THE

HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born on the 22d of February, 1732, on the banks of the river Potomac, in Virginia. His father dying when he was ten years old, he received a plain but useful education at the hands of his mother. He soon manifested a serious and contemplative disposition, and in his thirteenth year drew up a code of regulations for his own guidance, in which the germs are visible of those high principles which regulated his conduct in mature life. As a boy, he conceived a liking for the naval service, but, being dissuaded from this, he qualified himself for the occupation of a land-surveyor; and, at the age of eighteen, obtained, through his relation, Lord Fairfax, the office of Surveyor of the Western District of Virginia. This introduced him to the notice of Governor Dinwiddie, and in the following

year he was appointed one of the Adjutant-Generals of Virginia, with the duty of training the militia.

The boundaries of the British and French possessions in America were at that time subjects of dispute. In 1753 Washington was sent on a mission to the French settlement on the Ohio, which he executed successfully; and on his return published a journal of his route, which attracted much notice. In the following year he was less fortunate, being taken prisoner with his party, while in command of an expedition against the French. Being allowed to return home, he withdrew from the service, and went to reside at Mount Vernon, an estate which descended to him on the death of an elder brother. In 1755 he accepted the rank of Aide-de-camp to General Braddock, and was present at the surprise of the British in the woods near the Monongahela, where his coolness, courage, and knowledge of Indian warfare, chiefly contributed to the preservation of a handful of the troops. He escaped unhurt, but had three horses killed under him, and his dress was four times pierced with rifle-balls. Having gained much credit by his conduct on this occasion, Washington was next employed to defend the western

frontier against the incursions of the French and Indians. He concluded this harassing service at the end of four years, by reducing Fort du Quesne, and driving the French beyond the Ohio; and then resigned his commission.

After his return to Mount Vernon, in 1759, Washington married; and during the next fourteen years his time was divided between his duties as a member of the Colonial Assembly and agricultural pursuits, in which he took great interest. The disputes which preceded the Revolution again drew him from private life. He maintained that the Americans were entitled to all the rights of British subjects, and could not be taxed by a legislature in which they were not represented; and he recommended that, on the failure of peaceful and constitutional resistance, recourse should be had to arms. In 1774 the command of the troops raised by Virginia was given to him; and in 1775 he represented that State in the Convention held at Philadelphia. When the war began, Washington was chosen Commander-in-Chief of the American Army; an office which he accepted without remuneration, saying, that emolument would not have tempted him to forego the pleasures of private life, and that he should only require to have his

expenses reimbursed. His private letters have since proved that his object, at that time, was not to procure separation from England; but his alacrity in entering into the contest, and his constancy throughout its continuance, refute the insinuation, only countenanced by certain forged letters, that he was not hearty in the cause of independence.

About fourteen thousand people were at this time collected around Boston, where General Gage was held in a state of siege. Washington reached the colonial camp in July, 1775, and proceeded to give to the assembled multitude the form and discipline of a regular force. His next endeavours were to extend the period for which men enlisting were obliged to serve, and to ensure the maintenance of the troops by appointing a Commissary-General to collect supplies, instead of depending for them on the voluntary and uncertain contributions of the several States. Neither of these wishes was complied with, and the want of every requisite obliged Washington to change the siege into a blockade, until the following March, when, having obtained artillery and engineers, he forced the English to give up the town and embark on board their fleet. His conduct during

this siege is admirable, both for the resolution with which he maintained the blockade with an inferior army composed of untried men, and the patience with which he endured the reproaches of the people, to whom the real difficulties of his situation, with respect to arms and ammunition, could not be disclosed. He also established the principle, that captured Americans should be treated as prisoners of war.

In April, 1776, Washington anticipated the British in occupying New York, and the adjacent islands. Before the arrival of Lord Howe, in July, independence was proclaimed; and the American general refused to negotiate unless acknowledged as the functionary of an independent government, saying, that America, being her own mistress, and having committed no fault, needed no pardon. A severe defeat on Long Island, and subsequent losses, compelled him to abandon the State of New York to the English, to retreat with great loss through New Jersey, and to take shelter behind the Delaware, near Philadelphia. He showed much skill in preventing the British from taking advantage of these reverses, which he sought to repair by surprising their posts at Trenton and Princetown, in Jersey, where he

made many hundred prisoners. These successes were well timed, and revived the broken spirit of the country.

In 1777 Washington applied to Congress for more extensive powers, which were granted him, with the title of Dictator, by which he was empowered to act on his own responsibility in all military affairs. But he was not supplied with the means of acting effectually; and the campaign of that year was one of misfortunes, the Americans being defeated at Brandywine, and forced to yield Philadelphia to the English. During the winter months Washington occupied a fortified camp at Valley Forge, and his army, ill-supplied with ammunition and provisions, was daily in danger of being destroyed by hunger or the enemy. He freely expressed his opinion to Congress of their misconduct, and his remarks occasioned a faction which desired to displace him from his command, and to substitute General Gates; but this was never seriously attempted.

The campaign of 1778 was favourable to Washington; he recovered Philadelphia, and following Clinton in his retreat through New-Jersey, brought him to action at Monmouth. The issue of this engagement gave new confi-

dence to the people, and completely restored him to the good will of Congress. During the years 1779 and 1780 the war was actively carried on in the South, and Carolina and Virginia were reduced by the British. In the autumn of 1780 Major Andre, who had been sent by Clinton to concert with Arnold measures for betraying the post at West Point, was seized within the American lines, and tried and hanged as a spy. Whatever were the merits or misfortunes of the British officer, the duty of Washington was too plain to be mistaken, and the obloquy he incurred in its performance was undeserved.

Washington had throughout contended that the country could only be delivered by raising a permanent army, and consolidating the union of the States, so as to form a vigorous government. Five years' experience had taught Congress the inefficiency of temporary armies, and they resolved to form a permanent one with a system of half-pay and pensions, as an inducement to enter the service. But as the government of each State was empowered to levy its own taxes, and conduct all the measures for carrying this resolve into effect, such delay was occasioned, that although Count

Rochambeau arrived from France in August, 1780, with an auxiliary force of five thousand men, the American army could not actively co-operate with him during that year.

The temporising policy pursued by the States had severely tried the constancy of Washington, but did not lead him to despair of final success. The army, suffering extreme want, was kept in the field chiefly by attachment to his person. Attentive to alleviate their hardships, he did not permit any disorderly license; and although early in 1781 he allowed Congress to pacify the revolted troops, he, on a second occasion, shortly after, forcibly compelled the mutineers to submit, and summarily tried and executed many of them.

The pecuniary aid of France, and increased activity of the American Government, enabled Washington to resume offensive measures in the summer of 1781. Earl Cornwallis, then in Virginia, and but feebly opposed by La-Fayette, sent a part of his army to strengthen Clinton in New York. Shortly after De Grasse arrived off the coast of Virginia with a French fleet. Washington took advantage of this conjuncture to transfer the war to the South. Deceiving Clinton as to his real design, he

marched rapidly through New Jersey and Maryland, and, embarking his army on the Chesapeake, effected a junction at Williamsburg with La Fayette. By the combined operation of their forces, assisted by the fleet under De Grasse, Lord Cornwallis was compelled to surrender at York Town, with his whole force, October 19, after a siege of thirteen days. This event decided the war; but Washington remained watchful to preserve the advantages gained, and to provide for future contingencies, until 1783, when a general peace was concluded.

Washington then prepared to resume his station as a private citizen. The army had become disaffected towards the States, and appeared not unwilling to subvert the freedom of their country, if the general had sought his own aggrandisement. But he nobly rejected all such schemes, and persuaded the soldiers to return home, and trust to the assurance of Congress for the discharge of the arrears due to them. Having publicly taken leave of his officers, he repaired to Annapolis, and December 23, 1783, appeared in Congress, and resigned his commission. He also presented the account of his receipts and expenditure during the late

war, the items of which were entered in his own handwriting. His expenditure amounted to £19,306, and it subsequently appeared that he had applied considerable sums of his own to the public service, which he neglected to claim. He asked no favour or reward for himself, except that his letters should be free from postage, but he strongly recommended to Congress the claims of his late army.

Having delivered a farewell address to Congress, and forwarded one of a like character to the government of each State, pointing out the advantages they at present possessed, and giving his advice as to the future conduct of their affairs, he retired to Mount Vernon to enjoy the pleasures of private life. But although the next two years were passed in retirement, the mind of Washington was actively directed to public affairs. Beside maintaining a correspondence with the most eminent men, as well in Europe as in his own country, he was engaged in various projects to promote the agricultural and commercial interests of his native State. Under his direction, companies were formed to improve the navigation of the rivers James and Potomac, thus making Virginia the trading mart of the Western States. A number of shares

in the James River Company, which were presented to him in 1785 by the legislature of Virginia, he employed in founding the college in Virginia, now called by his name. His deference to the popular feelings and prejudices on the subject of liberty was shown in his conduct with regard to the Cincinnati, a military society of which he was president, instituted to commemorate the occurrences of the late war. An outcry was raised that the honours conferred by this society being hereditary, a titled order would be created in the State. Washington therefore prevailed on the members to annul the offensive regulations, and to agree that the society should cease at the termination of their lives.

The want of union amongst the States, and the incapacity of the government, engaged the attention of every able man in America, and more especially interested Washington, who desired to witness the establishment of a great republic. The principal defect of the existing government was, that no acts of Congress in forming commercial treaties, borrowing money, or introducing national regulations, were binding on the individual States, each of which pursued its own interests, without showing any

disposition to redeem the engagements of the government with the public creditors, either at home or abroad. Washington's principles were democratic; but he was opposed to those who contended for the absolute independence of the individual States, being convinced that each must sacrifice a portion of its liberty for the security of the whole, and that, without an energetic central government, the confederation would be insignificant. His representations to the Congress and the individual States, backed by the increasing distress of the country, at length brought about the Convention of Philadelphia, which met in May, 1787, and having chosen Washington president, continued sitting until September, when the federal constitution was finally decided on, and was submitted to the States for their approval.

Having acquitted himself of this duty, Washington retired to private life until March, 1789, when he was elected President of the United States. He had used no exertion to obtain this distinction, which his impaired health and love of retirement rendered unsuitable to him: he, however, accepted it, and his journey to New York was one continued triumph. April 30, he took the oaths prescribed by the constitution,

and delivered his inaugural address, in which he dwelt most fully on his own reasons for again entering on public life, and on the duties incumbent upon members of the Congress. He declared that he would receive no remuneration for his services, and required that a stated sum should be allowed for defraying the expenses of his office.

The President of the Union being a new political personage, it became requisite to establish certain observances of etiquette towards him. Washington's arrangements in this respect were sufficiently simple, yet they excited jealousy, as savouring of regal and courtly customs. The restriction placed on the admission of idle visitors, who hourly intruded on him, caused much offence, and became the subject of remonstrance, even from intelligent men.

One of the first acts of Washington's administration was to empower the legislature to become responsible for the general debt of the States, and to levy taxes for the punctual discharge of the interest upon it. The operation of the new government was in every respect satisfactory, its beneficial influence being apparent in the increasing prosperity of

the country; and before the end of the second year's presidency, Rhode Island and North Carolina, which at first were dissentient, desired to participate in the benefits of the Union, and were admitted as members. In 1790 Washington concluded a treaty with the hostile Indians on the Southern frontier; but the war which he directed against the Indians on the North Western frontier was unfortunate, the American forces sustaining three severe defeats Upon the whole, however, the period of his first presidency passed over prosperously and tranquilly. He was annoyed by occasional differences in his cabinet, and by the discontent of the anti-federal party; but being supported by John Adams, Hamilton, and other able men, his government suffered no real embarrassment.

In 1792, as he possessed the general confidence of the people, he was unanimously re-elected President; and in March, 1793, again took the oaths of office. The French Revolution was hailed with joy by the Americans, among whom an almost universal wish prevailed to assist in establishing, as they thought, true freedom in Europe. But Washington perceived that the real interests of his country required peace. He acknowledged the government of the French Republic, and sent an ambassador to Paris; but declared his resolution to adopt a strict neutrality in the contest between France and the allied powers of Europe. Still the enthusiasm in favour of the French continued to increase; and, at the instigation of M. Genet, envoy from Paris, privateers were armed in the American ports, and sent to cruise against the British. Washington promptly suppressed this practice; and the conduct of Genet having been intemperate and insolent towards the President, and calculated to produce serious disturbance in the States, he took the requisite steps for having him recalled.

The determination of the President to preserve peace was not the only ground of popular discontent. The imposition of excise taxes, as they were termed by the people, excited serious murmurings; and, in 1794, a general rising took place in Pennsylvania, which was put down without bloodshed by a vigorous display of force, and the principals, after being condemned to death, were pardoned.

The ferment among the people made a war with England seemingly unavoidable. Washington, at this juncture, appointed Mr. Jay envoy to England, with full powers to conclude

a treaty, in which all points then at issue between the two nations should be adjusted. With the concurrence of the Senate he ratified this treaty, regardless of the outcry raised against it; and subsequently upheld the authority of the President, in refusing to permit the House of Representatives to revise the articles it contained. The people soon perceived that the advantages to be derived from the contentions in Europe made it impolitic for their own country to become a party to them, and confidence and good will towards the President were in a great measure restored. These favourable dispositions were confirmed by the termination of a successful war against the Indians, and by a treaty with Spain, by which the navigation of the Mississippi to the Ocean was secured to the Americans.

Among the acts which immediately proceeded from Washington during his presidency, were those for forming a fund to pay off the national debt, and for organising the militia of the country. He was active and sssiduous in his duties as chief magistrate, making tours through the States, and ascertaining the progressive improvement in each, and the means which would most tend to increase it. The

limited powers conferred on the President prevented his effecting so much as he desired, and the public measures originating from him were but few. He declined being nominated a third time to the office of President, and on his retirement published an address to the people of the United States, in which, after remarking on the condition and prospects of the country, he insisted on the necessity of cementing the union of the States, and upholding the supremacy of the Federal Government; he also advised them never to admit the influence of foreign powers, and to reap benefit from the quarrels amongst the States of Europe, by remaining at peace with all.

Washington passed the rest of his days at Mount Vernon, engaged in the society of his friends, and in the improvement of his estate. He was for several years a member of the British Agricultural Association; and the efforts he made to form a similar society in America, and his letters to Sir John Sinclair, (a fac-simile copy of which is deposited in the British Museum,) show the interest he took in agricultural affairs. He died December 13, 1799, in his sixty-eighth year, after a few days' illness, and was buried at Mount Vernon. He

left no family. Congress suspended its sitting on receiving the intelligence of his death, and a public mourning was ordered for him.

In person, Washington was robust, and above the middle height. He was thoughtful and reserved, without being repulsive; and his manners were those of the old school of English gentlemen. Although mild and humane, he was stern in the performance of duty, and never, upon such occasions, yielded to softness or compassion. His speeches and official letters are simple and earnest, but wanting perhaps in that conciseness, which marks vigour of thought. Whilst President, he was assailed by the violence of party spirit. On his decease his worth was justly appreciated, and the sorrow at his loss was universal and sincere. Washington was distinguished less by the brilliancy of his talents than by his moral goodness, sound judgment, and plain but excellent understanding. His admirable use of those sterling, though homely qualities has gained a rank for him among the greatest and best of men; and his name will be coexistent, as it was coeval, with that of the empire, of which, no less by his rare civil wisdom than

his eminent military talents, he may be considered the founder.

The virtues which distinguish him from all others who have united the fame of statesman and captain, were two-fold, and they are as great as they are rare. He refused power which his own merit had placed within his reach, constantly persisting in the preference of a republican to a monarchial form of government, as the most congenial to liberty when it is not incompatible with the habits of the people and the circumstances of society; and he even declined to continue longer than his years seemed to permit at the head of that commonwealth which he had founded. This subjugation of all ambitious feelings to the paramount sense of duty is his first excellence; it is the sacrifice of his own aggrandisement to his country's freedom. The next is like unto it; his constant love of peace when placed at the head of affairs: this was the sacrifice of the worthless glory which ordinary men prize the most, to the tranquillity and happiness of mankind. Wherefore to all ages and in all climes, they who most love public virtue will hold in eternal remembrance the name of

George Washington; never pronouncing it but with gratitude and awe, as designating a mortal removed above the ordinary lot of human frailty.

The words of his last will in bequeathing his sword to his nephews—the sword which he had worn in the sacred war of liberty—ought to be graven in letters of gold over every palace in the world: "This sword they shall never draw but in defence of freedom, or of their country, or of their kindred; and when thus drawn, they shall prefer falling with it in their hands to the relinquishment thereof."

For farther information we refer to the works of Ramsay and Marshall; and to the Correspondence of Washington, published by Mr. Sparkes.

NATHANIEL GREENE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN ARMY.

GENERAL GREENE, although descended from ancestors of elevated standing, was not indebted to the condition of his family for any part of the real lustre and reputation he possessed. He was literally the founder of his own fortune, and the author of his own fame. He was the second son of Nathaniel Greene, a member of the society of Friends, an anchor-smith.

He was born in the year 1741, in the town of Warwick, and county of Kent, in the province of Rhode Island. Being intended by his father for the business which he himself pursued, young Greene received at school nothing but the elements of a common English education. But to him, an education so limited was unsatisfactory. With such funds as he was able to raise, he purchased a small, but well-selected library, and spent his evenings, and all the time he could redeem from his father's business, in regular study.

At a period of life unusually early, Greene was elevated, by a very flattering suffrage, to a