



General Nathanael Greene
and his wife.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WASHINGTON AND HIS FRIENDS,

AS PRESERVED IN THE FAMILY OF GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE.

BY MARTHA LITTLEFIELD PHILLIPS.

WITH PICTURES BY MALCOLM FRASER.

I WAS the adopted child, and for many years the constant companion, of my grandmother Cornelia, next to the youngest daughter of Major-General Nathanael Greene. For my instruction she reviewed her early life, and entertained me with stories illustrative of that life. The grip of her recollection on those early times seemed to tighten as the years went on. Her memory was most tenacious, holding fast all of the incidents and observations of her youth.

I propose to collate in this article a few of her narratives of Revolutionary and later times. The earliest of these that I recall was her account of her first interview with her father. She was born while General Greene

was absent on military duty in the field, struggling to uphold the unequal fight for freedom. The baby who afterward became my grandmother was so small and delicate that grave fears were entertained of her life. Such a human mite was she at her birth that she was put into the big cider-mug of her grandfather, and the lid closed, without protest or any observable sense of discomfort.

For several years the once inmate of the cider-mug grew so slowly in stature that her mother was alarmed at the prospect of a dwarf. The midget developed, however, intellectually, and displayed a keenness of sensibility and intelligence that was almost uncanny. It was not until three years after the cider-mug event that General Greene was

able to get leave of absence and visit his home. After greeting his wife and elder children, he asked for his little stranger daughter. Mrs. Greene rang, and ordered the child to be brought; and accordingly the nurse fetched her into the room where the family were assembled.

«I remember distinctly,» said my grandmother, «young as I was, the scene of the introduction, and the sense of the importance I felt as the principal person in it. My great soldier-father, of whom I had heard so much and had never seen, was come, and had asked for my acquaintance. The nurse led me, arrayed for the occasion, to the door where my father, throbbing with expectation, awaited me, cheered with the thought of seeing in his youngest daughter the handsome face and form characterizing his other children. When the pale and dwarfish little creature crept to his side, he was overcome with sudden horror, and shut me out from his vision with hands clasped over his eyes, crying out to my mother, (For God's sake, Katie, take her away!) I read his feelings, and darting from the room, hid myself in the darkest corner of the nursery.

It was a long while before I consented to receive the slightest tender of reparation from my father, or could even be coaxed to look at him. By shows of contrition he finally conquered a peace with me, and made me ever after his pet and darling.

«Of my father his children stood in no sort of awe. On the contrary, he was our boon companion and playfellow, who winked at every atrocity we perpetrated. Discipline, however, we had in abundance from my mo-

ther. One could hardly differ more radically from another in emotional character than my mother from my father. She was undemonstrative, and exacted from her children implicit obedience and unfailing deference. I never entered a room where my mother was without a deep courtesy, and never left it without asking her permission. When I wrote to her from school, each letter began with

(Dear and honored Madam,) and closed with (Your obedient daughter.) It was not that I failed in love for my mother, but it was love mixed with fear. She was the most remarkable combination of intellectual power and physical beauty I have personally encountered in woman. Her glossy black hair, her brilliant violet eyes, her clear-cut features, transparent complexion, and exquisitely molded hands and feet, united to make her lovely. One of my great delights as a child was to steal into her dressing-room and watch the arraying of my beautiful mother for some brilliant function. Her blue-black hair, drifting from the poised head over alabaster shoulders, her tiny shoes aglint with diamond buckles, and the delicate laces enmeshing her



«(OF MY FATHER HIS CHILDREN STOOD IN NO SORT OF AWE.)»

in filmy glory, contributed to the make-up of a vision which centered the gaze of all eyes. I have to this day as an heirloom a pair of those tiny slippers which inclosed her feet. They were made to order in Paris, of white satin brocaded in blue forget-me-nots. The slippers, with their faded satin, are still mine, but minus, alas! the diamond buckles.»

In view of the grand toilets of the society dames of colonial and post-colonial days, I inferred that their children were somewhat similarly attired. On inquiry, my grandmo-

ther informed me that the reverse was the case.

«The mothers of that day,» she said, «did not approve of finery for children, and thus it was that my sisters and I wore cottage bonnets, and plain white linen dresses cut low neck and with short sleeves. These, worn winter as well as summer, supplemented by white stockings and black slippers, completed the outside of the young-girl costume of that period.»

«But, grandmother,» said I, «was it not very extravagant to clothe the girls with white linen frocks every day?»

«Waiving the question of extravagance,» she replied, «it was a matter of necessity. Cotton cloth was not then in use for any purpose, and therefore linen had to take the place of cotton in all of the latter's present uses. This reminds me that the first piece of cotton cloth woven in the United States was presented to my mother. My sisters and I covered it with embroidered buds and roses, done in tambour. From this a gown was made, which she wore, to the admiration of all beholders.

«Speaking of gowns,» continued my grandmother, with a far-away look in her eyes, «reminds me of the first beautiful frock of my childhood; and I speak to you of it because it is associated with a circumstance illustrative of my mother's method of child-training and discipline. I was ten years of age, and this my first beautiful vanity came to me as a present. It was gossamer in texture, and covered with delicate embroidery and rare lace. It was my delight; but I was permitted to wear it only on extraordinary occasions. Once—it is vivid as yesterday—

I was invited to spend a long day in the country with a party of fellow-madcaps. I secretly determined to wear my beautiful frock. Knowing that permission to do so would be denied, I arrayed myself in solitude, and waited alone in my room until the moment that the carriage was ready to bear my sisters and me to the scene of festivity. Then I ran with the speed of a frightened lapwing

and took my place in the carriage, where the others were already seated, and escaped detection. The day in the country was a poem. We plucked flowers and devoured fruit, ran races in the meadows, rode on horses that were without saddles and bridles, and climbed trees. In the intoxication of the romp my frock was soiled, stained, and rent. Reaching home, I hurried, with gathering tears and fluttering heart, to my mother's room. To my amazement, she showed no trace of anger. After a calm and judicial examination, she said, «Well, my daughter, it must be mended.» «But, mama,» I retorted, «that is impossible; it is torn to pieces.» «Nothing is impossible, dear, to patience and perseverance; the frock must be mended.» And it

was mended. For the next three weeks I invested two hours of each day threading dwarf-eyed needles, setting invisible stitches, and darning up to the exactions of pattern, until at last the impossible was accomplished.

«One other fact illustrative of my mother's mode of domestic administration occurs to me. The white sugar, then used exclusively for tea, came in long, conical loaves, and was broken into irregular, small lumps, and dropped into the tea-cups from the grip of massive sugar-tongs. My brother, Nathanael



«I NEVER ENTERED A ROOM WHERE MY MOTHER WAS WITHOUT A DEEP COURTESY.»

Greene, Jr., when a mere boy was extravagantly fond of this sugar, and often, after a hungry peep into the big silver sugar-bowl, would express the wish to eat it all.

«My mother in vain assured him that the granting of his wish would end in his sickness. He persisted; and finally, in response, she put the bowl of sugar before him, and compelled him to eat its entire contents! The short but sharp indisposition incurred was a lesson in forbidden saccharine things which my brother afterward declared had more power of reformation than a thousand sermons.»

«Give me, grandmother, the round of your customary daily pursuits in those days, so that I may form an idea of your life then, and that of other children of your age.»

She smiled, and replied: «I am afraid, my daughter, the answer to your question will seem to imply a reflection on the dreamy, pleasure-loving life you and your young friends of to-day are leading. My mother, and the mothers of her time, had a horror of idle hands and brains, which their

children considered almost sinful in its exaggeration. Each daughter of a household was assigned to certain domestic duties, the performance of which was faithfully enforced. No servant, for example, was ever permitted to touch the old silver of the family, or their delicate china, or to fill the vases with flowers, or to dust the ornaments of the drawing-rooms. In our home such functions were performed one week by me, and by my sisters the alternate weeks.

«In addition to such duties, we were carefully taught to knit, to do embroidery in all forms, to learn drawing, music, and dancing,

and acquire poise and grace of carriage. My mother set me in the stocks an hour every day to give the proper outward turn to my toes, and a back-board strapped to my spinal column was a daily companion until I became erect and statuesque of figure.»

Even then, in her seventy-fifth year, my grandmother had the grace and bearing of a queen.

«The second great event of my early life,» said she, «was my first interview with General Washington. But a faint suggestion now survives of the love and reverence for Washington which inspired the children of the Revolution. These sentiments were exceptionally strong in my brothers and sisters and myself, because in addition to the sentiment of patriotism was the personal regard we held for Washington as our father's intimate friend and immediate commander.

«My mother had deeply imbued me with the honor in store, and had drilled my behavior to meet all the probable requirements of the occasion. I was, for example, to rise from my seat for presen-

tation to General Washington, and after tendering him my profoundest courtesy, stand at ease, and modestly answer all his possible questions, but at the same time keep religiously in the background, where all the good little girls of that day were socially referred.

«The eventful day came, and I was taken by my mother to Mount Vernon to make the longed-for visit. We were graciously welcomed by Mrs. Washington; but my heart was so thick with fluttering, and my tongue so tied, that I made but a stuttering semblance of response to her kindly questions. At length the door opened, and General



«MY MOTHER SET ME IN THE STOCKS AN HOUR EVERY DAY.»

Washington entered the room. I felt my mother's critical eyes, and advanced with the intention of making a courtesy and declaiming the little address previously taught me; instead of which, I dropped on my knees

not have a tender sound, but language may not convey the gentleness of his manner and the winning softness of his voice, as he wiped away my tears with his own handkerchief, kissed my forehead, and led me to a seat as



«I WAS, FOR EXAMPLE, TO RISE FROM MY SEAT FOR PRESENTATION TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.»

at Washington's feet, and burst into tears. All the resources of dramatic art could hardly have devised a more effective coup. Washington stooped and tenderly raised me, saying with a smile, (Why, what is the matter with this foolish child?) The words do

he might a young princess. He sat beside me, and with laughing jests, brought down to the plane of my appreciation, banished my sins from my eyes, rescued me from humiliation, and brought me back to composure. He guarded me from my mother's outraged eyes,

kept me with him while in the drawing-room, had me placed beside him at the dinner-table, and with his own hands heaped all of the good revelations of my hopes and fears. It has always impressed me as a quaint and pretty picture, that of the famous warrior, states-



«SO PROUD AND HAPPY WAS THE LITTLE GIRL.»

things on my plate. After dinner he took me to walk in the garden, and with an intelligent stooping to my intellectual stature, and a sympathetic understanding of my emotional state and need, he drew me into talks on the themes of my daily life, and won me into man, and patriot turning from great affairs, and lending himself to the task of making the happiness and charming the confidence of a shy and frightened child. And so proud and happy was the little girl thus made that, seventy-five years afterward, she lives, with

tears of joy in her eyes, to tell the story to her granddaughter.»

«How about Mrs. Washington, grandmother? How did she impress you?» I asked.

«The fact is,» she replied, «I was so absorbed on that occasion with General Washington, I paid very little attention to his wife. She took small note of children, and the only recollection that comes to me of her in that first interview is that she was handsome, of dignified carriage, and was dressed in a rich figured silk, with an embroidered apron around her waist, and a dainty kerchief folded about her neck and shoulders.

«The third great event of my young life was my acquaintance with Lafayette. Child as I was, I appreciated in some degree the romance of his mission, and its significance to the patriot cause. He was young then, scarce risen to majority; and while full of the enthusiasm and fire of his nature and race, he had a gentleness of bearing and a benevolence of expression that won all hearts, especially the hearts of children. As the companion in arms and the beloved of my father, he was brought by the latter into the intimacy of our home circle, and became the idol of our affections. Partly because of his attachment to General Greene, and in part also, possibly, because the sight of young things, so far from France, had a special charm for him, a warm attachment sprang up between us, and he taught us to call him (our dear *marquis*,) with an evident enjoyment of the loving sound. A circumstance long afterward occurred which showed how kindly and faithfully Lafayette bore in mind the friendship for my father, woven from the ties of

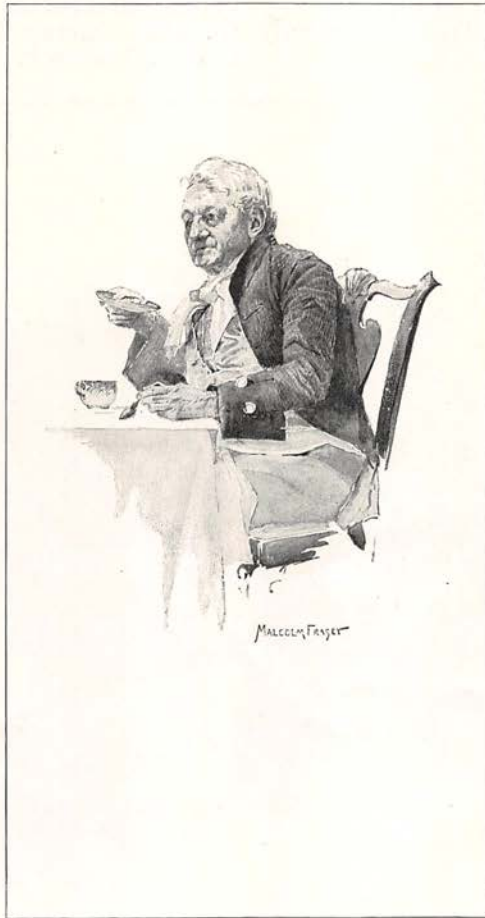
a common cause, a mutual love, and so many common dangers survived.

«My father's youngest son, and the son born to Lafayette during the Revolution, were both named George Washington. This fact abided with Lafayette, and after my father died he applied to my mother to allow him to take my brother George to France, where he might be educated with *his* George, so as

to perpetuate in the sons the love which had illustrated the lives of their fathers. My mother finally consented, and Lafayette's wish was carried into effect; for the boys grew up strong, in full health, thoroughly educated, and loving each other as fondly as their parents could have wished. But alas for human hopes! Shortly after my brother's return home, this young physical and intellectual athlete, so well equipped for the world's work, and on whom so many prayers and ambitious hopes centered, gave up life in its opening flower. A few weeks after his return home, in the midst of a pleasure sail with a party of young friends, his yacht was capsized by a squall, and every soul on board perished.»

«Tell me something of your school-days away from home,» I requested.

«I am afraid, my daughter,»—and the mischief of remembered pranks smiled in her face,—«I am afraid my story of those days would not be entirely edifying; for the impression rests with me that for a part of that period I was (little better than one of the wicked.) I was placed for four years at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, under the tuition of the Moravian nuns, excellent, good women, who strove with all their pious might to turn into a meek and manageable child the



«THE VISITOR DRANK HIS COFFEE FROM HIS SAUCER.»

breaker of rules, the ringleader in mischief, and the beguiler of the sedate, all of which I was during the first year of my school life. This wild surplus of vitality exhausted itself in a year, and after that I became a diligent student.»

«Now, grandmother, tell me something of your young ladyhood, and where its most charming period was passed.»

«Unquestionably the period of my *début*,» she replied, her eyes kindling.

«Where was that period passed?» I eagerly asked.

«In the Presidential mansion at Philadelphia, as the guest of General and Mrs. Washington. My great father had died three years before Washington's inauguration as President; and when, in the early part of his second administration, the young daughter of his friend and favorite general had grown into womanhood, he and Mrs. Washington sent for her, welcomed her to their home, and in name as well as deed launched her on the tide of social life as their daughter. I spent two winters with them in Philadelphia; and when I review in memory the occurrences



PRESTWOULD, THE FAMILY SEAT OF THE SKIPWITHS, VIRGINIA.



THE HALL AT PRESTWOULD.

of those winters, they seem more like chapters from dream-life than pages from the volume of my actual observations. Everything in America, in the way of men who had made its history, passed under my curious eyes; and many of them came into transient, and a few into permanent, relations with me. Chief of them all, the personality graven deepest on my recollection, is that of Alexander Hamilton. He was then in the meridian of his young manhood, intellectually as well as physically, and was not only a model of manly beauty, but distinguished by a refinement of thought and bearing which made him easily the most attractive man in the social life of his day.

« His marvelous genius for finance had just completed the miracle which Mr. Webster afterward happily described when he said: (Hamilton touched the dead corpse of the national credit, and it sprang to its feet.) Washington betrayed a tenderness of manner with Hamilton almost paternal. He loved and trusted the young fellow who had stood so loyally by him on many hard-fought fields, and had given him so many proofs of his fidelity, insight, and genius; and that one of the strong desires of his life was to see Hamilton

at some future time President of the United States he made no effort to disguise. Years afterward, when Hamilton was struck down by the hand of Aaron Burr, the whole land was oppressed with a sense of personal bereavement, and I was but one of thousands who wept over his untimely fate.

« One incident which occurred during that visit was so comical in itself, and so characteristic of Washington, that I recall it for your entertainment. Early in a bright December morning, a droll-looking old countryman called to see the President. In the midst of their interview breakfast was announced; and the President invited the visitor, as was his hospitable wont on such occasions, to a seat beside him at the table. The visitor drank his coffee from his saucer; but lest any grief should come to the snowy damask, he laboriously scraped the bottom of his cup on the saucer's edge before setting it down on the table-cloth. He did it with such audible vigor that it attracted my attention, and that of the several young people present, always on the alert for occasions of laughter. We were so indiscreet as to allow our amusement to become obvious. General Washington took in the situation, and immediately adopted his

visitor's method of drinking his coffee, making the scrape even more pronounced than the one he reproduced. Our disposition to laugh was quenched at once.

«From the shadow-land of those days,» said my grandmother, «there steals out the picture of a gown I wore, so unique in its embellishment, and so sensational in its effects on my companions, that I am moved to tell you of it. An affair of unusual state was to be given at the mansion; and my host and hostess were solicitous that I should pass with credit the challenge of the critical eyes, foreign and domestic, by which I should be studied on that occasion. My invention was aroused to devise something that might signalize my costume; for you must bear in mind that in those days silks and satins were the monopoly of the matrons, and the highest flight in stuffs permitted a girl was India muslin. On the wings of the countless black-birds which infested the plantation of my mother in southern Georgia were small glittering tufts, as brilliantly red as the plumage of a flamingo. From these radiant tufts I had wreaths arranged, and with these the skirt and waist of my gown gleamed from hem to shoulder. «There needs but one thing to complete the picture,» said Mrs. Washington, as she brought, and had fastened into my sleeves and around my willing arms, a lovely piece of Brussels lace. «With my love,» she continued, and sanctified the gift with a pressure of tender lips. For that night, in very truth, I was the observed of all observers.

«There, my daughter, you are a naughty girl! For you have aided and connived at a resuscitation of vanity in the heart of an old woman.¹

«The rest of my life as a young lady was passed at (Dungeness,) the beautiful home of my mother, constructed for her by General Greene, on Cumberland Island, just off the coast of Georgia. It was a superb pile, five stories high, with walls of great thickness, and constructed of (tabby,) a material made from oyster-shells, and supposed to be indestructible. The grounds were extensive, over-canopied with wide-spreading live-oaks and olive-trees, and brightened with flowers. For years Dungeness was the center of a wide and generous hospitality, and covered with its welcoming roof many of the companions in arms of my father. Chief of those in my recollection was bluff General Knox, who gave me my earliest lessons in horse-back-riding, and fought the battles of the

Revolution over again, in description, for my special edification.

«Long afterward came (Light-Horse Harry) Lee to Dungeness, saying prophetically, as he entered its doors: (I come to lay my bones among the children of my comrade in arms.) Not long afterward the expressed purpose of his coming was fulfilled, and he was buried at Dungeness. I am advised that his remains have since been removed by the members of his family, and now rest in the family tomb in Virginia.

«During my life at Dungeness a circumstance occurred there of some historic and scientific interest, and in regard to which much erroneous statement has been made. I refer to the invention of the cotton-gin by Eli Whitney, and my mother's connection with it. The facts, briefly stated, were about as follows: While spending the previous summer at Newport, Rhode Island, my mother became acquainted with Mr. Whitney, and grew much interested in the outcome of the experiments he was then making in the interest of his projected gin. To assist in his enterprise, my mother invited him to spend the following winter at Dungeness, where an abundance of cotton and quiet could be assured. Mr. Whitney accordingly came to Dungeness, and diligently pursued his experiments, a room in the fifth story having been specially fitted for his use as an inventor. One morning he descended headlong into the drawing-room, where a number of guests were assembled, and excitedly exclaimed, (The victory is mine!) In deep sympathy with him, the guests and hostess went with him to his workshop. Whitney set his model in motion. For a few moments the miniature saws revolved without hindrance, and the separation of the seed from the cotton-wool was successfully accomplished; but after a little the saws clogged with lint, the wheel stopped, and poor Whitney was in despair.

«(Here 's what you need!) exclaimed my mother, in her clear, decisive way; and she instantly seized a clothes-brush lying on the mantel, and held it firmly to the teeth of the saws. Again the drum revolved, and instantly the saws were cleaned of the lint, and the last requirement of the great invention was satisfied.

«(Madam,) said Whitney, overcome with emotion, and speaking with the exaggeration of gratitude, (you have perfected my invention!)

¹ The piece of lace referred to by my grandmother was given by her to her granddaughter Virginia Grey

Skipwith, the wife of Major John Withers Green of Atlanta, who still treasures it as a sacred heirloom.

My grandmother first married Mr. Peyton Skipwith, the eldest son in America of Sir Peyton Skipwith, Baronet, of (Prestwould,) the family seat of the Skipwiths in Mecklen-

She was born in our first, and died during the fratricidal throes of what, please God, was our last, revolution. She prayed that the cup of that bitterness might be spared



«HERE 'S WHAT YOU NEED!»

burg County, Virginia. Some years after the death of Mr. Skipwith she was married to my grandfather, Mr. Edward Brinley Littlefield of Newport, Rhode Island, leaving children of both marriages, whose descendants reside in different parts of our country.

her lips—that when her eyes closed they might be shut on a happy, united, and harmonious people. To her, more perhaps than to any living man or woman, our war of sections was an immeasurable horror. Hers, probably more than any heart in America,

was torn by conflicting agonies. Every aspiration of her soul turned to the star-faced banner which Washington, Lafayette, and her own soldier-father had so largely helped to make the emblem of a great nation. On the one side she was drawn, by the forces of nativity, friends, and kinsmen, to the North;

on the other side, by the irresistible ties of blood, home, and children, to the South. Rent by this mortal conflict, the vital powers of eighty-nine years succumbed; and she was laid at rest in her Mississippi home, her frail coffin vibrating with the thunder of hostile cannon.



RUINS OF DUNGENESS.

MADAME BUTTERFLY.

BY JOHN LUTHER LONG.

I.

SAYRE had counseled him on the voyage out (for he had repined ceaselessly at what he called their banishment to the Asiatic station) to wait till they arrived. *He* had never regarded service in Japanese waters as banishment, he said, and he had been out twice before.

Pinkerton had just come from the Mediterranean.

«For lack of other amusement,» continued Sayre, with a laugh, «you might get yourself married and—»

Pinkerton arrested him with a savage snort.

«You are usually merely frivolous, Sayre; but to-day you are silly.»

Without manifest offense, Sayre went on:

«When I was out here in 1890—»

«The story of the Pink Geisha?»

«Well—yes,» admitted Sayre, patiently.

«Excuse me, then, till you are through.»

He turned to go below.

«Heard it, have you?»

«A thousand times—from you and others.»

Sayre laughed good-naturedly, and passed Pinkerton his cigarette-case.

«Ah! Ever heard who the man was?»

«No.» He lighted his cigarette. «That has been your own little mystery—apparently.»

«Apparently?»

«Yes; we all knew it was yourself.»

«It was n't,» said Sayre, steadily. «It was my brother.» He looked away.

«Oh!»

«He's dead.»

«Beg pardon. You never told us that.»

«He went back; could n't find her.»

«And you advise me also to become a subject for remorse? That's good of you.»

«It is not quite the same thing. There is no danger of you losing your head for—» he glanced uncertainly at Pinkerton, then ended lamely—«any one. The danger would probably be entirely with—the other person.»

«Thanks,» laughed Pinkerton; «that's more comforting.»

«And yet,» mused Sayre, «you are hard to comfort—humanly speaking.»

Pinkerton smiled at this naïve but quite exact characterization of himself.

«You are,» continued Sayre, hesitating for the right word, «impervious.»

«Exactly,» laughed Pinkerton. «I don't see much danger to myself in your prescription. You have put it in rather an attractive light. The idea cannot be entirely disreputa-