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**MR. STRONG'S DISCOURSE,**

**ON THE DEATH OF**

**GENERAL WASHINGTON.**

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A

# DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED ON

*FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1799,*

THE DAY SET APART BY THE CITIZENS OF  
HARTFORD, TO LAMENT BEFORE GOD,

THE DEATH OF

Gen. George Washington ;

WHO DIED DEC. 14, 1799.

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BY NATHAN STRONG,

PASTOR OF THE NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HARTFORD.

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## FUNERAL SERMON.

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MY BRETHREN,

SO general an appearance of affliction was never depicted here before. To stand in this immense concourse of fellow citizens, where every face is marked with sorrow, almost unmans the speaker. Verily there is a great mourning here to-day, like the mourning of Israel when MOSES died, and to improve the occasion let us turn to

EXODUS xi. 3.

*—Moreover the man MOSES was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharoah's servants, and in the sight of the people.*

**I**T must be a solemn season, when a great people lament before the LORD, the death of those, whom his infinite goodness hath made the instruments of their greatest benefits. On such occasions the mind must be impressed with the sovereignty of GOD, and frailty of man in his best earthly estate; and a tender and respectful

remembrance of deceased virtues will open all hearts to a mutual condolence. All blessings are from God, who upholds the civil state, girds the civil and military rulers of men, and keeps his church in peace and quietness, thro the influence of his servants who fear his name.

The LORD hath set his king upon his holy hill of Zion, who is the CREATOR, REDEEMER, and JUDGE of men. He is GOD forever on the throne in heaven, and thro the earth, and to fulfil his counsels he works thro instruments prepared by himself, and made worthy of acting in his name, and bearing the marks of a divine commission. There have been but few men in the world eminently great, and those have, in general, been on the side of virtue. There have been many tyrants and destroyers, for it requires only small talents to work ruin; but to build up, to bless, to humanize society, to defend the oppressed, to vindicate human liberty, and at the same time restrain licentiousness, is an arduous task; where none but good men will be inclined to expose themselves, and which none but great men are able to accomplish.

That we may on this occasion, honor the supreme Sovereign of the world, and duly estimate the public loss sustained, let us,

1. Contemplate the providence of God in raising up great and eminent men, and qualify-

ing them for the good which they are appointed to do to mankind.

In the formation of such persons, there must be a union of rare and great natural talents, with an eminent love of moral virtue. Whenever God hath a great work to do in the world, he forms instruments fitted for the trust to be reposed in them, who are possessed of talents, guided by his providential care, and inspired with a spirit of understanding from himself, whereby they are enabled, whatever difficulties and opposition may occur, to do the things determined for them.

We know that those, who despise a supreme providence, are prone to refer every remarkable thing, either to a certain blind necessity of nature which they cannot describe, or to the effects of accidental but uncommon genius ; indeed like other foolish men who think themselves to be wise, they have recourse to any means which will hide the being, the holy perfections, and the providence of God. Herein infidels show themselves to be at an equal remove from piety, wisdom and truth ; and that they are as far from discerning in what the true greatness of a creature consists, as they are from being good and pious.

The rise of eminent and good men is one of the highest displays of a supreme Providence,

for they always appear at periods, when there is a work prepared for them to do, for the honor of GOD and the good of the world, and at no other times; so that we may consider their formation and introduction to the scenes of action, their good lives and their great actions, evidential of a SUPREME BEING, of the stability of his counsels and the irresistible energy of his government.

Divine wisdom, in the provision of means and instruments, always hath regard to the magnitude of the work that is to be done by them in the world, under the direction of his providence. To accomplish a great work in the earth he maketh his own instruments great, either thro uncommon natural endowments, assisted by a series of propitious providences; or by a supernatural aid evidencing their commission and the presence of GOD with them in discharging some important trust, or in both of those ways at the same time. MOSES, the Father, Lawgiver, and Commander of Israel was great, in the sight of Israel his people, and in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants their enemies, both by uncommon natural endowments and by supernatural aid. The FATHER of his Country, for whose decease we mourn before the LORD this day, was made great in the sight of his people, and of all their enemies, by his eminent natural endowments, which GOD was pleased to aid by a se,

ries of propitious providences, for the salvation and good government of his country.

When we see remarkable instruments of providence coming into action, it indicates an interesting period in that scheme of divine counsel, which will be forever unfolding ; and when such instruments of blessing to mankind are withdrawn by the power which raised them up, it becomes cause for public mourning and fear ; cause for mourning, for every good man will regret the departure of virtue from the earth ; cause of fear, for we are told that the righteous are taken from the evil to come, and that while they live, God will spare an ungrateful people from judgments, for their sakes.

When a MOSES, a CYRUS, and a WASHINGTON were brought on the stage of action, it was to effect changes in the state of mankind, favorable to religion and civil rights, which could not have been done, in the manner that divine counsel chose to execute, under the auspices of common characters, nor even of great men, as greatness is usually estimated in this imperfect world. These actors in the scenes of the world, were specially raised up, and guided by an infinite God, to achieve things which will ever make them celebrated in the history of mankind and of the church.

Much honor is due to them as instruments of Almighty goodness. Let their virtues—their love and friendship to human nature—their justice—their firmness in holding the sword of the LORD—and their political eminence as rulers and lawgivers; let these be admired and remain perpetual examples to such as wish to be on GOD'S side; but let the glory of fashioning them from the womb, of girding them to lead his armies, of inspiring them to give laws to nations or creating new commonwealths, and of enabling them to die great as they had lived; let the glory of these things be given to GOD.

It can be no glory to a man, either living or departed, to say that the great things he hath done for his country, either by his sword or sceptre, were done without a divine aid; for all considerate persons would know it to be a false eulogy. Even infidels, in the midst of their vain pretensions, know there is a divine providence; and in the profane words they utter on this subject, they speak the wishes of their hearts, and not the dictates of their consciences and of their better understandings. Such men are like actors in a farce, saying that which they know to be untrue, and it is a false complaisance to suppose they may be honest; for it is very evident they dare not trust their own honesty, when danger and death approach them.



The highest honor which we can give to mortals, is to say, that the infinite Author of life, power and wisdom, made them greater and more virtuous than other men, inspired them with talents above their brethren, and filled them with a rare understanding, to do things for the glory of God and the good of mankind, which were not permitted to others.—Many have made a conspicuous figure for a short season and within national limits, who were neither great nor good ; but death is written on the glory of such, by the pen of future historians, nor is it their privilege to live in the affections of mankind, or to be held up as examples for forming the morals of the world. Their praise rested in adventitious circumstances found in the corruption of courts, and an era of false opinions, and was never spoken by plain and good men, who were not poisoned by sensuality and the expectations of unprincipled ambition ; but the merits of great and good men, are seen by persons of every description. The peasant descries them as soon as the man of letters.—They are more admired by the virtuous yeomanry of a country, than by the gay circle who bow and flatter to make themselves noticed.

Such instruments of God's goodness to men, have a divine impression on their character, seen by all virtuous people—all look to them as

being, under GOD, fathers, defenders in war, and rulers in peace. Such was MOSES to the Hebrews, and such was WASHINGTON to us. If any expect me this day to draw his character with precision, let me beg such to recollect that they are expecting an impossibility, and that it is as much beyond me to do this as it is to be such a man as he was. All will allow, that he was formed by the providence of GOD, to walk in a path where other men cannot guide their steps, and to be an eminent agent in the formation of a new empire, which is to be conspicuous in the future history of mankind; but what it is to be such an instrument of the infinite Ruler, what divine energies meet in originally forming and providentially guiding, and how those energies were consciously felt and exerted by the recipient, certainly is not for me to tell and for but few of mankind to conceive.

MOSES was formed to rescue the ancient and eastern Israel from bondage, and after they were rescued to form their civil, military and religious state, and be an instrument of delivering the moral law to mankind in a new manner; and he was, in every respect, perfected for the office to which heaven designed him.

WASHINGTON was formed to rescue from bondage the modern and western Israel of the LORD, and after they were saved from foreign enemies

by his sword, to save them, a second time, from destruction by themselves ; from the miseries of anarchy ; and to bring them into a state of government, whereby they might be preserved from devouring one another, and being devoured by the whole earth. These were great objects in the divine government, and worthy of that display of his sufficiency, which was made in the provision of instruments. The glory of furnishing protectors must belong to God, and if the people who have been saved are pious, they will praise him for the means of executing his most gracious counsel. The formation of great characters, for the good of mankind, is really an exhibition of GOD'S providential efficiency, and is observed by the pious as a display of himself, thro the instrumentality of means made for his own glory. Their progress and their works thro life are the unfolding of his gracious counsels, and their exit from time is to be marked as a temporary withdrawalment of the remarkable energies of divine providence, in favor of those who have been his care. For this reason, the whole congregation of Israel mourned thirty days when MOSES died ; and for the same reason the American Israel mourn when WASHINGTON dies.

We are not to think, that the LORD can give counsel and preserve, only by those who have been great instruments of salvation ; nor are we

to distrust a future divine care ; or to suppose that he will not raise up instruments according to the day and exigencies in which they have to act ; but still the withdrawment of so great a benefactor, under existing circumstances, is to be devoutly and penitentially noticed as a divine frown ; especially when we consider the evidence that he was remarkably formed to be the father and deliverer of his country. None who have considered the American revolution with its subsequent events and the state of our country, can deny this ; nor can they doubt the evidence of a most wonderful interposition of heaven, in the formation and continuance of one so fitted to supply our great national wants.

2. There are two kinds of evidence by which great and good men are clearly commissioned from on high, to act a conspicuous part, under GOD, in his government of the world. The first is, supernatural works which evidence them to be immediate organs of divine power and truth speaking to men. The second, is uncommon natural talents and moral integrity, accompanied with fit opportunities for their exertion. In the case of MOSES, both these evidences were united to answer particular purposes in the divine government of the world, at that period of time.

His natural abilities and moral attainments were great, and continued to the end of his life ;

for when he died an old man, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. He was skilled in the learning of the world, and especially in the wisdom of that people, whom he was designed by the power of God to overcome. By a special providence, he was brought into a state of power and riches, and reputedly the son of Pharaoh's daughter, that having had an experimental taste of worldly wealth and pleasure, and found its vanity compared with the delights of moral and pious integrity, he might not be bribed from his duty by any worldly overture, when he came to a state of confidential trust.

Whoever reads his history as a lawgiver and military leader, considering the condition of the world in those ages when he acted, must be convinced that he was a great and good man, even apart from those supernatural aids, which he received to evidence his appointment and authority from heaven, and that he had that uncommon genius and self-command which all can see and admire, but only a rare few can imitate in the science and practice of legislation and government.

Also, he was a good man, fearing the providence and adoring the holiness of the God of Israel. If he had not been possessed of religious rectitude; neither great natural talents, nor acquired attainments, nor supernatural aid could

have given him so venerable an appearance in the eyes of his people, and sanctified their judgment in the opinion of all posterity. At the head of the LORD's Israel he was a meek man, and humble in the midst of greatness. He esteemed himself one among many brethren and citizens, and relying on a divine providence to lead him and the people to whom his life was consecrated, he was never forsaken, but witnessed a gracious presence thro his whole administration.

To the evidence that he was divinely commissioned, which arose from great natural talents and uncommon piety, we may add the supernatural works he was enabled to perform, and the revelations which were made to him. To learn the reason, why these additional and great evidences of the divine presence were given to MOSES, we must consider the extent of his commission. The flood had once cleansed the world of idolatry, but at the time of this great prophet, the nations in their new dispersion had forgotten the LORD, and the worship of idols had become almost universal. The people of Israel, who were descendants of Abraham, were designed to be depositaries of a written law of religion, and the works of providence, which regarded them and their enemies, were intended to show that their LORD JEHOVAH, was the GOD of the whole earth.

These intentions of heaven were foretold to their fathers, and to accomplish the divine promise it was necessary a character like MOSES should be raised up, who, being mighty in word and deed, should confound the idolizing nations, so that the world might look upon him and see that his LORD was the true GOD. Also, that no other ruler of men had been like unto him, in all the signs and wonders which he was sent to do, and in all that mighty hand and all that terror which he shewed in the fight of Israel and their enemies. This was the reason for a supernatural evidence of his divine commission being added to those rare talents and piety, which he possessed in common with other great and good men, who were made by GOD, in their respective times, to honor his name and bless mankind.

3. At other times GOD hath raised up his eminent servants and sent them abroad into the world, without this supernatural evidence of their commission from him; and indeed this hath been his usual manner in providential government. But in all such cases, there hath been to the considerate observer, sufficient notices of GOD's special providence, in forming his instruments and guiding and making them successful in his hand, to execute the counsels of his will. The production of rare talents at a time when they are needed to execute the benevolent purposes of

Providence, and preparing the way for their exertion, is a sufficient evidence that GOD is with the actor. In this part of my discourse I shall pass over many instances of the truth of this doctrine—many eventful epochs in the history of the world and the church—many great characters in the cabinet, in the temple of the LORD and in the field, who were raised by the almighty providence of GOD, at fit times to execute his pre-determined counsels for the benefit of men; and I shall come down to our own times and the occasion which hath gathered us before the LORD, the death of General WASHINGTON. Among modern characters there hath been none to whom the words of our text would more pertinently apply. He was very great, both in the fight of his own people, and in the fight of all their enemies; nor at the time of his death, was his eye dim, nor his natural force abated. As thro his life, so at the time of his death, circumstances seem to have been specially ordered by divine providence to hide human weakness, and make him an extraordinary example to men, in fortitude and in all the moral virtues. The common age of man had not in him, impaired a great understanding, nor any of those energies which decide in the cabinet or execute in the field.

THIS GREAT MAN WAS AN AMERICAN BY BIRTH, and the country raised by his sword into



independence, and which he afterwards governed as supreme magistrate, gave him the political and moral sentiments, which made him illustrious in scenes of action. He early commenced the life of a soldier, and while a young officer, Monongahela witnessed, and Britons owned the talents of the young American, in saving from slaughter the remains of an army sufficiently humbled by savage fury and policy. Even, at that time, the talents of the youth caused a prediction that he would be the saviour of his country, but little was it conjectured how the prediction would be fulfilled.\*

It certainly cannot be expected of me, on this occasion, particularly to recite the events which have made him beloved by his country, and owned as their preserver, under the providence of God, who girded him for the field, and filled him with the spirit of understanding in all national concerns. To make such a recital requires all the volumes, which have been, and the more

\* In a note to a sermon preached by that eminent servant of CHRIST, President DAVIES, before Capt. Overton's independent company of volunteers, raised in Hanover county, Virginia, Aug. 17, 1755, entitled, "*Religion and Patriotism the constituents of a good soldier,*" as an example of this character, the author says, "As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Col. WASHINGTON, whom I cannot but hope providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service to his country." Whoever reads this must be convinced that there were early presages of that great and good character, which General WASHINGTON hath since displayed, and that his greatness did not arise from a series of accidental events. The man WASHINGTON was great in his youth, and prepared by almighty Providence to protect the American state and church.

numerous ones which will be written on this great subject.—It must suffice for me to say, that **General WASHINGTON** was the point of strength around whom the political fathers and the military defenders of this country have rallied, and where they reposed their earthly confidence, from the moment a revolution was contemplated, as the only possible means of avoiding foreign oppression, down to the present time. In a period of almost thirty years, we have seen many changes, many dangers from within and without, from foreign artifice and internal folly and caprice; and during the whole of this term, **WASHINGTON** has been the name, which would raise a martial spirit and point its energies by the waving of his sword; or sooth the multitude to peace, quietness and subordination, as his voice and pen advised.—These influential energies of the man, were not confined to the uninformed multitude only; for they had as much impression on deliberating senates, as on armed squadrons;—he was as much the angel of peace as of war;—as much respected, as deeply revered in the political cabinet for a luminous coolness of disposition, whereby party jealousy became enlightened and ashamed of itself, as he was for a coolness of command, in the dreadful moment, when empires hung suspended on the fate of battle.—His opinions became the opinions of the public body, and every man was pleased with himself when he found he thought like **WASHINGTON**.

Our revolutionary war began suddenly, when the country was wholly unorganized in every department, that was necessary to maintain and enjoy an independent state among the nations. There was passion enough, among all orders of men ; but passion can endure only for a moment, and there is no safety in its dictates.

It was General WASHINGTON who came coolly to the scene of action, under a mighty impression of the greatness of the labor to which he had permitted himself to be proclaimed, and for which, thro the assistance of GOD, he was found able both in word and in deed. He ordained system—induced regularity—was found capable of reducing a half-armed multitude to military bravery and obedience, and for a long time had apparently to create the means, from day to day, by which he defended his country.

It since appears, that while doing this in camp, his pen was the organ of wisdom and of a persevering firmness to the councils of the union and of the several states ; and that the great men, who shone like stars of the first magnitude, in the several parts of the American hemisphere where GOD had placed them, shone brighter for their communication with him.—His name soon became revered by our enemies, and wherever they heard of him, they joined the apprehension of a senate and host. His name and the fear of him, and of

a few tried men and soldiers, who were the heads of military departments and in the line of actual service, often shielded the country against mighty hosts, and finally saved the commonwealth and made it independent.

The fame even of historians will be eternized, in relating how he with the band of his brother officers, and a patient, persevering, gallant army under them, vindicated the foundation of American empire, and then retired into the class of peaceful citizens, to eat the hard-earned, and in many instances, scanty bread of repose.

General WASHINGTON was formed and placed, in every respect, by the hand of Providence to perform the duty determined for him by infinite wisdom. He was skilled, by an early education, in human science. He expressed on all fit occasions, a reverence of God, and his governing providence in all the events of individual life and of empire, and resorted to the throne of grace and called on those around him to do the same when danger threatened, or when success claimed his praise. He had a luminous understanding—a mind above the ruffle of passion—was as far from the gasconade of mock heroism as he was from a servile fear of men and danger. Nothing was too small to call his attention, if it regarded the public good; at the same time he was naturally formed to look on great objects,

and survey in one comprehensive view, an empire in all its civil and military interests.—He seemed intuitively to look thro men, and know the extent of their capacities to understand, and their abilities for exertion, and from this it came that the heads of departments thro his advice, were filled in general with such extraordinary integrity and talents for exertion; and this was one circumstance which essentially conduced to American triumph.—If the created honors, which are given by crowns and royal nations could have bribed him, many a time he would have been stolen from us; but he esteemed it the greatest honor, to be the defence of a free people. American freedom, and independence were written on his heart, and he importunately breathed out a desire for them in all his devotions to heaven. Under the auspices of this great warrior, who was formed by the providence of God to defend his country, the war was ended, and America ranked among the nations. He who might have been a monarch, retired to his own Vernon, unclothed of all authority, to enjoy the blifs of being a free private citizen. This was a strange sight, and gave a new triumph to human virtue—a triumph that hath never been exceeded in the history of the world, except it was by his second recess, which was from the presidency of the United States.

After the revolutionary war was ended, experience soon taught that freedom cannot sub-

first without government. Anarchy became more dangerous than Britain with all her hosts had been before, and we were near despair. The impressive feelings of danger, again led the people to ask the aid of General WASHINGTON, and he greatly assisted in forming a constitution which we hope will be perpetual. By the voice of the people, he became once and again the President of the union, and continued thus until, in his opinion, the complete organization of the civil state, permitted him to retire a second time into private life, giving in all respects a new example to men and the world, that a virtuous mind finds its highest delights, in the enjoyments of solitude and in beholding others happy.

A third time danger menaced his country—a third time his country called—he heard his fellow-citizens and his children and took his sword, and bid them trust in God, and keep his laws, and the ordinances of a good government and they should be safe. When lo! the experiment became too great for humanity to exhibit any longer, and he who rules the universe, and hath great men and nations in his hand hath removed him by death.

Do not all our civil rulers say, Know ye not that a great man and a prince hath died in Israel to day.—Do not all the pious look after him heavenward, and say, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

—Ye rulers of the civil state, ye defenders of the land, know ye, that it will be no evidence against the firmness of your minds to weep this day. Ye young defenders of your country; ye virgins the offspring of those who fought the American battles, weep with your parents.

Concerning the final exit of our great and departed friend, private information thus says, That he died with one days illness, “that his  
“ great and good mind, remained unhurt and  
“ unclouded thro the closing scene, that he ex-  
“ pressed his sense of its near approach, and  
“ said it had no terrors for him.” Thus may all who have served under him, and all the people of the LORD die.

I have only a word more to say to you my brethren, by way of improvement.

1st. Let us praise and adore the providence of GOD, for raising up such an instrument to save this country from oppression. It was the work of GOD's most gracious providence, and marvellous in our eyes; let us now with reverence adore the sovereignty, which hath withdrawn the gift. Let us remember to adore that Providence which our departed FATHER adored, and taught us to trust. Let us keep far away from those principles of infidelity and atheism which he abhorred, and which in the present æra of nations, is both the cause and the means, whereby a holy GOD is punishing an ungrateful world.

2ndly. Let us seek that public spirit in our feelings and practice, which guided him, so honorably thro life and brought him to so peaceful an end. You my hearers, are the most of you private men, but if you fear GOD ; if you honor his government, and keep his precepts ; if you love the state and continue to maintain a righteous government, you may die unclouded, and say death has no terrors for you.

3dly. Under this bereaving event, there are but two grounds of consolation remain for us ; the LORD who hath been our GOD, and the defender of our country is still on the throne ; and he hath prepared an ADAMS to succeed our WASHINGTON ; for we already see the spirit of ELIJAH resting on ELISHA.

4thly. Let us ever remember the political opinions of our deceased father. He was an American both in principle and feeling, as well as by birth. While he loved all men, and respected the rights of all nations, his most ardent affection was for the household of his country. And as his enlightened life drew towards a close, he had a most deep sense, that the people whom he had saved by his sword, could be preserved in future prosperity, only by a firm adherence to the principles of their own government, and the religion of their fathers.

May the LORD be with the American states to preserve them. AMEN.



## SKETCHES OF THE LIFE OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.

**G**EORGE WASHINGTON was born on the 11th of February A. D. 1732 O. S. His person was considerably above the middle size, but of a dignified and graceful form. His countenance exhibited strong marks of that fortitude and wisdom which always shone in his character; and at once spoke the hero and the man. At an early period of life, he was thought worthy of the confidence of his native state, and while only twenty-one years of age was, at his own request, sent on a difficult and important mission. During the dispute which originated the war which concluded in 1763, the French, pretending to claim the territory in the vicinity of the river Ohio, committed many acts of hostility and violence upon the British subjects by erecting forts in their dominions, and seizing their persons and sending them prisoners to Canada. Complaints being made to the governor of Virginia of these outrages, he determined to send some suitable person to the French commandant near the Ohio, to demand of him the reason of his conduct, and insist upon his evacuating the fort lately built in that quarter. General WASHINGTON, then being a major, offered his service, which was thankfully accepted. The distance to be travelled was more than 400 miles, and one half of the rout lay through a wilderness, inhabited only by savages. Taking provision on his back, he set out, attended by a single companion. When he arrived and delivered his message, the officer refused to comply with the demand, and claimed the whole country as belonging to the king his master.

The Ohio company could not brook this disappointment of their hopes, and prevailed on the British government to instruct the colonies to oppose with arms these encroachments on their territory. In the year 1754 Virginia sent Col. WASHINGTON with the command of 300 men towards the Ohio. An engagement between them and a party of the French took place, in which the latter were defeated. In consequence of this event, the commandant of the French marched against Col. WASHINGTON with 900 men, partly Indians, and attacked him. He made a brave defence, behind a small unfinished entrenchment, which he called fort Necessity, and obliged the French officer to grant him honorable terms of capitulation.

The hostile conduct of the French produced, both in England and America, the resolution of driving them out of the whole territory claimed by the English. General Braddock was accordingly ordered from Ireland to Virginia with two regiments, and was there joined by as many Americans as made in the whole 2200 men. General Braddock was a brave man, but with a supercilious contempt of the Americans, he greatly slighted the Virginia officers and men. Col. WASHINGTON who then com-

manded the Virginia troops, begged his permission to march before him and with the Americans, who were acquainted with that kind of service, scour the woods ; but was refused. The General pushed on incautiously with 1400 men, and fell into an ambuscade of French and Indians, by whom he was defeated and mortally wounded on the 9th day of June 1755. The British were thrown into confusion, but the Americans more accustomed to savage warfare, were not much disconcerted. They continued unbroken under Col. WASHINGTON, and by covering the retreat of the British, prevented their being entirely cut off. Ever since this battle was fought, General WASHINGTON has had the credit of saving the remains of that unfortunate corps by his masterly address and good conduct.

After the peace of Paris, in 1763, Gen. WASHINGTON retired to his estate, where with great industry and success he pursued the arts of peace. Since this time there seems to be no historical monument of his public life until he was returned a delegate from the state of Virginia to the memorable congress of 1774. This venerable band of patriots and statesmen might glory in reckoning among their number the sage and hero of America.

On the 15th day of June 1775, he was unanimously chosen, by the continental congress, to fill the important and dangerous station of commander in chief of the forces raised, or to be raised for the defence of American Liberty. His election presented the uncommon spectacle of a man raised to the highest honors his country could bestow, without exciting either competition or envy. On the day following, the President of Congress announced to General WASHINGTON his appointment ; to which he, standing in his place, replied—

“ Mr. President,

“ Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness, that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust : however, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

“ But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

“ As to pay, sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those I doubt not they will discharge, and that is all I desire.”

To do justice to that part of the life of General WASHINGTON

which is included within the time of the American war, would require a detail of all the principal events which took place in that hard struggle for liberty, and would greatly exceed the limits of these sketches. The evacuation of Boston, the masterly retreat from Long-Island and New-York, crossing the North river and the retreat through New-Jersey, the brilliant coup-de-main at Trenton, the more splendid affair at Princeton, the battle of Germantown, the battle of Monmouth, the capture of Stoney-point, these are a few of the events which were directed by his wisdom, or effected by his arm; and are but resting places in his glorious career through this bloody conflict. During the progress of the war the confidence of the Congress was, on many occasions, manifested to him, by votes of thanks and applause, and by medals ordered to be presented to him in commemoration of particular instances of heroism and generalship. So great indeed was their trust in his abilities and virtue, that from time to time they increased his powers as commander in chief until he was little less than universal dictator.— In no instance can he be accused of abusing those powers; and the time arriving when they were no longer necessary for the public good, he cheerfully resigned them.

The event which finished the American war and added the last wreath to the brow of WASHINGTON, was the capture of Lord Cornwallis with 7000 British troops, at Yorktown in the month of October 1781. This success was gained by the immediate valor of the combined troops of America and France; but the wisdom of the plan and energy of the execution must be attributed to him. On this triumphant occasion his heart was filled with joy and gratitude to heaven for his wonderful success. A short extract from his orders on this great day, will evince that amidst all his prosperity, he was not unmindful of that God whose directing hand had pointed out to him the path of glory. “ Divine service shall be performed to-morrow in all the brigades and divisions. The commander in chief, recommends that all the troops that are not upon duty, do assist at it with a serious deportment and that sensibility of heart, which the recollection of the surprising and particular interposition of Divine Providence in our favor claims.”

Every one knows that towards the close of the war our troops were unpaid and the credit of the United States at its lowest ebb. At this period an attempt was made to inflame the minds of the officers and soldiers, by a seditious and artful publication, inviting them while they had arms in their hands, to redress their own grievances. Perhaps in no period of the war was the conduct of the commander in chief, so politic, so magnanimous, so worthy of himself, as at this interesting and alarming crisis. No sooner were these mutinous and inflammatory papers scattered through the camp; than the General convened the officers together, and in a speech well calculated to calm their minds, he

pledged himself to use all his faculties and influence in their favour, and urged them to rely on the future justice of their country. He conjured them "as they valued their honor, as they respected the rights of humanity and as they regarded the military and national character of America, to express their utmost detestation of the man, who was attempting to open the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluge their rising empire with blood." His attempt was successful; and the officers and soldiers returned to their duty and consented to wait for the tardy justice of their country.

At the return of peace, General WASHINGTON repaired to Annapolis, where Congress was in session, for the purpose of resigning his command. The 23d day of December 1783, was fixed for the ceremony of his resignation. He attended Congress on the day with many distinguished persons, where he addressed the president in the following speech:

"Mr. President,

"The great events on which my resignation depended, having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself before them to surrender into their hands, the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country.

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

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

"While I repeat my obligations to the army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge, in this place, the peculiar services, and distinguished merits of the persons who have been attached to my person during the war: it was impossible the choice of confidential officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate; permit me, Sir, to recommend in particular those who have continued in the service to the present moment, as worthy of the favorable notice and patronage of Congress.

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

"Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action; and bidding an affectionate farewell

to this august body, under whose orders I have long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

From this time General WASHINGTON resided at his retreat at Mount Vernon, until the deranged state of our public affairs, and the total inefficiency of our confederation, had convinced the leading characters of our nation that a new form of government was necessary. At this time a convention was called, which met in Philadelphia in the year 1787. To this convention General WASHINGTON was sent as a delegate from the state of Virginia, and was chosen their President during the term of their session.

In the year 1789, he was unanimously chosen President of the United States. No sooner was he informed that he was again called to exchange his happy retirement for the stormy scenes of public life, than he prepared to meet the wishes of his country; and in a few days arrived at New-York. Here he accepted his appointment of President of the United States, and informed both houses of Congress, that he should decline any compensation for his services—in the following manner; "When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline as inapplicable to myself, any share in the personal emoluments which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the executive department; and must accordingly pray that pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed, may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures, as the public good may be thought to require."

In the year 1793 the time for which his first appointment was made being expired, he was again elected; and having a second time officiated in the character of President of the United States, he chose to retire from the public scene and spend the remainder of his days in rural quiet and domestic tranquillity. He published his intention in an address to the people of the United States, which, while it breathes the pure spirit of benevolence and patriotism, recommends to them in the most winning and impressive language the cause of virtue and religion.

After his farewell for a second time, to all public honors, he retired to his favorite seat at Mount Vernon, where he resided in the character of a private citizen, until the prospect of a rupture with France turned the eyes of the government towards him as their only refuge during the impending storm. His cheerful acquiescence in accepting the office of Lieutenant-General of the American forces, at a time when his age and former services might have justified a refusal, will long be remembered with sentiments of affection and gratitude, by a generous people.