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BRADDOCK'S DEFEAT.

[The defeat of General Braddock on the banks of the Monongahela, in 1755, is one of the most memorable events in the annals of our American Colonies; and we may add, that the account of it belongs, in some respects, more particularly, to the history of our own State than to that of any other; as the expedition which led to it began its march from our territory, and was composed partly of our native forces; and as it was almost the first event that brought the gallantry and good conduct of our great general that was to be—the future leader of our revolutionary contest—into bright and prominent view. We submit, therefore, with great pleasure, the following illustrations of it, which we take, for the most part, from a magazine entitled the “Olden Time;” edited by Neville B. Craig, Esq., (Vol. 1, p. 64, &c.,) and which we think our readers will find highly interesting.]

We believe we might leave these papers to speak for themselves, and to tell their own tale, as they do indeed with sufficient spirit, and with a particularity of detail which puts us, as it were, on the scene, and in sight of the whole drama; but it may perhaps be better to introduce them with a more condensed account of the affair which we find in Marshall's History of the American Colonies, (p. 285, &c.,) and which runs as follows:]

of America; afterward to the King of France, to the Queen, and success to the arms of the combined army. Then is given sometimes what is called a sentiment; for example—“To our success with our enemies and the ladies!” “Success in war and love!”

I have *toasted* several times *with* Gen. Washington. On one occasion I proposed to him to drink to the Marquis de Lafayette, whom he looks upon as a son. He accepted with a smile of benevolence, and had the politeness to propose to me in return that of my father and wife.

M. Washington appears to me to keep up a perfect bearing towards the officers of his army; he treats them very politely, but they are far from growing familiar with him; they all wear, on the contrary, in presence of this General, an air of respect, confidence and admiration.

GEORGE WYTHER.

[We find the following letter from the late Mr. CLAY to B. B. Minor, Esq., of this city,—containing an interesting notice of the eminent patriot and judge, George Wythe, with a glance at his own early youth—in the Whig of May 18th, and readily transfer it to our more convenient pages to which it properly belongs.]

LETTER FROM HON. HENRY CLAY TO B. B. MINOR, ESQ.

ASHLAND, MAY 3, 1851.

My Dear Sir—I duly received your favor of the 21st ult., in which you inform me that one of the Richmond booksellers intends to publish a new edition of the Reports of the lamented Chancellor Wythe, and you express a wish that I would furnish a brief memoir of the illustrious author. It would be a most pleasing and grateful task to

comply with your request, if I possessed the requisite authentic materials, and the requisite capacity to prepare the work. But the first condition does not exist, and it is therefore unnecessary to dwell upon the second. My acquaintance with the Chancellor commenced in the year 1793, in my 16th year, when I was a clerk in the office of the court over which he presided, and when I think he must have passed the age of three score years and ten. I knew nothing personally of his career at the bar, of his ancestry, or of the part which he had taken in public affairs. I understood that he was born in Elizabeth City; that he was taught the Greek letters by his mother, and afterwards, by her assistance and by his own exertions, he became an accomplished Greek scholar. How he learned the Latin language I do not remember to have heard, but probably at William and Mary College, or at some other college in Lower Virginia. When I first knew him, his right hand had become so affected with rheumatism or gout, that it was with difficulty he could write his own name. Owing to that cause he engaged me to act as his amanuensis, and I attended him frequently, though not every day, to serve him in that capacity for several years. Upon his dictation, I wrote, I believe, all the reports of cases which it is now proposed to re-publish. I remember that it cost me a great deal of labor, not understanding a single Greek character, to write some citations from Greek authors, which he wished inserted in copies of his reports sent to Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Samuel Adams of Boston, and to one or two other persons. I copied them by imitating each character as I found them in the original works.

Mr. Wythe was one of the purest, best, and most learned men in classical lore that I ever knew. Although I did not understand Greek, I was often highly gratified in listening to his readings in Homer's *Illiad* and other Greek

authors, so beautifully did he pronounce the language. No one ever doubted his perfect uprightness, or questioned his great ability as a Judge. I remember an incident which occurred in my presence, which demonstrated with what scrupulous regard he avoided the possibility of any imputation upon his honor, or his impartiality. A neighbor of his, Mr. H——, who had the reputation of being a West India nabob, and who at the time had an important suit pending in the Court of Chancery, sent him a demijohn of old arrack, and an orange tree for his niece, Miss Nelson, then residing with him. When the articles were brought into Mr. Wythe's house, with the message from the donor, Mr. Wythe requested the servant to take them back to his master, and to present to him his respects, and thanks for his kind intentions, but to say that he had long ceased to make any use of arrack, and that Miss Nelson had no conservatory in which she could protect the orange tree. I was amused at another scene, which I witnessed between him and the late Justice Washington of the Supreme Court, then practising law in the city of Richmond. He called on the Chancellor with a bill of injunction in behalf of General ——, to restrain the collection of a debt. The ground of the application was, that the creditor had agreed to await the convenience of General ——, for the payment of the debt, and that it was not then convenient to pay it. The Chancellor attentively read the bill through, and deliberately folding it up, returned it to Mr. Washington, enquiring with an ineffable smile upon his countenance, "do you think, sir, that I ought to grant this injunction?" Mr. Washington blushed, and observed that he had presented the bill at the earnest instance of his client.

Mr. Wythe's relations to the Judges of the Court of Appeals, were not of the most friendly or amicable kind, as

may be inferred from the tenor of his reports. Conscientiously and thoroughly convinced of the justice and equity of his decrees, he was impatient when any of them were reversed, and accordingly evinces that feeling in his reports. Mr. Pendleton, from what I have heard and the little I knew of him, I suppose was more prompt and ready, and possessed greater powers of elocution than his great rival. Mr. Wythe's forte, as I have understood, lay in the opening of the argument of a case; in which, for thorough preparation, clearness and force, no one could excel him. He was not so fortunate in reply. Mr. Pendleton, on the contrary, was always ready, both in opening and concluding an argument, and was prompt to meet all the exigencies which would arise in the conduct of a cause in court. The consequence was, that Mr. Pendleton was oftener successful than Mr. Wythe in their struggles at the bar. On one occasion, when Mr. Wythe, being opposed to Mr. Pendleton, lost the cause, in a moment of vexation, he declared, in the presence of a friend, that he would quit the bar, go home, take orders, and enter the pulpit. You had better not do that, replied his friend, for if you do, Mr. Pendleton will go home, take orders, and enter the pulpit too, and beat you there. Mr. Pendleton was far less learned than Mr. Wythe, but he possessed more versatile talents, was an accomplished gentleman, and better adapted to success in general society and in the busy world. Although not so finished a scholar as Mr. Wythe, he had a much more pleasing style of composition. The high consideration in which Messrs. Pendleton and Wythe were both held, was often evinced by the distinguished honors and eminent offices which they received from their parent State. It was particularly exhibited in the organization of the Convention which adopted the Constitution of the United States, when Mr. Pendleton was appointed to preside over

the body, and Mr. Wythe to preside over the Committee of the Whole, which he did during, I believe, the entire sitting of the Convention—the Constitution having been considered and discussed in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Wythe's personal appearance and his personal habits were plain, simple, and unostentatious. His countenance was full of blandness and benevolence, and I think he made, in his salutation of others, the most graceful bow that I ever witnessed. A little bent by age, he generally wore a grey coating, and when walking carried a cane. Even at this moment, after the lapse of more than half a century since I last saw him, his image is distinctly engraved on my mind. During my whole acquaintance with him, he constantly abstained from the use of all animal food.

It is painful and melancholy to reflect, that a man so pure, so upright, so virtuous, so learned, so distinguished and beloved, should have met with an unnatural death. The event did not occur until several years after I emigrated from Richmond to the State of Kentucky, and of course I am not able, from personal knowledge, to relate any of the circumstances which attended it. Of these, however, I obtained such authentic information as to leave no doubt in my mind as to the manner of its occurrence. He had a grand nephew, a youth scarcely, I believe, of mature age, to whom, by his last will and testament, written by me upon his dictation before my departure from Richmond, after emancipating his slaves, he devised the greater part of his estate. That youth poisoned him, and others—black members of his household—by putting arsenic into a pot in which coffee was preparing for breakfast. The paper which had contained the arsenic, was found on the floor of the kitchen. The coffee having been drunk by the Chancellor and his servants, the poison developed

its usual effects. The Chancellor lived long enough to send for his neighbor, Major William Duval, and got him to write another will for him, disinheriting the ungrateful and guilty grand nephew, and making other dispositions of his estate. An old negro woman, his cook, also died under the operation of the poison, but I believe that his other servants recovered. After the Chancellor's death, it was discovered that the atrocious author of it had also forged bank checks in the name of his great uncle; and he was subsequently, I understood, prosecuted for the forgery, convicted, and sentenced to the penitentiary; but whether that was the fact or not, can be ascertained by a resort to the records of the proper criminal courts in Richmond.

I have written this hasty sketch, not as a memoir of the illustrious man of whom it treats, but for the purpose of contributing some materials, which may be wrought by more competent hands, into a biography more worthy of his great name and memory. I conclude it by an acknowledgement, demanded of me alike by justice and feelings of gratitude, that to no man was I more indebted, by his instructions, his advice, and his example, for the little intellectual improvement which I made, up to the period, when, in my 21st year, I finally left the city of Richmond.

I am, with great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

MR. B. B. MINOR.

H. CLAY.

LYING ALL OVER.

“It is a hard matter,” says Washington Allston, “for a man to lie *all over*, Nature having provided king’s evidence in almost every member. The hand will sometimes act as