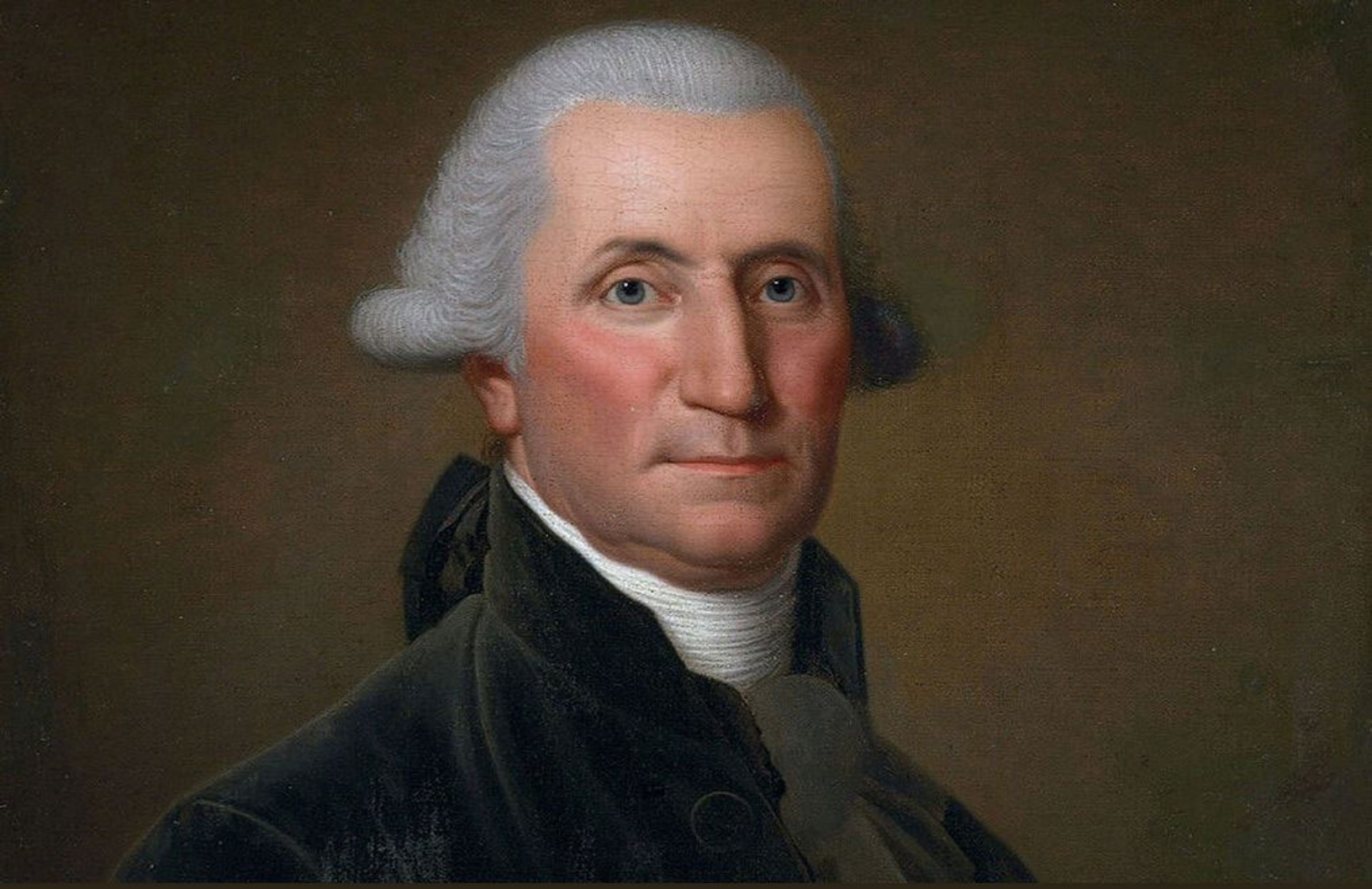

# THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

## VOLUME 3

WASHINGTON IRVING

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

# The Life Of George Washington, Vol. 3

## Washington Irving

## Contents:

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## Washington Irving – A Biographical Primer

Washington Irving (1783-1859), American man of letters, was born at New York on the 3rd of April 1783. Both his parents were immigrants from Great Britain, his father, originally an officer in the merchant service, but at the time of Irving's birth a considerable merchant, having come from the Orkneys, and his mother from Falmouth. Irving was intended for the legal profession, but his studies were interrupted by an illness necessitating a voyage to Europe, in the course of which he proceeded as far as Rome, and made the acquaintance of Washington Allston. He was called to the bar upon his return, but made little effort to practice, preferring to amuse himself with literary ventures. The first of these of any importance, a satirical miscellany entitled *Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff and others*, written in conjunction with his brother William and J. K. Paulding, gave ample proof of his talents as a humorist. These were still more conspicuously displayed in his next attempt, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, by “Diedrich Knickerbocker” (2

vols., New York, 1809). The satire of *Salmagundi* had been principally local, and the original design of “Knickerbocker's” History was only to burlesque a pretentious disquisition on the history of the city in a guidebook by Dr Samuel Mitchell. The idea expanded as Irving proceeded, and he ended by not merely satirizing the pedantry of local antiquaries, but by creating a distinct literary type out of the solid Dutch burgher whose phlegm had long been an object of ridicule to the mercurial Americans. Though far from the most finished of Irving's productions, “Knickerbocker” manifests the most original power, and is the most genuinely national in its quaintness and drollery. The very tardiness and prolixity of the story are skillfully made to heighten the humorous effect.

Upon the death of his father, Irving had become a sleeping partner in his brother's commercial house, a branch of which was established at Liverpool. This, combined with the restoration of peace, induced him to visit England in 1815, when he found the stability of the firm seriously compromised. After some years of ineffectual struggle it became bankrupt. This misfortune compelled Irving to resume his pen as a means of subsistence. His reputation had preceded him to England, and the curiosity naturally excited by the then unwonted apparition of a successful American author procured him admission into the highest literary circles, where his popularity was ensured by his amiable temper and polished manners. As an American, moreover, he stood aloof from the political and literary disputes which then divided England. Campbell, Jeffrey, Moore, Scott, were counted among his friends, and the last-named zealously recommended him to the publisher Murray, who, after at first refusing, consented (1820) to bring out *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (7 pts., New York, 1819-1820). The most interesting part of this work is the description of an English Christmas, which

displays a delicate humor not unworthy of the writer's evident model Addison. Some stories and sketches on American themes contribute to give it variety; of these Rip van Winkle is the most remarkable. It speedily obtained the greatest success on both sides of the Atlantic. *Bracebridge Hall, or the Humourists* (2 vols., New York), a work purely English in subject, followed in 1822, and showed to what account the American observer had turned his experience of English country life. The humor is, nevertheless, much more English than American. *Tales of a Traveller* (4 pts.) appeared in 1824 at Philadelphia, and Irving, now in comfortable circumstances, determined to enlarge his sphere of observation by a journey on the continent. After a long course of travel he settled down at Madrid in the house of the American consul Rich. His intention at the time was to translate the *Coleccion de los Viajes y Descubrimientos* (Madrid, 1825-1837) of Martin Fernandez de Navarrete; finding, however, that this was rather a collection of valuable materials than a systematic biography, he determined to compose a biography of his own by its assistance, supplemented by independent researches in the Spanish archives. His *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (London, 4 vols.) appeared in 1828, and obtained a merited success. *The Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1831) followed; and a prolonged residence in the south of Spain gave Irving materials for two highly picturesque books, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada from the MSS. of* [an imaginary] *Fray Antonio Agapida* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1829), and *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1832). Previous to their appearance he had been appointed secretary to the embassy at London, an office as purely complimentary to his literary ability as the legal degree which he about the same time received from the university of Oxford.

Returning to the United States in 1832, after seventeen years' absence, he found his name a household word, and himself universally honored as the first American who had won for his country recognition on equal terms in the literary republic. After the rush of fêtes and public compliments had subsided, he undertook a tour in the western prairies, and returning to the neighborhood of New York built for himself a delightful retreat on the Hudson, to which he gave the name of “Sunnyside.” His acquaintance with the New York millionaire John Jacob Astor prompted his next important work — *Astoria* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1836), a history of the fur-trading settlement founded by Astor in Oregon, deduced with singular literary ability from dry commercial records, and, without labored attempts at word-painting, evincing a remarkable faculty for bringing scenes and incidents vividly before the eye. *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (London and Philadelphia, 1837), based upon the unpublished memoirs of a veteran explorer, was another work of the same class. In 1842 Irving was appointed ambassador to Spain. He spent four years in the country, without this time turning his residence to literary account; and it was not until two years after his return that Forster's life of Goldsmith, by reminding him of a slight essay of his own which he now thought too imperfect by comparison to be included among his collected writings, stimulated him to the production of his *Life of Oliver Goldsmith, with Selections from his Writings* (2 vols., New York, 1849). Without pretensions to original research, the book displays an admirable talent for employing existing material to the best effect. The same may be said of *The Lives of Mahomet and his Successors* (New York, 2 vols., 1840-1850). Here as elsewhere Irving correctly discriminated the biographer's province from the historian's, and leaving the philosophical investigation of cause and effect to writers of Gibbon's caliber, applied

himself to represent the picturesque features of the age as embodied in the actions and utterances of its most characteristic representatives. His last days were devoted to his *Life of George Washington* (5 vols., 1855-1859, New York and London), undertaken in an enthusiastic spirit, but which the author found exhausting and his readers tame. His genius required a more poetical theme, and indeed the biographer of Washington must be at least a potential soldier and statesman. Irving just lived to complete this work, dying of heart disease at Sunnyside, on the 28th of November 1859.

Although one of the chief ornaments of American literature, Irving is not characteristically American. But he is one of the few authors of his period who really manifest traces of a vein of national peculiarity which might under other circumstances have been productive. “Knickerbocker's” *History of New York*, although the air of mock solemnity which constitutes the staple of its humor is peculiar to no literature, manifests nevertheless a power of reproducing a distinct national type. Had circumstances taken Irving to the West, and placed him amid a society teeming with quaint and genial eccentricity, he might possibly have been the first Western humorist, and his humor might have gained in depth and richness. In England, on the other hand, everything encouraged his natural fastidiousness; he became a refined writer, but by no means a robust one. His biographies bear the stamp of genuine artistic intelligence, equally remote from compilation and disquisition. In execution they are almost faultless; the narrative is easy, the style pellucid, and the writer's judgment nearly always in accordance with the general verdict of history. Without ostentation or affectation, he was exquisite in all things, a mirror of loyalty, courtesy and good taste in all his literary connexions, and exemplary in all the relations of domestic

life. He never married, remaining true to the memory of an early attachment blighted by death.

The principal edition of Irving' s works is the “Geoffrey Crayon,” published at New York in 1880 in 26 vols. His *Life and Letters* was published by his nephew Pierre M. Irving (London, 1862-1864, 4 vols.; German abridgment by Adolf Laun, Berlin, 1870, 2 vols.) There is a good deal of miscellaneous information in a compilation entitled *Irvingiana* (New York, 1860); and W. C. Bryant's memorial oration, though somewhat too uniformly laudatory, may be consulted with advantage. It was republished in *Studies of Irvine* (1880) along with C. Dudley Warner's introduction to the “Geoffrey Crayon” edition, and Mr. G. P. Putnam's personal reminiscences of Irving, which originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. See also *Washington Irving* (1881), by C. D. Warner, in the “American Men of Letters” series; H. R. Haweis, *American Humourists* (London, 1883).

# The Life Of George Washington, Vol. 3

## Chapter I.

The news of Washington's recrossing the Delaware, and of his subsequent achievements in the Jerseys, had not reached London on the 9th of January. "The affairs of America seem to be drawing to a crisis," writes Edmund Burke. " The Howes are at this time in possession of, or able to awe the whole middle coast of America, from Delaware to the western boundary of Massachusetts Bay; the naval barrier on the side of Canada is broken. A great tract is open for the supply of the troops; the river Hudson opens a way into the heart of the provinces, and nothing can, in all probability, prevent an early and offensive campaign. What the Americans have done is, in their circumstances, truly astonishing; it is indeed infinitely more

than I expected from them. But, having done so much for some short time, I began to entertain an opinion that they might do more. It is now, however, evident that they cannot look standing armies in the face. They are inferior in every thing — even in numbers. There seem by the best accounts not to be above ten or twelve thousand men at most in their grand army. The rest are militia, and not wonderfully well composed or disciplined. They decline a general engagement; prudently enough, if their object had been to make the war attend upon a treaty of good terms of subjection; but when they look further this will not do. An army that is obliged at all times, and in all situations, to decline an engagement, may delay their ruin, but can never defend their country."

At the time when this was written, the Howes had learnt to their mortification, that " the mere running through a province, is not subduing it." The British commanders had been outgeneraled, attacked and defeated. They had nearly been driven out of the Jerseys, and were now hemmed in and held in check by Washington and his handful of men castled among the heights of Morristown. So far from holding possession of the territory they had so recently overrun, they were fain to ask safe conduct across it for a convoy to their soldiers captured in battle. It must have been a severe trial to the pride of Cornwallis, when he had to inquire by letter of Washington, whether money and stores could be sent to the Hessians captured at Trenton, and a surgeon and medicines to the wounded at Princeton; and Washington's reply must have conveyed a reproof still more mortifying: No molestation, he assured his lordship, would be offered to the convoy by any part of the regular army under his command; but " he could not answer for the militia, who were resorting to arms in most parts of the State, and were excessively exasperated at the treatment they had met with from both Hessian and British troops."

In fact, the conduct of the enemy had roused the whole country against them. The proclamations and printed protections of the British commanders, on the faith of which the inhabitants in general had staid at home, and forbore to take up arms, had proved of no avail. The Hessians could not or would not understand them, but plundered friend and foe alike. The British soldiery often followed their example, and the plunderings of both were at times attended by those brutal outrages on the weaker sex, which inflame the dullest spirits to revenge. The whole State was thus roused against its invaders. In Washington's retreat of more than a hundred miles through the Jerseys, he had never been joined by more than one hundred of its inhabitants; now sufferers of both parties rose as one man to avenge their personal injuries. The late quiet yeomanry armed themselves, and scoured the country in small parties to seize on stragglers, and the militia began to signalize themselves in voluntary skirmishes with regular troops.

In effect, Washington ordered a safe conduct to be given to the Hessian baggage as far as Philadelphia, and to the surgeon and medicines to Princeton, and permitted a Hessian sergeant and twelve men, unarmed, to attend the baggage until it was delivered to their countrymen.

Morristown, where the main army was encamped, had not been chosen by Washington as a permanent post, but merely as a halting-place, where his troops might repose after their excessive fatigues and their sufferings from the inclement season. Further considerations persuaded him that it was well situated for the system of petty warfare which he meditated, and induced him to remain there. It was protected by forests and rugged heights. All approach from the seaboard was rendered difficult and dangerous to a hostile force by a chain of sharp hills, extending from

Pluckamin by Boundbrook and Springfield, to the vicinity of the Passaic River, while various defiles in the rear afforded safer retreats into a fertile and well-peopled region. It was nearly equidistant from Amboy, Newark, and Brunswick, the principal posts of the enemy; so that any movement made from them could be met by a counter movement on his part; while the forays and skirmishes by which he might harass them, would school and season his own troops. He had three faithful generals with him: Greene, his reliance on all occasions; swarthy Sullivan, whose excitable temper and quick sensibilities he had sometimes to keep in check by friendly counsels and rebukes, but who was a good officer, and loyally attached to him; and brave, genial, generous Knox, never so happy as when by his side. He had lately been advanced to the rank of brigadier at his recommendation, and commanded the artillery.

Washington's military family at this time was composed of his aides-de-camp, Colonels Meade and Tench Tilghman of Philadelphia; gentlemen of gallant spirit, amiable tempers, and cultivated manners; and his secretary, Colonel Robert H. Harrison of Maryland; the " old secretary," as he was familiarly called among his associates, and by whom he was described as " one in whom every man had confidence, and by whom no man was deceived."

Washington's head-quarters at first were in what was called the Freemason's Tavern, on the north side of the village green. His troops were encamped about the vicinity of the village, at first in tents, until they could build log huts for shelter against the winter's cold. The main encampment was near Bottle Hill, in a sheltered valley which was thickly wooded, and had abundant springs. It extended south-easterly from Morristown; and was called the Lowantica Valley, from the Indian name of a beautiful limpid brook which ran through it, and lost itself in a great swamp.

The enemy being now concentrated at New Brunswick and Amboy, General Putnam was ordered by Washington to move from Crosswicks to Princeton, with the troops under his command. He was instructed to draw his forage as much as possible from the neighborhood of Brunswick, about eighteen miles off, thereby contributing to distress the enemy to have good scouting parties continually on the lookout; to keep nothing with him but what could be moved off at a moment's warning, and, if compelled to leave Princeton, to retreat towards the mountains, so as to form a junction with the forces at Morristown.

Putnam had with him but a few hundred men. " You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is," writes Washington; a common expedient with him in those times of scanty means. Putnam acted up to the advice. A British officer, Captain Macpherson, was lying desperately wounded at Princeton, and Putnam, in the kindness of his heart, was induced to send in a flag to Brunswick in quest of a friend and military comrade of the dying man, to attend him in his last moments and make his will. To prevent the weakness of the garrison from being discovered, the visitor was brought in after dark. Lights gleamed in all the college windows, and in the vacant houses about the town; the handful of troops capable of duty were marched hither and thither and backward and forward, and paraded about to such effect, that the visitor on his return to the British camp, reported the force under the old general to be at least five thousand strong.

Cantonments were gradually formed between Princeton and the Highlands of the Hudson, which made the left flank of Washington's position, and where General Heath had command. General Philemon Dickinson, who commanded the New Jersey militia, was stationed on the west side of

Millstone River, near Somerset court-house, one of the nearest posts to the enemy's camp at Brunswick. A British foraging party, of five or six hundred strong, sent out by Cornwallis with forty waggons and upwards of a hundred draft horses, mostly of the English breed, having collected sheep and cattle about the country, were sacking a mill on the opposite side of the river, where a large quantity of flour was deposited. While thus employed, Dickinson set upon them with a force equal in number, but composed of raw militia and fifty Philadelphia riflemen. He dashed through the river, waist deep, with his men, and charged the enemy so suddenly and vigorously, that, though supported by three field-pieces, they gave way, left their convoy, and retreated so precipitately, that he made only nine prisoners. A number of killed and wounded were carried off by the fugitives on light waggons.

These exploits of the militia were noticed with high encomiums by Washington, while at the same time he was rigid in prohibiting and punishing the excesses into which men are apt to run when suddenly clothed with military power. Such is the spirit of a general order issued at this time. " The general prohibits, in both the militia and Continental troops, the infamous practice of plundering the inhabitants under the specious pretence of their being Tories. * * * It is our business to give protection and support to the poor distressed inhabitants, not to multiply and increase their calamities." After the publication of this order, all excesses of this kind were to be punished in the severest manner.

To counteract the proclamation of the British commissioners, promising amnesty to all in rebellion who should, in a given time, return to their allegiance, Washington now issued a counter proclamation (Jan. 25th), commanding every person who had subscribed a

declaration of fidelity to Great Britain, or taken an oath of allegiance, to repair within thirty days to head-quarters, or the quarters of the nearest general officer of the Continental army or of the militia, and there take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America, and give up any protection, certificate, or passport he might have received from the enemy; at the same time granting full liberty to all such as preferred the interest and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happiness of their country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemy's fines. All who should neglect or refuse to comply with this order were to be considered adherents to the crown, and treated as common enemies.

This measure met with objections at the time, some of the timid or over-cautious thinking it inexpedient; others, jealous of the extraordinary powers vested in Washington, questioning whether he had not transcended these powers and exercised a degree of despotism.

The small-pox, which had been fatally prevalent in the preceding year, had again broken out, and Washington feared it might spread through the whole army. He took advantage of the interval of comparative quiet to have his troops inoculated. Houses were set apart in various places as hospitals for inoculation, and a church was appropriated for the use of those who had taken the malady in the natural way. Among these the ravages were frightful. The traditions of the place and neighborhood, give lamentable pictures of the distress caused by this loathsome disease in the camp and in the villages, wherever it had not been parried by inoculation.

" Washington " we are told, " was not an unmoved spectator of the griefs around him, and might be seen in Hanover and in Lowantica Valley, cheering the faith and inspiring the

courage of his suffering men." It was this paternal care and sympathy which attached his troops personally to him. They saw that he regarded them not with the eye of a general, but of a patriot, whose heart yearned towards them as countrymen suffering in one common cause.

A striking contrast was offered throughout the winter and spring between the rival commanders, Howe at New York, and Washington at Morristown. Howe was a soldier by profession. War, with him, was a career. The camp was, for the time, country and home. Easy and indolent by nature, of convivial and luxurious habits, and somewhat addicted to gaming, he found himself in good quarters at New York, and was in no hurry to leave them. The Tories rallied around him. The British merchants residing there regarded him with profound devotion. His officers, too, many of them young men of rank and fortune, gave a gayety and brilliancy to the place; and the wealthy royalists forgot in a round of dinners, balls and assemblies, the hysterical alarms they had once experienced under the military sway of Lee.

Washington, on the contrary, was a patriot soldier, grave, earnest, thoughtful, self-sacrificing. War, to him, was a painful remedy, hateful in itself, but adopted for a great national good. To the prosecution of it all his pleasures, his comforts, his natural inclinations and private interests were sacrificed; and his chosen officers were earnest and anxious like himself, with their whole thoughts directed to the success of the magnanimous struggle in which they were engaged.

So, too, the armies were contrasted. The British troops, many of them, perchance, slightly metamorphosed from vagabonds into soldiers, all mere men of the sword, were well clad, well housed, and surrounded by all the

conveniencies of a thoroughly appointed army with a "rebel country " to forage. The American troops for the most part were mere yeomanry, taken from their rural homes; ill sheltered, ill clad, ill fed and ill paid, with nothing to reconcile them to their hardships but love for the soil they were defending, and the inspiring thought that it was their country. Washington, with paternal care, endeavored to protect them from the depraving influences of a camp. " Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much as possible in your brigade," writes he in a circular to his brigadier generals; " and, as a chaplain is allowed to each regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship. Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden, as being the foundation of evil, and the cause of many a brave and gallant officer's ruin."

## Chapter II.

A cartel for the exchange of prisoners had been a subject of negotiation previous to the affair of Trenton, without being adjusted. The British commanders were slow to recognize the claims to equality of those they considered rebels; Washington was tenacious in holding them up as patriots ennobled by their cause.

Among the cases which came up for attention was that of Ethan Allen, the brave, but eccentric captor of Ticonderoga. His daring attempts in the "path of renown " had cost him a world of hardships. Thrown into irons as a felon; threatened with a halter; carried to England to be tried for treason; confined in Pendennis Castle; retransported to Halifax, and now a prisoner in New York. " I have suffered every thing short of death," writes he to the Assembly of his native State, Connecticut. He had, however, recovered health and suppleness of limb, and with

them all his swelling spirit and swelling rhetoric. "I am fired" writes he, " with adequate indignation to revenge both my own and my country's wrongs. I am experimentally certain I have fortitude sufficient to face the invaders of America in the place of danger, spread with all the horrors of war." And he concludes with one of his magniloquent, but really sincere expressions of patriotism: " Provided you can hit upon some measure to procure my liberty, I will appropriate my remaining days, and freely hazard my fife in the service of the colony, and maintaining the American Empire. I thought to have enrolled my name in the list of illustrious American heroes, but was nipped in the bud!"

Honest Ethan Allen! his name will ever stand enrolled on that list; not illustrious, perhaps, but eminently popular.

His appeal to his native State had produced an appeal to Congress, and Washington had been instructed, considering his long imprisonment, to urge his exchange. This had scarce been urged, when tidings of the capture of General Lee presented a case of still greater importance to be provided for. "I feel much for his misfortune," writes Washington, "and am sensible that in his captivity our country has lost a warm friend and an able officer." By direction of Congress, he had sent in a flag to inquire about Lee's treatment, and to convey him a sum of money. This was just previous to the second crossing of the Delaware.

Lee was now reported to be in rigorous confinement in New York, and treated with harshness and indignity. The British professed to consider him a deserter, he having been a lieutenant-colonel in their service, although he alleged that he had resigned his commission before joining the American army. Two letters, which he addressed to General Howe, were returned to him unopened, enclosed in a cover directed to Lieutenant-colonel Lee.

On the 13th of January, Washington addressed the following letter to Sir William Howe. " I am directed by Congress to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers taken at Trenton for Major-general Lee; or if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, upon good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service, as his resignation has never been accepted, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves, but I must give you warning that Major-general Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit upon his life and liberty, will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies in our hands."

In this letter he likewise adverted to the treatment of American prisoners in New York; several who had recently been released, having given the most shocking account of the barbarities they had experienced, " which their miserable emaciated countenances confirmed." — "I would beg," added he, "that some certain rule of conduct towards prisoners may be settled; and, if you are determined to make captivity as distressing as possible, let me know it, that we may be upon equal terms, for your conduct shall regulate mine."

Sir William, in reply, proposed to send an officer of rank to Washington, to confer upon a mode of exchange and subsistence of prisoners. "This expedient," observes he, "

appearing to me effectual for settling all differences, will, I hope, be the means of preventing a repetition of the improper terms in which your letter is expressed, and founded on the grossest misrepresentations. I shall not make any further comment upon it, than to assure you, that your threats of retaliating upon the innocent such punishment as may be decreed in the circumstances of Mr. Lee by the laws of his country, will not divert me from my duty in any respect; at the same time, you may rest satisfied that the proceedings against him will not be precipitated; and I trust that, in this, or in any other event in the course of my command, you will not have just cause to accuse me of inhumanity, prejudice, or passion."

Sir William, in truth, was greatly perplexed with respect to Lee, and had written to England to Lord George Germaine for instructions in the case. " General Lee," writes he, " being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner; but I do not bring him to trial, as a doubt has arisen, whether, by a public resignation of his half pay prior to his entry into the rebel army, he was amenable to the military law as a deserter."

The proposal of Sir William, that all disputed points relative to the exchange and subsistence of prisoners, should be adjusted by referees, led to the appointment of two officers for the purpose; Colonel Walcott by General Howe, and Colonel Harrison, "the old secretary," by Washington. In the contemplated exchanges was that of one of the Hessian field-officers for Colonel Ethan Allen.

The haughty spirit of Lee had experienced a severe humiliation in the late catastrophe; his pungent and caustic humor is at an end. In a letter addressed shortly afterwards to Washington, and enclosing one to Congress which Lord and General Howe had permitted him to send, he writes, "

as the contents are of the last importance to me, and perhaps not less so to the community, I most earnestly entreat, my dear general, that you will dispatch it immediately, and order the Congress to be as expeditious as possible."

The letter contained a request that two or three gentlemen might be sent immediately to New York, to whom he would communicate what he conceived to be of the greatest importance. " If my own interests were alone at stake," writes he, " I flatter myself that the Congress would not hesitate a single instant in acquiescing in my request; but this is far from the case, the interests of the public are equally concerned. * * Lord and General Howe will grant a safe conduct to the gentlemen deputed."

The letter having been read in Congress, Washington was directed to inform General Lee that they were pursuing and would continue to pursue every means in their power to provide for his personal safety, and to obtain his liberty; but that they considered it improper to send any of their body to communicate with him, and could not perceive how it would tend to his advantage or the interest of the public.

Lee repeated his request, but with no better success. He felt this refusal deeply; as a brief, sad note to Washington indicates.

"It is a most unfortunate circumstance for myself, and I think not less so for the public, that Congress have not thought proper to comply with my request. It could not possibly have been attended with any ill consequences, and might with good ones. At least it was an indulgence which I thought my situation entitled me to. But I am unfortunate in every thing, and this stroke is the severest I have yet

experienced. God send you a different fate. Adieu, my dear general.

" Yours most truly and affectionately,

"Charles Lee."

How different from the humorous, satirical, self-confident tone of his former letters. Yet Lee's actual treatment was not so harsh as had been represented. He was in close confinement, it is true; but three rooms had been fitted up for his reception in the Old City Hall of New York, having nothing of the look of a prison excepting that they were secured by bolts and bars.

Congress, in the mean time, had resorted to their threatened measure of retaliation. On the 20th of February they had resolved that the Board of War be directed immediately to order the five Hessian field officers and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell into safe and close custody, " it being the unalterable resolution of Congress to retaliate on them the same punishment as may be inflicted on the person of General Lee."

The Colonel Campbell here mentioned had commanded one of General Frazer's battalions of Highlanders, and had been captured on board of a transport in Nantasket Road, in the preceding summer. He was a member of Parliament, and a gentleman of fortune. Retaliation was carried to excess in regard to him, for he was thrown into the common jail at Concord in Massachusetts.

From his prison he made an appeal to Washington, which at once touched his quick sense of justice. He immediately wrote to the council of Massachusetts Bay, quoting the words of the resolution of Congress. " By this you will

observe," adds he, " that exactly the same treatment is to be shown to Colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, that General Howe shows to General Lee, and as he is only confined to a commodious house, with genteel accommodations, we have no right or reason to be more severe upon Colonel Campbell, who I would wish should upon the receipt of this be removed from his present situation, and be put into a house where he may live comfortably."

In a letter to the President of Congress on the following day, he gives his moderating counsels on the whole subject of retaliation. "Though I sincerely commiserate," writes he, " the misfortunes of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that these resolutions will not have the desired effect, are founded on impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature" *****

" The balance of prisoners is greatly against us, and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us, in their possession, that we impose on theirs in our power? Why should we suppose them to possess more humanity than we have ourselves? Or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave, unfortunate man, involve many more in the same calamities? * * * Suppose," continues he, "the treatment prescribed for the Hessians should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice and the grossest misrepresentations, I mean an opinion of our enmity towards them, and of the cruel treatment they experience when they fall into our hands, a prejudice which we on our

part have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and to root out by every act of lenity and of kindness? "

" Many more objections," added he, " might be subjoined, were they material. I shall only observe, that the present state of the army, if it deserves that name, will not authorize the language of retaliation, or the style of menace. This will be conceded by all who know that the whole of our force is weak and trifling, and composed of militia (very few regular troops excepted) whose service is on the eve of expiring."

In a letter to Mr. Robert Morris also, he writes: " I wish, with all my heart, that Congress had gratified General Lee in his request. If not too late, I wish they would do it still. I can see no possible evil that can result from it; some good, I think, might. The request to see a gentleman or two came from the general, not from the commissioners; there could have been no harm, therefore, in hearing what he had to say on any subject, especially as he had declared that his own personal interest was deeply concerned. The resolve to put in close confinement Lieutenant-colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, in order to retaliate upon them General Lee's punishment, is, in my opinion, injurious in every point of view, and must have been entered into without due attention to the consequences. * * * * * If the resolve of Congress respecting General Lee strikes you in the same point of view it has done me, I could wish you would signify as much to that body, as I really think it fraught with every evil."

Washington was not always successful in instilling his wise moderation into public councils. Congress adhered to their vindictive policy, merely directing that no other hardships should be inflicted on the captive officers, than such confinement as was necessary to carry their resolve into

effect. As to their refusal to grant the request of Lee, Robert Morris surmised they were fearful of the injurious effect that might be produced in the court of France, should it be reported that members of Congress visited General Lee by permission of the British commissioners. There were other circumstances beside the treatment of General Lee, to produce this indignant sensibility on the part of Congress. Accounts were rife at this juncture, of the cruelties and indignities almost invariably experienced by American prisoners at New York; and an active correspondence on the subject was going on between Washington and the British commanders, at the same time with that regarding General Lee.

The captive Americans who had been in the naval service, were said to be confined, officers and men, in prison-ships, which, from their loathsome condition, and the horrors and sufferings of all kinds experienced on board of them, had acquired the appellation of floating hells. Those who had been in the land service, were crowded into jails and dungeons like the vilest malefactors; and were represented as pining in cold, in filth, in hunger and nakedness.

" Our poor devoted soldiers," writes an eye-witness, " were scantily supplied with provisions of bad quality, wretchedly clothed, and destitute of sufficient fuel, if indeed they had any. Disease was the inevitable consequence, and their prisons soon became hospitals. A fatal malady was generated, and the mortality, to every heart not steeled by the spirit of party, was truly deplorable." According to popular account, the prisoners confined on shipboard, and on shore, were perishing by hundreds.

A statement made by a Captain Gamble, recently confined on board of a prison-ship, had especially roused the ire of Congress, and by their directions had produced a letter

from Washington to Lord Howe. " I am sorry," writes he, " that I am under the disagreeable necessity of troubling your lordship with a letter, almost wholly on the subject of the cruel treatment which our officers and men in the naval department, who are unhappy enough to fall into your hands, receive on board the prison-ships in the harbor of New York." After specifying the case of Captain Gamble, and adding a few particulars, he proceeds: " From the opinion I have ever been taught to entertain of your lordship's humanity, I will not suppose that you are privy to proceedings of so cruel and unjustifiable a nature; and I hope, that, upon making the proper inquiry, you will have the matter so regulated, that the unhappy persons whose lot is captivity, may not in future have the miseries of cold, disease, and famine, added to their other misfortunes. You may call us rebels, and say that we deserve no better treatment; but remember, my lord, that, supposing us rebels, we still have feelings as keen and sensible as loyalists, and will, if forced to it, most assuredly retaliate upon those upon whom we look as the unjust invaders of our rights, liberties and properties. I should not have said thus much, but my injured countrymen have long called upon me to endeavor to obtain a redress of their grievances, and I should think myself as culpable as those who inflict such severities upon them, were I to continue silent," &c. Lord Howe, in reply (Jan. 17), expressed himself surprised at the matter and language of Washington's letter, " so different from the liberal vein of sentiment he had been habituated to expect on every occasion of personal intercourse or correspondence with him." He was surprised, too, that " the idle and unnatural report " of Captain Gamble, respecting the dead and dying, and the neglect of precautions against infection, should meet with any credit. " Attention to preserve the lives of these men," writes he, " whom we esteem the misled subjects of the king, is a duty as binding on us, where we

are able from circumstances to execute it with effect, as any you can plead for the interest you profess in their welfare."

He denied that prisoners were ill treated in his particular department (the naval). They had been allowed the general liberty of the prison-ship, until a successful attempt of some to escape, had rendered it necessary to restrain the rest within such limits as left the commanding parts of the ship in possession of the guard. They had the same provisions in quality and quantity that were furnished to the seamen of his own ship. The want of cleanliness was the result of their own indolence and neglect. In regard to health, they had the constant attendance of an American surgeon, a fellow prisoner; who was furnished with medicines from the king's stores; and the visits of the physician of the fleet.

" As I abhor every imputation of wanton cruelty in multiplying the miseries of the wretched," observes his lordship, " or of treating them with needless severity, I have taken the trouble to state these several facts."

In regard to the hint at retaliation, he leaves it to Washington to act therein as he should think fit; but adds he grandly, " the innocent at my disposal will not have any severities to apprehend from me on that account."

We have quoted this correspondence the more freely, because it is on a subject deeply worn into the American mind; and about which we have heard too many particulars, from childhood upwards, from persons of unquestionable veracity, who suffered in the cause, to permit us to doubt about the fact. The Jersey Prisonship is proverbial in our revolutionary history; and the bones of the unfortunate patriots who perished on board, form a monument on the Long Island shore. The horrors of the

Sugar House converted into a prison, are traditional in New York; and the brutal tyranny of Cunningham, the provost marshal, over men of worth confined in the common jail, for the sin of patriotism, has been handed down from generation to generation.

That Lord Howe and Sir William were ignorant of the extent of these atrocities we really believe, but it was their duty to be well informed. War is, at best, a cruel trade, that habituates those who follow it to regard the sufferings of others with indifference. There is not a doubt, too, that a feeling of contumely deprived the patriot prisoners of all sympathy in the early stages of the Revolution. They were regarded as criminals rather than captives. The stigma of rebels seemed to take from them all the indulgences, scanty and miserable as they are, usually granted to prisoners of war. The British officers looked down with haughty contempt upon the American officers, who had fallen into their hands. The British soldiery treated them with insolent scurrility. It seemed as if the very ties of consanguinity rendered their hostility more intolerant, for it was observed that American prisoners were better treated by the Hessians than by the British. It was not until our countrymen had made themselves formidable by their successes that they were treated, when prisoners, with common decency and humanity.

The difficulties arising out of the case of General Lee interrupted the operations with regard to the exchange of prisoners; and gallant men, on both sides, suffered prolonged detention in consequence; and among the number the brave, but ill-starred Ethan Allen.

Lee, in the mean time, remained in confinement, until directions with regard to him should be received from government. Events, however, had diminished his

importance in the eyes of the enemy; he was no longer considered the American palladium. " As the capture of the Hessians and the man oeuvres against the British took place after the surprise of General Lee," observes a London writer of the day, " we find that he is not the only efficient officer in the American service.

## Chapter III.

The early part of the year brought the annual embarrassments caused by short enlistments. The brief terms of service for which the Continental soldiery had enlisted, a few months perhaps, at most a year, were expiring; and the men, glad to be released from camp duty, were hastening to their rustic homes. Militia had to be the dependence until a new army could be raised and organized; and Washington called on the council of safety of Pennsylvania, speedily to furnish temporary reinforcements of the kind.

All his officers that could be spared were ordered away, some to recruit, some to collect the scattered men of the different regiments, who were dispersed, he said, almost over the continent. General Knox was sent off to Massachusetts to expedite the raising of a battalion of artillery. Different States were urged to levy and equip their quotas for the Continental army. " Nothing but the united efforts of every State in America," writes he, " can save us from disgrace, and probably from ruin."

Rhode Island is reproached with raising troops for home service before furnishing its supply to the general army. " If each State," writes he, " were to prepare for its own defence independent of each other, they would all be

conquered, one by one. Our success must depend on a firm union, and a strict adherence to the general plan."

He deplores the fluctuating state of the army while depending on militia; full one day, almost disbanded the next. "I am much afraid that the enemy, one day or other, taking advantage of one of these temporary weaknesses, will make themselves masters of our magazines of stores, arms and artillery."

The militia, too, on being dismissed, were generally suffered by their officers to carry home with them the arms with which they had been furnished, so that the armory was in a manner scattered over all the world, and for ever lost to the public.

Then an earnest word is spoken by him in behalf of the yeomanry, whose welfare always lay near his heart. " You must be fully sensible," writes he, " of the hardships imposed upon individuals, and how detrimental it must be to the public to have farmers and tradesmen frequently called out of the field, as militia men, whereby a total stop is put to arts and agriculture, without which we cannot long subsist."

While thus anxiously exerting himself to strengthen his own precarious army, the security of the Northern department was urged upon his attention. Schuyler represented it as in need of reinforcements and supplies of all kinds. He apprehended that Carleton might make an attack upon Ticonderoga, as soon as he could cross Lake Champlain on the ice; that important fortress was under the command of a brave officer, Colonel Anthony Wayne, but its garrison had dwindled down to six or seven hundred men, chiefly New England militia. In the present destitute situation of his department as to troops, Schuyler feared that Carleton