MY AMERICA STORY BOOK

A New Nation

A Compilation of Historical
Biographies for the Young Reader

Compiled by Marlene Peterson

Libraries of Hope

My America Story Book
Book Six: A New Nation

Cover Image: Washington's Inauguration at Philadelphia, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (before 1925). In public domain, source Wikimedia Commons.

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Chapter 1

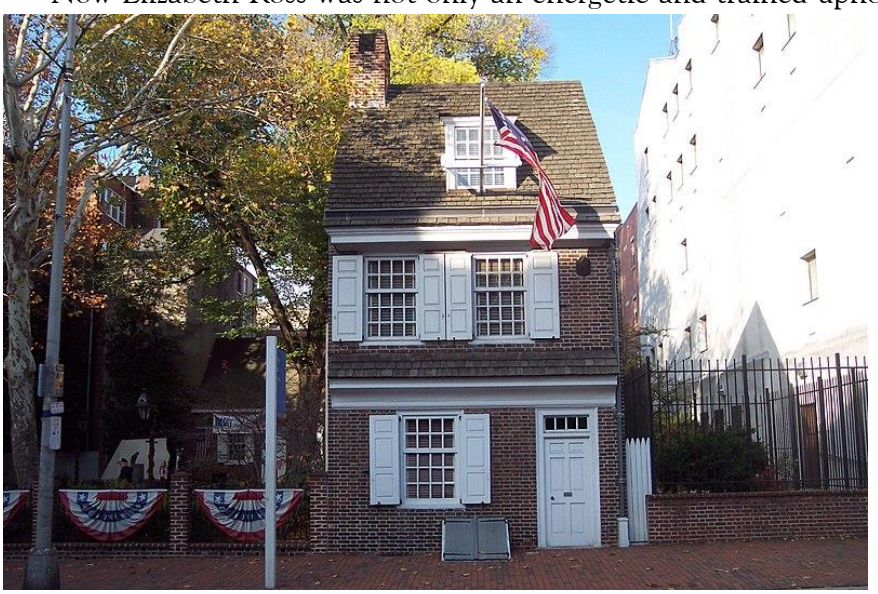
Betsy Ross and Our American Flag

1752-1836

In 1752 the eighth child was born in the Quaker family of Griscom in Philadelphia, and was named Elizabeth. Nine other children came after her, so with a total of sixteen brothers and sisters you may be sure she never had much opportunity to be lonely. Perhaps the large number of children is the explanation for her being apprenticed at Webster's, the leading upholstery establishment in the city. There Elizabeth became acquainted with John Ross, one of her fellow-apprentices; their friendship grew to love, and when she was twenty-one they were married. Now John Ross was the son of an Episcopal clergyman and because of that fact Elizabeth was "disowned" by the Friends for her marriage.

Soon afterward they left Webster's and opened a little upholstery shop of their own, in a two-story house on Arch Street a quaint little house that was old then, for it was built of bricks that came over to America as ballast in one of William Penn's vessels. It is still standing, in a good state of preservation, and very little changed from the old days, with its wide doors, big cupboards, narrow stairs and tiny window-panes. The front room was the shop, where Elizabeth and John waited on customers; and next to this was the back parlor.

Now Elizabeth Ross was not only an energetic and trained upholsterer, she was also the most skilful needlewoman in Philadelphia, and had a great reputation for embroidering and darning. There was a story current of a young lady visiting in the city, who wanted an elaborately embroidered frock mended. She was directed to take it to Mistress Betsy Ross. And the owner said, when it was finished, that the darning was the handsomest part of the gown! Considerable artistic skill had Betsy, too, for she could draw freehand, very



Betsy Ross' House, Philadelphia, PA

rapidly and accurately, the complicated designs used in those days for quilting. Withal she was a thoroughly efficient housekeeper.

The happiness of the Ross family was not to last long. The spirit of liberty was awakening among the colonists, the spirit of resistance to the demands of the mother country. In common with many patriotic women, Betsy Ross saw her husband march away for military service. With several other young men he was guarding cannon balls and artillery stores on one of the city wharves along the Delaware River, when he received a serious injury, from the effects of which he died in January, 1776, after long and anxious nursing on the part of his young wife. He was buried in the Christ Church burying-ground; and in that historic old Philadelphia church you can still see the Ross pew, marked with the Stars and Stripes.

There was Betsy Ross, a widow at twenty-four. She determined to maintain herself independently, if possible, and to continue alone the upholstery business they had developed together. About five months after her husband's death, some time between the twenty-second of May and the fifth of June, she was one day working in the shop when three gentlemen called.

The first was General Washington, in Philadelphia for a few days to consult the Continental Congress. Mistress Ross had frequently seen him, for the story is that he had visited her shop more than once, to have her embroider the ruffles for his shirts, an important branch of fine hand-sewing in those days. With him was Robert Morris, to go down in history as the treasurer and financier of the Revolution; and her husband's uncle, Colonel George Ross, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

These gentlemen had come to consult her. She knew, of course, how the various banners carried by troops from the different colonies, as well as by different regiments, had caused confusion and might mean danger. It was time to do away with the pine tree flag, the beaver flag, the rattlesnake flag, the hope flag, the silver crescent flag, the anchor flag, the liberty tree flag, and all the rest of them, and have a single standard for the American army. Betsy Ross had heard, too, of the Cambridge flag, often called the grand union flag, which Washington had raised the New Year's day before, a flag half English, half American, with thirteen red and white stripes, and the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew. But since the first of the year events had moved rapidly and the desire for separation from England had become steadily stronger. A new flag was needed, to show the growing spirit of Americanism which was soon to crystallize on the fourth of July.

All this Betsy Ross knew, as a good patriot would. And she could not have been greatly surprised when General Washington said they had come to consult her about a national flag.

"Can you make a flag?" he asked.

Modestly and with some diffidence she replied, "I don't know, sir, but I can try."

Then in the little back parlor Washington showed her a rough sketch; he had made a square flag with thirteen stripes of red and white, and thirteen stars in the blue canton. He asked her opinion of the design. With unerring accuracy of eye she saw at once what was needed to make the flag more beautiful, more attractive. She suggested that the proportions be changed, so that the length would be a third more than the width; that the thirteen stars should not be scattered irregularly over the canton, but grouped to form some design, say a circle or a star, or placed in parallel rows; and lastly that a five-pointed star was more symmetrical than one with six points.

"But," asked Washington, "isn't it more difficult to make?"

In answer practical Betsy Ross took up a piece of paper, folded it over, and with one dip of her scissors cleverly made a perfect star with five even points.

That was sufficient, and the general drew up his chair to her table and made another pencil sketch, embodying her three suggestions. The second sketch was copied and colored by a Philadelphia artist, William Barrett, a painter of some note, who returned it to Mistress Ross. Meantime not knowing just how to make a flag, for it must be sewed in a particular way, she went to a shipping merchant, an old Scotchman who was a friend of Robert Morris, to borrow a ship's flag as a guide.

Betsy Ross, Charles H. Weisgerber

And in this way Betsy Ross made the first Stars and Stripes. To try the effect, the new flag was run up to the peak of one of the vessels in the Delaware River, the story goes, a ship commanded by Paul Jones; and the result was so pleasing that on the same day the flag was carried into Congress and approved. At the same time the Congress passed a resolution putting Paul Jones in command of the *Ranger.*

"The flag and I were born the same day and hour," Jones used to say. "We are twins, we can not be parted in life or death. So long as we can float, we shall float together. If we must sink we shall go down as one."

It was not until June 14, 1777, that the Continental Congress passed a resolution formally adopting this flag as the national standard, a resolution reported to have been introduced by John Adams. Another and unexplained delay followed, for not until September was this resolution publicly promulgated.

The fact that Betsy Ross was not named in the *Congressional Record* has been considered by some sufficient evidence that the whole story is a myth. But there is no Congressional record whatever about the Cambridge flag, which was used for almost a year. Is it surprising then that its modification was not put on record promptly? There was no newspaper notice of the resolution of June fourteenth, the basis of our modern flag day. And in all the letters and diaries and writings of the time, there is found no mention of this flag resolution. Betsy Ross had made the flag months earlier, and all that time it had been gradually coming into use. Does not that explain the apparent lack of

interest? This story she told, over and over and over, to her daughters and grandchildren, and in later years they wrote the account down, just as they had heard it from her, and as you have read it here.

We know too from other records that before the flag was officially adopted by Congress, Elizabeth Ross was engaged in flagmaking. For in May of 1777 the state navy board of Pennsylvania passed an order to pay her the sum of fourteen pounds, twelve shillings and two pence, for making ships' colors for the fleet in the Delaware River. And immediately after the resolution did pass, she was authorized to proceed at once to manufacture a large number of flags for the Continental Congress.

For more than fifty years Betsy Ross continued to make government flags, with her daughters and nieces, and later her grandchildren, helping her. She continued to sew red and white stripes together and put five-pointed stars on the blue canton, even after her second marriage to a sea captain, while he went back and forth to Europe on his dangerous business and during his imprisonment in England where he died. When his friend, who had been a fellow-prisoner, was finally released and returned to Philadelphia to deliver to Betsy Ross her husband's little property, she married this messenger and kept on making flags. Except for a brief residence with her daughter, she continued

The Birth of Old Glory, Edward Percy Moran

to live in the quaint little house on Arch Street where the flag was born. Shortly before her death she became completely blind; but her busy fingers must keep on stitching, and with her little grandsons to sort the colors for her, she sewed happily on carpet rags.

When Mistress Ross retired from the business of making flags her daughter Clarissa took over this work and carried it on until 1857. Flags of many kinds they made for army and navy, for arsenals and the merchant marine; flags with thirteen stars in a circle, like a round-robin to show that one state should have no precedence over the others; flags with stars in parallel rows of four, five and four; flags with fifteen stripes and stars; flags bearing the arms of Pennsylvania, painted on the silk by William Barrett.

It was George Washington, more than any other, who seems to have been most interested in the question of a national flag. But it was to the skilled needlewoman that he took his first rough design, to have her opinion of its worth. It is to Betsy Ross that much of the beauty of our flag is due. A true patriot of Revolutionary times, her humble life is an incentive to others, showing that there is more than one way to serve the nation even if one is known only as a maker of ruffles.

Says a great writer: "Every color means liberty; every thread means liberty; every form of star and beam or stripe of light means liberty. It is not a painted rag."

Red means love; some persons say it means divine love, that is, the love of God. It is the language of bravery and the emblem of war. Red was the field color of England's flag and the colonial army flag. Red denotes daring and defiance; and it also tells of the blood our forefathers shed for their rights. This meaning appears in the crimson stripes of the flag. White means truth and hope. It is the language of purity and the emblem of peace.

Blue means loyalty, sincerity, justice. Blue was the color of the Covenanter's banner, of Scotland, adopted by them in opposition to the scarlet of the royalty; its choice is based on Numbers xv. 38: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringes of the borders a ribband of blue." Other nations, to be sure, had previously used these colors, but never in such a beautiful design as "Old Glory."

Our flag, my young friends, is not a borrowed one. We did not get it from any other country. Its babyhood bore some resemblance to its English cousins; but that was because it was a baby. It is really unlike any other flag.

OUR FIRST FLAG

Tune: Yankee Doodle

When Uncle Sam his first flag made
    To wave for freedom's cause, sir,
He called upon a gentle dame
    Whose name was Betsy Ross, sir,
She showed the stripes to Washington,
    Composed of red and white, sir.
Clipped thirteen stars out one by one
    For States that did unite, sir.

Three great men watched her as she wrought
Our nation's emblem new, sir;
Inspired by her skill and thought
Its folds in beauty grew, sir.
She deftly blent its rosy light
With blue from Heaven's dome, sir.
Then circled it with stars of night
To show 'twas Freedom's home, sir!

Each patriot his approval showed
With dignity and grace, sir.
Their gratitude for gifts bestowed
Smiled forth from every face, sir.
Said Morris then to Washington,
"That is the very thing, sir!
'Twill make the red coats turn and run,
And scare old George, the King, sir."

Then Betsy neatly wrapped the flag
And gave it the committee;
She told them not to let it drag
As they walked through the city.
We'll never let it touch the earth,
Nor soil its matchless beauty,
For flag of such a noble birth
Shall keep us true to duty.

Chapter 2

The Crisis

Exactly eight years from the day when:

> "the embattled farmers stood,
> And fired the shot heard round the world,"

the Continental Congress informed General Washington that the war was over. In September, 1783, the formal treaty of peace was signed; a month later, the Continental army was disbanded; and three weeks later, the British army sailed from New York.

What a pathetic and impressive scene took place at a little tavern, in lower New York, when Washington said good-by to his generals! With hearts too full for words, and with eyes dimmed with tears, these veterans embraced their chief and bade him farewell.

A few days before Christmas, Washington gave up the command of the army, and hurried away to spend the holidays at Mount Vernon.

"The times that tried men's souls are over," wrote the author of "Common Sense," a man whose writings voiced the opinions of the people.

Freedom was indeed won, but the country was in a sad plight.

"It is not too much to say," says John Fiske, "that the period of five years following the peace of 1783 was the most critical moment in all the history of the American people."

Thirteen little republics, fringing the Atlantic, were hemmed in on the north, the south, and the west, by two hostile European nations that were capable of much mischief.

In 1774, under the pressure of a common peril and the need of quick action, the colonies had banded together for the common good. By a kind of general consent their representatives in the Continental Congress had assumed the task of carrying on the war. But for nine years Congress had steadily declined in power, and now that peace had come and the need of united action was removed, there was danger that this shadowy union would dissolve. Believing strongly in their own state governments, the people had almost no feeling in favor of federation.

Just before the disbanding of the army and his retirement to private life, Washington wrote a letter to the governor of each colony. This letter, he said, was his "legacy" to the American people.

He urged the necessity of forming a more perfect union, under a single government. He declared that the war debt must be paid to the last penny; that the people must be willing to sacrifice some of their local interests for the common good; and that they must regard one another as fellow citizens of a common country.

We must not make the mistake of thinking that the Continental Congress was like our present national Congress.

When the struggle between the colonies and the mother country threatened war, the colonies through their assemblies, or special conventions, chose delegates to represent them in Philadelphia. These delegates composed the first Continental Congress. It met on September 5, 1774, and broke up during the last week of the following October.

Three weeks after Lexington, a second Congress met in the same city. This was the Congress that appointed Washington commander in chief, and issued the immortal Declaration of Independence.

In the strict sense of the word, this body had no legal authority. It was really a meeting of delegates from the several colonies, to advise and consult with each other concerning the public welfare.

There was war in the land. Something must be done to meet the crisis. The Continental Congress, therefore, acted in the name of the "United Colonies."

Many of the ablest and most patriotic men of the country were sent as delegates to this Congress; and until the crowning victory at Yorktown, although without clearly defined powers, it continued to act, by common consent, as if it had the highest authority. It made an alliance with France; it built a navy; it granted permits to privateers; it raised and organized an army; it borrowed large sums of money, and issued paper bills.

A few days after the Declaration of Independence was signed, a form of government, called the "Articles of Confederation," was brought before Congress; but it was not adopted until several weeks after the surrender of Burgoyne, in 1777.

The "Articles" were not finally ratified by the states until the spring of 1781.

The constitution thus adopted was a league of friendship between the states. It was bad from beginning to end; for it dealt with the thirteen states as thirteen units, and not with the people of the several states. It never secured a hold upon the people of the country, and for very good reasons.

Each state, whether large or small, had only one vote. A single delegate from Delaware or from Rhode Island could balance the whole delegation from New York or from Virginia.

Congress had no power to enforce any law whatever. It could recommend all manner of things to the states, but it could do nothing more. It could not even protect itself.

Hence, the states violated the "Articles" whenever they pleased. Thus Congress might call for troops, but the states could refuse to obey. Without the consent of every state, not a dollar could be raised by taxation.

At one time, twelve states voted to allow Congress to raise money to pay the soldiers; but little Rhode Island flatly refused, and the plan failed. The next year Rhode Island consented, but New York refused.

Although Congress had authority to coin money, to issue bills of credit, and to make its notes legal tender for debts, each one of the thirteen states had the same authority.

Money affairs got into a wretched condition. Paper money became almost worthless. The year after Saratoga, a paper dollar was worth only sixteen cents, and early in 1780 its value had fallen to two cents.

A trader in Philadelphia papered his shop with dollar bills, to show what he thought of the flimsy stuff. In the year of Cornwallis's surrender, a bushel of corn sold for one hundred and fifty dollars; and Samuel Adams, the Boston patriot, had to pay two thousand dollars for a hat and a suit of clothes.

A private soldier had to serve four months before his pay would buy a bushel of wheat. When he could not collect this beggarly sum, is it any wonder that he deserted or rebelled?

At one time, being unable to get money for the army, Congress asked the states to contribute supplies of corn, pork, and hay.

To add to the general misery, the states began to quarrel with one another, like a lot of schoolboys. They almost came to bloodshed over boundary lines, and levied the most absurd taxes and duties.

If a Connecticut farmer brought a load of firewood into New York, he had to pay a heavy duty. Sloops that sailed through Hell Gate, and Jersey market boats that crossed to Manhattan Island, were treated as if from foreign ports. Entrance fees had to be paid, and clearance papers must be got at the custom house.

The country was indeed in a bad condition. There were riots, bankruptcy, endless wranglings, foreclosed mortgages, and imprisonment for debt.

The gallant Colonel Barton, who captured General Prescott, was kept locked up because he could not pay a small sum of money. Robert Morris, once a wealthy merchant, was sent to jail for debt, although he had given his whole fortune to the patriot cause.

Thoughtful and patriotic men and women throughout the country felt that something must be done.

Washington and other far-sighted men of Virginia began to work out the problem. First it was proposed that delegates from two or three states should meet at Annapolis, to discuss the question of trade. Finally all the states were invited to send delegates.

At this meeting, only twelve delegates, from five states, were present. Alexander Hamilton wrote an eloquent address, which it was voted to send to the state assemblies, strongly recommending that delegates should be appointed to meet at Philadelphia on the second day of May, 1787.

This plan, however, Congress promptly rejected.

During the winter of 1786, the times were perhaps even harder, and the country nearer to the brink of civil war and ruin. There were riots in New Hampshire and in Vermont and Shays's Rebellion in the old Bay State. There were also the threatened separation of the Northern and Southern states, the worthless paper money, wildcat speculation, the failure to carry out certain provisions of the treaty of peace, and many troubles of less importance.

As we may well suppose, all this discord made King George and his court happy. He declared that the several states would soon repent, and beg on bended knees to be taken back into the British empire.

When it was predicted in Parliament that we should become a great nation, a British statesman, who bore us no ill will, said, "It is one of the idlest and most visionary notions that was ever conceived even by a writer of romance."

Frederick the Great was friendly to us, but he declared that nobody but a king could ever rule so large a country.

All these unhappy events produced a great change in public opinion. People were convinced that anarchy might be worse than the union of these thirteen little commonwealths, under a strong, central government. At this great crisis in affairs, Virginia boldly took the lead, and promptly sent seven of her ablest citizens, one of whom was Washington, to the Philadelphia convention. This

was a masterly stroke of policy. People everywhere applauded, and the tide of popular sentiment soon favored the convention. At last Congress yielded to the voice of the people and approved the plan. Every state except Rhode Island sent delegates.

It was a notable group of Americans that met in one of the upper rooms of old Independence Hall, the last week of May, 1787. There were fifty-five delegates in all, some of whom, however, did not arrive for several weeks after the convention began its meetings.

Eight of the delegates had signed the Declaration of Independence, in the same room; twenty-eight had been members of the Continental Congress, and seven had been governors of states. Two afterwards became presidents of the United States, and many others in after years filled high places in the national government.

Head and shoulders above all others towered George Washington. The man most widely known, except Washington, was Benjamin Franklin, eighty-one years old; the youngest delegate was Mr. Dayton of New Jersey, who was only twenty-six.

Here also were two of the ablest statesmen of their time, Alexander Hamilton of New York, and James Madison of Virginia.

Connecticut sent two of her great men, Oliver Ellsworth, afterwards chief justice of the United States, and Roger Sherman, the learned shoemaker.

Near Robert Morris, the great financier, sat his namesake, Gouverneur Morris, who originated our decimal system of money, and James Wilson, one of the most learned lawyers of his day.

The two brilliant Pinckneys and John Rutledge, the silver-tongued orator, were there to represent South Carolina.

Then there were Elbridge Gerry and Rufus King of Massachusetts, John Langdon of New Hampshire, John Dickinson of Delaware, and the great orator, Edmund Randolph of Virginia.

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams would no doubt have been delegates, had they not been abroad in the service of their country. Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams remained at home; for they did not approve of the convention.

How Rhode Island must have missed her most eminent citizen, Nathanael Greene, who had just died of sunstroke, in the prime of manhood!

Washington was elected president of the convention. The doors were locked, and, every member being pledged to secrecy, they settled down to work.

Just what was said and done during those four months was for more than fifty years kept a profound secret. After the death of James Madison, often called the "Father of the Constitution," his journal was published, giving a complete account of the proceedings.

When the delegates began their work, they soon realized what a problem it was to frame a government for the whole country. As might have been expected, some of these men had a fit of moral cowardice. They began to cut and to trim, and tried to avoid any measure of thorough reform.

Washington was equal to the occasion. He was not a brilliant orator, and his speech was very brief; but the solemn words of this majestic man, as his tall figure drawn up to its full height rose from the presidents chair, carried conviction to every delegate.

"If, to please the people," he said, "we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterward defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair; the event is in the hand of God."

The details of what this convention did would be dull reading; but some day we shall want to study in our school work the noble Constitution which these men framed.

The gist of the whole matter is that our Federal Constitution is based upon three great compromises.

The first compromise was between the small and the large states. In the upper house, or Senate, equal representation was conceded to all the states, but in the lower house of Congress, representation was arranged according to the population.

Thus, as you know, little Rhode Island and Delaware have each two senators, while the great commonwealths of New York and Ohio have no more. In the House of Representatives, on the other hand, New York has thirty-seven representatives, and Ohio has twenty-one, while Rhode Island has two, and Delaware only one.

The second compromise was between the free and the slave states.

Were the slaves to be counted as persons or as goods?

South Carolina and Georgia maintained that they were persons; the Northern states said they were merely property.

Now indeed there was a clashing over local interest; but it was decided that in counting the population, whether for taxation, or for representation in the lower house, a slave should be considered as three fifths of an individual. And so it stood until the outbreak of the Civil War.

It was a bitter pill for far-sighted men like Washington, Madison, and others, who hated slavery. Without this compromise, however, they believed that nine slave states would never adopt the Constitution, and doubtless they were right.

The slave question was the real bone of contention that resulted in the third compromise. The majority of the delegates, especially those from Virginia, were bitterly opposed to slavery.

"This infernal traffic that brings the judgment of Heaven on a country!" said George Mason of Virginia.

At first, it was proposed to abolish foreign slave trade. South Carolina and Georgia sturdily protested.

"Are we wanted in the Union?" they said.

They declared that it was not a question of morality or of religion, but purely a matter of business.

Rhode Island had refused to send delegates; and those from New York had gone home in anger. The discussions were bitter, and the situation became dangerous.

While the convention "was scarcely held together by the strength of a hair," the question came up for discussion, whether Congress or the individual states should have control over commerce.

The New England states, with their wealth of shipping, said that by all means Congress should have the control, and should make a uniform tariff in all the states. This, it was believed, would put an end to all the wranglings and the unjust acts which were so ruinous to commerce.

The extreme Southern states that had no shipping said it would never do; for New England, by controlling the carrying trade, would extort ruinous prices for shipping tobacco and rice.

When the outlook seemed darkest, two of the Connecticut delegates suggested a compromise.

"Yes," said Franklin, "when a carpenter wishes to fit two boards, he sometimes pares off a bit from each."

It was finally decided that there should be free trade between the states, and that Congress should control commerce.

To complete the "bargain," nothing was to be done about the African slave trade for twenty years. Slavery had been slowly dying out both in the North and in the South, for nearly fifty years. The wisest men of 1787 believed that it would speedily die a natural death and give way to a better system of labor.

It was upon these three great foundation stones, or compromises, that our Constitution was built. The rest of the work, while very important, was not difficult or dangerous. The question of choosing a president, and a hundred other less important matters were at last settled.

The scorching summer of 1787 was well-nigh spent before the great document was finished. The convention broke up on September 17. Few of its members were satisfied with their work. None supposed it complete.

Tradition says that Washington, who was the first to sign, standing by the table, held up his pen and said solemnly, "Should the states reject this excellent Constitution, they probably will never sign another in peace. The next will be drawn in blood."

Of the delegates who were present on the last day of the convention, all but three signed the Constitution.

It is said that when the last man had signed, many of the delegates seemed awe-struck at what they had done. Washington himself sat with head bowed in deep thought.

Thirty-three years before this, and before some of the delegates then present were born, Franklin had done his best to bring the colonies into a federal union. He was sixty years of age when, in this very room, he put his name to the Declaration of Independence. Now, as the genial old man saw the noble aim of his life accomplished, he indulged in one of his homely bits of pleasantry.

There was a rude painting of a half sun, gorgeous with its yellow rays, on the back of the president's black armchair. When Washington solemnly rose, as the meeting was breaking up, Franklin pointed to the chair and said, "As I have been sitting here all these weeks, I have often wondered whether that sun behind our president is rising or setting. Now I do know that it is a rising sun."

The Constitution was sent to the Continental Congress, who submitted it to the people of the several states for their approval. It was agreed that when it was adopted by nine states, it should become the supreme law of the land.

Now for the first time there was a real national issue. The people arranged themselves into two great political parties, the Federalists, who believed in a strong government and the new Constitution, and the Anti-Federalists, who were opposed to a stronger union between the states.

And now what keen discussions, bitter quarrels, and scurrilous and abusive newspaper articles! A bloodless war of squibs, broadsides, pamphlets, and frenzied oratory was waged everywhere.

Hamilton and Madison were "mere boys" and "visionary young men"; Franklin was an "old dotard" and "in his second childhood"; and as for Washington, "What did he know about politics?"

The Constitution was called "a triple-headed monster." Many able men sincerely believed it to be "as deep and wicked a conspiracy as ever was invented in the darkest ages against the liberties of the people."

How eloquently did such men as Hamilton, Madison, Randolph, Jay, "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, John Marshall, Fisher Ames, and a score of other "makers of our country" defend the "New Roof,"

as the people were then fond of calling the Federal Constitution!

A series of short essays written by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, and published under the name of "The Federalist," were widely read. Although written at a white heat, their grave and lofty eloquence and their stern patriotism carried conviction to the hearts of the people.

"The Delaware State," as it was called, was the first to adopt the Constitution. It was not until the next June that Massachusetts and Virginia ratified it, as the sixth and tenth states. New York next fell into line in July.

The victory was won! The "New Roof" was up and finished, supported by eleven stout pillars!

On the glorious "Fourth" in 1788, there was great rejoicing throughout the land. Bonfires, stump speeches, fireworks, processions, music, gorgeous banners, and barbecues of oxen expressed the joy of the people over the establishment of a federal government.

"Hurrah for the United States of America!" shouted every patriot. "The good ship Constitution" was at last fairly launched.

The wheels of the new government began to turn slowly and with much friction. It was not until the first week of April, 1789, that the House of Representatives and the Senate met and counted the electoral votes for a President of the newly born nation. There were sixty-nine votes in all, and of these every one was for George Washington. John Adams was the second choice of the electoral college. He received thirty-four votes, and was accordingly declared Vice President.

Thus was formed and adopted our just and wise Constitution, which, except for a few amendments, has ever since been the supreme law of the land. This document has been called by Gladstone "the greatest work ever struck off at any time by the mind and purpose of man." To it we owe our prosperity and our high place among nations.

Shipping in a Calm at Flushing with a States General Yacht Firing a Salute, Jan van de Cappelle

Chapter 3

Abigail Adams

Wife of John Adams and Mother of John Quincy Adams
1744-1818

"She was a woman of rare mind, high courage, and of a patriotism not less intense and devoted than that of any hero of the Revolution." — *John T. Morse, Jr.*

John Adams, writing to his wife amid the confusion and debate of the General Congress at Philadelphia, called her "saucy." He said it laughingly, for her sauciness pleased him. It always had. John Adams admired wit and spirit in a woman. He must have or he never would have married Abigail Adams.

Her friends and relatives disapproved of the match. Plain John Adams, one of the "dishonest tribe of lawyers," son of a small country farmer, was not considered worthy of Miss Abigail Smith, the parson's daughter, descendant of John Quincy and Thomas Shephard and a long, illustrious line of good Puritan divines. When John Adams was mentioned Miss Abby heard words of warning and disapproval passed upon all sides. But the independent young lady was not frightened by them. She kept her own opinion of honest John in his coat of homespun.

John Adams's wife was not yet twenty when, in the brilliant autumn weather of the year 1764, she married him and went to live in the small frame-house on the Braintree road. She was, however, a young woman "wise beyond her years." Her education and surroundings had made her so. "I never went to school," she once said regretfully. But we know that in those days a girl who "never went to school" was by no

Abigail Adams, Benjamin Blyth

means a phenomenon. It was not unusual for a girl, even in Massachusetts, to receive no regular schooling. Indeed, Massachusetts, although it boasted the most learned and cultivated men in America, was quite as negligent in the education of its women as any of the other colonies. Possibly the Puritan rulers of the province recalled the early example of the brilliant Anne Hutchinson, who so nearly turned the counsels of the elders to naught, and consequently were determined that no other woman should become too wise for them. At all events, they took no pains to have their daughters well taught. Indeed, "it was the fashion," as Mrs. Adams herself declared, "to ridicule female learning."

She was, however, more fortunate than most little girls of her time in her home influences. These were distinctly literary. The high standing of her family, her father's profession, and the near neighborhood of Harvard College brought the most refined and educated people of the province to the Weymouth parsonage. She must have sat by often, as a child, fixing her big bright eyes on her father's guests as they talked, listening and understanding more than any one supposed. And although she "never went to school," she heard what learned people thought and knew.

Then, too, she had some very good friends in her father's library. For there she became acquainted with the English poets and prose writers. There can have been no happier times for her than those hours spent among the books, curled up in some comfortable corner with Pope's verses or a bound volume of the "Spectator" or one of Mr. Richardson's novels. She grew up with the ideas and fancies of the poets and with the people of the story world, and her early familiarity with the best English authors showed in her letters all through life. She wrote of them and quoted from them as one who had always known and loved them.

Besides her books Abby had another friend who taught her a great deal. At Mount Wollaston, the "Merry Mount," as a part of Braintree was then called, lived her grandfather, the famous John Quincy. At his home Abby used to spend much of her time, in the company of her grandmother, a woman of "genuine manners and culture." We can fancy Miss Abby seated with her knitting on a low hassock beside her grandmother's rocking-chair, listening while the old lady told amusing stories or tales of heroes in myth and fable, or while she gave those helpful lessons which her admiring granddaughter never forgot, and referred to, years after, as "oracles of wisdom."

And we may call up another picture of Miss Abby in her girlhood, that of the entertaining penwoman writing her first letters. One imagines her and her sisters, Mary, the elder, and Betsey, the younger, gathered round the table with ink and quills and blotting-sand, while their mother is near to correct mistakes and answer the oft-repeated query, "How do you spell?" Letter-writing was a highly cultivated art in those days, a very necessary part of every one's education. Parson Smith's young daughters were set early to the task of producing small essays for the benefit of a faraway cousin or friend. Some of these letters still remain, and along with the town news, bits of gossip, and fun-making contained in their pages, appear criticisms on books and long quotations from favorite authors which show the literary turn of the writers' minds. As another proof of their book-loving tastes these youthful correspondents delighted to sign themselves under fictitious names. Miss Abby was Diana until the time of her marriage, and then she gave up her maiden name and became Portia.

Under such influences and surroundings Abigail Smith grew up a delicate, brilliant-looking girl with a bright, vivacious manner and a tongue that was ever ready with pertinent questions and replies. In her childhood she had few acquaintances of her own age, and her friendships had been

almost entirely with older people and characters in books. This had made her unusually imaginative and sensitive, but, fortunately for her, her father's good sense and fun-loving spirit had descended upon her. So she was preserved from the too great sensibility and lack of common sense which her peculiar bringing up might otherwise have caused. She was romantic, but she was practical too, and quite capable, as we shall see, of looking after a house, farm, and family.

John Adams and his wife began housekeeping in a very modest way. Their manner of living was quite different from that of the Washingtons. When Mrs. Custis married George Washington he was a wealthy gentleman and a celebrated colonel. Their home was one of wealth and elaborate hospitality. But the man whom Miss Abigail Smith married was neither rich nor distinguished. To be sure, he was a graduate of Harvard College and a promising young lawyer in his own province, but he was "only a farmer's son" and his means were moderate. There was nothing imposing about the home to which he brought his young bride, the little farmhouse on the country road, at the foot of Penn's Hill. Yet John and Abigail Adams were as happy there as ever they were afterwards in their London drawing-rooms and the halls of the White House. And we may be sure that Mrs. Adams had no thoughts nor wishes of coming greatness nor any dreams of ambassadors' balls and presidential mansions when she was in the daily of the Braintree farmhouse skimming milk or in the kitchen polishing her pots and pans. Nor did the homely domestic duties of her early married life in any way unfit her for the part she was to play in latter days as the wife of the first American minister to England and the lady of the second president of the United States.

The first ten years of her married life passed quietly and busily either in Boston or Braintree. During those early days before the Revolution she was mostly occupied with her domestic responsibilities and the care of her babies. But she found time to interest herself in her husband's professional studies and she sympathized wholly with him in his ideas on public affairs. Even so soon she was showing her genius for politics, and, while she kept her eyes open to the situation of her country, she was preparing herself for the stand she was to take in the coming struggle.

Yet it was not so many years later that she was called upon to part with him on a long journey and a dangerous mission. In August of the year 1774 John Adams left home in the company of Samuel Adams, Thomas Gushing, and Robert Treat Paine for the General Congress at Philadelphia.

And now begins the famous correspondence between Mrs. Adams and her husband, which is valuable no less for the near acquaintance it affords us with the character of the writers than for the atmosphere and color it gives to the historical facts of the time. Never do we like John Adams so well as during those first years of the Revolution. Honors and fame had not yet made him vain, headstrong, and presumptuous. He was full of noble patriotism and a generous sense of brotherhood. Sometimes he grows a little bitter over the sacrifice he feels that he is making at the cost of his family and writes to his wife, like the sturdy Puritan descendant that he was, "For God's sake, make your children hardy, active, and industrious; for strength, activity, and industry will be their only resource and dependence." Sometimes he becomes despondent over public affairs, for his impatient, energetic spirit chafed at the delays of people less courageous than himself. But the American cause was too dear to him for him to despair more than temporarily. And his momentary fits of gloom are almost forgotten in hopeful reflections and bursts of high spirit.

John Adams's letters are delightful, but his wife's are even more so. Their style, so vivid, bright, and entertaining, has given her a place among the world's most charming letter-writers, and their

Abigail Adams, Gilbert Stuart

tone of cheerfulness, courage, and intense patriotism has won for her universal admiration.

She made her sacrifices and faced her dangers bravely, like other patriots. In John Adams's own words we are told how she encouraged him in his intention to devote himself to his country and "bursting into a flood of tears, said she was sensible of all the danger to her and to our children as well as to me, but she thought I had done as I ought. She was very willing to share in all that was to come and to place her trust in Providence."

The dangers "to her and to our children" were not slight. Braintree, where she and the four little Adamses were staying, was close to the British lines. Raids and foraging parties were to be feared continually. There was little prospect of more peaceful times. And while, in Philadelphia, John Adams was proving himself "the most arrant and determined rebel in the Congress," Mrs. Adams, at home, was preparing herself, by reading and reflection, for war. "Did ever any kingdom or state," she asks her husband, "regain its liberty without bloodshed? I cannot think of it without horror. Yet we are told that all the misfortunes of Sparta were occasioned by their too great solicitude for present tranquillity, and from an excessive love of peace they neglected the means of making it sure and lasting. 'They ought to have reflected,' says Polybius, that 'as there is nothing more desirable or advantageous than peace when founded in justice and honor, so there is nothing more shameful and at the same time more pernicious when attained by bad measures and purchased at the price of liberty!'"

In a letter dated September 14, this special correspondent of Revolutionary days informs her husband of the "warlike preparations" which the governor was making in Boston — the mounting of cannon upon Beacon Hill, digging intrenchments upon the Neck, placing cannon there, throwing up breastworks, and encamping a regiment. And then she goes on to give a graphic account of how they secured the gunpowder from the British in her own town of Braintree.

This interesting letter and Mrs. Adams's other letters of the same year (1774) were written to her husband during the session of the first Congress at Philadelphia. The first Congress sat only a few months. It merely consulted and remonstrated. But the second Congress, to which John Adams set out in April of the following year, was occupied with graver matter than that of consultation and

remonstrance. The first gun had been fired at Lexington only four days before his departure. Congress now had to deliberate and debate concerning war. And meanwhile the actual battle was being fought in the near neighborhood of the Braintree farmhouse.

From the top of Penn's Hill Mrs. Adams could watch the struggle that was to bring about the independence of America. One hot June afternoon, with her daughter Abby and her little son John Quincy, she climbed to the summit of the hill and there, looking through the clear air across the bay, she saw the flaming ruin of Charlestown and the smoke and fire of Bunker Hill. And the next day, while "the distant roar of the cannon" was still sounding in her ears and so "distressing" her that she could neither "eat, drink, nor sleep," her "bursting heart found vent at her pen," and in a moment of intense "agitation," sympathy for her suffering countrymen, and grief at the death of her friend Dr. Warren, she wrote to her husband:

"'The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; but the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto his people. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us.' … Almighty God, cover the heads of our countrymen and be a shield to our dear friends. How many have fallen we know not. May we be supported and sustained in the dreadful conflict."

During the many months in which the war raged round her door her house was an asylum where soldiers came for a lodging, breakfast, supper, and drink, where the tired refugees from Boston sought refuge for a day, a night, or a week. "You can hardly imagine how we live," she writes, "yet:

> "'To the houseless child of want
> Our doors are open still,
> And though our portions are but scant
> We give them with good will.'"

When news of the raids, battles, and burnings around Boston reached the ears of John Adams he naturally felt great anxiety for the safety of his wife and children. From the "far country," as Mrs. Adams called Philadelphia in those days of travelling coach and post chaise, he sent words of encouragement and stoical advice. "In a cause which interests the whole globe," he says, "at a time when my friends and my country are in such keen distress, I am scarcely ever interrupted in the least degree by apprehensions for my personal safety. I am often concerned for you and our dear babes, surrounded as you are by people who are too timorous and too susceptible of alarms. Many fears and jealousies and imaginary evils will be suggested to you, but I hope you will not be impressed by them. In case of real danger, of which you cannot fail to have previous intimations, fly to the woods with our children."

This startling alternative of "flying to the woods with our children" might have frightened a woman less brave than Mrs. Adams. But John Adams knew his wife's firm mettle. Her letters are continually giving him proof of her cheerfulness and courage. "I have been distressed but not dismayed," she writes; and again, "Hitherto I have been able to maintain a calmness and presence of mind and hope I shall let the exigency of the time be what it will." She chides him for fearing to tell her bad news. "Don't you know me better than to think me a coward?" she says.

Her husband gave expression to his pride and pleasure in her "fortitude." "You are really brave, my dear," he tells her. "You are a heroine and you have reason to be. For the worst that can happen

can do you no harm. A soul as pure, as benevolent, as virtuous, and pious as yours has nothing to fear but everything to hope from the last of human evils."

At that troubled time Mrs. Adams's "fortitude" was tried by privation as well as danger. There were many hardships to be endured from having the British in possession of Boston. She and her "dear babes" were forced to live in a most frugal way. Once they were four months without flour. And in one of her letters she writes: "We shall very soon have no coffee nor sugar nor pepper." Her cry for pins is pathetic. "Not a pin to be purchased for love or money," she exclaims.

It was a high compliment to his wife's intelligence that John Adams discussed with her the weighty affairs and knotty problems with which he was concerned as frankly and seriously as if she had been one of his fellow congressmen. He knew her understanding in such matters.

One cannot but take a sly sort of pleasure at the way in which Mrs. Adams approaches her husband with the now hackneyed but then quite fresh subject of "Woman's Rights." "I long to hear that you have declared an independency," she writes her constructive statesman. "And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

Of that memorable July day when the Declaration was made, John Adams wrote to his wife, "It ought to be commemorated as a day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with show, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasures that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend the States. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is more than worth all the means. And that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction, even although we shall rue it, which I trust in God we shall not."

The statesman father's thoughts are continually travelling to his "babes" at home. He tells of how he walked the city streets "twenty times and gaped at all the store windows like a countryman," in order to find presents suitable to send to his "pretty little flock." His letters to his wife contain many grave injunctions about the children. "Take care that they don't go astray," he says. "Cultivate their minds, inspire their little hearts, raise their wishes. Fix their attention upon great and glorious objects. Root out every little thing, weed out every meanness. Let them revere nothing but religion, morality, and liberty."

And their mother answers, "Our little ones, whom you so often recommend to my care and instruction, shall not be deficient in virtue or probity if the precepts of a mother have their desired effect; but they would be doubly enforced could they be indulged with the example of a father alternately before them. I often point them to their sire —

> "'. . . engaged in a corrupted state
> Wrestling with vice and faction.'"

Mrs. Adams's influence on her children was strong, inspiring, vital. Something of the Spartan

mother's spirit breathed in her. She taught her sons and daughter to be brave and patient, in spite of danger and privation. She made them feel no terror at the thought of death or hardships suffered for one's country. She read and talked to them of the world's history. We find that "Master John" read Rollins' Ancient History aloud to his mother when he was only seven years old. And every night, when the Lord's prayer had been repeated, she heard him say that ode of Collins beginning,

> "How sleep the brave who sink to rest
> By all their country's wishes blest."

The Adams children grew up under firm discipline and vigorous training, and a strength of character was established that has lasted through succeeding generations.

Upon the education of her children Mrs. Adams spent much thought and energy. But her efforts to teach them made her feel more keenly than ever her own deficiencies in book learning. Writing to her husband, she says, "If you complain of neglect of education in sons what shall I say of daughters who every day experience the want of it. With regard to the education of my own children I feel myself soon out of my depth, destitute in every part of education. I most sincerely wish that some more liberal plan might be laid and executed for the benefit of the rising generation and that our new Constitution may be distinguished for encouraging learning and virtue. If we mean to have heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, we should have learned women. The world perhaps would laugh at me, but you, I know, have a mind too enlarged and liberal to disregard sentiment. If as much depends as is allowed upon the early education of youth and the first principles which are instilled take the deepest root great benefit must arise from the literary accomplishments in women."

John Adams, on his part, laments that he is not more learned. This realization of their own deficiencies made John and Abigail Adams most serious, conscientious, and persevering in the pursuit of learning for themselves, their children, and coming generations. They were among the first Americans to talk of a "Higher Education."

It is remarkable to see upon how many of the great questions of that day and of later days Mrs. Adams has spoken. She is always logical and forcible. Of slavery she said: "I wish most sincerely that there was not a slave in the province. It always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me — to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have."

And while she was interesting herself in all the problems that were arising in the new nation and discussing them freely in her correspondence with her husband, she was longing ardently for the time when he and she might be permitted to live together once more. "I wish for peace and tranquillity," she wrote him. "All my desire and all my ambition is to be esteemed and loved by my partner, to join with him in the education and instruction of our little ones, to sit under our own vines in peace, liberty, and safety."

John Adams was as desirous as she for the "peace, liberty, and safety" that would make it possible for him to retire from public life and enter into the enjoyments of "domestic and rural felicity." "The moment our affairs are in a more prosperous way," he informs her, "and a little more out of doubt, that moment I become a private gentleman, the respectful husband of the amiable Mrs. Adams of Braintree, and the affectionate father of her children, two characters which I have scarcely supported for these three years past, having done the duties of neither." He describes himself as "a

lonely, forlorn creature" whose yearnings for his wife and children are known only to "God and my own soul." His chief pleasure, he says, is in writing to her and receiving her "charming letters." Yet letters are but a poor sort of substitute for her society. "I want to hear you think, and to see your thoughts," he tells her. He tries to persuade her to come and join him in Philadelphia. "If you will come," he says, "I shall be as proud and happy as a bridegroom."

His practical wife, however, will not let herself be tempted by his "invitation." In one of her escaping sighs Mrs. Adams says: "It is almost thirteen years since we were united, but not more than half that time have we had the happiness of living together. I consider it a sacrifice to my country." Yet this "sacrifice" was small in comparison with one which she was soon to make. In November of the year 1777 Mr. Adams received a commission which sent him to a foreign shore "over seas covered with the enemy's ships" and the separation of months become one of years.

Mr. Adams set out in his new capacity, that of joint commissioner with Dr. Franklin at the court of France, in the spring of 1778. He took with him his eldest son, John Quincy. Never before in all her experience did Mrs. Adams undergo so severe a trial as at this time. Vessels carrying letters were seized by the enemy. For months she received no word of her voyages. The false report that Dr. Franklin had been assassinated reached her ears, and made her fear the same fate for the other commissioner. So she lived in a state of the utmost anxiety, dreading shipwreck or capture, and haunted by the "horrid idea of assassination." But at last came the welcome news that "Johnny" and his father were safe in France, that "great garden," as her husband called it.

John Adams writes to his wife of the "innumerable delights" of that sunny land, but assures her he would not exchange "all the magnificence of Europe for the simplicity of Braintree and Weymouth.

Mrs. Adams did not hear very regularly or particularly from her travellers. A large proportion of the letters which they wrote to her never reached their destination. Many were lost at sea or, for fear of capture, were destroyed by those carrying them. Mrs. Adams had to complain constantly of the "avidity of the sea god," who cruelly destroyed her letter and had not "complacence enough to forward them" to her. Moreover, the letters which did arrive were generally short and unsatisfactory. John Adams declared that there were spies upon every word he uttered and upon every syllable he wrote. Not even to his wife could he write freely or so affectionately as formerly. The British might get hold of their letters and then, he reflected, what ridiculous figures she and he would make "in a newspaper, to be read by the whole world"!

Still above all her moods of longing, loneliness, and sadness, her patriotism rose supreme. "Difficult as the day is," she bravely declared, "cruel as this war has been, separated as I am, on account of it, from the dearest connection in life, I would not exchange my country for the wealth of the Indies nor be any other than an American though I might be queen or empress of any nation on the globe."

During this period she lived, as she expressed it, "like a nun in a cloister" and often "smiled to think she had the honor of being allied to an ambassador." Yet never does she appear more able, energetic, and versatile than at this time of quiet, country life. We see her as a farmer discussing her crops, as a merchant talking of values and prices, and as a politician considering her country's outlook. But above all she is a devoted wife and mother, sympathizing in all things with her husband, and sending her boy letters of advice and warning, full of affection and tenderness. She is ardently

interested in everything and puts it all into her delightful letters. Her husband reads these letters with pride.

The time, however, was approaching when it would be necessary no longer for John Adams and his wife to talk by letter. For, as it became evident to Mr. Adams that his stay in Europe must be lengthened out indefinitely, he felt justified in asking his wife to join him abroad. He was homesick for his "housekeeper;" he wanted to enjoy her "conversation." Her longing to be with her "dearest friend" overcame all her scruples and she and her family embarked for England in June of the year 1784.

Mr. Adams and his son met them at London, and the Adamses were once more united and, to quote Mrs. Adams's own words, "a very, very happy family."

The homecoming of the Adams family occurred at the same time with the adoption of the present American Constitution. Under the new code of laws Mrs. Adams found herself Madam Vice-President, and, eight years later, upon Washington's retirement from public life, she rose to the position of the first lady in the land, the wife of President John Adams.

When the news of her husband's election to the highest place among his countrymen came to Abigail Adams she was at Quincy and from the old home she writes to him, in a spirit of humility that exalts her:

Quincy, Feb. 8, 1797.

'The sun is dressed in brightest beams
To give thy honors to the day.'

And may it prove an auspicious prelude to each ensuing season. You have this day to declare yourself head of a nation. 'And, now, O Lord, my God, Thou hast made thy servant ruler over the people. Give unto him an understanding heart, that he may know how to go out and come in before this great people; that he may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge thy so great people?' were the words of a royal sovereign; and not less applicable to him who is invested with the chief magistracy of a nation, though he wear not a crown nor the robes of royalty. My thoughts and meditations are with you, though personally absent; and my petitions to Heaven are that the things which make for peace may not be hidden from your eyes. My feelings are not those of pride or ostentation upon this occasion. They are solemnized by a sense of the obligations, the important trusts, and numerous duties connected with it. That you may be enabled to discharge them with honor to yourself, with justice and impartiality to your country, and with satisfaction to this great people, shall be the daily prayer of your,

A. A.

As mistress of the presidential mansion Mrs. Adams was admired for her excellent judgment, her conversational powers, and her "statesman-like" mind, while her genial disposition and kindness of heart did much to soften the party spite and enmity which arose toward the close of her husband's political career. And when the tide of popular sentiment turned against John Adams and he was left a maligned and defeated man, it was his wife's cheerful, buoyant spirit which cheered him. Amid

all his disappointments, perplexities, and bitterness of soul, he said he had found consolation in her perfect understanding of him.

For eighteen years after their retirement from public life John Adams and his wife lived together in the farmhouse at Quincy, as that part of Braintree which had always been their home came to be called. And once more Mrs. Adams was to be seen in her dairy skimming milk, and the old president in the field working among his haymakers. The simple, rural, domestic pleasures which they could not enjoy together in their earlier days were no longer denied them. From the people they came and to the people they had returned.

Mrs. Adams lived to see all her sons graduates of Harvard College and students of law as their father had been, and her eldest son she saw raised to the honor of secretary of state. She lived to welcome many frolicsome little grandchildren, on Thanksgiving days and merry Christmases, to the jolly farmhouse beyond the "President's Bridge." She lived to celebrate her golden wedding with that "dear untitled man" to whom she had given her "heart," the farmer's son of whom, in the days before the Revolution, her father's parishioners had disapproved.

To the end she kept her brave and cheerful nature. "I am a mortal enemy," she used to declare, "to anything but a cheerful countenance and a merry heart, which Solomon tells us does good like medicine."

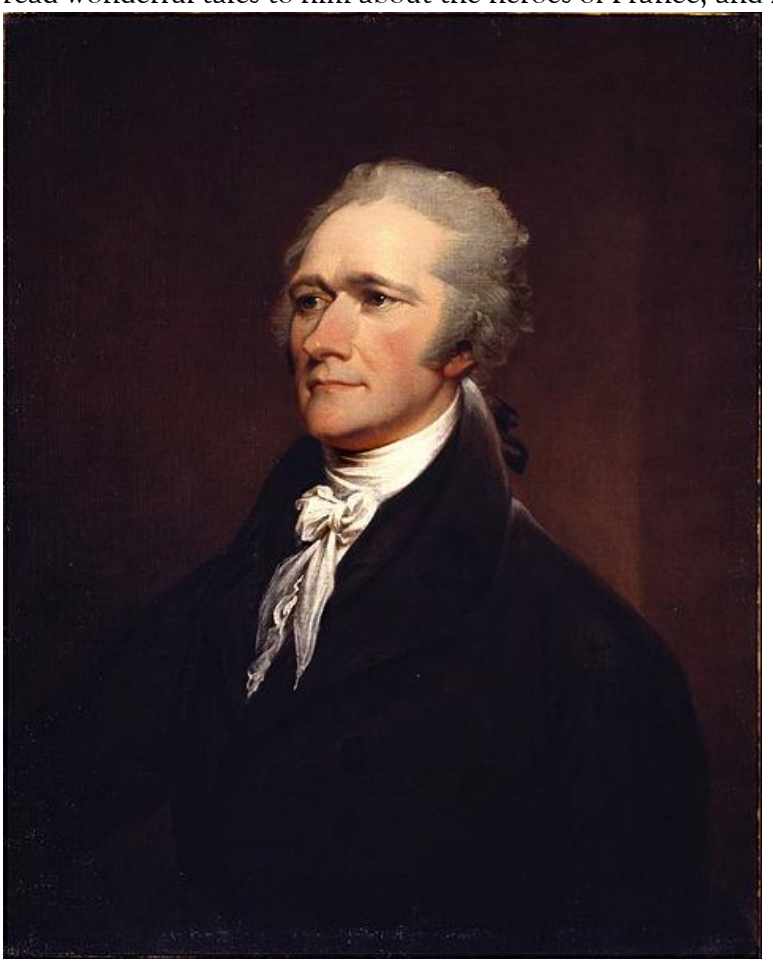
"Genial, affectionate Abigail Adams! She never grew old. One likes to think of her in those golden-wedding days, young and strong in courage, patriotism, and kindness, living in the realization of her youthful dream, "esteemed and loved by her partner, sitting with him under their own vines in peace, liberty, and safety."

Chapter 4

Alexander Hamilton

1757-1801

Southeast of the United States, in the West Indies, there is a tiny island called Nevis. It was upon that island that Alexander Hamilton was born. His father was a member of a famous Scotch family, and his mother was the daughter of a Frenchman who fled to Nevis for religious reasons. The first years of Alexander's life were care-free and happy. The great white house of the Hamiltons which overlooked the blue Caribbean Sea was like a fairy palace to the child. His French mother read wonderful tales to him about the heroes of France, and his father told him of the brave men of Scotland. Soon the boy could speak both French and English. Many of the people of the island who called at the Hamilton home thought that Alexander was very clever for his age.



Alexander Hamilton, John Trumball

The happy days of Alexander's childhood did not last long. Before he was twelve years old his mother died and his father lost all his money. For a short time the boy stayed with an aunt, but soon he began working as a clerk for one of the island merchants. A year later he was placed in full charge of the business while the merchant made a trip abroad. While acting as head of the business he wrote to a friend that he disliked his work. He could see no future in it. He felt that he could do great things if only he had the chance.

Soon something did happen. The islands of the Caribbean Sea are sometimes visited by great storms called hurricanes. One of these storms which lasted for three days swept over the islands and ruined

thousands of dollars' worth of property. Houses were wrecked, cattle were killed, and sugar-cane fields were destroyed. Young Hamilton wrote a splendid account of the hurricane and sent his story to the paper. It was printed and every one who read it said that the writer was a very brilliant person. It was learned that the young clerk, Alexander Hamilton, was the writer. His friends decided that he would have to go away to school where he would be sure to receive a proper education. Every one was sure that he must not waste his life on a little island in the West Indies. The idea of leaving the island suited Hamilton exactly, and when his friends raised enough money for him to go away to school he gladly accepted the chance.

At that time Hamilton was about sixteen years of age. He took passage on a sailing vessel bound for Boston. When he landed at that port he went south to New York and began to search for a good school. Finally one at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, was selected. By hard study he soon completed the work there and was ready to enter college. The nearest was at Princeton. Hamilton asked the president to allow him to pass his examinations as fast as he was ready, without waiting for his slower classmates. The president would not have a student in his school who wanted to do his college work so quickly, so Hamilton went to King's College (now called Columbia) in New York. There he completed the work in less than the usual time.

"While Alexander Hamilton was a student in college he made a trip to Boston. The Boston Tea Party had occurred just a few days before and the people were still very much excited. Hamilton was always interested in new movements and new people; so he took pains to learn all he could about the trouble between the colonies and England. He was told about the Stamp Act, the Tea Tax, the Navigation Laws, and the Writs of Assistance. He saw the English soldiers who were housed in the homes of the people of Boston. Finally he was convinced that the colonists were right in opposing England; hence, when he returned to New York he was a warm patriot.

Soon after his return to New York, Hamilton attended a great mass meeting in the fields just outside the city. At this meeting the speakers told of the wrongs the colonies had suffered at the hands of England. Hamilton listened for a long time. The speakers did not seem to be able to touch the heart of the matter. At last Hamilton lost patience and strode up to the platform. The chairman was very much interested and surprised when this young man, who was hardly more than a boy, asked permission to speak to the crowd. As the chairman hesitated some one shouted, "Let him talk! Let's hear what he has to say!" Hamilton was allowed to address the crowd and soon he had them cheering. He made his points in clear-cut language that the people easily understood. After that when he appeared on the streets he was pointed out as the college boy who was able to make such fine speeches in the cause of freedom.

The speech in the fields of New York marked the entrance of Alexander Hamilton into American politics. Soon a pamphlet, or little book, which he wrote to defend the acts of Congress, was being read by every one. In it he declared that the American people must support the measures of Congress if the cause was to be successful. The president of King's College, Doctor Cooper, did not agree with what Hamilton had written. Doctor Cooper believed that England was right in all her acts and that the colonists were disloyal subjects. One evening, as Hamilton was nearing the home of the president of the college, he heard the cries of a mob. Soon he found that a crowd was about to break down the door of Doctor Cooper's home. Hamilton rushed up the steps and asked the leaders of the mob why they were storming the house. They told him that Doctor Cooper was a

Tory, and an enemy of the colonists. Hamilton urged them not to destroy property and injure harmless people. While he was talking Doctor Cooper raised an upper window and looked out. "When he saw who was talking he thought that Hamilton was urging the mob to break down the door, so he called out. "Don't believe him. He is crazy!" Hamilton talked on, and the doctor fled out the back door and later took refuge on an English man-of-war that was in the harbor.

By this time it was very clear that war would soon be declared between the colonies and the mother country, England. Hamilton got ready for the next event. He gathered together a band of patriots who named themselves "Hearts of Oak," and began drilling them for the battles he knew they would soon have to fight. Hamilton knew very little about how to drill and fight, but his men knew less, so he studied the rules of war in the evenings and taught his soldiers what he had learned when he met them the next afternoon. When war was finally declared and New York started to raise an army, Alexander Hamilton was elected the captain of the first company of artillery that was formed. At that time he was less than twenty and in command of many men who were older than he, but who followed and obeyed him without a question. Soon Hamilton was noticed by General Greene who told Washington about the dashing young artillery officer he had seen.

George Washington was always looking for men who were able and trustworthy, men whom he could trust to do things quickly when they were given orders. When he heard of Alexander Hamilton he sent for him. Washington was pleased with Hamilton's appearance and offered him a place on the general staff with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. This was a great step and soon he became Washington's aide. In this position Hamilton wrote letters and carried messages to prominent men throughout the colonies and to Congress. He knew almost as much about the war and the conditions throughout the country as Washington himself. In the camp and on the field Hamilton was popular with his fellow officers who called him "The Little Lion," because of his small size and his great bravery.

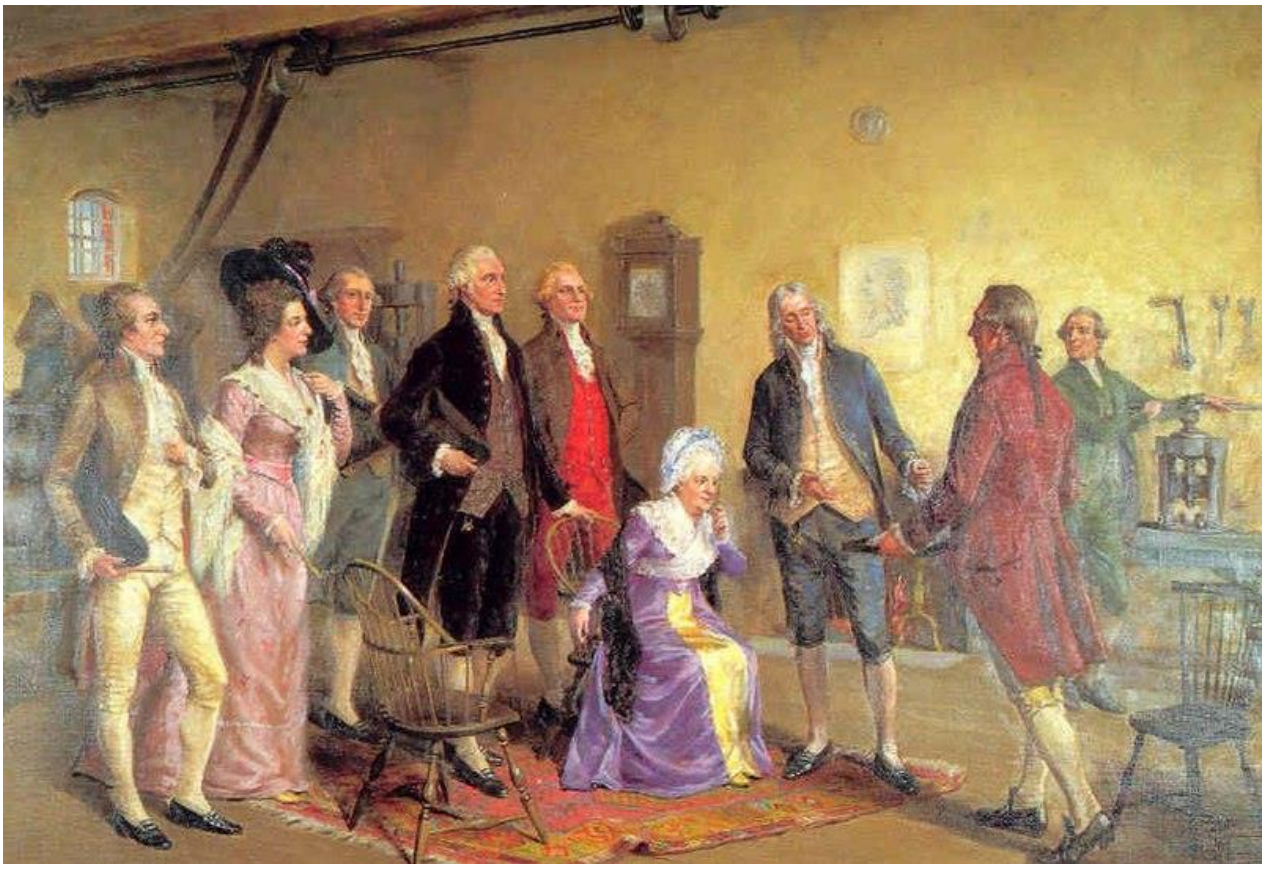
Alexander Hamilton was a man of action. Although he liked his work as Washington's aide, he much preferred to lead a company of brave men into battle. Often he asked to be transferred to one of the fighting units of the army, but Washington needed him at his side. As Hamilton passed Washington on the stairs one day at headquarters the general stopped and said he wished to see him on important business. Hamilton was hurrying to deliver a handful of papers to Lafayette, also a member of the staff, who was in a room on the floor below. He continued on his errand, talked with Lafayette for a short time, and returned. At the head of the stairs he was met by Washington who said, "Colonel Hamilton, you have kept me waiting at the head of these stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." Hamilton, very much surprised, replied, "I did not know it, sir, but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir, if it be your choice," the general replied. Washington, Lafayette, and the friends of Hamilton tried to get him to change his mind, but they did not succeed. There was a chance for active fighting and he was given charge of a body of light infantry in Lafayette's division. At Yorktown he led his men in a brilliant attack on the defenses of the enemy.

After the Revolutionary War, Hamilton returned to New York and studied law. Soon he was admitted to the bar. He became one of the ablest lawyers in the state. However, he was more interested in the affairs of the country than he was in building up a great fortune for himself. The young nation was deeply in debt and no one seemed to know what to do. Hamilton believed in a

national bank, and it was partly due to his efforts that the Bank of North America was opened in Philadelphia in 1781. This bank was to handle all the government money. As a member of Congress from New York, Hamilton stated to his fellow members that this nation must have a strong central government to be successful. Many of the congressmen believed in "state rights" or that separate states were supreme. They strongly opposed any attempt to strengthen the national government and weaken state powers.

"When the Constitution was written and adopted by Congress, Hamilton steadily fought for a strong central government. He did not succeed in getting all his ideas adopted, and although he was not entirely satisfied with it, he did all in his power to have it accepted by his state. Together with James Madison of Virginia, Hamilton wrote a series of papers called The Federalist, in which he explained to the American people why the Constitution should be accepted by the states.

George Washington, the first president of the United States, appointed Alexander Hamilton secretary of the treasury. Thomas Jefferson was also a member of the president's Cabinet. The two men held opposite views on most political subjects. Hamilton believed in a strong central government and was an aristocrat. Jefferson stood for state rights and had great faith in the ability of the common people to govern themselves. The two men were constantly quarreling about government policies. Hamilton read the Constitution carefully and said it meant the president and Congress had unlimited power. Jefferson said the central government had only such powers as were named. All



The First Coin, John Ward Dunsmore

others belonged to the states. The fight between the two statesmen became bitter when Hamilton, as secretary of the treasury, put forth his plans to raise money to pay the debts of the nation.

Before the question of taking over the state debts was decided, Congress began to talk about a proper site for the national capital. The northern representatives wanted New York or Philadelphia to be the seat of government. The southerners urged that a point in the South be chosen. As the matter was debated Hamilton saw a chance to settle at one stroke the question of taking over the state debts and the location of the capital. The southern states were most strongly opposed to his plan, so he said if they agreed that the central government should pay all war debts he would see that the national capital was built in the South. The plan was accepted, and Washington, in the District of Columbia, became the capital.

Under the newly adopted Constitution Congress could tax the people. It was Hamilton's duty as secretary of the treasury to decide how this was to be done. Money was badly needed to repay loans made to the government by foreign nations and by American citizens. Hamilton suggested that a tax should be paid on all whisky and upon all goods brought from other countries. Under this plan all the state debts were also to be paid by the national government out of the central treasury. These ideas were opposed by Thomas Jefferson and all others who believed in state rights. They were sure that they were only new ways of weakening the states and making the national government more powerful.

Hamilton's dream of a strong central government was fast coming true when the election of 1800 took place. Thomas Jefferson, who had been Hamilton's bitterest enemy during Washington's term as president, and Aaron Burr, a New York politician, received an equal number of votes for the presidency. When such a thing happened Congress had the power to decide who should be the president and who should be the vice-president. Both Jefferson and Burr wanted the higher office. Alexander Hamilton was a man whose advice was always well received by the thinking men of his party. The man who had his support was sure to win the honor of being president of the United States for four years. Hamilton distrusted Jefferson's democratic ideas. He was not sure that the common people knew enough to govern themselves as they should be governed. On the other hand Aaron Burr was known to be a man who could not be trusted. If he became president all the careful work of Washington and his followers might be ruined. After carefully thinking over the matter Hamilton decided to throw all his support in favor of Thomas Jefferson. This he did and Jefferson became president while Aaron Burr received the office of vice-president. Burr knew that Hamilton had spoiled his plans and he resolved to be revenged.

The next three years were spent in hard work by Hamilton. He had many warm and true friends but he also had many enemies. One evening at a theater party young Philip Hamilton heard a politician make a disrespectful remark about his father. He challenged the man to a duel and the two met early one morning across the harbor from New York at Weehawken Heights, New Jersey. Young Hamilton was only a boy, just past eighteen, and he fell mortally wounded at the first shot. The death of this son was one of the greatest sorrows of Alexander Hamilton's life. Three years later he, too, was to fight a duel on that same spot and to lose his life at the hand of a political enemy, Aaron Burr.

Before Burr's term of office as vice-president of the United States had expired, he ran for the governorship of New York. For several months the New England states had been dissatisfied, and

Duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, J. Mund

there had been some talk of their withdrawing from the Union and setting up an independent republic. Hamilton believed that Burr was ambitious to head such a movement and that if he became governor of New York he would attempt to build a new nation out of that state and those to the north. Such a plan, if it succeeded, would mean that the United States of America would disappear and that in its place we would have a number of little countries that would always be quarreling among themselves. Alexander Hamilton had spent too many years in building one nation of thirteen weak colonies to see all his work ruined by Aaron Burr. As soon as Burr announced that he was a candidate for the office of governor, Hamilton took the field against him. He fought him bitterly and when the ballots were cast Aaron Burr was not elected. For a second time he had been defeated by Hamilton. Burr's anger and hatred were so great that he challenged Hamilton to fight a duel. Aaron Burr spent several hours each day in pistol practise while he was waiting for the day of the duel. Alexander Hamilton continued with his daily work at his law office and in the court room. None of his friends knew that he was soon to meet his enemy, although Burr's daily practise aroused some curiosity. At seven o'clock on the morning of July 11, 1804, Hamilton was rowed across the Hudson to Weehawken Heights, New Jersey. The sun was shining on the water and the birds were singing in the trees as he climbed to the ledge where he met Burr and two of his friends. Pistols were provided and the two men moved several paces apart. The word was given; the weapons were fired. Hamilton dropped, fatally wounded; Burr escaped unharmed. Hamilton was carried back

to his home in the city where he died the following day.

The services that Alexander Hamilton rendered this country can never be fully measured. He came here from one of the smallest islands in the West Indies, unknown and alone. All his thoughts and energies were spent in helping to make this country free and strong. At times he was misunderstood, but the plans that he made and the policies that he outlined have proved worth while. During the Revolution he was a brave and valuable officer. After the war he served as a statesman of the first rank. He was one of the ablest men in Washington's Cabinet. His decision to pay all the debts of the nation won for us the respect and friendship of all the countries of Europe. His plans for raising taxes have been followed, with some changes, to the present day.

Chapter 5

Elizabeth Schuyler of Albany

Afterwards Wife of Alexander Hamilton
1757–1854

"A charming woman, who joined to all the graces, the simplicity of an American wife."
— *Brissot de Warville.*

One pleasant October afternoon in the year 1777 a young girl was standing in one of the great windows of the Schuyler manor house at Albany.

She was looking out across the sloping lawns, the lilac hedge, and over the chestnut trees to where, along the western skies, the craggy hills of the Helderbergs stood out sharp and clear, and, farther off, along the southerly horizon, the lofty peaks of the Catskills rose against the blue.

Mrs. Eliza Schuyler Hamilton, Ralph Earl

The clatter of hoofs rang out on the driveway below her and, looking down, the girl saw a young officer ride out from the grove of forest trees that shaded the lawn, and rein up his spirited horse before the doorway of her father's house.

The bearing and appearance of the young man were dignified and distinguished. He wore the green ribbon that designated the uniform of Washington's "military family," or staff, and rode his horse like a trooper; but his three-cornered hat was drawn almost over his eyes, as though he were deep in thought.

As he approached the house, however, he lifted his head, pushed back his hat from his forehead, and gave the handsome residence before him a quick survey.

Then it was that his glance rested for a moment on the bright picture of the girl, framed in the western window. The afternoon sun was shedding its warmth and light on her simple head-dress, the gay colors of her brocaded gown, and the brilliant beauty of her face. For a second his dark eyes met the merry brown ones of Betsey Schuyler; but the next instant the girl drew quickly away from the window.

"Why, Betsey!" exclaimed her younger sister Peggy from across the room as she caught Betsey's quick action and noted her face; "I vow, you are blushing. What at?"

"Indeed, I am not blushing," protested Betsey, as she dropped the curtain.

Then the girls heard the blows of the heavy door-knocker resounding through the house.

"I wonder," continued Betsey with feigned indifference, as she carefully examined the buckles on her little high-heeled slippers, "was papa expecting any one this afternoon, Peggy?"

The younger girl reflected a moment, casting meanwhile a suspicious glance at her sister.

"H'm," she said slowly, "yes, I believe he was expecting a call from one of General Washington's aids — Mr. — "

"Hamilton!" broke in Betsey, darting at her sister, no longer able to restrain her girlish enthusiasm over this young stranger at the door. "Then 'twas he I saw from the window but now, for he wears the general's uniform. And oh, Peggy!" she exclaimed, catching her sister by the hand and dancing her across the room, "he is the most refreshing sight I have seen this long while."

Meanwhile young Hamilton was closeted below with General Philip Schuyler, the girl's father. This visit to the Schuyler mansion at Albany was an episode in the most important event of Hamilton's career, that of his mission from General Washington to General Gates and the Army of the North to treat concerning reinforcements for the southern army. On his way Colonel Hamilton had stopped to ask the advice of Gen. Philip Schuyler, Washington's trusted friend. The consultation between them was a long one, and it was several hours before the general brought the young aid-de-camp into the drawing-room, where the rest of the household were assembled.

In the words of one of Philip Schuyler's contemporaries, the general had "a palace of a house" and lived "like a prince." The young officer felt this as he passed through the long, handsomely furnished rooms, crossed the great white wainscoted hall, sixty feet in length, and entered the brilliantly lighted drawing-room with its deep window-seats and handsomely carved mantels.

But Alexander Hamilton was still more impressed with the atmosphere of cordiality and sociability that pervaded the fine old colonial house. But soon he was conscious of nothing but the charming presence of Mistress Betsey Schuyler.

Presently dinner was announced, and then the Schuyler dining-room resounded with merry voices and laughter and the jingling of plates and glasses.

After dinner Hamilton was permitted to resume his téte-a-téte with Miss Betsey. It is surprising how much two attractive young people can tell each other in the short period of a few hours. Betsey soon knew a great deal about Hamilton's early history, his island home in the West Indies, his faint memories of his French mother and his Scottish father, his untaught childhood, his entrance as a boy of twelve into the West Indian counting-house, and his voyage to the United States. She had already heard of him as the remarkable young orator of King's College, New York, the patriotic writer of pamphlets, and the able artillery officer and aid of General Washington. But his story as told by himself in his eager speech and quick motions possessed a charm no history can give.

Betsey in return told tales of her own childhood and early girlhood on the northern frontier, while the young officer listened with enthusiastic interest, fixing his eloquent dark eyes on her face as she talked.

The friendship which Betsey formed with Alexander Hamilton during his short stay in Albany was not destined to end here. He carried away with him a sincere and lasting regard for the bright-eyed, sweet-faced Betsey Schuyler, and she kept a very pleasant memory of the brilliant, boyish-looking young aide-de-camp.

Some time later, Alexander wrote in a love letter to her:

"I wish I could give you an idea of her. You have no conception of how sweet a girl she is. It is only in my heart that her image is truly drawn. She has a lovely form and still more lovely mind. She is all goodness, the gentlest, the dearest, the tenderest of her sex — ah, Betsey, how I love her!"

On December 14, 1780, Elizabeth Schuyler and Alexander Hamilton were married in the ample and handsome drawing-room of the Schuyler mansion at Albany, where three years before, if reports be true, they had met and loved.

Elizabeth Schuyler's story as a daughter of colonial days ends with her marriage. The merry, light-hearted Betsey has become Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, one of the most prominent leaders of official society. She was eminently fitted for her high position. In her father's home she had been accustomed to entertaining the great people of the day; from her mother she had learned the ways of a large and ever-ready hospitality; while her own brightness, grace, and ability ensured her success.

The Hamiltons were not rich. "I have seen," writes Talleyrand, "one of the marvels of the world. I have seen the man who made the fortune of a nation laboring all night to support his family."

Yet in spite of their slender means the Hamiltons were frequent entertainers. Hamilton, however, was not merely the most brilliant statesman of his day and Betsey was not only a charming society woman. There are glimpses of a beautiful home life led apart from their official duties and social obligations. Here is a letter written by Hamilton, shortly after the birth of their first son, to Mead, one of his army friends:

"You cannot imagine how domestic I am becoming," he writes. "I sigh for nothing but the society of my wife and baby."

There are later scenes of an equally affectionate family life. There is that one of Hamilton accompanying his daughter Angelica at the piano when she sang or played — his beautiful young daughter, who lost her mind after her father's tragic death. Then there is that one of Mrs. Hamilton "seated at the table cutting slices of bread and spreading them with butter for the younger boys, who, standing by her side, read in turn a chapter in the Bible or a portion of Goldsmith's 'Rome.' When the lessons were finished the father and the elder children were called to breakfast, after which the boys were packed off to school." It is interesting to note that among the elder boys included in the family at one time was Lafayette's son, George Washington Lafayette, who was confided to the care of Hamilton during the frightful days of the French Revolution.

Hamilton's reason for resigning his seat in the Cabinet has become historic. In it we see a proof of his love for his wife and children.

"To indulge my domestic happiness more freely," he writes, "was the principal motive for relinquishing an office in which it is said I have gained some glory."

In this life of "domestic happiness" for which Hamilton resigned his career as a statesman, Elizabeth Hamilton was a bright and cheerful influence. She entered warmly into her husband's plans, and sympathized heartily in the interests of her children. That sweetness of disposition and kindness of heart which in her girlhood had so endeared her to her friends made her relations as wife and mother very beautiful.

The peace and gladness of the Hamilton home were cruelly ended on that fatal July morning, in 1804, when Hamilton lost his life. At his untimely death all America mourned, but the terrible sorrow of his family cannot be described.

His wife, the dear "Betsey" of his boyhood, survived her husband for fifty long, lonesome years. When she died, at ninety-seven, a pleasant, sweet-faced old lady, praised for her sunny nature and her quiet humor, a pocket-book was found in her possession. Within it lay a yellow, timeworn letter. It was written on the morning of the duel, and was Hamilton's farewell to his "beloved wife."

Mrs. Eliza Schuyler Hamilton, engraving based on the painting by Ralph Earl

Chapter 6

The Days of Weakness and Confusion

The Story of Our Constitution

There was once a family of boys who were somewhat inclined to quarrel. One day the father called them together and handed the youngest a bundle of short sticks. "See if you can break that," he said. The boy tried, but he could not even crack them. Then the next boy tried, and the next, and finally the oldest of the four, but the bundle was tied closely together and remained as firm as ever. While the boys stood wondering what their father was trying to do, he untied the string and gave each boy a stick. Even the youngest could break one, and the father said, "You boys are like the sticks. If you quarrel and each one stands alone, you are weak; but if you are good friends and stand together, no one can ever harm you.

It is a pity that the Americans could not have read this old fable every morning of the first years following the Revolutionary War. They had had a severe struggle, and they had won the victory. Naturally, they were somewhat puffed up and just a bit proud of themselves. No one should step on their toes, whether he were George III or a man from a neighboring State.

Colonial Kitchen with Woman Spinning, from *A Brief History of the United States* by Joel Dorman Steele and Esther Baker Steele

They had opinions of their own, and every man was prodigiously sure that his were correct. Some of these opinions, whether correct or not, were certainly remarkable. One sturdy Vermonter fled to the newspapers with a wrathful declaration that nothing but luxuries ought to be taxed, that lawsuits were luxuries and served chiefly for the entertainment of idle, quarrelsome people, and therefore lawsuits ought to be taxed. Another went even farther,

for he was much aggrieved that any of the tax money should go to the support of the courts. "I never had a case in court," he declared virtuously, "and why should I be taxed to help pay the costs of settling other people's quarrels?"

About the Society of the Cincinnati there was a real tempest in a teapot. This society was formed of the surviving officers of the Revolution. It was merely an association of friends who agreed to help one another if any need for help should arise. At the death of each member, his oldest male descendant was to have the right to take his place. There does not seem to be anything especially alarming in this, but in the eyes of many worthy Americans of the day, it was fraught with awful danger to the democracy of the country. Hereditary honors and a "hereditary nobility" were bad enough, but much worse was the fact that foreign officers who had fought in the war were actually allowed to become members; and from this there was no knowing what evils might arise. Even the fact that Washington was president of the Cincinnati did not soothe the fears of the apprehensive people.

Another alarm arose at the demand of Congress for a standing army, although it does not seem as if its proposed size need have startled any one. According to the treaty of peace with England, the confiscated property of the Tories, or those who had been on the English side during the war, was to be returned to them and all private debts were to be paid. Congress asked the different States to do this, but they paid no heed to the request. England refused to give up the western forts till it was done, and a motion was introduced in Congress to requisition some nine hundred men as a defense in case of necessity. The people were angry and alarmed. What right had Congress, they demanded, to require an army to be furnished by the States in time of peace? There was no knowing where this might end. If Congress once had armed troops at its command, who could foresee what it might do? This storm was at length quieted by the change of a single word; Congress no longer "requisitioned," it "recommended," and quiet was restored.

So it was that everything that Congress did or proposed to do was watched, not only by the people as individuals, but as States. Every State was jealous of every other State. New York on the one side and New Jersey and Connecticut on the other, almost came to blows. New Jersey served New York as a great truck farm. Whenever market day came around, fleets of boats weighed down with fruit, vegetables, fowls, cheese, and butter, sailed from New Jersey to the wharves of New York; and from Connecticut came almost as many piled up with great loads of fire-wood.

New York began to take heed of the amount of money that was going from the pockets of her citizens into those of her thrifty neighbors. It was highly improper, she thought, for so many good pounds and shillings to be carried off to rival States. That she was getting a fair return for her money did not affect the matter; and her assembly passed a decree that all boats over twelve tons must be entered and cleared at the custom house; that is, they must pay their neighboring State as large dues for selling to her citizens as if the vessels had been foreign craft.

The Jersey folk meditated on how to strike back. They could raise the price of wood and vegetables, of course, but the probabilities were that the New Yorkers would then refuse to purchase. There was one way, however, in which New Jersey could get her revenge. New York, it seemed, needed a lighthouse on Sandy Hook, and some time before this had bought of its New Jersey owner four acres of ground and had put up a light-house. Nothing was simpler than for the New Jersey assembly to increase the taxes on that four acres; and New York was promptly notified that her

annual tax would be $1,800, a sum worth far more than it is now. As for Connecticut, a league of business men agreed not to sell one article to New York for a year.

Each State was looking out for itself. Kentucky and Tennessee, for instance, wished to trade with New Orleans; but Spain held the land about the lower Mississippi, and she refused to allow American vessels to use that part of the river. New England wished to have a commercial treaty with Spain, and Spain replied, "Very well, I will agree to such a treaty, provided all American vessels are forbidden to enter the lower Mississippi." Kentucky and Tennessee and the Southern States were indignant at being shut off from the mouth of the river; New England was indignant at the "obstinacy and selfishness" of the South. Both groups of States threatened to leave the Union. "What I buy and sell and how I buy and sell it is my own business," was the claim of each and every State.

So it was that the different States contended at home, and when the question arose of sending goods to Europe, there was even more trouble. Most of the imported articles that were wanted in America came from England. England was ready to sell, but she would not buy any American goods in return unless they had been brought in English vessels. Of course any State that chose could refuse to receive goods that were not brought in American vessels; but that would not trouble England in the least, for some neighboring State was always ready to accept the goods. In the same way, a State could put as high a tax as she chose upon any articles brought to her ports; but that made little difference to the sellers, for some other State was always ready to admit them free of duty. In matters of trade, then, America was like a house with thirteen doors. It made no difference whether any one door were closed or not, since some of the others would always be open.

America was buying of England five times as much as England was buying of America; and moreover, America was paying in coin. The result was that coin was becoming very scarce on this side of the ocean, so scarce that many places were almost without any, and people had to go back to the old fashion of barter. If a man wanted to buy a sheep, for instance, he had to pay for it in vegetables or hay or some other product, or in work, rather an inconvenient system of trading. One of the Massachusetts newspapers advertised that it would take pay in salt pork for subscriptions.

What coin there was in the land was as confused as a nightmare. Here were nearly four million people who had been successful in a contest with the most powerful country of Europe, and they used only second-hand coins, which had come to them from England, France, Spain, Germany, and other countries. Their names and their mottoes were in half a dozen different languages. There were great copper pennies and golden guineas from England; francs and sous from France; big, heavy silver dollars and golden doubloons from Spain, the Spanish Indies, and the mouth of the Mississippi River; and there were golden johannes, or "foes," from Portugal and Brazil. There were bits and half-bits, ducats, halfpence, picayunes, fips, and at least a dozen others. Merely to learn the face value of these coins was no trifling matter; but this was only a small part of the knowledge required to buy and sell so as neither to be cheated nor to cheat any one else.

It would not have been so hopeless if these coins had been of the same value in different parts of the country, or had even remained of the same value in any one place, or if counterfeiters and coin-clippers had not been constantly at work. Their business paid well. A copper coin with a wash of silver would often make its way in the world as an English sixpence. A French sou, worth about half a cent, could be nicely gilded and would then sometimes pass for a gold Portuguese coin worth

$6.50. Even worse than this was the clipping of coins. A French livre, for instance, was not required to weigh as much in America as in France. Therefore, clipping this coin was especially common. Indeed, it was once done by Congress itself when hopelessly short of funds; for when a loan arrived from France in livres, each coin was promptly cut down to the American weight. Dishonest folk of the day did not stop at that, but clipped away diligently as far as they could and still hope to pass the coins. Indeed, matters became so bad that when a debt was to be paid, the creditor had to bring out his scales and weigh every coin to make sure of getting the amount due him. It was ten years after the Declaration of Independence before our simple and easy decimal system of coinage was adopted. Up to that date the United States coined nothing but copper cents.

Both the United States and many of the separate States issued paper money, however—promises to pay with nothing to back them up! At first people were delighted. It was such a fine thing to have money plentiful! Why vote for taxation when nothing but a printing-press and some paper were necessary? Little by little, this money began to lose even its imaginary value until, near the end of the Revolutionary War, it took, as Washington said, "a wagon-load of money to buy a wagon-load of potatoes."

Chapter 7

Keeping the Union Together

The Story of Our Constitution

No government can be carried on without money and power. As to money, Congress needed it badly. The pay of the soldiers was long overdue. The salaries of officers and employees of the Government at home and of representatives abroad were in arrears. Forts were needed to protect from the Indians the settlers in what was then the "far West." Americans who had lent their savings to the Government had not received even the interest on their loans. France in the darkest days of the Revolution had helped with men and treasure to win the war, and had continued her generosity even after the contest had come to an end. Holland and Spain were also our creditors. The Union was grateful, but it could not pay.

What could be done? No more money could be borrowed, and it was very difficult to raise any by taxation. Sometimes a State declared that the amount required of it was unjust, and refused to pay. Sometimes a State refused unless Congress would oblige some other State to grant it a desired privilege. Some States issued notes to serve as money, as has been said; but this did not make matters much better, for while the legislature of a State could oblige its citizens to accept the notes of their own State, it could not force them to accept those of any other. Sometimes merchants stopped carrying on business rather than accept payment in such notes. The agreement under which the States lived, the Articles of Confederation, as it was called, formed a "league of friendship" and nothing more; for the colonists had been so anxious to be "free" that they had given Congress no power to enforce its decrees. The lawless, who are in every land and who delight in disorder and opposition to any control, were constantly at work trying to overthrow what government there was.

Europe, and especially England, were watching the course of events in America. "That Union will never stand," they said. "It will soon fall to pieces, and the Americans will be glad enough to beg England to take them back under a government strong enough to rule and protect its people." Indeed, Europe had good warrant for such belief, for scattered all over the country were groups planning to cut loose from the Confederation, and some of them thinking of calling upon England for protection.

The Union had held together while its people were struggling for independence; but now that they had won their independence, there was nothing to keep them united, or rather, there was only one thing, namely, the Northwest Territory. This was the land lying between the Mississippi and the Ohio Rivers. Four States had claims upon it, but one by one they finally gave up their claims into the hands of the general Government. This was between 1780 and 1786. Congress made treaties with the Indians of the Territory, made fair laws for its government, and threw it open to immigrants. It was valuable enough to pay the whole cost of the war and more, too. If a State left the Union and set up for herself, she would lose her share of this wealth. At last there was something

in which every State was interested.

The compact by which the States had agreed to be governed, the "Articles of Confederation," was quite a lengthy document. It emphasized the independence of each State, and declared that the object of the Union was that these States might assist one another. It promised that any citizen of one State should have the same rights of trade and commerce in any other as if he had been an inhabitant of that State. Money needed for the general welfare was to be provided by the States in proportion to their wealth. The decisions of Congress were to be "inviolably observed" by every State.

This sounded well, but if any State did not wish to "inviolably observe," Congress had no power to force it to obey. Another difficulty was in regard to apportioning taxes. In voting, the State was represented, but the people were not, for each State, large or small, had but one vote. These Americans had fought for seven years to make sure of representation, and they did not propose to be governed without that representation now that they had been victorious.

Of course, long before this the people who thought rather than grumbled had seen that if there was to be any commerce with other countries, Congress must be able to make treaties that would bind every State; if it was to carry on the Government, it must be able to raise money to work with. In short, it must have power. The States must yield some of their "sovereignty, freedom, and independence," as the Articles put it, and consider what was for the best good of the whole Union.

Washington had been especially troubled by the disagreements of the States. He had made many sacrifices for America. By his eight years' absence he had greatly lessened the value of his property. He had risked his life not only in war, but in the certainty of being hanged as a traitor to the Mother Country if the struggle of the colonies should prove to be a rebellion rather than a revolution. He believed that this spacious America might become the land of the free, the land of peace and justice and uprightness; and he saw it a collection of selfish, quarrelsome, and often lawless States. But he did not join the ranks of the grumblers. The States do not understand one another, he said; they must learn to look at matters from the point of view of one another. Instead of being rivals, they must learn that they have interests in common. They must become acquainted. The people of the East and the people of the West must be brought together. The way to bring them together is to make it more possible to go from one to the other.

To lay out even the roughest roads through the wilderness would be an enormous undertaking. Travel by land was at the best extremely slow and full of difficulties. To go from New England to Annapolis, for instance, through the most thickly settled parts of the country required between two and three weeks. Travel by water was a different matter. To deepen the channels of the Potomac and the James Rivers and clear away obstructions would not be at all impossible or even especially difficult. It would be easy to connect the head waters of the Potomac with those of the Ohio. Vessels going up and down these waters would exchange the products of East and West; and such intercourse would do much to unite the people of the two parts of the country. This was a favorite scheme of Washington's even before the war, and after the war he had made a seven-hundred-mile horseback tour to the Monongahela River and through the wilderness of the Alleghany Mountains into the Shenandoah Valley. A company was formed to carry his plans into effect, and he was chosen president.

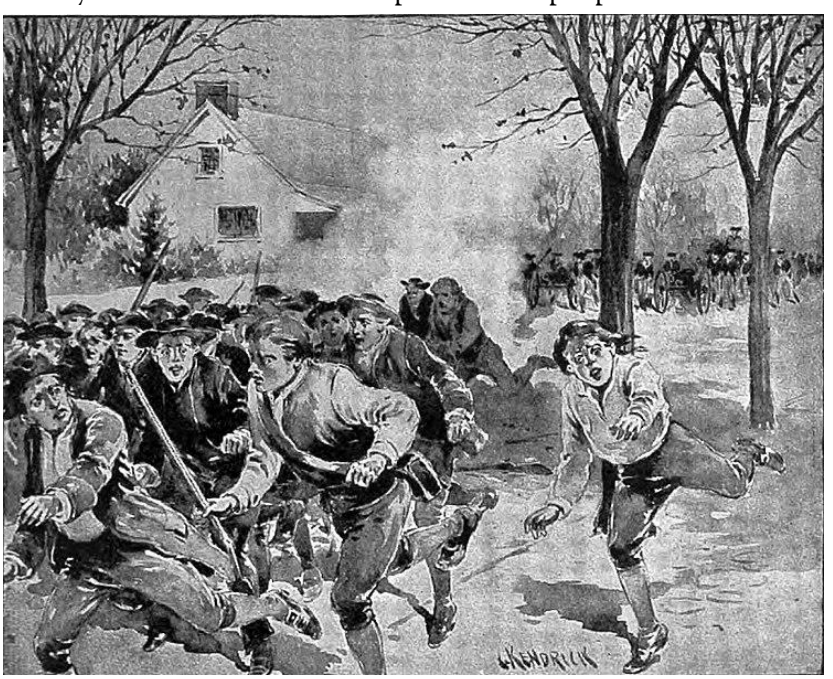
Here was a matter in which four States, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, were interested. They would have to meet and agree upon questions of duties; why not, then, invite the

other States to send commissioners for informal talk about desirable laws for trade? So said the Virginia legislature, and in the name of the governor of Virginia an invitation was sent to the other nine States. When the day came, Washington and the others who were most interested must have been badly disappointed, for besides Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, only two other States were represented. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and North Carolina had indeed made appointments, but their commissioners had not arrived. Maryland had not taken the trouble even to name commissioners.

There was only one thing to do, and that was to adjourn and start for home. But of course the men who were there had informal consultations together, and they decided to ask all the States to send delegates to a convention to be held in Philadelphia some eight months later, with the object, they said frankly, of planning how to make the Government strong enough to meet the needs of the Union.

Everybody had been so independent, so afraid of "oppression," that no one had ventured to say much about giving more power to Congress; but people were beginning to feel alarmed and doubtful whether a weak Congress was after all what they really wanted. Even the most independent among them were questioning whether bankruptcy, rebellions, disputes with Spain, threats of separation and of appeals to England for protection, together with a general and increasing lawlessness were just what they had been struggling for.

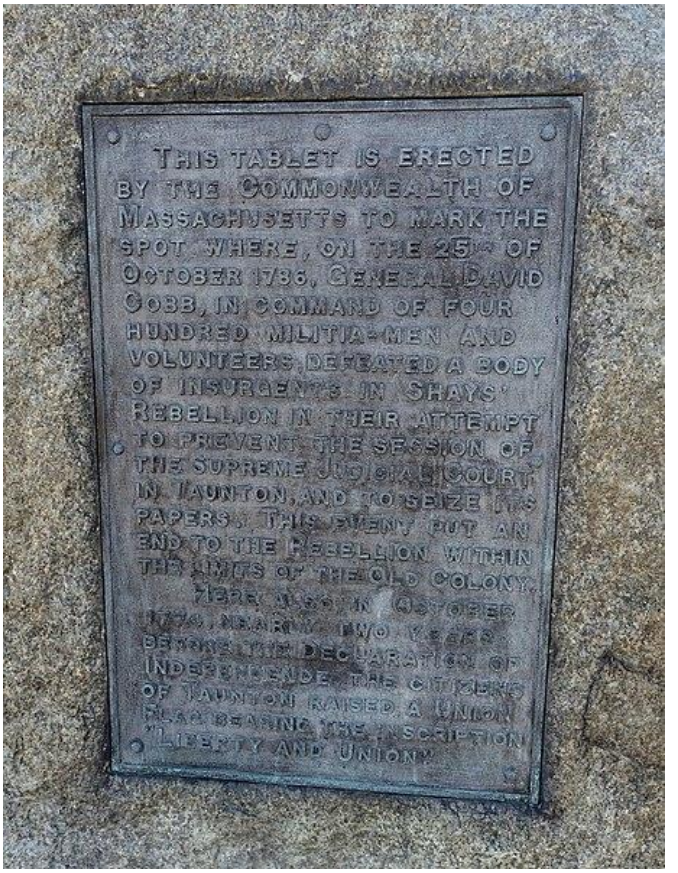
Of course there were all shades of opinion. Some of those who opposed giving power to Congress had not had enough of monarchy, and would have been glad to set up a king. Some thought that the country was entirely too large for a single republic. The men of the East were chiefly fishermen or merchants, they said, and these would form one republic. The men of the South were farmers and planters. Their wishes and needs were quite different from those of the New Englanders, and so they would form a second republic. The people of New York and the other Middle States would form a third.



Daniel Shay's forces fleeing from federal troops, C. Kendrick

Massachusetts was won for the convention by a rebellion that took place on her own soil. There was little coin to be had, and the State had refused to issue paper "notes." People who owed money could not pay, and as the law was then, they could be put into prison for non-payment. One Daniel Shays led a company of debtors against the courthouses in several Massachusetts towns, and prevented the laws from being carried out. Barns were burned, houses robbed, and the arsenal at Springfield attacked before the rebellion could be subdued.

Part of this trouble was caused by the fact that Congress could not raise money to pay debts which were due to Massachusetts people. This set the Bay State citizens to thinking. They began to realize that a country with no way to enforce its laws was a poor place in which to live. Perhaps this proposed convention would better the condition of affairs. While they were discussing the matter, news came from Virginia that George Washington had been named as the first delegate. This settled the question, for where he led, no true patriot need hesitate to follow. Before this, Massachusetts had opposed every attempt to strengthen Congress. Only a few months earlier she had actually formed a scheme to separate New England from the rest of the country. She had now seen for herself that a stronger power than that of the State was sometimes required, and from that moment Massachusetts was one of the most earnest friends of a strong central government.



Shay's Rebellion Memorial,
Taunton, Massachusetts

Connecticut just escaped a similar uprising. The farmers could not pay their taxes, and more than five hundred farms were advertised for sale. These must be sold for cash, and as cash was so hard to get, their prices were put very low. Often a farmer whose farm was sold for taxes received only one-tenth of its real value. Just who was to blame for this was not clear, but the orders came from the courts and were made out by the lawyers; therefore the people turned upon the courts and the lawyers. The country was not only in confusion, but was on the verge of anarchy. It was time for a convention.

Five or six States had already chosen their delegates, but here and there was a feeling that it was not quite according to law for such a convention to be called by any other authority than that of Congress. At length a motion was made in Congress that this body itself should call a meeting at Philadelphia on the date named, that is, should formally adopt the plan already formed. This motion was carried, and now the greatest stickler for legality might feel his mind at rest.

Chapter 8

The Coming of the Delegates

The Story of Our Constitution

Delegates were chosen by the legislatures, and the legislatures of the different States did not all meet on the same date. Traveling was, as has been said, difficult and full of dangers. When a man set out on a journey he could only guess at the time of his arrival. Most of the delegates came to Philadelphia on horseback. Several of those from Virginia came by boat. The treasury of New Hampshire was empty, and there was some delay before "real money" for the expenses of her delegates could be raised. Rhode Island would have nothing to do with the convention. She was repudiating debts and issuing large quantities of paper money. "They are afraid of everything that may become a control on them," Madison wrote to his father of her citizens.

Washington had hesitated about accepting his appointment as delegate. The Cincinnati were to meet at the same time and in the same city and wished him to accept a second term as their

Washington and Lafayette at Mt. Vernon,
Thomas Prichard Rossiter

president. He had refused on the ground of private business, and now felt that he could not properly accept this later appointment. Moreover, as he said, he did not wish to be swept back into the tide of public affairs. His life since the close of the war had been as fully occupied as it was during the struggle. He had taken leave of his officers with great affection, and with tears in their eyes they had silently watched him while he entered the barge that was to carry him to Paulus Hook, New Jersey, on his way to Mount Vernon. For his services as commander-in-chief of the army he had refused any compensation, but had agreed to keep an account of his expenses. This account he now presented to the comptroller of the treasury, in Philadelphia. In Annapolis, where Congress was then in session, he formally laid down his sword. "I here offer my commission," he said, "and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

So it was that he returned to beautiful Mount Vernon, which he had not seen for eight years; but the peace and quiet for which he had longed he could not find even there. Guests came in a constant stream. Everybody wrote to him. Some sent him inquiries which, as he said, "would require the pen of a historian to satisfy." People applied for favors of all sorts. One requested the loan of his private papers to assist in writing a history of the events of the war. One asked him to write to Europe for a wolf-hound. Another wished permission to dedicate an arithmetic to him. The Empress of Russia begged him to collect for her the vocabularies of some of the Indian tribes—and he did. Little Mademoiselle Lafayette, eight years old, wrote him a letter, which received a prompt reply. Those who could think of nothing else to write about, sent him pages of compliments. Everybody who had ever wielded a paint-brush wanted him to sit for his portrait.

And all this while he was longing to give his time to his family and his estate. That his place should have some attention was very necessary. During his long absence he had received weekly reports from his overseer; but for eight years Mount Vernon had missed its master's hand, and it was sadly in need of care. This was the "private business" which demanded his presence.

His finances were troubling him. For two years his crops had failed. He could not collect debts that were long overdue. His living expenses were much increased by the numerous visitors. He wrote his mother that he had no idea where he could get a shilling toward the taxes that were due; he would not be in debt, and he feared lest he should have to sell part of his estate. His country was not ungrateful; but when he learned that through Congress the whole nation was to be invited to unite in a gift to him, he gratefully declined it in advance; he would take no rewards for serving his own land. Even when the companies formed to connect the Virginia rivers with the Ohio wished to present him with shares worth many thousands of dollars, he refused to accept the gift, because he believed that he could arouse the interest of the people in the undertaking more surely if they knew that he had no selfish concern in it.

Surely, no one could have blamed Washington if he had left public business to others and had spent a little time in attending to his own affairs. When he left the army, he said that he hoped to pass the remainder of his life "in a state of undisturbed repose," and he felt sure that becoming a delegate would be the beginning of a return to public life. But duty to his country came first with him, and when Shays's Rebellion showed so plainly the lawlessness of the land, he laid aside all thoughts of his own advantage and accepted the appointment.

Washington never accepted any position without preparing himself as thoroughly as possible to fill it well. Now that he had agreed to be present at the convention, he set to work to make his

presence of value. He read the standard books on politics, and he read also the history of a number of the modern and ancient confederacies. He pondered over these; he made outlines of what he read; and he noted in each case its good points and its bad ones and why it was a success or a failure.

The convention was to meet on Monday, the 14th of May, 1787. Five days earlier, Washington set out from Mount Vernon in his carriage. Of course he could not make his appearance anywhere in the country without receiving all the honors that the people could show him. Fourteen miles from Philadelphia he was met by the speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly and a number of officers and prominent men of the State, who rode beside his carriage. At Gray's Ferry, two miles from the city, stood the Philadelphia Light-Horse drawn up ready to escort him into town. As they entered, the bells on all the churches rang in joyful greeting, and the crowd that lined the streets shouted their welcome. He had intended to stay at a boarding-house, but, as he wrote in his diary, "Being again warmly and kindly pressed by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Morris to lodge with them, I did so, and had my baggage removed thither."

Robert Morris had come to this country from England when he was only thirteen. He soon found a position in a business house, and from that day his rise to fame and fortune was quite like that of some of the heroes of the Oliver Optic books, for at twenty he and the son of his employer formed a partnership, and twenty years later they were at the head of the largest business house in Philadelphia. When war broke out, he was made a delegate to the Continental Congress, and he was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was the "financial backer" of the Revolution, and at the times when it seemed as if for the lack of money the cause must fail, he always came to the rescue.

One of those times was six months after the signing of the Declaration, when Washington was trying to recruit his army. This he could not do without money for bounties, good hard money in coins of gold and silver. Morris had been made financial agent of the United States, and to him Washington appealed to raise the sum needed. Morris felt that he must do it—but could he? The story is told that he was walking away from his office, wondering how to get that money, when he met a wealthy Quaker and told him of the trouble. "Robert, what security canst thou give?" the Quaker asked. "My note and my honor," Morris replied. Both stood high, and the Quaker said cordially, "Thou shalt have it." The following morning, $50,000 went to the anxious commander-in-chief. So it was that Robert Morris pledged his wealth and his honor for the cause of the States.

One day some five years later three men with troubled faces and troubled hearts stood talking together. They had just heard that the French fleet could not leave the West Indies, and without the fleet the proposed campaign against the British in New York would fail. But a campaign against Cornwallis could be entered upon "if—." They all knew what that "if "meant. "What can you do for me?" Washington asked, and the secretary of the board of war replied gravely, "With money, everything; without it, nothing." "Let me know what you want," said Morris. The result of this little talk was that thousands of barrels of flour and everything else needed were supplied, and Morris gave his own notes for $1,400,000. It was because of these supplies that Washington was able to pursue Cornwallis, and it was Cornwallis's surrender that practically put an end to the war. How much Morris and Washington must have had to talk over that Sunday evening in Morris's home in Philadelphia!

Benjamin Franklin was then president of Pennsylvania, and of course Washington had called

on him as soon as he reached town. Franklin's life, like Washington's, had been devoted to his country, but in an entirely different way. It is true that he went into the field, and was urged to let himself be made commander of an expedition; but he was wise enough to see that he could do more for the colonies in other ways than by using his sword. Indeed, what the country would have done without him is a question. Some one has called him "the incarnated common sense of his time." He founded the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Library. He was the first postmaster-general. He published the famous Poor Richard's Almanac, full of wise advice put so amusingly that people remembered it and followed it whether they meant to or not. "The sleeping fox catches no poultry," was a better argument for early rising than the time-worn advice to "get up early." "Help, hands, for I have no lands; or if I have, they are smartly taxed," would catch every one's attention at a time when every one was groaning over taxation.

As a scientist, nothing was too large and nothing was too small to interest him; and just as soon as he discovered a new fact, he set to work to make it useful. He invented the Franklin stove, which, he said, "kept him twice as warm with one-fourth as much wood." He studied the Gulf Stream, and when he was postmaster-general, he arranged to send mails by the routes which took advantage of it. He was equally interested in how to cure smoky chimneys and in the effects upon the waves of the ship cook's greasy water thrown out through a porthole.

The discovery that brought him most fame was that lightning and electricity are one and the same. So little was known of electricity in those days that it was quite an exciting experience to "take a shock." Six young Germans called on Franklin one day. They had not much confidence in the reports of the power of electricity, and they had "come to see whether there was anything in it." "Give us a thumper," they said, and he did. In a moment they lay side by side on the floor like so many ninepins. They admitted that there was "something in it."

Franklin was famous throughout Europe for his scientific discoveries. Indeed, he had been famous before the majority of the delegates could remember. Twenty years before the Revolution, he had received honorary degrees from Oxford and St. Andrews. He had been made a member of the Royal Society, and the greatest men of Europe were proud to be counted his friends.

It was this wise, shrewd, famous American who had been sent to England to speak for the colonies, and to France to win friends and money for them. Wherever he went, he was always the same sensible, level-headed man. No amount of praise could sweep him off his feet, and no blame ever made him lose his bearings. When he was to be formally received at the court of France, he did not think it proper for a plain American citizen to follow the elaborate French fashions in dress. Then, too, it was cold weather, and it would be somewhat dangerous to change his woolen stockings for fine silk. On this momentous question King Louis himself was consulted. He replied that Dr. Franklin was welcome to come to court in any dress he pleased. So the blue yarn stockings made their appearance at the sumptuous court of France; and the conversation of their wearer was so brilliant that the courtiers forgot to look at them. Paris ran wild over him, his learning, his charming talk, his simple, independent ways, and his perfect tact. Wherever he went, he was followed by crowds of admirers. He was both witty and dignified, and not in the least elated by his glory. He was so popular in France that even if King Louis had been inclined to refuse aid to America, he would hardly have ventured to arouse the wrath of his people by refusing it to Franklin.

When the time came for a treaty to be made between England and the United States, Franklin

was at his best. With apparent expectation of getting just what he wanted, he calmly proposed that, since England had injured the colonies by the war, the Mother Country should cede Canada and Nova Scotia to the United States by way of reparation. This would pay the American losses, he said serenely, and it would enable the United States to make good the property of the Tories which had been confiscated. Of course Franklin knew fully as well as King George and his friends that this would never be agreed to; but the bold stand of the American commissioner gave the Americans something to bring forward by way of compromise when the English commissioners with equal coolness requested compensation for giving up several American cities then in the hands of the British troops. There were many complications in making this treaty, but the tact and clear-sightedness of Franklin and the ability of his two associates made it a great success.

In 1785, Franklin returned to America, almost eighty years of age. Like Washington, he would gladly have had a little time of quiet, but Pennsylvania at once demanded him as president of the State; and he held this position for three years. It was during his third year that he was made delegate to the convention.

These delegates were what Daniel Webster would have called a "respectable" [that is, worthy of respect] body of men. Six of them had signed the Declaration of Independence. Out of fifty-five, more than half were graduates of either American or English universities. There were lawyers, financiers, clear-headed thinkers, men of genius, men who could make masterly speeches, and men who only listened, thought, and voted. Some had been officers in the army, governors of States, or congressmen. Some were plain, honest men with no brilliant record behind them, but with a sincere love for their country and a strong resolution to do for her the very best that was in them.

Not many of the delegates were so punctual as Washington. Some had been delayed by storms. Some had been slow in starting. Some were not even appointed until it was too late for them to reach Philadelphia on time. The delegates from Virginia and Pennsylvania, however, were all on the minute. Indeed, some of them arrived several days earlier than Washington. It was eleven days before a quorum of States was present. There had been no waste of time, however, for the hours were filled with informal talks in little groups of two or three; and every afternoon all who had reached the city met for a general discussion. The Virginia delegates were especially glad to have this time together. The suggestion of the convention had come from their State, and so her delegates felt themselves bound to have a definite plan to propose to the others. These conversations enabled them to learn the point of view of one another and made it possible for them later to vote as a unit.

The leader of the Virginians was James Madison, a man whose knowledge and thoughtful opinions had come to be looked upon with great respect. He had been a quiet, scholarly boy, so fond of study that, after Princeton had given him a diploma, he stayed at college another year in order to work on Hebrew. He came home, and still he studied—history, law, theology, constitutional law—everything was grist that came to his mill. When he was in college, he had once for several months given only three hours out of the twenty-four to sleep; and it is hard to see how he could have been much more generous with himself at home, for he had eleven brothers and sisters, and he acted as their tutor. He was only twenty-two years old, but probably they looked upon him with the utmost veneration, and supposed he was at least a hundred.

In 1774, when people began to see that there would be trouble with England, the student was aroused. Even if he had spent his twenty-three years apart from public affairs, he was a true

American, and when he was put on the committee of safety—possibly because of his father's reputation—he accepted promptly. Some of his neighbors had declared that he was too much of a student to be of any value on the committee; but evidently his neighbors were mistaken, for although he was the "baby member," he was made a delegate to the State convention two years later. He was pale and slender. His light hair was combed straight back and braided in a queue tied with a black ribbon. He looked like a particularly shy young minister, rather alarmed at the possibility of having to preach before so many older folk. Indeed, he made a motion only once, and then he did not venture to make a speech to support it.

Everybody knew that the quiet young man had knowledge, and somehow they must have found out that he had ability and statesmanship, for he was made a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1780. He attended strictly to the business of being a delegate, whether this agreed with his convenience or not. It was hardly a paying occupation, for although Virginia voted her delegates a generous allowance for their maintenance, it was, in the lack of money, seldom paid. They made common cause, and when any one of them was so lucky as to receive a check, he shared it with the others. Checks came seldom, however, and at length Madison found himself so deeply in debt that he had to borrow money of a broker, a Polish Jew. This Jew was a good American, for when his debtor spoke about the interest, he said, "But I take no interest from any member of Congress."

Madison held one public position after another, doing excellently well in all, and showing such wisdom and sound judgment that people began to call him "Colonel," which was used as a title of supreme respect fully as often as one of military distinction. It was quite to be expected that he would be one of the delegates from Virginia to the convention at Philadelphia. Indeed, he was the leader of the delegation. He no longer appeared the "shy young minister "of his earlier years. He

Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Ferdinand Richardt

The Assembly Room, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA

had become accustomed to people, and they liked him and respected him. He had a keen sense of humor and was an agreeable companion.

The eleven days were also useful socially, if all the delegates were as much sought after as Washington. He ate a "family dinner" at Mr. Morris's and "drank tea in a very large circle of ladies." On one day he was present at a wedding feast, and on another he dined "in great splendor," as his diary declares. In short, he was invited somewhere every day, and apparently enjoyed himself everywhere.

By the 25th a quorum had arrived, and the delegates came together. Washington was unanimously elected president. A committee was chosen to prepare rules of order for the convention, and the meeting was adjourned until Monday, the 28th.

When Monday came, delegates from two other States had reached the city. At the appointed hour, they all assembled in a simple, dignified brick building on Chestnut Street, the State House, but now known as Independence Hall. In this building, the Second Continental Congress had held its meetings. Here Washington was elected commander-in-chief of the Continental forces. Here the Declaration of Independence was adopted and signed, and in the belfry overhead hung the bell that had rung out the news of freedom to the waiting city. Many of the delegates had been present on some of these occasions, and they must have realized that the work in which they were about to engage was quite as important as any that had been done within those walls. What they were to accomplish during the next four months would show to the world whether the freedom for which they had risked their lives was freedom indeed or only the beginning of anarchy. They entered the house and the doors were shut. Fifty years were to pass before the discussions that went on behind those closed doors were to become known.

Chapter 9

A New Constitution

The Story of Our Constitution

When the convention met, on May 28th, the rules of order were presented by the committee, and proved to be simple and sensible. A complicated motion was to be divided into its parts, and each part voted on separately. If the delegates of any State preferred to postpone a vote to the following day, this was to be done. How voting was to be carried on in the sessions was a difficult question to decide. Naturally, as the larger States represented more people, they thought they ought to have more votes; and quite as naturally, the smaller States did not agree to this. Indeed, the delegates from Delaware had been absolutely forbidden to submit to anything of the kind. The Virginia delegates very wisely concluded that it would be better to avoid the opposition of the smaller States and make no objection to their having an equal vote, trusting to their being reasonable and yielding if this was at any time about to interfere with forming a strong, trustworthy government.

The rules for attention were as strict as those of any schoolroom, for while a member was speaking, no one was allowed to talk or read "book, pamphlet, or paper, printed or manuscript"—they were nothing if not definite, those makers of the Constitution, and they left no loopholes. They looked out for the manners of their members, too, for it was positively forbidden to walk between the president and the person speaking; and on adjournment every member was commanded to stand in his place until the president had passed him.

A letter was presented and read, signed by a number of the substantial citizens of Rhode Island, regretting that the upper house of their legislature had refused to appoint delegates, and promising to do their utmost to have the conclusions of the convention adopted by their State.

The convention then adjourned, but at the next meeting the lines of good behavior were drawn even more strictly, for it was voted that no member should be absent without leave, that no committees should sit "while the house shall be, or ought to be, sitting." Evidently, there was to be no wasting valuable time in that convention. Members were to attend strictly to business.

It was also decided that no word spoken in the house should be repeated beyond its walls. But Madison, the student of ancient republics, knew well that, while the convention would pass, the day would surely come at some future time when every word of the constitution that he hoped to see formed would be closely scanned, and when details of how it was formed would help to interpret its meaning. Therefore he took his seat with quill and inkhorn directly in front of Washington, where he could hear every word, and took notes of what was said. He never missed a session, and each day, after he went home to his lodgings, he wrote out his notes. Half a century later, Madison died. He was the last survivor of the fifty-five makers of the Constitution. There was no longer any

Washington at the Constitutional Convention, Junius Brutus Stearns

reason for secrecy, and the notes were then published.

There was one point, the most essential of all, upon which it was certain that the members would not at first agree. This was, as has been said, whether to patch up the old ship and try to keep it afloat by pumping, or to build a new one. That is, should they try to amend the old Articles of Confederation by which they had been governed—or rather, not governed—or should they form a new constitution?

Now was the time for the Virginia delegates to bring forward their plan. Edmund Randolph, of their number, governor of Virginia, was an experienced speaker; and therefore this had been left to him. He spoke first of the Articles of Confederation, and pointed out their weakness so forcibly that the listeners must have wondered how they had ever lived under them a single day. If enemies come to our shores, he said, Congress can do nothing to protect us. Congress cannot raise an army, neither can it raise money; and no army of volunteers can be raised without money. It cannot even settle a quarrel between States or a rebellion against its own authority. Congress has no power to impose duties; in short, it is far less strong than the constitution of many of the States. The whole country is in danger of anarchy, and Congress is so feeble that it can do nothing but advise and suggest.

Governor Randolph then read the fifteen resolutions that the Virginia delegates had agreed upon. These gave an outline of a government as they believed it should be. He made it perfectly clear that he was not aiming at patching up the old Confederation in the hope that it would somehow get along; but at establishing a strong government in which the Union and not the individual

State should be the supreme power. "This is the opportunity," he said, "to establish peace, harmony, happiness, and liberty. I beg that you will not suffer it to pass away unimproved."

Then there was discussion indeed. What do you mean by "supreme power?" was asked. It was explained that it meant a government above that of the separate States; a government of such authority that if its decrees clashed with those of the States, the States were to yield. To some of the members the suggestion to put such power into the hands of Congress seemed as momentous as it would seem to-day if it were proposed to take away most of the powers of Congress and put them into the hands of the separate States.

Everybody talked and everybody questioned. Do you mean to abolish the State governments altogether? Have we any right even to discuss a new government in a convention called by the old government? Is it wise to pass amendments that the States will never agree to? When the question was put: "Resolved, That a national government ought to be established, consisting of a supreme legislative, executive, and judiciary," it was passed by a vote of six to one. It was a strenuous day, and it is no wonder that Washington was glad to go to a party that evening.

The New York vote was divided, Alexander Hamilton voting for the Constitution, the other delegate present voting against it. New York had played a shrewd game. It was certain that a new constitution would be proposed, and New York did not wish to have any "supreme power" making changes in her commercial regulations; so she had sent with Hamilton two other delegates who would be sure to vote against giving up the Articles of Confederation.

There would be a new constitution, that was now settled—if the separate States accepted the work of the convention. It was decided that the "national legislature," that is, Congress, should consist of a lower and an upper house [the House of Representatives and the Senate]. This vote would have been unanimous had not Pennsylvania, probably out of respect to the opinion of Franklin, who thought a single house better, voted against it.

The next question was how the States should be represented in Congress. That touched a sensitive point. The wealthy States would, of course, have preferred to have representation based upon the taxes which were paid to the government; the Southern States would have liked to base it upon the number of inhabitants; the Northern States would have preferably counted only the free inhabitants. Virginia had generously suggested that it might be based upon either property or free inhabitants. The tactful course was to let the matter rest for a while. It would be enough for the time being to agree that some change in the old system of representation should be made. Later, they could settle details.

There was no reason, however, why the question how Congress should be elected should not be considered; but here, too, there was a decided difference of opinion. The lower house was first discussed. Some thought that members ought to be elected by the legislatures of the States.

"I expect our federal pyramid to rise high," said one member, "and therefore I wish to give it as broad a base as possible. I believe that the whole people should choose their representatives in the lower house."

"But the great body of the people are not well informed in matters of government; they are easily misled," objected a third; and one who had just passed through the experience of Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts agreed with him. "The people are often dupes," he said. "Men who have something to gain by it go about among them with their false stories, and there is no one at hand to show their

falseness."

"Still, the lower house is to be our House of Commons," said another thoughtfully. "It ought to know and sympathize with all kinds of people. We must look out for the rights of all, high or low."

Then Mr. Madison made one of his quiet, reasonable speeches and turned the plan to elect by legislature into a sort of "House that Jack built." "In some of the States," he said, "the people choose electors, and the electors choose the legislators. Now if these legislators choose the lower house, and the lower house chooses the upper house, and the upper house chooses the executive, the people will be lost sight of. I believe that our great fabric to be raised will be more stable if it rests on the solid foundation of the people themselves, rather than on the pillars of the legislatures." It was "Resolved: That the members of the lower house be chosen by the people."

The convention had now decided that there should be a new constitution, with legislative, executive, and judiciary powers; that Congress should be made up of two houses, and that the lower house should be elected by the people themselves. It had passed over details and unimportant matters, and had also put one side for the time questions that would have led to "irritating discussions." They had set to work wisely, those makers of the Constitution. They had not tried to find out in what they differed, but in what they agreed. When that was done and they had the substance of a constitution before them, some of the points on which they now disagreed would not seem so important, and it might be easier to yield to one another.

The legislative department would make the laws, but who would see that they were carried out and punish any who might not obey them? That would be the work of the executive division of the government, and of how many persons should this consist? Now that for nearly a century and a half we have had one man, a president, for chief executive, this does not seem a difficult question to decide; but it was a real puzzle to the honest men who were trying to do their best for the country in all the years to come. They had grown up under the rule of a king, but they had made their country into a republic, and they had no experience to guide them.

One speaker came out boldly in favor of a single person. There was a dead pause. "Shall I put the question?" the chairman asked. "This is a point of great importance," said Franklin, "and I hope that before the question is put, the gentlemen will deliver their sentiments on it."

"Deliver their sentiments" they did, now that the ice was broken. Everybody had something to say. It was almost as if some one was thinking aloud somewhat like this: "One man would feel the responsibility more than several. He need not stand alone, for a council could be appointed to aid and advise him. Or, there might be three executives; but it would be rather difficult in military matters to have a general with three heads!

"And how should he be chosen? Some States had been in the habit of choosing their chief magistrate by vote of the people. This had proved to be successful, but it might not be successful when tried throughout the country. The national legislature makes the laws, and perhaps it would be best for that body to choose the executive to enforce them. Would three years be too short a term of office? Would seven years be too long? If the executive does not approve of any law passed by Congress, shall he have the right of veto? If he neglects his duties or acts contrary to law, how can he be deposed? Ought he to be paid a salary?" Franklin thought not, that the honor should be sufficient reward; and he spoke of the great commander-in-chief who had served his country for eight years with no salary. If the House of Representatives were chosen directly by the people, would

it be well for the legislature to choose the Senate, and so represent the States as States? If so, how should it be chosen?" Realizing how weighty a question any one of these is, it is a wonder that the brains of these men did not whirl. Perhaps they did.

So the discussion went on. From time to time a main point was laid aside until the way for it had been made more plain by clearing away some minor points. The rules of order had aimed at giving the delegates as much freedom as if they were thinking aloud. It was quite allowable to pass a motion for the time being in order to clear the road for another, even with the realization that this decision was not final and the matter would come up again later, and that if a member changed his mind during the interval, he could change his vote without being called fickle and inconsistent.

The question of the equality of the States was always cropping up in one form or another. The small States took the ground that a State was a State, and one should have the same rights as another. The large States felt that the desires of many should carry more weight than the desires of a few. One member declared that the only satisfactory method of treating the matter would be to spread out a map of the United States and divide it into thirteen equal parts. Another said that if a large State was to have more votes than a small one, a rich man ought to have more votes than a poor man.

Here were two parties, the supporters of the small States and the supporters of the large States. Neither party could understand why the other could not see the matter from their point of view. They were all getting a little nettled and out of patience. One of the New Jersey members had declared that neither he nor his State would ever "submit to despotism or to tyranny "; and a Pennsylvania delegate had suggested that the citizens of Pennsylvania were equal to those of New Jersey. This was the time for Franklin to make some of his tactful remarks. He reminded the members that no one was ever convinced by a man's declaring positively that his mind was made up and he would never change it. "We are sent here," he said, "to consult, not to contend with each other." He smiled at the notion that the large States would swallow the smaller ones, and declared it to be fully as likely, under the Articles of Confederation, that the small States would swallow the large ones. Quite in Franklin's own fashion he went on to prove his point mathematically. "Suppose, for example," he said, "that seven smaller States had each three members in the House, and the six larger to have, one with another, six members; and that, upon a question, two members of each smaller State should be in the affirmative, and one in the negative, they would make affirmatives, fourteen; negatives, seven; and that all the larger States should be unanimously in the negative, they would make, negatives, thirty-six; in all, affirmatives, fourteen; negatives, forty-three. It is then apparent that the fourteen carry the question against the forty-three, and the minority overpowers the majority, contrary to the common practice of assemblies in all countries and ages." It was not very probable that such a case would occur, and the delegates must have smiled at the idea; but the smile cleared the air, and things went on more smoothly.

The fifteen resolutions of the Virginia plan had now been acted upon or postponed, and Judge Gorham, of Massachusetts, had prepared a report summing up the action that had been taken. Just at this point New Jersey and several other States asked for more time to consider this plan, and also to present another, which they called "purely federal."

Chapter 10

The Constitution is Completed

The Story of Our Constitution

This "purely federal" plan had been prepared by the delegates from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. All four opposed a strong national government, but not for the same reason. Connecticut and New York did not wish to have their State decrees interfered with by any "supreme government," and New Jersey and Delaware, two small States, had no idea of agreeing to any government that would give the large States more representatives than the small. They wanted a Congress of one house, and that house made up of the same numbers from each State, no matter what its size. They were willing to give Congress a few more powers, but no real power. The old question was brought up, whether they had any right to form a new constitution, when they had been sent there by Congress to revise the old one. This had been gone over again and again, and it

Scene at the Signing of the Constitution, Howard Chandler Christy

is little wonder that one member declared, maybe just a little scornfully, "Give New Jersey an equal vote, and she will dismiss her scruples." The New Jersey plan seemed at first reading to give Congress all necessary power. It did not cut loose from the Articles, but proposed merely to modify them to suit the changed circumstances. Congress should have the right to impose and collect taxes and make laws for commerce. It could oblige the States to be obedient to its orders. The weak point was that Congress was to consist of one house, representing not persons, but States; and all States, whether rich or poor, with many citizens or few, were to have the same number of representatives. Power can come only from the people, not from the States. The New Jersey plan would throw the country into the same old troubles. Congress would have powers, but no power.

Madison now took the floor, and showed how one State after another had broken the Articles of Confederation. Georgia had made treaties with the Creek Indians; Massachusetts had even then a body of troops—a standing army—in her pay. Several States had issued paper money with no coin behind it. New Jersey herself had not been too obedient to refuse to obey a requisition of Congress. It would be easy to crush a small State, he said, and force her into obedience, but what about the large States? Would it be easy for such a Congress to oblige them to obey? Again, if no plan could be agreed upon, either each State would be independent of the others, or they would unite in several confederacies. Who would then protect the small States from their stronger neighbors? New States which would later come in from the West, would have at first few inhabitants; but supposing all States had the same number of representatives, a minority might easily become the rulers of the whole land.

The convention was near coming to an abrupt end. The speakers became more and more angry. They began to declare that they "would never consent," that there were foreign powers ready to take them by the hand. "Gentlemen, I do not trust you," shouted wrathfully one of the Delaware members.

Everybody made a speech, and no one's speech influenced any one else. It began to look as if the convention would surely dissolve, and each man would put on his hat and start for home. Would a compromise be possible? Two of the Connecticut delegates thought it might. They proposed that the lower house should be national and the upper house be federal; that is, that the House of Representatives should represent the people, and the Senate the States. Franklin always enjoyed a simple, everyday illustration, and now he said, "When a broad table is to be made, and the edges of the planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint."

No one was very enthusiastic about the compromise, but from sheer helplessness they at length put it to vote whether each State should be allowed to send one representative to the upper house. One State after another voted, one in favor, one against; and so it went on until the vote of five States had been recorded for the motion and five against it. Ten States were represented, and all but one, Georgia, had voted. Mr. Houston, of Georgia, voted no. Then everybody's gaze turned upon his colleague, a young man named Abraham Baldwin. He was a Yale graduate, a Connecticut man, but now a lawyer of Savannah. His vote would decide the fate of the motion. He did not agree with it, but if he said no, the compromise would fail. Probably the convention would dissolve; and it must be kept together. He voted yes. It was a tie, and the motion was lost. If New Hampshire and Rhode Island had been present, they would doubtless have voted for a compromise; therefore it was not given up, but a committee was appointed to draw up a form of compromise.

Three days they had for this piece of work, for the delegates took a recess of three days, so they could celebrate the Fourth of July if they wished. It cannot have been a very festive celebration for Washington, if we may judge from his diary, for he gave a sitting to an artist, went to see some "anatomical figures," attended a meeting of an agricultural society, heard a law student deliver an oration on the "Anniversary of Independence," and dined with the Cincinnati.

The committee on the compromise had rather a stormy time, but they finally came to an agreement to bring in a report in its favor. After all their struggles, they must have felt discouraged when they came to present their report to the convention, for a whole crop of new arguments had come to life, and eleven full days of talk passed before that compromise really came to a vote and was passed. Even then, it was somewhat different in form from the one originally presented. It now stood that the Senate should consist of two members from every State, elected by the legislature of the State; and that the House of Representatives should consist of one member for every 30,000 of the population. "In the course of one hundred and fifty years, one for every 30,000 will make a House rather unmanageably large," some one remarked. One or two disrespectfully smiled at the idea that any system of government which they could work out would last so long; but it has already lasted nearly that length of time. Our present House consists of one member for every 211,877 persons. If the original ratio of one for every 30,000 had been continued, our Capitol would have to be enlarged, for seats would have to be provided for about 3,700 members.

This is the lengthy story of the making of one of the three great compromises of the Constitution. It had taken a full month's discussion to come to a settlement; but this settlement was a real stroke of policy. "Give New Jersey an equal vote, and she will dismiss her scruples," turned out to be an excellent prophecy. New Jersey and the other small States were made sure of their equal vote in the Senate, and now they were willing that Congress should have all the power that any one might choose to give it. The second compromise was also on the question of representation. Should slaves be counted as persons or as property? The North declared that in the South they were considered property, and that they should therefore be taxed as property and not counted as persons. The South admitted that they were property, but declared that they were also persons. Counting them as property would increase the taxes of the Southern States; counting them as persons would increase the number of Southern representatives in Congress.

Another question was closely connected with this: How shall the States be taxed? There was a long discussion, and at length it was agreed that it should be according to population. This did not help so very much, for it brought them back to the first question, namely, whether slaves should be counted as persons in computing the State tax. The North said yes; the South said no. Should they be counted in deciding upon the number of representatives for a State? The North said no; the South said yes. This began to seem like another deadlock, but each side yielded. The North agreed that slaves should be counted in settling the number of representatives and the South agreed that they should be counted in computing the State tax. Both agreed that not all the slaves, but only three-fifths of their number should be counted.

According to this arrangement, five men in Massachusetts counted as five in apportioning representtation in the House of Representatives. If those five men moved to South Carolina and each bought a slave, they would count as eight. In South Carolina it was not long before there were more slaves than free men, and although the slaves were not "represented" in any way, they were counted

Signing of the Constitution, Albert Herter

in the representation for the white men. This was why the Southern States had so much power in Congress. The war had been fought to uphold the principle that all citizens should count equally in representation, and this compromise was directly against it. Nevertheless, if it had not been agreed to, the Constitution would probably not have been formed; anarchy would have prevailed; and it is quite possible that the country would have been divided and that perhaps part or all of it would have fallen into the hands of some foreign power. Compromises are never absolutely fair to either side, but they sometimes seem necessary in order to avoid worse things.

The third compromise was on the slave trade. New England was determined that Congress should have the right to regulate commerce. The South was equally determined that it should not; for the Southern States were afraid that New England would get control of the ocean freight, and that the South would then be at her mercy in sending rice, tobacco, and indigo to Europe. "Commerce" included the slave trade. Nearly all the Southern States had forbidden it, but in the rice swamps of Georgia and South Carolina slaves became rapidly exhausted. To carry on their most profitable business, these States demanded that the importation of negroes should not be interfered with. One of the delegates from South Carolina declared that a refusal to make such allowance would be regarded as shutting South Carolina out of the Union. Another member retorted that if the two States intended, as they had hinted, to give up in a short time this importation of slaves, they would not be so unwilling to have it prohibited; and one member from South Carolina declared boldly that the Carolinas and Georgia would never be such fools as to give up the right to import. The result was the third compromise. To please New England, Congress was to have absolute control over commerce. To please the South, the slave trade was not to be prohibited before 1808—for there was a general feeling that before that date it would be given up.

These were the three compromises that made the Union possible. The first conciliated the smaller States; the second gained the support of the slave States; the third put commerce into the hands

of Congress and assured free trade among the States.

The old question how the executive should be elected had been taken up more than once. It was now suggested that the State legislatures should choose electors, who should go to the capital city and vote; but such a journey was not lightly to be undertaken. Some one even hinted that choosing electors by lot among the congressmen might be practicable. Some one else thought that one man might be named by each State, and from these thirteen either Congress or a board of electors might choose an executive. A month later, still other plans were brought forward. At length the present plan was adopted.

Concerning the judiciary, there was little disagreement. No one doubted that it must have courts, and that the decisions of its courts were not to be questioned. Its noblest task is that of interpreting the Constitution. It not only interprets what has been written; but should a new law be passed, and a case involving this law be brought before the Supreme Court, then, if this Court should declare the law contrary to the Constitution, it is null and void; the highest authority in the land has spoken.

There was much yet to do. There was more than once a disagreement with emphatic opinions expressed on both sides; but the foundations had been laid, and the rest followed. Four months after the day in May when the convention first met the last session was held. A draft of the Constitution was signed by all but three of those present.

The chair in which Washington sat at the meetings chanced to have painted on its back a half-sun, rising or setting. Franklin said, "While I have been sitting here, I have often looked at that without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun."

Detail of the Rising Sun Chair, Assembly Room, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Save for a ten-days' adjournment the convention had been in session five, six, even seven hours a day through the four months of summer in a torrid city. The work was now completed. After dining at the City Tavern, the delegates said a cordial farewell to one another, and made ready to start for their homes. Washington wrote in his diary that he returned to his lodgings "and retired to meditate on the momentous work which had been executed." "I wish the Constitution had been more nearly perfect," he wrote to Patrick Henry, "but I sincerely believe it is the best that could be obtained at this time."

Chapter 11

Will the States Ratify?

The Story of Our Constitution

After the Constitution had been the law of the land for a century, Gladstone said that it was "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." Nevertheless, it was not altogether easy to get this "wonderful work" adopted in the first place. Nine States must accept it before it would become law, and with some of them the acceptance was decidedly slow.

Whatever Benjamin Franklin had to do was always done promptly, and even if he was eighty-one years old, he was up early on the day following the close of the convention, and at eleven o'clock he with his seven colleagues marched straight to the hall in which the Pennsylvania legislature was assembled, made a little speech expressing his pleasure, and presented a copy of the important paper. It had a warm reception, for no other State was more indignant than Pennsylvania at the lawlessness that prevailed. On the morning of the 28th of September it was moved that a State convention be called to consider the ratification of the Constitution.

This motion stole the powder of the Anti-Federalists, or Antis, as those were called who opposed the Constitution. The assembly was to adjourn on the 29th, and they had never supposed that so near its adjournment it would call a State convention. They had it nicely planned to secure a majority if possible before the assembly met again, and so prevent the Constitution from being laid before the people at all. They declared that until Congress sent the paper, it was highly improper to admit any knowledge of it; and in any case, notice should have been given beforehand, they insisted. Nevertheless, the vote was taken. Forty-three were in favor of the convention; the nineteen Antis were against it. That afternoon, when the assembly came together, the nineteen were missing. The sergeant-at-arms went in search of them, but they refused to come. There was no quorum, so the assembly had to adjourn.

Then the City of Brotherly Love was wrathful. To form a quorum only two more were needed, and on the following morning crowds burst open the doors of two of the runaways, dragged them to their seats in the State House, and held them there while business went on. The 30th of November was chosen as the day for the State convention.

Now everybody began to write letters to the newspapers, and everybody made speeches. Some objected because the Constitution did not contain a bill of rights. To this James Wilson, delegate from Pennsylvania to the constitutional convention and now its earnest defender, replied that in England such a bill was necessary, because the king was regarded as the source of power, and all rights must come from him; but that in the United States all power came from the people, and any power which they did not definitely give to the general government remained in their own hands.

The preamble to the Constitution begins, "We the people of the United States do establish," "and this is in itself a bill of rights," he declared. Some one brought up the criticism of six months earlier, that the delegates had gone beyond their authority in making a constitution at all. Wilson replied that they claimed no authority, that they had framed a constitution which they thought good for the country, and it was now laid before the States for them to ratify or reject, as they might choose.

Not all the Antis presented reasons. Many were satisfied to produce silly doggerel, many mistook ridicule for reason. When the Federalists demanded whether their opponents had no respect for the work of Washington and Franklin, they retorted flippantly that Franklin was a childish old man, that Washington was a soldier, but not a politician; and that the rest of them were mere boys. One went so far as to call Washington a fool from nature and Franklin a fool from age. There was occasionally a touch of wit, but there was a constant stream of what no one but its originators would have ever dreamed to be wit.

In the midst of this contention, news arrived one morning that little Delaware, the smallest of the States represented at the convention, had "fully, freely, and entirely approved of, assented to, ratified, and confirmed the federal Constitution," and had done it unanimously, too! Evidently there was no mistaking what Delaware's opinions were.

The Philadelphia Federalists were delighted. Thus far, the Antis had done everything in their power to block any action by the convention. They had talked five, seven, nine hours on a stretch—the State paying them a salary for the time that they wasted; they had spent day after day disputing about the meaning of common words, until some of the thrifty Pennsylvanians had begun to wonder how the bill would ever be paid if they kept on.

A great deal of Anti propaganda had been carried on in the western part of the State. The people beyond the Susquehanna were assured that Congress would increase the taxes; that, as members were to be paid from the Federal treasury, they would be independent of their own States; and that therefore the State was to lose all power. From these people a petition was brought in demanding all sorts of "rights" which belonged to them in any case. Pennsylvania had lost her chance to be in the lead, but six days after the Delaware ratification she became, by a vote of forty-six to twenty-three, the second in the procession of States. Twenty-one of the twenty-three prepared an address to the effect that Congress would promptly become a despotism, and that the country was altogether too large for a centralized government.

Not one bit did the Federalists care for this. They were not at all afraid of Congress, and the thought of a large country did not alarm them in the least. On the next day there was a grand procession to the Court House, and there the ratification was formally read aloud. The bells of Christ Church rang merrily—almost of their own accord—a Federal salute of thirteen guns was fired, and the members of the State convention had a fine dinner together. It is not stated whether the minority were present or not, or whether the feast disagreed with them if they were.

On the very day before the Pennsylvania ratification, the New Jersey convention met in Trenton. Slowly the proposed constitution was read, section by section, with an opportunity to discuss each one. Nothing was done hastily. For a week they debated and deliberated; then, "by the unanimous consent of the members present, agreed to, ratified, and confirmed the proposed Constitution and every part thereof." This was as clear and determined, even if not quite so jubilant, as the ratification of little Delaware, and the emphatic envoi, "and every part thereof," must have

cast a gloom over the Antis. Indeed, in western Pennsylvania it was a question whether the people would not take up arms and rebel. The Federalists were carrying on a mild celebration of bonfire and salute, when down upon them came a wild mob of Antis. These new arrivals did no worse than to spike the saucy Federalist cannon and burn the new almanac for 1788, which had audaciously ventured to print the proposed Constitution on its revered pages. The Federalists meant to have their celebration, and so they and some muskets tried again—successfully. Then the Antis burned Wilson and his colleague, Judge McKean, in effigy; which did not injure the two men and possibly did somewhat to soothe the Anti-Federalistic feelings.

The Antis had lost the central States, but the Southern States and New England remained, and it seemed quite possible that even the compromises might not prevent these States from slipping through the fingers of the Federalists. But alas for the hopes of the Antis! Georgia had her two votes in the Senate just the same as Pennsylvania. She had a very small population as yet, but her soil was rich, and she expected to have before long a population that would greatly increase her number of representatives in the lower house. As it was, the compromise had given her the right to a larger representation than her number of free men entitled her to have, and Georgia saw no reason why she should not be satisfied. Moreover, much of her area was forest, and in this forest were hostile Indians. Spain held the land to her south, extending from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River. Who could say when she might need help against one or the other of these foes? She would have been foolish indeed to toss aside the one friend whom she could so easily and advantageously bind to give her assistance in time of need. Georgia called her convention for Christmas Day. One week later, she unanimously ratified the Constitution. As the last name was signed, a salute of thirteen guns was fired. So Georgia signified her faith in the Union.

Before the Constitution could become the law of the land it must be accepted, as has been said, by nine of the thirteen States; but the Antis were especially strong in New England, and if it should be rejected by the four New England States and one more, it would fail. With the confusion following such a failure, the condition of the country would be worse than ever. It is no wonder that both parties kept close watch of New England.

Connecticut's convention met on the last day of the year. It had a dignified membership, for it was made up of government officials, judges, clergymen, and some sixty veterans of the war. One section of the Constitution was read and debated upon, then another, and so on; but no vote was taken until the whole had been discussed. Connecticut men who had helped to make the Constitution were present to explain it; and as the discussion proceeded, one of them said gravely, "If we reject it, our national existence must come to an end." One of the veteran officers objected to having duties on imports, because he thought this would favor the Southern States; but a delegate replied that Connecticut was a manufacturing State, that the manufacturers were rapidly increasing, and that such a law would be of great benefit. The veteran objected that a central government ought not to have both sword and purse; it would become a despotism. The delegate replied that the government must have revenues, and it must have power to defend the country, that there could be no true government without sword and purse. When the vote was taken, the Federalists were delighted, for it stood three to one in favor of the ratification.

Now came the tug of war. Massachusetts was in population the fourth State; only Virginia, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina contained more inhabitants. Her vote would strongly influence

that of New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Indeed, when her convention met, prominent men from both States went to Boston to watch proceedings, and they said confidently that as went Massachusetts, so their States would go. Madison, the "Father of the Constitution," declared that the decision of Massachusetts would involve that of New York; and that if Massachusetts should reject the Constitution, the minority in Pennsylvania would be aroused and would make a stubborn resistance.

It did not look as if there was much hope that Massachusetts would ratify. Several of the most prominent men were believed to object. Shays's Rebellion had indeed been suppressed, but many of his supporters had not changed their minds, even though they had been forced to yield. The farmers had been hoping for laws that would release them in whole or in part from their contracts; and this new Constitution would have nothing of the sort. The land that is now Maine was then a part of Massachusetts, and its people were eager to cut loose and have a State of their own. The Constitution would tend, they thought, to bind them more closely. Massachusetts as a whole never did like interference with her affairs. She was accustomed to attending to her own business on her own ground. She liked a town meeting and not a long-distance government. It is no wonder that the Antis looked upon Massachusetts as a most hopeful State.

The Federalists had their fears, to be sure, but they also had their hopes. Commerce was an important matter in Massachusetts, and it would be much to the advantage of commerce to have a government strong enough to make commercial treaties with European nations. Therefore, workmen, business men, and the people of the cities generally favored the Constitution.

The convention met, and a good representation of Massachusetts it was. There were clergymen, lawyers, veterans of the war, scholars, substantial farmers, and some of Shays's followers. There was opportunity for everybody to speak, and everybody was listened to. Many of the delegates were terribly afraid of this unfamiliar government which had been proposed to them. No one knew what it might do, or whether it would be wise to trust it with power. It might turn upon them and crush them; who could say?

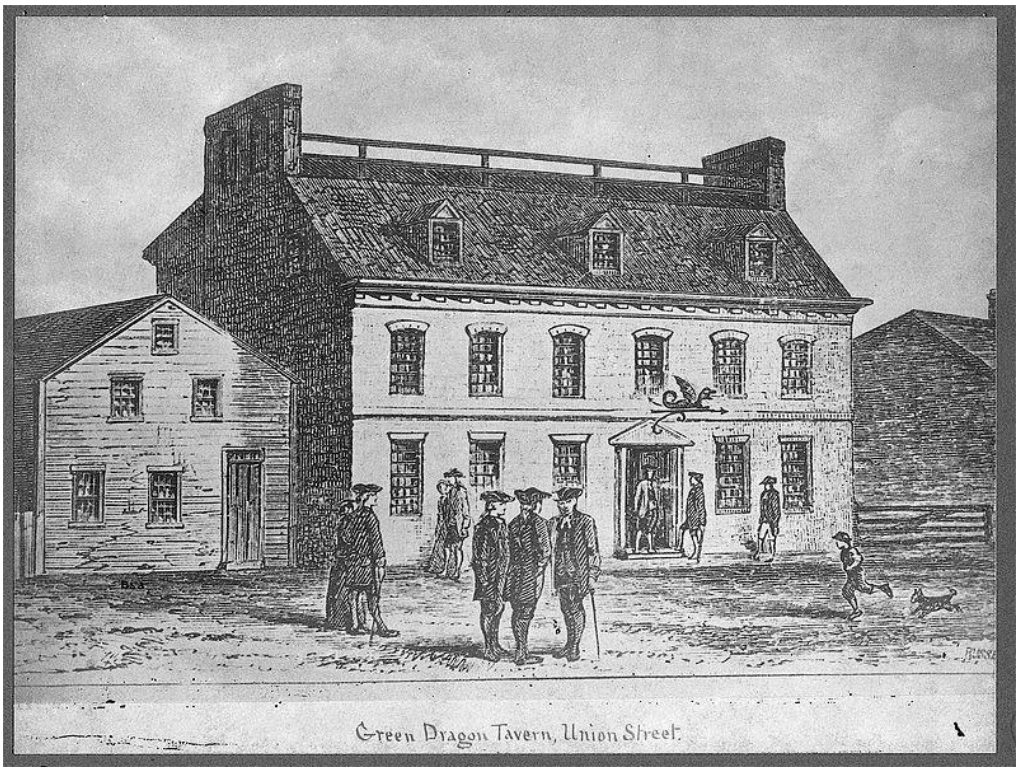
"But our State legislatures have power," said a New Bedford clergyman quietly. "What hinders them from abusing it? Will not the men whom we choose be in general good men?"

"I would not trust them," declared one, "though every one of them should be a Moses."

One great difficulty was that many of the country people were afraid that the wealthy men and the lawyers were scheming to get in some way the better of them. The best speech on that point was made by a level-headed farmer from the Berkshires. He had obtained a copy of the Constitution, and he had read it and studied it by himself. Now he slowly rose to his feet. "I am not used to speak in public," he said… "I never had any post, nor do I want one. But I don't think the worse of the Constitution, because lawyers and men of learning, and moneyed men are fond of it… Brother farmers, let us suppose a case now. Suppose you had a farm of fifty acres, and your title was disputed, and there was a farm of 5,000 acres joined to yours that belonged to a man of learning, and his title was involved in the same difficulty: would you not be glad to have him for your friend, rather than to stand alone in the dispute? Well, the case is the same. These lawyers, these moneyed men, these men of learning, are all embarked in the same cause with us, and we must sink or swim together. Shall we throw the Constitution overboard because it does not please us all alike? Suppose two or three of you had been at the pains to break up a piece of rough land and sow it with wheat: would

you let it lie waste because you could not agree what sort of a fence to make? Would it not be better to put up a fence that did not please everybody than keep disputing about it until the wild beasts came in and devoured the crop?"

This sensible, reasonable speech contained the real gist of the matter, and had a strong influence; but there was one man for whom everybody was waiting, Samuel Adams, the "Father of the Revolution." Every one trusted him. He would be wise, and he would be faithful to whatever he thought best for the country. Day by day he had listened, but as yet he had not spoken. It was believed that he was not fully in sympathy with the Constitution; but could he not be brought over to the Federal side? There was one argument that would be sure to influence him, namely, what the masses of the people thought, for he had a strong confidence in the common sense of the "plain man." The people knew this well, and the mechanics of Boston determined to take the matter into their own hands. They met at the Green Dragon Tavern, passed resolutions in favor of the Constitution, and then sent a committee to present them to Adams. Their leader was Paul Revere.



Green Dragon Tavern, Union St., Russell

"How many mechanics were at the Green Dragon when these resolutions passed?" Adams questioned.

"More, sir, than the Green Dragon could hold."

"And where were the rest, Mr. Revere?"

"In the streets, sir."

"And how many were in the streets?"

"More, sir, than there are stars in the sky."

Samuel Adams was perhaps a little shy of the reasonings of the lawyers, but he trusted the people. He became a supporter of the Constitution.

Gradually the strongest objections came to the front. Like the people of Pennsylvania, the Massachusetts folk did not feel safe without the familiar bill of rights. They wanted to be definitely assured that there would be no interference with their religious belief, that they might send petitions to government if they wished, that they might be sure not to have soldiers quartered upon them in time of peace, and that they might be safe from general search warrants. In short, they seemed to forget that they had advanced from colonial times and had cut loose from a royal government. It was suggested that while the Constitution must be accepted as a whole, these points might be proposed as amendments. President John Hancock brought this before the convention. Samuel Adams upheld it. The result of the vote was that on February 6, 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth State to ratify the Constitution.

The crowds in the streets shouted with delight. The national salute was fired over and over again. Bells rang, bonfires burned all night long. "The Boston people have lost their senses with joy," wrote General Knox. There is a street in Boston known as Federal Street. It used to be called Long Lane, but it ran by the meeting-house where the convention met, and from that day to this it has been Federal Street.

Chapter 12

Coming "Under the Roof"

The Story of Our Constitution

New Hampshire's convention met about the time that the Massachusetts convention adjourned. The Federalists load not felt at all troubled about New Hampshire, for it was expected that she would follow the lead of Massachusetts. It was not a pleasant surprise to find that New Hampshire was not at all decided what to do. Some of her delegates thought that the Constitution permitted too much freedom in religious matters. Some spoke strongly against permitting the slave trade to go on until 1808. New Hampshire ought not to become its guarantor for even a few years, they declared.

Most cities in New Hampshire favored the Constitution, but the delegates from the country places had received their orders to vote against it. Even if they themselves were converted by arguments heard at the convention, they were bound to oppose. For the Federalists to call for a vote then would have been throwing away all chance of success. It would be better to let these men go home for a time; perhaps they would succeed in converting their neighbors, and a later vote might be favorable. New Hampshire was a small State, and the Antis were easily convinced that it might be to her advantage to wait a little and see how the other States went. Therefore the convention was adjourned to meet in June. It looks a little as if there might have been a compromise between Federalists and Antis, for, while this convention was to meet in Exeter, where the general feeling was Federal, the June convention was to meet in Concord, which was decidedly Anti-Federal.

The Antis were jubilant. They hoped that when June came, they would be able to hold New Hampshire. Meanwhile, they strained every nerve to win Maryland. Her convention had met three months earlier, but a decision had been postponed until a second meeting, to be held at the end of April. How she would be affected by New Hampshire's failure to take action was a question. The Federalists lay awake nights when they thought of that.

When the Maryland delegates came together they had done their thinking beforehand, and their minds were pretty well made up. Neither the eloquence of men of ability nor the influence of State favorites moved them. The Antis said it was a most important matter, and should not be decided too rashly. There was no need of haste; it would be wiser to wait a little until some of the larger States had come to a decision. As in Pennsylvania, these Antis filled up the hours in every way that they could. They knew that the delegates were eager to go home to their plantations and their spring work; so they planned to delay till the members were out of patience and ready to agree to anything to get away, and then a motion to adjourn could be carried and the question left undecided.

This was the only danger, but it had been looked out for in advance. Washington was intensely

Foundation of the American Government, John Henry Hintermeister

interested in the ratification of the Constitution. "I never saw him so keen for anything in my life as he is for the adoption of the new scheme of government," said one who visited him; and just before the convention he had written to a friend who was a member, saying that an adjournment would amount to the same as a rejection of the Constitution. Madison had written to the same effect. There was no adjournment, and when the question was put, Maryland, by a vote of nearly six to one, became the seventh State to ratify.

Two weeks later, South Carolina must make her decision. Her real struggle had come in the legislature when the convention was appointed. She had several very definite fears. One was lest this powerful new Congress should interfere with slavery. Another was lest navigation acts should interfere with her trade. Some parts of the State still longed for paper money; and the new Constitution would give no permission for any such thing.

When the convention met, one of the Antis spoke of the Articles in terms of the highest praise, and called them "a blessing from Heaven!" The slave trade he called a religious and humane occupation, and demanded to know why it should be limited to twenty years.

Cotesworth Pinckney, who at the constitutional convention had stood firm for the claims of South Carolina, replied that during those twenty years they could import as many slaves as they wished. The government could never set them free, he declared, and to whatever part of the country they might escape, the legal right to recover them had been won, a right not possessed before. In regard to navigation acts and the fear lest the Eastern States should get all the carrying trade into

their hands, and make ruinous charges for their services, Pinckney replied that the East had the ships, and would certainly prefer to use them rather than see them lying idle at the wharves. The South would furnish freight, and the East would furnish vessels. They needed each other, and the two would now be more united than ever before. South Carolina cannot stand alone, he said; she must make friends with the stronger States at the east. The old objection was then brought up, namely, that the Constitution contained no bill of rights. Pinckney replied, "By delegating express powers, we certainly reserve to ourselves every power and right not mentioned in the Constitution… Bills of rights generally begin with declaring that all men are by nature born free. Now, we should make that declaration with a very bad grace when a large part of our property consists in men who are actually born slaves."

A day was set for the convention. Both Charleston and Columbia wanted it, but Charleston won by a single vote. South Carolina had chosen her delegates from among her noblest citizens. The vote was two to one in favor of the Constitution. Sturdy Christopher Gadsden, patriot tried and true, said reverently, "I shall say with good old Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word,' for mine eyes have seen the salvation of my country."

But what about New Hampshire and her long-delayed convention? Eight States had already ratified, and New Hampshire was now fired with ambition to be the ninth. June 21st, she gave her vote in favor of ratification. Her convention was careful to write in its record that this was done "on Saturday, June 21, at 1 P. M.," for if Virginia's vote should chance to be at two o'clock, they did not mean to lose their honors. Riders were sent off post haste to carry the news to Pennsylvania and Virginia; but travel was slow, and from New Hampshire to Virginia is a long way. Even before the riders reached Alexandria, they heard the ringing of bells and found themselves in the midst of a joyful celebration. Virginia, too, had voted to ratify.

This ratification had not been carried through in Virginia without a severe struggle. For one thing, her people had never forgotten or forgiven that a year or two earlier New England for her own advantage had been more than willing to close the mouth of the Mississippi to Kentucky and Tennessee, if she could only get a commercial treaty with Spain. Now Kentucky was in some degree a district or colony of Virginia, and therefore Virginia felt this a personal grievance, and had no idea of allowing New England a free hand in the government. Indeed, many a Virginian had dreamed about a union of the South, a confederacy that should be in no way subject to the aims of the Eastern States; but this had become impossible now that Georgia and South Carolina had accepted the new government.

Virginia had nearly as many inhabitants as New York and Pennsylvania together. It was the oldest of the colonies and the home of Washington. "The other States cannot do without Virginia, and we can dictate to them what terms we please," Patrick Henry declared. On the other hand, Virginia could not do without the other States, and Madison, John Marshall, who afterwards became chief justice of the Supreme Court, and Governor Randolph stood firmly for ratification. Patrick Henry opposed with all the might of his fiery eloquence. Fortunately for the Virginia Federalists, he was not a statesman, however brilliant he was as an orator; and the convention was not the place for oratory. It was the place for keen, logical, persuasive reasoning, and quiet, sensible decisions. "What Virginia does, that New Hampshire will do," was the feeling in Virginia; but New Hampshire's post riders had been on the way four days when Virginia put the question in her convention. The vote

was close, eighty-nine to seventy-nine, but it was in favor of the Constitution. Virginia had come "under the roof," as people said then.

Nine days later came Independence Day, and never was there such a merry, jubilant, hopeful time as on July 4, 1788. In Philadelphia there was a procession such as America had never seen before. Pioneers with their axes and a car called the Constitution, in the form of a great eagle, began the line. In this car sat Judge McKean, who had worked so hard for the Constitution, and ten men followed, each with a silken flag bearing the name of a State. There were consuls of foreign states, each carrying his national flag; a prominent citizen dressed as an Indian sachem, and smoking the pipe of peace; a troop of dragoons; and then came what was called "a most splendid spectacle." It was a dome upheld by thirteen columns, three of them unfinished. On the pedestal of each column appeared the name of one of the States, and above the dome rose a cupola bearing the figure of Plenty. Around the pedestal of the whole structure were the words, "In union the fabric stands firm." This was drawn by ten white horses. It was followed by architects, carpenters, officers of the Cincinnati, the militia, members of the Agricultural Society, farmers with ploughs drawn by four stalwart oxen, and members of the Manufacturing Society with spinning and carding machines, looms, etc., in a wagon, or "float," drawn by ten bay horses. The weavers were at work, and the process of printing cotton cloth was going on. After the Marine Society with flag, trumpets, and spy-glasses, came another float on which was the "Federal Ship Union," a beautiful little vessel thirty-three feet long, which had been captured by Paul Jones as the barge of the Serapis. As their course was changed from time to time, her crew of twenty-five men trimmed the sails to the wind. This was drawn by horses—there were no electric motors in those days—but under the vessel was canvas painted to represent the waves of the sea, and this hid the wheels. Then followed boat-builders, sail-makers, ship carpenters, all with silken flags, then rope-makers, merchants, one with a ledger in his hands, shoemakers, gilders, coach-makers, potters, wheelwrights, all with shops wherein men were working at their different trades. The blacksmiths were making ploughshares out of old swords; the printers had a press and printed as they went along a song said to have been written by Franklin, which begins:

"Ye merry *Mechanics*, come join in my song,
And let the brisk chorus go bounding along;
Though some may be poor, and some rich there may be,
Yet all are contented, and happy, and free."

There can hardly be much doubt that Franklin was really the writer of the song, for it sounds so much like him, especially the lines:

"And Carders, and Spinners, and Weavers attend,
And take the advice of Poor Richard, your friend;
Stick close to your looms, your wheels, and your card,
And you need never fear of the times being hard."

The printers tossed handfuls of this song fresh from the press to the crowds as they went along. About 5,000 men were in this "Federal Procession." Three hours after the start they were on

the lawn of Bush Hill, where Hamilton lived. Round tables were arranged in a circle some five hundred feet in diameter, and in the center of the circle was the "Grand Federal Edifice." James Wilson delivered an oration, and then came the feast. Casks of porter, beer, and cider lined the inner circle of the tables; and they certainly flowed freely, for ten toasts were drunk in honor of the ten States that had ratified. At each toast a cannon was fired; and from the ship Rising Sun, lying with ten others in the Delaware, a second cannon was fired in response. In the evening the ships were "highly illuminated." "I did not see the spectacle," said a Philadelphian regretfully, "but it was the talk of my youthful days for years after the event."

To prepare for this elaborate celebration, Philadelphia had just four days!

Chapter 13

The Beginning of the Government

The Story of Our Constitution

It was not all smooth sailing, even in the celebrations. The Federalists in Providence did not wait for their State's decision, but were beginning a jubilation with a barbecue of roasted oxen, when down upon them came a mob of lovers of paper money, led by three members of the State legislature. In Albany, the Federalists rang the bells and fired ten guns. The Antis retorted with thirteen guns and burned a copy of the Constitution. They then went to one hotel for dinner, and the Federalists went to another. After dinner the Federalists cut down a tree in the woods, trimmed off the branches, nailed another copy of the Constitution to the top, and planted it in the warm ashes of the Anti-Federal fires. So far, the proceedings hurt no one, but the Antis now set off with all the stones they could carry, and went in pursuit of the Federalists. Then came a real fight, in which the Federalists were the victors.

What was to be done about New York was a question, and an important one. The State stood fifth in number of inhabitants, but her location made her important, for she not only touched the ocean, but by means of her rivers she could easily have excellent communication with the Great Lakes and the West. She had a large commerce with New Jersey and the Eastern States on her own borders. Goods coming in from other States had to pay a five-percent duty, and New York had no idea of giving this up to Congress for the sake of free trade with every State that might wish to sell her things. On the other hand, she had no desire to stand entirely alone, and have to provide her own navy, forts, and representatives abroad. Perhaps New York, Virginia, and North Carolina could unite, she thought, but the news came that Virginia had come "under the roof." This was a blow to the New York Antis. After considerable delay, they made an offer which many people thought the Federalists ought to accept. They said they would agree to ratify the Constitution provided some amendments that they desired might be made a part of it; and they wanted the right to withdraw from the Union if they chose.

Hamilton and Madison consulted. Madison declared that after a State had once ratified the Constitution, it had no right to withdraw from the Union. They agreed that a conditional ratification was no ratification at all. At length it was moved that New York should ratify the Constitution, as Massachusetts had done, "in full confidence" that needed amendments would be made. This confidence was not so "full," however, that the Antis did not think it necessary to insist upon an agreement that all States should be invited by a circular letter to an immediate convention for taking up all proposed amendments. Even then, the motion to ratify was barely carried, for the vote was only thirty to twenty-seven in favor. At the New York celebration, the "Ship of State" that was drawn through the streets was named Hamilton. The honor was well deserved, for the fact that

Parade in New York celebrating the ratification of the constitution.

New York ratified at all was due in great part to this young man whom that State had sent to the constitutional convention in Philadelphia expressly to be beaten by his two colleagues. He had been in a most helpless and embarrassing position; but now he had come to his own.

Hamilton was born in Nevis, one of the British West Indies, came to New York and entered Columbia [then King's] College. He was only seventeen when he spoke at a great mass meeting in New York City in favor of resistance to Great Britain, and wrote two powerful pamphlets on the same subject. In the Revolution he had been on Washington's staff; then he became a lawyer, and at thirty was sent as a delegate to the constitutional convention with the two older men of opposing views. He was now free from all such embarrassment, and he became the leader of the Federalists in the State convention.

Although Hamilton had signed the Constitution, he had not been wildly enthusiastic about it; but now he became its most earnest advocate. To whatever was said in opposition, he had always an answer ready. His most telling work, however, was done in the newspapers. Of course the papers were full of attacks upon the proposed constitution, some of them honest and decent, others scurrilous.

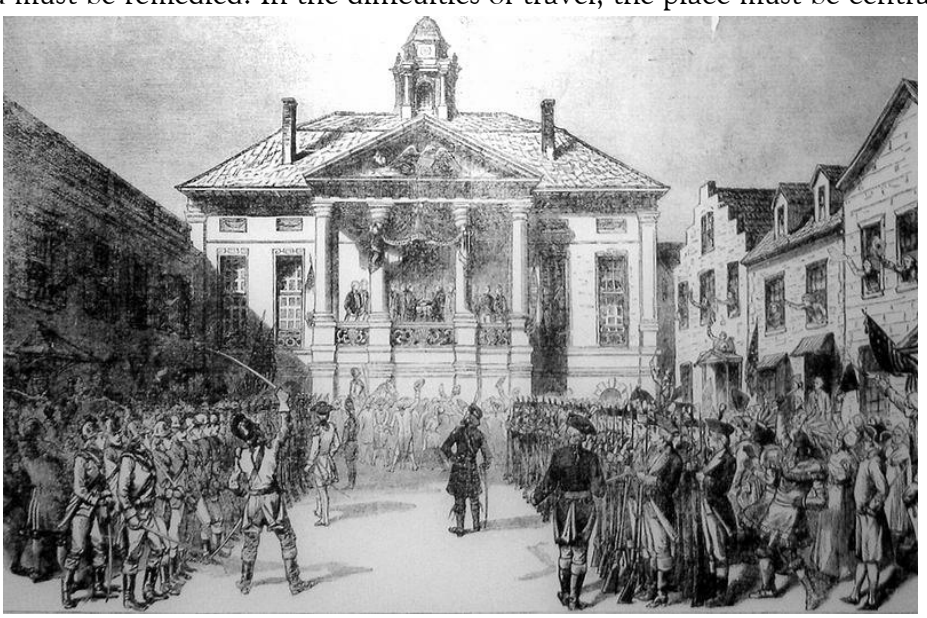
It was by one writer declared to be "as deep and wicked a conspiracy as ever was invented in the darkest ages against the liberties of a free people."

Hamilton had no idea of replying to such writings as these, but he did believe that there were in the land thousands of honest, straightforward Americans who were not accustomed to the terms of documents and conventions and who would therefore be easily influenced by these plausible slanderers. To reach these people he planned a series of articles explaining in simple language the meaning of the Constitution, part by part. Madison and Jay united in this work, but Jay was taken

ill, Madison was occupied in Virginia, and the result was that Hamilton wrote nearly two-thirds of the articles. He wrote simply and clearly, but with dignity and eloquence; and he made an irresistible appeal to just the class whom he wished to reach, the quiet thinkers of the day. These papers had a powerful influence throughout the States, but greatest in New York—where they were most needed. They came out three or four times a week. They were written for a definite purpose, and probably Hamilton never dreamed of their being handed down through the generations; but it was gradually discovered that the Federalist, as the collected papers were called, was the clearest and best and most authoritative interpreter of the Constitution.

Neither North Carolina nor Rhode Island was "under the roof." North Carolina had indeed called her convention to meet in July. The members were discussing the Constitution when news came that Virginia, New Hampshire, and New York had ratified it. Now they were in a dilemma. Those whom they represented had bidden them vote against it, and they hardly ventured to act contrary to their instructions. On the other hand, this news put matters in a different light, for North Carolina did not care to stand as the only State between Rhode Island and Florida not belonging to the Union. While they were trying to find a way out of their dilemma, news came of the convention proposed by New York. That gave them an idea; they would send a list of the amendments which they desired to this new convention, to be acted upon, and meanwhile they would adjourn. They made it clear that they had no intention of opposing Congress, for they voted that whatever duties Congress might ordain should be collected in North Carolina by the State "for the use of Congress." November 21, 1789, North Carolina gave her vote in favor of ratification. Rhode Island clung to her paper money and did not ratify until May 29, 1790.

The new government set to work promptly. A day was appointed to choose electors who should meet and vote for a President and Vice-President. But Congress had no abiding-place. It had no city, no capitol, not a building of any kind that it could call its home. This was undignified, to say the least, and must be remedied. In the difficulties of travel, the place must be central. Baltimore,



Inauguration of George Washington, artist unknown

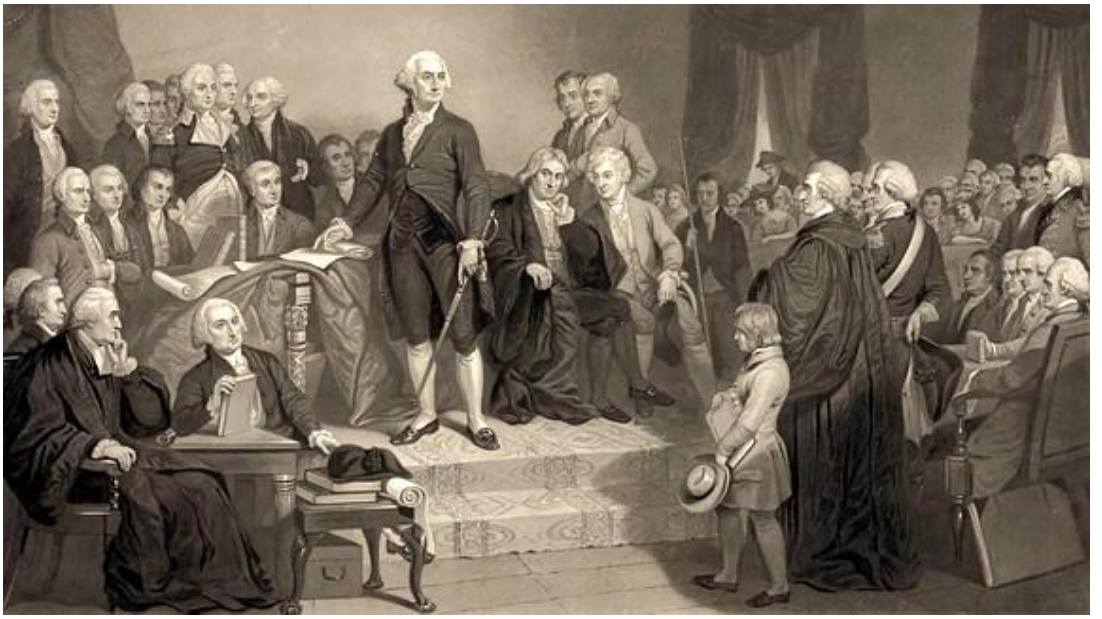
Lancaster, Trenton, Philadelphia, New York, Princeton were all discussed. New York was the best place, but there was strong opposition to giving the honor to a State which had joined the Union almost under compulsion. Finally, after every other name had been discussed, Congress went back to New York, and that city was chosen.

New York now began to clean house and get ready for company. There was no money in her treasury, but some of her wealthy merchants contributed a generous sum. The City Hall was practically made over, and when March 4, 1789, came, it was ready to receive Congress—more ready indeed than Congress was to be received, for of the fifty-nine members only twenty-one were

Washington's Inauguration at Philadelphia, Jean Leon Gerome Ferris

present. One week, two weeks, three weeks passed. The Antis had a fine time making fun of the Congress that had forgotten to assemble. The congressmen who were in town sent messengers to the tardy members to hurry, and a few came straggling in, but March was nearly at its end before the thirty necessary to a quorum had arrived. The ranks of the senators were still thin, and it was the end of the first week in April before they were ready to count the votes for President and Vice-President. The ballots were carried into the Senate Chamber and presented to the presiding officer, John Langdon of New Hampshire, and in the presence of the Senate and the House, he opened them and counted the vote. Washington was unanimously chosen President, and John Adams, Vice-President.

Washington had deeply longed to spend his last years in quiet, but he would not refuse to heed



Washington Delivering His Inaugural Address April 1789 in the Old City Hall New York,
T. H. Matterson, engraved by H. S. Sadd

the call of his country. He wrote that he realized keenly how lacking he was in political skill, abilities, and inclination to take such a position. He felt, he said, "like a culprit who is going to the place of his execution."

Charles Thomson, who had been secretary of Congress ever since its first meeting, as the "First Continental Congress," in Carpenters Hall, in Philadelphia, carried Washington the letter of John Langdon announcing his election. Two days later he set out for New York. A large company of his friends and neighbors attended him across the borders of Virginia. At each town on the way he was welcomed and shown every honor that his time would permit.

In Philadelphia he received and answered addresses from the officers of the city and State government. At Trenton, the Jersey bank of the Delaware was lined with people, who greeted him with salutes and huzzas. It was at Trenton that he had captured the Hessians that stormy Christmas night of 1776. At the bridge over the creek where he had repulsed the British army, the ladies of the town had raised a triumphal arch supported by thirteen columns, each wreathed with evergreen. On it was inscribed, "The Defender of the mothers will be the Protector of the daughters." Here stood a group of young girls dressed in white; and as he advanced they strewed flowers in his way and sang:

"Virgins fair, and matrons grave,
Those thy conquering arms did save,
Build for thee triumphal bowers.
Strew, ye fair, his way with flowers—
Strew your Hero's way with flowers."

At Elizabeth Point, Washington embarked in a barge built for the occasion, manned by thirteen

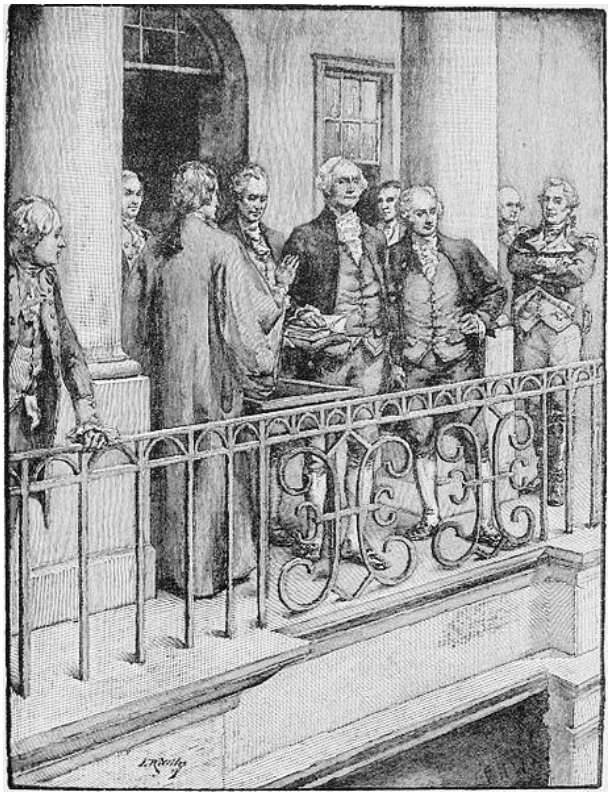


Illustration from *United States; a history* by John Clark

sailors in white, and was rowed to the New York shore. Here were the chief officers of State and city. Bells were rung, flags flown, houses were brilliant with banners and flowers and evergreens, and "Washington" in letters of gold. The streets were crowded with citizens, all eager to have a look at his face.

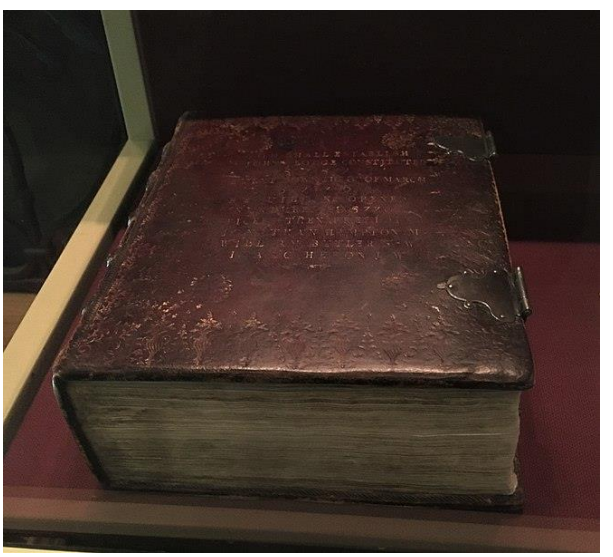
April 30th was the day set for the inauguration. In the morning the churches were crowded with people who had gone to offer up prayers for the safety and welfare of the president of their republic. At noon, a long procession formed to escort the chosen one of the people to Federal Hall.

After meeting both Houses of Congress, he was informed that the time had come for the administration of the oath of office. Followed by senators and representatives, he went out upon the balcony. This was a kind of recess with high columns on either side. In the center was a table with crimson velvet cover, and on the table was a Bible resting on a crimson velvet cushion. Here Washington stood in full view of the multitude of citizens. He wore a dark brown suit with white silk stockings and silver shoe-buckles. His hair was powdered. By his side hung a dress sword. The people welcomed him with cheers and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. He moved forward to the rail and bowed several times, then seated himself.

The great multitude was hushed as the Chancellor of the State repeated slowly and distinctly the words of the Presidential oath: "'I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.' Do you swear this?"

Washington stood with his hand laid on the open Bible and said solemnly:— "I swear—so help me God!"

The secretary would have raised the Bible to his lips, but he bowed reverently and kissed it. As he raised his head, the Chancellor cried: "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!"



George Washington Inaugural Bible,
Federal Hall, New York NY

Chapter 14

The States Guard Their Rights

The Story of Our Constitution

The United States of America had now a President. It had also a Constitution—an excellent one; but no one could expect 4,000,000 people to accept without criticisms the work of any one group of men, no matter how wise they might be. Even so good a student of the needs of the country as Thomas Jefferson was alarmed because no plan had been made for rotation in office, and feared lest some President might succeed in becoming powerful enough to establish a hereditary monarchy.

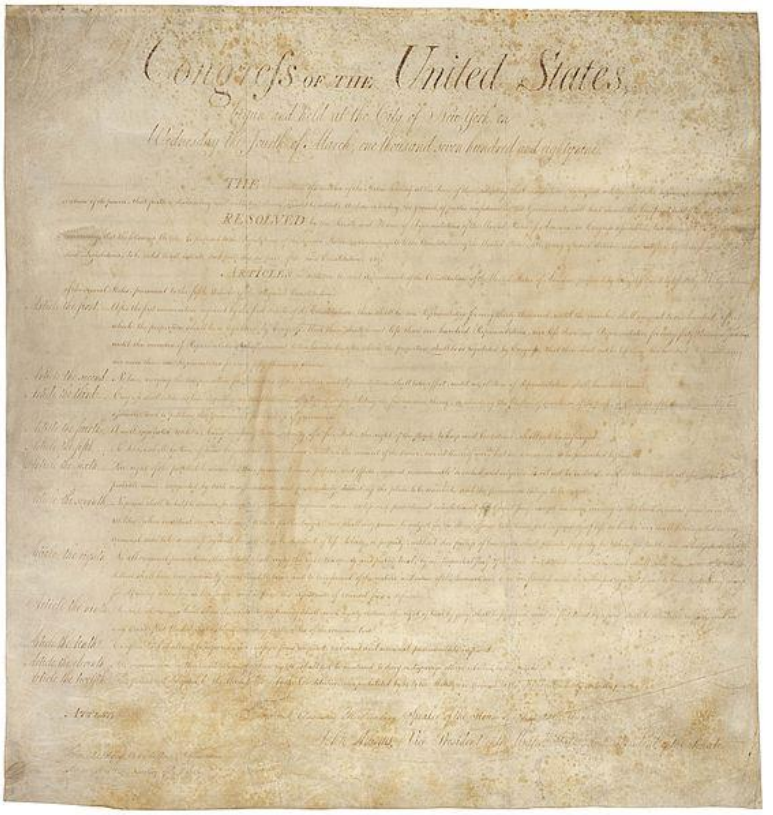
North Carolina did not come "under the roof" until more than six months after Washington's inauguration. This State had had rather a hard time under the rule of her English governors, and a year before the Declaration of Independence was signed, she had declared herself no longer under their control, and had begun to make her own laws. Naturally, her sturdy, liberty-loving people were suspicious of any new government and were slow to put themselves into its power. Looking ahead, however, they saw that they could not expect to stand alone when all the other States had united, and they had shrewdly concluded to be friendly with Congress and leave a way open to join the Union at some future time if they should think best. They knew that Congress would lay an impost upon goods imported into the ratifying States; so these canny people recommended their legislature to pass laws for collecting an impost at their ports and then giving over to Congress the resulting money. At the end of 1789, however, they concluded to ratify.

Rhode Island was even slower than North Carolina to accept the new Constitution, and for almost opposite reasons. She had had no tyrannical governors, but had been free and remarkably independent from the first. Her custom of having her own way was well established, and she had no idea of making any change. For some time she refused even to call a convention to consider the question of ratifying the Constitution. Finally, however, in 1790, more than a year after the inauguration of Washington, she voted for ratification.

This new government could demand money, make peace and war, make treaties with other nations, raise an army and a navy, build roads, establish a post-office system, make laws for commerce. Government was no longer, as in Revolutionary days, obliged to beg for money; it could require, and it had power to enforce its requirements. Remembering that each State had been independent of the others, had made its own laws, and had looked out for its own interests, it is no wonder that there was hesitation in the minds of many as to whether it was well to give up so much of their freedom. It is no wonder that people questioned what this unknown and untried Congress, made up of their own representatives as it was, might choose to do. It is no wonder that of the first eleven States to ratify, six proposed Amendments—105 in all—and one of them a bill of rights in addition. Later, when North Carolina ratified, she presented another bill of rights and called for

twenty-six Amendments. Both Virginia and New York petitioned Congress to call another convention to consider the proposed Amendments and report which of them would be for the best good of the country.

Congress had no authority to call a convention save at the request of the legislatures of two-thirds of the States, and could not propose any Amendments unless two-thirds of both Houses deemed it necessary. Five of the States had not demanded Amendments; and the members of Congress were by no means agreed that any were necessary. "Our Constitution is like a vessel just launched, and lying at the wharf," declared one. "She is untried, you can hardly discover any one of her properties. It is not known how she will answer her helm or lay her course; whether she will bear with safety the precious freight deposited in her hold. But, in this state, will the prudent men chant attempt alterations? Will he employ workmen to tear off the planking and take asunder the frame? He certainly will not." Another member thought that the people whom they represented would be out of patience and distrustful of them if they did not consider the proposed Amendments at once. Still another said rather tartly, "It strikes me that the great Amendment which the Government wants is expedition in the despatch of business." It was proposed that a committee be appointed to report on the matter. "What," cried one, "can we neither see, hear, smell, or feel, unless we employ a committee for the purpose?" Nevertheless, a committee of eleven was appointed, one from each State that had ratified, to examine all proposed Amendments and present a report on their desirability.



The Bill of Rights

Before this report could be considered, however, and quite aside from the substance of the Amendments themselves, there was an important question to be decided, namely, "Should any Amendment adopted be made a part of the original Constitution, or should it be presented as an addition to it?" Mr. Madison thought it would produce a much more "neat and proper" result if it were interwoven with the Constitution. "We might as well endeavor to mix brass, iron, and clay as to incorporate an Amendment with the original Articles," retorted a second member. A third declared bluntly that it would not be honest, that the document produced would not be the one that Washington and the others of the convention had signed. A fourth member said that he agreed with this last speaker, and objected to patching it up until it resembled Joseph's coat of many colors.

But still another member said that if the Amendments were not incorporated with the Constitution, this might in years to come read like a paper which he had once seen: "An act entitled an act to amend a supplement to an act entitled an act for altering part of an act entitled an act for certain purposes therein mentioned."

On one point all were agreed, namely, to reduce the Amendments to as small a number as possible; and they set to work. The House retained seventeen, and the Senate cut down this number to twelve. They were then laid before the separate States, and in the course of the three years following, three-fourths of the States accepted ten of them; and these ten were added to the Constitution.

The ten Amendments are interesting reading, because they show so clearly the thoughts and feelings of the people. The new Government was untried. Congress could make laws; the Supreme Court could interpret them; and the President could call out the army if necessary to see that they were obeyed. There was no chance for escape. These men realized that they were firmly held in the grasp of whatever they now voted for. It is no wonder that they considered the Amendments carefully. Slowly and with much discussion they voted for one after another, emphasizing the rights with which they would brook no interference, and ended with a sturdy declaration to the effect that all rights which the Constitution did not give to the general Government or forbid to the States should belong to the States respectively or to the people.

But just what rights belonged to the general Government was not always clear. Even the wise framers of the Constitution could not foresee every case that might arise. Evidently there were some rights of the general Government and also some rights of the separate States that were not "set down in writing," but that were reasonably implied. Just what these were could not be determined save as case after case arose.

One of the most important of these cases was that of Alexander Chisholm of North Carolina, who had a claim against the State of Georgia. The Constitution did not declare whether or not an individual had a right to sue a State; and the Court took the ground that no State should be allowed to do injustice to any person. Georgia had sent no one to represent her, and therefore the Court decided in favor of Chisholm, and issued a writ of inquiry, that is, instructions to ascertain what damages were due him from Georgia.

Then the tempest broke forth. Georgia declared that her sovereignty had been invaded, and passed an act making the execution of such a writ punishable by death. The Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution was proposed in Congress and passed, and the Supreme Court gave up all claim to jurisdiction in such cases.

Chapter 15

Electing the President

The Story of Our Constitution

There is an old story which says that two knights once rode up to a trophy shield from opposite directions. One spoke of it as made of gold; the other declared that it was of silver. They quarreled, then they fought. A third knight stopped the warfare by showing them that the shield was gold on one side and silver on the other.

So with the interpretation of the Constitution. From the very beginning of discussing plans for a union, there had existed two ways of looking at the subject, and gradually two political parties had been formed, one inclined to interpret all cases in such a way as to strengthen the general Government, the other on guard lest the rights of the individual States should not be respected. It began to be a matter of interest to every man not only to have the chief officers of Government men well prepared for their positions, but to have men who were of his own way of thinking on this subject.

At the time of the constitutional convention there were no political parties, and the makers of the Constitution, clear-sighted as they were, had not foreseen what an effect the formation of such parties would have upon the Federal elections. They had planned that when a President was to be elected, each State was to appoint, by whatever method its people might think best, its proper number of electors. These were expected to be as a matter of course some of the most eminent men of their State. They were to meet together, and after free discussion, were to select candidates for the presidency.

Each delegate was then to vote for two persons. The person winning the greatest number of votes, provided this was a majority, should become President; the one winning the next largest number should become Vice-President. In the minds of the worthy members of the convention, there seems not to have been the slightest doubt that this would result in electing the men best qualified for the two offices.

As long as Washington was a candidate, the elections moved smoothly, for no one would vote against him. But in 1796, after he had refused a third term, the two political parties had come into being. In this election, John Adams was chosen President, and Thomas Jefferson, Vice-President. These two men belonged to different parties. Therefore if Adams should die in office, then for the rest of his term the head of the Government would be a man of the opposite party, that is, the head of the Government would represent not a majority, but a minority of the citizens. Evidently, there was need of reform, and the Twelfth Amendment was passed and ratified.

This remains in force, but, because the country has become so large, the way of carrying out the Amendment has changed; for instance, since, if a political party hopes to succeed, its members must vote for the same candidate, the present custom of nominating him at a great party convention has

arisen.

This nomination begins with the "primaries," that is, meetings of the voters in a city ward or a country town or a precinct. Delegates chosen at the primaries are sent to the county or district convention to work for the nomination of some particular candidate for the presidency. From these conventions or districts, delegates are now sent to the State convention. At the State convention delegates are chosen to attend the national convention, and presidential electors are nominated. The business of the latter is not to choose a President by any means, but merely to cast a formal vote, when the time comes, for whatever man their party shall name in the national convention. This convention usually meets in June or July, and then the candidates are nominated. The nominee who is supported by the largest number of delegates is declared to be the nominee of his party, and the electors are to give him their votes.

All this time the electors have only been nominated, not elected; but in November, at what is spoken of as the presidential election, the electors are formally appointed. Their ballots are opened by the president of the Senate in the presence of Senate and House. This ceremony does not take place until February; but as every one knows how the electors have been instructed to vote, the result of the election is known in November. If an elector chooses, he has the power to vote for an opposing candidate, but this would be a grave breach of trust.

By this method of election, all votes are of equal value. The vote of a foreigner who has just been naturalized has as much weight as that of an ex-president. Indeed, once upon a time a war was

Washington's Inauguration, Ramon de Elorriaga

brought on by a single vote. A man in Indiana hesitated whether to go to mill or to the polls, but at length decided to do his duty and vote. His district by a majority of one sent its candidate to the legislature, and the legislature elected a United States Senator, also by a majority of one. This Senator became president of the Senate. On the question, Shall Texas be annexed? there was a tie, and the Senator gave the casting vote, a "Yes." The annexation took place and was the cause of the Mexican War.

Chapter 16

The War Amendments

The Story of Our Constitution

After the Twelfth Amendment was declared in force, in 1804, the Constitution remained unchanged for more than half a century. In that time the thirteen States had grown to thirty-four, and the 4,000,000 inhabitants had become 31,000,000. Civil War was raging between North and South. Negro slavery was not then forbidden by the Constitution and was in operation throughout the Southern States. The slaves remaining at home cared for their masters' families and worked for them, leaving the white men of the household free to join the Southern armies. To prevent this would be a valuable military measure, of great help to the forces of the Government.

One morning in July, 1862, President Lincoln called his Cabinet together. He read to its members a paper which he had just prepared, declaring all slaves free in those States which were at war with the Union. It is no wonder that the Cabinet were surprised and almost bewildered. "It will cost

First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln, Francis Bicknell Carpenter

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, Signing the Emancipation Proclamation, W. E. Winner, engraved by John Serz

you your election," said one member, but this did not move the President. One suggestion, however, he did follow, and this was to postpone issuing the Proclamation until the Union forces should have won some decided victory.

Two months later he felt that the time had come. Again he called his Cabinet together, and read them the Emancipation Proclamation. At the end he said, "I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can… There is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take." The Proclamation was then carried to the State Department, and the great seal of the United States was affixed. The paper was signed by the President that same day, and on the following morning it was published in the leading newspapers of the country.

This Proclamation declared that on January 1, 1863, just one hundred days later, "all persons held as slaves in the States then at war with the United States should be then, thenceforward, and forever free." It was added that the Government of the United States would maintain the freedom of such persons.

This Proclamation did not free all the slaves, but only those of the States at war with the Union. Several of what were called the Border States allowed slavery, but some of these had of their own accord set their slaves free. Toward the close of the war, the Thirteenth Amendment, which freed all slaves in the United States or in any place under its rule, was laid before Congress. Late in the afternoon came the roll-call and the registering of each vote. The members on the floor and the spectators in the galleries listened with breathless interest to every name, eager and anxious. After the last name had been called, the speaker announced that the resolve was passed by a two-thirds vote. Visitors in the galleries waved hats and handkerchiefs, while even the members forgot all rules for behavior in a law-making assembly, and joined in the cheers. This Amendment was submitted to the States, and before the close of the year 1865, it had become the law of the land.

One year after the end of the war, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment, and in July 1868 this had been ratified by a sufficient number of States to be declared in force. This Amendment

gave to Negroes the right of citizenship, and lessened the number of votes to any State denying this right. It forbade, without a special Act of Congress, any one to become a member of Congress or hold any office under the United States or under any State who, having once taken an oath to support the Government of the United States, had taken part in the war.

The Constitution had given to each House of Congress the right to decide who were or were not qualified to become its members, and Congress had refused to receive any man from the seceding States as Senator or Representative who would not take what was called the "ironclad oath," that is, an oath declaring that he had taken no part in secession. As almost every white man in those States had taken part in the secession, few of the white inhabitants of the State had a legal right to vote, while this right was given by Congress to their former slaves. This caused trouble and interference with the Negro vote. To protect the Negroes in their right to vote, Congress now passed the Fifteenth Amendment. This declared that neither the United States nor any State Government could refuse the right to vote to a citizen "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Chapter 17

The Twentieth Century Amendments

The Story of Our Constitution

During the years between 1909 and 1919, four Amendments were passed, as different in character as any four Amendments could possibly be. They were concerning the right of Government to impose an income tax; the election of Senators; prohibition; and woman suffrage.

The income tax was brought about because the expenses of the Government had increased and more money was needed to pay the bills. In 1894 Government had imposed a tax of two percent on the excess of all incomes above $4,000. Whether this was according to the Constitution or not was a question, and the subject was brought before the Supreme Court.

The Constitution declared that all direct taxes must be apportioned among the States according to the number of their citizens respectively. This tax did not deal with States, but with individual citizens, and it might easily happen that a State with a few wealthy citizens would pay larger taxes than a State with many but poorer citizens. The Court decided that this was contrary to the Constitution.

The matter of an income tax affected so large a portion of the citizens that it was discussed by everybody. "It is unfair," some declared, "because it throws a heavy burden upon a small class." "Burdens should be borne by those who are best able," was retorted. "To exempt a certain amount of income for all is not fair," said some, "for a dollar bill will buy more food and pay house rent longer in some parts of the country than in others." "Then, too, the Government will receive the largest returns from places where the living expenses are heaviest." "Is it fair to tax thrift and economy?" queried some. "Thrift and economy without the protection of a good Government would amount to little," said others.

So the people talked, some with good arguments, and some with poor; but at length, in July, 1909, Congress passed the Sixteenth Amendment, giving Government the right to impose such a tax. It went into power in 1913, and a law for an income tax was promptly passed.

According to the Constitution, United States Senators were to be elected by the legislatures of their respective States, but many persons had come to believe that it would be better for them to be elected directly by the people.

These persons argued as follows: It is much easier to make the power of money and influence felt among the few members of a legislature than among the whole number of citizens of a State. The party in power elects the legislature, and therefore a man belonging to the opposing party loses his vote for Senators. In a State where the two parties are nearly equally divided, a party only slightly in the majority elects the Senators; that is, the deciding power is in the hands of a very few persons, whose vote might perhaps be easily swung to the opposing side. There is sometimes a deadlock in a

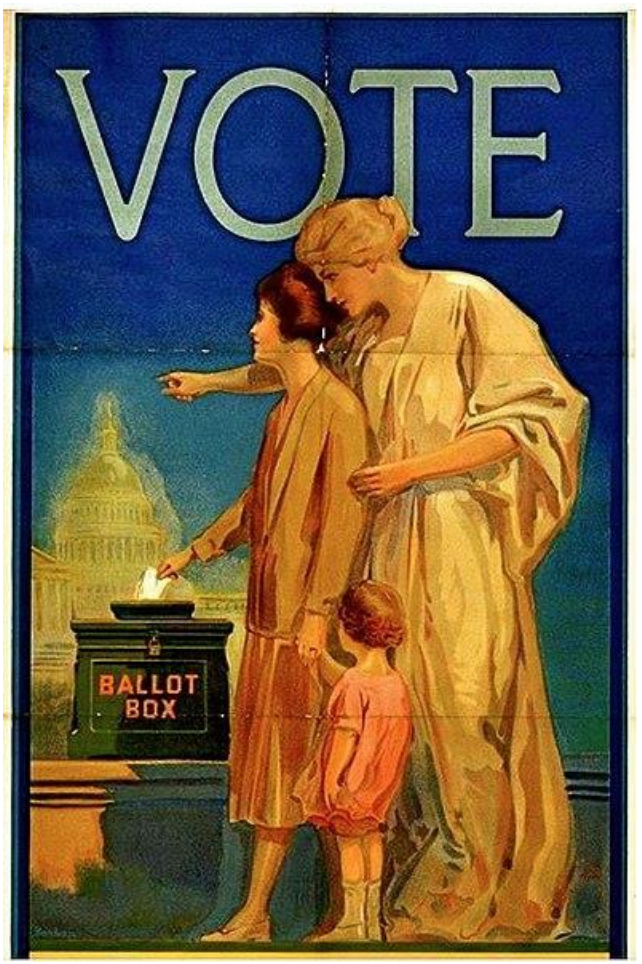
legislature, and this would be impossible with a direct vote.

Those who were satisfied with their present manner of electing replied: If the people of a State as a whole can elect honorable Senators, there is no reason why they cannot elect honorable legislators. It is not good to weaken the legislature by taking responsibility from it. As to any possible deadlocks, these could easily be prevented if the law would permit elections by plurality rather than by majority. Another point is that some of the men who would best serve the country as Senators would refuse to seek to win the position by entering a political campaign.

So they argued, but when the question came before Congress for a vote, an Amendment in favor of the newly proposed method was passed, and in 1913 it became the law of the land.

In 1914 the World War broke out, and soon there was great need of conservation of food. Cereals, molasses, etc., were valuable foods, and in 1917 an Act of Congress forbade their being used to manufacture liquor. Some of the States were already "dry," and a few months later, another Act forbade carrying liquor into any dry State.

Those who for many years had been working for prohibition now felt so encouraged that many believed no more spirits would ever be manufactured in the United States for drinking purposes. Near the end of 1917, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed in Congress, forbidding the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor in any territory subject to the rule of the United States.



VOTE Poster by the League of Women Voters, 1920

This Act was now given to the States for ratification. When January 29, 1919, had come, thirty-six States had ratified the Amendment. Ohio was the thirty-sixth, and at the November elections the people of that State repudiated the vote of their legislature. Luckily for the prohibition Amendment, several other States had ratified it meanwhile, and one year later it became a part of the law of the land. Early in that same year Rhode Island, New Jersey, and a number of brewers and distillers united in suits to test the validity of the Amendment; but it was upheld by the Supreme Court as being according to the Constitution.

Up to 1920 Government had been in great degree in the hands of men; but long before that date there was much questioning as to why women should not have an equal share in making the laws by which they were governed. As early as 1848 a convention met to discuss votes for women, and from that time the subject increased in importance. One association was

formed to work for suffrage through State Amendments, and another to try to secure it through a national Amendment to the Constitution.

For a long time it seemed almost hopeless to think of securing a national Amendment, but State Amendments were of course quite a different matter, and the number of "Woman-Suffrage States" increased from the four of 1909 to the eleven of 1917. Numerous other States had also granted partial suffrage to women, and in May, 1919, the House of Representatives passed an Act in favor of full suffrage. Two weeks later this Act, the Nineteenth Amendment, was also passed by the Senate.

The Amendment was put into the hands of the States for ratification. Then came bitter contests. Some States promptly and positively refused to ratify. Some called in vain special sessions of their legislatures to vote on the Amendment. Five refused to vote either for or against it. The year 1920 opened, the year of a presidential election. There was need of haste if the women's vote was to be counted, and in the early months of the year those who favored the Amendment worked zealously. They were successful. A sufficient number of States voted for ratification, and some weeks before the election, the Nineteenth Amendment was proclaimed as law throughout the United States.

Vice President Thomas Marshall Signing the 19th Amendment

So stands the Constitution, a century and a half since the little group of patriots came together in Independence Hall to think and plan for the America of to-day. There have been additions and alterations, for "New occasions teach new duties," but we could ask nothing better than that these changes shall have been in accord with the marvellous paper sent forth to the expectant people who with courage and determination had fought their way to Statehood and Union.

Chapter 18

The Story of John Marshall of Richmond

Called "The Great Chief-Justice"
1755-1835

"A note from the Commander-in-Chief, sir," replied the messenger.

"The Constitution, since its adoption, owes more to John Marshall than to any other single mind for its true interpretation and vindication." — *Joseph Story.*

The young man in the blanket, standing with his back to the blazing logs, said cheerily as a knock resounded on the outer door of the hut, "Open up, Porterfield. You're butler to-day, and footman too. You've got the clothes of the whole mess."

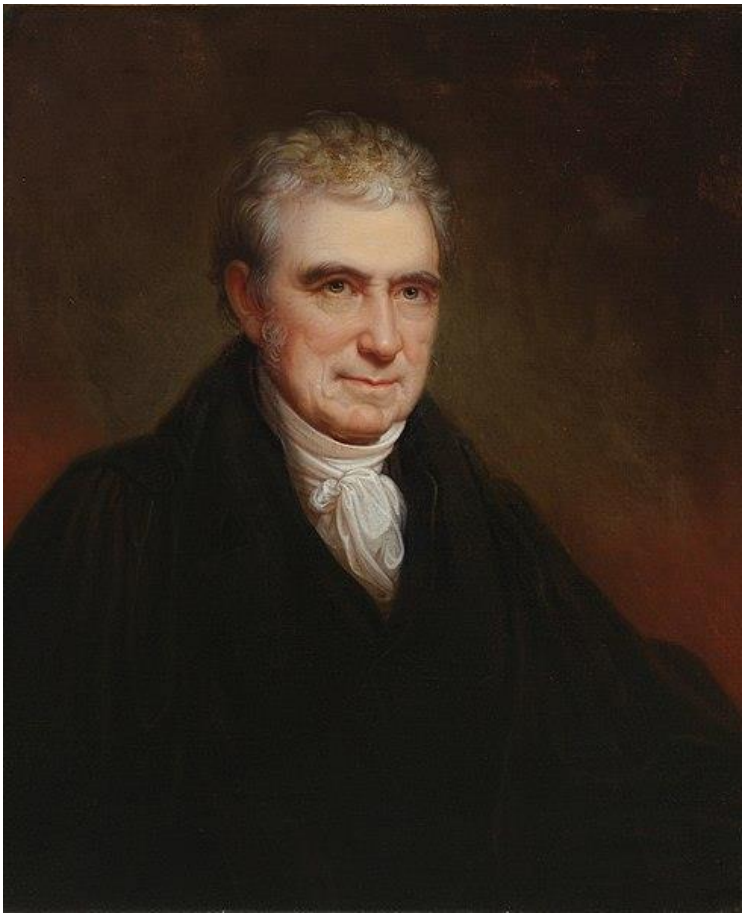
The officer thus accosted flung open the door and a soldier entered, saluting.

"What is it, orderly?" inquired Porterfield.

"A note from the commander-in-chief, sir," replied the messenger, "for Lieutenant Marshall."

The figure wrapped in the blanket slipped from before the open fire and took the proffered note. Opening it, he read it, reread it, rubbed his chin thoughtfully while a quizzical sort of smile played about his fine mouth, and then said to the messenger, "My compliments to the general, orderly. Pray say to him that I accept with pleasure."

The orderly saluted and withdrew. Again the lieutenant ran over the note and looked up with a smile of mingled pleasure and perplexity.



John Marshall, Rembrandt Peale

"It's my turn to-day, boys," he said. "Hear this: 'General Washington presents his compliments to Lieutenant Marshall and will be glad to have his company to-day at dinner, at headquarters, at the usual hour.'"

"And you're going?" asked Porterfield.

Marshall nodded.

"In that rig?" queried Lieutenant Slaughter, from his home-made bench, where he was carefully tightening a cloth about a very ragged shoe.

"Well, hardly," Marshall replied. "The general likes full dress at dinner, you know, and this is" —

"Undress," suggested Porterfield.

"Precisely. Now, I'm not going to decline, as you fellows do when his Excellency honors you with an invite," Marshall went on. "Some day you'll be proud to say that you dined with Washington, especially when one has such an appetite as I have, and the Goodevrow Onderdonk's last apple pies were so hard that we played football with 'em. See here, boys, I'm going to levy on each one of you for contributions. You'll have to lend me a shirt, Slaughter."

"Can't do it, Jack," the lieutenant on the bench replied. "This one isn't fresh enough, and I gave my only other one this very morning to one of the Rhode Island boys who was mighty nigh frozen."

"Same here with stockings," Porterfield chimed in. "I'd let you have these, Marshall, but I can't go bare-legged in this weather."

"Johnson has a pair of stockings, I know," said Marshall. "I saw them in his kit yesterday. No shirt, eh? I reckon mine will be back from the wash in time. Nice state of affairs for the lieutenant of Taliafero's (he called it Tolliver's) shirt men to be in, isn't it? That's what Dunmore's Tories used to call us, you remember, Porterfield, when we chased 'em out of Suffolk in our green hunting-shirts, home spun, home woven, and home made."

"Oh! you were one of John Randolph's Virginia minute-men, eh?" queried Porterfield. "Raised in a minute, armed in a minute, marched in a minute, fought in a minute, and vanquished in a minute — that's why they called you minute-men, he said."

"Well, I've got to be armed in a minute now, if I'm going to dine at headquarters," said Marshall. "Come, boys, you've just got to fix me up. John Marshall never breaks his word, you know."

So in that snow-covered hut of logs, scantily warmed by the log fire, and less scantily furnished with home-made necessities, the jolly mess of five shivering and scantily clothed but healthy and even-tempered young officers of the Continental army went to work to make Lieutenant Marshall presentable for the dinner-table of the commander-in-chief at headquarters in Valley Forge.

They had scarcely a complete suit among them; for what was not worn out they had given away to the freezing privates, like the generous-hearted boys they were. But, by careful selection, they managed at last to fit out for the "banquet" their comrade, John Marshall, of Fauquier county — "the best-tempered fellow I ever knew," so one of them declared.

Captain Johnson's stockings, Captain Porterfield's breeches, Lieutenant Porterfield's waistcoat, with John Marshall's own coat, his own shirt hurried back from the wash, and adorned with the wristbands and collar which Lieutenant Slaughter had made for dress occasions from the bosom of his own well-worn shirt — these made the young soldier fairly presentable; and thus equipped in borrowed plumage, Lieut. John Marshall ploughed through the snow to headquarters — the old Potts house at Valley Forge — to dine with the commander-in-chief, and to receive his promotion as captain for gallant services at Germantown and Brandywine.

As John Marshall was at Valley Forge in that dark and distressing winter so he ever was as a young man. "Nothing discouraged him, nothing disturbed him," said his friend Slaughter, who lent him the collar and cuffs. "If he had only bread to eat, it was just as well; if only meal, it made no difference. If any of the officers murmured at their deprivations he would shame them by good-natured raillery or encourage them by his own exuberance of spirits."

It is no wonder that the young soldier — he was only twenty-two — was liked by the officers, from Washington down, and by the soldiers in the camp. He was such a pleasant comrade that he made even that dreary camp lively with his fun, his stories, and his continual good-nature, and he was chosen, again and again, to arbitrate the disputes that, in a cramped and snow-bound winter camp, were often breaking out between less adaptable officers. His decisions were always abided by, and so wise and just were his counsels in these camp quarrels that he was, in time, appointed deputy judge-advocate of the army at Valley Forge.

This judicial fairness and ability to counsel and advise had characterized John Marshall from boyhood. His father was a veteran of the French war and a colonel in the Continental army, who, during that terrible winter at Valley Forge, shared all its hardships with three of his seven sons. Of these seven sons John Marshall was the eldest, born at the village of Germantown, in Virginia, on the twenty-fourth of September, 1755.

He was an active and energetic, if sometimes a careless and fun-loving boy, as ready for a game of quoits, a foot race, or a wrestling match as for a drill on the muster field or a tug at his Latin. Spite of his willingness to play he was a ready student, for at twelve years old he knew Pope by heart and could quote by the hour from Shakespeare, Dryden, or Milton, while at eighteen he was making ready for his own bread-winning by studying to become a lawyer.

But the American Revolution called him from his studies and sent him into the army first as one of the blue-shirted Virginia minute-men and then as a lieutenant in the Virginia line. He fought under Washington at Germantown and Monmouth; he was in the daring dash of Wayne at Stony Point; he helped drive the traitor Arnold from Virginia and then, the Revolution over, he went quietly back to his law studies to become in time a successful Richmond lawyer, a member of the

Virginia Legislature, a member of the governor's council, a general in the State militia, a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention, the best-liked Virginian of his day, a defender of the new Constitution of the United States, and an envoy to France, when France seemed bent on blackmailing the United States, but could only force from our envoys, Pinckney and Marshall, the famous declaration that America remembers with pride to this day: "Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute."

For the bold stand he then took against the artful Talleyrand the American people gave him great praise. "Of the three envoys to France," said President John Adams, "the conduct of Marshall alone has been entirely satisfactory and ought to be marked by the most decided approbation of the public. He has raised the American people in their own esteem; and if the influence of truth and justice, reason and argument, is not lost in Europe, he has raised the consideration of the United States in that quarter."

The president would at once have appointed him one of the judges of the Supreme Court, but Marshall declined; the people of Virginia desired to send him to Congress, and although he preferred to devote himself to his large practice as a lawyer he finally accepted the nomination and, in 1799, he was elected and took his seat as a representative from Virginia, in December of that year.

Almost the first duty that devolved upon the new congressman was to notify the House that his friend, and America's deliverer, George Washington, was dead.

It was on the nineteenth of December that Marshall conveyed to his colleagues this melancholy intelligence. Rising in his seat with a voice low and solemn, while his words almost trembled into tears, he said: "The melancholy event, which was yesterday announced with doubt, has been rendered but too certain. Our Washington is no more! The hero, the patriot, the sage of America, the man on whom in times of danger every eye was turned and all hopes were placed, lives now only in his own great actions, and in the hearts of an affectionate and afflicted people."

Then, in a few brief, eloquent words, heavy with sorrow and filled with reverent appreciation, Marshall pronounced his short eulogy on his old commander, leader, and friend, closing with the resolutions, prepared by "Light-horse Harry" Lee, but effectively read by John Marshall, and now known to all the world.

"*Resolved,*" the resolution concluded, "That a committee, in conjunction with one from the Senate, be appointed to consider the most suitable manner of paying honors to the memory of the man first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his fellow-citizens."

President Adams, who held the abilities and services of Marshall in such high regard, again begged to be allowed to make use of him in the conduct of his own administration, and having secured, at last, a reluctant consent, he appointed John Marshall, upon the adjournment of Congress, in May, 1800, secretary of state.

But even this high honor did not fully satisfy the desires of the Massachusetts statesman, who held the Virginia statesman in such esteem; for, in less than a year after the appointment, President Adams, on the thirty-first of January, 1801, named John Marshall as chief-justice of the United States.

It was one of the last official acts of John Adams, and as has well been said of it, "never was a more correct appreciation of fitness shown."

"If President Adams," says Mr. Magruder, "had left no other claims on the grateful remembrance

of his countrymen than in giving to the public service this great magistrate, so pure and so wise, he would always have lived in that act as a great benefactor of his country. The aged patriot survived long enough to see abundant proof of the soundness of his choice, and to rejoice in it."

That this opinion is borne out by the facts every student of American history and American law must agree. "He was born to be chief-justice of any country in which he lived," one lawyer who heard Marshall's masterly decisions enthusiastically exclaimed, and Professor Channing declares that Marshall "proved to be the ablest legal luminary that America has yet produced."

For thirty-five years John Marshall remained at the head of the Supreme Court as chief-justice of the United States. Impartial, judicial, courageous, clear, discriminating, just, and wise, possessing alike what are called the judicial instinct and the constructive faculty, he taught, by his opinions and his decisions, the supreme power of the nation and the supreme position of the Constitution of the United States as the written law of the land.

He did this so well, so forcibly, and so decisively that he established, as much as any other American statesman, the value of the Constitution as a permanent authority, and the position of the nation as the head and controller of the affairs of the Republic.

Through all the changes of parties and presidents he remained the head of the greatest legal body on earth, in a position which he appreciated so highly that he declared he preferred to be chief-justice to being president.

And yet, notwithstanding the dignity of his position and the greatness of the responsibilities it entailed, he remained throughout his long and priceless service the same simple, sweet-tempered, helpful, earnest character that he was when, amid the snow-covered huts of Valley Forge, he kept up the spirits and lightened the depression of his comrades. For more than forty years he was a member of the Richmond Quoit Club, and he was as keen and deft a hand at that athletic sport as when, years and years before, he had challenged his companions to a game on the parade ground where Taliafero's "shirt men" gathered for their muster.

In all things which he believed, his convictions were deep and his loyalty to them lasting. One evening, in a tavern in the town of Winchester, in Northern Virginia, a group of three or four young lawyers were discussing, first, eloquence, and then religion. As they talked, a gig drove up to the tavern and a tall, bright-eyed, venerable man of nearly eighty descended from the gig and came into the room. He wore his hair in a queue, and was plainly dressed, so plainly, in fact, that the young debaters took him for some travelling farmer, and simply nodding their "How d'ye do?" went on with their discussion.

All the evening the talk continued, each one airing his opinions and advancing his arguments until it seemed as if the advocates of Christianity were getting the worst of the discussion, while near at hand, a silent, modest-appearing listener, the old man still sat, as if deriving alike benefit and information from the words of the heated young disputants.

Suddenly one of the young fellows who had taken the stand against Christianity, as if to see how convincing his arguments had been to an outsider, turned to the old man and asked brusquely and just a bit patronizingly, "Well, old gentleman, what do you think about these things?"

A more surprised group of over-confident young men would have been hard to find when the "old granger," as the boys of to-day might have called the unassuming traveller of the rickety gig, replied directly to the carelessly put question of the young debater; for he entered at once upon a

defence of Christianity so clear, so forcible, so simple and energetic, and yet, withal, so direct and convincing, that doubt was conquered and even unbelief was checked.

The young men sat intent and silent, with no arguments to advance in rebuttal and with only delight and admiration for the speaker's words.

Still they sat silent as the stranger rose and bade them a cheery good-night. Then curiosity got the better of appreciation, and they fell to wondering who the "old gentleman" was.

"Must be a parson," one of them remarked.

"Sure," assented another. "He talked just like a preacher. I wonder where he's from?"

Just then the landlord came back from lighting his guest to bed.

"Who was the old party? Where does he come from? Where does he preach?" were the questions that greeted him from all parts of the room.

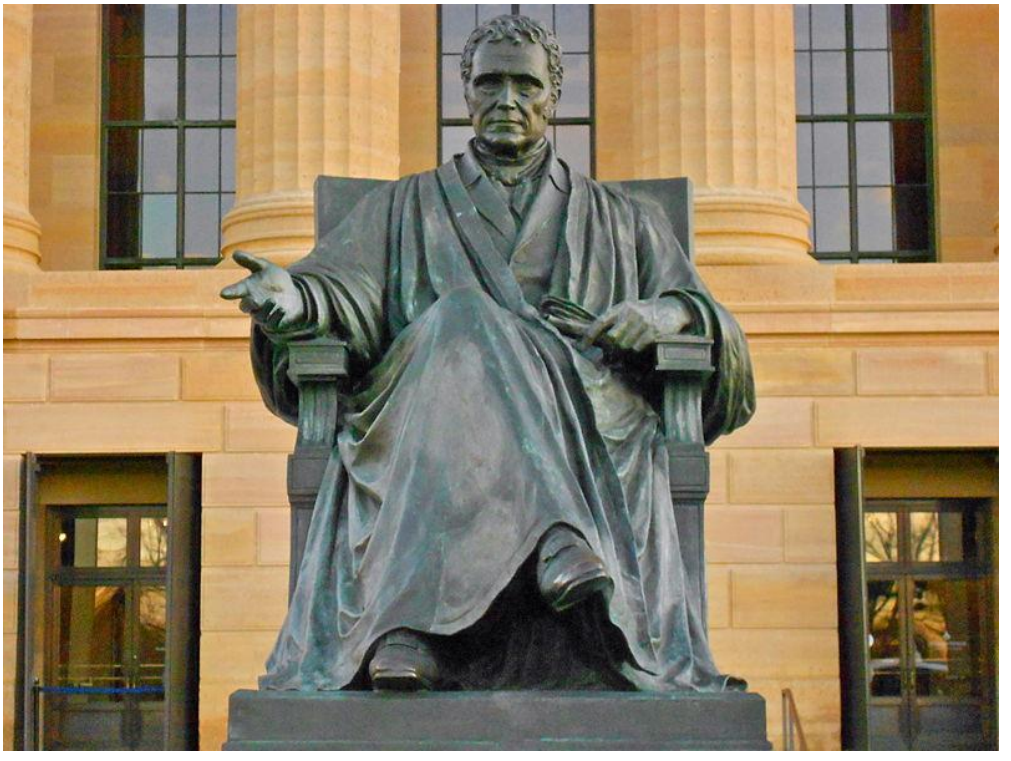
"Preach? What are you talking about, boys? He's no preacher," said the landlord, with the superiority of knowledge. "Didn't you know who it was? That was Judge Marshall, from down in Fauquier county."

The young fellows looked at each other in dismay.

"Judge Marshall?" they said. "Not —"

"Yes, but it was, though," replied the landlord, answering their unspoken and hesitating inquiry. "That's Judge John Marshall, chief-justice of the United States. Reckon the old gentleman knows more than you thought he did, eh? Oh, yes, I knew him all the time."

But while the landlord laughed aloud at their discomfort more than one of these young men recalled the earnest, convincing, and inspiring words of the speaker, and never forgot the faith or



Sculpture of John Marshall, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia PA

the fervor of Chief-Justice Marshall.

So with blended humor, pathos, and dignity, with love of sport and strength of belief, with simple tastes and homely manners, but with the courage of his convictions, a strong mind, a masterly grasp, and an intelligence and breadth that lifted him above his fellow-workers, the life of John Marshall, the great chief-justice, kept the tenor of its way unto the end.

No man in all America did so much to teach his countrymen the meaning of the Constitution of the United States or the real scope and limit of the powers granted by the people through the Constitution to their general government. His decisions have been the basis of opinions and arguments for a hundred years, his constructions of intentions and meanings have been adopted without criticism, his exposition of the law as laid down in the Constitution has been accepted without dissent.

Unbiased, logical, fair, and good-tempered, patient through all the intricacies of the law and calm under all its disappointments and delays, loving toward his friends, conciliatory toward his opponents, few American lawyers have been more popular when living or more revered when dead.

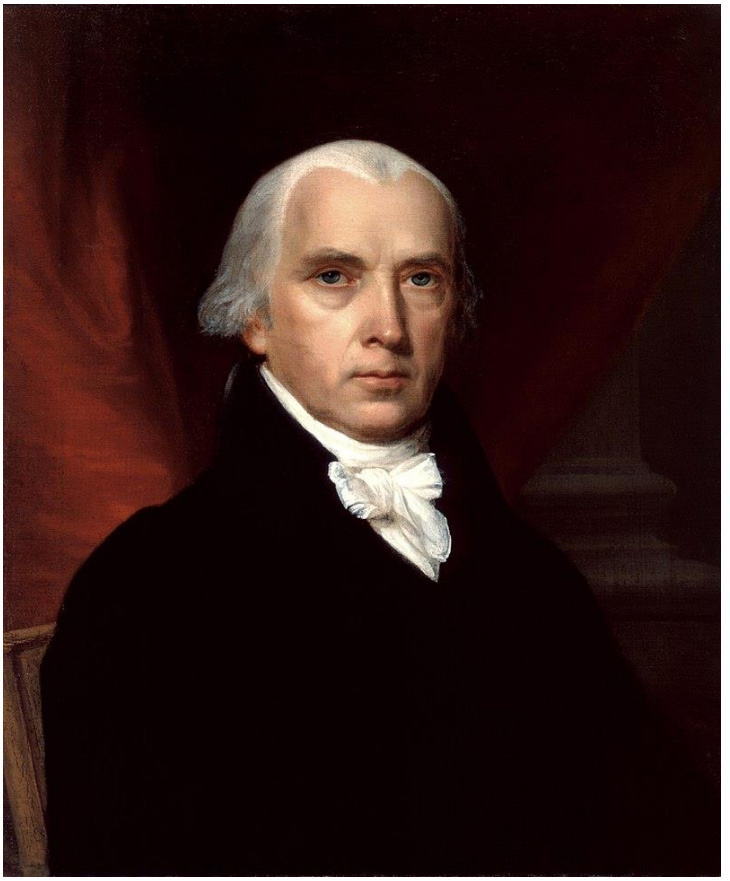
To-day his residence in Richmond is still an object of curiosity and regard for the visitor to that beautiful Virginian capital, while the splendid equestrian statue of Washington that adorns its tree-embowered square bears upon its pedestal the bronze statue of John Marshall as the representative of Justice and as one of the supporters of the great president. And this is right. For of all the men of his day there was no one who earlier saw and appreciated the justice of the cause for which Washington labored; there was none who in later life led his countrymen more truly along the path of national honor and national strength by his wise and unquestioned counsels than did the great chief-justice of the United States, John Marshall, the Virginian and American.

Chapter 19

The Story of James Madison of Montpelier

Called "The Father of the Constitution"
1751-1836

"He was not the sort of hero for whom people throw up their caps and shout themselves hoarse; but his work was of a kind that will long be powerful for good in the world." — *John Fiske.*



James Madison, John Vanderlyn

There was excitement on the college campus and within the college walls. From out the plain building that was at once dormitory, chapel, and school-room, where the great portrait of King George the Second frowned down upon the protesting students, black-robed figures streamed out upon the college green, where already a fire was crackling and climbing as if anxious for some accepted sacrifice.

The sacrifice was evidently ready. For as the young collegians in their black robes formed, two and two, and winding out from Nassau hall serpentined over the college green to the tolling of the bell and gathered about the fire, out from the ranks stepped two young fellows, one of whom held in his hand a copy of one of the abbreviated and unattractive looking newspapers of that day.

It was a July night in the year 1770. The college windows were open, the college bell was tolling, the college spirit was aroused, and while from the doorway

the well-recognized form of the college president, good Doctor Witherspoon, the patriot of Princeton, looked down in unacknowledged but very evident sympathy upon the scene, the black-gowned student with the paper shook it aloft and with the sentiment, "So perish all foes to liberty!" thrust the newspaper into the fire.

It was a suttee of a copy of "Rivington's Gazette," in which had been published a letter from certain weak-kneed and unpatriotic merchants of New York who had proved false to their pledge under the non-importation agreement and had written to the merchants of Philadelphia requesting them to act with them against the Non-Importation Act, which, so these thrifty merchants thought, would be a boon to trade, to profit, and to security.

But the students of Princeton College were "true blue" patriots. Some of them already belonged to the aggressive "Sons of Liberty," and all of them were ready to stand forth as friend and follower of independence, the cause to which their preceptor, good Doctor Witherspoon, was already committed, and for which he taught his students to love and to labor — even to die.

Earnest and enthusiastic in this boyish revenge upon a time-serving and unpatriotic act, one young Princetonian was foremost in his groans for the merchants and his cheers for the Sons of Liberty, President Witherspoon, and non-importation.

He was a slight-built, not over strong, keen-eyed young fellow of nineteen, unused to demonstrations and unskilled in hurrahs. But on this night his enthusiasm mastered him, and quiet, unobtrusive, serious and often solemn James Madison, the Virginia boy, was as vociferous as the rest.

He never was much of a real boy — the restless, impulsive, active, careless college boy most familiar to us. Indeed, one of his biographers declares that he seems never to have been a young man. But such an occasion as this stirred him to enthusiasm as few occurrences did, so that one can scarcely tell, as he reads his letter home, giving an account of the student's bonfire, which stirred and inspired James Madison most — the tolling bell, the solemn march and the parading black robes in the college yard, or the practical and exuberant patriotism of the college boys of that year of 1770, when they were, "all of them, dressed in American cloth."

Indeed, the studious, serious-minded, and sober-faced young Virginian, who seems to have indulged in few laughs and less jokes in all his busy life, interested himself, while little more than a boy, in the great questions that were disturbing America and upsetting the world in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. For we come upon such a letter as this, written from his quiet country home to a boy friend, left behind at Princeton, when the writer was but a very young man:

"We are very busy at present in raising men and procuring the necessaries for defending ourselves and our friends, in case of a sudden invasion. The extensiveness of the demands of the Congress, and the pride of the British nation, together with the wickedness of the present ministry, seem, in the judgment of all politicians, to require a preparation for extreme events."

When these "extreme events" came at last, young James Madison was not only prepared for them, he bore a part in them. It was not the part of a soldier, for he was weak in body and poor in health; indeed, we find him in a letter to a young friend lamenting that while that friend had "health, youth, fire, and genius to bear you along the high track of public life," he, James Madison, was "too dull and infirm to look for any extraordinary things in this world," and could not "expect a long or healthy life." And yet that "dull and infirm" young invalid lived for more than sixty years after that letter was written, and became one of the most active and foremost men of his day and generation.

But if he could not bear the part of a soldier at the front he did, early in his career, assume the work of the statesman. When but twenty-three years old he was appointed a member of the Virginia Committee of Safety of 1774 — the youngest member of that important body, and in 1776 he was elected a delegate to the Virginia Convention, where he helped prepare the famous "Bill of Rights," which placed Virginia beside Massachusetts in the opening struggle with England, and, what is almost as important in Madison's story, where he first met the man who through very nearly all the years of Madison's life was to him as "guide, philosopher, and friend" — Thomas Jefferson, of Monticello.

The Bill of Rights was, in effect, a declaration of what the proposed State of Virginia meant to do for the comfort and freedom of its people, and in it James Madison proposed and prepared the clause providing for toleration in the free exercise of religion to which all men are equally entitled according to the dictates of conscience — not a bad way for a young statesman to begin his public work.

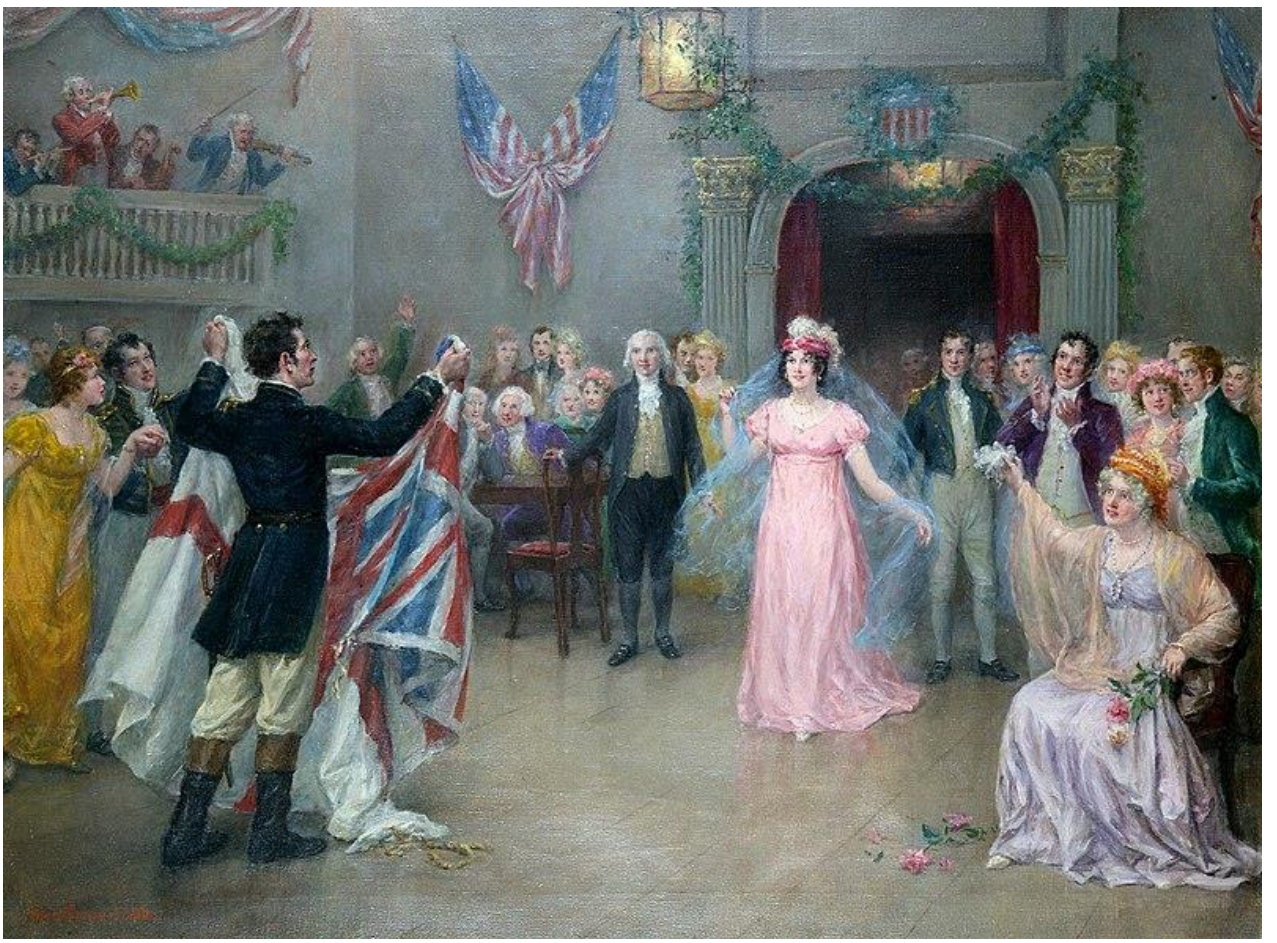
Before he was thirty years old, in December, 1779, James Madison was elected by the Legislature of Virginia as one of its delegates to the Continental Congress, and thus began his long career of public service of over forty years — a service that closed only with his retirement from the highest office in the gift of the United States.

His congressional life filled many busy years, and his services were of lasting value to the Republic. It was he who stood out longest and strongest against the encroachments of Spain, and demanded from that procrastinating nation the rights to navigate the Mississippi; it was he who declared in Congress that the demands and desires of constituents should not be binding upon their representatives in Congress; it was he who declared that "the existing Confederacy is tottering to its foundation," and urged a speedy binding of all the States together in a firm national government — "the Union before the States and for the sake of the States;" it was he who proposed a certain plan of union out of which the Constitution of the United States was finally evolved, and this proposition, linked to his careful report of the proceedings of the convention which made the Constitution, has caused him to divide with Alexander Hamilton the title of "Father of the Constitution." It was James Madison who, joined with Hamilton and Jay, wrote a number of carefully prepared, thoughtful, and exhaustive papers on the nature and meaning of the Federal Constitution, as the great document was often called; these papers were collected in a volume called "The Federalist" — a treatise which is, today, according to Professor Channing, "the best commentary on the Constitution and one which should be studied by all who desire to have a through comprehension of its provisions."

It was James Madison who, when elected a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention, fought through to adoption the question of accepting and abiding by the Union and the Constitution in the face of the opposition of Patrick Henry and other leading Virginians who did not believe in the Union and would not agree to the Constitution. He won his victory, and Virginia, by a majority of ten, adopted the Constitution — that Constitution of the United States under which we live to-day, and of which James Madison said: "Every man who loves peace, every man who loves his country, every man who loves liberty, ought to have this Constitution ever before his eyes, that he may cherish in his heart a due attachment to the Union of America and be able to set a due value on the means of preserving it."

In this work of suggesting, framing, defending, and establishing the immortal Constitution of the United States James Madison did the best and greatest service of his life. He shaped and set in action the party which advocated, championed, and established the Constitution — the party of Washington and Hamilton — the party to which he gave the name of "Federalist," and of which he was esteemed the father. Indeed, if he is not to be reckoned the "Father of the Constitution" itself, he is at least the creator of the Federalist party. In this Madison made his place in the history of the Republic. But after the adoption of the Constitution Madison became more and more influenced by Thomas Jefferson, and gradually went over to his side as one who was the leader in his State, and therefore the one to whom he should be loyal as a Virginian rather than an American. This mistaken loyalty went so far that, at last, James Madison left the party of Washington and Hamilton, became an anti-Federalist, or rather a Jeffersonian — a follower and ally of the great democrat. He served in Jefferson's administration as secretary of state, and succeeded him as president of the United States, to which high office he was twice elected.

It was during his service as president, from March 4, 1809, to March 4, 1817, that the Republic went through the strain and stress of the second war with England, called the war of 1812, as unnecessary and as avoidable as the war with Spain in 1898; like that war, too, it scored its greatest



A Ball at Tomlinson's Hotel in Washington…to celebrate the American victory at the battle of Craney Island, Jennie Augusta Brownscombe

glories on the sea. It was a leaderless war both as regards the president who should have controlled and the generals who should have conducted it; for only the brilliant but needless victory of Jackson at New Orleans remains with us as the one military glory of that three-years' war of 1812. But on the sea it was memorable in the naval annals of America. The names of Hull and Perry and Lawrence shed lustre on an otherwise unsatisfactory war, in which those famous sea-fighters were the forerunners in bravery, brilliancy, and success of Farragut and Dewey and Sampson and Schley.

Like President McKinley in 1898, President Madison in 1812 neither desired nor advocated war, but, instead, worked for peace, only to be forced into war by an unfortunate naval disaster, the clamors of the war-shouters, and the action of a belligerent Congress. So far, the story of the two wars runs parallel; but, unlike President McKinley, President Madison was not equal to the situation, nor was he designed by nature or disposition, by training or temperament, to be the conductor of a war or the commander-in-chief of armies and navies. Able and amiable, designed to make laws rather than to execute them, he found himself plunged into a war which he neither desired nor approved, and was forced, contrary to his own wishes, to conduct it either to failure or success. Badly advised and poorly served; invading Canada when he should have strengthened his own defences; careless of naval operations and unable to understand those on land, Madison scarcely made a success as a war president. In 1898, too, the whole country was united in action when the necessity for action came; but in 1812, besides an invading enemy, Madison had to face and strive against, within the borders of the Republic, a large, persistent, and influential opposition to what was called "Mr. Madison's War." The New England States, while bearing their share, as required by law, in the conflict with England, regarded the war with absolute disfavor and open discontent. Their harbors were unprotected, their trade was ruined by harsh methods, their men of affairs had no confidence in those in charge of the war, and, finally, the representatives of New England assembled in convention at Hartford, in Connecticut, threatened to take matters into their own hands, and even to set up the authority of the States against that of the government. But before anything could be decided upon the war came to a sudden end, Jackson's victory at New Orleans gave a tinge of success and glory to the close of the strife, and the New England "objectors" found themselves suddenly in a ridiculous minority. Then James Madison, president, completed the Treaty of Ghent, which brought peace to his country, and, "of all men, had," as Mr. Gay says, "the most reason to be glad for a safe deliverance from the consequences of his own want of foresight and want of firmness."

During the war the British had made a descent upon Washington, burned the public buildings, and sent president, Cabinet, and military "defenders" fleeing for their lives, when proper precautions, taken in time, might have prevented alike the invasion and destruction. But such disasters are the fortunes of war, and Madison should not be made the scapegoat, as he too often has been, for this disgraceful and unnecessary catastrophe.

It was a temporary disgrace, however. President and people soon recovered from its effects, and were made more united, less provincial; more a nation, and less a simple confederation. Indeed, as one historian asserts, "the War of 1812 has been often and truly called the Second War of Independence," an independence not merely of other nations, but of the hampering, old-time condition and traditions of the narrow colonial days. So, after all, like the Spanish war of 1898, it was, if unnecessary, not unproductive of good as part of that Divine plan which permits wars for the sake

of national development, progress, humanity, and manliness.

In all of this progress James Madison had a share, and no one welcomed peace with more delight or more strenuously endeavored to heal the cruel wounds of war. His efforts, which were strong, practical, sincere, statesmanlike, and patriotic, were attended with success, and the prestige lost by him through lack of warlike ability was restored to him by his efforts towards the public good; for, as the evils and ill-feeling of the war melted away, the people received with appreciative satisfaction the eighth and last annual message of the president of the United States.

"I can indulge the proud reflection," he said, "that the American people have reached in safety and success their fortieth year as an independent nation; that for nearly an entire generation they have had experience of their present Constitution, the offspring of their undisturbed deliberation and of their free choice; that they have found it to bear the trials of adverse as well as of prosperous circumstances; to contain in its combination of the federate and elective principles a reconcilement of public strength with individual liberty, of national power for the defence of national rights, with a security against wars of injustice, of ambition, and of vainglory, and in the fundamental provision which subjects all questions of war to the will of the nation itself, which is to pay its costs and feel its calamities. Nor is it less a peculiar felicity of this Constitution, so dear to us all, that it is found to be capable, without losing the vital energies, of expanding itself over a spacious territory with the increase and expansion of the community for whose benefit it was established."

James Madison gravestone at Montpelier estate, Orange, VA

It is natural for a man who has done a fine piece of work to regard it with affection and speak of it with pride. So, on the occasion of his retirement from public life, which came in 1817 at the conclusion of his second term as president, Mr. Madison, in his last annual message, fell back, as you have seen, to the piece of his own handiwork he admired most — the Constitution — and begged his fellow-countrymen to look upon it with equal pride and veneration.

May not this remark from "the Father of the Constitution" also be seriously considered by those who to-day affirm that "the Fathers" and the "Constitution" were

opposed to American expansion and progress?

And as the old veteran — worn and weakened by his long service and the trials he had undergone — drops out of public life into the happy retirement of his Virginia farm at Montpelier, where he died in 1836, at the age of eighty-five, we can readily give him place as one of those historic Americans who builded even better than he knew when he did so large and so grand a share towards the production of the immortal Constitution of the United States — a paper which Professor Channing calls "the most marvellous political instrument that has ever been formulated. It was designed," he says, "by men familiar with the mode of life of the eighteenth century, to provide an escape from the intolerable conditions of that time, and to furnish a practicable form of government for four millions of human beings inhabiting the fringe of a continent. It has proved, with exceptions, sufficient for the government of seventy millions, living in forty-five States, covering an area imperial in extent and under circumstances unthought of in 1787." Should Americans question the ability of that immortal document to prove equal to the necessities and emergencies of even wider growth and vaster development?

And for this beneficent, enduring, and world-famous national covenant the Republic has largely to thank its illustrious son and patriotic defender, James Madison, of Montpelier, fourth president of the United States.

Chapter 20

How the English and the Americans Fought Again

For years before and after the year 1800 all Europe was filled with war and bloodshed. Most of my readers must have heard of Napoleon Bonaparte, one of the greatest generals that ever lived, and one of the most cruel men. He was at the head of the armies of France, and was fighting all Europe. England was his greatest enemy and fought him on land and sea and this fighting on the sea made trouble between England and the United States.

The English wanted men for their war-vessels and said they had a right to take Englishmen wherever they could find them. So they began to take sailors off of American merchant vessels. They said that these men were deserters from the British navy, but the fact is that many of them were true-born Americans, and our people grew very angry as this went on year after year. What made it worse was the insolence of some of the British captains. One of them went so far as to stop an American war-vessel, the "Chesapeake," and demand part of her crew, who, he said, were British deserters. When Captain Barron refused to give them up the British captain fired all his guns and killed and wounded numbers of the American crew. The "Chesapeake" had no guns fit to fire back, so her flag had to be pulled down and the men to be given up.

You may well imagine that this insult made the American blood boil. There would have been war at that time if the British government had not apologized and offered to pay for the injury. A few years afterwards the insult was paid for in a different way. Another proud British captain thought he could treat Americans in the same insulting fashion. The frigate "President" met the British sloop-of-war "Little Belt," and hailed it, the captain calling through his trumpet, "What ship is that?"

Instead of giving a civil reply the British captain answered with a cannon shot. Then the "President" fired a broadside which killed eleven and wounded twenty-one men on the "Little Belt." When the captain of the "President" hailed again the insolent Briton was glad to reply in a more civil fashion. He had been taught a useful lesson.

The United States was then a poor country, and not in condition to go to war. But no nation could submit to such insults as these. It is said that more than six thousand sailors had been taken from our merchant ships, and among these were two nephews of General Washington, who were seized while they were on their way home from Europe, and put to work as common seaman on a British war-vessel.

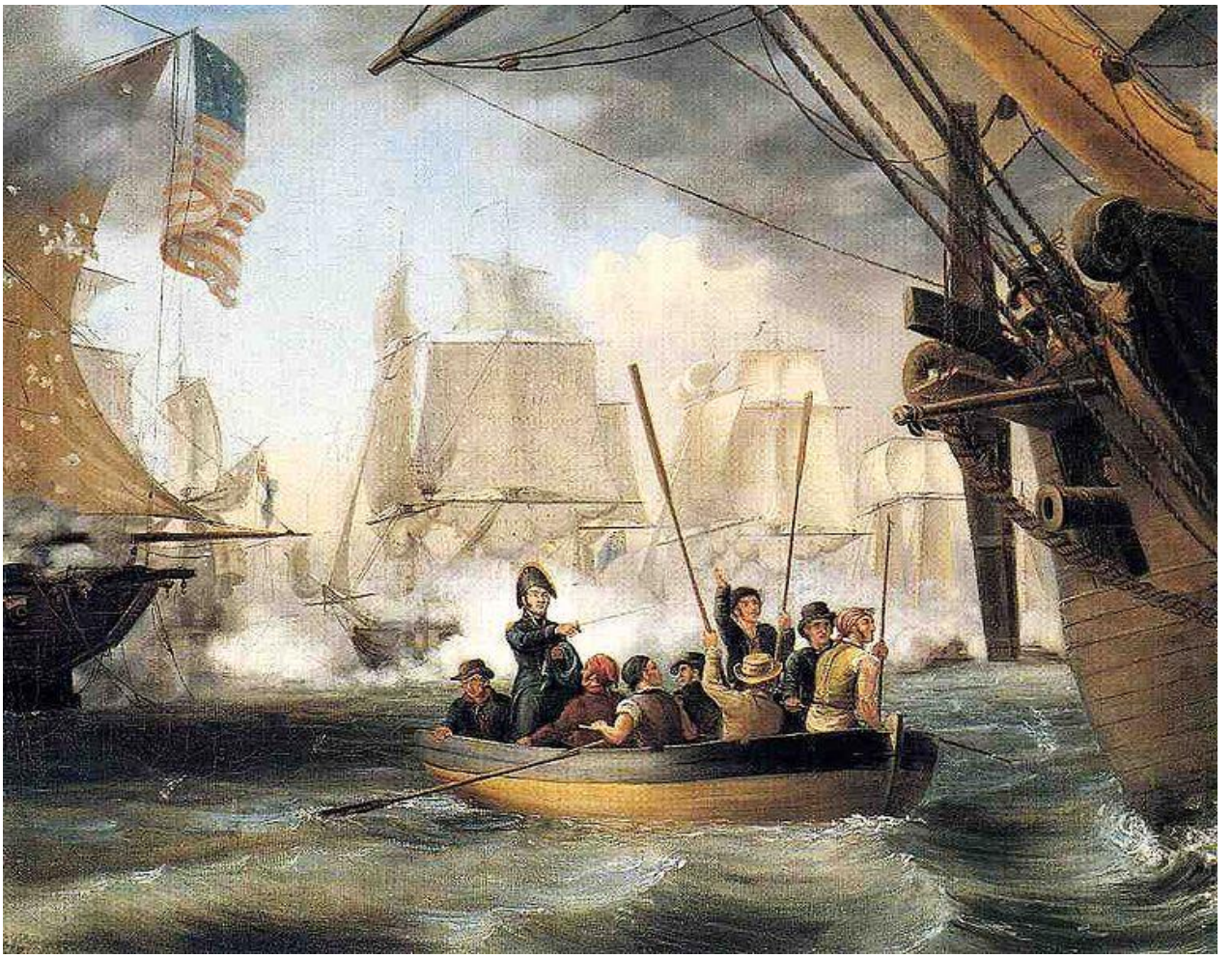
At length, on June 18, 1812, the United States declared war against Great Britain. It had put

up with insults and injuries as long as it could bear them. It did not take long to teach the haughty British captains that American sea-dogs were not to be played with. The little American fleet put to sea, and before the end of the year it had captured no less than five of the best ships in the British navy and had not lost a single ship in return. I fancy the people of England quit singing their proud song, "Britannia rules the waves."

Shall I tell you the whole story of this war? I do not think it worth while, for there is much of it you would not care to hear. The war went on for two years and a half, on sea and land, but there were not many important battles and the United States did not win much honor on land. But on the sea the sailors of our country covered themselves with glory.

Most of the land battles were along the borders of Canada. Here there was a good deal of fighting, but most of it was of no great account. At first the British had the best of it, and then the Americans began to win battles, but it all came to an end about where it began. Neither side gained anything for the men that were killed.

There was one naval battle in the north that I must tell you about. On Lake Erie the British had



Commodore Perry Leaving the "Lawrence" for the "Niagara" at the Battle of Lake Erie,
Thomas Birtch

a fleet of six war-vessels, and for a time they had everything their own way. Then Captain Oliver Perry, a young officer, was sent to the lake to build a fleet and fight the British.

When he got there his ships were growing in the woods. He had to cut down trees and build ships from their timber. But he worked like a young giant, and in a few weeks he had some vessels built and afloat. He got others on the lake, and in a wonderfully short time he had a fleet on the lake and was sailing out to find the British ships.

They met on September 10, 1813. The Americans had the most vessels, but the British had the most guns, and soon they were fighting like sea-dragons. The "Lawrence," Captain Perry's flagship, fought two of the largest British ships till it was nearly ready to sink, and so many of its crew were killed and wounded that it had only eight men left fit for fighting. What do you think the brave Perry did then? He leaped into a small boat and was rowed away, with the American flag floating in his hand, though the British ships were firing hotly at him.

When he reached the "Niagara," another of his ships, he sprang on board and sailed right through the enemy's fleet, firing right and left into their shattered vessels. The British soon had enough of this, and in fifteen minutes more they gave up the fight.

"We have met the enemy and they are ours," wrote Perry to General Harrison. He was a born hero of the waves.

Now I think we had better take a look out to sea and learn what was going on there. We did not have many ships, but they were like so many bulldogs in a flock of sheep. The whole world looked on with surprise to see our little fleet of war-vessels making such havoc in the proud British navy which no country in Europe had ever been able to defeat.

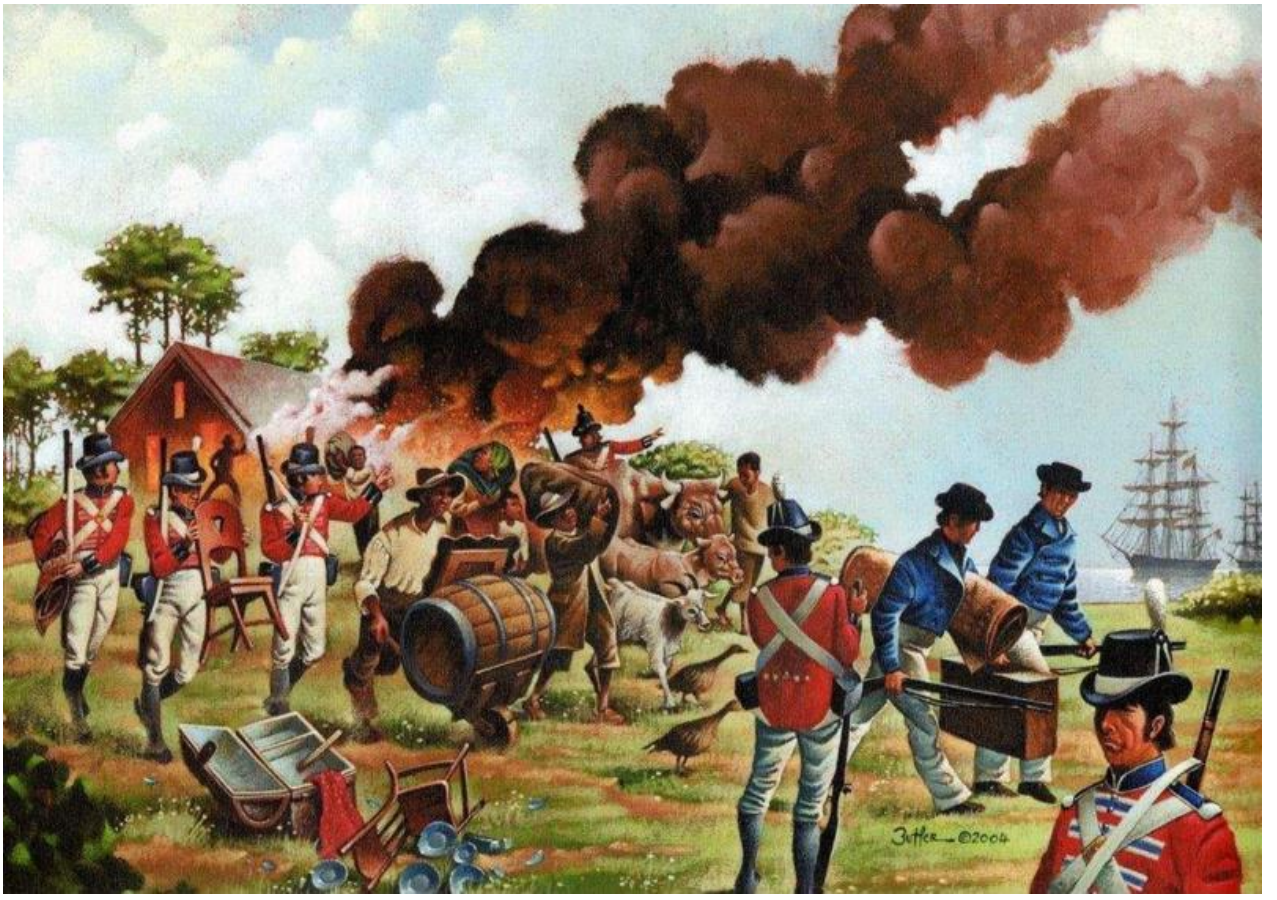
In less than two months after war was declared the frigate "Essex" met the British sloop-of-war "Alert" and took it in eight minutes, without losing a man. The "Essex" was too strong for the "Alert," but six days afterwards the "Constitution" met the "Guerriere," and these vessels were nearly the same in size. But in half an hour the "Guerriere" was nearly cut to pieces and ready to sink, and had lost a hundred of her men. The others were hastily taken off, and then down went the proud British frigate to the bottom of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

All the island of Great Britain went into mourning when it learned how the Americans had served this good ship. There was soon more to mourn for. The American sloop "Wasp" captured the British sloop "Frolic." The frigate "United States" captured the frigate "Macedonia." The "Constitution" met the "Java" and served it the same way as it had done the "Guerriere." In two hours the "Java" was a wreck. Soon after the sloop "Hornet" met the ship "Peacock" and handled her so severely that she sank while her crew was being taken off.

Later on the British won two battles at sea, and that was all they gained during the whole war. On the water the honors stayed with the Americans.

There was one affair in which the British won dishonor instead of honor. In July, 1814, a strong British fleet sailed up Chesapeake Bay, with an army of nearly five thousand men on board. These were landed and marched on the city of Washington, the capital of the young republic.

Their coming was a surprise. There were few trained soldiers to meet this army, and those were not the days of railroads, so that no troops could be brought in haste from afar. Those that gathered were nearly all raw militia, and they did not stand long before the British veterans who had fought in the wars with Napoleon. They were soon put to flight and the British army marched into our



British Raid on Chesapeake Bay in War Of 1812, unknown artist

capital city.

There they behaved in a way that their country has ever since been ashamed of. They set fire to the public buildings and burned most of them to the ground. The Capitol, the President's house, and other buildings were burned, and the records of the government were destroyed. Then, having acted like so many savages, the British hurried away before the Americans could get at them for revenge. That was a victory, I fancy, which the British do not like to read about.

They had been so successful at Washington that they thought they would try the same thing with another city. This time they picked out New Orleans, which was so far away from the thickly settled part of the country that they fancied it would be an easy matter to capture it. In this they made a great mistake, as you will soon see.

There was a general at New Orleans who was not used to being defeated. His name was Andrew Jackson, one of our bravest soldiers. He also had won fame in the war he waged with the Indians in Florida. He was a man who was always ready to fight and this the English found when they marched on New Orleans. There were twelve thousand of them, and Jackson only had half that many. And the British were trained soldiers, while the Americans were militia. But they were old hunters and knew how to shoot.

Some of you may have heard that Jackson's men fought behind cotton bales. That is not quite true, but he was in such a hurry in building his breastworks that he did put in them some bales of

cotton taken from the warehouses. The British, who were in as great a hurry, built a breastwork of sugar hogsheads which they found on the plantations. But the cannon balls soon set the cotton on fire and filled the air with flying sugar, so the bales and the hogsheads had to be pulled out. It was found that cotton and sugar, while good enough in their place, were not good things to stop cannon balls.

Soon the British marched against the American works and there was a terrible fight.

"Stand to your guns, my men," said Jackson to his soldiers. "Make every shot tell. Give it to them."

Many of the men were old hunters from Tennessee, some of whom could hit a squirrel in the eye, and when they fired the British fell in rows. Not a man could cross that terrible wall of fire, and they fought on until twenty-six hundred of them lay bleeding on the field, while only eight Americans were killed.

That ended the battle. The men were not born who could face a fire like that. It ended the war also, and it was the last time Americans and Englishmen ever fought each other. Jackson became the hero of the country, and he was finally elected President of the United States. I cannot say that he was a very good President. He was a very obstinate man, who always wanted to have his own way, and that is better in a soldier than in a president.

Chapter 21

Dolly Madison

Who Guarded the Nation's Treasures
1768–1849

"Dolly," asked President Madison of his wife, "have yon the courage to stay here till I come back to-morrow or next day?"

"I am not afraid of anything if only yon are not harmed and our army succeeds," was her reply.

"Good-by, then, take care of yourself, and if anything happens, look out for the Cabinet papers," said the President, and rode away to where the militia was gathering.

Dolly Madison, Gilbert Stuart

There was good reason for Mrs. Madison to be anxious about her husband and about the success of the Americans. It was now 1814; America and England had been fighting for two years. Many people thought that the President had been wrong in resorting to war. Letters had been sent him which said, "If this war does not come to an end soon, you will be poisoned." The city of Washington, too, was in great danger. Four days earlier a messenger had ridden up at full speed to say, "Fifty British ships are anchoring off the Potomac." Nearly all the men hurried to the front to try to oppose the enemy. People in Washington were carrying their property away to the country. Still the little lady at the White House did not run away. She had the public papers to guard, and she would not go.

Besides the papers, there was another of the nation's treasures in the house, a fine portrait of George Washington by the famous artist, Gilbert Stuart. The son of Washington's stepson came to Mrs. Madison to plan for its safety. "Whatever happens, that shall be cared for," she had promised him.

At last a note came to her from the President. "The enemy are stronger than we heard at first," it said. "They may reach the city and destroy it. Be ready to leave at a moment's warning."

Most of her friends had already gone, but her faithful servants were with her. "Bring me as many trunks as my carriage will hold," she ordered; and then she set to work to fill them with the Declaration of Independence and the other papers that were of value to the whole nation.

Night came, but there was no rest for the lady of the White House. As soon as the sun rose, she was at the windows with a spy-glass, gazing in every direction and hoping to catch a glimpse of her husband. All she could see was clouds of dust, here and there a group of soldiers wandering about, and little companies of frightened women and children, hurrying to the bridge across the Potomac. She began to hear the roar of cannon, and she knew that a battle was going on; still the President did not come. There was nothing to do but wait. It was of no use to pack the silver and other valuables, for every wagon had been seized long before, and not one was left for even the wife of the President.

At three o'clock two men, covered with dust, gal-loped up and cried, "You must fly, or the house will be burned over your head."

"I shall wait here for the President," was her reply.

A wagon came rumbling along. Some good friends had at last succeeded in getting it for her. She had it filled with silver and other valuables. "Take them to the Bank of Maryland," she ordered; but she said to herself, "The Bank of Maryland or the hands of the British — who knows which it will be?"

Two or three friends came to hurry her away. "The British will burn the house," they said. "They will take you prisoner; they boast that they will carry the President and his wife to England and make a show of them."

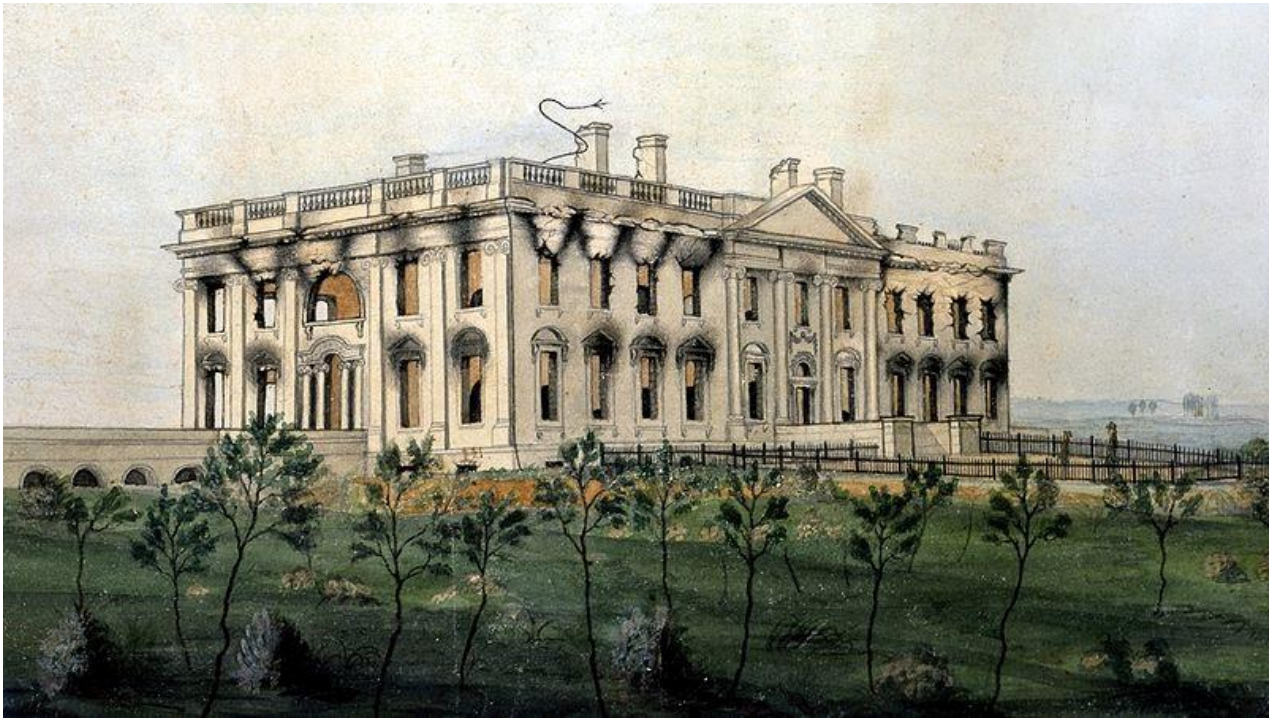
They were almost lifting her to her carriage, when she said, "Not yet. The picture of Washington shall never fall into the hands of the enemy. That must be taken away before I leave the house." This picture was in a heavy frame that

George Washington,
Gilbert Stuart

British Burn the Capitol, 1814, Allyn Cox

was firmly screwed to the wall, and with what tools were at hand it could not be easily loosened. "Get an axe and break the frame," Mrs. Madison bade her servants. This was done, the canvas was taken from the stretcher, carefully rolled up, and sent to a safe place. Then the carriage with Mrs. Madison was driven rapidly away.

She left the house none too soon, for the British were upon the city. They broke into the White House. They stole what they could carry off with them, and set fire to the rest. They fired the navy yard, the Treasury building, the public libraries, and the new Capitol. The British Admiral Cockburn had a special spite against one of the Washington newspapers because it had printed some bitter articles about his savage burning of defenseless villages along the coast. "Burn that office," he commanded, "and be sure that all the C's are destroyed, so that the rascals cannot abuse my name



The President's House, George Munger

any longer." It is said that he jumped down from his horse and kindled the fire with his own hand.

At night a fearful tempest swept over the city. Trees were blown down and houses were unroofed. When the storm burst, Mrs. Madison was pleading for shelter at a little tavern sixteen miles from Washington. She had seen the President, and he had told her to meet him at this place. The house was full of people who had fled from the city. "Stay out," they cried. "Your husband brought on this war, and his wife shall have no shelter in the same house with us." At last, however, they let her in. The President found his way to her later, almost exhausted; but before he had had an hour of rest, a man threw open the door, so out of breath that he could only gasp, "The British — they know you are here — fly!" Mrs. Madison begged him to go, and finally he yielded and escaped to a little hut in the woods where he could be safe. "I will disguise myself and go to some safer place," she promised; and in the first gray of the morning she left the tavern. On the way she heard the best of news: "The British heard that reinforcements were coming and they have gone to their ships." Then she turned around and drove toward the city; but when she came to the bridge over the Potomac, it was afire. An American officer stood by. "Will you row me across the river?" she begged, for a little boat was moored to the bank. "No," he replied, "we don't let strange women into the city." In vain she pleaded, but he was firm. "Who knows what you are?" he demanded roughly. "We have had spies enough here. How do I know but the British have sent you to burn what they left? You will not cross the river — that is sure."

"But I am Mrs. Madison, the wife of your President," she said, and threw off her disguise.

Even then he could hardly be persuaded to row her across, but finally he yielded. Through clouds of smoke she made her way past heaps of smouldering ruins to the home of her sister, where she awaited the coming of the President.

Such were five days in the life of a "first lady of the land."

Chapter 22

The Star-Spangled Banner

In 1814, while the War of 1812 was still going on, the people of Maryland were in great trouble, for a British fleet had sailed into Chesapeake Bay. The cannon would be aimed at some town, but no one knew which. The ships sailed up one river, then came back and sailed up another, as if they had not decided where to go. The people who lived on the banks of these rivers fired alarm guns and lighted signal fires to let those who lived inland know that danger was near. The ships lingered, hesitated, then suddenly spread all sail and ran to the north up the Bay. "They will surely attack us," thought the people of Annapolis, and they crammed their household goods into wagons and carts, even into wheelbarrows, and hurried away to the country as fast as they could. But the ships sailed past Annapolis. Then there was no question which town was to be attacked; it was Baltimore.

As the fleet sailed on, General Eoss, the British commander, spoke of his plans. "I shall have my winter quarters in Baltimore," he said.

"What about the American militia, general?" asked one of his officers playfully.

"Militia?" replied Eoss; "I don't care a straw if it rains militia."

The fleet landed the soldiers at the mouth of the Patapsco River, and sailed up stream toward the town. The men marched up the river for five miles. They met a force of American militia, and there was a sharp fight for two or three hours; then the Americans retreated. "There will be no great trouble in taking the town in the morning," thought the leader; "and we will camp here to-night." When morning came, he found that, however it might be about taking the town, he would have some trouble in getting to it; for the Americans had dug ditches, and dragged heavy logs across the road. It took the whole day to get in sight of the place; and then they found it anything but an agreeable sight, for all along the hills above the city was a heavy line of entrenchments. There seemed to be plenty of men behind the entrenchments, and the British concluded that they would not take possession of their winter quarters at once. They thought it would be pleasanter to wait at least until after dark, when they would not be so plainly seen from the forts. "The cannon on our ships will surely silence Fort McHenry and the other forts and batteries by that time," they said.

"While the soldiers were stumbling over logs and rolling into hidden ditches, the cannon on the British ships were firing as fast as possible. The river was so shallow that the men-of-war could not get within range of the town. "We will bombard the forts," they said. "They will yield in a few hours, and then our troops can march up and take the city." For twenty-four hours the terrific bombardment went on.

"If Fort McHenry only stands, the city is safe," said Francis Scott Key to a friend, and they gazed anxiously through the smoke to see if the flag was still flying.

These two men were in the strangest place that could be imagined. They were in a little

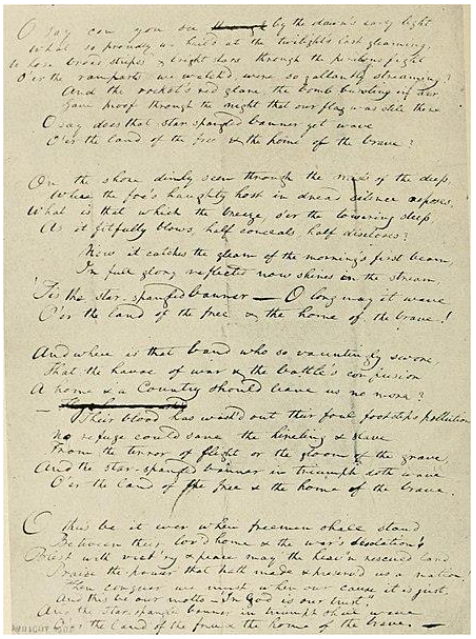
American vessel fast moored to the side of the British admiral's flag-ship. A Maryland doctor had been seized as a prisoner by the British, and the President had given permission for them to go out under a flag of truce to ask for his release. The British commander finally decided that the prisoner might be set free; but he had no idea of allowing the two men to go back to the city and carry any information. "Until the attack on Baltimore is ended, you and your boat must remain here," he said.

The firing went on. As long as the daylight lasted, they could catch glimpses of the stars and stripes whenever the wind swayed the clouds of smoke. When night came they could still see the banner now and then by the blaze of the cannon. A little after midnight the firing stopped. The two men paced up and down the deck, straining their eyes to see if the flag was still flying. "Can the fort have surrendered?" they questioned. "Oh, if morning would only come!"

Francis Scott Key standing on boat, with right arm stretched out toward the United States flag flying over Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland, Edward Percy Moran

At last the faint gray of dawn appeared. They could see that some flag was flying, but it was too dark to tell which. More and more eagerly they gazed. It grew lighter, a sudden breath of wind caught the flag; and it floated out on the breeze. It was no English flag, it was their own stars and stripes. The fort had stood, the city was safe. Then it was that Key took from his pocket an old letter and on the back of it he wrote the poem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The British departed, and the little American boat went back to the city. Mr. Key gave a copy of the poem to his uncle, who had been helping to defend the fort. The uncle sent it to a printer, and had it struck off on some handbills. Before the ink was dry the printer caught up one and hurried away to a restaurant, where many patriots were assembled. Waving the paper, he cried, "Listen to this!" and he read: —

"O say, can you see by the dawn's early light,
  What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
  O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,



Francis Scott Key's original manuscript copy of his "Star-Spangled Banner" poem, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

"Sing it! sing it!" cried the whole company. Charles Durang mounted a chair, and then for the first time "The Star-Spangled Banner" was sung. The tune was "To Anacreon in Heaven," an air which had long been a favorite. The song was caught up at once. Halls, theatres, and private houses rang with its strains.

The fleet was out of sight even before the poem was printed. In the middle of the night the admiral had sent to the British soldiers the message, "I can do nothing more," and they had hurried on board the vessels. It was not long before they left Chesapeake Bay altogether — perhaps with the new song ringing in their ears as they went.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

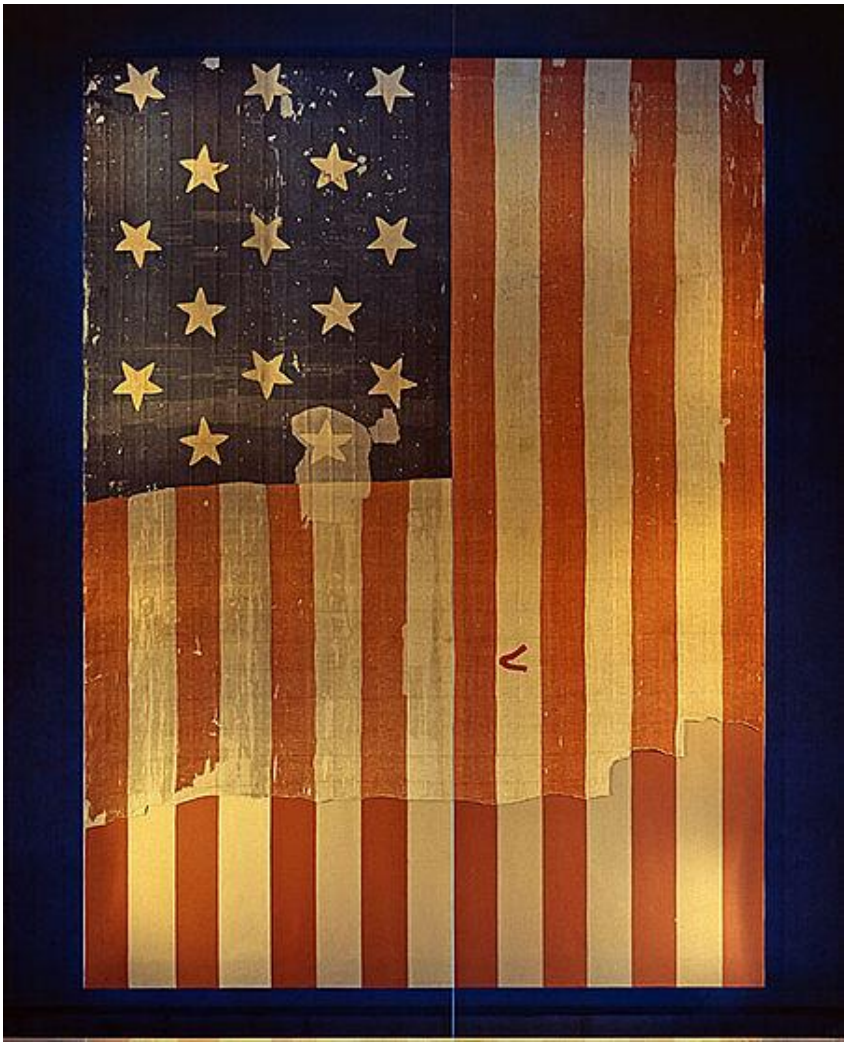
Oh, say, can you see? By the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming.
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air.
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave?
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In fully glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution!
No refuge could save the hireling and slave

From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Oh, thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust":
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.



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