you not, at any rate, sir, permit me to go ahead with some of my Virginians, and report the whereabouts of the enemy?"

"They will he advised of our approach soon enough," returned Braddock brusquely.

Suddenly, as the advance guard reached a narrow, enclosed portion of the road, a shot rang out, then another, and another.

The French and Indians were in ambush, and were shooting into the dense ranks. The British regulars were thrown into confusion. They looked wildly about for their enemy, but none was in sight. Meanwhile every tree trunk and bush seemed to spout tongues of flame, or whizzing arrows. The bravest troops in the world could not have held steady under such an attack.

Washington at once galloped forward, without waiting for Braddock's orders, and endeavored to hold the line. He told them to fall flat upon the ground, and fight from behind the bush, as their enemies were doing. A few did so, but most of them scattered like sheep. A company of Washington's Virginians, who had previously been sneered at as "raw militia," started a counter attack to cover the retreat.

Poor mistaken Braddock called them cowards when he saw them fighting from behind shelters.

"Stand up and fight like men!" he shouted; and with his officers he dashed bravely here and yonder to reform his lines. He was to pay for his foolish bravery with his life; for presently he received a mortal wound.

As for Washington, he showed a like disregard for his personal safety, but he seemed to bear a charmed life. He got four bullets through his coat and had two horses shot from under him. Jumping from his horse, at one time, he seized one of the small cannon with his own hands and turned it upon the enemy. One old campaigner later described the incident in picturesque style.

"I saw Colonel Washington spring from his panting horse, and seize a brass field-piece as if it had been a stick. His look was terrible. He put his right hand on the muzzle, his left hand on the breach; he pulled with this, he pushed with that, and wheeled it round, as if it had been a plaything. It furrowed the ground like a plowshare. He tore the sheet-lead from the touch-hole; then the powder-monkey rushed up with the fire, when the cannon went off, making the bark fly from the trees, and many an Indian

send up his last yell and bite the dust."

Every moment, however, added to the disorder, and when Braddock fell the troops broke and ran. Washington and his Virginians fought till the last, protecting their retreat, and saving them from being entirely wiped out. He cared for Braddock there in the forest until the General's death a few hours later, and read a simple burial service for him. With his last breath Braddock murmured; "What a pity! We should know how to handle them the next time!"

Washington led the beaten army back to Virginia, and was the only man in all that time of disaster who got any glory out of it. But personal glory was far from his thoughts. Again his soul was filled with bitterness that he had to march home beaten.

One good thing, however, came of the defeat. It taught all concerned the real problem facing them, and when Washington next advised, they listened to him. Furthermore, Governor Dinwiddie appointed him Commander-in-Chief of all the Virginia forces.

Washington did not seek the command. He did not want it. But he was never one to shirk a plain duty. As he wrote to his mother: "If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall. But if the command is pressed upon me by the voice of the country, it would be dishonorable in me to refuse it."

For three more years he led his men against the French and Indians. The English had also learned wisdom, and fought the enemy in his own fashion. They further sent troops to Canada to engage the French there, and the latter at last found it so hot that they quietly marched out of the disputed Ohio Country.

V. The Virginia Planter

"I dunno what de mattah with Massa George to-day," grumbled an old black slave. "He usually mighty prompt, but heah I is with his bosses ready to start, an' he ain't ready yit."

The scene was the Chamberlayne home near Williamsburg, and, the cause of the unusual delay a charming young widow who held the Indian fighter a willing prisoner. It had been a case of love at first sight, at least with him; and when he finally rode on his way twenty-four hours later, he and Martha Custis had plighted their troth.

A whirlwind courtship it was indeed, but again Washington's lucky star was with him, for their later married life was extremely happy. Martha was his complement in many ways. She was short and plump, he tall and rugged. She had dark eyes and a laughing countenance. His were blue, and he was naturally inclined to be grave. She was vivacious and talkative; he serious and taciturn. She exerted a profound influence over his life, and made an ideal hostess at Mount Vernon and later still as the very first "First Lady of the Land."

Soon after the conclusion of the war they were married, January 6, 1759 — and a typical Virginia wedding of the olden time it was. The bride was wealthy in her own right, and her retinue befitted a queen. She rode to her home at White House (notice the name!) in state, in an open coach drawn by six horses; she herself clad in white satin, with pearls to match; while by himself rode the groom resplendent in his army uniform of blue cloth lined with red silk, with silver trimmings.

For three months Washington remained at the home of his bride, looking after her affairs preparatory to their removal to Mount Vernon. He became also the legal guardian of her two children, "Jack" and "Patty," six and four years of age, and came to love them as his own. When they were

finally settled at Mount Vernon, Washington looked at his "ready-made family" with much delight. As he told a friend: "I am now, I believe, fixed in this spot with an agreeable partner for life; and I hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced in the wide and bustling world."

There is a painting extant showing the Virginia planter at home, and it is a pleasing family group indeed. Washington sits opposite his comely wife with an air of absolute contentment. The two children are in the foreground; while in the rear is the Negro, Billy, Washington's personal servant.

The only taste of public life at this time was an occasional attendance at the House of Burgesses, as the Virginia assembly was called. Washington had been elected a member while still away at the wars. When he came to take his seat, the Speaker of the House read to him a formal address of welcome, thanking him in the name of Virginia for his conduct in the campaign.

The thing was so unexpected that the young officer colored, stammered, and was at a loss for a reply; whereupon the Speaker said: "Sit down, Mr. Washington. Your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

A very pretty compliment, was it not? But we can imagine that its recipient was as red as a beet by this time.

But the bulk of Washington's time for the next seventeen years was spent at Mount Vernon. Since his brother's death the estate had grown quite valuable; and with his wife's property added to his own, he was one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. The land itself consisted of 8,000 acres, and crowning the knoll overlooking the Potomac River was the mansion, a typical Virginia homestead of the better class. It was a large, two-story house with four rooms on each floor. A high and broad piazza supported by

columns ran the entire front length. At the back were servants' quarters flanked by gardens, meadows, fields, and dense forests beyond.

It was a spot well calculated to make a man happy, and after the hardship of his early days, Washington turned to it with the joy of a boy let loose from school. He was a practical farmer and superintended his crops with care. He raised fine horses and blooded stock of all sorts. He rose with the dawn and retired at nine o'clock. Between whiles he went hunting — perhaps he persuaded his old neighbor, Lord Fairfax, to accompany him on his shorter trips. Frequently the younger George Fairfax, friend of his surveying days, rode with him. Among his splendid mounts we read of Magnolia, the Arabian mare, and Blue skin his favorite iron-gray steed, as well as Chinkling, Ajax, and Valiant. We seem to hear again the baying of his hounds, Vulcan, Ringwood, Music, Sweetlips, and Singer. Those were indeed the days of real sport!

"No estate in United America," he observes in one of his letters, "is more pleasantly situated. In a high and healthy country; in a latitude between the extremes of heat and cold; on one of the finest rivers in the world; a river well stocked with various kinds of fish at all seasons of the year; and in the spring with shad, herring, bass, carp, sturgeon, etc., in great abundance."

Meanwhile the doors of Mount Vernon were always thrown open to the passer-by whether friend or stranger. Both George and Martha Washington liked to entertain. They had a host of friends, and every person of distinction who visited Virginia must needs pay his respects. In fact, so rarely were they without guests, that Washington would note the occasion in his diary; and he once whimsically confided to it that although he had a hundred cows he had to buy butter!

He varied his duties as country gentleman, and member of the House of Burgesses, with service as vestryman in the Episcopal Church at Alexandria, and judge of the county court. So he must have led a busy life.

"A large Virginia estate in those days, was a little empire," writes Irving in his delightful biography of Washington. "The mansion house was the seat of government, with its numerous dependencies, such as kitchens, smoke-house, workshops, and stables. In this mansion the planter ruled supreme; his steward or overseer was his prime minister and executive officer; he had his legion of house Negroes for domestic service, and his host of field Negroes for the culture of tobacco, Indian corn, and other crops, and for other out-of-door labor. Their quarter formed a kind of hamlet apart, composed of various huts, with little gardens and poultry yards, all well stocked, and swarms of little Negroes gamboling in the sunshine. Then there were large wooden edifices for curing tobacco, the staple and most profitable production, and mills for grinding wheat and Indian corn, of which large fields were cultivated for the supply of the family and the maintenance of the Negroes.

"Among the slaves were artificers of all kinds, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, smiths, wheelwrights, and so forth; so that a plantation produced everything within itself for ordinary use; as to articles of fashion and elegance, luxuries and expensive clothing, they were imported from London; for the planters on the main rivers, especially the Potomac, carried on an immediate trade with England."

Many of the Virginia planters led lives of ease. They looked down on all labor as degrading, and they turned over the active management of their property to overseers. Not so, Washington. He delighted in the work and liked to superintend its details. He kept his own accounts, with the same painstaking accuracy which had marked the "ciphering" of the young surveyor.

Not content with his public duties and private affairs, we find him engaged in other enterprises, as for example the draining of the great Dismal Swamp. This was a morass about thirty miles long by ten miles wide, and had been unexplored. Washington himself went through it by

horseback and on foot, made a map of his explorations, and later formed one of a company which drained and developed it.

As a farmer, Washington was much in advance of his time. He read up on all the agricultural topics that he could lay his hands upon. He was a pioneer in two great features of modern farming — fertilizing and rotation of crops. When he took charge of his plantation, it, like most Virginia plantations, was a one-crop affair — tobacco. But he directed that the land should be rested by growing in turn as many different crops as possible, and that they should buy nothing they could themselves raise. At one time he writes: "My countrymen are too much used to corn blades and corn shucks; and have too little knowledge of the profit of grass lands"; and again, after his return home after the Revolution: "No wheat that has ever yet fallen under my observation exceeds the wheat which some years ago I cultivated extensively but which, from inattention during my absence of almost nine years from home, has got so mixed or degenerated as scarcely to retain any of its original characteristics properly."

As the quiet, busy years rolled by, Washington became more and more the country gentleman. The glamour of war was forgotten, and when a friend reminded him that he had once said the hum of a bullet "had a pleasant sound," he replied apologetically, "Ah, that was when I was young!"

But by his constant outdoor life, exercise, and regular habits he kept himself in the pink of condition. At forty it was said of him that he could throw a hammer farther, and run a longer distance than any man of his acquaintance. It was said that he could throw a silver dollar across the Potomac from his front dooryard — although some wag has retorted that a dollar went farther in those days than it does to-day!

VI. The Outbreak Of The Revolution

Every schoolboy and girl is familiar with the facts which led up to the Revolution — how the English government enacted one law after another directed against the Colonies, and without giving them the slightest voice in it. England does things far differently nowadays!

The chief bone of contention was the levying of special taxes, such as that upon every pound of tea shipped to America. These levies under the "Stamp Act" were constant causes of irritation, and the quarrel continued for ten or twelve years. The rift constantly grew wider between the mother country and the daughter, and another important thing resulted. The thirteen separate colonies scattered along the Atlantic Coast began to come together for self-defense. From being separate communities with few interests in common, they saw that their only safety lay in union. It was the first start toward nationality.

In September, 1774, in answer to a general call, each of the thirteen colonies sent picked men to a convention in Philadelphia, which besides being the largest city was centrally located. The delegates met in a building known as Carpenters' Hall, and their organization became known as the First Continental Congress.

Of these stirring times we are all so familiar, that it is not necessary to treat them in further detail, except as they affected the fortunes of a certain Virginia planter.

Washington was chosen from Virginia, among others, to attend this Congress; and rode thither in company with the fiery Patrick Henry and the courtly Edmund Pendleton. As they left Mount Vernon with its domestic peace, Martha Washington said:

"I hope you will all stand firm. I know George will. God be with you,

gentlemen!"

This first session of Congress was not in open rebellion. Many who attended were still loyal subjects of the Crown. They only sought a way out of the misunderstanding. They remained in session fifty-one days, and when their petition was finally presented to the House of Lords in London, the great statesman Chatham said:

"When your lordships look at the papers transmitted to us from America; when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own."

Nevertheless, there were hotheads led by the stubborn old king himself who would not accept this olive-branch of peace.

On his return home, when Patrick Henry was asked who was the greatest man in Congress, he answered: "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor."

While a peaceable way out was still being sought, news came of the Boston Massacre and the Battle of Lexington, and hard upon the news the whole country seemed to rise in arms as one man. Congress was convened again on May 10, and although they sent a second petition to King George, their chief concern was to equip and provide leaders for the army that was already coming together. Above all they wanted a commander-in-chief — one who was accustomed to handling men, who had executive ability, experience in military matters, and the bodily strength for this arduous task.

John Adams of Massachusetts rose up to speak. He was a man whose opinions always commanded respect.

"Gentlemen," he said to the Congress, "as I look over this body, I have

but one gentleman in my mind. He is a certain gentleman from Virginia who is among us and is well known to us all. His skill and experience as an officer, his independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character would command the approbation of all the colonies, and unite the cordial exertions of all the colonies better than any other person in the union."

Everyone knew whom John Adams meant, and all eyes were turned in a certain direction where a tall, athletic figure dressed in a colonel's uniform of buff and blue, was quietly slipping out of the room. Washington never outgrew his shyness of public praise.

As a result of Adams's speech, Washington was unanimously elected commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. After the vote was announced, Washington thanked Congress for this honor and the confidence it implied, adding:

"I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with. As to pay, I beg leave to assure the Congress that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit of it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses — that is all I desire."

And he wrote to his wife: "I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years." And again: "It is a trust too great for my capacity, but it has been a kind of destiny" (at last he recognized it!) "that has thrown me upon it, and it was utterly out of my power to refuse it."

Losing no time, Washington mounted his horse and turned northward toward Boston, then the center of disturbance. He found on his way that, far from being the unknown Virginia planter, his name and his fame had

preceded him. They told of his earlier prowess against the French and Indians, and they turned out in crowds to hail him and wish him God-speed. He was no longer an individual; he was the personification of their liberties.

As he rode with his armed escort, he was met by tidings of the battle fought on Breeds Hill (or "Bunker Hill," as the fight was later called from a neighboring eminence). The hard-riding courier reported that the American force had finally been dispersed. It looked like a bad defeat.

"Why did they retreat?" asked General Washington (as he must now be called).

"Their ammunition gave out," answered the courier, truthfully.

"And did they stand the fire of the British regulars as long as they had ammunition?" pressed the commander.

"That they did!" replied the courier. "They held their own fire in reserve until the enemy were within eight rods."

A look of relief came across Washington's face, as he turned to Generals Lee and Schuyler who were by his side.

"Then the liberties of the country are safe, gentlemen!" he exclaimed.

It was a prophecy which finally proved true.

On he and his party rode — through New York, along the old Post Road, and finally reached Cambridge on the outskirts of Boston, where the Continental troops were assembled — still defying their enemy entrenched across the Charles River, in Boston.

Under the branching limbs of a stately elm, which still stands not far from the present campus of Harvard University, Washington unsheathed his

sword and formally took command of the Continental Army. The date was July 3, 1775.

Washington was then forty-three years old. An actual description of him at the time, from the diary of Dr. James Thatcher, a surgeon in the army, is of interest: "The personal appearance of our commander-in-chief is that of a perfect gentleman and accomplished warrior. He is remarkably tall — full six feet — erect and well-proportioned. The strength and proportion of his joints and muscles appear to be commensurate with the preeminent powers of his mind. The serenity of his countenance, and majestic gracefulness of his deportment impart a strong impression of that dignity and grandeur which are peculiar characteristics; and no one can stand in his presence without feeling the ascendancy of his mind, and associating with his countenance the idea of wisdom, philanthropy, magnanimity, and patriotism. There is a fine symmetry in the features of his face indicative of a benign and dignified spirit. His nose is straight, and his eyes inclined to blue. He wears his hair in a becoming cue, and from his forehead it is turned back, and powdered in a manner which adds to the military air of his appearance. He displays a native gravity, but devoid of all appearance of ostentation. His uniform dress is a blue coat with two brilliant epaulets, buff-colored underclothes, and a three-cornered hat with a black cockade. He is constantly equipped with an elegant small-sword, boots and spurs, in readiness to mount his noble charger."

In this personal description, perhaps fulsome in its praise, we can still see something of the boundless respect and confidence which the new commander inspired among his men, and which was to continue through all the weary months of the Revolution.

VII. The First Months Of The Revolution

When Washington waved his sword in the air, as he sat his horse, under the spreading elm at Cambridge, and took command of the American troops, none knew better than he that the whole ceremony was only an empty show. In order to become a real commander-in-chief he must first have an army worthy of the name. The men who faced him were patriotic enough but they were an undisciplined mob — men 'hastily gathered together from all walks of life. Uniforms there were none, and weapons were of all makes and patterns. Many had no guns at all, and powder was lacking. The terms of enlistment were so short that men were constantly dropping out and going home, to be replaced by others no less green.

Washington saw that his first duty was to drill and discipline the troops. They were an easy-going lot, not accustomed to obeying orders. So from that midsummer day on through the fall and winter, he drilled his men into some semblance of order, obtained supplies, and, in a word, manufactured an army. In appearance it still aroused the derision of the well-dressed, smart-stepping redcoats, but still it was an army on its way to becoming a formidable fighting machine, as the British were soon to find out.

From the outset this army performed one valiant service. It kept the British shut up tight in Boston. Three crack generals had been sent over from England — Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne, with a considerable body of men — and they must have chafed at the inaction. They spoke of the patriots only as a bunch of farmers and store-keepers. They would not recognize Washington as a general. But despite this, they were compelled to stick to the city. Meanwhile they fortified Bunker Hill and other points of approach.

Washington, on his part, was only waiting for the right moment to engage the enemy. As his army was drilled into shape, he felt more and

more confident of it. In studying the map of operations he noted also that the British had left one weak link in their defenses — Dorchester Heights, overlooking the city from an opposite direction. Deploying a force around there in the night, the men worked so fast that when the sun rose a new fort was taking shape and its guns were already trained upon Boston.

General Howe was astounded. "I know not what to do," he said. "The rebels have done more work in one night than my whole army would have done in one month."

He saw that the work must be stopped at once, and, the following night, sent a force of 2,500 men by water to surprise and seize the new fort. But they were hindered from landing by a violent storm, and the next day the rain continued to fall so heavily that an attack was impossible. The Americans, however, still worked feverishly despite the elements, and by the third day had made the fort so strong that the British were afraid to attack it. With such a fort constantly menacing the garrison and the ships in harbor, nothing remained but for the proud British to evacuate the city. Out they marched, on March 17, 1776, headed for New York.

The Continental Army did not offer them battle, but at once marched into the city, and planted their own Hag on its forts. It was a bitter blow to the British, for in this city they had planned to crush the rebellion in short order. In the House of Lords, the Duke of Manchester said: "British generals, whose name never met with a blot of dishonor, are forced to quit that town, which was the first object of the war, the immediate cause of hostilities, the place of arms, which had cost this nation more than a million to defend."

A thrill ran through all the colonies at this first signal success of the Continental Army. It proved again that England was not invincible, and that man for man the patriots could hold their own. Congress gave a vote of thanks to Washington, and struck off a medal in his honor, bearing a profile likeness of him on one side, and the scene and date of the capture of Boston, on the other.

Hard on the heels of the retreating Britishers, his army followed to New York. But with each day the difficulties of his task increased. The first victory had caused a letdown in the morale of his men. They were inclined to take it too much as a lark. By constant recruiting and drilling he managed to get a force together of about ten thousand men. Against these the British soon had a force of three times that number. They had swelled their own ranks by hiring some German soldiers, known as Hessians, who were sent over that summer. Many Englishmen were indignant at employing these hirelings to shoot down their own relatives in America; and naturally it did not increase America's love for either the mother country, or Germany.

The seeds of distrust once sown are hard to uproot. The rift with England was healed in the course of years by her generous treatment of America the nation. But the course that Germany took when we fought for freedom has always been remembered by contrast with that of France, who sent over troops to help us. With France to-day a peculiar and beautiful friendship exists; and when we sent over troops in our own turn to help her in her distress, in the World War, General Pershing on landing said: "Lafayette, we have come!"

And now came the first great battle of the Revolution. The Americans met a force two or three times their number, on Long Island just across from New York, on August 27, 1770, and were badly defeated. The trained British and Hessians were more than a match for the ragged colonials, who fought bravely and lost heavily. As Washington watched the conflict he wrung his hands, exclaiming:

"What brave fellows I must this day lose!"

General Howe glowed with satisfaction, as well he might.

"To-morrow evening will bring the fleet up the river," he said, "and with an army on one side of the rebels and our ships on the other, we will

bag the whole army and crush the rebellion."

But the only trouble with Howe as well as with the other British generals was that they did not know Washington. He had foreseen this defeat, and while he did not welcome it, he knew that the lesson was needed, in order to arouse the whole country to the necessity of having a large and well-trained army. While the battle was raging he had quietly given orders to collect every boat small and large in East River. That night, aided by a dense fog which seemed providential, he embarked his men. Washington himself went across on the last boat. He had been forty-eight hours without sleep. When morning dawned the British were chagrined to find that their defeated enemy of yesterday was once again an active enemy in the field somewhere north of New York.

It is related that a Tory woman (that is, a sympathizer with the British cause) had seen the troops crossing the river, and had sent her servant to British headquarters to announce the fact. The Hessian sentry on duty did not understand English, so locked up the messenger on suspicion until morning, when it was too late. That was one time when a soldier "made in Germany" was not as good as the home product!

How fine it would be to write a story of Washington which would abound in victories for himself and his men in these first months of the Revolution! But sober history shows just the reverse; and indeed Washington the man shows himself greater in defeat than in victory. He held his men together and fought against tremendous odds. His men often lacked the barest necessities of life. There were sickness in camp, discouragement, and desertion. Washington said: "Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill, are timid, and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides, the sudden change in their manner of living brings on an unconquerable desire to return to their homes."

While he had every sympathy for raw, homesick troops, he had no

patience with cowardice. Soon after his retreat from Long Island he established some breastworks in Harlem. The British came up by water and attacked them. The militia were seized with panic and fled at the first advance. Washington dashed in among them and endeavored to reform the lines, but in vain. Losing his self-control he exclaimed in a fury:

"Are these the men with whom I am to defend America!"

He threatened some of the fleeing men with pistol and sword, and was so heedless of his own danger that he might have fallen into the enemy's hands, then only eighty yards distant, had not one of his staff officers seized the bridle of his horse and pulled him away forcibly.

This was one of the few recorded instances where Washington lost command of himself, and it was but momentary. The condition of the army was indeed critical. Most of the men had enlisted for terms not exceeding a year, and Congress was not offering inducements to re-enlist.

"We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of the army," he wrote, "and unless some speedy and effective measures are adopted by Congress, our cause will be lost."

In September he wrote a long letter to this effect to John Hancock, the President of Congress, which finally led to the reorganization of the army on a sounder basis. Meanwhile, on October 28, the American forces suffered another defeat at White Plains, although the "ragged rebels," as the British contemptuously called them, put up a splendid resistance lasting through two days.

Contrast the picture of these two armies if you can! The British advanced in two columns, the right commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, the left by the Hessian general, De Heister. There was also a troop of horse.

"It was a brilliant but formidable sight," writes Heath in his memoirs.

"The sun shone bright, their arms glittered; and perhaps troops never were shown to more advantage."

While here is a pen picture of the patriot army written by a British officer to a friend:

"The rebel army are in so wretched a condition as to clothing and accouterments, that I believe no nation ever saw such a set of tatterdemalions. There are few coats among them but what are out at elbows, and in a whole regiment there is scarce a pair of breeches. Judge, then, how they must be pinched by a winter's campaign."

Despite the defeat at White Plains Washington withdrew his army in good order.

An aide pays this tribute to his strategy:

"The campaign hitherto," he says, "has been a fair trial of generalship, in which I flatter myself we have had the advantage. If we, with our motley army, can keep Mr. Howe and his grand appointment at bay, I think we shall make no contemptible military figure."

VIII. A Retreat That Ended In Victory

After the battle of White Plains the Americans continued to give ground. Indeed, there was nothing left for them to do, to avoid the continual prospect of capture. Washington's next move was to cross the Hudson into New Jersey. His little army was so hard-pressed that it narrowly escaped capture at Hackensack, by Cornwallis.

The army now did not exceed three thousand men. In their rapid marches they had lost much of their equipment including tents and tools for digging entrenchments. Winter was approaching and they were in a desperate plight.

Washington himself was not free from attack at home. A cabal was working against him both in camp and in Congress to supplant him with another general. They said that he was too cautious, that he would not fight. Some of his most trusted officers added to his difficulties by disobeying or delaying to execute his orders. But the commander-in-chief did not reply to his critics. He set his lips firmly together and hung on.

Cornwallis continued to press upon his retreat. Washington moved to Newark. It was like the moves upon a gigantic checkerboard. He moved again to New Brunswick, just as Cornwallis occupied Newark. So close were the two armies that the last of Washington's men was leaving Newark when the British vanguard entered the town.

Moving from New Brunswick, Washington marched by way of Princeton to Trenton, reaching there the second day of December. The Delaware River was now beginning to fill with ice, but he collected all the boats within seventy miles and safely crossed with his army. Cornwallis in full pursuit reached the eastern shore just as the last boat had gotten safely over, and looked in vain for a means of crossing. There was nothing for it, but to encamp and wait for the river to freeze over, which it promised to do

in a few days.

It did indeed seem as though the cause of freedom was lost, but the spirit of the leader himself was firm and unbroken.

"What think you," he asked of General Mercer; "if we should retreat to the back parts of Pennsylvania, would the Pennsylvanians support us?"

"If the lower counties give up, the back counties will do the same," was the discouraging reply.

"We must then retire to Virginia," said Washington. "Numbers will repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleghenies."

But never did the word "surrender" pass his lips!

Instead, at the moment when the American cause seemed most hopeless, he executed a brilliant coup against the enemy, and one which changed the entire aspect of the campaign.

Cornwallis had himself returned to New York for a few days, leaving the pursuing army of Hessians encamped at Trenton. With customary German thoroughness they had seized everything in sight, and now settled down to enjoy life. The enemy was on the run, Christmas was approaching — so why not eat, drink and be merry?

But the American army, far from being on the run, was quietly securing boats to re-cross the river and attack them. On Christmas night the expedition set out. It seemed the very worst time to attempt such a venture. The weather was bitter cold, the air was filled with particles of sleet, and the current with floating cakes of ice. But the very desperateness of the venture was its safeguard so far as the enemy was concerned. He had eaten his Christmas dinner, and secure against surprise was sleeping it off.

During the thickest of that wild night Washington and his brave men battled with wind and stream and ice, getting safely over with the loss of only two men who were frozen to death. At four in the morning they began a march overland through the storm to Trenton. At eight they reached the village, overpowered the sentries, and surrounded the camp.

The Hessians were roused from their late slumbers by the cry: "Der feind! der feind! heraus!" (The enemy! the enemy! turn out!) but it was too late. Their commanding officer, Rahl, was killed, and all but five hundred, who managed to escape, laid down their arms. One thousand were thus captured and, more important still, a large quantity of much needed supplies was obtained.

Most important of all, new life had been put into the army. A thrill ran through the whole land. Patriots took heart again. This victory small in its tangible results will always rank as one of the most dramatic and thrilling events in American history.

The captured Hessians were marched from place to place until they reached Virginia. At first they were the object of much curiosity, and upbraiding as well. Especially did they have to endure the scoldings of women in the small towns, who told them that they had hired themselves out to rob the Americans of their liberty.

A German corporal who kept a diary of the time writes: "At length General Washington had written notices put up in town and country, that we were innocent of this war and had joined in it not of our free will, but through compulsion. We should, therefore, be treated not as enemies, but friends. From this time things went better with us. Every day came many out of the towns, old and young, rich and poor, and brought us provisions, and treated us with kindness and humanity."

When Cornwallis learned of the disaster at Trenton, he rode back from

New York with all haste. This time, Washington instead of retreating decided to wait for him. Cornwallis brought fresh troops and supplies, and his line when he reached Trenton extended back to Princeton. Washington was entrenched on the opposite side of a small but deep and swift stream which was spanned only by a stone bridge. The enemy tried repeatedly to cross over, but without success. With the approach of night they ceased firing and made camp, each with his campfires in plain sight of the other.

"Never mind," said Cornwallis to his men. "I shall bag the old fox in the morning."

But when morning came, no Washington was there. Instead of waiting to be bagged he had marched swiftly and silently around the British and was now trying to capture their supplies at Princeton!

Cornwallis hurried back and although he saved his baggage, he got the worst of it in this his first direct encounter with Washington. The English general, in fact, now suddenly found conditions reversed. Instead of being the pursuer he was now the pursued. He entrenched himself in New Brunswick where he could supply his needs by water, from New York. And here all winter he stuck. He could not send out so much as a foraging party without danger of its capture.

IX. Foes Without And Within

This brief life story of Washington will not attempt to give a detailed account of the progress of the Revolution. Every school history recounts it. We must therefore pass lightly on the succeeding years of its progress, noting only such facts as may serve to bring in clearer detail our portrait of the great commander.

After the battle of Princeton, Washington made his headquarters at Morristown, where he kept a watchful eye upon the enemy in New York and New Brunswick. Meanwhile he was busily writing letters to Congress and to various state legislatures urging them to send more men to fill up his depleted ranks.

"The enemy," he writes, "must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested, and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the fact to paper, lest this letter should fall into other hands than those for which it is intended."

To General Putnam he said: "Try to make the enemy believe that your force is twice as great as it is." And this precept was actually put into practice on at least one occasion, when a wounded British officer was brought into camp. Lights were placed in the windows of vacant houses all over town, and a company of soldiers was marched and counter-marched up and down the main street all night long. When the British officer was suffered to rejoin his command he reported that the American force was very active and must consist of at least 5,000 men!

Washington also watched over his men with a fatherly solicitude. We find him writing to one of his brigadier generals as follows: "Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much as possible in your brigade; and, as a chaplain is allowed to each regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship. Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden,

as being the foundation of evil, and the cause of many a brave and gallant officer's ruin."

The first definite successes of the American army had an effect in another quarter. It directed the attention of soldiers of fortune in foreign lands, and many requests came for permission to serve under Washington. These where as a rule embarrassing to him, as the men usually brought nothing but inexperience, so far as America was concerned. Two notable exceptions must be mentioned, however.

Thaddeus Kosciusko, a Pole of ancient and noble family, had been disappointed in a love affair, and immigrated to America. Armed with a letter from Franklin he sought out Washington.

"What do you seek here?" asked the commander.

"To fight for American independence," was the reply.

"What can you do?"

"Try me."

Washington was so pleased by the brief but business-like manner of the young foreigner, that he made him an aide-de-camp. Congress shortly after appointed him an engineer with the rank of colonel; and he proved a valuable officer during the succeeding years of the Revolution.

The other name which is inseparably linked with that of Washington, is of a certain gallant young Frenchman, the Marquis de Lafayette. Unlike Kosciusko, he did not turn to America because of a disappointment in love. Lafayette at twenty was happily married and a favorite of the French court. But his chivalrous spirit was so stirred by the American struggles, that he turned his back upon home and friends, and came to this country to cast in his lot with our uncertain fortunes.

He presented his letters of introduction to Congress, only to meet with discouragement. So many such requests had been received that Congress felt it must go slow. Lafayette then sent in the following note: "After my sacrifices, I have the right to ask two favors; one is to serve at my own expense; the other, to commence by serving as a volunteer."

This simple appeal had its effect, and Congress accorded him the rank of major-general. Later at a public dinner he first met Washington. The latter was surrounded by his staff, but Lafayette immediately knew him by his stature and commanding presence. Washington greeted him graciously, and invited him out to headquarters.

"I cannot promise you the luxuries of a court," said he, "but as you have become an American soldier, you will doubtless accommodate yourself to the fare of an American army."

Thus began a friendship between two high-souled men, that was to be of lasting value to the American cause. For in addition to his own efforts and the funds he was able to raise, Lafayette later influenced still greater aid from France as a nation.

Lafayette in his Memoirs describes a review of Washington's army which he witnessed soon after reporting for duty.

"Eleven thousand men, but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, presented a singular spectacle; in this parti-colored and often naked state, the best dresses were hunting shirts of brown linen. Their tactics were equally irregular. They were arrayed without regard to size; excepting that the smallest men were the front rank; with all this, there were good-looking soldiers conducted by zealous officers."

"We ought to feel embarrassed," said Washington to him, "in presenting ourselves before an officer just from the French army."

"It is to learn, and not to instruct, that I come here," was Lafayette's apt and modest reply, and it gained for him immediate popularity.

The year 1777 witnessed both victory and defeat for the patriot army. In the North the British general, Burgoyne, was defeated in his expedition south from Canada; and finally was forced to complete surrender. But Washington's forces in New Jersey were not so successful. In the battle of Brandywine, they were surrounded and defeated by the British under General Howe. As an immediate result. Congress had to leave Philadelphia, which city was soon captured; and Washington took up winter quarters in Valley Forge, about twenty miles away.

The horrors of that winter have often been described and pictured. The ill-clad men were sheltered only by hastily constructed barracks, and lacked the barest necessities of life. As they felled trees to build their huts, the snow often showed bloodstains from their unprotected feet. Sickness made its inroads. Washington reported to Congress:

"No less than two thousand, eight hundred and ninety-eight men are now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and other-wise naked." For lack of blankets, "numbers have been obliged, and still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest." He adds: "From my soul, I pity those miseries which it is neither in my power to relieve nor prevent."

Then the harassed commander gives us another revealing glimpse of himself in this outburst: "It adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress, to find that much more is expected from me than is possible to be performed, and that, upon the ground of safety and policy, I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny."

This outburst of feeling was caused by the fact that a conspiracy had

been under way for some time, known as the "Conway Cabal" to undermine him with Congress and the country at large, and cause his resignation as commander-in-chief, in favor of General Gates, the victor over Burgoyne at Saratoga. General Gates's army had been reinforced at the expense of the southern army, and the latter left constantly exposed to a superior enemy — as Washington pointed out in a letter to Patrick Henry:

"My own difficulties, in the course of the campaign, have been not a little increased by the extra aid of colonial troops which the gloomy prospect of our affairs in the North induced me to spare from this army. But it is to be hoped that all will yet end well. *If the cause is advanced, indifferent is it to me where or in what quarter it happens."*

Washington Irving, the general's name-sake and greatest biographer, placed the last sentence, which we have italicized, in capital letters, saying, "It speaks the whole soul of Washington. Glory with him is a secondary consideration. Let those who win, wear the laurel — sufficient for him is the advancement of the cause."

Yet he would have been less the great man, if his soul had not revolted at the injustice of his present position.

While he remained all winter at Valley Forge sharing the hardships of his men and striving to preserve their morale, or fighting spirit, against the most tremendous odds, his enemies in the cabal were openly active against him. They called Gates to Yorktown, now the seat of Congress, as head of the War Board. Gates planned an expedition to Canada, without consulting Washington, and to add force to the covert insult, appointed Lafayette as commander of the expedition. The latter was still on Washington's personal staff, and did not want to go under such auspices. Washington, however, at once detached him and gave him full permission to go.

Lafayette set out and went as far north as Albany, but the expedition collapsed before it was even launched; and the young Marquis was glad to

hasten back to Washington's own command.

Washington's only comment at this time is in a letter to another officer: "I shall say no more of the Canada expedition than that it is at an end. I never was made acquainted with a single circumstance relating to it"

Although Washington was fully aware of the effort on the part of his enemies to drive him from command of the army, he never made any public mention of it, nor any appeal on his own behalf.

For the present his whole task was to shield his army from want, and to preserve it as an army through the winter — the darkest winter that American liberty ever knew. His was a twofold burden, but his devoted men never guessed the half which related to him.

On the approach of spring, Washington writes: "For some days past there has been little less than a famine in the camp. A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been, ere this, excited by their suffering to a general mutiny and desertion."

Who but Washington could have held them together through this trying time?

X. The Varying Fortunes Of War

With the approach of spring affairs began to look up for the camp at Valley Forge. The commissary department was reorganized by Congress, and supplies began to arrive regularly. The foraging troops even surprised provision wagons intended for the British in Philadelphia, and diverted them to the place "where they would do the most good."

Another volunteer from Europe arrived at this time in the person of Baron von Steuben, a seasoned officer who had served under Frederick the Great. He wrote a fine letter to Washington, saying: "The object of my greatest ambition is to render your country all the service in my power, and to deserve the title of a citizen of America by fighting for the cause of your liberty. I would say moreover," he added later, "were it not for the fear of offending your modesty, that Your Excellency is the only person under whom, after having served under the King of Prussia, I could wish to pursue an art to which I have wholly given myself up."

As the baron was a fine drill-master he was of great service in training the troops; but he must have been shocked when he first saw them in their winter camp. He afterwards declared that no army in Europe could have been kept together a single month under such conditions.

The conspiracy against Washington himself, which had been working in Congress, also came to an end. Gates was sent back to the army of the North, with instructions to do nothing of importance without consulting Washington. Conway, the ringleader of the cabal, was dismissed from the army. In a word, the skies were brighter both for the commander and the country, than for months past.

The next piece of good news was that France had made a formal treaty with America and had pledged her aid in the fight for freedom. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which this news was received. It reached

Valley Forge in a day in early May when the whole countryside had blossomed forth with new life. It seemed that the flowers were blooming and the trees bursting their buds in sympathy with the joyous troops. A dress parade was held which was really a creditable affair, thanks to the zeal of von Steuben. Then came a thanksgiving service by the chaplains of each regiment; then a salute of thirteen guns, amid cries of "Long live France! Huzza for the American States!" A banquet followed, with much toasting and speech-making.

England, alarmed by this treaty, passed a Bill of Conciliation, offering to revise all taxation measures for the colonies; to grant pardon to the "rebels"; to appoint friendly commissioners, and so forth. But it was too late. Congress would have none of it. Washington and some ten of his generals held a council of war, just after that May-day fete, and resolved to fight it out to the one objective now dear to all their hearts — complete freedom.

With the approach of summer, the British evacuated Philadelphia, where they had been comfortably housed all winter. But their ease and inaction proved their undoing. As Franklin said: "The British have not taken Philadelphia, but Philadelphia has taken the British." With a force of about 20,000 men they had been kept at bay by an American force of half that number. England was so dissatisfied that she removed General Howe, and appointed Clinton as commander. His first action was to retreat back across New Jersey, toward New York.

Washington at once set out in pursuit, reached his flank at Monmouth Court House, and attacked him. The attack came near ending in defeat for the American army, however, owing to the retreat of one of his trusted generals, Lee. Washington rode up just in time to halt his flying columns.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" he cried, with an oath.

It was one of those rare occasions when the commander lost his

temper; and eye-witnesses say that he was terrible to behold. But he speedily reformed the troops and turned the defeat into victory. That he swore in his wrath is pretty well vouched for by history; and even his most careful biographers seem to think that a few "cuss-words" were justifiable!

During the next few months, the American army fought generally on the defensive, contenting itself with keeping the British army constantly on the alert. The French made good their promises by sending a fleet over to harass the British, but its first ventures brought no definite results. Still that it was in action and might at any moment strike the enemy kept up the spirits of the patriot army.

One constant anxiety to Washington was the poor pay which his men received. Congress was not altogether to blame for this, as it as yet had no power to levy taxes. Each State still issued its own money and raised its own funds. But the paper money thus issued finally became so cheap that forty or fifty paper dollars were scarcely equal to one silver one.

The soldiers often grew so discouraged over this and insufficient rations that companies would threaten to quit in a body. It required all of Washington's diplomacy to hold them in line. On one occasion when an expedition had been planned against the Indians of Central New York, to prevent their frequent raids and massacres, the chosen brigade quietly but firmly refused to march until they had received their pay. They offered as an excuse that their families were starving. Of course from a military point of view this was inexcusable, and they could have been court-martialed. But Washington laid aside discipline. He went among the men and talked to them "like a father," then went to the state legislature, and finally got the matter smoothed over.

While some states made good in their quotas of men and money, others were very remiss. This made the planning of extended campaigns difficult. The British saw this weakness, and sent a portion of their army south by water to Savannah and Charleston; whence they speedily overran

the southern tier of states.

Washington thereupon petitioned Congress to remedy this defect by placing all military matters under the control of Congress, aided by a committee of staff officers. At first that body demurred, and their reasons are worth quoting: They did not desire to put so much power in a few hands, especially in those of the commander-in chief, feeling "that his influence was already too great; that even his virtues afforded motives for alarm; that the enthusiasm of the army, joined to the kind of dictatorship already confided to him, put Congress and the United States at his mercy; that it was not expedient to expose a man of the highest virtues to such temptations."

Truly a hack-handed compliment, which while praising Washington showed the jealousy existing because of his influence over his men!

Another great general — Napoleon Bonaparte — did in fact make use of such a situation, at a little later date, to found an empire with himself as emperor. But Washington was not that kind of man.

Not content with petitioning Congress, Washington also wrote many letters to the state bodies, and obtained some measures of relief. That his men were kept in the ranks at all during the third and fourth years of the war was due largely to his personal efforts.

Meanwhile his devoted friend Lafayette had returned to France, and thanks to his efforts a force of 5,000 men under Rochambeau was sent to America, reaching this country in the summer of 1780. A combined attack by French and American forces, by both land and sea, was contemplated, but had to be postponed. The British were making a vigorous campaign in South Carolina and Georgia. And hard upon this came the treason of Benedict Arnold at West Point.

The story of Arnold has been often told; his treachery struck

Washington a keener blow than any other single event in the war. Arnold had been a brave soldier and one of Washington's most trusted generals. His conduct in the first years of the war had been markedly Brilliant. In one action he had been severely wounded in one leg. What motives led to his final treachery are not clearly known, beyond the fact that Congress had once reprimanded him for a petty misdemeanor, and also that he was in need of money to pay large personal debts; for he lived extravagantly.

Washington entrusted to him the command of West Point. Arnold plotted to surrender this strong fort to the British for $50,000 in money and the rank of brigadier general in their army. Major John Andre was entrusted by the British with the final negotiations. At the last moment their plot miscarried, and Andre was captured by three militiamen at Tarrytown. Poor Andre suffered the fate of a spy and was executed. Arnold escaped to a British ship and took up arms against his country. He received a commission, as promised, but he was execrated by the British no less than by those he would have betrayed. He became a man without a country. Once when talking to an American prisoner, he asked what would have been done to him, had he been captured.

"They would have cut off the leg wounded in the service of your country, and buried it with the honors of war," was the reply. "But the rest of you they would have hanged."

Washington's opportune arrival at West Point prevented any other ill results from Arnold's treason; but the commander himself was profoundly shaken by the tidings. Taking Knox and Lafayette to one side, he placed in their hands the letter intercepted on Andre's person, from Arnold.

"Whom can we trust now?" was his only comment. But it spoke volumes.

XI. The Surrender At Yorktown

Fortunately for us all, the army did not bring out any more Benedict Arnolds. Washington found that, although his men murmured at times over their hardships and poor pay, they could be trusted. One historic incident which occurred not long after proved this very forcibly.

Some of General Wayne's men mutinied, because Congress had not paid them, as promised. As one officer wrote Washington:

"I will not pain you with further accounts of the wants and sufferings of this army. There is not a shilling in the pay chest, nor a prospect of any for months to come. This is really making bricks without straw."

Wayne's men openly mutinied, and taking their guns marched out of camp. As we would say to-day, they "struck." Clinton, the British general in New York, heard of it and sent agents to them promising food, clothing and pay in abundance if they would join his army. The agents were promptly hung as spies.

"We are not traitors to our country," they answered.

Their curious brand of loyalty, while it might imperil one enterprise, was proof against treason. The men were dealt with firmly but kindly, and kept in the service. The pay chest, however, was empty most of the time.

But better days were ahead for the American army in this year of 1781. The first rift in the clouds occurred in the South. Cornwallis had won a decisive victory at Camden, S. C., and thought that the war was over in that section, until a band of Carolina and Tennessee mountaineers trapped one of his ablest officers at King's Mountain and won a lively battle there. Cornwallis, alarmed, stayed more closely to the seaboard after this. He began a march northward through the Carolinas and Virginia, being

continually hampered and annoyed by the patriot forces under Greene. They avoided general engagements, but buzzed around the enemy like a swarm of angry hornets. Cornwallis was glad at last to reach Yorktown, Virginia, where he could be in touch, by sea, with the general headquarters in New York. He thought he had reached a haven of safety; but it proved a death-trap.

Thanks to the efforts of Benjamin Franklin in France, and the brilliant example of Lafayette who was actively fighting on Washington's staff, the French Government sent a fleet of twenty warships to America, and three thousand men. General Clinton, the British commander-in-chief in New York, was afraid of an attack upon that city, especially as Washington had made a great parade from the Jersey side. So Clinton, instead of sending men to Cornwallis, actually asked him for three regiments.

But Washington and his French allies did not strike at New York. Instead they turned swiftly south and began a closing-in movement on Cornwallis at Yorktown. Too late the latter saw his danger; but he was strongly entrenched and he expected supplies and reinforcements by water. He did not know that the French fleet was to the north of him.

By the first of October the line of besiegers, nearly two miles from the Yorktown forts, had thrown up a redoubt each end resting on the river and completely cutting off the British communication by land. The French rendered valuable aid by both land and sea.

Washington personally directed these hemming-in operations, and was frequently in range of the enemy's guns. Once a shot struck close to his feet throwing up a cloud of dust. His chaplain who stood by was greatly alarmed for the leader's safety. Taking off his own hat and showing it covered with sand, he said, "See here, General!"

"Mr. Evans," retorted Washington, smiling, "you had better carry that home, and show it to your wife and children."

At another time an aide remonstrated with him for thus keeping in an exposed position. "It is dangerous, sir," he said.

"If you think so," replied Washington, "you are at liberty to step back."

Shortly afterwards another musket ball fell at his feet, and this time one of his generals grasping him by the arm tried forcibly to pull him back, exclaiming, "We can't spare you yet!"

"It is a spent ball," replied the commander quietly. "No harm is done."

When the enveloping movement around the town was completed and the outer forts actually seized, Washington at last stepped back out of gunshot.

"The work is done, and well done!" he said with a sigh of relief.

The words might have been prophetic of the whole war, now so soon to end.

Shut off by land, Cornwallis sent urgent messages to Clinton for relief. The latter at last awoke to the seriousness of the situation and sent a fleet with seven thousand men to the Virginia capes. But before he arrived there, he received word that Cornwallis had surrendered; and the relief army turned north again. Although Clinton did not realize it at the time, in trying to save New York he had lost America.

So closely was Yorktown invested, that within ten days after the siege began, Cornwallis surrendered. He sent out messengers under a flag of truce to arrange terms, and was allowed to march out of town with the honors of war. Washington elected not to receive the submission of the beaten army in person, but generously gave that honor to General Lincoln, whose own army had met defeat in Charleston, at the hands of Cornwallis. An eye-

witness has given us this graphic description of the ceremony:

"At about twelve o'clock the combined army was drawn up in two lines more than a mile in length, the Americans on the right side of the road, the French on the left. Washington mounted on a noble steed, and attended by his staff, was in front of the former; the Count de Rochambeau and his suite, of the latter. The French troops in complete uniform and well equipped made a brilliant appearance, and had marched to the ground with a band of music playing, which was a novelty in the American service. The American troops but part in uniform and all in garments much the worse for wear, yet had a spirited, soldier-like air, and were not the worse in the eyes of their countrymen for bearing the marks of hard service and great privations. The concourse of spectators from the country seemed equal in number to the military, yet silence and order prevailed.

"At two o'clock the garrison sallied forth, and passed through with shouldered arms, slow and solemn steps, colors cased, and drums beating a British march. They were all well clad, having been furnished with new suits prior to the capitulation. They were led by General O'Hara on horseback, who, riding up to General Washington, took off his hat and apologized for the non-appearance of Lord Cornwallis, on account of indisposition.

"Washington received him with dignified courtesy, but pointed to Major-General Lincoln as the officer who was to receive the submission of the garrison. By him they were conducted into a field where they were to ground their arms. In passing through the line formed by the allied army, their march was careless and irregular, and their aspect sullen, the order to 'ground arms' was given by their platoon officers with a tone of deep chagrin, and many of the soldiers threw down their muskets with a violence sufficient to break them. This irregularity was checked by General Lincoln; yet it was excusable in brave men in their unfortunate predicament. This ceremony over, they were conducted back to Yorktown, to remain under guard until removed to their places of destination."

Another account states that the British marched out to the tune, "The World Turned Upside Down." It probably expressed the state of their feelings!

The next morning Washington issued general orders praising both armies for their fine conduct. He pardoned and set at liberty all of his army who were under arrest. And he asked that services of thanksgiving be held and "that the troops not on duty should universally attend, with seriousness of deportment and gratitude of heart."

Cornwallis's "indisposition" which prevented him from surrendering his sword in person was not merely pique. The proud British peer was almost sick with humiliation and grief. But he wrote later in much appreciation of the consideration shown him and his men by the allied troops. "The treatment, in general, that we have received from the enemy since our surrender has been perfectly good and proper."

Cornwallis was not only spared the mortification of handing over his sword in person; he and his staff were entertained at dinner by Washington. At this meal, so the story goes, Rochambeau, being asked for a toast, gave "The United States." Washington gave "The King of France." Lord Cornwallis simply pledged "The King." But Washington, answering this toast, quickly added, "of England." Then said smilingly "Confine him there, and I'll drink him a full bumper!"

Cornwallis never forgot Washington's courtesy, and some years later when governor-general of India he sent a message to his old foe wishing "General Washington a long enjoyment of tranquility and happiness," and adding that he himself "continued in troubled waters."

Meanwhile, the rejoicings begun in the American camp had continued throughout the Union.

"Cornwallis is taken! Cornwallis is taken!" The word spread like

wildfire. It was considered the deathblow of the war.

Congress was in a transport of joy. Two stands of colors were voted to Washington, and trophies to the French commanders, with the official thanks of the nation.

Far different was the sensation aroused in England. Lord North, the prime minister, received the tidings "as he would have taken a musket hall in the breast," according to an eye-witness. "He opened his arms, exclaiming wildly as he paced up and down the apartment:

"'Oh God! It is all over I'"

XII. The End Of Army Life

Although the surrender of Cornwallis was the last great stroke of the war, several months passed by before it was actually ended. They were months filled with peril and anxiety for the commander-in-chief and his advisers.

In the first place, the news of the great victory caused a great let-down among the states as to enlistments and pay; and in the second, Congress was still far behind with pay already promised and earned. But Congress, we must remember, was not much to blame, as it had as yet very little actual authority. No Constitution had as yet been adopted.

The army was in danger of dwindling away, with thousands of British soldiers still on American soil. So it was Washington's constant task to keep his men in line with one hand, so to speak, and Congress with the other. He was our first great apostle of preparedness.

"Even if the British nation and Parliament are really in earnest to obtain peace with America," he said, "it will undoubtedly be wisdom in us to meet them with great caution, and by all means to keep our arms firm in our hands. No nation ever yet suffered in treaty by preparing, even in the moment of negotiation, most vigorously for the field."

Just about this time we find him the recipient of a very strange offer. Some of his military officers, losing patience with Congress and realizing that a strong central power was needed, openly hinted that the country should have a limited monarchy, with Washington as king! When this suggestion reached him he lost his temper — another of the few historic occasions when it got away from him. The men who secretly visited him with the suggestion were roundly scolded. The general paced the room in a towering rage.

"No occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations," he said. "I am at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my country." And he ends: "Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for your country or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or anyone else, a sentiment of the like nature."

Compare Napoleon's course, at a later time when a similar temptation came to him, and he seized it to crown himself an emperor, — and ask yourself which was the greater man!

Washington's wonderful control over his army was shown again and again, and never more so than in these closing months of the war when the country was still in chaos and confusion. Once when a portion of the army while in winter quarters at Newburgh, on the Hudson, was on the brink of mutiny against Congress, Washington was sent for in hot haste to quell the discontent. On reaching the camp an unsigned letter was thrust into his hand, stating the army's grievances. He replied to it at length, agreeing to the justice of its contentions, but also pointing out that the army was proceeding the wrong way in rectifying them.

Major Shaw, who was present, has given us an account of this scene. He relates that Washington, after reading the first part of the letter, made a short pause, took out his spectacles and begged the indulgence of his audience while he put them on, observing at the same time that he had grown gray in their service, and now found himself growing blind.

"There was something so natural, so unaffected in this appeal," adds Shaw, "as rendered it superior to the most studied oratory. It forced its way to the heart, and you might see sensibility moisten every eye."

The articles of peace between the new nation and the old were not signed until January 20, 1783 — nearly eight years after the Battle of

Lexington. News traveled slowly in those days, and it was not until April that Congress in Philadelphia and the British commander in New York ordered a cessation of hostilities by sea and land. Before the formal notice could be carried into effect, Washington gave many furloughs to his war-worn men. They were sent singly or in small groups to their homes, on an indefinite leave of absence. This was not only kindness to the men, it relieved the country from a great danger, of disbanding large masses of unpaid soldiery at once.

Says Irving: "Now and then were to be seen three or four in a group, bound probably to the same neighborhood, beguiling the way with camp jokes and camp stories. The war-worn soldier was always kindly received at the farmhouses along the road, where he might shoulder his gun and fight over his battles. The men thus dismissed on furlough were never called upon to rejoin the army. Once at home they sank into domestic life; their weapons were hung up over their fire-places, military trophies of the Revolution to be prized by future generations."

The commander himself had the same feelings as his men, when he thought of home. Mount Vernon had been very dear to him, but for eight long years he had been an exile from its friendly roof. In a general letter to the governors of the various states, upon the breaking up of the army, he says:

"The great object for which I had the honor to hold an appointment in the service of my country being accomplished, I am now preparing to return to that domestic retirement which, it is well known, I left with the greatest reluctance; a retirement for which I have never ceased to sigh, through a long and painful absence, and in which (remote from the noise and trouble of the world) I meditate to pass the remainder of life in a state of undisturbed repose."

Nothing could be freer from personal ambition than such a desire — but Destiny was by no means through with this her chosen vessel!

It was not until October that the army absent on leave was formally discharged. The British completed the evacuation of New York in November, and Washington with the remainder of his forces marched in. On December 4, he assembled his officers at Fraunces' Tavern, and bade farewell to them. As he saw himself surrounded by his comrades in arms who had shared his perils and privations, he was so overcome with emotion that for a few moments he could not speak. When he had obtained self-control he said:

"With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you, most devoutly wishing that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." Then he added with emotion: "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand." A few moments later a ferry took him from the city, and he proceeded to Congress to tender his formal resignation. He received the thanks of that body and at last turned his face toward Mount Vernon. General Washington, the commander, had become George Washington, the private citizen.

XIII. Washington Tries Unsuccessfully To Remain A Private Citizen

Washington reached home in the dead of winter. The roads were blocked with snow. But once by his roaring fireside, he welcomed the shut-in days. They gave him just the chance he needed to rest and take mental stock of himself.

"Strange as it may seem," he wrote to General Knox, "it is nevertheless true that it was not until very lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating as soon as I wake in the morning, on the business of the ensuing day; and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man, nor had anything to do with public transactions."

Mrs. Washington completes the picture of his domestic comfort, as she sat on the opposite side of the fire always knitting, in the early evening hours. She had become an inveterate knitter during the war, making socks for the soldiers, and doubtless inspiring the making of many others, by her example. What a tower of strength she would have been to the Red Cross of later wars!

One of the first invited guests to Mount Vernon was Lafayette, between whom and Washington a constant bond of affection had been maintained. While there, Lafayette went to Fredericksburg to pay his respects to Washington's aged mother. As he spoke in eloquent praise of the man he so loved and honored, Mary Washington responded quietly, "I am not surprised at what George has done, for he was always a good boy."

Simple tribute of a devoted mother heart! Mary Washington lived on a few years longer — until 1789 — to see her son receive the highest gifts in the power of a new and grateful nation.

Meanwhile in the present year of 1784, he was finding it more and

more difficult to remain the simple private citizen. As the roads cleared up, with the advent of spring, visitors of all sorts flocked to Mount Vernon. Some had business, or fancied they had, while others came out of curiosity to see the most-talked-of man in America. By person and by letter his opinions were sought. Letters came to him from all over the world, and he was hard put to it to answer them. Here was one from the King and Queen of France inviting him to visit their country as their guest. Here, a plea for advice as to the best way to reclaim public lands, or to civilize the Indians. Here, a request that he would stand godfather to a child that was to be named for him — the first of countless children white, black, and yellow who were to be called George Washington!

As he tried to keep pace with the daily demands upon him, he came to realize with a start the great change that the war had made in him. He had entered it a Virginian; he came out of it an American. As he studied the problem during those first snowbound days at home, he saw that the only hope of the country lay — not in separate state control — but in a union of states. He began to write letters advocating this plan to each of the states — and he kept it up. He pointed out that the thirteen states could never make any headway pulling and hauling against each other. As a single example of the need for united action, there was the western frontier, held by Indians, English, with the Spanish in the South — all jealous of the new nation and ready to make trouble.

He pleaded for a central government with what he called "a federal head." His former soldiers already knew his sentiments along these lines; for had they not watched him battle for their interests with a patriotic but impotent Congress? So as the subject became one of general debate these old veterans would nod their heads sagely and remark:

"Yes, that's what General Washington thinks about it — and he ought to know!"

But new ideas move slowly; and although Washington was not alone in

this thought, other public men adding their voice to it, two years and more went by, before the project began to take shape. The governors were reluctant to yield their powers to a scheme they did not understand. One convention was called to meet in Annapolis, in 1786, but fell through. Then at last a meeting was called successfully at Philadelphia, in May, 1787. It was known as the Federal Convention. Its purpose was to provide a working plan by which the states could retain their separate power, and yet work together. Nobody had ever heard of such a scheme, and of course many were skeptical.

The convention brought together some able men, the tried and true of the Revolution. There was old Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, a patriarch universally esteemed; John Adams and his cousin Samuel of Massachusetts; Alexander Hamilton, who had served brilliantly on Washington's staff, and was to display unusual ability in statecraft; Thomas Jefferson, his great political rival; and many another. It has been said that no revolution ever produced so many notable men as this of America. But by common consent, Washington was the ablest man of them all. He was unanimously chosen president of the convention.

The result is a matter of history — the writing of the Constitution of the United States, an unique document in the history of the world, with its lofty preamble:

"We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

But "the People of the United States" did not accept this strange new document all together or all at once. It required several months more of separate arguing and persuading before the required number of states — at least nine — entered into this joint agreement and made it binding. And

there is no doubt that the first name signed to it, that of George Washington, did much to convince the people that it was probably the best document that could be produced as chart and compass for the new Ship of State.

When Washington as presiding officer took up his pen to sign the Constitution, it is said that he remarked slowly and solemnly: "Should the States reject this excellent Constitution, the probability is that an opportunity will never again be offered to cancel another in peace; the next will be drawn in blood."

What he must have meant was that without such a safeguard the states would soon be torn by internal dissensions and would fall an easy prey to the next foreign power who might undertake a conquest.

On September 13, 1788, Congress gave notice that the Constitution had been ratified by a sufficient number of states, and that an election would be held in the succeeding January for a President of the United States, to take office on the first Wednesday in March, in the new seat of government, the city of New York.

Then came the all-important task of choosing the first President — but this proved not nearly so difficult as adopting the Constitution itself. Only one man seemed the logical candidate — the man who had led the troops through the long years of the Revolution and kept them together until final victory; the man who had been "father" to the Constitution. It could be none other than George Washington. Hamilton, who first called him the father of the Constitution, told him that the whole country wanted him, and that it was his duty to accept the call.

"But I do not desire the office," protested Washington, honestly. "Let those who wish such things as office or leadership be at the head of things. All I desire now is to settle down at Mount Vernon and live and die an honest man on my own farm."

To Lafayette and others of his friends he expressed himself in the same fashion. It was with "unfeigned reluctance" that he viewed the possibility of his election, and nothing but a sense of duty which inclined him to accept. Washington was in fact fifty-seven years of age. At least half his life had been "in the saddle" for public affairs. He had just passed through one of the most grueling experiences that had ever fallen to the lot of man. He knew also that the Chief Executive of a brand new nation would have his hands filled to overflowing. Add to this his deep love for his own home, and we can well see that he was sincere in his desire to avoid this new honor.

But Washington was never a man to shirk a plain duty; and when the January elections showed him to be the overwhelming choice of the whole country, — every one of the sixty-nine electoral votes having been cast for him — he put his own ease and quiet aside again. George Washington, private citizen, ordered his horse saddled, and rode away from Mount Vernon, back into public life to become President Washington.

XIV. President Washington

An entry in Washington's diary dated April 16 reads: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York with the best disposition to render service to my country, in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

But if Washington had misgivings as to his ability to fill the high position, his fellow citizens did not share his anxiety. His journey to New York was a triumphal progress. The ringing of bells and the salutes of cannon proclaimed his course throughout the country. Old and young came out to meet him and wish him Godspeed; children strewed flowers in his horse's path. Over the bridge crossing the river at Trenton — the same stream that he had braved in an open boat during the storm of a winter's night — an arch of laurel and evergreen had been erected with the words:

"The defender of the mothers will be the protector of the daughters."

A military parade was formed for his entrance into Philadelphia, and a superb white horse was led out for him to mount. As he passed through the garlanded streets while people waved and cheered themselves hoarse, he must have remembered the time only a few short months before when he and his little army huddled together like culprits at Valley Forge, while the enemy held these same streets and houses.

Washington had requested that his entry into New York be quiet — but again his preferences were overruled. The overjoyed country just had to celebrate. A committee from both Houses of Congress met him at Elizabethtown Point where a splendid barge awaited to convey him by water to the city. As his barge passed on up into New York harbor other boats fell in line, forming a nautical parade. Many of these boats were

decorated, and there were singers or bands of music aboard. The vessels in the harbor, gaily dressed, fired salutes as the presidential barge passed by. One alone, a Spanish man-of-war, remained silent and bare of ornament, until just as the barge came abreast, when as if by magic the yards were manned, and the ship burst forth, as it were, into a full array of flags, while it thundered a salute of thirteen guns.

From the landing at the Battery carpets were spread to a carriage that was to convey him to his official residence; but he preferred to walk. Attended by a parade of citizens and soldiers he passed through cheering lanes of people and along streets literally smothered in flowers and bunting. Never had the city witnessed such a scene.

His triumphal entry, however, did not fill him with pride. Instead, it gave him later moments of anxious thought, as he confided to his faithful diary.

"I must not fail my people now!" was the burden of his prayer.

The public inauguration took place on the 30th day of April, 1789. At nine o'clock in the morning religious services were held in all the churches, Old Trinity at the head of Wall Street having an especially noteworthy service. At twelve o'clock the troops paraded before Washington's door, and were soon followed by the committees from Congress and other public officials. The procession then moved forward escorting Washington, who rode in a coach of state, to the Senate Building. This stately structure which occupied the spot where the Sub-Treasury now stands, had a series of lofty columns supporting the roof, and a balcony forming a kind of open recess. In this balcony within full view of the street Washington took the oath of office as first President of the United States.

Chancellor Livingston administered the oath of office, and Washington stooping kissed the open Bible which he held in his hand. "This was the man," says Thomas W. Higginson, "whose generalship, whose patience,

whose self-denial, had achieved and then preserved the liberties of the nation; the man who, greater than Caesar, had held a kingly crown within reach, and had refused it."

After repeating the oath of office and kissing the Bible reverently, Washington added in a low, clear voice which yet carried to the first ranks of the throng:

"I swear — so help me God!"

Then the Chancellor stepped forward, waved his hand, and exclaimed:

"Long live George Washington, President of the United States!"

At this moment a flag was run up to the tower, and at the signal every bell in the city rang; while the guns at the Battery fired a presidential salute. The new nation was born indeed, now that it had a responsible head.

After delivering his inaugural address to Congress, he proceeded with the whole assemblage to St. Paul's Church, where prayers were read for the safety and success of the new government.

All that day the city continued to rejoice, and at night there were brilliant illuminations and fireworks. But in the privacy of his own room, Washington the man pondered over the outlook with anxious brow. The praise and festivities only made him realize his vast responsibilities.

"I greatly fear," he writes, "that my countrymen will expect too much from me."

His "fear," however, was not of the craven kind that deserts a duty. With him it was a trumpet call to battle.

The position to which he was elected did indeed bristle with

difficulties. There was a huge debt on behalf of the army to be paid off; alliances to be perfected with other countries; the frontiers to be established; and the complete organization of government to be effected.

"I walk, as it were, on untrodden ground," he writes to a friend. "So many untoward circumstances may intervene, that I shall feel an insuperable diffidence in my own abilities. I stand in need of the aid of every friend to myself, of every lover of good government."

At the outset he had but four Departments — State, Treasury, War, and Law. The first dealt, as it deals to-day, with foreign affairs; the second with money matters; the third with military affairs; and the fourth with the law of the land. John Adams had been elected Vice President; and Washington had beside him other advisers such as John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, General Knox, and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was made Secretary of State, and Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury.

These two appointments were most interesting, as the men themselves were intense political rivals, Jefferson being an advocate of the government by separate states, or "states' rights," and Hamilton of a strong central or "federal" government. From their opinions the first two great political parties were born — the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists.

Washington, while a Federalist, did not allow party considerations to influence him, as is shown by his appointing these two men to the most important positions in his cabinet.

Soon after his taking office, Mrs. Washington joined her husband in New York; and it is pleasant to note that many honors were shown her also, as her carriage was driven northward. The same barge conveyed her on the last stage of the journey, as had brought the President-elect, and she was given a presidential salute by the Battery cannons.

She and the President soon inaugurated a series of weekly receptions,

held every Friday, "to which the families of all persons of respectability" (as Irving says) "native or foreign, had access, without special invitation; and at which the President was always present."

His first official residence was at the junction of Pearl and Cherry streets, Franklin Square. At the end of about a year he removed to a mansion on the west side of Broadway, near Rector Street. Both these buildings have long since passed away before the march of improvement. The only down-town buildings which remain to us from that historic time are Fraunces' Tavern, where he bade his troops farewell, and the old churches. Trinity and St. Paul's. In the latter Washington's pew is still pointed out.

One of the little annoyances which threatened Washington's peace of mind at this time, was the desire on the part of some people to give him a high-sounding title, such as "His Highness, the President." He felt that such titles savored of royalty. "A grand name is of no value," he said, "if the man who bears it is not worthy or noble, or one who tries so to live and act that the title shall really be suited to him." He was pleased, therefore, when it was officially decided to address him simply as "the President of the United States," or "Mr. President" — and these designations have remained unchanged from that day to this.

Of all the turmoils and troubles of that first presidential term there is not room here to speak. There were plenty of them both without and within. The whole world looked critically at this new experiment in government, and most of the old-world monarchies with distrust. For people to elect their own ruler and manage their own destinies was almost an unheard-of thing. The monarchies would all have breathed easier, if the new republic had failed after a few months' trial.

But it did not fail, thanks to the steady hand of Washington. And presently another country, inspired by our example, tried to set up a republic. Poor, downtrodden France began a revolution which over-turned

its government, slew its rulers, and was not to end until seas of blood had been shed. Lafayette had gone back to France and was one of the prime-movers of this revolution in its opening months; but he did not countenance the bloodshed of its darker days. In fact, he came near losing his own life at the hands of the fickle mob. As this revolution continued it became a serious menace and embarrassment to America, as we shall see.

Meanwhile, Washington was not without his critics at home. For want of better things to criticize, they disparaged his official receptions and Mrs. Washington's "queenly drawing rooms." They said that the President was formal and distant, and that there was too much pomp and display. Others hinted that the presidency was only a stepping-stone to a monarchy, and that the wool was being pulled over the eyes of the people.

Such foolish slurs as this were only the least of Washington's troubles; such big national questions as the public debt, the establishment of a national bank, and the quelling of Indian disturbances, were continually demanding attention.

In the midst of all this pressure of public business, Washington's term of office expired. He had been elected — as all succeeding chief executives have been elected under the Constitution — for a period of four years. Even those who did not agree with him and had cast slurs at him behind his back did not think that it was wise to make a change. So he was again elected President — without one dissenting vote being cast against him!

While he expressed himself as gratified by this vote of confidence, it only caused him to redouble his efforts. But privately he viewed the next four years with misgiving; and he began to yearn more and more for the peaceful life of Mount Vernon. If those who accused him of wanting to be king could only have seen his private letters at this time, they would have realized how sadly they misjudged him.

One little circumstance shows how jealous his critics were. Just after

his reelection and before he had again taken the oath of office, his birthday came around. Many of the members of Congress, then in session, wished to pay their respects to him, and a motion was made to adjourn for half an hour, for that purpose. But it met with opposition as being a species of homage to Washington; it was setting up a popular idol that was dangerous to liberty!

If these petty politicians had been able to look ahead for a very few years, and see not merely a half-hour but a whole day set aside each year for Washington; if they had been able to vision the magnificent new capital city which was to bear his name, or even the imposing shaft of stone over five hundred feet high pointing its impressive finger toward heaven — might they not have felt a little "small" for having begrudged half an hour to Washington while he was yet alive?

Just about the time that Washington entered upon his second term, in 1793. events in France began to happen thick and fast. The king and queen were executed. Lafayette and some of the moderate faction had to flee for their own lives. The Reign of Terror — as the darkest days of the revolution were called — had begun. And, as if the unhappy country had not misery enough, war was declared upon England.

Many in America, their hearts warm for France, our own late ally, were for joining in this war. But cooler counsel prevailed. Washington at once saw that it would be little less than suicidal for our country to be embroiled. We were too young and weak.

"It behooves the government of this country," said he, "to use every means in its power to prevent the citizens thereof from embroiling us with either of those powers, by endeavoring to maintain a strict neutrality."

This was both common-sense and prudence. Further, it was pointed out by Hamilton and others that the France of that moment was little better than an anarchy, its leaders' hands stained with blood, and the guillotine

even then taking its daily toll of innocent victims.

But public opinion is a curious thing sometimes; and Washington was violently criticized for his "ingratitude" to France, and even accused of subservience to England.

Matters came to a climax when France sent over a minister, Genet, to represent her in America. Instead of landing in New York or Philadelphia, Genet chose to land at Charleston, South Carolina. Before calling upon Washington and presenting his credentials, he enlisted volunteers for his ships of war, or privateers, as they were called; and he made a sort of royal progress northward, stirring up a lot of enthusiasm as he came for "France our ally." People flocked to the support of France, and openly reviled Washington for standing aloof.

Despite this discourtesy on Genet's part, Washington received him courteously, when he did make his presence known; and while expressing every sympathy for France, he pointed out to the French delegate the un-wisdom of his present conduct.

Genet, however, did not take the hint. He relied upon the people's approval, as shown him by his tour northward, and went ahead with fitting up privateers in our ports, despite the President's proclamation of neutrality. When one of these illegal vessels was seized, he even flew into a rage and called upon Jefferson, the Secretary of State, breathing vengeance. He ended by declaring that if the President continued to thwart him, he would appear before Congress!

Jefferson heard him patiently, and said that such a request could not be carried before them, nor would they take any notice of it.

"But is not your Congress the sovereign power?" asked Genet in surprise.

"No," replied Jefferson, "they are sovereign only in making laws; the executive is the sovereign in executing them."

"But, at least," cried Genet, "Congress is bound to see that the treaties are observed."

"No," said Jefferson, "that is the President's task."

"But if he decides against the treaty," demanded Genet, "to whom is a nation to appeal?"

"The Constitution has made the President the last appeal," responded Jefferson.

Genet shrugged his shoulders and had the effrontery to remark: "I would not compliment Mr. Jefferson on such a Constitution!"

This foreigner had taken an attitude of open defiance against our President, gaining courage because of the popular support he had received. Newspapers of the day took it up, and some scurrilous articles and pictures were printed against Washington.

Nothing swerved him from his policy of strict neutrality. "I have consolation within," said he, "that no earthly effort can deprive me of, and that is, that neither ambitious nor interested motives have influenced my conduct."

Genet continued to be a thorn in his side for some time to come, and narrowly escaped involving America in war with both France and England. He was finally recalled at this country's request, and Washington and his Cabinet, as well as every far-seeing citizen, breathed more freely.

It is pleasant to note in this connection that when the Reign of Terror finally came to an end in France, and a more stable government was set up,

their own ministers were among the first to recognize the wisdom of our course, and to welcome our next minister to them, James Monroe, with lively cordiality.

Another perplexing issue in the closing half of Washington's second term was the ratification of a proper treaty with England. John Jay had been sent over as a special envoy to this end, and had finally cleared up all the existing disputes between the two countries, in this new treaty. It was far from perfect, he himself admitted when he forwarded it to Washington; but it was "the best that could be procured."

Washington himself saw its weak points, but felt that any document in the present crisis was better than none, and so sent it on to the Senate. That body ratified the treaty with the exception of one article. When the treaty was finally given out, the opposition press and party raised a great hue-and-cry about it. In New York a copy was burned before the governor's house. In Philadelphia it was suspended on a pole, carried about the streets, and finally burnt in front of the British minister's house, amid shouts and cheers. In Boston a public meeting was held, and an address sent to Washington. His reply is worth noting:

"In every act of my administration I have sought the happiness of my fellow-citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local, and partial considerations; *to contemplate the United States as one great whole.*"

The italics are our own. They show the broad vision of Washington in the very first years of our nation's history — when state was still jealous of state, and section of section. He anticipated the immortal words of Webster: "Liberty and Union, one and inseparable, now and forever!"

As the time for a third presidential election approached, Washington's friends besought him to stand again for office. But this time he was adamant. He felt that two terms of office were enough, for any one citizen,

and he thus established a precedent that has not since been overturned. Furthermore, he felt himself growing old. He wrote to his old companion-in-arms, General Knox: "To the wearied traveler who sees a resting-place, and is bending his body to lean thereon, I now compare myself."

John Adams, who had been his Vice President, was chosen to succeed him; Thomas Jefferson, his Secretary of State, Vice President. Washington was well content; and after giving his memorable Farewell Address and attending the new inauguration ceremonies, he turned his steps once more toward home and private life.

XV. At Home Again

On his way back to Mount Vernon Washington and his little party received many flattering attentions, which he strove to avoid. He was honestly tired of the round of public festivities and honors. He regarded himself now as only a private citizen returning to his own home.

When he reached there he found plenty to do in the farm life that was so congenial to him. During his last absence of eight years the place had run down sadly.

"I find myself in the situation of a new beginner," he says. "Almost everything requires repairs. I am surrounded by joiners, masons, and painters, and such is my anxiety to be out of their hands, that I have scarcely a room to put a friend into, or to sit in myself, without the music of hammers or smell of paint."

He writes to another friend: "To make and sell a little flour, to repair houses going fast to ruin, to build one for my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agricultural pursuits, will be employment enough for my few remaining years."

So he mended and built and farmed, and as he worked the old peace and quiet which he had courted years before came back to him. At times the shock of war and the pressure of official life must have seemed to him like a dream, and only Washington the farmer, the real man. But reminders of his past life constantly cropped up in the shape of visitors. The hospitable doors of Mount Vernon constantly swung open, and hardly a day went by without some caller. After his daily horse-back ride around the plantation and active oversight of its details, he had barely time to dress for dinner — "at which," he writes, "I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come, as they say, out of respect to me. Pray would not the word curiosity answer as well?"

He mentions whimsically, in this same letter, a round of duties which begin at sun-up and bring him to candle-light; "previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve that I will retire to my writing table and acknowledge the letters I have received. But when the lights are brought I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next night comes, and with it the same causes for postponement — and so on.

"Having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year, and I am persuaded you will not require a second edition of it. But it may strike you that in this detail no mention is made of any portion of time allotted for reading. The remark would be just, for I have not looked into a book since I came home; nor shall I be able to do it until I have discharged my workmen; probably not before the nights grow longer, when possibly I may be looking in Doomsday Book."

In his solitary rides around Mount Vernon, he could not help but think of the many changes which had come upon it, since first he went there as a young man — the loss of his brother, and later of his stepson and daughter, whom he had come to love as his own. Both of the Custis children had died young. Then his old friend, Lord Fairfax, had passed away, an ardent Tory to the last. It was said that the shock of Cornwallis's surrender was too much for him, for he was quite an old man.

"Put me to bed, Joe," he said to his old colored servant. "I guess I have lived too long."

Yet his pride and affection for George Washington never ceased, and Washington on his part never wavered in his regard for the old nobleman or the younger Fairfax with whom he had gone surveying nearly half a century before. Now the Fairfax home, Belvoir, was in ashes.

In a letter to Mrs. Fairfax, in England, he writes: "It is a matter of sore regret when I cast my eyes toward Belvoir, which I often do, to reflect that

the former inhabitants of it, with whom we lived in such harmony and friendship, no longer reside there, and the ruins only can be viewed as the mementos of former pleasures."

But Washington was not allowed to give way to moodiness, even if he had been so disposed. Mrs. Washington's two grandchildren, Nelly and George Custis made their home at Mount Vernon. They were now grown and therefore interested in the social life of the neighborhood. The halls soon resounded with music, laughter, and the tripping of the stately minuet.

Nelly Custis was a lovely and attractive girl whose flash of wit and saucy repartee were a constant delight to the General. Frequently he would forget his dignity and reserve, and indulge in a hearty laugh. But her love affairs gave him no little concern, and we find him writing pages of sound advice to her on the subject, on one of his short visits away from home.

The young lady herself often became wearied with her callers, and sought to escape them by lonely rambles through the woods. Her grandmother thought this unsafe, and forbade her to wander around thus alone. But, one evening, she was again missing, and when she finally reached home she found the General walking up and down the drawing room with his hands behind his back; while her grandmother was seated in her great armchair.

Mrs. Washington read her a sharp lecture, as the young culprit herself confessed in later years. She knew she had done wrong, so essayed no excuse; and when there was a slight pause she left the room somewhat crestfallen. But just as she was shutting the door she over-heard Washington in a low voice interceding in her behalf.

"My dear, I would say no more — perhaps she was not alone."

Nelly turned in her tracks and reentered the room.

"Sir," she said, "you brought me up to speak the truth, and when I told grand-mamma I was alone, I hope you believed I was alone."

Washington made one of his courtliest bows. "My child, I beg your pardon," he said.

The quiet pleasures of home life, however, were again rudely disturbed by political events. Affairs with France were once more approaching a crisis.

One of the most unpopular acts of Washington's administration, we remember, was his stand against France in her war with England. This move had cost him a great deal of popularity, as the rank and file of the people felt very justly that America owed France a huge debt.

The French were shrewd enough to see that Washington's stand had been unpopular. They reasoned that the American people would side with them against their government, and even start another Revolution. So early in President Adams's administration they began to make trouble. They made demands upon America which were like thinly-veiled insults. They seemed to look upon this country as a sort of vassal of France, and were unceasing in their strictures.

The situation grew so intolerable that Adams convened a special session of Congress, and then appointed three envoys to go to France and draw up a treaty that would be satisfactory to both sides. The envoys very soon found out that the Directory, as the French governing head was then called, cared not a whit about America's friendship, or trade, or their mutual interests. All they wanted was money. In other words, peace with France could be secured only by the paying of tribute by us.

When our envoys tried to bring up the question of a treaty, their secret agent calmly said: "Gentlemen, you mistake the point. You say nothing of the money you are to give — you make no offer of money — on that point

you are not explicit."

"We are explicit enough," retorted one of the envoys sternly. "We will not give you one farthing. And before coming here we should have thought such an offer as you now propose would have been regarded as a mortal insult."

The envoys returned home, without making the slightest progress with their mission. When the news as to their treatment spread, public indignation ran high. People began to see the wisdom of Washington's former stand, and they turned to him instinctively, as the one man who could help them in this crisis. For war with France now seemed inevitable.

"You ought to be aware," Hamilton wrote to him at this juncture, "that in the event of an open rupture with France, the public voice will again call you to command the armies of your country; and though your friends will deplore an occasion which would tear you from that repose to which you have so good a right, yet it is the opinion of all with whom I converse, that you will be compelled to make the sacrifice."

President Adams was of the same mind. "We must have your name, if you will in any case permit us to use it. There will be more efficacy in it, than in many an army."

And McHenry, the Secretary of War, wrote: "You see how the storm thickens, and that our vessel will soon require its ancient pilot."

Washington was sorely troubled by these overtures and their cause, but never in his long life had he shirked a plain duty.

"I see as you do that the clouds are gathering and that a storm may ensue," he answered McHenry; "and I find, too, from a variety of hints, that my quiet, under these circumstances, does not promise to be of long continuance. As my whole life has been dedicated to my country in one

shape or another, for the poor remains of it, it is not an object to contend for peace and quiet, when all that is valuable is at stake, further than to be satisfied that such sacrifice is acceptable to my country."

Before this letter reached Philadelphia the President had appointed him commander-in-chief of the new army, and the Senate had unanimously confirmed the choice. President Adams voiced the general feeling when he said:

"If the General should decline the appointment, all the world will he silent and respectfully assent. If he should accept it, all the world, except the enemies of this country, will rejoice."

Washington placed his own feelings in the background, and accepted the post. He at once began an active correspondence leading up to the reorganization of the army. In November, 1798, he left home for Philadelphia, to meet the Secretary of War, and some of his new staff of officers. He did not remain long in the capital, but soon returned to Mount Vernon bringing back a mass of official papers, such as requests for appointments. He had stipulated that he was not to be called personally into the field until actual operations should commence.

About this time he received a warm letter from his old friend Lafayette, who had been an exile and a prisoner during the Reign of Terror, more than once in danger of his life. Lafayette wrote that he was persuaded, the French Directory did not desire war with the United States; but that Washington was the one man to bring about a reconciliation between the two countries.

"Believe me, my dear friend," answered Washington, "that no man can deprecate an affair of this sort more than I do. If France is sincere, I will pledge that my people will meet them heart and hand."

France did, in fact, make roundabout overtures of peace — her

attitude being rapidly changed by reports of warlike operations in America. Washington, however, went calmly on with his preparations. He was peacefully disposed, but he was a living example of the modem Boy Scout motto, "Be Prepared." Roosevelt has put it still more tersely with his: "Speak softly, but carry a big stick."

President Adams sent three new envoys to France. General Washington made appointments for his army. It was for France to choose peace or war. Fortunately and wisely she chose the olive branch.

The old soldier down at Mount Vernon was well pleased. He did not desire war, but he had said more than once that "the surest guarantee of peace was a well-equipped army." He did not mean by this, a large army, but one that was efficient, and always ready. The levying and drilling of raw troops was out of date. Not only was it expensive and slow, but the enemy was likely to strike before an army could be licked into shape.

This, by the way, was shown very forcibly in the War of 1812, some years after Washington's death, when a few regiments of trained British troops easily defeated a mob of hasty recruits and marched with fire and sword into our capital itself.

Not long after the affair with France we find Washington writing a letter to Hamilton heartily approving a plan for a military academy.

"The establishment of such an institution is of primary importance. I have omitted no opportunity of recommending it in my public speeches and otherwise. I sincerely hope that the subject will meet with due attention."

This last letter that he was ever to address to his old aide had its share in bringing about the foundation of the Military Academy at West Point, now recognized as one of the finest training schools for officers, in the world.

Meanwhile, thinking and planning always for his country, Washington awaited the call, to serve wherever the country should require. He had twice filled the highest post. He was now ready to take a subordinate place, with his men in the field.

At last the call came. But it was a call from another source — that last dread summons to which we must all one day respond — and the old soldier faced it unflinchingly, with the calm response,

"I am ready!"

XVI. The Passing Of Washington

Winter had set in again at Mount Vernon — the last month of the year 1799 — but Washington still continued his daily rides around the farm, "visiting the out-posts," as he jestingly said in military speech.

Although Washington was now sixty-seven years old he still seemed in the full vigor of health. His simple, regular life coupled with his years of outdoor exercise had left him robust and erect, a fine picture of manhood. A nephew who visited him just at this time says:

"When I parted from him he stood on the steps of the front door. It was a bright frosty morning; he had taken his usual ride, and the clear, healthy flush on his cheek and his sprightly manner brought the remark that we had never seen the General look so well. I have sometimes thought him decidedly the handsomest man I ever saw; and when in a lively mood, so full of pleasantry, so agreeable to all with whom he associated, that I could hardly realize he was the same Washington whose dignity awed all who approached him."

All his farming instincts had returned to him during the last few months, and he had occupied his spare moments in preparing a sort of crop calendar, showing a rotation of planting through his various fields so as to rest the soil and produce the greatest yield. This calendar comprised thirty closely-written pages, and was accompanied by a letter to his steward. It showed his love of order in his family affairs, as well as his mental vigor and foresight.

"My greatest anxiety," he said, "is to have all that concerns me in such a clear and distinct form, that no reproach may attach itself to me after I am gone."

The morning of the 12th of December was overcast. A chill wind began

to blow, and the sky became threatening. The old veteran of Valley Forge and of the Indian campaigns of long before, however, was not used to staying indoors on account of the weather. Bundling himself in his great coat he mounted his horse for his daily round of inspection.

For upwards of five hours he was on the move inspecting and planning; and meanwhile a spiteful flurry of snow and sleet began to fall. When he finally reached home his coat and hat were covered with snow. His secretary met him at the door.

"I fear you got wet, sir," he observed.

"No, my great coat kept me dry," was the answer.

Washington hung this up, but proceeded to the dinner table without changing any of his other garments.

That night three inches of snow fell and the next morning he did not take his daily ride. He complained of a slight sore throat. But in the afternoon the weather had cleared up, and he walked out on the grounds a little way to mark some trees which needed cutting down.

On retiring that evening his hoarseness had increased, and he was advised to take some remedy for it.

"No," replied he; "you know I never take anything for a cold. Let it go as it came."

The next morning, however, his throat was so swollen that he could hardly breathe. The family physician was hastily summoned; then two others; but their united efforts gave the patient only temporary relief. It was an acute attack of laryngitis, or "quinsy sore throat."

Washington recognized at once that his hours were numbered. He

called his wife to his bedside, gave her his final requests, and told her where she would find his will. His secretary tried to reassure him, saying he hoped the end was not so near.

"Ah, but it is," said the sufferer smiling in spite of the pain; "but it is a debt which we must all pay, and so I look to the event with resignation."

During the afternoon he had such difficulty in breathing that they had to change his position in bed frequently.

"I am afraid I fatigue you too much," he would say apologetically. The perfect courtesy which he had shown all through life did not desert him here when he was fighting for his last breath.

After one of these struggles he remarked to his old friend, Dr Craik; "Doctor, I die hard, but I am not afraid to go."

The doctor pressed his hand in silence and then withdrew to the fireside, trying vainly to hide his grief.

His personal servant, Christopher, had been standing by his bedside helping as best he might, all day long. Washington noticed it, and kindly remarked:

"Sit down and rest yourself awhile, my friend."

A little later he managed to say: "I feel I am going. I thank you for your attentions, but I pray you to take no more trouble about me." Still his thought was for the others rather than himself.

That evening he made a final attempt to speak. It was to give a few simple instructions regarding his burial. His secretary, Lear, bowed assent, for his own emotions prevented him from uttering a word.

"Do you understand me?" asked Washington looking at him.

"Yes," answered Lear.

"'Tis well!" said he.

These were the last words of Washington. They might fittingly be the summing-up of his whole life.

Shortly after he passed away without a struggle or a sigh. He simply fell asleep.

Mrs. Washington, who was seated at the foot of the bed, asked with a firm voice, "Is he gone?"

A gesture of the hand from one of the others assured her that the great soul had fled. She bowed her head.

"'Tis well!" she answered, using the same words that her husband had breathed out. "All is now over. I shall soon follow him."

It was the evening of December 14, 1799. Four days later the funeral services were held, and following his wishes they were simple and free from display. A small troop of soldiers accompanied the casket from the home to the family vault, and minute guns were fired. The General's horse, with his saddle and pistols, led by two grooms, preceded the body of his dead master. The minister of the church at Alexandria, where Washington had been a member for so many years, read the burial service of the Episcopal faith; and the Masonic lodge assisted in consigning his remains to their last resting place.

Such was the funeral of Washington, quiet and modest as he had wished it; and held entirely within the limits of his beloved Mount Vernon, the home to which he had looked forward as a haven in his old age — now

to become a visible symbol of his presence for all time to come.

When the news went out to the world, "Washington is dead," a deep sorrow fell upon his countrymen. In hamlets, on farms, in cities, work was suspended, and men gathered in groups sadly talking over the glorious past.

"He rode this way, when he led his men — don't you remember?"

"I recollect how fine he looked when he rode through Jersey to his inauguration!"

"He was the greatest man this nation or any other ever saw!"

Such were a few of the remarks that might be heard on every side.

Congress, on receiving the tidings immediately adjourned for the day. The speaker's chair was draped in black, and the members wore mourning for thirty days. A joint committee was appointed from House and Senate to consider the most suitable manner of doing honor to him who was "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Nor were the expressions of grief and respect confined to this country. The two great powers which had been arrayed against him hastened to do honor to his memory. The great channel fleet of England, riding at anchor, lowered the flags of every frigate and every other ship of the line to half-mast. It was a sincere tribute to a foe-man who was more responsible than any other one man for the loss of her American colonies, but who personally England had learned to respect and honor.

At about the same time. Napoleon Bonaparte, who was emerging as the strong man of France, decreed that the standards of his army should be surmounted with crape for a period of ten days.

Martha Washington survived her husband only three years, when the

family vault was reopened and she was placed by his side. Some years later the two coffins were encased in white marble, and thus they have remained to the view of visitors to Mount Vernon today. They had been wonderfully happy and congenial in their home life, "and in their death they were not divided."

Many years later a grateful nation completed and dedicated to Washington's memory a noble shaft of stone, five hundred and fifty five feet high, rising above the banks of the Potomac, in the beautiful capital city - which also bears his name. But neither of these tributes was needed to perpetuate his fame. He will always be remembered both for his services to his country, and the fine example he set. Gladstone said of him that he was "the purest figure in history." And Jefferson, who differed with him on many questions of state, wrote:

"His integrity was most pure; his justice the most inflexible I have ever known; no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the word, a wise, a good, and a great man."

XVII. Washington The Man

As we finish tracing Washington's life step by step, we find that it was not, what we would call to-day, exciting. He did no one thing so remarkable that it stands out above everything else. He did not play the hero, or pose. What he did do were the every-day things of life — but he did them well.

Washington the man suffered greatly at the hands of his first biographers. They made him out a prig and a saint, and they sounded his virtues so insistently that he quit being a human being at all to thousands of boys and girls of a later generation. Nothing would have grieved him more than to have foreseen such a fate. The story is told of him that as he began to grow famous, the children of the neighborhood began to stand in awe of him. They could not understand how a great soldier, who looked so fine as he rode by on his prancing steed, could possibly unbend. They did not know that he had loved children all his life, though having none of his own, and that he liked to dance and romp as well as any of them.

As the story goes, there was a young folks' party at his home — it might have been Hallowe'en — and when the fun and noise were at their height, the General rode up, dismounted, and entered the room. At once the merriment stopped. The little girls dropped old-fashioned courtesies to him, and the boys stood stiffly at attention. Washington gravely saluted though with twinkling eyes. He pinched some of the girls' cheeks, patted the boys on the back, and tried to indicate that the fun was to go on. But somehow it lagged. So presently he slipped out of the room, and the youngsters forgot their dignity. On went the noise and fun until, awhile later, some of the jolly crowd discovered Washington in another hallway. He had slipped quietly around to enjoy the party unseen, without putting a damper upon it.

All of which shows that fame has its drawbacks. We know, from many other things told of him, that he often found it irksome and liked most of all

to live the simple life of a country gentleman.

The same love of sport that made Washington a leader among his boy companions stayed with him through life. He always liked to have children about him, and in one letter he speaks of having had "a pretty little frisk" with a houseful of children. Naturally quiet and reserved, he unbent most of all when he was with them. His granddaughter, Nellie Custis, led him a merry chase with her lively pranks, and said later that she "made him laugh most heartily" at some of her pranks and capers.

When he was a boy he shared in all the sports like any other youngster, and it was not strange that he should have been chosen as leader; for he was well-grown, strong, and active. And the other boys very soon found out that he played fair. He was chosen as umpire in disputes because they could depend upon his honesty. Yet if someone had praised him for it he probably would have been greatly surprised. For to him there was no other way. He did not make of it a virtue, but just plain common sense.

That he played soldier, and drilled his playmates in war games was not remarkable, nor was it prophetic of his later career. It is true that Napoleon also played soldier, and made of himself a great world conqueror when he grew up. But Washington had no such dreams of conquest. He was probably inspired to play war games by the danger from French and Indians, which then threatened Virginia; also from the fact that his brother Lawrence was going into the real wars.

Washington was a plodder at school, rather than a brilliant student. Nothing came easy to him, but when he once got it, he remembered it. As he grew up he was diffident, especially with the girls. One of his girl friends wrote later in life that "she liked George, but did wish that he would talk more."

As he grew up to manhood he had several little love affairs, one in

especial with "a low-land beauty" to whom he even wrote poetry. But she jilted him as did others, who lost patience with him for his bashfulness. One such romance has come down to history. It seems that when he was twenty-four, some military business caused him to make a journey to Boston. This was twenty years before the Revolution. Both in coming and going he visited in New York, where he met Mary Philipse, a vivacious young lady of about his own age. A picture of her which has been handed down shows a pretty face framed in bewitching dark curling hair. The young cavalier was badly smitten; but he had rivals who knew how to say soft nothings better than he. One of them. Colonel Roger Morris afterwards won the fair Mary. They were married. When the war came on, Morris chose the Tory side. He and his wife were compelled to flee to Canada. As a curious sequel to the tale, his house became Washington's military headquarters in 1776.

When Washington finally became successful in his courting, he was more than repaid for his former ill-success. He found a congenial mate in Martha Custis, and his home life was remarkably happy.

There are pleasing glimpses of this home life in his letters, many of which have been preserved. They make us feel as though we were in the very presence of the man, for no one of this time — not even Franklin or Jefferson who were brilliant letter-writers — excelled him in setting down the intimate touches which breathed his spirit.

Let us peep in on him as he sits at his desk there at Mount Vernon, still in the early days of married life, writing to his friends of his daily doings. Let us read again stray passages from his daily diary, which show his manner of life even more intimately:

"Several of the family were taken with the measels. . . . Hauled the Sein and got some fish, but was near being disappointed of my Boat by means of an oyster man who had lain at my landing and plagued me a good deal by his disorderly behavior."

We read elsewhere that this man was a poacher who wouldn't go away when Washington ordered him to do so; but instead threatened Washington with a gun. The latter wasted no more words on him, but waded straight out to him, gun and all, and seizing the boat capsized it. He then told the bedraggled fisherman that if he caught him there again he would thrash him soundly.

"Mrs. Washington was a good deal better to-day," he continued; "but the oyster man still continuing his disorderly behavior at my landing, I was obliged in the most peremptory manner to order him and his company away."

That the Virginia planter had a temper all his friends and servants knew. He kept a tight rein upon it generally, but it peeved him to find any of his servants slackers with their work.

"Went to Alexandria and saw my Tobacco ... in very bad order . . . visited my Plantation. Severely reprimanded young Stephens for his insolence. . . . After Breakfast . . . rode out to my plantation . . . found Stephens hard at work with an ax — very extraordinary this! . . . Two Negroes sick . . . ordered them to be blooded (i.e. bled). . . . Visited my Plantation and found to my great surprise Stephens constantly at work."

Stephens had evidently got pretty deeply into his black books, and was trying his best to get out again. But the master seemed to see in his work only an effort to pull the wool over his eyes; for a little further on we find this entry: "Visited my Plantations before sunrise, and forbid Stephens keeping any horses upon my expense."

Here is an entry of a different sort: "Went to a ball at Alexandria, where Musick and dancing was the chief entertainment. . . . Great plenty of bread and butter, some biscuits with tea and coffee, which the drinkers of could not distinguish from hot water sweetened. . . . I shall therefore distinguish this ball by the stile and title of the Bread and Butter Ball."

There speaks the lover of good things to eat, and the connoisseur of coffee! Old diary, we thank you!

But the social diversions must give way to work again: "After several efforts to make a plow . . . was feign to give it up. . . . Mrs. Posy and some young woman, whose name was unknown to anybody in this family, dined here." (Evidently Mrs. Posy mumbled her words when introducing her!) "Spent the greatest part of the day making a new plow of my own invention." (So he did not "give it up" after all; that was not his nature.) "Set my plow to work and found she answered very well."

"A messenger came to inform me that my Mill was in great danger. . . . Got there myself just time enough to give her a reprieve ... by wheeling dirt into the place which the water had worked."

This last item shows that he could and did take off his own coat on occasion, and work with his men. Indeed his notebooks then and in his old age as well showed that he liked nothing so well as to make a plow, wield an ax, or show with his own hands the best method of cradling wheat. "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself," seems to have been his motto.

Here are some entries written in his agricultural notebook, in the closing years of his life, and, let us remember, by a victorious General and beloved President:

"Harrowed the ground at Muddy Hole, which had been twice ploughed, for Albany pease in broad-cast. . . . Began to sow the remainder of the Siberian wheat. . . . Ordered a piece of ground, two acres, to be ploughed at the Ferry ... to be drilled with corn and potatoes between, each ten feet apart, row from row of the same kind.

"Corn. On rows ten feet one way, and eighteen inches thick, single stalks; will yield as much to the Acre in equal ground, as at five feet each

way with two stalks in a hill. To that Potatoes, Carrots, and Pease between the drilled Corn, if not exhaustive, . . . are nearly a clear profit.

"Let the hands at the Mansion House grub well, and perfectly prepare the old clover lot. . . . When I say grub well, I mean that everything which is not to remain as trees, should be taken up by the roots . . . for I seriously assure you, that I had rather have one acre cleared in this manner, than four in the common mode. ... It is a great and very disagreeable eye-sore to me, as well as a real injury ... to have foul meadows.

''You will be particularly attentive to my Negroes in their sickness; and to order every overseer positively to be so likewise; for I am sorry to observe that the generality of them view these poor creatures in scarcely any other light than they do a draught horse or ox . . . instead of comforting and nursing them when they lie on a sick bed. . . .

"I find by the reports that Sam is, in a manner, always returned sick. Doll at the Ferry, and several of the spinners, very frequently so, for a week at a stretch. And ditcher Charles often laid up with a lameness. I never wish my people to work when they are really sick . . . but if you do not examine into their complaints, they will lay by when no more ails them than all those who stick to their business. . . . My people will lay up a month, at the end of which no visible change in their countenance, nor the loss of an ounce of flesh is discoverable; and their allowance of provision is going on as if nothing ailed them."

There can be no denying the fact that Washington had a high temper. Very seldom in his strenuous life did he let it get away from him — but some of those occasions are historic. Nothing roused him more than cowardice on the field of battle. In commenting on Braddock's defeat at the hands of the French and Indians, he could hardly find words to express his contempt of the English troops. He called them "cowardly regulars," said their behavior was "dastardly," and that they "broke and ran as sheep before hounds."

Later on he was just as provoked over the action of American troops. When the British fleet landed at New York near Hell-gate on the Sound, and two New England regiments lost their nerve and ran away without firing a shot, Washington is said to have "damned them for cowardly rascals," and, drawing his sword to have struck fleeing soldiers with the back of it. So carried away was he with rage, that he paid no attention to the enemy now only a few paces distant, and would probably have been captured himself, had not his aides seized his horse's bridle and forcibly dragged him away.

At Monmouth an aide states that when the General met a man running away he was "exasperated," and threatened the man that he would have him whipped. And General Scott says that on finding Lee retreating, "he swore like an angel from heaven." Hamilton, who was also on his staff, and between whom and his commander a strong tie of affection existed, admits that his chief's temper sometimes got the better of him. Whose, indeed, would not — charged with the task of leading a half-starved army for weary months? It was clearly an attack of nerves, and proves again that our Washington was only human.

Gilbert Stuart, the famous painter who has given us the best known portrait of Washington, says that "all his features were indicative of the strongest and most ungovernable passions, and had he been born in the forests, he would have been the fiercest man among the savage tribes." Stuart's daughter relates this anecdote:

"While talking one day with General Lee, my father happened to remark that Washington had a tremendous temper, but held it under wonderful control. General Lee breakfasted with the President and Mrs. Washington a few days afterwards.

"'I saw your portrait the other day,' said the General, 'but Stuart says you have a tremendous temper.'

" 'Upon my word,' said Mrs. Washington, coloring, 'Mr. Stuart takes a

great deal upon himself to make such a remark.'

"'But stay, my dear lady,' said General Lee, 'he added that the President had it under wonderful control.'

"With something like a smile, Washington remarked, 'He is right.' "

We dwell upon these stories of his failings, because we want every boy and girl to-day to see Washington the man, and not Washington the hero. As a boy he was only a boy among others — getting his lessons by hard grubbing. As a young man he was adventurous and hardy — not afraid of a task which sent him for long months at a time into the wilderness. As a man he showed himself a natural-born leader of men. He won the War of Independence, not by his brilliant victories, — for as a matter of cold fact they were few and far between, — but by his ability to hold his army intact despite defeat and hardship.

When liberty was achieved, he was the one man to whom the whole nation turned for further leadership. The common people believed in him, because he could be trusted to "carry through" without fear or favor.

He was not born great. He grew into greatness so slowly and unconsciously that when honors were later thrust upon him, he was confused. To him it meant simply doing the daily task as best he knew how. When unanimously chosen President — the first to hold this untried office in an untried nation — he felt a cold chill of fear lest the public confidence should be misplaced. But still he never faltered in the new task; that was not George Washington's way.

It has been often said of him that he was cold and distant. Certain it is that his dignity was a marked trait, and no one felt that liberties could be taken with him. But underneath the calm exterior was a highly sensitive and warm nature. The man who, when a young frontiersman in Virginia, was so moved by the hardships of the pioneers against the Indians as to exclaim: "I

solemnly declare I could offer myself a willing victim to the butchering enemy, provided this would contribute to the people's ease!"; who could show a constant affection for and deference to his mother, even when he had become a public man; who could share his soldiers' sufferings at Valley Forge ; who could actually shed tears when he viewed from across the Hudson, a surprise attack upon some of his troops; who could make such young men as Lafayette and Hamilton cling to him as to a father; who could embrace his officers in farewell at Fraunces' Tavern, leaving these strong men in tears — surely such a man as this was not naturally "cold and distant!"

That he was truly great has been shown by each succeeding year since he was laid to rest at Mount Vernon. A century and a quarter have passed by, and as the country itself has grown and expanded from the weakest to the mightiest among nations, so the name of Washington has kept pace with it. Surveyor, Indian fighter, soldier, statesman, farmer, true gentleman, — his name lives not merely in the tall shaft of granite on the Potomac; not merely in the Capital city whose influence is now felt around the world ; not merely in that great and prosperous State on the Pacific Coast which also bears his name. It will live forever as "first in the hearts of his countrymen."