

from the beginning of her residence there she was greatly beloved, because of her abounding charities toward the needy and her motherly care of all the servants of the large estate. She ever tried to conceal her deeds of charity from all but the recipients, not allowing her left hand to know what her right hand was doing.

In the year 1758 Washington was elected a member of the Virginia Assembly, and from that time until the commencement of the war for Independence, a period of about 15 years, he was continuously a member of that body. No children had blessed their union, and upon his wife's son and daughter Washington bestowed in full measure the wealth of his affections for the young with which he was abundantly endowed. The daughter died in early womanhood when the son was about to be married, and Mrs. Washington, unwilling to mar with her serious face (because of the loss of her daughter) the gayety that should prevail at the marriage, sent the following note by her husband, to be handed to the bride immediately after the nuptial ceremonies :

My Dear Nelly,—God took from me a daughter when June roses were blooming. He has now given me another daughter about her age when Winter winds are blowing to warm my heart again. I am as happy as one so afflicted and so blest can be. Pray receive my benediction, and a wish that you may long live the loving wife of my happy son, and a loving daughter of your affectionate mother,

M. WASHINGTON.

A crisis in public affairs was now rapidly approaching. Washington was chosen a delegate to the First Centennial Congress, which met at Philadelphia in September, 1774, and also to the Second Congress, which assembled on the 10th of May, 1775, when all the colonies, and especially those of New England, were in a blaze of ex-

citement. When Patrick Henry was asked, "who do you think is the greatest man in Congress?" he replied, "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on the floor." At the Second Congress he was made Commander-in-Chief of the army, and for a period of nearly nine years spent most of his time in the discharge of his duties as such commander. You are all familiar with the history of this great struggle for Independence, and it is not my purpose to speak of the many victories and defeats, privations and disappointments to which he was subjected during this time, many of which were shared by his ever faithful wife. The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown virtually closed the war, but the army was not actually disbanded until late in 1783.

After resigning his commission, he thus writes to Gov. Clinton, of New York, "I arrived at my seat the day before Christmas, having previously divested myself of my official character. The scene is at last closed. I hope to spend the remainder of my days in cultivating the affections of good men, and in the practice of the domestic virtues." He also, about this time, thus writes to the wife of Lafayette, "I am now enjoying domestic life under my own vine and fig-tree, and in a small villa, with the implements of husbandry and lambkins about me. I expect to glide gently down the stream of life till I am entombed in the mansion of my Fathers." He was doomed to disappointment in the expectation of leading a retired life; his advice and counsel was constantly sought, and after the adoption and ratification of the Constitution, in which he took an active part, he was unanimously chosen the first President of the United States, and was inaugurated April 30th, 1789. The