WASHINGTON IRVING

LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON — VOLUME 01

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I

GENEALOGY OF THE WASHINGTON FAMILY.

The Washington family is of an ancient English stock, the genealogy of which has been traced up to the century immediately succeeding the Conquest. At that time it was in possession of landed estates and manorial privileges in the county of Durham, such as were enjoyed only by those, or their descendants, who had come over from Normandy with the Conqueror, or fought under his standard. When William the Conqueror laid waste the whole country north of the Humber, in punishment of the insurrection of the Northumbrians, he apportioned the estates among his followers, and advanced Normans and other foreigners to the principal ecclesiastical dignities. One of the most wealthy and important sees was that of Durham. Hither had been transported the bones of St. Cuthbert from their original shrine at Lindisfarne, when it was ravaged by the Danes. That saint, says Camden, was esteemed by princes

and gentry a titular saint against the Scots. [Footnote: Camden, Brit. iv., 349.] His shrine, therefore, had been held in peculiar reverence by the Saxons, and the see of Durham endowed with extraordinary privileges.

William continued and increased those privileges. He needed a powerful adherent on this frontier to keep the restless Northumbrians in order, and check Scottish invasion; and no doubt considered an enlightened ecclesiastic, appointed by the crown, a safer depositary of such power than an hereditary noble.

Having placed a noble and learned native of Loraine in the diocese, therefore, he erected it into a palatinate, over which the bishop, as Count Palatine, had temporal, as well as spiritual jurisdiction. He built a strong castle for his protection, and to serve as a barrier against the Northern foe. He made him lord high-admiral of the sea and waters adjoining his palatinate, — lord warden of the marches, and conservator of the league between England and Scotland. Thenceforth, we are told, the prelates of Durham owned no earthly superior within their diocese, but continued for centuries to exercise every right attached to an independent sovereign. [Footnote: Annals of Roger de Hovedon. Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii. Collectanea Curiosa, vol. ii., p. 83.]

The bishop, as Count Palatine, lived in almost royal state and splendor. He had his lay chancellor, chamberlains, secretaries, steward, treasurer, master of the horse, and a host of minor officers. Still he was under feudal obligations. All landed

property in those warlike times, implied military service. Bishops and abbots, equally with great barons who held estates immediately of the crown, were obliged, when required, to furnish the king with armed men in proportion to their domains; but they had their feudatories under them to aid them in this service.

The princely prelate of Durham had his barons and knights, who held estates of him on feudal tenure, and were bound to serve him in peace and war. They sat occasionally in his councils, gave martial splendor to his court, and were obliged to have horse and weapon ready for service, for they lived in a belligerent neighborhood, disturbed occasionally by civil war, and often by Scottish foray. When the banner of St. Cuthbert, the royal standard of the province, was displayed, no armed feudatory of the bishop could refuse to take the field. [Footnote: Robert de Graystanes, Ang. Sac., p. 746.]

Some of these prelates, in token of the warlike duties of their diocese, engraved on their seals a knight on horseback armed at all points, brandishing in one hand a sword, and holding forth in the other the arms of the see. [Footnote: Camden, Brit. iv., 349.]

Among the knights who held estates in the palatinate on these warlike conditions, was WILLIAM DE HERTBURN, the progenitor of the Washingtons. His Norman name of William would seem to point out his national descent; and the family long continued to have Norman names of baptism. The surname of De Hertburn was taken from a village on the palatinate which

he held of the bishop in knight's fee; probably the same now called Hartburn on the banks of the Tees. It had become a custom among the Norman families of rank about the time of the Conquest, to take surnames from their castles or estates; it was not until some time afterwards that surnames became generally assumed by the people. [Footnote: Lower on Surnames, vol. i., p. 43. Fuller says, that the custom of surnames was brought from France in Edward the Confessor's time, about fifty years before the Conquest; but did not become universally settled until some hundred years afterwards. At first they did not descend hereditarily on the family. —*Fuller, Church History. Roll Battle Abbey.*]

How or when the De Hertburns first acquired possession of their village is not known. They may have been companions in arms with Robert de Brus (or Bruce) a noble knight of Normandy, rewarded by William the Conqueror with great possessions in the North, and among others, with the lordships of Hert and Hertness in the county of Durham.

The first actual mention we find of the family is in the Bolden Book, a record of all the lands appertaining to the diocese in 1183. In this it is stated that William de Hertburn had exchanged his village of Hertburn for the manor and village of Wessyngton, likewise in the diocese; paying the bishop a quitrent of four pounds, and engaging to attend him with two greyhounds in grand hunts, and to furnish a man at arms whenever military aid should be required of the palatinate. [Footnote: THE BOLDEN

BOOK. As this ancient document gives the first trace of the Washington family, it merits especial mention. In 1183, a survey was made by order of Bishop de Pusaz of all the lands of the see held in demesne, or by tenants in villanage. The record was entered in a book called the Bolden Buke; the parish of Bolden occurring first in alphabetical arrangement. The document commences in the following manner: Incipit liber qui vocatur Bolden Book. Anno Dominice Incarnationis, 1183, &c.

The following is the memorandum in question: —

Willus de Herteburn habet Wessyngton (excepta ecclesia et terra ecclesie partinen) ad excamb. pro villa de Herteburn quam pro hac quietam clamavit: Et reddit 4 L. Et vadit in *magna caza* cum 2 Leporar. Et quando commune auxilium venerit debet dare 1 Militem ad plus de auxilio, &c. —*Collectanea Curiosa*, vol. ii., p. 89.

The Bolden Buke is a small folio, deposited in the office of the bishop's auditor, at Durham.]

The family changed its surname with its estate, and thenceforward assumed that of DE WESSYNGTON. [Footnote: The name is probably of Saxon origin. It existed in England prior to the Conquest. The village of Wassengtone is mentioned in a Saxon charter as granted by king Edgar in 973 to Thorney Abbey. —*Collectanea Topographica*, iv., 55.] The condition of military service attached to its manor will be found to have been often exacted, nor was the service in the grand hunt an idle form. Hunting came next to war in those days, as the occupation of

the nobility and gentry. The clergy engaged in it equally with the laity. The hunting establishment of the Bishop of Durham was on a princely scale. He had his forests, chases and parks, with their train of foresters, rangers, and park keepers. A grand hunt was a splendid pageant in which all his barons and knights attended him with horse and hound. The stipulations with the Seignior of Wessyngton show how strictly the rights of the chase were defined. All the game taken by him in going to the forest belonged to the bishop; all taken on returning belonged to himself. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham vol. ii., p. 489.]

Hugh de Pusaz (or De Pudsay) during whose episcopate we meet with this first trace of the De Wessyngtons, was a nephew of king Stephen, and a prelate of great pretensions; fond of appearing with a train of ecclesiastics and an armed retinue. When Richard Coeur de Lion put every thing at pawn and sale to raise funds for a crusade to the Holy Land, the bishop resolved to accompany him. More wealthy than his sovereign, he made magnificent preparations. Besides ships to convey his troops and retinue, he had a sumptuous galley for himself, fitted up with a throne or episcopal chair of silver, and all the household, and even culinary, utensils, were of the same costly material. In a word, had not the prelate been induced to stay at home, and aid the king with his treasures, by being made one of the regents of the kingdom, and Earl of Northumberland for life, the De Wessyngtons might have followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the Holy wars.

Nearly seventy years afterwards we find the family still retaining its manorial estate in the palatinate. The names of Bondo de Wessyngton and William his son appear on charters of land, granted in 1257 to religious houses. Soon after occurred the wars of the barons, in which the throne of Henry III was shaken by the De Mountforts. The chivalry of the palatinate rallied under the royal standard. On the list of loyal knights who fought for their sovereign in the disastrous battle of Lewes (1264), in which the king was taken prisoner, we find the name of William Weshington, of Weshington. [Footnote: This list of knights was inserted in the Bolden Book as an additional entry. It is cited at full length by Hutchinson. —*Hist. Durham*, vol. i., p. 220.]

During the splendid pontificate of Anthony Beke (or Beak), the knights of the palatinate had continually to be in the saddle, or buckled in armor. The prelate was so impatient of rest that he never took more than one sleep, saying it was unbecoming a man to turn from one side to another in bed. He was perpetually, when within his diocese, either riding from one manor to another, or hunting and hawking. Twice he assisted Edward I. with all his force in invading Scotland. In the progress northward with the king, the bishop led the van, marching a day in advance of the main body, with a mercenary force, paid by himself, of one thousand foot and five hundred horse. Besides these he had his feudatories of the palatinate; six bannerets and one hundred and sixty knights, not one of whom, says an old poem, but surpassed Arthur himself, though endowed with the charmed gifts of

Merlin. [Footnote: Onques Artous pour touz ces charmes, Si beau prisent ne ot de Merlyn. SIEGE OF KARLAVEROCK; *an old Poem in Norman French.*] We presume the De Wessyngtons were among those preux chevaliers, as the banner of St. Cuthbert had been taken from its shrine on the occasion, and of course all the armed force of the diocese was bound to follow. It was borne in front of the army by a monk of Durham. There were many rich caparisons, says the old poem, many beautiful pennons, fluttering from lances, and much neighing of steeds. The hills and valleys were covered with sumpter horses and waggons laden with tents and provisions. The Bishop of Durham in his warlike state appeared, we are told, more like a powerful prince, than a priest or prelate. [Footnote: Robert de Graystanes, Ang. Sac., p. 746, cited by Hutchinson, vol. i. p. 239.]

At the surrender of the crown of Scotland by John Baliol, which ended this invasion, the bishop negotiated on the part of England. As a trophy of the event, the chair of Schone used on the inauguration of the Scottish monarchs, and containing the stone on which Jacob dreamed, the palladium of Scotland, was transferred to England and deposited in Westminster Abbey. [Footnote: An extract from an inedited poem, cited by Nicolas in his translation of the Siege of Carlavarock, gives a striking picture of the palatinate in these days of its pride and splendor: —

> There valour bowed before the rood and book,
> And kneeling knighthood served a prelate lord,

Yet little deigned he on such train to look,
Or glance of ruth or pity to afford.

There time has heard the peal rung out at night,
Has seen from every tower the cressets stream,
When the red bale fire on yon western height
Had roused the warder from his fitful dream.

Has seen old Durham's lion banner float
O'er the proud bulwark, that, with giant pride
And feet deep plunged amidst the circling moat,
The efforts of the roving Scot defied.]

In the reign of Edward III. we find the De Wessyngtons still mingling in chivalrous scenes. The name of Sir Stephen de Wessyngton appears on a list of knights (nobles chevaliers) who were to tilt at a tournament at Dunstable in 1334. He bore for his device a golden rose on an azure field. [Footnote: Collect. Topog. et Genealog. T. iv., p. 395.]

He was soon called to exercise his arms on a sterner field. In 1346, Edward and his son, the Black Prince, being absent with the armies in France, king David of Scotland invaded Northumberland with a powerful army. Queen Philippa, who had remained in England as regent, immediately took the field, calling the northern prelates and nobles to join her standard. They all hastened to obey. Among the prelates was Hatfield,

the Bishop of Durham. The sacred banner of St. Cuthbert was again displayed, and the chivalry of the palatinate assisted at the famous battle of Nevil's cross, near Durham, in which the Scottish army was defeated and king David taken prisoner.

Queen Philippa hastened with a victorious train to cross the sea at Dover, and join king Edward in his camp before Calais. The prelate of Durham accompanied her. His military train consisted of three bannerets, forty-eight knights, one hundred and sixty-four esquires, and eighty archers, on horseback. [Footnote: Collier's Eccles. Hist., Book VI., Cent. XIV.] They all arrived to witness the surrender of Calais, (1346) on which occasion queen Philippa distinguished herself by her noble interference in saving the lives of its patriot citizens.

Such were the warlike and stately scenes in which the De Wessyngtons were called to mingle by their feudal duties as knights of the palatinate. A few years after the last event (1350), William, at that time lord of the manor of Wessyngton, had license to settle it and the village upon himself, his wife, and "his own right heirs." He died in 1367, and his son and heir, William, succeeded to the estate. The latter is mentioned under the name of Sir William de Weschington, as one of the knights who sat in the privy council of the county during the episcopate of John Fordham. [Footnote: Hutchinson, vol. ii.] During this time the whole force of the palatinate was roused to pursue a foray of Scots, under Sir William Douglas, who, having ravaged the country, were returning laden with spoil. It was a fruit of

the feud between the Douglases and the Percys. The marauders were overtaken by Hotspur Percy, and then took place the battle of Otterbourne, in which Percy was taken prisoner and Douglas slain. [Footnote: Theare the Dowglas lost his life, And the Percye was led away. FORDUN. *Quoted by Surtee's Hist. Durham*, vol i.]

For upwards of two hundred years the De Wessyngtons had now sat in the councils of the palatinate; had mingled with horse and hound in the stately hunts of its prelates, and followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the field; but Sir William, just mentioned, was the last of the family that rendered this feudal service. He was the last male of the line to which the inheritance of the manor, by the license granted to his father, was confined. It passed away from the De Wessyngtons, after his death, by the marriage of his only daughter and heir, Dionisia, with Sir William Temple of Studley. By the year 1400 it had become the property of the Blaykestons. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii., p. 489.]

But though the name of De Wessyngton no longer figured on the chivalrous roll of the palatinate, it continued for a time to flourish in the cloisters. In the year 1416, John de Wessyngton was elected prior of the Benedictine convent, attached to the cathedral. The monks of this convent had been licensed by Pope Gregory VII. to perform the solemn duties of the cathedral in place of secular clergy, and William the Conqueror had ordained that the priors of Durham should enjoy all the liberties, dignities and honors of abbots; should hold their lands and churches in

their own hands and free disposition, and have the abbot's seat on the left side of the choir — thus taking rank of every one but the bishop. [Footnote: Dugdale Monasticon Anglicanum. T. i., p. 231. London ed. 1846.]

In the course of three centuries and upwards, which had since elapsed, these honors and privileges had been subject to repeated dispute and encroachment, and the prior had nearly been elbowed out of the abbot's chair by the archdeacon. John de Wessyngton was not a man to submit tamely to such infringements of his rights. He forthwith set himself up as the champion of his priory, and in a learned tract, *de Juribus et Possessionibus Ecclesiae Dunelm*, established the validity of the long controverted claims, and fixed himself firmly in the abbot's chair. His success in this controversy gained him much renown among his brethren of the cowl, and in 1426 he presided at the general chapter of the order of St. Benedict, held at Northampton.

The stout prior of Durham had other disputes with the bishop and the secular clergy touching his ecclesiastical functions, in which he was equally victorious, and several tracts remain in manuscript in the dean and chapter's library; weapons hung up in the church armory as memorials of his polemical battles.

Finally, after fighting divers good fights for the honor of his priory, and filling the abbot's chair for thirty years, he died, to use an ancient phrase, "in all the odor of sanctity," in 1446, and was buried like a soldier on his battle-field, at the door of

the north aisle of his church, near to the altar of St. Benedict. On his tombstone was an inscription in brass, now unfortunately obliterated, which may have set forth the valiant deeds of this Washington of the cloisters. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii., passim.]

By this time the primitive stock of the De Wessyngtons had separated into divers branches, holding estates in various parts of England; some distinguishing themselves in the learned professions, others receiving knighthood for public services. Their names are to be found honorably recorded in county histories, or engraved on monuments in time-worn churches and cathedrals, those garnering places of English worthies. By degrees the seignorial sign of *de* disappeared from before the family surname, which also varied from Wessyngton to Wassington, Wasshington, and finally, to Washington. [Footnote: "The de came to be omitted," says an old treatise, "when Englishmen and English manners began to prevail upon the recovery of lost credit." —*Restitution of decayed intelligence in antiquities.* Lond. 1634.

About the time of Henry VI., says another treatise, the de or d' was generally dropped from surnames, when the title of *armiger*, *esquier*, amongst the heads of families, and *generosus*, or *gentylman*, among younger sons was substituted. —*Lower on Surnames*, vol i.] A parish in the county of Durham bears the name as last written, and in this probably the ancient manor of Wessyngton was situated. There is another parish of the name in

the county of Sussex.

The branch of the family to which our Washington immediately belongs sprang from Laurence Washington, Esquire, of Gray's Inn, son of John Washington, of Warton in Lancashire. This Laurence Washington was for some time mayor of Northampton, and on the dissolution of the priories by Henry VIII. he received, in 1538, a grant of the manor of Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire, with other lands in the vicinity, all confiscated property formerly belonging to the monastery of St. Andrew's.

Sulgrave remained in the family until 1620, and was commonly called "Washington's manor." [Footnote: The manor of Garsdon in Wiltshire has been mentioned as the homestead of the ancestors of our Washington. This is a mistake. It was the residence of Sir Laurence Washington, second son of the above-mentioned grantee of Sulgrave. Elizabeth, granddaughter of this Sir Laurence, married Robert Shirley, Earl Ferrers and Viscount of Tamworth. Washington became a baptismal name among the Shirleys — several of the Earls Ferrers have borne it.

The writer of these pages visited Sulgrave a few years since. It was in a quiet rural neighborhood, where the farm-houses were quaint and antiquated. A part only of the manor house remained, and was inhabited by a farmer. The Washington crest, in colored glass, was to be seen in a window of what was now the buttery. A window on which the whole family arms was emblazoned had been removed to the residence of the actual proprietor of the

manor. Another relic of the ancient manor of the Washingtons was a rookery in a venerable grove hard by. The rooks, those stanch adherents to old family abodes, still hovered and cawed about their hereditary nests. In the pavement of the parish church we were shown a stone slab bearing effigies on plates of brass of Laurence Wasshington, gent., and Anne his wife, and their four sons and eleven daughters. The inscription in black letter was dated 1564.]

One of the direct descendants of the grantee of Sulgrave was Sir William Washington, of Packington, in the county of Kent. He married a sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the unfortunate favorite of Charles I. This may have attached the Sulgrave Washingtons to the Stuart dynasty, to which they adhered loyally and generously throughout all its vicissitudes. One of the family, Lieutenant Colonel James Washington, took up arms in the cause of king Charles, and lost his life at the siege of Pontefract castle. Another of the Sulgrave line, Sir Henry Washington, son and heir of Sir William, before mentioned, exhibited in the civil wars the old chivalrous spirit of the knights of the palatinate. He served under prince Rupert at the storming of Bristol, in 1643, and when the assailants were beaten off at every point, he broke in with a handful of infantry at a weak part of the wall, made room for the horse to follow, and opened a path to victory. [Footnote: Clarendon, Book vii.]

He distinguished himself still more in 1646, when elevated to the command of Worcester, the governor having been

captured by the enemy. It was a time of confusion and dismay. The king had fled from Oxford in disguise and gone to the parliamentary camp at Newark. The royal cause was desperate. In this crisis Sir Henry received a letter from Fairfax, who, with his victorious army, was at Haddington, demanding the surrender of Worcester. The following was Colonel Washington's reply:

SIR,

It is acknowledged by your books and by report of your own quarter, that the king is in some of your armies. That granted, it may be easy for you to procure his Majesty's commands for the disposal of this garrison. Till then I shall make good the trust reposed in me. As for conditions, if I shall be necessitated, I shall make the best I can. The worst I know and fear not; if I had, the profession of a soldier had not been begun, nor so long continued by your Excellency's humble servant,

HENRY WASHINGTON. [Footnote: Greene's Antiquities of Worcester, p. 273.]

In a few days Colonel Whalley invested the city with five thousand troops. Sir Henry dispatched messenger after messenger in quest of the king to know his pleasure. None of them returned. A female emissary was equally unavailing. Week after week elapsed, until nearly three months had expired. Provisions began to fail. The city was in confusion. The troops grew insubordinate. Yet Sir Henry persisted in the defence. General Fairfax, with 1,500 horse and foot, was daily expected. There was not powder enough for an hour's contest should

the city be stormed. Still Sir Henry "awaited his Majesty's commands."

At length news arrived that the king had issued an order for the surrender of all towns, castles, and forts. A printed copy of the order was shown to Sir Henry, and on the faith of that document he capitulated (19th July, 1646) on honorable terms, won by his fortitude and perseverance. Those who believe in hereditary virtues may see foreshadowed in the conduct of this Washington of Worcester, the magnanimous constancy of purpose, the disposition to "hope against hope," which bore our Washington triumphantly through the darkest days of our revolution.

We have little note of the Sulgrave branch of the family after the death of Charles I. and the exile of his successor. England, during the protectorate, became an uncomfortable residence to such as had signalized themselves as adherents to the house of Stuart. In 1655, an attempt at a general insurrection drew on them the vengeance of Cromwell. Many of their party who had no share in the conspiracy, yet sought refuge in other lands, where they might live free from molestation. This may have been the case with two brothers, John and Andrew Washington, great-grandsons of the grantee of Sulgrave, and uncles of Sir Henry, the gallant defender of Worcester. John had for some time resided at South Cave, in the East Riding of Yorkshire; [Footnote: South Cave is near the Humber. "In the vicinity is Cave Castle, an embattled edifice. It has a noble collection of

paintings, including a portrait of General Washington, whose ancestors possessed a portion of the estate." —*Lewes, Topog. Dict.* vol. i., p. 530.] but now emigrated with his brother to Virginia; which colony, from its allegiance to the exiled monarch and the Anglican Church had become a favorite resort of the Cavaliers. The brothers arrived in Virginia in 1657, and purchased lands in Westmoreland County, on the northern neck, between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. John married a Miss Anne Pope, of the same county, and took up his residence on Bridges Creek, near where it falls into the Potomac. He became an extensive planter, and, in process of time, a magistrate and member of the House of Burgesses. Having a spark of the old military fire of the family, we find him, as Colonel Washington, leading the Virginia forces, in co-operation with those of Maryland, against a band of Seneca Indians, who were ravaging the settlements along the Potomac. In honor of his public services and private virtues the parish in which he resided was called after him, and still bears the name of Washington. He lies buried in a vault on Bridges Creek, which, for generations, was the family place of sepulture.

The estate continued in the family. His grandson Augustine, the father of our Washington, was born there in 1694. He was twice married; first (April 20th, 1715), to Jane, daughter of Caleb Butler, Esq., of Westmoreland County, by whom he had four children, of whom only two, Lawrence and Augustine, survived the years of childhood; their mother died November

24th, 1728, and was buried in the family vault.

On the 6th of March, 1730, he married in second nuptials, Mary, the daughter of Colonel Ball, a young and beautiful girl, said to be the belle of the Northern Neck. By her he had four sons, George, Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles; and two daughters, Elizabeth, or Betty, as she was commonly called, and Mildred, who died in infancy.

George, the eldest, the subject of this biography, was born on the 22d of February (11th, O. S.), 1732, in the homestead on Bridges Creek. This house commanded a view over many miles of the Potomac, and the opposite shore of Maryland. It had probably been purchased with the property, and was one of the primitive farm-houses of Virginia. The roof was steep, and sloped down into low projecting eaves. It had four rooms on the ground floor, and others in the attic, and an immense chimney at each end. Not a vestige of it remains. Two or three decayed fig trees, with shrubs and vines, linger about the place, and here and there a flower grown wild serves "to mark where a garden has been." Such at least, was the case a few years since; but these may have likewise passed away. A stone [Footnote: Placed there by George W. P. Custis, Esq.] marks the site of the house, and an inscription denotes its being the birthplace of Washington.

We have entered with some minuteness into this genealogical detail; tracing the family step by step through the pages of historical documents for upwards of six centuries; and we have been tempted to do so by the documentary proofs it gives of

the lineal and enduring worth of the race. We have shown that, for many generations, and through a variety of eventful scenes, it has maintained an equality of fortune and respectability, and whenever brought to the test has acquitted itself with honor and loyalty. Hereditary rank may be an illusion; but hereditary virtue gives a patent of innate nobleness beyond all the blazonry of the Herald's College.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME OF WASHINGTON'S BOYHOOD — HIS EARLY EDUCATION — LAWRENCE WASHINGTON AND HIS CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST INDIES — DEATH OF WASHINGTON'S FATHER — THE WIDOWED MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN — SCHOOL EXERCISES.

Not long after the birth of George, his father removed to an estate in Stafford County, opposite Fredericksburg. The house was similar in style to the one at Bridges Creek, and stood on a rising ground overlooking a meadow which bordered the Rappahannock. This was the home of George's boyhood; the meadow was his play-ground, and the scene of his early athletic sports; but this home, like that in which he was born, has disappeared; the site is only to be traced by fragments of bricks, china, and earthenware.

In those days the means of instruction in Virginia were limited, and it was the custom among the wealthy planters to send their sons to England to complete their education. This was done by Augustine Washington with his eldest son Lawrence, then about fifteen years of age, and whom he no doubt considered the future head of the family. George was yet in early childhood: as his intellect dawned he received the rudiments of education in the best establishment for the purpose that the neighborhood

afforded. It was what was called, in popular parlance, an "old field school-house;" humble enough in its pretensions, and kept by one of his father's tenants named Hobby, who moreover was sexton of the parish. The instruction doled out by him must have been of the simplest kind, reading, writing, and ciphering, perhaps; but George had the benefit of mental and moral culture at home, from an excellent father.

Several traditional anecdotes have been given to the world, somewhat prolix and trite, but illustrative of the familiar and practical manner in which Augustine Washington, in the daily intercourse of domestic life, impressed the ductile mind of his child with high maxims of religion and virtue, and imbued him with a spirit of justice and generosity, and above all a scrupulous love of truth.

When George was about seven or eight years old his brother Lawrence returned from England, a well-educated and accomplished youth. There was a difference of fourteen years in their ages, which may have been one cause of the strong attachment which took place between them. Lawrence looked down with a protecting eye upon the boy whose dawning intelligence and perfect rectitude won his regard; while George looked up to his manly and cultivated brother as a model in mind and manners. We call particular attention to this brotherly interchange of affection, from the influence it had on all the future career of the subject of this memoir.

Lawrence Washington had something of the old military

spirit of the family, and circumstances soon called it into action. Spanish depredations on British commerce had recently provoked reprisals. Admiral Vernon, commander-in-chief in the West Indies, had accordingly captured Porto Bello, on the Isthmus of Darien. The Spaniards were preparing to revenge the blow; the French were fitting out ships to aid them. Troops were embarked in England for another campaign in the West Indies; a regiment of four battalions was to be raised in the colonies and sent to join them at Jamaica. There was a sudden outbreak of military ardor in the province; the sound of drum and fife was heard in the villages with the parade of recruiting parties. Lawrence Washington, now twenty-two years of age, caught the infection. He obtained a captain's commission in the newly raised regiment, and embarked with it for the West Indies in 1740. He served in the joint expeditions of Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth, in the land forces commanded by the latter, and acquired the friendship and confidence of both of those officers. He was present at the siege of Carthagena, when it was bombarded by the fleet, and when the troops attempted to escalade the citadel. It was an ineffectual attack; the ships could not get near enough to throw their shells into the town, and the scaling ladders proved too short. That part of the attack, however, with which Lawrence was concerned, distinguished itself by its bravery. The troops sustained unflinching a destructive fire for several hours, and at length retired with honor, their small force having sustained a loss of about six hundred in killed and

wounded.

We have here the secret of that martial spirit so often cited of George in his boyish days. He had seen his brother fitted out for the wars. He had heard by letter and otherwise of the warlike scenes in which he was mingling. All his amusements took a military turn. He made soldiers of his schoolmates; they had their mimic parades, reviews, and sham fights; a boy named William Bustle was sometimes his competitor, but George was commander-in-chief of Hobby's school.

Lawrence Washington returned home in the autumn of 1742, the campaigns in the West Indies being ended, and Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth being recalled to England. It was the intention of Lawrence to rejoin his regiment in that country, and seek promotion in the army, but circumstances completely altered his plans. He formed an attachment to Anne, the eldest daughter of the Honorable William Fairfax, of Fairfax County; his addresses were well received, and they became engaged. Their nuptials were delayed by the sudden and untimely death of his father, which took place on the 12th of April, 1743, after a short but severe attack of gout in the stomach, and when but forty-nine years of age. George had been absent from home on a visit during his father's illness, and just returned in time to receive a parting look of affection.

Augustine Washington left large possessions, distributed by will among his children. To Lawrence, the estate on the banks of the Potomac, with other real property, and several shares in iron

works. To Augustine, the second son by the first marriage, the old homestead and estate in Westmoreland. The children by the second marriage were severally well provided for, and George, when he became of age, was to have the house and lands on the Rappahannock.

In the month of July the marriage of Lawrence with Miss Fairfax took place.

He now gave up all thoughts of foreign service, and settled himself on his estate on the banks of the Potomac, to which he gave the name of MOUNT VERNON, in honor of the admiral.

Augustine took up his abode at the homestead on Bridges Creek, and married Anne, daughter and co-heiress of William Aylett, Esquire, of Westmoreland County.

George, now eleven years of age, and the other children of the second marriage, had been left under the guardianship of their mother, to whom was intrusted the proceeds of all their property until they should severally come of age. She proved herself worthy of the trust. Endowed with plain, direct good sense, thorough conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly, but kindly, exacting deference while she inspired affection. George, being her eldest son, was thought to be her favorite, yet she never gave him undue preference, and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper and a spirit of command, but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern

that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity and justice.

Tradition gives an interesting picture of the widow, with her little flock gathered round her, as was her daily wont, reading to them lessons of religion and morality out of some standard work. Her favorite volume was Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, moral and divine. The admirable maxims therein contained, for outward action as well as self-government, sank deep into the mind of George, and, doubtless, had a great influence in forming his character. They certainly were exemplified in his conduct throughout life. This mother's manual, bearing his mother's name, Mary Washington, written with her own hand, was ever preserved by him with filial care, and may still be seen in the archives of Mount Vernon. A precious document! Let those who wish to know the moral foundation of his character consult its pages.

Having no longer the benefit of a father's instructions at home, and the scope of tuition of Hobby, the sexton, being too limited for the growing wants of his pupil, George was now sent to reside with Augustine Washington, at Bridges Creek, and enjoy the benefit of a superior school in that neighborhood, kept by a Mr. Williams. His education, however, was plain and practical. He never attempted the learned languages, nor manifested any inclination for rhetoric or belles-lettres. His object, or the object of his friends, seems to have been confined to fitting him for ordinary business. His manuscript school books still exist, and

are models of neatness and accuracy. One of them, it is true, a ciphering book, preserved in the library at Mount Vernon, has some school-boy attempts at calligraphy; nondescript birds, executed with a flourish of the pen, or profiles of faces, probably intended for those of his schoolmates; the rest are all grave and business-like. Before he was thirteen years of age he had copied into a volume forms for all kinds of mercantile and legal papers; bills of exchange, notes of hand, deeds, bonds, and the like. This early self-tuition gave him throughout life a lawyer's skill in drafting documents, and a merchant's exactness in keeping accounts; so that all the concerns of his various estates; his dealings with his domestic stewards and foreign agents; his accounts with government, and all his financial transactions are to this day to be seen posted up in books, in his own handwriting, monuments of his method and unwearied accuracy.

He was a self-disciplinarian in physical as well as mental matters, and practised himself in all kinds of athletic exercises, such as running, leaping, wrestling, pitching quoits and tossing bars. His frame even in infancy had been large and powerful, and he now excelled most of his playmates in contests of agility and strength. As a proof of his muscular power, a place is still pointed out at Fredericksburg, near the lower ferry, where, when a boy, he flung a stone across the Rappahannock. In horsemanship too he already excelled, and was ready to back, and able to manage the most fiery steed. Traditional anecdotes remain of his achievements in this respect.

Above all, his inherent probity and the principles of justice on which he regulated all his conduct, even at this early period of life, were soon appreciated by his schoolmates; he was referred to as an umpire in their disputes, and his decisions were never reversed. As he had formerly been military chieftain, he was now legislator of the school; thus displaying in boyhood a type of the future man.

CHAPTER III

PATERNAL CONDUCT OF AN ELDER BROTHER — THE FAIRFAX FAMILY — WASHINGTON'S CODE OF MORALS AND MANNERS — SOLDIERS' TALES — THEIR INFLUENCE — WASHINGTON PREPARES FOR THE NAVY — A MOTHER'S OBJECTIONS — RETURN TO SCHOOL — STUDIES AND EXERCISES — A SCHOOL-BOY PASSION — THE LOWLAND BEAUTY — LOVE DITTIES AT MOUNT VERNON — VISIT TO BELVOIR — LORD FAIRFAX — HIS CHARACTER — FOX-HUNTING A REMEDY FOR LOVE — PROPOSITION FOR A SURVEYING EXPEDITION.

The attachment of Lawrence Washington to his brother George seems to have acquired additional strength and tenderness on their father's death; he now took a truly paternal interest in his concerns, and had him as frequently as possible a guest at Mount Vernon. Lawrence had deservedly become a popular and leading personage in the country. He was a member of the House of Burgesses, and Adjutant General of the district, with the rank of major, and a regular salary. A frequent sojourn with him brought George into familiar intercourse with the family of his father-in-law, the Hon. William Fairfax, who resided at a beautiful seat called Belvoir, a few miles below

Mount Vernon, and on the same woody ridge bordering the Potomac.

William Fairfax was a man of liberal education and intrinsic worth; he had seen much of the world, and his mind had been enriched and ripened by varied and adventurous experience. Of an ancient English family in Yorkshire, he had entered the army at the age of twenty-one; had served with honor both in the East and West Indies, and officiated as governor of New Providence, after having aided in rescuing it from pirates. For some years past he had resided in Virginia, to manage the immense landed estates of his cousin, Lord Fairfax, and lived at Belvoir in the style of an English country gentleman, surrounded by an intelligent and cultivated family of sons and daughters.

An intimacy with a family like this, in which the frankness and simplicity of rural and colonial life were united with European refinement, could not but have a beneficial effect in moulding the character and manners of a somewhat homebred schoolboy. It was probably his intercourse with them, and his ambition to acquit himself well in their society, that set him upon compiling a code of morals and manners which still exists in a manuscript in his own handwriting, entitled "rules for behavior in company and conversation." It is extremely minute and circumstantial. Some of the rules for personal deportment extend to such trivial matters, and are so quaint and formal, as almost to provoke a smile; but in the main, a better manual of conduct could not be put into the hands of a youth. The whole code evinces that rigid

propriety and self control to which he subjected himself, and by which he brought all the impulses of a somewhat ardent temper under conscientious government.

Other influences were brought to bear on George during his visit at Mount Vernon. His brother Lawrence still retained some of his military inclinations, fostered no doubt by his post of Adjutant General. William Fairfax, as we have shown, had been a soldier, and in many trying scenes. Some of Lawrence's comrades of the provincial regiment, who had served with him in the West Indies, were occasional visitors at Mount Vernon; or a ship of war, possibly one of Vernon's old fleet, would anchor in the Potomac, and its officers be welcome guests at the tables of Lawrence and his father-in-law. Thus military scenes on sea and shore would become the topics of conversation. The capture of Porto Bello; the bombardment of Carthagena; old stories of cruisings in the East and West Indies, and campaigns against the pirates. We can picture to ourselves George, a grave and earnest boy, with an expanding intellect, and a deep-seated passion for enterprise, listening to such conversations with a kindling spirit and a growing desire for military life. In this way most probably was produced that desire to enter the navy which he evinced when about fourteen years of age. The opportunity for gratifying it appeared at hand. Ships of war frequented the colonies, and at times, as we have hinted, were anchored in the Potomac. The inclination was encouraged by Lawrence Washington and Mr. Fairfax. Lawrence retained pleasant recollections of his cruisings

in the fleet of Admiral Vernon, and considered the naval service a popular path to fame and fortune. George was at a suitable age to enter the navy. The great difficulty was to procure the assent of his mother. She was brought, however, to acquiesce; a midshipman's warrant was obtained, and it is even said that the luggage of the youth was actually on board of a man of war, anchored in the river just below Mount Vernon.

At the eleventh hour the mother's heart faltered. This was her eldest born. A son, whose strong and steadfast character promised to be a support to herself and a protection to her other children. The thought of his being completely severed from her and exposed to the hardships and perils of a boisterous profession, overcame even her resolute mind, and at her urgent remonstrances the nautical scheme was given up.

To school, therefore, George returned, and continued his studies for nearly two years longer, devoting himself especially to mathematics, and accomplishing himself in those branches calculated to fit him either for civil or military service. Among these, one of the most important in the actual state of the country was land surveying. In this he schooled himself thoroughly, using the highest processes of the art; making surveys about the neighborhood, and keeping regular field books, some of which we have examined, in which the boundaries and measurements of the fields surveyed were carefully entered, and diagrams made, with a neatness and exactness as if the whole related to important land transactions instead of being mere school exercises. Thus,

in his earliest days, there was perseverance and completeness in all his undertakings. Nothing was left half done, or done in a hurried and slovenly manner. The habit of mind thus cultivated continued throughout life; so that however complicated his tasks and overwhelming his cares, in the arduous and hazardous situations in which he was often placed, he found time to do every thing, and to do it well. He had acquired the magic of method, which of itself works wonders.

In one of these manuscript memorials of his practical studies and exercises, we have come upon some documents singularly in contrast with all that we have just cited, and, with his apparently unromantic character. In a word, there are evidences in his own handwriting, that, before he was fifteen years of age, he had conceived a passion for some unknown beauty, so serious as to disturb his otherwise well-regulated mind, and to make him really unhappy. Why this juvenile attachment was a source of unhappiness we have no positive means of ascertaining. Perhaps the object of it may have considered him a mere school-boy, and treated him as such; or his own shyness may have been in his way, and his "rules for behavior and conversation" may as yet have sat awkwardly on him, and rendered him formal and ungainly when he most sought to please. Even in later years he was apt to be silent and embarrassed in female society. "He was a very bashful young man," said an old lady, whom he used to visit when they were both in their nonage. "I used often to wish that he would talk more."

Whatever may have been the reason, this early attachment seems to have been a source of poignant discomfort to him. It clung to him after he took a final leave of school in the autumn of 1747, and went to reside with his brother Lawrence at Mount Vernon. Here he continued his mathematical studies and his practice in surveying, disturbed at times by recurrences of his unlucky passion. Though by no means of a poetical temperament, the waste pages of his journal betray several attempts to pour forth his amorous sorrows in verse. They are mere common-place rhymes, such as lovers at his age are apt to write, in which he bewails his "poor restless heart, wounded by Cupid's dart," and "bleeding for one who remains pitiless of his griefs and woes."

The tenor of some of his verses induce us to believe that he never told his love; but, as we have already surmised, was prevented by his bashfulness.

> "Ah, woe is me, that I should love and conceal;
> Long have I wished and never dare reveal."

It is difficult to reconcile one's self to the idea of the cool and sedate Washington, the great champion of American liberty, a woe-worn lover in his youthful days, "sighing like furnace," and inditing plaintive verses about the groves of Mount Vernon. We are glad of an opportunity, however, of penetrating to his native feelings, and finding that under his studied decorum and

reserve he had a heart of flesh throbbing with the warm impulses of human nature.

Being a favorite of Sir William Fairfax, he was now an occasional inmate of Belvoir. Among the persons at present residing there was Thomas, Lord Fairfax, cousin of William Fairfax, and of whose immense landed property the latter was the agent. As this nobleman was one of Washington's earliest friends, and, in some degree the founder of his fortunes, his character and history are worthy of especial note.

Lord Fairfax was now nearly sixty years of age, upwards of six feet high, gaunt and raw-boned, near-sighted, with light gray eyes, sharp features and an aquiline nose. However ungainly his present appearance, he had figured to advantage in London life in his younger days. He had received his education at the university of Oxford, where he acquitted himself with credit. He afterwards held a commission, and remained for some time in a regiment of horse called the Blues. His title and connections, of course, gave him access to the best society, in which he acquired additional currency by contributing a paper or two to Addison's Spectator, then in great vogue.

In the height of his fashionable career, he became strongly attached to a young lady of rank; paid his addresses, and was accepted. The wedding day was fixed; the wedding dresses were provided; together with servants and equipages for the matrimonial establishment. Suddenly the lady broke her engagement. She had been dazzled by the superior brilliancy of

a ducal coronet.

It was a cruel blow, alike to the affection and pride of Lord Fairfax, and wrought a change in both character and conduct. From that time he almost avoided the sex, and became shy and embarrassed in their society, excepting among those with whom he was connected or particularly intimate. This may have been among the reasons which ultimately induced him to abandon the gay world and bury himself in the wilds of America. He made a voyage to Virginia about the year 1739, to visit his vast estates there. These he inherited from his mother, Catharine, daughter of Thomas, Lord Culpepper, to whom they had been granted by Charles II. The original grant was for all the lands lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers; meaning thereby, it is said, merely the territory on the northern neck, east of the Blue Ridge. His lordship, however, discovering that the Potomac headed in the Allegany Mountains, returned to England and claimed a correspondent definition of his grant. It was arranged by compromise; extending his domain into the Allegany Mountains, and comprising, among other lands, a great portion of the Shenandoah Valley.

Lord Fairfax had been delighted with his visit to Virginia. The amenity of the climate, the magnificence of the forest scenery, the abundance of game, — all pointed it out as a favored land. He was pleased, too, with the frank, cordial character of the Virginians, and their independent mode of life; and returned to it with the resolution of taking up his abode there for the

remainder of his days. His early disappointment in love was the cause of some eccentricities in his conduct; yet he was amiable and courteous in his manners, and of a liberal and generous spirit.

Another inmate of Belvoir at this time was George William Fairfax, about twenty-two years of age, the eldest son of the proprietor. He had been educated in England, and since his return had married a daughter of Colonel Carey, of Hampton, on James River. He had recently brought home his bride and her sister to his father's house.

The merits of Washington were known and appreciated by the Fairfax family. Though not quite sixteen years of age, he no longer seemed a boy, nor was he treated as such. Tall, athletic, and manly for his years, his early self-training, and the code of conduct he had devised, gave a gravity and decision to his conduct; his frankness and modesty inspired cordial regard, and the melancholy, of which he speaks, may have produced a softness in his manner calculated to win favor in ladies' eyes. According to his own account, the female society by which he was surrounded had a soothing effect on that melancholy. The charms of Miss Carey, the sister of the bride, seem even to have caused a slight fluttering in his bosom; which, however, was constantly rebuked by the remembrance of his former passion — so at least we judge from letters to his youthful confidants, rough drafts of which are still to be seen in his tell-tale journal.

To one whom he addresses as his dear friend Robin, he writes: "My residence is at present at his lordship's, where I might, was

my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there's a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house (Col. George Fairfax's wife's sister); but as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her, revives my former passion for your Lowland Beauty; whereas was I to live more retired from young women, I might in some measure alleviate my sorrows, by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion," &c.

Similar avowals he makes to another of his young correspondents, whom he styles, "Dear friend John;" as also to a female confidant, styled "Dear Sally," to whom he acknowledges that the company of the "very agreeable young lady, sister-in-law of Col. George Fairfax," in a great measure cheers his sorrow and dejectedness.

The object of this early passion is not positively known. Tradition states that the "lowland beauty" was a Miss Grimes, of Westmoreland, afterwards Mrs. Lee, and mother of General Henry Lee, who figured in revolutionary history as Light Horse Harry, and was always a favorite with Washington, probably from the recollections of his early tenderness for the mother.

Whatever may have been the soothing effect of the female society by which he was surrounded at Belvoir, the youth found a more effectual remedy for his love melancholy in the company of Lord Fairfax. His lordship was a staunch fox-hunter, and kept horses and hounds in the English style. The hunting season had arrived. The neighborhood abounded with sport; but fox-

hunting in Virginia required bold and skilful horsemanship. He found Washington as bold as himself in the saddle, and as eager to follow the hounds. He forthwith took him into peculiar favor; made him his hunting companion; and it was probably under the tuition of this hard-riding old nobleman that the youth imbibed that fondness for the chase for which he was afterwards remarked.

Their fox-hunting intercourse was attended with more important results. His lordship's possessions beyond the Blue Ridge had never been regularly settled nor surveyed. Lawless intruders — squatters, as they were called — were planting themselves along the finest streams and in the richest valleys, and virtually taking possession of the country. It was the anxious desire of Lord Fairfax to have these lands examined, surveyed, and portioned out into lots, preparatory to ejecting these interlopers or bringing them to reasonable terms. In Washington, notwithstanding his youth, he beheld one fit for the task — having noticed the exercises in surveying which he kept up while at Mount Vernon, and the aptness and exactness with which every process was executed. He was well calculated, too, by his vigor and activity, his courage and hardihood, to cope with the wild country to be surveyed, and with its still wilder inhabitants. The proposition had only to be offered to Washington to be eagerly accepted. It was the very kind of occupation for which he had been diligently training himself. All the preparations required by one of his simple habits were soon

made, and in a very few days he was ready for his first expedition into the wilderness.

CHAPTER IV

EXPEDITION BEYOND THE BLUE RIDGE — THE VALLEY OF THE SHENANDOAH — LORD HALIFAX — LODGE IN THE WILDERNESS — SURVEYING — LIFE IN THE BACKWOODS — INDIANS — WAR DANCE — GERMAN SETTLERS — RETURN HOME — WASHINGTON AS PUBLIC SURVEYOR — SOJOURN AT GREENWAY COURT — HORSES, HOUNDS, AND BOOKS — RUGGED EXPERIENCE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

It was in the month of March (1748), and just after he had completed his sixteenth year, that Washington set out on horseback on this surveying expedition, in company with George William Fairfax. Their route lay by Ashley's Gap, a pass through the Blue Ridge, that beautiful line of mountains which, as yet, almost formed the western frontier of inhabited Virginia. Winter still lingered on the tops of the mountains, whence melting snows sent down torrents, which swelled the rivers and occasionally rendered them almost impassable. Spring, however, was softening the lower parts of the landscape and smiling in the valleys.

They entered the great valley of Virginia, where it is about twenty-five miles wide; a lovely and temperate region, diversified by gentle swells and slopes, admirably adapted to cultivation. The

Blue Ridge bounds it on one side, the North Mountain, a ridge of the Alleganies, on the other; while through it flows that bright and abounding river, which, on account of its surpassing beauty, was named by the Indians the Shenandoah — that is to say, "the daughter of the stars."

The first station of the travellers was at a kind of lodge in the wilderness, where the steward or land-bailiff of Lord Halifax resided, with such negroes as were required for farming purposes, and which Washington terms "his lordship's quarter." It was situated not far from the Shenandoah, and about twelve miles from the site of the present town of Winchester.

In a diary kept with his usual minuteness, Washington speaks with delight of the beauty of the trees and the richness of the land in the neighborhood, and of his riding through a noble grove of sugar maples on the banks of the Shenandoah; and at the present day, the magnificence of the forests which still exist in this favored region justifies his eulogium.

He looked around, however, with an eye to the profitable rather than the poetical. The gleam of poetry and romance, inspired by his "lowland beauty," occurs no more. The real business of life has commenced with him. His diary affords no food for fancy. Every thing is practical. The qualities of the soil, the relative value of sites and localities, are faithfully recorded. In these his early habits of observation and his exercises in surveying had already made him a proficient.

His surveys commenced in the lower part of the valley, some

distance above the junction of the Shenandoah with the Potomac, and extended for many miles along the former river. Here and there partial "clearings" had been made by squatters and hardy pioneers, and their rude husbandry had produced abundant crops of grain, hemp, and tobacco; civilization, however, had hardly yet entered the valley, if we may judge from the note of a night's lodging at the house of one of the settlers — Captain Hite, near the site of the present town of Winchester. Here, after supper, most of the company stretched themselves in backwood style, before the fire; but Washington was shown into a bed-room. Fatigued with a hard day's work at surveying, he soon undressed; but instead of being nestled between sheets in a comfortable bed, as at the maternal home, or at Mount Vernon, he found himself on a couch of matted straw, under a threadbare blanket, swarming with unwelcome bedfellows. After tossing about for a few moments, he was glad to put on his clothes again, and rejoin his companions before the fire.

Such was his first experience of life in the wilderness; he soon, however, accustomed himself to "rough it," and adapt himself to fare of all kinds, though he generally preferred a bivouac before a fire, in the open air, to the accommodations of a woodman's cabin. Proceeding down the valley to the banks of the Potomac, they found that river so much swollen by the rain which had fallen among the Alleganies, as to be unfordable. To while away the time until it should subside, they made an excursion to examine certain warm springs in a valley among the

mountains, since called the Berkeley Springs. There they camped out at night, under the stars; the diary makes no complaint of their accommodations; and their camping-ground is now known as Bath, one of the favorite watering-places of Virginia. One of the warm springs was subsequently appropriated by Lord Fairfax to his own use, and still bears his name.

After watching in vain for the river to subside, they procured a canoe, on which they crossed to the Maryland side; swimming their horses. A weary day's ride of forty miles up the left side of the river, in a continual rain, and over what Washington pronounces the worst road ever trod by man or beast, brought them to the house of a Colonel Cresap, opposite the south branch of the Potomac, where they put up for the night.

Here they were detained three or four days by inclement weather. On the second day they were surprised by the appearance of a war party of thirty Indians, bearing a scalp as a trophy. A little liquor procured the spectacle of a war-dance. A large space was cleared, and a fire made in the centre, round which the warriors took their seats. The principal orator made a speech, reciting their recent exploits, and rousing them to triumph. One of the warriors started up as if from sleep, and began a series of movements, half-grotesque, half-tragical; the rest followed. For music, one savage drummed on a deerskin, stretched over a pot half filled with water; another rattled a gourd, containing a few shot, and decorated with a horse's tail. Their strange outcries, and uncouth forms and garbs, seen by the

glare of the fire, and their whoops and yells, made them appear more like demons than human beings. All this savage gambol was no novelty to Washington's companions, experienced in frontier life; but to the youth, fresh from school, it was a strange spectacle, which he sat contemplating with deep interest, and carefully noted down in his journal. It will be found that he soon made himself acquainted with the savage character, and became expert at dealing with these inhabitants of the wilderness.

From this encampment the party proceeded to the mouth of Patterson's Creek, where they recrossed the river in a canoe, swimming their horses as before. More than two weeks were now passed by them in the wild mountainous regions of Frederick County, and about the south branch of the Potomac, surveying lands and laying out lots, camped out the greater part of the time, and subsisting on wild turkeys and other game. Each one was his own cook; forked sticks served for spits, and chips of wood for dishes. The weather was unsettled. At one time their tent was blown down; at another they were driven out of it by smoke; now they were drenched with rain, and now the straw on which Washington was sleeping caught fire, and he was awakened by a companion just in time to escape a scorching.

The only variety to this camp life was a supper at the house of one Solomon Hedge, Esquire, his majesty's justice of the peace, where there were no forks at table, nor any knives, but such as the guests brought in their pockets. During their surveys they were followed by numbers of people, some of them squatters,

anxious, doubtless, to procure a cheap title to the land they had appropriated; others, German emigrants, with their wives and children, seeking a new home in the wilderness. Most of the latter could not speak English; but when spoken to, answered in their native tongue. They appeared to Washington ignorant as Indians, and uncouth, but "merry, and full of antic tricks." Such were the progenitors of the sturdy yeomanry now inhabiting those parts, many of whom still preserve their strong German characteristics.

"I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed," writes Washington to one of his young friends at home, "but after walking a good deal all the day I have lain down before the fire upon a little straw or fodder, or a bear skin, 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."

Having completed his surveys, he set forth from the south branch of the Potomac on his return homeward; crossed the mountains to the great Cacapehon; traversed the Shenandoah valley; passed through the Blue Ridge, and on the 12th of April found himself once more at Mount Vernon. For his services he received, according to his note-book, a doubloon per day when actively employed, and sometimes six pistoles. [Footnote: A pistole is $3.60.]

The manner in which he had acquitted himself in this arduous expedition, and his accounts of the country surveyed, gave great satisfaction to Lord Fairfax, who shortly afterwards moved across the Blue Ridge, and took up his residence at the place heretofore

noted as his "quarters." Here he laid out a manor, containing ten thousand acres of arable grazing lands, vast meadows, and noble forests, and projected a spacious manor house, giving to the place the name of Greenway Court.

It was probably through the influence of Lord Fairfax that Washington received the appointment of public surveyor. This conferred authority on his surveys, and entitled them to be recorded in the county offices, and so invariably correct have these surveys been found that, to this day, wherever any of them stand on record, they receive implicit credit.

For three years he continued in this occupation, which proved extremely profitable, from the vast extent of country to be surveyed and the very limited number of public surveyors. It made him acquainted, also, with the country, the nature of the soil in various parts, and the value of localities; all which proved advantageous to him in his purchases in after years. Many of the finest parts of the Shenandoah valley are yet owned by members of the Washington family.

While thus employed for months at a time surveying the lands beyond the Blue Ridge, he was often an inmate of Greenway Court. The projected manor house was never even commenced. On a green knoll overshadowed by trees was a long stone building one story in height, with dormer windows, two wooden belfries, chimneys studded with swallow and martin coops, and a roof sloping down in the old Virginia fashion, into low projecting eaves that formed a verandah the whole length of the house. It

was probably the house originally occupied by his steward or land agent, but was now devoted to hospitable purposes, and the reception of guests. As to his lordship, it was one of his many eccentricities, that he never slept in the main edifice, but lodged apart in a wooden house not much above twelve feet square. In a small building was his office, where quitrents were given, deeds drawn, and business transacted with his tenants.

About the knoll were out-houses for his numerous servants, black and white, with stables for saddle-horses and hunters, and kennels for his hounds, for his lordship retained his keen hunting propensities, and the neighborhood abounded in game. Indians, half-breeds, and leathern-clad woodsmen loitered about the place, and partook of the abundance of the kitchen. His lordship's table was plentiful but plain, and served in the English fashion.

Here Washington had full opportunity, in the proper seasons, of indulging his fondness for field sports, and once more accompanying his lordship in the chase. The conversation of Lord Fairfax, too, was full of interest and instruction to an inexperienced youth, from his cultivated talents, his literary taste, and his past intercourse with the best society of Europe, and its most distinguished authors. He had brought books, too, with him into the wilderness, and from Washington's diary we find that during his sojourn here he was diligently reading the history of England, and the essays of the Spectator.

Such was Greenway Court in these its palmy days. We visited

it recently and found it tottering to its fall, mouldering in the midst of a magnificent country, where nature still flourishes in full luxuriance and beauty.

Three or four years were thus passed by Washington, the greater part of the time beyond the Blue Ridge, but occasionally with his brother Lawrence at Mount Vernon. His rugged and toilsome expeditions in the mountains, among rude scenes and rough people, inured him to hardships, and made him apt at expedients; while his intercourse with his cultivated brother, and with the various members of the Fairfax family, had a happy effect in toning up his mind and manners, and counteracting the careless and self-indulgent habitudes of the wilderness.

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH AND FRENCH CLAIMS TO THE OHIO VALLEY — WILD STATE OF THE COUNTRY — PROJECTS OF SETTLEMENTS — THE OHIO COMPANY — ENLIGHTENED VIEWS OF LAWRENCE WASHINGTON — FRENCH RIVALRY — CELERON DE BIENVILLE — HIS SIGNS OF OCCUPATION — HUGH CRAWFORD — GEORGE CROGHAN, A VETERAN TRADER, AND MONTOUR, HIS INTERPRETER — THEIR MISSION FROM PENNSYLVANIA TO THE OHIO TRIBES — CHRISTOPHER GIST, THE PIONEER OF THE YADKIN — AGENT OF THE OHIO COMPANY — HIS EXPEDITION TO THE FRONTIER — REPROBATE TRADERS AT LOGSTOWN — NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INDIANS — SCENES IN THE OHIO COUNTRY — DIPLOMACY AT PIQUA — KEGS OF BRANDY AND ROLLS OF TOBACCO — GIST'S RETURN ACROSS KENTUCKY — A DESERTED HOME — FRENCH SCHEMES — CAPTAIN JONCAIRE, A DIPLOMAT OF THE WILDERNESS — HIS SPEECH AT LOGSTOWN — THE INDIANS' LAND — "WHERE?"

During the time of Washington's surveying campaigns among the mountains, a grand colonizing scheme had been set on foot,

destined to enlist him in hardy enterprises, and in some degree to shape the course of his future fortunes.

The treaty of peace concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle, which had put an end to the general war of Europe, had left undefined the boundaries between the British and French possessions in America; a singular remissness, considering that they had long been a subject in dispute, and a cause of frequent conflicts in the colonies. Immense regions were still claimed by both nations, and each was now eager to forestall the other by getting possession of them, and strengthening its claim by occupancy.

The most desirable of these regions lay west of the Allegany Mountains, extending from the lakes to the Ohio, and embracing the valley of that river and its tributary streams. An immense territory, possessing a salubrious climate, fertile soil, fine hunting and fishing grounds, and facilities by lakes and rivers for a vast internal commerce.

The French claimed all this country quite to the Allegany mountains by the right of discovery. In 1673, Padre Marquette, with his companion, Joliet, of Quebec, both subjects of the crown of France, had passed down the Mississippi in a canoe quite to the Arkansas, thereby, according to an alleged maxim in the law of nations, establishing the right of their sovereign, not merely to the river so discovered and its adjacent lands, but to all the country drained by its tributary streams, of which the Ohio was one; a claim, the ramifications of which might be spread, like the meshes of a web, over half the continent.

To this illimitable claim the English opposed a right derived, at second hand, from a traditionary Indian conquest. A treaty, they said, had been made at Lancaster, in 1744, between commissioners from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and the Iroquois, or Six Nations, whereby the latter, for four hundred pounds, gave up all right and title to the land west of the Allegany Mountains, even to the Mississippi, which land, *according to their traditions*, had been conquered by their forefathers.

It is undoubtedly true that such a treaty was made, and such a pretended transfer of title did take place, under the influence of spirituous liquors; but it is equally true that the Indians in question did not, at the time, possess an acre of the land conveyed; and that the tribes actually in possession scoffed at their pretensions, and claimed the country as their own from time immemorial.

Such were the shadowy foundations of claims which the two nations were determined to maintain to the uttermost, and which ripened into a series of wars, ending in a loss to England of a great part of her American possessions, and to France of the whole.

As yet in the region in question there was not a single white settlement. Mixed Iroquois tribes of Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes, had migrated into it early in the century from the French settlements in Canada, and taken up their abodes about the Ohio and its branches. The French pretended to hold them under their protection; but their allegiance, if ever acknowledged, had been sapped of late years by the influx of fur traders

from Pennsylvania. These were often rough, lawless men; half Indians in dress and habits, prone to brawls, and sometimes deadly in their feuds. They were generally in the employ of some trader, who, at the head of his retainers and a string of pack-horses, would make his way over mountains and through forests to the banks of the Ohio, establish his head-quarters in some Indian town, and disperse his followers to traffic among the hamlets, hunting-camps and wigwams, exchanging blankets, gaudy colored cloth, trinketry, powder, shot, and rum, for valuable furs and peltry. In this way a lucrative trade with these western tribes was springing up and becoming monopolized by the Pennsylvanians.

To secure a participation in this trade, and to gain a foothold in this desirable region, became now the wish of some of the most intelligent and enterprising men of Virginia and Maryland, among whom were Lawrence and Augustine Washington. With these views they projected a scheme, in connection with John Hanbury, a wealthy London merchant, to obtain a grant of land from the British government, for the purpose of forming settlements or colonies beyond the Alleganies. Government readily countenanced a scheme by which French encroachments might be forestalled, and prompt and quiet possession secured of the great Ohio valley. An association was accordingly chartered in 1749, by the name of "the Ohio Company," and five hundred thousand acres of land was granted to it west of the Alleganies; between the Monongahela and Kanawha rivers; though part of

the land might be taken up north of the Ohio, should it be deemed expedient. The company were to pay no quitrent for ten years; but they were to select two fifths of their lands immediately; to settle one hundred families upon them within seven years; to build a fort at their own expense, and maintain a sufficient garrison in it for defence against the Indians.

Mr. Thomas Lee, president of the council of Virginia, took the lead in the concerns of the company at the outset, and by many has been considered its founder. On his death, which soon took place, Lawrence Washington had the chief management. His enlightened mind and liberal spirit shone forth in his earliest arrangements. He wished to form the settlements with Germans from Pennsylvania. Being dissenters, however, they would be obliged, on becoming residents within the jurisdiction of Virginia, to pay parish rates, and maintain a clergyman of the Church of England, though they might not understand his language nor relish his doctrines. Lawrence sought to have them exempted from this double tax on purse and conscience.

"It has ever been my opinion," said he, "and I hope it ever will be, that restraints on conscience are cruel in regard to those on whom they are imposed, and injurious to the country imposing them. England, Holland, and Prussia I may quote as examples, and much more Pennsylvania, which has nourished under that delightful liberty, so as to become the admiration of every man who considers the short time it has been settled. ... This colony (Virginia) was greatly settled in the latter part of Charles the

First's time, and during the usurpation by the zealous churchmen; and that spirit, which was then brought in, has ever since continued; so that, except a few Quakers, we have no dissenters. But what has been the consequence? We have increased by slow degrees, whilst our neighboring colonies, whose natural advantages are greatly inferior to ours, have become populous."

Such were the enlightened views of this brother of our Washington, to whom the latter owed much of his moral and mental training. The company proceeded to make preparations for their colonizing scheme. Goods were imported from England suited to the Indian trade, or for presents to the chiefs. Rewards were promised to veteran warriors and hunters among the natives acquainted with the woods and mountains, for the best route to the Ohio. Before the company had received its charter, however, the French were in the field. Early in 1749, the Marquis de la Galisonniere, Governor of Canada, despatched Celeron de Bienville, an intelligent officer, at the head of three hundred men, to the banks of the Ohio, to make peace, as he said, between the tribes that had become embroiled with each other during the late war, and to renew the French possession of the country. Celeron de Bienville distributed presents among the Indians, made speeches reminding them of former friendship, and warned them not to trade with the English.

He furthermore nailed leaden plates to trees, and buried others in the earth, at the confluence of the Ohio and its tributaries, bearing inscriptions purporting that all the lands

on both sides of the rivers to their sources appertained, as in foregone times, to the crown of France. [Footnote: One of these plates, bearing date August 16, 1749, was found in recent years at the confluence of the Muskingum with the Ohio.] The Indians gazed at these mysterious plates with wondering eyes, but surmised their purport. "They mean to steal our country from us," murmured they; and they determined to seek protection from the English.

Celeron finding some traders from Pennsylvania trafficking among the Indians, he summoned them to depart, and wrote by them to James Hamilton, Governor of Pennsylvania, telling him the object of his errand to those parts, and his surprise at meeting with English traders in a country to which England had no pretensions; intimating that, in future, any intruders of the kind would be rigorously dealt with.

His letter, and a report of his proceedings on the Ohio, roused the solicitude of the governor and council of Pennsylvania, for the protection of their Indian trade. Shortly afterwards, one Hugh Crawford, who had been trading with the Miami tribes on the Wabash, brought a message from them, speaking of the promises and threats with which the French were endeavoring to shake their faith, but assuring the governor that their friendship for the English "would last while the sun and moon ran round the world." This message was accompanied by three strings of wampum.

Governor Hamilton knew the value of Indian friendship, and suggested to the assembly that it would be better to clinch it

with presents, and that as soon as possible. An envoy accordingly was sent off early in October, who was supposed to have great influence among the western tribes. This was one George Croghan, a veteran trader, shrewd and sagacious, who had been frequently to the Ohio country with pack-horses and followers, and made himself popular among the Indians by dispensing presents with a lavish hand. He was accompanied by Andrew Montour, a Canadian of half Indian descent, who was to act as interpreter. They were provided with a small present for the emergency; but were to convoke a meeting of all the tribes at Logstown, on the Ohio, early in the ensuing spring, to receive an ample present which would be provided by the assembly.

It was some time later in the same autumn that the Ohio company brought their plans into operation, and despatched an agent to explore the lands upon the Ohio and its branches as low as the Great Falls, take note of their fitness for cultivation, of the passes of the mountains, the courses and bearings of the rivers, and the strength and disposition of the native tribes. The man chosen for the purpose was Christopher Gist, a hardy pioneer, experienced in woodcraft and Indian life, who had his home on the banks of the Yadkin, near the boundary line of Virginia and North Carolina. He was allowed a woodsman or two for the service of the expedition. He set out on the 31st of October, from the banks of the Potomac, by an Indian path which the hunters had pointed out, leading from Wills' Creek, since called Fort Cumberland, to the Ohio. Indian paths and buffalo tracks

are the primitive highways of the wilderness. Passing the Juniata, he crossed the ridges of the Allegany, arrived at Shannopin, a Delaware village on the south-east side of the Ohio, or rather of that upper branch of it, now called the Allegany, swam his horses across that river, and descending along its valley arrived at Logstown, an important Indian village a little below the site of the present city of Pittsburg. Here usually resided Tanacharisson, a Seneca chief of great note, being head sachem of the mixed tribes who had migrated to the Ohio and its branches. He was generally surnamed the half-king, being subordinate to the Iroquois confederacy. The chief was absent at this time, as were most of his people, it being the hunting season. George Croghan, the envoy from Pennsylvania, with Montour his interpreter, had passed through Logstown a week previously, on his way to the Twightwees and other tribes, on the Miami branch of the Ohio. Scarce any one was to be seen about the village but some of Croghan's rough people, whom he had left behind — "reprobate Indian traders," as Gist terms them. They regarded the latter with a jealous eye, suspecting him of some rivalship in trade, or designs on the Indian lands; and intimated significantly that "he would never go home safe."

Gist knew the meaning of such hints from men of this stamp in the lawless depths of the wilderness; but quieted their suspicions by letting them know that he was on public business, and on good terms with their great man, George Croghan, to whom he despatched a letter. He took his departure from Logstown,

however, as soon as possible, preferring, as he said, the solitude of the wilderness to such company.

At Beaver Creek, a few miles below the village, he left the river and struck into the interior of the present State of Ohio. Here he overtook George Croghan at Muskingum, a town of Wyandots and Mingoes. He had ordered all the traders in his employ who were scattered among the Indian villages, to rally at this town, where he had hoisted the English flag over his residence, and over that of the sachem. This was in consequence of the hostility of the French who had recently captured, in the neighborhood, three white men in the employ of Frazier, an Indian trader, and had carried them away prisoners to Canada.

Gist was well received by the people of Muskingum. They were indignant at the French violation of their territories, and the capture of their "English brothers." They had not forgotten the conduct of Celeron de Bienville in the previous year, and the mysterious plates which he had nailed against trees and sunk in the ground. "If the French claim the rivers which run into the lakes," said they, "those which run into the Ohio belong to us and to our brothers the English." And they were anxious that Gist should settle among them, and build a fort for their mutual defence.

A council of the nation was now held, in which Gist invited them, in the name of the Governor of Virginia, to visit that province, where a large present of goods awaited them, sent by their father, the great king, over the water to his Ohio children.

The invitation was graciously received, but no answer could be given until a grand council of the western tribes had been held, which was to take place at Logstown in the ensuing spring.

Similar results attended visits made by Gist and Croghan to the Delawares and the Shawnees at their villages about the Scioto River; all promised to be at the gathering at Logstown. From the Shawnee village, near the mouth of the Scioto, the two emissaries shaped their course north two hundred miles, crossed the Great Moneami, or Miami River, on a raft, swimming their horses; and on the 17th of February arrived at the Indian town of Piqua.

These journeyings had carried Gist about a wide extent of country beyond the Ohio. It was rich and level, watered with streams and rivulets, and clad with noble forests of hickory, walnut, ash, poplar, sugar-maple, and wild cherry trees. Occasionally there were spacious plains covered with wild rye; natural meadows, with blue grass and clover; and buffaloes, thirty and forty at a time, grazing on them, as in a cultivated pasture. Deer, elk, and wild turkeys abounded. "Nothing is wanted but cultivation," said Gist, "to make this a most delightful country." Cultivation has since proved the truth of his words. The country thus described is the present State of Ohio.

Piqua, where Gist and Croghan had arrived, was the principal town of the Twightwees or Miamis; the most powerful confederacy of the West, combining four tribes, and extending its influence even beyond the Mississippi. A king or sachem of one or other of the different tribes presided over the whole. The

head chief at present was the king of the Piankeshas.

At this town Croghan formed a treaty of alliance in the name of the Governor of Pennsylvania with two of the Miami tribes. And Gist was promised by the king of the Piankeshas that the chiefs of the various tribes would attend the meeting at Logstown to make a treaty with Virginia.

In the height of these demonstrations of friendship, two Ottawas entered the council-house, announcing themselves as envoys from the French Governor of Canada to seek a renewal of ancient alliance. They were received with all due ceremonial; for none are more ceremonious than the Indians. The French colors were set up beside the English, and the ambassadors opened their mission. "Your father, the French king," said they, "remembering his children on the Ohio, has sent them these two kegs of milk," here, with great solemnity, they deposited two kegs of brandy, — "and this tobacco;": — here they deposited a roll ten pounds in weight. "He has made a clean road for you to come and see him and his officers; and urges you to come, assuring you that all past differences will be forgotten."

The Piankesha chief replied in the same figurative style. "It is true our father has sent for us several times, and has said the road was clear; but I understand it is not clear — it is foul and bloody, and the French have made it so. We have cleared a road for our brothers, the English; the French have made it bad, and have taken some of our brothers prisoners. This we consider as done to ourselves." So saying, he turned his back upon the ambassadors,

and stalked out of the council-house.

In the end the ambassadors were assured that the tribes of the Ohio and the Six Nations were hand in hand with their brothers, the English; and should war ensue with the French, they were ready to meet it.

So the French colors were taken down; the "kegs of milk" and roll of tobacco were rejected; the grand council broke up with a war-dance, and the ambassadors departed, weeping and howling, and predicting ruin to the Miamis.

When Gist returned to the Shawnee town, near the mouth of the Scioto, and reported to his Indian friends there the alliance he had formed with the Miami confederacy, there was great feasting and speech-making, and firing of guns. He had now happily accomplished the chief object of his mission — nothing remained but to descend the Ohio to the Great Falls. This, however, he was cautioned not to do. A large party of Indians, allies of the French, were hunting in that neighborhood, who might kill or capture him. He crossed the river, attended only by a lad as a travelling companion and aid, and proceeded cautiously down the east side until within fifteen miles of the Falls. Here he came upon traps newly set, and Indian footprints not a day old; and heard the distant report of guns. The story of Indian hunters then was true. He was in a dangerous neighborhood. The savages might come upon the tracks of his horses, or hear the bells put about their necks, when turned loose in the wilderness to graze.

Abandoning all idea, therefore, of visiting the Falls, and

contenting himself with the information concerning them which he had received from others, he shaped his course on the 18th of March for the Cuttawa, or Kentucky River. From the top of a mountain in the vicinity he had a view to the southwest as far as the eye could reach, over a vast woodland country in the fresh garniture of spring, and watered by abundant streams; but as yet only the hunting-ground of savage tribes, and the scene of their sanguinary combats. In a word, Kentucky lay spread out before him in all its wild magnificence; long before it was beheld by Daniel Boone.

For six weeks was this hardy pioneer making his toilful way up the valley of the Cuttawa, or Kentucky River, to the banks of the Blue Stone; often checked by precipices, and obliged to seek fords at the heads of tributary streams; and happy when he could find a buffalo path broken through the tangled forests, or worn into the everlasting rocks.

On the 1st of May he climbed a rock sixty feet high, crowning a lofty mountain, and had a distant view of the great Kanawha, breaking its way through a vast sierra; crossing that river on a raft of his own construction, he had many more weary days before him, before he reached his frontier abode on the banks of the Yadkin. He arrived there in the latter part of May, but there was no one to welcome the wanderer home. There had been an Indian massacre in the neighborhood, and he found his house silent and deserted. His heart sank within him, until an old man whom he met near the place assured him his family were safe, having fled

for refuge to a settlement thirty-five miles off, on the banks of the Roanoke. There he rejoined them on the following day.

While Gist had been making his painful way homeward, the two Ottawa ambassadors had returned to Fort Sandusky, bringing word to the French that their flag had been struck in the council-house at Piqua, and their friendship rejected and their hostility defied by the Miamis. They informed them also of the gathering of the western tribes that was to take place at Logstown, to conclude a treaty with the Virginians.

It was a great object with the French to prevent this treaty, and to spirit up the Ohio Indians against the English. This they hoped to effect through the agency of one Captain Joncaire, a veteran diplomatist of the wilderness, whose character and story deserve a passing notice.

He had been taken prisoner when quite young by the Iroquois, and adopted into one of their tribes. This was the making of his fortune. He had grown up among them, acquired their language, adapted himself to their habits, and was considered by them as one of themselves. On returning to civilized life he became a prime instrument in the hands of the Canadian government, for managing and cajoling the Indians. Sometimes he was an ambassador to the Iroquois; sometimes a mediator between the jarring tribes; sometimes a leader of their warriors when employed by the French. When in 1728 the Delawares and Shawnees migrated to the banks of the Ohio, Joncaire was the agent who followed them, and prevailed on them to consider

themselves under French protection. When the French wanted to get a commanding site for a post on the Iroquois lands, near Niagara, Joncaire was the man to manage it. He craved a situation where he might put up a wigwam, and dwell among his Iroquois brethren. It was granted of course, "for was he not a son of the tribe — was he not one of themselves?" By degrees his wigwam grew into an important trading post; ultimately it became Fort Niagara. Years and years had elapsed; he had grown gray in Indian diplomacy, and was now sent once more to maintain French sovereignty over the valley of the Ohio.

He appeared at Logstown accompanied by another Frenchman, and forty Iroquois warriors. He found an assemblage of the western tribes, feasting and rejoicing, and firing of guns, for George Croghan and Montour the interpreter were there, and had been distributing presents on behalf of the Governor of Pennsylvania.

Joncaire was said to have the wit of a Frenchman, and the eloquence of an Iroquois. He made an animated speech to the chiefs in their own tongue, the gist of which was that their father Onontio (that is to say, the Governor of Canada) desired his children of the Ohio to turn away the Indian traders, and never to deal with them again on pain of his displeasure; so saying, he laid down a wampum belt of uncommon size, by way of emphasis to his message.

For once his eloquence was of no avail; a chief rose indignantly, shook his finger in his face, and stamping on the

ground, "This is our land," said he. "What right has Onontio here? The English are our brothers. They shall live among us as long as one of us is alive. We will trade with them, and not with you;" and so saying he rejected the belt of wampum.

Joncaire returned to an advanced post recently established on the upper part of the river, whence he wrote to the Governor of Pennsylvania: "The Marquis de la Jonquiere, Governor of New France, having ordered me to watch that the English make no treaty in the Ohio country, I have signified to the traders of your government to retire. You are not ignorant that all these lands belong to the King of France, and that the English have no right to trade in them." He concluded by reiterating the threat made two years previously by Celeron de Bienville against all intruding fur traders.

In the mean time, in the face of all these protests and menaces, Mr. Gist, under sanction of the Virginia Legislature, proceeded in the same year to survey the lands within the grant of the Ohio company, lying on the south side of the Ohio river, as far down as the great Kanawha. An old Delaware sachem, meeting him while thus employed, propounded a somewhat puzzling question. "The French," said he, "claim all the land on one side of the Ohio, the English claim all the land on the other side — now where does the Indians' land lie?"

Poor savages! Between their "fathers," the French, and their "brothers," the English, they were in a fair way of being most lovingly shared out of the whole country.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS FOR HOSTILITIES — WASHINGTON APPOINTED DISTRICT ADJUTANT GENERAL — MOUNT VERNON A SCHOOL OF ARMS — ADJUTANT MUSE A VETERAN CAMPAIGNER — JACOB VAN BRAAM THE MASTER OF FENCE — ILL HEALTH OF WASHINGTON'S BROTHER LAWRENCE — VOYAGE WITH HIM TO THE WEST INDIES — SCENES AT BARBADOES — TROPICAL FRUITS — BEEFSTEAK AND TRIPE CLUB — RETURN HOME OF WASHINGTON — DEATH OF LAWRENCE.

The French now prepared for hostile contingencies. They launched an armed vessel of unusual size on Lake Ontario; fortified their trading house at Niagara; strengthened their outposts, and advanced others on the upper waters of the Ohio. A stir of warlike preparation was likewise to be observed among the British colonies. It was evident that the adverse claims to the disputed territories, if pushed home, could only be settled by the stern arbitrament of the sword.

In Virginia, especially, the war spirit was manifest. The province was divided into military districts, each having an adjutant-general, with the rank of major, and the pay of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, whose duty was to attend to the

organization and equipment of the militia.

Such an appointment was sought by Lawrence Washington for his brother George. It shows what must have been the maturity of mind of the latter, and the confidence inspired by his judicious conduct and aptness for business, that the post should not only be sought for him, but readily obtained; though he was yet but nineteen years of age. He proved himself worthy of the appointment.

He now set about preparing himself, with his usual method and assiduity, for his new duties. Virginia had among its floating population some military relics of the late Spanish war. Among these was a certain Adjutant Muse, a Westmoreland volunteer, who had served with Lawrence Washington in the campaigns in the West Indies, and had been with him in the attack on Carthagena. He now undertook to instruct his brother George in the art of war; lent him treatises on military tactics; put him through the manual exercise, and gave him some idea of evolutions in the field. Another of Lawrence's campaigning comrades was Jacob Van Braam, a Dutchman by birth; a soldier of fortune of the Dalgetty order; who had been in the British army, but was now out of service, and, professing to be a complete master of fence, recruited his slender purse in this time of military excitement, by giving the Virginian youth lessons in the sword exercise.

Under the instructions of these veterans Mount Vernon, from being a quiet rural retreat, where Washington, three years

previously, had indited love ditties to his "lowland beauty," was suddenly transformed into a school of arms, as he practised the manual exercise with Adjutant Muse, or took lessons on the broadsword from Van Braam.

His martial studies, however, were interrupted for a time by the critical state of his brother's health. The constitution of Lawrence had always been delicate, and he had been obliged repeatedly to travel for a change of air. There were now pulmonary symptoms of a threatening nature, and by advice of his physicians he determined to pass a winter in the West Indies, taking with him his favorite brother George as a companion.

They accordingly sailed for Barbadoes on the 28th of September, 1751. George kept a journal of the voyage with logbook brevity; recording the wind and weather, but no events worth citation. They landed at Barbadoes on the 3d of November. The resident physician of the place gave a favorable report of Lawrence's case, and held out hopes of a cure. The brothers were delighted with the aspect of the country, as they drove out in the cool of the evening, and beheld on all sides fields of sugar cane, and Indian corn, and groves of tropical trees, in full fruit and foliage.

They took up their abode at a house pleasantly situated about a mile from town, commanding an extensive prospect of sea and land, including Carlyle bay and its shipping, and belonging to Captain Crofton, commander of James Fort.

Barbadoes had its theatre, at which Washington witnessed for

the first time a dramatic representation, a species of amusement of which he afterwards became fond. It was in the present instance the doleful tragedy of George Barnwell. "The character of Barnwell, and several others," notes he in his journal, "were said to be well performed. There was music adapted and regularly conducted." A safe but abstemious criticism.

Among the hospitalities of the place the brothers were invited to the house of a Judge Maynards, to dine with an association of the first people of the place, who met at each other's house alternately every Saturday, under the incontestably English title of "The Beefsteak and Tripe Club." Washington notes with admiration the profusion of tropical fruits with which the table was loaded, "the granadilla, sapadella, pomegranate, sweet orange, water-lemon, forbidden fruit, and guava." The homely prosaic beefsteak and tripe must have contrasted strangely, though sturdily, with these magnificent poetical fruits of the tropics. But John Bull is faithful to his native habits and native dishes, whatever may be the country or clime, and would set up a chop-house at the very gates of paradise.

The brothers had scarcely been a fortnight at the island when George was taken down by a severe attack of small-pox. Skilful medical treatment, with the kind attentions of friends, and especially of his brother, restored him to health in about three weeks; but his face always remained slightly marked.

After his recovery he made excursions about the island, noticing its soil, productions, fortifications, public works, and the

manners of its inhabitants. While admiring the productiveness of the sugar plantations, he was shocked at the spendthrift habits of the planters, and their utter want of management.

"How wonderful," writes he, "that such people should be in debt, and not be able to indulge themselves in all the luxuries, as well as the necessaries of life. Yet so it happens. Estates are often alienated for debts. How persons coming to estates of two, three, and four hundred acres can want, is to me most wonderful." How much does this wonder speak for his own scrupulous principle of always living within compass.

The residence at Barbadoes failed to have the anticipated effect on the health of Lawrence, and he determined to seek the sweet climate of Bermuda in the spring. He felt the absence from his wife, and it was arranged that George should return to Virginia, and bring her out to meet him at that island. Accordingly, on the 22d of December, George set sail in the Industry, bound to Virginia, where he arrived on the 1st February, 1752, after five weeks of stormy winter seafaring.

Lawrence remained through the winter at Barbadoes; but the very mildness of the climate relaxed and enervated him. He felt the want of the bracing winter weather to which he had been accustomed. Even the invariable beauty of the climate; the perpetual summer, wearied the restless invalid. "This is the finest island of the West Indies," said he; "but I own no place can please me without a change of seasons. We soon tire of the same prospect." A consolatory truth for the inhabitants of more

capricious climes.

Still some of the worst symptoms of his disorder had disappeared, and he seemed to be slowly recovering; but the nervous restlessness and desire of change, often incidental to his malady, had taken hold of him, and early in March he hastened to Bermuda. He had come too soon. The keen air of early spring brought on an aggravated return of his worst symptoms. "I have now got to my last refuge," writes he to a friend, "where I must receive my final sentence, which at present Dr. Forbes will not pronounce. He leaves me, however, I think, like a criminal condemned, though not without hopes of reprieve. But this I am to obtain by meritoriously abstaining from flesh of every sort, all strong liquors, and by riding as much as I can bear. These are the only terms on which I am to hope for life."

He was now afflicted with painful indecision, and his letters perplexed his family, leaving them uncertain as to his movements, and at a loss how to act. At one time he talked of remaining a year at Bermuda, and wrote to his wife to come out with George and rejoin him there; but the very same letter shows his irresolution and uncertainty, for he leaves her coming to the decision of herself and friends. As to his own movements, he says, "Six weeks will determine me what to resolve on. Forbes advises the south of France, or else Barbadoes." The very next letter, written shortly afterwards in a moment of despondency, talks of the possibility of "hurrying home to his grave!"

The last was no empty foreboding. He did indeed hasten back,

and just reached Mount Vernon in time to die under his own roof, surrounded by his family and friends, and attended in his last moments by that brother on whose manly affection his heart seemed to repose. His death took place on the 26th July, 1752, when but thirty-four years of age. He was a noble-spirited, pure-minded, accomplished gentleman; honored by the public, and beloved by his friends. The paternal care ever manifested by him for his youthful brother, George, and the influence his own character and conduct must have had upon him in his ductile years, should link their memories together in history, and endear the name of Lawrence Washington to every American.

Lawrence left a wife and an infant daughter to inherit his ample estates. In case his daughter should die without issue, the estate of Mount Vernon, and other lands specified in his will, were to be enjoyed by her mother during her lifetime, and at her death to be inherited by his brother George. The latter was appointed one of the executors of the will; but such was the implicit confidence reposed in his judgment and integrity, that, although he was but twenty years of age, the management of the affairs of the deceased were soon devolved upon him almost entirely. It is needless to say that they were managed with consummate skill and scrupulous fidelity.

CHAPTER VII

COUNCIL OF THE OHIO TRIBES AT LOGSTOWN — TREATY WITH THE ENGLISH — GIST'S SETTLEMENT — SPEECHES OF THE HALF-KING AND THE FRENCH COMMANDANT — FRENCH AGGRESSIONS — THE RUINS OF PIQUA — WASHINGTON SENT ON A MISSION TO THE FRENCH COMMANDER — JACOB VAN BRAAM, HIS INTERPRETER — CHRISTOPHER GIST, HIS GUIDE — HALT AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE MONONGAHELA AND ALLEGANY — PROJECTED FORT — SHINGISS, A DELAWARE SACHEM — LOGSTOWN — THE HALF KING — INDIAN COUNCILS — INDIAN DIPLOMACY — RUMORS CONCERNING JONCAIRE — INDIAN ESCORTS — THE HALF-KING, JESKAKAKE AND WHITE THUNDER.

The meeting of the Ohio tribes, Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes, to form a treaty of alliance with Virginia, took place at Logstown, at the appointed time. The chiefs of the Six Nations declined to attend. "It is not our custom," said they proudly, "to meet to treat of affairs in the woods and weeds. If the Governor of Virginia wants to speak with us, and deliver us a present from our father (the King), we will meet him at Albany, where we expect the Governor of New York will be present." [Footnote:

Letter of Col. Johnson to Gov. Clinton. — Doc. Hist. N. Y. ii., 624.]

At Logstown, Colonel Fry and two other commissioners from Virginia, concluded a treaty with the tribes above named; by which the latter engaged not to molest any English settlers south of the Ohio. Tanacharisson, the half-king, now advised that his brothers of Virginia should build a strong house at the fork of the Monongahela, to resist the designs of the French. Mr. Gist was accordingly instructed to lay out a town and build a fort at Chartier's Creek, on the east side of the Ohio, a little below the site of the present city of Pittsburg. He commenced a settlement, also, in a valley just beyond Laurel Hill, not far from the Youghiogeny, and prevailed on eleven families to join him. The Ohio Company, about the same time, established a trading post, well stocked with English goods, at Wills' Creek (now the town of Cumberland).

The Ohio tribes were greatly incensed at the aggressions of the French, who were erecting posts within their territories, and sent deputations to remonstrate, but without effect. The half-king, as chief of the western tribes, repaired to the French post on Lake Erie, where he made his complaint in person.

"Fathers," said he, "you are the disturbers of this land by building towns, and taking the country from us by fraud and force. We kindled a fire a long time since at Montreal, where we desired you to stay and not to come and intrude upon our land. I now advise you to return to that place, for this land is ours.

"If you had come in a peaceable manner, like our brothers the English, we should have traded with you as we do with them; but that you should come and build houses on our land, and take it by force, is what we cannot submit to. Both you and the English are white. We live in a country between you both; the land belongs to neither of you. The Great Being allotted it to us as a residence. So, fathers, I desire you, as I have desired our brothers the English, to withdraw, for I will keep you both at arm's length. Whichever most regards this request, that side will we stand by and consider friends. Our brothers the English have heard this, and I now come to tell it to you, for I am not afraid to order you off this land."

"Child," replied the French commandant, "you talk foolishly. You say this land belongs to you; there is not the black of my nail yours. It is my land, and I will have it, let who will stand up against me. I am not afraid of flies and mosquitoes, for as such I consider the Indians. I tell you that down the river I will go, and build upon it. If it were blocked up I have forces sufficient to burst it open and trample down all who oppose me. My force is as the sand upon the sea-shore. Therefore here is your wampum; I fling it at you."

Tanacharisson returned, wounded at heart, both by the language and the haughty manner of the French commandant. He saw the ruin impending over his race, but looked with hope and trust to the English as the power least disposed to wrong the red man.

French influence was successful in other quarters. Some of the Indians who had been friendly to the English showed signs of alienation. Others menaced hostilities. There were reports that the French were ascending the Mississippi from Louisiana. France, it was said, intended to connect Louisiana and Canada by a chain of military posts, and hem the English within the Allegany Mountains.

The Ohio Company complained loudly to the Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, of the hostile conduct of the French and their Indian allies. They found in Dinwiddie a ready listener; he was a stockholder in the company.

A commissioner, Captain William Trent, was sent to expostulate with the French commander on the Ohio for his aggressions on the territory of his Britannic majesty; he bore presents also of guns, powder, shot, and clothing for the friendly Indians.

Trent was not a man of the true spirit for a mission to the frontier. He stopped a short time at Logstown, though the French were one hundred and fifty miles further up the river, and directed his course to Piqua, the great town of the Twightwees, where Gist and Croghan had been so well received by the Miamis, and the French flag struck in the council house. All now was reversed. The place had been attacked by the French and Indians; the Miamis defeated with great loss; the English traders taken prisoners; the Piankesha chief, who had so proudly turned his back upon the Ottawa ambassadors, had been sacrificed by

the hostile savages, and the French flag hoisted in triumph on the ruins of the town. The whole aspect of affairs was so threatening on the frontier, that Trent lost heart, and returned home without accomplishing his errand.

Governor Dinwiddie now looked round for a person more fitted to fulfil a mission which required physical strength and moral energy; a courage to cope with savages, and a sagacity to negotiate with white men. Washington was pointed out as possessed of those requisites. It is true he was not yet twenty-two years of age, but public confidence in his judgment and abilities had been manifested a second time, by renewing his appointment of adjutant-general, and assigning him the northern division. He was acquainted too with the matters in litigation, having been in the bosom councils of his deceased brother. His woodland experience fitted him for an expedition through the wilderness; and his great discretion and self-command for a negotiation with wily commanders and fickle savages. He was accordingly chosen for the expedition.

By his letter of instructions he was directed to repair to Logstown, and hold a communication with Tanacharisson, Monacatoocha, alias Scarooyadi, the next in command, and the other sachems of the mixed tribes friendly to the English; inform them of the purport of his errand, and request an escort to the head-quarters of the French commander. To that commander he was to deliver his credentials, and the letter of Governor Dinwiddie, and demand an answer in the name of his Britannic

majesty; but not to wait for it beyond a week. On receiving it, he was to request a sufficient escort to protect him on his return.

He was, moreover, to acquaint himself with the numbers and force of the French stationed on the Ohio and in its vicinity; their capability of being reinforced from Canada; the forts they had erected; where situated, how garrisoned; the object of their advancing into those parts, and how they were likely to be supported.

Washington set off from Williamsburg on the 30th of October (1753), the very day on which he received his credentials. At Fredericksburg he engaged his old "master of fence," Jacob Van Braam, to accompany him as interpreter; though it would appear from subsequent circumstances, that the veteran swordsman was but indifferently versed either in French or English.

Having provided himself at Alexandria with necessaries for the journey, he proceeded to Winchester, then on the frontier, where he procured horses, tents, and other travelling equipments, and then pushed on by a road newly opened to Wills' Creek (town of Cumberland), where he arrived on the 14th of November.

Here he met with Mr. Gist, the intrepid pioneer, who had explored the Ohio in the employ of the company, and whom he engaged to accompany and pilot him in the present expedition. He secured the services also of one John Davidson as Indian interpreter, and of four frontiersmen, two of whom were Indian traders. With this little band, and his swordsman and interpreter, Jacob Van Braam, he set forth on the 15th of November, through

a wild country, rendered almost impassable by recent storms of rain and snow.

At the mouth of Turtle Creek, on the Monongahela, he found John Frazier the Indian trader, some of whose people, as heretofore stated, had been sent off prisoners to Canada. Frazier himself had recently been ejected by the French from the Indian village of Venango, where he had a gunsmith's establishment. According to his account the French general who had commanded on this frontier was dead, and the greater part of the forces were retired into winter quarters.

As the rivers were all swollen so that the horses had to swim them, Washington sent all the baggage down the Monongahela in a canoe under care of two of the men, who had orders to meet him at the confluence of that river with the Allegany, where their united waters form the Ohio.

"As I got down before the canoe," writes he in his journal, "I spent some time in viewing the rivers, and the land at the Fork, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has the absolute command of both rivers. The land at the point is twenty or twenty-five feet above the common surface of the water, and a considerable bottom of flat, well timbered land all around it, very convenient for building. The rivers are each a quarter of a mile or more across, and run here very nearly at right angles; Allegany bearing north-east, and Monongahela south-east. The former of these two is a very rapid and swift-running water, the other deep and still, without any perceptible fall." The Ohio company had

intended to build a fort about two miles from this place, on the south-east side of the river; but Washington gave the fork the decided preference. French engineers of experience proved the accuracy of his military eye, by subsequently choosing it for the site of Fort Duquesne, noted in frontier history.

In this neighborhood lived Shingiss, the king or chief sachem of the Delawares. Washington visited him at his village, to invite him to the council at Logstown. He was one of the greatest warriors of his tribe, and subsequently took up the hatchet at various times against the English, though now he seemed favorably disposed, and readily accepted the invitation.

They arrived at Logstown after sunset on the 24th of November. The half-king was absent at his hunting lodge on Beaver Creek, about fifteen miles distant; but Washington had runners sent out to invite him and all the other chiefs to a grand talk on the following day.

In the morning four French deserters came into the village. They had deserted from a company of one hundred men, sent up from New Orleans with eight canoes laden with provisions. Washington drew from them an account of the French force at New Orleans, and of the forts along the Mississippi, and at the mouth of the Wabash, by which they kept up a communication with the lakes; all which he carefully noted down. The deserters were on their way to Philadelphia, conducted by a Pennsylvania trader.

About three o'clock the half-king arrived. Washington had

a private conversation with him in his tent, through Davidson, the interpreter. He found him intelligent, patriotic, and proudly tenacious of his territorial rights. We have already cited from Washington's papers, the account given by this chief in this conversation, of his interview with the late French commander. He stated, moreover, that the French had built two forts, differing in size, but on the same model, a plan of which he gave, of his own drawing. The largest was on Lake Erie, the other on French Creek, fifteen miles apart, with a waggon road between them. The nearest and levellest way to them was now impassable, lying through large and miry savannas; they would have, therefore, to go by Venango, and it would take five or six sleeps (or days) of good travelling to reach the nearest fort.

On the following morning at nine o'clock, the chiefs assembled at the council house; where Washington, according to his instructions, informed them that he was sent by their brother, the Governor of Virginia, to deliver to the French commandant a letter of great importance, both to their brothers the English and to themselves; and that he was to ask their advice and assistance, and some of their young men to accompany and provide for him on the way, and be his safeguard against the "French Indians" who had taken up the hatchet. He concluded by presenting the indispensable document in Indian diplomacy a string of wampum.

The chiefs, according to etiquette, sat for some moments silent after he had concluded, as if ruminating on what had been said,

or to give him time for further remark.

The half-king then rose and spoke in behalf of the tribes, assuring him that they considered the English and themselves brothers, and one people; and that they intended to return the French the "speech-belts," or wampums, which the latter had sent them. This, in Indian diplomacy, is a renunciation of all friendly relations. An escort would be furnished to Washington composed of Mingoes, Shannoahs, and Delawares, in token of the love and loyalty of those several tribes; but three days would be required to prepare for the journey.

Washington remonstrated against such delay; but was informed, that an affair of such moment, where three speech-belts were to be given up, was not to be entered into without due consideration. Besides, the young men who were to form the escort were absent hunting, and the half-king could not suffer the party to go without sufficient protection. His own French speech-belt, also, was at his hunting lodge, where he must go in quest of it. Moreover, the Shannoah chiefs were yet absent and must be waited for. In short, Washington had his first lesson in Indian diplomacy, which for punctilio, ceremonial, and secret manoeuvring, is equal at least to that of civilized life. He soon found that to urge a more speedy departure would be offensive to Indian dignity and decorum, so he was fain to await the gathering together of the different chiefs with their speech-belts.

In fact there was some reason for all this caution. Tidings had reached the sachems that Captain Joncaire had called a meeting

at Venango, of the Mingoes, Delawares, and other tribes, and made them a speech, informing them that the French, for the present, had gone into winter quarters, but intended to descend the river in great force, and fight the English in the spring. He had advised them, therefore, to stand aloof, for should they interfere, the French and English would join, cut them all off, and divide their land between them.

With these rumors preying on their minds, the half-king and three other chiefs waited on Washington in his tent in the evening, and after representing that they had complied with all the requisitions of the Governor of Virginia, endeavored to draw from the youthful ambassador the true purport of his mission to the French commandant. Washington had anticipated an inquiry of the kind, knowing how natural it was that these poor people should regard, with anxiety and distrust, every movement of two formidable powers thus pressing upon them from opposite sides, he managed, however, to answer them in such a manner as to allay their solicitude without transcending the bounds of diplomatic secrecy.

After a day or two more of delay and further consultations in the council house, the chiefs determined that but three of their number should accompany the mission, as a greater number might awaken the suspicions of the French. Accordingly, on the 30th of November, Washington set out for the French post, having his usual party augmented by an Indian hunter, and being accompanied by the half-king, an old Shannoah sachem

named Jeskakake, and another chief, sometimes called Belt of Wampum, from being the keeper of the speech-belts, but generally bearing the sounding appellation of White Thunder.

CHAPTER VIII

ARRIVAL AT VENANGO — CAPTAIN JONCAIRE — FRONTIER REVELRY — DISCUSSIONS OVER THE BOTTLE — THE OLD DIPLOMATIST AND THE YOUNG — THE HALF-KING, JESKAKAKE, AND WHITE THUNDER STAGGERED — THE SPEECH-BELT — DEPARTURE — LA FORCE, THE WILY COMMISSARY — FORT AT FRENCH CREEK — THE CHEVALIER LEGARDEUR DE ST. PIERRE, KNIGHT OF ST. LOUIS — CAPTAIN REPARTI — TRANSACTIONS AT THE FORT — ATTEMPTS TO SEDUCE THE SACHEMS — MISCHIEF BREWING ON THE FRONTIER — DIFFICULTIES AND DELAYS IN PARTING — DESCENT OF FRENCH CREEK — ARRIVAL AT VENANGO.

Although the distance to Venango, by the route taken, was not above seventy miles, yet such was the inclemency of the weather and the difficulty of travelling, that Washington and his party did not arrive there until the 4th of December. The French colors were flying at a house whence John Frazier, the English trader, had been driven. Washington repaired thither, and inquired of three French officers whom he saw there where the commandant resided. One of them promptly replied that he "had the command of the Ohio." It was, in fact, the redoubtable Captain Joncaire,

the veteran intriguer of the frontier. On being apprised, however, of the nature of Washington's errand, he informed him that there was a general officer at the next fort, where he advised him to apply for an answer to the letter of which he was the bearer.

In the mean time, he invited Washington and his party to a supper at head quarters. It proved a jovial one, for Joncaire appears to have been somewhat of a boon companion, and there is always ready though rough hospitality in the wilderness. It is true, Washington, for so young a man, may not have had the most convivial air, but there may have been a moist look of promise in the old soldier Van Braam.

Joncaire and his brother officers pushed the bottle briskly. "The wine," says Washington, "as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely. They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by G — they would do it; for that although they were sensible the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking. They pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a discovery made by one La Salle sixty years ago, and the rise of this expedition is to prevent our settling on the river or the waters of it, as they heard of some families moving out in order thereto."

Washington retained his sobriety and his composure throughout all the rodomontade and bacchanalian outbreak of

the mercurial Frenchmen; leaving the task of pledging them to his master of fence, Van Braam, who was not a man to flinch from potations. He took careful note, however, of all their revelations, and collected a variety of information concerning the French forces; how and where they were distributed; the situations and distances of their forts, and their means and mode of obtaining supplies. If the veteran diplomatist of the wilderness had intended this revel for a snare, he was completely foiled by his youthful competitor.

On the following day there was no travelling on account of excessive rain. Joncaire, in the mean time, having discovered that the half-king was with the mission, expressed his surprise that he had not accompanied it to his quarters on the preceding day. Washington, in truth, had feared to trust the sachem within the reach of the politic Frenchman. Nothing would do now but Joncaire must have the sachems at head-quarters. Here his diplomacy was triumphant. He received them with open arms. He was enraptured to see them. His Indian brothers! How could they be so near without coming to visit him? He made them presents; but, above all, plied them so potently with liquor, that the poor half-king, Jeskakake, and White Thunder forgot all about their wrongs, their speeches, their speech-belts, and all the business they had come upon; paid no heed to the repeated cautions of their English friends, and were soon in a complete state of frantic extravagance or drunken oblivion.

The next day the half-king made his appearance at

Washington's tent, perfectly sober and very much crestfallen. He declared, however, that he still intended to make his speech to the French, and offered to rehearse it on the spot; but Washington advised him not to waste his ammunition on inferior game like Joncaire and his comrades, but to reserve it for the commandant. The sachem was not to be persuaded. Here, he said, was the place of the council fire, where they were accustomed to transact their business with the French; and as to Joncaire, he had all the management of French affairs with the Indians.

Washington was fain to attend the council fire and listen to the speech. It was much the same in purport as that which he had made to the French general, and he ended by offering to return the French speech-belt; but this Joncaire refused to receive, telling him to carry it to the commander at the fort.

All that day and the next was the party kept at Venango by the stratagems of Joncaire and his emissaries to detain and seduce the sachems. It was not until 12 o'clock on the 7th of December, that Washington was able to extricate them out of their clutches and commence his journey.

A French commissary by the name of La Force, and three soldiers, set off in company with him. La Force went as if on ordinary business, but he proved one of the most active, daring, and mischief-making of those anomalous agents employed by the French among the Indian tribes. It is probable that he was at the bottom of many of the perplexities experienced by Washington at Venango, and now travelled with him for the

prosecution of his wiles. He will be found, hereafter, acting a more prominent part, and ultimately reaping the fruit of his evil doings.

After four days of weary travel through snow and rain, and mire and swamp, the party reached the fort. It was situated on a kind of island on the west fork of French Creek, about fifteen miles south of Lake Erie, and consisted of four houses, forming a hollow square, defended by bastions made of pallisades twelve feet high, picketed, and pierced for cannon and small arms. Within the bastions were a guard-house, chapel, and other buildings, and outside were stables, a smith's forge, and log-houses covered with bark, for the soldiers.

On the death of the late general, the fort had remained in charge of one Captain Reparti until within a week past, when the Chevalier Legardeur de St. Pierre had arrived, and taken command.

The reception of Washington at the fort was very different from the unceremonious one experienced at the outpost of Joncaire and his convivial messmates. When he presented himself at the gate, accompanied by his interpreter, Van Braam, he was met by the officer second in command and conducted in due military form to his superior; an ancient and silver-haired chevalier of the military order of St. Louis, courteous but ceremonious, mingling the polish of the French gentleman of the old school with the precision of the soldier.

Having announced his errand through his interpreter, Van

Braam, Washington offered his credentials and the letter of Governor Dinwiddie, and was disposed to proceed at once to business with the prompt frankness of a young man unhackneyed in diplomacy. The chevalier, however, politely requested him to retain the documents in his possession until his predecessor, Captain Reparti, should arrive, who was hourly expected from the next post.

At two o'clock the captain arrived. The letter and its accompanying documents were then offered again, and received in due form, and the chevalier and his officers retired with them into a private apartment, where the captain, who understood a little English, officiated as translator. The translation being finished, Washington was requested to walk in and bring his translator Van Braam, with him, to peruse and correct it, which he did.

In this letter, Dinwiddie complained of the intrusion of French forces into the Ohio country, erecting forts and making settlements in the western parts of the colony of Virginia, so notoriously known to be the property of the crown of Great Britain. He inquired by whose authority and instructions the French Commander-general had marched this force from Canada, and made this invasion; intimating that his own action would be regulated by the answer he should receive, and the tenor of the commission with which he was honored. At the same time he required of the commandant his peaceable departure, and that he would forbear to prosecute a purpose "so interruptive of the

harmony and good understanding which his majesty was desirous to continue and cultivate with the most catholic king."

The latter part of the letter related to the youthful envoy. "I persuade myself you will receive and entertain Major Washington with the candor and politeness natural to your nation, and it will give me the greatest satisfaction if you can return him with an answer suitable to my wishes for a long and lasting peace between us."

The two following days were consumed in councils of the chevalier and his officers over the letter and the necessary reply. Washington occupied himself in the mean time in observing and taking notes of the plan, dimensions, and strength of the fort, and of every thing about it. He gave orders to his people, also, to take an exact account of the canoes in readiness, and others in the process of construction, for the conveyance of troops down the river in the ensuing spring.

As the weather continued stormy, with much snow, and the horses were daily losing strength, he sent them down, unladen, to Venango, to await his return by water. In the mean time, he discovered that busy intrigues were going on to induce the half-king and the other sachems to abandon him, and renounce all friendship with the English. Upon learning this, he urged the chiefs to deliver up their "speech-belts" immediately, as they had promised, thereby shaking off all dependence upon the French. They accordingly pressed for an audience that very evening. A private one was at length granted them by the commander, in

presence of one or two of his officers. The half-king reported the result of it to Washington. The venerable but astute chevalier cautiously evaded the acceptance of the proffered wampum; made many professions of love and friendship, and said he wished to live in peace and trade amicably with the tribes of the Ohio, in proof of which he would send down some goods immediately for them to Logstown.

As Washington understood, privately, that an officer was to accompany the man employed to convey these goods, he suspected that the real design was to arrest and bring off all straggling English traders they might meet with. What strengthened this opinion was a frank avowal which had been made to him by the chevalier, that he had orders to capture every British subject who should attempt to trade upon the Ohio or its waters.

Captain Reparti, also, in reply to his inquiry as to what had been done with two Pennsylvania traders, who had been taken with all their goods, informed him that they had been sent to Canada, but had since returned home. He had stated, furthermore, that during the time he held command, a white boy had been carried captive past the fort by a party of Indians, who had with them, also, two or three white men's scalps.

All these circumstances showed him the mischief that was brewing in these parts, and the treachery and violence that pervaded the frontier, and made him the more solicitous to accomplish his mission successfully, and conduct his little band

in safety out of a wily neighborhood.

On the evening of the 14th, the Chevalier de St. Pierre delivered to Washington his sealed reply to the letter of Governor Dinwiddie. The purport of previous conversations with the chevalier, and the whole complexion of affairs on the frontier, left no doubt of the nature of that reply.

The business of his mission being accomplished, Washington prepared on the 15th to return by water to Venango; but a secret influence was at work which retarded every movement.

"The commandant," writes he, "ordered a plentiful store of liquor and provisions to be put on board our canoes, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every artifice which he could invent to set our Indians at variance with us, to prevent their going until after our departure; presents, rewards, and every thing which could be suggested by him or his officers. I cannot say that ever in my life I suffered so much anxiety as I did in this affair. I saw that every stratagem which the most fruitful brain could invent was practised to win the half-king to their interests, and that leaving him there was giving them the opportunity they aimed at. I went to the half-king, and pressed him in the strongest terms to go; he told me that the commandant would not discharge him until the morning. I then went to the commandant and desired him to do their business, and complained to him of ill treatment; for, keeping them, as they were a part of my company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my journey as much as he could. He

protested he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the cause of their stay; though I soon found it out. He had promised them a present of guns if they would wait until the morning. As I was very much pressed by the Indians to wait this day for them, I consented, on the promise that nothing should hinder them in the morning."

The next morning (16th) the French, in fulfilment of their promise, had to give the present of guns. They then endeavored to detain the sachems with liquor, which at any other time might have prevailed, but Washington reminded the half-king that his royal word was pledged to depart, and urged it upon him so closely that exerting unwonted resolution and self-denial, he turned his back upon the liquor and embarked.

It was rough and laborious navigation. French Creek was swollen and turbulent, and full of floating ice. The frail canoes were several times in danger of being staved to pieces against rocks. Often the voyagers had to leap out and remain in the water half an hour at a time, drawing the canoes over shoals, and at one place to carry them a quarter of a mile across a neck of land, the river being completely dammed by ice. It was not until the 22d that they reached Venango.

Here Washington was obliged, most unwillingly, to part company with the sachems. White Thunder had hurt himself and was ill and unable to walk, and the others determined to remain at Venango for a day or two and convey him down the river in a canoe. There was danger that the smooth-tongued and

convivial Joncaire would avail himself of the interval to ply the poor monarchs of the woods with flattery and liquor. Washington endeavored to put the worthy half-king on his guard, knowing that he had once before shown himself but little proof against the seductions of the bottle. The sachem, however, desired him not to be concerned; he knew the French too well for any thing to engage him in their favor; nothing should shake his faith to his English brothers; and it will be found that in these assurances he was sincere.

CHAPTER IX

RETURN FROM VENANGO — A TRAMP ON FOOT — MURDERING TOWN — THE INDIAN GUIDE — TREACHERY — AN ANXIOUS NIGHT — PERILS ON THE ALLEGANY RIVER — QUEEN ALIQUIPPA — THE OLD WATCH-COAT — RETURN ACROSS THE BLUE RIDGE.

On the 25th of December, Washington and his little party set out by land from Venango on their route homeward. They had a long winter's journey before them, through a wilderness beset with dangers and difficulties. The packhorses, laden with tents, baggage, and provisions, were completely jaded; it was feared they would give out. Washington dismounted, gave up his saddle-horse to aid in transporting the baggage, and requested his companions to do the same. None but the drivers remained in the saddle. He now equipped himself in an Indian hunting-dress, and with Van Braam, Gist, and John Davidson, the Indian interpreter, proceeded on foot.

The cold increased. There was deep snow that froze as it fell. The horses grew less and less capable of travelling. For three days they toiled on slowly and wearily. Washington was impatient to accomplish his journey, and make his report to the governor; he determined, therefore, to hasten some distance in advance of the party, and then strike for the Fork of the Ohio by the

nearest course directly through the woods. He accordingly put the cavalcade under the command of Van Braam, and furnished him with money for expenses; then disencumbering himself of all superfluous clothing, buckling himself up in a watch-coat, strapping his pack on his shoulders, containing his papers and provisions, and taking gun in hand, he left the horses to flounder on, and struck manfully ahead, accompanied only by Mr. Gist, who had equipped himself in like manner.

At night they lit a fire, and "camped" by it in the woods. At two o'clock in the morning they were again on foot, and pressed forward until they struck the south-east fork of Beaver Creek, at a place bearing the sinister name of Murdering Town; probably the scene of some Indian massacre.

Here Washington, in planning his route, had intended to leave the regular path, and strike through the woods for Shannopins Town, two or three miles above the fork of the Ohio, where he hoped to be able to cross the Allegany River on the ice.

At Murdering Town he found a party of Indians, who appeared to have known of his coming, and to have been waiting for him. One of them accosted Mr. Gist, and expressed great joy at seeing him. The wary woodsman regarded him narrowly, and thought he had seen him at Joncaire's. If so, he and his comrades were in the French interest, and their lying in wait boded no good. The Indian was very curious in his inquiries as to when they had left Venango; how they came to be travelling on foot; where they had left their horses, and when it was probable the latter would

reach this place. All these questions increased the distrust of Gist, and rendered him extremely cautious in reply.

The route hence to Shannopins Town lay through a trackless wild, of which the travellers knew nothing; after some consultation, therefore, it was deemed expedient to engage one of the Indians as a guide. He entered upon his duties with alacrity, took Washington's pack upon his back, and led the way by what he said was the most direct course. After travelling briskly for eight or ten miles Washington became fatigued, and his feet were chafed; he thought, too, they were taking a direction too much to the north-east; he came to a halt, therefore, and determined to light a fire, make a shelter of the bark and branches of trees, and encamp there for the night. The Indian demurred; he offered, as Washington was fatigued, to carry his gun, but the latter was too wary to part with his weapon. The Indian now grew churlish. There were Ottawa Indians in the woods, he said, who might be attracted by their fire, and surprise and scalp them; he urged, therefore, that they should continue on: he would take them to his cabin, where they would be safe.

Mr. Gist's suspicions increased, but he said nothing. Washington's also were awakened. They proceeded some distance further: the guide paused and listened. He had heard, he said, the report of a gun toward the north; it must be from his cabin; he accordingly turned his steps in that direction.

Washington began to apprehend an ambuscade of savages. He knew the hostility of many of them to the English, and what a

desirable trophy was the scalp of a white man. The Indian still kept on toward the north; he pretended to hear two whoops — they were from his cabin — it could not be far off.

They went on two miles further, when Washington signified his determination to encamp at the first water they should find. The guide said nothing, but kept doggedly on. After a little while they arrived at an opening in the woods, and emerging from the deep shadows in which they had been travelling, found themselves in a clear meadow, rendered still more light by the glare of the snow upon the ground. Scarcely had they emerged when the Indian, who was about fifteen paces ahead, suddenly turned, levelled his gun, and fired. Washington was startled for an instant, but, feeling that he was not wounded, demanded quickly of Mr. Gist if he was shot. The latter answered in the negative. The Indian in the mean time had run forward, and screened himself behind a large white oak, where he was reloading his gun. They overtook, and seized him. Gist would have put him to death on the spot, but Washington humanely prevented him. They permitted him to finish the loading of his gun; but, after he had put in the ball, took the weapon from him, and let him see that he was under guard.

Arriving at a small stream they ordered the Indian to make a fire, and took turns to watch over the guns. While he was thus occupied, Gist, a veteran woodsman, and accustomed to hold the life of an Indian rather cheap, was somewhat incommoded by the scruples of his youthful commander, which might enable

the savage to carry out some scheme of treachery. He observed to Washington that, since he would not suffer the Indian to be killed, they must manage to get him out of the way, and then decamp with all speed, and travel all night to leave this perfidious neighborhood behind them; but first it was necessary to blind the guide as to their intentions. He accordingly addressed him in a friendly tone, and adverting to the late circumstance, pretended to suppose that he had lost his way, and fired his gun merely as a signal. The Indian, whether deceived or not, readily chimed in with the explanation. He said he now knew the way to his cabin, which was at no great distance. "Well then," replied Gist, "you can go home, and as we are tired we will remain here for the night, and follow your track at daylight. In the mean time here is a cake of bread for you, and you must give us some meat in the morning."

Whatever might have been the original designs of the savage, he was evidently glad to get off. Gist followed him cautiously for a distance, and listened until the sound of his footsteps died away; returning then to Washington, they proceeded about half a mile, made another fire, set their compass and fixed their course by the light of it, then leaving it burning, pushed forward, and travelled as fast as possible all night, so as to gain a fair start should any one pursue them at daylight. Continuing on the next day they never relaxed their speed until nightfall, when they arrived on the banks of the Allegany River, about two miles above Shannopins Town.

Washington had expected to find the river frozen completely

over; it was so only for about fifty yards from either shore, while great quantities of broken ice were driving down the main channel. Trusting that he had out-travelled pursuit, he encamped on the border of the river; still it was an anxious night, and he was up at daybreak to devise some means of reaching the opposite bank. No other mode presented itself than by a raft, and to construct this they had but one poor hatchet. With this they set resolutely to work and labored all day, but the sun went down before their raft was finished. They launched it, however, and getting on board, endeavored to propel it across with setting poles. Before they were half way over the raft became jammed between cakes of ice, and they were in imminent peril. Washington planted his pole on the bottom of the stream, and leaned against it with all his might, to stay the raft until the ice should pass by. The rapid current forced the ice against the pole with such violence that he was jerked into the water, where it was at least ten feet deep, and only saved himself from being swept away and drowned by catching hold of one of the raft logs.

It was now impossible with all their exertions to get to either shore; abandoning the raft therefore, they got upon an island, near which they were drifting. Here they passed the night exposed to intense cold by which the hands and feet of Mr. Gist were frozen. In the morning they found the drift ice wedged so closely together, that they succeeded in getting from the island to the opposite side of the river; and before night were in comfortable

quarters at the house of Frazier, the Indian trader, at the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela.

Here they learned from a war party of Indians that a band of Ottawas, a tribe in the interest of the French, had massacred a whole family of whites on the banks of the great Kanawha River.

At Frazier's they were detained two or three days endeavoring to procure horses. In this interval Washington had again occasion to exercise Indian diplomacy. About three miles distant, at the mouth of the Youghiogeny River, dwelt a female sachem, Queen Aliquippa, as the English called her, whose sovereign dignity had been aggrieved, that the party on their way to the Ohio, had passed near her royal wigwam without paying their respects to her.

Aware of the importance, at this critical juncture, of securing the friendship of the Indians, Washington availed himself of the interruption of his journey, to pay a visit of ceremony to this native princess. Whatever anger she may have felt at past neglect, it was readily appeased by a present of his old watch-coat; and her good graces were completely secured by a bottle of rum, which, he intimates, appeared to be peculiarly acceptable to her majesty.

Leaving Frazier's on the 1st of January, they arrived on the 2d at the residence of Mr. Gist, on the Monongahela. Here they separated, and Washington having purchased a horse, continued his homeward course, passing horses laden with materials and stores for the fort at the fork of the Ohio, and families going out to settle there.

Having crossed the Blue Ridge and stopped one day at Belvoir to rest, he reached Williamsburg on the 16th of January, where he delivered to Governor Dinwiddie the letter of the French commandant, and made him a full report of the events of his mission.

We have been minute in our account of this expedition as it was an early test and development of the various talents and characteristics of Washington.

The prudence, sagacity, resolution, firmness, and self-devotion manifested by him throughout; his admirable tact and self-possession in treating with fickle savages and crafty white men; the soldier's eye with which he had noticed the commanding and defensible points of the country, and every thing that would bear upon military operations; and the hardihood with which he had acquitted himself during a wintry tramp through the wilderness, through constant storms of rain and snow; often sleeping on the ground without a tent in the open air, and in danger from treacherous foes, — all pointed him out, not merely to the governor, but to the public at large, as one eminently fitted, notwithstanding his youth, for important trusts involving civil as well as military duties. It is an expedition that may be considered the foundation of his fortunes. From that moment he was the rising hope of Virginia.

CHAPTER X

REPLY OF THE CHEVALIER DE ST. PIERRE — TRENT'S MISSION TO THE FRONTIER — WASHINGTON RECRUITS TROOPS — DINWIDDIE AND THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES — INDEPENDENT CONDUCT OF THE VIRGINIANS — EXPEDIENTS TO GAIN RECRUITS — JACOB VAN BRAAM IN SERVICE — TOILFUL MARCH TO WILLS' CREEK — CONTRECOEUR AT THE FORK OF THE OHIO — TRENT'S REFRACTORY TROOPS.

The reply of the Chevalier de St. Pierre was such as might have been expected from that courteous, but wary commander. He should transmit, he said, the letter of Governor Dinwiddie to his general, the Marquis du Quesne, "to whom," observed he, "it better belongs than to me to set forth the evidence and reality of the rights of the king, my master, upon the lands situated along the river Ohio, and to contest the pretensions of the King of Great Britain thereto. His answer shall be a law to me. ... As to the summons you send me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey it. Whatever may be your instructions, I am here by virtue of the orders of my general; and I entreat you, sir, not to doubt one moment but that I am determined to conform myself to them with all the exactness and resolution which can be expected from the best officer." ...

"I made it my particular care," adds he, "to receive Mr. Washington with, a distinction suitable to your dignity, as well as his own quality and great merit. I flatter myself that he will do me this justice before you, sir, and that he will signify to you, in the manner I do myself, the profound respect with which I am, sir," &c. [Footnote: London Mag., June, 1754.]

This soldier-like and punctilious letter of the chevalier was considered evasive, and only intended to gain time. The information given by Washington of what he had observed on the frontier convinced Governor Dinwiddie and his council that the French were preparing to descend the Ohio in the spring, and take military possession of the country. Washington's journal was printed, and widely promulgated throughout the colonies and England, and awakened the nation to a sense of the impending danger, and the necessity of prompt measures to anticipate the French movements.

Captain Trent was despatched to the frontier, commissioned to raise a company of one hundred men, march with all speed to the Fork of the Ohio, and finish as soon as possible the fort commenced there by the Ohio Company. He was enjoined to act only on the defensive, but to capture or destroy whoever should oppose the construction of the works, or disturb the settlements. The choice of Captain Trent for this service, notwithstanding his late inefficient expedition, was probably owing to his being brother-in-law to George Croghan, who had grown to be quite a personage of consequence on the frontier, where he had an

establishment or trading-house, and was supposed to have great influence among the western tribes, so as to be able at any time to persuade many of them to take up the hatchet.

Washington was empowered to raise a company of like force at Alexandria; to procure and forward munitions and supplies for the projected fort at the Fork, and ultimately to have command of both companies. When on the frontier he was to take council of George Croghan and Andrew Montour the interpreter, in all matters relating to the Indians, they being esteemed perfect oracles in that department.

Governor Dinwiddie in the mean time called upon the governors of the other provinces to make common cause against the foe; he endeavored, also, to effect alliances with the Indian tribes of the south, the Catawbas and Cherokees, by way of counterbalancing the Chippewas and Ottawas, who were devoted to the French.

The colonies, however, felt as yet too much like isolated territories; the spirit of union was wanting. Some pleaded a want of military funds; some questioned the justice of the cause; some declined taking any hostile step that might involve them in a war, unless they should have direct orders from the crown.

Dinwiddie convened the House of Burgesses to devise measures for the public security. Here his high idea of prerogative and of gubernatorial dignity met with a grievous countercheck from the dawning spirit of independence. High as were the powers vested in the colonial government of Virginia, of

which, though but lieutenant-governor, he had the actual control; they were counterbalanced by the power inherent in the people, growing out of their situation and circumstances, and acting through their representatives.

There was no turbulent factious opposition to government in Virginia; no "fierce democracy," the rank growth of crowded cities, and a fermenting populace; but there was the independence of men, living apart in patriarchal style on their own rural domains; surrounded by their families, dependants and slaves, among whom their will was law, — and there was the individuality in character and action of men prone to nurture peculiar notions and habits of thinking, in the thoughtful solitariness of country life.

When Dinwiddie propounded his scheme of operations on the Ohio, some of the burgesses had the hardihood to doubt the claims of the king to the disputed territory; a doubt which the governor reprobated as savoring strongly of a most disloyal French spirit; he fired, as he says, at the thought "that an English legislature should presume to doubt the right of his majesty to the interior parts of this continent, the back part of his dominions!"

Others demurred to any grant of means for military purposes which might be construed into an act of hostility. To meet this scruple it was suggested that the grant might be made for the purpose of encouraging and protecting all settlers on the waters of the Mississippi. And under this specious plea ten thousand pounds were grudgingly voted; but even this moderate

sum was not put at the absolute disposition of the governor. A committee was appointed with whom he was to confer as to its appropriation.

This precaution Dinwiddie considered an insulting invasion of the right he possessed as governor to control the purse as well as the sword; and he complained bitterly of the assembly, as deeply tinctured with a republican way of thinking, and disposed to encroach on the prerogative of the crown, "which he feared would render them more and more difficult to be *brought to order*."

Ways and means being provided, Governor Dinwiddie augmented the number of troops to be enlisted to three hundred, divided into six companies. The command of the whole, as before, was offered to Washington, but he shrank from it, as a charge too great for his youth and inexperience. It was given, therefore, to Colonel Joshua Fry, an English gentleman of worth and education, and Washington was made second in command, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

The recruiting, at first, went on slowly. Those who offered to enlist, says Washington, were for the most part loose idle persons without house or home, some without shoes or stockings, some shirtless, and many without coat or waistcoat.

He was young in the recruiting service, or he would have known that such is generally the stuff of which armies are made. In this country especially it has always been difficult to enlist the active yeomanry by holding out merely the pay of a soldier. The

means of subsistence are too easily obtained by the industrious, for them to give up home and personal independence for a mere daily support. Some may be tempted by a love of adventure; but in general, they require some prospect of ultimate advantage that may "better their condition."

Governor Dinwiddie became sensible of this, and resorted to an expedient rising out of the natural resources of the country, which has since been frequently adopted, and always with efficacy. He proclaimed a bounty of two hundred thousand acres of land on the Ohio River, to be divided among the officers and soldiers who should engage in this expedition; one thousand to be laid off contiguous to the fort at the fork, for the use of the garrison. This was a tempting bait to the sons of farmers, who readily enlisted in the hope of having, at the end of a short campaign, a snug farm of their own in this land of promise.

It was a more difficult matter to get officers than soldiers. Very few of those appointed made their appearance; one of the captains had been promoted; two declined; Washington found himself left, almost alone, to manage a number of self-willed, undisciplined recruits. Happily he had with him, in the rank of lieutenant, that soldier of fortune, Jacob Van Braam, his old "master of fence," and travelling interpreter.

In his emergency he forthwith nominated him captain, and wrote to the governor to confirm the appointment, representing him as the oldest lieutenant, and an experienced officer.

On the 2d of April Washington set off from Alexandria for

the new fort, at the fork of the Ohio. He had but two companies with him, amounting to about one hundred and fifty men; the remainder of the regiment was to follow under Colonel Fry with the artillery, which was to be conveyed up the Potomac. While on the march he was joined by a detachment under Captain Adam Stephen, an officer destined to serve with him at distant periods of his military career.

At Winchester he found it impossible to obtain conveyances by gentle means, and was obliged reluctantly to avail himself of the militia law of Virginia, and impress horses and waggons for service; giving the owners orders on government for their appraised value. Even then, out of a great number impressed, he obtained but ten, after waiting a week; these, too, were grudgingly furnished by farmers with their worst horses, so that in steep and difficult passes they were incompetent to the draught, and the soldiers had continually to put their shoulders to the wheels.

Thus slenderly fitted out, Washington and his little force made their way toilfully across the mountains, having to prepare the roads as they went for the transportation of the cannon, which were to follow on with the other division under Colonel Fry. They cheered themselves with the thoughts that this hard work would cease when they should arrive at the company's trading-post and store-house at Wills' Creek, where Captain Trent was to have packhorses in readiness, with which they might make the rest of the way by light stages. Before arriving there they were

startled by a rumor that Trent and all his men had been captured by the French. With regard to Trent, the news soon proved to be false, for they found him at Wills' Creek on the 20th of April. With regard to his men there was still an uncertainty. He had recently left them at the fork of the Ohio, busily at work on the fort, under the command of his lieutenant, Frazier, late Indian trader and gunsmith, but now a provincial officer. If the men had been captured, it must have been since the captain's departure. Washington was eager to press forward and ascertain the truth, but it was impossible. Trent, inefficient as usual, had failed to provide packhorses. It was necessary to send to Winchester, forty miles distant, for baggage waggons, and await their arrival. All uncertainty as to the fate of the men, however, was brought to a close by their arrival, on the 25th, conducted by an ensign, and bringing with them their working implements. The French might well boast that they had again been too quick for the English. Captain Contrecoeur, an alert officer, had embarked about a thousand men with field-pieces, in a fleet of sixty bateaux and three hundred canoes, dropped down the river from Venango, and suddenly made his appearance before the fort, on which the men were working, and which was not half completed. Landing, drawing up his men, and planting his artillery, he summoned the fort to surrender, allowing one hour for a written reply.

What was to be done! the whole garrison did not exceed fifty men. Captain Trent was absent at Wills' Creek; Frazier, his lieutenant, was at his own residence at Turtle Creek, ten

miles distant. There was no officer to reply but a young ensign of the name of Ward. In his perplexity he turned for counsel to Tanacharisson, the half-king, who was present in the fort. The chief advised the ensign to plead insufficiency of rank and powers, and crave delay until the arrival of his superior officer. The ensign repaired to the French camp to offer this excuse in person, and was accompanied by the half-king. They were courteously received, but Contrecoeur was inflexible. There must be instant surrender, or he would take forcible possession. All that the ensign could obtain was permission to depart with his men, taking with them their working tools. The capitulation ended. Contrecoeur, with true French gayety, invited the ensign to sup with him; treated him with the utmost politeness, and wished him a pleasant journey, as he set off the next morning with his men laden with their working tools.

Such was the ensign's story. He was accompanied by two Indian warriors, sent by the half-king to ascertain where the detachment was, what was its strength, and when it might be expected at the Ohio. They bore a speech from that sachem to Washington, and another, with a belt of wampum for the Governor of Virginia. In these he plighted his steadfast faith to the English, and claimed assistance from his brothers of Virginia and Pennsylvania.

One of these warriors Washington forwarded on with the speech and wampum to Governor Dinwiddie. The other he prevailed on to return to the half-king, bearing a speech from

him, addressed to the "Sachems, warriors of the Six United Nations, Shannoahs and Delawares, our friends and brethren." In this he informed them that he was on the advance with a part of the army, to clear the road for a greater force coming with guns, ammunition, and provisions; and he invited the half-king and another sachem, to meet him on the road as soon as possible to hold a council.

In fact, his situation was arduous in the extreme. Regarding the conduct of the French in the recent occurrence an overt act of war, he found himself thrown with a handful of raw recruits far on a hostile frontier, in the midst of a wilderness, with an enemy at hand greatly superior in number and discipline; provided with artillery, and all the munitions of war, and within reach of constant supplies and reinforcements. Beside the French that had come from Venango, he had received credible accounts of another party ascending the Ohio; and of six hundred Chippewas and Ottawas marching down Scioto Creek to join the hostile camp. Still, notwithstanding the accumulating danger, it would not do to fall back, nor show signs of apprehension. His Indian allies in such case might desert him. The soldiery, too, might grow restless and dissatisfied. He was already annoyed by Captain Trent's men, who, having enlisted as volunteers, considered themselves exempt from the rigor of martial law; and by their example of loose and refractory conduct, threatened to destroy the subordination of his own troops.

In this dilemma he called a council of war, in which it was

determined to proceed to the Ohio Company store-houses, at the mouth of Redstone Creek; fortify themselves there, and wait for reinforcements. Here they might keep up a vigilant watch upon the enemy, and get notice of any hostile movement in time for defence, or retreat; and should they be reinforced sufficiently to enable them to attack the fort, they could easily drop down the river with their artillery.

With these alternatives in view, Washington detached sixty men in advance to make a road; and at the same time wrote to Governor Dinwiddie for mortars and grenadoes, and cannon of heavy metal.

Aware that the Assembly of Pennsylvania was in session, and that the Maryland Assembly would also meet in the course of a few days, he wrote directly to the governors of those provinces, acquainting them with the hostile acts of the French, and with his perilous situation; and endeavoring to rouse them to cooperation in the common cause. We will here note in advance that his letter was laid before the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and a bill was about to be passed making appropriations for the service of the king; but it fell through, in consequence of a disagreement between the Assembly and the governor as to the mode in which the money should be raised; and so no assistance was furnished to Washington from that quarter. The youthful commander had here a foretaste, in these his incipient campaigns, of the perils and perplexities which awaited him from enemies in the field, and lax friends in legislative councils in the grander operations

of his future years. Before setting off for Redstone Creek, he discharged Trent's refractory men from his detachment, ordering them to await Colonel Fry's commands; they however, in the true spirit of volunteers from the backwoods, dispersed to their several homes.

It may be as well to observe, in this place, that both Captain Trent and Lieutenant Frazier were severely censured for being absent from their post at the time of the French summons. "Trent's behavior," said Washington, in a letter to Governor Dinwiddie, "has been very tardy, and has convinced the world of what they before suspected — his great timidity. Lieutenant Frazier, though not altogether blameless, is much more excusable, for he would not accept of the commission until he had a promise from his captain that he should not reside at the fort, nor visit it above once a week, or as he saw necessity." In fact, Washington, subsequently recommended Frazier for the office of adjutant.

CHAPTER XI

MARCH TO THE LITTLE MEADOWS — RUMORS FROM THE OHIO — CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE BANKS OF THE YOUGHIOGENY — ATTEMPT TO DESCEND THAT RIVER — ALARMING REPORTS — SCOUTING PARTIES — PERILOUS SITUATION OF THE CAMP — GIST AND LA FORCE — MESSAGE FROM THE HALF-KING — FRENCH TRACKS — THE JUMONVILLE SKIRMISH — TREATMENT OF LA FORCE — POSITION AT THE GREAT MEADOWS — BELLIGERENT FEELINGS OF A YOUNG SOLDIER.

On the 29th of April Washington set out from Wills' Creek at the head of one hundred and sixty men. He soon overtook those sent in advance to work the road; they had made but little progress. It was a difficult task to break a road through the wilderness sufficient for the artillery coming on with Colonel Fry's division. All hands were now set to work, but with all their labor they could not accomplish more than four miles a day. They were toiling through Savage Mountain and that dreary forest region beyond it, since bearing the sinister name of "The Shades of Death." On the 9th of May they were not further than twenty miles from Wills' Creek, at a place called the Little Meadows.

Every day came gloomy accounts from the Ohio; brought

chiefly by traders, who, with packhorses bearing their effects, were retreating to the more settled parts of the country. Some exaggerated the number of the French, as if strongly reinforced. All represented them as diligently at work constructing a fort. By their account Washington perceived the French had chosen the very place which he had noted in his journal as best fitted for the purpose.

One of the traders gave information concerning La Force the French emissary, who had beset Washington when on his mission to the frontier, and acted, as he thought, the part of a spy. He had been at Gist's new settlement beyond Laurel Hill, and was prowling about the country with four soldiers at his heels on a pretended hunt after deserters. Washington suspected him to be on a reconnoitering expedition.

It was reported, moreover, that the French were lavishing presents on the Indians about the lower part of the river, to draw them to their standard. Among all these flying reports and alarms Washington was gratified to learn that the half-king was on his way to meet him at the head of fifty warriors.

After infinite toil through swamps and forests, and over rugged mountains, the detachment arrived at the Youghiogeny River, where they were detained some days constructing a bridge to cross it.

This gave Washington leisure to correspond with Governor Dinwiddie, concerning matters which had deeply annoyed him. By an ill-judged economy of the Virginia government at this

critical juncture, its provincial officers received less pay than that allowed in the regular army. It is true the regular officers were obliged to furnish their own table, but their superior pay enabled them to do it luxuriously; whereas the provincials were obliged to do hard duty on salt provisions and water. The provincial officers resented this inferiority of pay as an indignity, and declared that nothing prevented them from throwing up their commissions but unwillingness to recede before approaching danger.

Washington shared deeply this feeling. "Let him serve voluntarily, and he would with the greatest pleasure in life devote his services to the expedition — but to be slaving through woods, rocks, and mountains, for the shadow of pay — " writes he, "I would rather toil like a day laborer for a maintenance, if reduced to the necessity, than serve on such ignoble terms." Parity of pay was indispensable to the dignity of the service.

Other instances of false economy were pointed out by him, forming so many drags upon the expedition, that he quite despaired of success. "Be the consequence what it will, however," adds he, "I am determined not to leave the regiment, but to be among the last men that leave the Ohio; even if I serve as a private volunteer, which I greatly prefer to the establishment we are upon. ... I have a constitution hardy enough to encounter and undergo the most severe trials, and I flatter myself resolution to face what any man dares, as shall be proved when it comes to the test."

And in a letter to his friend Colonel Fairfax — "For my

own part," writes he, "it is a matter almost indifferent whether I serve for full pay or as a generous volunteer; indeed, did my circumstances correspond with my inclinations, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter; *for the motives that have led me here are pure and noble. I had no view of acquisition but that of honor, by serving faithfully my king and country*."

Such were the noble impulses of Washington at the age of twenty-two, and such continued to actuate him throughout life. We have put the latter part of the quotation in italics, as applicable to the motives which in after life carried him into the Revolution.

While the bridge over the Youghiogeny was in the course of construction, the Indians assured Washington he would never be able to open a waggon-road across the mountains to Redstone Creek; he embarked therefore in a canoe with a lieutenant, three soldiers, and an Indian guide, to try whether it was possible to descend the river. They had not descended above ten miles before the Indian refused to go further. Washington soon ascertained the reason. "Indians," said he, "expect presents — nothing can be done without them. The French take this method. If you want one or more to conduct a party, to discover the country, to hunt, or for any particular purpose, they must be bought; their friendship is not so warm as to prompt them to these services gratis." The Indian guide in the present instance, was propitiated by the promise of one of Washington's ruffled shirts, and a watch-coat.

The river was bordered by mountains and obstructed by rocks

and rapids. Indians might thread such a labyrinth in their light canoes, but it would never admit the transportation of troops and military stores. Washington kept on for thirty miles, until he came to a place where the river fell nearly forty feet in the space of fifty yards. There he ceased to explore, and returned to camp, resolving to continue forward by land.

On the 23d Indian scouts brought word that the French were not above eight hundred strong, and that about half their number had been detached at night on a secret expedition. Close upon this report came a message from the half-king, addressed "to the first of his majesty's officers whom it may concern."

"It is reported," said he, "that the French army is coming to meet Major Washington. Be on your guard against them, my brethren, for they intend to strike the first English they shall see. They have been on their march two days. I know not their number. The half-king and the rest of the chiefs will be with you in five days to hold a council."

In the evening Washington was told that the French were crossing the ford of the Youghiogeny about eighteen miles distant. He now hastened to take a position in a place called the Great Meadows, where he caused the bushes to be cleared away, made an intrenchment and prepared what he termed "a charming field for an encounter."

A party of scouts were mounted on waggon horses, and sent out to reconnoitre. They returned without having seen an enemy. A sensitiveness prevailed in the camp. They were surrounded

by forests, threatened by unseen foes, and hourly in danger of surprise. There was an alarm about two o'clock in the night. The sentries fired upon what they took to be prowling foes. The troops sprang to arms, and remained on the alert until daybreak. Not an enemy was to be seen. The roll was called. Six men were missing, who had deserted.

On the 25th. Mr. Gist arrived from his place, about fifteen miles distant. La Force had been there at noon on the previous day, with a detachment of fifty men, and Gist had since come upon their track within five miles of the camp. Washington considered La Force a bold, enterprising man, subtle and dangerous; one to be particularly guarded against. He detached seventy-five men in pursuit of him and his prowling band.

About nine o'clock at night came an Indian messenger from the half-king, who was encamped with several of his people about six miles off. The chief had seen tracks of two Frenchmen, and was convinced their whole body must be in ambush near by.

Washington considered this the force which had been hovering about him for several days, and determined to forestall their hostile designs. Leaving a guard with the baggage and ammunition, he set out before ten o'clock, with forty men, to join his Indian ally. They groped their way in single file, by footpaths through the woods, in a heavy rain and murky darkness, tripping occasionally and stumbling over each other, sometimes losing the track for fifteen or twenty minutes, so that it was near sunrise when they reached the camp of the half-king.

That chieftain received the youthful commander with, great demonstrations of friendship, and engaged to go hand in hand with him against the lurking enemy. He set out accordingly, accompanied by a few of his warriors and his associate sachem Scarooyadi or Monacatoocha, and conducted Washington to the tracks which he had discovered. Upon these he put two of his Indians. They followed them up like hounds, and brought back word that they had traced them to a low bottom surrounded by rocks and trees, where the French were encamped, having built a few cabins for shelter from the rain.

A plan was now concerted to come upon them by surprise; Washington with, his men on the right; the half-king with his warriors on the left; all as silently as possible. Washington was the first upon the ground. As he advanced from among the rocks and trees at the head of his men, the French caught sight of him and ran to their arms. A sharp firing instantly took place, and was kept up on both sides for about fifteen minutes. Washington and his party were most exposed and received all the enemy's fire. The balls whistled around him; one man was killed close by him, and three others wounded. The French at length, having lost several of their number, gave way and ran. They were soon overtaken; twenty-one were captured, and but one escaped, a Canadian, who carried the tidings of the affair to the fort on the Ohio. The Indians would have massacred the prisoners had not Washington prevented them. Ten of the French had fallen in the skirmish, and one been wounded. Washington's loss was

the one killed and three wounded which we have mentioned. He had been in the hottest fire, and having for the first time heard balls whistle about him, considered his escape miraculous. Jumonville, the French leader, had been shot through the head at the first fire. He was a young officer of merit, and his fate was made the subject of lamentation in prose and verse — chiefly through political motives.

Of the twenty-one prisoners the two most important were an officer of some consequence named Drouillon, and the subtle and redoubtable La Force. As Washington considered the latter an arch mischief-maker, he was rejoiced to have him in his power. La Force and his companion would fain have assumed the sacred character of ambassadors, pretending they were coming with a summons to him to depart from the territories belonging to the crown of France.

Unluckily for their pretensions, a letter of instructions, found on Jumonville, betrayed their real errand, which was to inform themselves of the roads, rivers, and other features of the country as far as the Potomac; to send back from time to time, by fleet messengers, all the information they could collect, and to give word of the day on which they intended to serve the summons.

Their conduct had been conformable. Instead of coming in a direct and open manner to his encampment, when they had ascertained where it was, and delivering their summons, as they would have done had their designs been frank and loyal, they had moved back two miles, to one of the most secret retirements,

better for a deserter than an ambassador to encamp in, and staid there, within five miles of his camp, sending spies to reconnoitre it, and despatching messengers to Contrecoeur to inform him of its position and numerical strength, to the end, no doubt, that he might send a sufficient detachment to enforce the summons as soon as it should be given. In fact, the footprints which had first led to the discovery of the French lurking-place, were those of two "runners" or swift messengers, sent by Jumonville to the fort on the Ohio.

It would seem that La Force, after all, was but an instrument in the hands of his commanding officers, and not in their full confidence; for when the commission and instructions found on Jumonville were read before him, he professed not to have seen them before, and acknowledged, with somewhat of an air of ingenuousness, that he believed they had a hostile tendency. [Footnote: Washington's letter to Dinwiddie, 29th May, 1754.]

Upon the whole, it was the opinion of Washington and his officers that the summons, on which so much stress was laid, was a mere specious pretext to mask their real designs and be used as occasion might require. "That they were spies rather than any thing else," and were to be treated as prisoners of war.

The half-king joined heartily in this opinion; indeed, had the fate of the prisoners been in his hands, neither diplomacy nor any thing else would have been of avail. "They came with hostile intentions," he said; "they had bad hearts, and if his English brothers were so foolish as to let them go, he would never aid in

taking another Frenchman."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.