(CONTINUED.)

The two youngest children he claimed for himself, with that wistful fatherly longing that had always marked him; and Mount Vernon seemed to him more like a haven than ever, where to seek rest and solace.

The two years he had yet to wait may well have seemed to him the longest of his life and may have added a touch of their own to what strangers deemed his sternness.

Washington had seldom seemed so stern as in one incident of those trying months.

An officer of the American army had been taken in a skirmish, and the English had permitted a brutal company of loyalists under one Captain Lippincott, to take him from his prison in New York and wantonly hang him in broad daylight on the heights near Middletown.

Washington at once notified the British commander that unless the murderers were delivered up to be punished, a British officer would be chosen by lot from among his prisoners to suffer in their stead; and, when reparation was withheld, proceeded without hesitation to carry his threat into execution.

The lot fell upon Captain Charles Asgill, an engaging youth of only nineteen, the heir of a great English family.

Lady Asgill, the lad's mother, did not stop short of moving the very French court itself to intervene to save her son, and at last the congress counseled his release, the English commander having disavowed the act of the murderers in whose place he was to suffer, and Washington himself having asked to be directed what he should do.

"Captain Asgill has been released," Washington wrote to Vergennes, in answer to the great minister's intercession. "I have no right to assume any particular merit from the lenient manner in which this disagreeable affair has been terminated. But I beg you to believe, sir, that I most sincerely rejoice, not only because your humane intentions are gratified, but because the event accords with the wishes of his most Christian majesty."

A Great Weight Lifted.

It lifted a great weight from his heart to have the innocent boy to go unhurt from his hands, and he wrote almost tenderly to him in acquainting him with his release; but it was of his simple nature to have sent the lad to the gallows, nevertheless, had things continued to stand as they were at first.

He was inexorable to check perfidy and vindicate the just rules of war. Men were reminded, while the affair pended, of the hanging of Andre, Arnold's British confederate in treason, and how pitiless the commander-in-chief had seemed in sending the frank, accomplished, lovable gentleman to his disgraceful death, like any common spy, granting him not even the favor to be shot, like a soldier. It seemed hard to learn the inflexible lines upon which that consistent mind worked, as if it had gone to school to Fate.

Goodby to His Officers.

But no one deemed him hard or stern, or so much as a thought more or less than human, when at last the British had withdrawn from New York, and he stood amidst his officers in Fraunce's tavern to say goodby.

He could hardly speak for emotion; he could only lift his glass and say: "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take my 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. . . . I cannot come to each of you and take my leave," he said, "but shall be obliged if you will come and take me by the hand."

A Fervent Parting.

When General Knox, who stood nearest, approached him, he drew him to him with a sudden impulse and kissed him, and not a soldier among them all went away without an embrace from this man who was deemed cold and distant. After the parting they followed him in silence to Whitehall Ferry, and saw him take boat for his journey.

And then, standing before the congress at Annapolis to resign his commission, he added the crowning touch of simplicity to his just repute as a man beyond others noble and sincere.

Resigns His Commission.

"I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to congress," he said, as he stood amidst the august scene they had prepared for him, "and of presenting myself before them to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country."

"Happy in the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence—a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

"The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations; and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence and the assistance I have received from my countrymen increases with every review of the momentous contest.

I consider it my indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God and those who have the superintendence of them to his holy keeping."

It was as if spoken on the morrow of the day upon which he accepted his commission; the same diffidence, the same trust in a power greater and higher than his own.

An Idol and a Hero.

The plaudits that had but just now filled his ears at every stage of his long journey from New York seemed utterly forgotten; he seemed not to know how his fellow countrymen had made of him an idol and a hero; his simplicity was once again his authentic hedge of genuineness. He knew, it would seem, no other way in which to act.

A little child remembered afterwards how he had prayed at her father's house upon the eve of battle; how he had taken scripture out of Joshua, and had cried, "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord (save us not this day)."

There was here the same note of solemnity and of self-forgetful devotion as if duty and honor were alike inevitable.

On Christmas eve, 1783, Washington was once more at Mount Vernon, to resume the life he loved more than victory and power.

He had a zest for the means and the labor of succeeding, but not for the mere content of success. He put the revolution behind him as he would have laid aside a book that was read; turned from it as quietly as he had turned from receiving the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown—interested in victory, not as a pageant and field of glory, but only as a means to an end.

He looked to find very sweet satisfaction in the peace which war had earned, as sufficient a scope for his power at home as in the field.

Once more he would be a Virginian, and join his strength to his neighbors' in all the tasks of good citizenship.

He had seen nothing of the old familiar places since that far-away spring in the year 1775, when he had left his farming and his fox-hunting, amidst rumors of war, to attend the congress which was to send him to Cambridge. He had halted at Fredericksburg, indeed, with the Count de Rochambeau, two years ago, ere he followed his army from York to its posts upon the Hudson.

Mrs. Lewis, his sister, had returned one day from visiting a neighbor in the quiet town to look in astonishment upon an officer's horses and attendants, at her door, and had entered to find her beloved brother stretched upon her own bed within, sound asleep in his clothes, like a boy returned from hunting.

Takes His Mother to a Ball.

There had been a formal ball given, too, in celebration of the victory, before the French officers and the commander-in-chief left Fredericksburg to go northward again, and Washington had had the joy of entering the room in the face of the gay company with his aged mother on his arm, not a whit bent for all her seventy-four years, and as quiet as a queen at receiving the homage of her son's comrades in arms.

He had got his imperious spirit of command from her. A servant had told her that "Mars George" had put up at the tavern.

"Go and tell George to come here instantly," she had commanded, and he had come, masterful man though he was.

He had felt every old affection and every old allegiance renew itself as he saw former neighbors crowd around him; and that little glimpse of Virginia had refreshed him like a tonic—deeply, and as if it renewed his very nature, as only a silent man can be refreshed. But a few days in Fredericksburg and at Mount Vernon then had been only an incident of campaigning, only a grateful pause on a march.

Back to Private Life.

Now at last he had come back to keep his home and be a neighbor again, as he had not been these nine years.

It was not the same Virginia, nor even the same home and neighborhood he had gone from, that Washington came back to when the war was done.

He had left Mount Vernon in the care of Lund Washington, his nephew, while the war lasted, and had not forgotten amidst all his letter writing to send seasonable directions and maintain a constant oversight upon the management of his estate.

Rebukes His Nephew.

It was part of his genius to find time for everything, and Mount Vernon had suffered something less than the ordinary hazards and neglects of war. It had suffered less upon one occasion, indeed, than its proud owner could have found it in his heart to wish.

In the spring of 1781 several British vessels had come pillaging within the Potomac, and the anxious Lund had regaled their officers with refreshments from Mount Vernon to buy them off from mischief. "It would have been a less painful circumstance to me," his uncompromising uncle had written him, "to have heard that, in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my house and laid the plantation in ruin. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative."

Kept though it was from harm, however, the place had suffered many things for lack of his personal care. There was some part of the task to be over again that had confronted him when he came to take possession of the old plantation with his bride after the neglects of the French war.

Finds Virginia a State.

But Virginia was more changed than Mount Vernon. He had left it a colony, at odds with a royal governor; he returned to find it a state, with Benjamin Harrison, that stout gentleman and good planter, for governor, by the free suffrage of his fellow Virginians.

There had been no radical break with the aristocratic traditions of the past. Mr. Harrison's handsome seat at Lower Brandon lay where the long reaches of the James marked the oldest regions of Virginia's life upon broad, half-feudal estates; where there were good wine and plate upon the table, and gentlemen kept old customs bright and honored in the observance.

A Great Change in Affairs.

But the face of affairs had greatly changed, nevertheless. The old generation of statesmen had passed away, almost with the colony, and a younger generation was in the saddle, notwithstanding a gray-haired figure here and there.

Richard Bland had died in the year of the Declaration; Peyton Randolph had not lived to see it.

Edmund Pendleton, after presiding over Virginia's making as a state, as chairman of her revolutionary committee of safety, was now withdrawn from active affairs to the bench, his fine figure marred by a fall from his horse, his old power as an advocate transmuted into the cooler talents of the judge.

Patrick Henry, the ardent leader of the Revolution, had been chosen the state's first governor, in the year of the Declaration of Independence; three years later Thomas Jefferson had succeeded him in office, the philosophical radical of times of change; the choice of Mr. Harrison had but completed the round of the new variety in affairs.

Men who, like Richard Henry Lee, had counseled revolution and the breaking of old bonds, were now in all things at the front of Virginia's business; and younger men, of a force and power of origination equal to his own, were pressing forward as if to carry a new generation to the stage which had known nothing but independence and a free field of statesmanship.

Among the rest, James Madison, only a little more than ten years out of college, but already done with serving his novitiate in the congress of the confederation, a publicist and leader in the old dominion at thirty-two.

Edmund Randolph, of the new generation of the commonwealth's great family of lawyers, like his forbears in gifts and spirit, was already received at thirty, into a place of influence among public men.

Marshall a War Veteran.

John Marshall, just turned of twenty-eight, but a veteran of the long war none the less, having been at the thick of the fighting, a lieutenant and a captain abong the Virginian forces, from the time Dunmore was driven from Norfolk till the eve of Yorktown, was, now that that duty was done, a lawyer in quiet Fauquier, drawing to himself the eyes of every man who had the perception to note qualities of force and leadership.

James Monroe had come out of the war at twenty-five to go at once into the public councils of his state, an equal among his elders. Young men came forward upon every side to take their part in the novel rush of affairs that followed upon the heels of revolution.

Royal Welcome for Washington.

Washington found himself no stranger in the new state, for all it had grown of a sudden so unlike that old community in which his own life had been formed. He found a very royal welcome awaiting him at his homecoming.

The old commonwealth loved a hero still as much as ever; was as loyal to him now as it had been in the far-away days of the French war, when Dinwiddie alone fretted against him; received him with every tribute of affection, offered him gifts, and loved him all the better for refusing them.

But he must have felt that a deep change had come upon his life, none the less, and even upon his relations with his old familiars and neighbors.

Most Famous Man of the Day.

He had gone away honored indeed, and marked for responsible services among his people—a Burgess as a matter of course, a notable citizen, whose force no man who knew him could fail to remark; but by no means accounted greatest, even among the men who gathered for the colony's business at Williamsburg; chosen only upon occasion for special services of action; no debater or statesman, so far as ordinary men could see; too reserved to be popular with the crowd, though it should like his frankness and taking address, and go out of its way to see him on horseback; a man for his neighbors, who could know him, not for the world, which he refused to court.

But the war had suddenly lifted him to the view of all mankind, and set him among the great captains of the world; had marked him a statesman in the midst of affairs—more a statesman than a soldier even, men must have thought who had read his letters or heard them read in congress, on the floor or in the committee rooms; had drawn to himself the admiration of the very men he had been fighting, the very nation whose dominion he had helped to cast off.

He had come home perhaps the most famous man of his day, and could not take up the old life where he had left it off, much as he wished to; was obliged, in spite of himself, to play a new part in affairs.

Befriended by Nature.

For a few weeks, indeed, after he had reached Mount Vernon, Nature herself assisted him to a little privacy and real retirement.

The winter (1783-4) was an uncommonly severe one. Snow lay piled, all but impassable, upon the roads; frosts hardened all the country against travel; he could not get even to Fredericksburg to see his aged mother; and not many visitors, though they were his near neighbors, could reach him at Mount Vernon.

In Fancied Retirement.

"At length, my dear Marquis," he could write to Lafayette in his security, "I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac; and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig tree, free from the bustle of a camp and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself. . . . Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order of my march, I will move gently down the stream of time until I sleep with my fathers."

The simple gentleman did not yet realize what the breaking up of the frosts would bring.

With the spring the whole life of the world seemed to come pouring in upon Washington.

Men of note everywhere pressed their correspondence upon him; no stranger visited America but thought first of Mount Vernon in planning where he should go and what he should see; new friends and old sat every day at his table; a year and a half had gone by since his home-coming before he could note in his diary (June 30, 1785): "Dined with only Mrs. Washington, which, I believe, is the first instance of it since my retirement from public life"—for some visitors had broken their way even through the winter roads.

All Roads Lead to Mount Vernon.

Authors sent him what they wrote; inventors submitted their ideas and models to him; everything that was being said, everything that was being done, seemed to find its way, if nowhere else, to Mount Vernon—till those who knew his occupations could speak of Washington, very justly, as "the focus of political intelligence for the new world."

He would not alter his way of living even in the face of such overwhelming interruptions.

Sticks to His Business.

His guests saw him for a little after dinner, and once and again, it might be, in the evening also; but he kept to his business throughout all the working hours of the day; was at his desk even before breakfast, and after breakfast was always early in the saddle and off to his farms.

Only at table did he play the host, lingering over the wine to give and call for toasts and relax in genial conversation, losing, as the months passed by, some of the deep gravity that had settled upon him in the camp, and showing once more an enjoying relish for "a pleasant story, an unaffected sally of wit, or a burlesque description," as in the old days after hunting.

Strangers in Awe of Him.

Strangers were often in awe of him. It did not encourage talk in those who had little to say to sit in the presence of a man who so looked his greatness in the very proportions of his strong figure even, and whose grave and steady eyes so challenged the significance of what was said.

Young people would leave off dancing and romping when he came into the room, and force him to withdraw, and peep at the fun from without the door, unobserved.

It was only among his intimates that he was suffered and taken to be the simple, straightforward, sympathizing man he was, exciting, not awe, but only a warm and affectionate allegiance. "The General with a few glasses of champagne, got quite merry," a young Englishman could report who had had the good luck to be introduced by Richard Henry Lee, "and, being with his intimate friends, laughed and talked a good deal."

Resumes His Old Life.

As much as he could, he resumed the old life, and the thoughts and pastimes that had gone with it.

Once more he became the familiar of his hounds at the kennels, and followed them as often as might be in the hunt at sunrise. He asked but one thing of a horse, as of old, "and that was to go along. He ridiculed the idea that he could be unhorsed, provided the animal kept on his legs."

The two little children, a tiny boy and a romping, mischievous lassie, not much bigger, whom he had adopted at Jack Custis' death-bed, took strong hold upon his heart, and grew slowly to an intimacy with him such as few ventured to claim any longer amidst those busy days in the guest-crowded house.

Lafayette's Word Picture.

It seemed to Lafayette a very engaging picture when he saw Washington and the little toddling boy together—"a very little gentleman with a feather in his hat, holding fast to one finger of the good general's remarkable hand, which (so large that hand!)" was all the tiny fellow could manage.

These children took Washington back more completely than anything else to the old days when he had brought his bride home with her own little ones. He felt those days come back, too, when he was on his horse in the open, going the round of good twelve miles and more that carried him to all the quarters of his plantation.

Again a Farmer.

Once more he was the thorough farmer, ransacking books, when men and his own observation failed him, to come at the best methods of cultivation. Once more he took daily account of the character of his slaves and servants, and of the progress of their work, talking with them when he could, and gaining a personal mastery over them.

Contracts for work he drew up with his own hand, with a minuteness and particularity which were sometimes whimsical and shot through with a gleam of grim humor.

He agreed with Philip Barter that if he would serve him faithfully as gardener and keep sober at all other times he would allow him "four dollars at Christmas, with which to be drunk four days and four nights; two dollars at Easter, to effect the same purpose; two dollars at Whitsuntide, to be drunk for two days; a dram in the morning, and a drink of grog at dinner, at noon;" and the contract was drawn, signed, and witnessed with all formality.

A Thorough-Going Master.

Philip no doubt found short shrift of consideration from his thorough-going master if there was any drunkenness in the garden beyond the limit of the eight days nominated in the bond, and found the contract no jest in the end, for Washington had small patience and no soft words for a breach of agreement, whatever its kind.

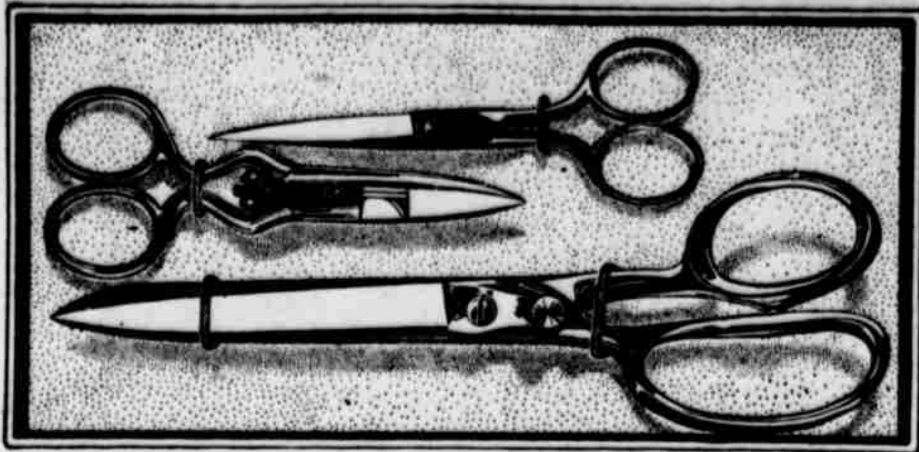
He would help men in distress with a generosity and wise choice of means which few took the pains to exercise, but he had only sharp rebuke for carelessness or neglect or any slackness in the performance of a duty. Men who had cheated or sought to impose upon him deemed him harsh and called him a hard master, so sharply did they smart after he had reckoned with them.

Washington exacted the uttermost farthing. But he spent it, with the other hand, to relieve genuine suffering and real want, though it were deserved and the fruit of a crying fault.

In his home dealings, as in everything else, his mind kept that trait by which men had been awed in the camp—that trick, as if of Fate, of letting every act come at its consequences and its full punishment or reward, as if he but presided at a process which was just Nature's own.

When he succored distress, he did it in pity, not in justice—not excusing fault, but giving leave to mercy. If he urged the government to pension and reward the soldiers of the war, who had only done their duty, he himself set an example.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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The Maupin Case

Promptly at the noon hour the Maupin case was called for trial and both sides announced ready. About seventy men have been summoned from our neighboring county of Clark, and a large number of them were on hand and answered to the call of their names.

The hour at which we go to press will preclude any further mention of the case. It is supposed that it will take the entire week to try it.

A Love Feast

The biggest international fleet ever assembled is expected to gather at Hampton Roads in 1915 and cruise through the Panama Canal to San Francisco in response to invitations to foreign governments from the United States.

Court Day Dinner

The French Mission Circle will give a court day dinner next Monday, at McKee's Rink.

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