Wythe Mentions in Tazewell

Pg. 70

“There [Williamsburg] he [John Tazewell] finished his legal education [in Williamsburg], and having obtained a license, he commenced the practice of the law in that vicinity. He attained eminence as a lawyer, and enjoyed the most lucrative practice of any one ^then at the bar, probably. At the commencement of the Revolution, John Tazewell succeeded Mr. Wythe as Clerk of the House of Burgesses.”

Pg. 83

“His [Henry Tazewell’s] license [to practice law] was granted by John Randolph the Attorney General and by George Wythe esq: each of them filling a high place at the bar of the old General Court, by which Court they had been appointed examiners, in pursuance of the Act of Assembly, upon this subject, then in force.”

Pg. 93

“The superior Courts of Virginia too at this time presented the fairest field for the advancement of a young practitioner which could be desired. The crowd of old and eminent counsel who formerly thronged to those bars was all (with a very few exceptions indeed) removed and occupied in other pursuits. Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Mason, and Nicholas, had been elevated to the bench, Henry had been made governor and Jefferson was in Congress.”

Pg. 95

“To have acquired and maintained such a rank as he [Henry Tazewell] held amongst such competitors and especially with such judges as Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Lyons and Waller, who then presided in these courts, is sufficient evidence of the legal acquirements of Henry Tazewell.”

Pg. 97 – 99

[An old man named Charles Lewis, a freeholder, got up to speak at the York election, as to whether the proposed Constitution should be adopted, he said:]

“That having no opinion himself [Charles Lewis] upon this question it had occurred to him as improper to express one, by voting in favor of any of the candidates, who had already formed and declared a decided resolution as to the course they should pursue if elected: For his part, wanting information as he did, he could reconcile it to himself, to vote for any, to whom having decided already, further information would be of no advantage. That if the question was, who [page ripped] he should depute for him to decided unknown and unforeseen matters, he [page ripped] would unquestionably vote for the persons to whom he had addressed himself; for as to such subjects, their minds were as impartial as his own, and he had unlimited confidence (which experience had taught him was well merited) in their judgements, when exercised with such impartiality. But as there was now a single and known proposition to be settled, which all concurred in considering, as the most important of any that had ever come before the people, since the question of Independence, he thought it wrong to prejudge such a question, when it had not been fully examined. Hence, he had made up his mind, to vote in favor of persons who as far as he knew had formed no opinion as yet, who were still open to conviction, and unpledged to support any side, and who should be well qualified to determine wisely, what they were prepared to examine impartially. These reflections had called to his recollection his two fellow citizens George Wythe, and ^John ~~James~~ Blair; and he hoped his friends would excuse him, if upon this occasion he directed the sheriff to record his vote in favour of these distinguished patriots, whose age and retirement by keeping them aloof from the warm conflict that had been”

[Page break to page 98]

“carrying on, had them still to be impartial, and whose long experience, and well approved past services, while they gave assurance of their wisdom, also preferred strong claims to the gratitude of their country. Scarcely were these words uttered by Lewis, when General Nelson, springing from the bench, where he had taken a seat advanced to him, and seizing him by the hand, thanked him in the warmest terms for what he had said and done; adding that though Mr. Lewis had got the start of him in the good race then to be won, he would suffer no other man to precede him in the support of Mr. Wythe and Mr. Blair, whose merit none knew better than himself. He therefore directed the sheriff to record his vote in favor of these gentlemen and soliciting all those who might have come to the Courthouse intending to vote for him, not to consider him a candidate, but to follow his example in supporting these persons. Mr. Prentis soon followed General Nelson in this course, and Mr. Wythe and Mr. Blair were elected by unanimous vote. When the election was over, General Nelson addressing the people observed that as they had elected these gentlemen without their knowledge, it would be well to complete they had so begun, and to secure the approbation of the persons elected, and their consent to serve. He therefore proposed, that they should proceed in a body from York to Williamsburg, and be themselves the bearers of their own request that the persons elected would accept their appointments. This proposition was carried by acclamation; and General Nelson placing himself at the head of his fellow-citizens, they moved in procession to Williamsburg, where upon their arrival they ranged themselves quietly in front of Mr. Wythe’s house and deputing their as their spokesman, he presented himself in their behalf to the old man, and announced what had occurred what had occurred.—^X When General Nelson entered the room, I was reciting a Greek lesson to Mr. Wythe, and never shall I forget the countenances of these two great men upon this occasion.— That of General Nelson was lighted up with the ^satisfaction which the consciesness of having willingly done a good deed never fails to inspires. His address was short and rapid, for his utterance was always quick. He remarked to Mr. Wythe, that altho’ he had not expected him to have seen him at the election that day, yet he regretted that he had not been there, for he would have seen exemplified very strongly the truth of a sentiment the conviction of a sentiment, which his whole life had manifested sufficiently, that the people were their own best governors, ‘True to this maxim the freeholders of York county, have this day unanimously elected you sir as one of their representatives in the next Convention. And as’”

[Page break to page 99]

“’they did ^this without consulting you, they have come themselves to state to you what they have done: and to solicit you to fulfil the truth they have thus sought to confer upon you They are now at your door, and have deputed me to make this communication in their behalf.’ Mr. Wythe who had arisen when General Neslon first entered the study, had listened to these words with that sort of impatient anxiety that is produced by the anticipation of hearing something interesting, but of what nature we cannot conjecture.— So soon as the communication was ended however he exclaimed, ‘At my door sir;’ and immediately quitting the study went to the front door. We all followed him, and when we joined him at the door, the loud shouts with which he had been received by the assembled multitude were still ringing. An hundred voices exclaimed at the same time, ‘Will you serve?’— We have elected you without your knowledge, will you serve us’ – Mr. Wythe was much agitated, every muscle of his face was in motion, and when the good old man standing on his steps, his bald head quite bare attempted to speak, tears flowed down his cheeks in copious streams, and he could utter incoherent sentences.— It was to me the most interesting scene I had ever witnessed and the swelling of my little heart was only relieved by a flood of tears also.— General Nelson seeing Mr. Wythe’s agitation, promptly observed, ‘My Dear Sir we prize you too highly to suffer you to expose yourself thus uncovered. Come into the house, and let me report your answer which I hope will accord with all our wishes.’ Mr. Wythe however was still unable to say more than— ‘Surely.’ ‘How can I refuse’.— ‘Yes I will do all my friends wish.’ Hearing which General Nelson immediately announced— ‘He will serve’ and bowing to Mr. Wythe left the house.— Again the shouts of multitude made the welkin roar and they passed respectfully by the door toward’s Mr. Blair’s. Mr. Wythe remained bowing most gracefully to the throng as it moved by him, and when they left retired to his own apartment, and was seen no more that day.”

Pg. 102

“In October 1788 a new organization of the judicial establishment of Virginia was created by the Assembly. At this time there was a single Court of Chancery, which consisted of three judges, Pendleton, Wythe, and Blair. The general Court was composed of five judges only, Carrington, Fleming, Lyons, Mercer, and Tazewell— And the Court of Admiralty of three Cary, Henry, and Tyler.— These eleven Judges constituted the Supreme Court of Appeals in which none of the Judges sat on the examinations of the decision of their own courts. The adoption of the new Federal Constitution, by transferring all Admiralty to the United States, would when this government went into operation, necessarily extinguish the state court of admiralty. A new arrangement therefore of the Court of Appeals was indispensable. ~~A supreme~~ A scheme of Courts of Assize had been adopted in 1784, but had been postponed from time to time in its ~~action~~ execution. As the project however required the agency of all the eleven judges of the Court of Appeals, whose numbers would be reduced to eight by the extinction of the Court of Admiralty, the modification of that scheme became also requisite. In this state of things the Assembly repealed the law establishing Courts of Assize, and passed the various acts altering the Court of Appeals, and General Court and creating District Courts. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Under the new system, the Court of Appeals was made a district Court and five judges were appointed to this Court exclusively. The High Court of Chancery remained as before but was to be held by a single judge only. The state was divided into five different Circuits each containing four districts and two judges of the General Court was assigned to each circuit, in all the districts of which Courts were to be held by the two judges, on certain appointed days twice ~~in~~ ^each year.

 In the designation of the Judges to these different courts Mr. Pendleton, and Mr. Blair were taken from the Court of Chancery, Mr. Carrington, Mr. Lyons, and Mr. Fleming, the senior judges of the General Court, were taken from that court and these five were made judges of the new Court of Appeals.— Mr. Wythe the other Judge of the Court of Chancery, preferred remaining in that Court, and was therefore made the sole Chancellor.”

Pg. 104

“While a member of the house of delegates in 1785 he [Henry Tazewell] was placed on the bench of the old general Court, of any reputation there who was ever made a judge, and the last judge of that court ever appointed. When the present General Court was created, in 1785, he was the second judge on its bench, and by the death of Judge Mercer very soon became its chief justice. And when in 1793 he was translated to the bench of the Court of Appeals, he was the last judge of the old general court, and the last chief justice of the new Court, who was so transferred. Up to this period the Assembly had always filled the bench of the Court of Appeals, by translating hither the senior Judges of the other courts. No departure from this rule had ever occurred except in the case of Mr. Wythe, who did not wish to quit his own court.”

Pg. 125 - 126

“I [L.W. Tazewell] will mention a circumstance that occurred about this time, which most probably had ^much influence ~~some effect~~ upon my future destiny. To give more celebrity to his establishment, it was a custom with Mr. Maury to have occasional public examinations of his scholars. These examinations were generally made by, and always in the presence of, the visitors, governors, and proffessors of William and Mary college, and any other distinguished gentlemen, who happened to be in Williamsburg at that time. Upon one of these occasions it fell to the lot of my class to be examined by the venerable and learned chancellor the late George Wythe. We had just begun the lives of Cornelius Nepos, and placing myself at the head of my class-fellows, I led them up to his chair, to recite their lesson from this work.— The recitation being finished, Mr. Wythe questioned us very particularly in passing and as to the subject matter of the life, a part of which we had just read — It was the life of Eumenes. To all his questions put to me I answered with a promptness, and accuracy which obviously pleased him very much; and I manifested such a perfect acquaintance with the portion of Grecian history connected with this biographical sketch, as to excite even his astonishment, for I had not then attained my tenth year. When the examinations were ended, he called me to him and in the presence of my tutor and all other gentlemen, extolled my exhibition in such flattering terms, that I was afterwards distinguished in the school, as one of its principal ornaments.— Some months after this, returning from school one evening to my grandfather I found him sitting with Mr. Wythe. They had been very intimate in their early days; and altho’ my grandfather never went out then and Mr. Wythe very rarely, yet he made it a point to call to see my grandfather one or twice every year, and to spend an afternoon with him. When I came in Mr. Wythe very immediately recognized me, and seeing my grandfather caress me as he did, he repeated to him with high eulogies the occurrences of my examination. Pleased to hear this ^account (which I had ~~account which I h~~ before told him) from Mr. Wythe himself, my grandfather requested him to examine me again; and he did so. I was then reading Caeser’s Commentaries, and Mr. Wythe taking the book from me, made me recite several passages and to accompany my recitation with and account of the circumstance introductory to the passages read. To these my grandfather added many questions relating to this portion of the Roman History and to ancient Geography of the Roman Empire at that time. I answered all the questions, and performed all that was required of me so entirely to Mr. Wythe’s satisfaction, that he”

[Page break to 126]

“observed to my grandfather with an appearance of great earnestness ‘Mr. Waller this is a very clever boy, and when he has advanced a little further, you must let me have him.’ To this the good old man replied with much feeling ‘George (for by this familiar appellation he always spoke to Mr. Wythe) this boy is the sole companion of my old age and the principal comfort. I feel that I cannot part with him while I live; but when I die, if you will take him under your charge, I shall consider it as the greatest and highest favour you can confer on each of us.’ Mr. Wythe thereupon promptly answered that he would do so; and the conversation between the old gentlemen was turned to other subjects. I was too young then in 1785 — to think of what was to happen to me thereafter.”

Pg. 127 --137

“Mr. Murray [sic] removed from Williamsburg, having entered into holy”

[Page break to 128]

“orders, in the summer of 1786, and after his removal I [L.W. Tazewell] was left entirely to myself, to do as I pleased, for my father was often from home, and while there was too actively employed to attend much to me. Altho’ not vicious, yet I became very idle and scarcely ever opened a book. I continued thus for some months, when one day meeting Mr. Wythe in the street, he immediately accosted me, and carried me to his house. There he questioned me very closely as to my situation and occupation, and examined me very closely as to my studies. He made me translate for him an ode of Horace and some lines in Homer. I did not acquit myself as well as I had formerly done, but he seemed satisfied with my performance, which was without any previous preparation. My father was then in Richmond, but the day after his return Mr. Wythe called to see him, and stating to him what had passed between my grandfather and himself some time before, and what had taken place between him and myself during my father’s absence, he very kindly offered to take me under his charge. My father was delighted at this unexpected overture, to which he very willingly assented and the very next day I was sent to attend Mr. Wythe, who resided but a short distance from our house.

Before I proceed to give any further account of myself, let me make you ^somewhat acquainted with this great and good man, under whose tuition I passed several of the succeeding years of my life. Mr. Wythe was a native of the county of Elizabeth City. I have often heard him say that he was intirely indebted to his mother for his early education. She was an extraordinary wom[an] in some respects, and having added to her other acquirements a knowledge of the Latin language, she was the sole instructress of her son in this also. He was very studious and industrious, and as he grew up, so much improved upon this good foundation his mother had laid, that he made himself in time one of the best Latin scholars in America. Long after he had attained manhood, and had been engaged extensively in the practice of the Law, he determined to teach himself Greek and he entered upon and prosecuted this task with so much zeal, that in a few years he made himself certainly the very best Greek scholar I have ever seen and such he was universally acknowledged to be. He afterwards in like manner acquired the French language, and became deeply versed in Algebra, Mathematics,”

[Page break to 129]

“and Natural Philosophy. He therefore may very properly considered as one of the ~~rarely~~ rare examples the world has ever produced of a man who by his own unaided efforts, has made himself a profound scholar. When he came to Williamsburg, and commenced the study of the law, under the direction of my grandfather Waller, who was ten years older than himself, and engaged at that time in its practice, Mr. Wythe by his unwearied industry, soon acquired a very extensive knowledge of this science, in all its branches and obtaining a licence, returned to his native county, where he commenced the practice of the law in about the year 1748. He was then elected a member of the house of ~~delegates~~ Burgesses, and continued to represent the County of Elizabeth City in that body for many successive years.

 Very soon after he commenced the practice of the law, he acquired so much distinction in his profession, that he relinquished it in the inferior courts, and took his stand at the bar of the General Court, where all the eminent Counsellors of Virginia were then ^collected ~~essembled~~. At this bar, his indefatigable industry, extensive knowledge, and profound research, speedily acquired for him very high and well merited distinction; and he ascended to its highest rank, in which he found no other equal competitor, than the late venerated Edmund Pendleton, who was his senior by some years.

 It would be odious to draw a comparison between these two great men, both of whom stood so high and deserved so much. Honourable rivals for public distinction during many years, they were unlike in so many respects that no fair parallel could be drawn between them. The address of Mr. Pendleton was most popular, and his manners more courtly than those of Mr. Wythe, whose fondness for study kept him much secluded from general observation, and whose excessive modesty concealed much of his merit even in this respect. For the manners of Mr. Wythe were very polished indeed, and full of dignity and grace. Mixing much more with the world, and more conversant with men than Mr. Wythe, Mr. Pendleton looked always to consequences. He therefore rarely made an enemy, but acquired the esteem of a very large circle of friends, who always sustained and supported him, and whim he in like manner upheld. While the stern integrity and unyielding firmness of Mr. Wythe’s character, carried him always straight to his object, so soon as he was convinced it was proper and”

[Page break to 130]

“in the pursuit of what he thought right, he was heedless and utterly indifferent ~~indiff~~ to after effects. This strong difference between the two was exemplified in their conduct and practice both at the bar and in the Assembly. Mr. Wythe would never engage in a cause which he thought wrong, and would often abandon his cases when he discovered they had not been fully represented to him; which Mr. P--[Pendleton], considering the subject more correctly, felt no scruple in exacting his professional powers for any client whom he had undertaken to represent, or in taking any cause which was presented to him. In the year 1766 when the enormous fraud committed by Speaker Robinson was detected, Mr. Pendleton whose patron and personal friend the Speaker was exerted his every power to ward off the blow which threatened him; but yet so conducted himself throughout the enquiry, that he was finally represented as one of its authors. If this had been Mr. Wythe’s situation, no consideration would have prevailed upon him to refrain~~in~~ from denouncing his very best friend, and from prosecuting him so far as his delinquency required.

From these different traits in their characters, it may readily inferred, that Mr. Pendleton was the more successful practitioner, although Mr. Wythe was considered as the better lawyer. And the former acquired with ease but retained with effort the high distinction to which he afterwards rose. When the Revolution came on they were both sound whigs, but they seem to have differed in this too as in most other respects; Mr. Pendleton yielding to the force of public opinion, was thus enabled in some degree to direct, what he could not control. He very ably assisted in effecting the Revolution in government, but strongly opposed, and to his efforts Virginia is strongly indebted for the prevention ^thus of ~~this~~ much revolution. ~~M~~~~r~~~~. Wythe~~ in society. Mr. Wythe on the contrary having once satisfied himself of the rights of the colonists, and of the usurpations of the mother country, laboured with all his soul to stimulate and prepare the public mind for a change; and not believing that a revolution in government could ever be perfectly achieved, unless a great change in society was previously effected, he would have gone all lengths ~~to~~ in uprooting the basis upon which society itself rested, rather than hazard the success of the scheme, he deemed so essential to the liberty of the people. While Mr. Pendleton calmly presided as chief of the Executive in the Committee of safety,”

[Page break to 131]

“Mr. Wythe altho’ then an old man, presented himself in his hunting shirt to Col. Innis proposing to enter the ranks of his detachment as a~~n~~ volunteer to fight the invading enemy. While the former yielded a reluctant assent to the policy which dictated a change in the system of entails then existing in the country, the latter was desirous to alter even the language of its people.

Both these great men pursued the same course, and successively filled almost every station of high distinction in the country. Mr. Pendleton was elected by the Convention (of which he was a member) to be one of the delegates of the first Congress, that assembled in Philadelphia in Sept. 1774. Upon the death of Mr. Randolph during the next year who had long presided both in the Assembly and Convention, the latter body then assembled in Richmond, chose Mr. Pendleton as their President and appointed Mr. Wythe to succeed him in Congress. In this situation he had a great share in preparing the declaration of independence, the production of his pupil~~s~~ and colleague~~s~~ Mr. Jefferson. When the new Government of Virginia went into operation in 1776, and the dissolution of the old government took place, a complete a complete revision and re modification of all the statutes became necessary. For this important duty Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Wythe were selected by the Assembly.-- The execution of this important task making it necessary for Mr. Wythe to relinquish his situation in Congress, and Mr. Pendleton having then retired from the Assembly, in 1777 Mr. Wythe was elected to succeed him as the Speaker of that body. And so soon as a new judiciary was created by ~~that body~~ the Legislature in the winter of 1777, Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Wythe, and Mr. Nicholas, were made Judges of the Court of Chancery.

While occupying this situation in the year 1786 Mr. Wythe was chosen by the Assembly one of the deputation from Virginia to the Convention, which the next year met in Philadelphia, and then formed the present constitution of the United States. He attended this Convention when it first met, but the illness of his wife during its session compelled him to return home, so that he was not present at its adoption by that body. Both Mr. Pendleton and himself however were elected members of the Virginia convention to whom this Constitution was submitted afterwards for ratification and each of them ably supported its adoption by this State. Mr. Pendleton was elected the President of this body, and Mr. Wythe presided over its deliberations, as Chairman”

[Page break to 132]

“of the Committee of the whole. When the Courts were re-organized in 1788 Mr. Pendleton was made the chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, ^and ~~which~~ and Mr. Wythe declining an appointment to that Court was made the sole chancellor of Virginia, in which situation he died about the year 1805. His death it was generally believed, was produced by poison, administered in his coffee, by a reprobate boy, relation of his, who he undertaken to educate, and who afterwards convicted of having committed many forgeries of chesques in his patrons name.

 Amongst many singularities in Mr. Wythe’s character, all of which were results of his pure philanthropy, the most remarkable was his passion (for it really deserved that name) in the instructing and aiding in ~~the instructing~~ the education of youth. The difficulties and embarrassments he had experienced in educating himself, if I may so say, made him not merely willing but desirous to smooth the path and assist the efforts of others in this pursuit. Mr. Jefferson was greatly indebted to him for the aid he rendered in improving and forming his mind; and there was no period of his life I believe after he attained ^to manhood, during which he did not surerintend the education of several young men. For this he would receive no compensation, and could expect no satisfaction but that springing from the consciousness of performing a good action. Wherever he saw a youth of any promise, who had made some progress in his studies, he was desirous to have him, to the end he might stimulate to greater exertion an enable him to reach a higher eminence than without his aid such a one would ever rise.

This disposition will explain the conversation he had with my grandfather relative to me in the year 1785, which I have formerly stated. Let me now return to my story.

In the autumn of 1786, I was placed as I have stated under the guidance of Mr. Wythe. I lived with my father, but attended Mr. Wythe daily; I was the youngest boy he had ever undertaken to instruct, and had no companion in my studies with him at that time. His mode of instruction was singular; and as everything connected with the life and opinions of this great and good man must be interesting, I will here describe it. I attended him”

[Page break to 133]

“every morning very early, and always found him waiting for me in his study by sunrise. When I entered the room, he immediately took from his well stored library some Greek ~~or Latin~~ book, to which any accidental circumstances first directed his attention. This was opened at random, and I was bid to recite the first passage that caught his eye. Although utterly unprepared for such a task, I was never permitted to have the assistance of a Lexicon or a grammar but whenever I was at a loss, he gave me the meaning of the word or structure of the sentence which had puzzled me, taking occasion to remark to me the particular structure of the language, the peculiarity of its syntax, or the diversities of its dialects. Whenever in the course of our reading any reference was made to the ancient manners, customs, laws, superstitions or history, of the Greeks, he asked me to explain the allusion, and when I failed to do so satisfactorily, (as was often the case,) he immediately gave ~~of~~ a full clear and complete account of the subject to which reference was so made. Having done so, I was bidden to remind him of it the next day, in order that we might then learn from some better source, whether his explanation was correct or not; and the difficulties I met with on one day, generally produced the subject of the lesson of the next.— This exercise continued until breakfast time, when I left him and returned home.— I returned again about noon, and always found him in his study as before. We then took some Latin author, and continued our Latin studies, in the manner I have above described as to the Greek, until about two o’clock when I again went home. In the afternoon I again came back about four o’clock when we amused ourselves until dark with working algebraic equations, or demonstrating Mathematical problems.— Our text books in both cases were in the French language to which resort was had that I might perfect myself in this language also while I was advancing in the studies whose subjects were so comm[on].

These evening occupations were ~~repair~~ occasionally varied, by employing me in reading to him detached parts of the best English authors either in verse or prose; and sometimes the periodical publications of the day-- and whenever these last were the subjects of our employment, my reading was often interrupted by some anecdote suggested by the matter read, referring to minor events, in the history of the country or the character of those who had formerly occupied a distinguished situation in it. Of such anecdotes the long life and particular situation of Mr. Wythe had supplied him with a stock”

[Page break to 134]

“almost inexhaustible, which he told in a manner calculated to excite much interest. This mode of instruction would have been a very good one if I had been older or somewhat more advanced than I then was, but in my situation it was objectionable in many respects. The difficulties I encountered were removed with so little effort on my part, that having no occasion for the exercise of my own strength of mind it did not increase as much as would probably have been the case, nor did my instruction take such deep root as if I had been made to exert my own powers more. The subjects of our studies were also often times beyond the comprehension of one so young as I then was (for I was only twelve years of age) and therefore did not excite my attention sufficiently— and the irregular course of our reading, was not well calculated to enable me to require much useful knowledge of the language, altho’ it gave me some instruction as to the subjects treated by the authors read.-- By the help of a very at[t]entive memory however, I acquired a great deal and some some very useful knowledge during this period of my life, the stock of which, the disposition I felt would I think much enlarged, provided my course of study had been more methodical and regular. But Mr. Wythe judged of me by himself I suppose, and therefore decided erroneously. He was a man however naturally endowed with great strength of mind, whose powers he had never called into exertion in this mode, until they were fully matured and ripened, whilst I was a boy of tender years whose intellect was just forming. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ In the mode I have just described passed away the first year I studied with Mr. Wythe. In the autumn of next year 1787 my father having purchased Kingsmill, and being about to remove there, and Mr. Wythe having lost his wife about this time, he proposed to my father that I should board with him.— This proposition was readily assented to by my father, and upon his removal from Williamsburg, I became an inmate of Mr. Wythe’s house. My course of study was the same as before, but having now the free use of his library at all times, and knowing generally what would be the subjects of our exercises the following day, I was enabled to prepare myself for them better than I had done before. And when I was disappointed in this calculation, I rarely found any difficulty in playing off upon him some little stratagem or other, by means of which, the authors and passages”

[Page break to 135]

“I had already examined the preceding day became the selected books for our next days reading. This previous preparation, and the benefitted I derived from uninterrupted intercourse with venerable tutor and from his instructive conversation made my progress and improvement much more rapid than it ^had ever ~~would have~~ been. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I now became a great favorite of my much respected master, and he proudly exhibited me at all times as a boy of great promise. Every foreigner or other gentleman of distinction who passed through Williamsburg, generally made it a point to pay their respects to this distinguished man, and very few of these were ever suffered to leave his house, without being made to witness some of my performances. About this time Mr. Wythe imported a very complete Electrical machine together with a very fine air pump and sundry other parts of philosophical apparatus. And when this arrived, most of our leisure moments were employed in making philosophical experiments, and ascertaining the causes of the effects produced. Several other young gentlemen were also taken by him as boarders, from whose society I likewise derived some information. So that this year passed away with me more profitably than even the preceding.

The experience of the year taught Mr. Wythe, what almost any other man than himself would have foreseen, that at his time of life in his situation, and with habits, the presence of a numerous family about him, must occasion much more trouble than he could sustain. The necessary domestic duties occupied so much of his time, broke in upon his pursuits, and interrupted even his business and his amusements. He was irritated and vexed by a thousand little occurrences he had never foreseen, and which any other would have guarded against. He could not bear and ought never to have subjected himself to any such burdens; He therefore ~~by~~ very properly decided to apply the only remedy, which was to break up his boarding establishment, and to live by himself. He could not forego the pleasure he derived from instructing others however; and in refusing to take any young gentlemen to live in his house he still expressed a wish however to continue his instruction to any such as would attend him for that purpose. Most of those who lived at a distance, did not do so afterwards, but I continued to attend him as I had done. So soon as I left the house of Mr. Wythe my father placed me with our friend Mr. John Wickham. I have mentioned this gentleman before. When hostilities ceased with”

[Page break to 136]

“Great Britain in 1782, he left Mr. Fanning in Greenville, and returned to New York. From thence he proceeded to Europe, and having travelled there awhile, came back to the United States, and visiting Virginia about the beginning of this year 1786, he then determined to study the law and to practice there. He accordingly commenced the study of the law under the direction of my father, and obtaining a licence, entered into the practice and fixed himself in Williamsburg, where he kept a bachelor’s house, at the time I am now speaking of — the autumn of 1778. I then went to live with him, and as he did not dine at home, I dined out, first at Judge Prentis’s, and afterwards with an old man by the name of Taliaferro, who resided near Mr. Wythe whom I continued to attend regularly as I had done previously. Deprived now of the use of Mr. Wythe’s valuable library for my preparatory studies, and losing much of the benefit I had derived from perpetual association with him, my improvement in some respects, was certainly not equal to what it had been during the past year; but I derived full compensation for this loss probably, in the society of my friend Mr. Wickham, and from my intercourse with two young gentleman of Petersburg, who now became scholars of Mr. Wythe also, and boarded near me. These young gentlemen, Charles Turnbull, and John Thompson, were both of the amiable and excellent boys, and the latter particularly was the most promising youth I have ever seen. He became highly distinguished afterwards as the author of the celebrated letters of Curtius while he was still quite young; and by his untimely death I have little doubt Virginia was deprived of one of her sons who had he been spared but a short time longer, would have been regarded as one of her brightest ornaments. Between these young gentlemen and myself a close intimacy soon commenced, and ever afterwards, continued. We became almost inseparable companions, and I derived very great advantage from my intercourse and conversation with them, engaged as they were in the same pursuits with myself.

Early in the year 1789 the re-organization of the Courts, which had then recently been effected by imposing upon Mr. Wythe exclusively, the whole duties of the Chancery court made it necessary for him to remove to Richmond where his court was held. He therefore broke up his establishment in ~~Richmond~~ ^Williamsburg, and fixed himself in Richmond, where he”

[Page break to 137]

“continued to reside until his death. When Mr. Wythe left Williamsburg, my father and Mr. Wickham concurring in the opinion that I was now sufficiently advanced to be placed at College, I was immediately entered a student of William and Mary— I continued to live with Mr. Wickham as before, but attended all the Prof~~f~~essor’s daily. When I entered College I had but just attained my fifteenth year, and as their courses were then were then half finished by the several professors, I did not derive much benefit from any of them save only the Mathematical professors with whom my previous studies under Mr. Wythe enabled me to keep up very well.—”