

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A MEMORABLE EVENING.

ON a cool, crisp autumn evening, toward the close of the century, a group of three men sat in front of the roaring hickory-wood fire, in the spacious sitting room at Mount Vernon. Two of them were visitors, and the third was the host, General George Washington.

The fame of the peerless patriot was complete and world-wide. The dominant, all-controlling spirit of the Revolution, the first President of the Republic, was nearing the end of a career, the most honourable in all history ; the quiet home-life for which he had yearned through the stormy days of the past had come to him at last, and he was content, happy, and satisfied.

Distinguished men, not only of his own country but from across the Atlantic, made their pilgrimages to that modest home in order to meet face to face and converse with the Father of his Country,—the man of transcendent military and civic ability, who was unselfish and without ambition, save for the good of the land which he loved better than his life,