

119

directing him as before to bring a blank commission with him for the clerk of the General Court; this was then one of the most lucrative appointments in the Colony, and as the clerk of the general court had the principal direction of the Secretary's office, the various duties of which required much skill, it had ever been filled with much caution and circumspection, by all preceding Secretaries. - My grandfather who was then about twenty five years of age only, and had so recently received so signal a proof of the Secretary's regard for him, had not the most remote expectation that he would confer upon him this office also. - But he did so, accompanying the commission with the most gratifying compliments, and saying that he had always intended the appointment for him whenever it became vacant, for that there was none whom he thought deserved it so well.

His office of clerk necessarily excluded him from the bar of the General court, and the duties his new appointment imposed upon him, ~~constrained~~ constrained him to limit his practice, which had by this time become very extensive and lucrative. The profits of his profession however ^{were} not diminished by the limitation he imposed upon the extent of his practice. At that time the most valuable business done by the lawyers of the country, was the collection and securing of the debts due by the colonists to the British merchants who had debts to a large amount due them in Virginia - These arrangements were for the most part effected at the meetings of the merchants of Virginia, which took place twice every year, in Williamsburg at the close of the session of the General court there.

The residence of my grandfather upon the spot, the character he very soon established for industry, punctuality, integrity and skill very soon recommended him to all the British merchants, a very large proportion indeed of whose business fell into his hands, and was managed by him up to the commencement of the Revolution. - I have often heard him state, that he was indebted for this part of his success, very much to the recommendation of Sir William Gooch the Royal Governor of Virginia, whose friendship for him was manifested repeatedly in many other modes besides.

After his appointment to the clerkship of James City and of the General court, my grandfather finding himself in a situation of independence, and capable of supporting a family, married a lady to whom he had been for some time attached, Miss Martha Hall, Her

120
parents had formerly resided in North-Carolina, but were both dead; ~~parents~~ and she herself had lived for several years with a relation of hers in Williamsburg. - This event took place I believe in 1746, for I have heard him say he was married on the very night that the capitol in Williamsburg was burned, and this seems to have occurred ~~for~~ in that year. - Some years before his marriage, he had been elected a member of the Assembly for the County of James City, which county he continued to represent in that body ever afterwards, until the year 1769. - The difficulties with the mother country, which afterwards led to war, having then commenced, and my grandfather being then advanced in years, and holding several appointments directly from the crown, such as King's Advocate in the ~~court~~ court of Admiralty ~~and~~; he did not think it right to oppose the measures of the administration, and could not reconcile it to himself to oppose those proposed by his countrymen, he therefore declined a re-election and soon after relinquished all his other public appointments, and retired into private life.

After the organizing of this government however, he was induced by the entreaties of his friends, to take some place under it and accepted a ^{seat} ~~place~~ at the Council board for a short time. - From thence he was translated into the Court of Admiralty, of which he was made the chief-judge, and the session of which were still held at Williamsburg ~~and~~ ^{even} after the removal of the seat of the seat of government to Richmond, merely to accomodate him. - This office he resigned a short time before his death, which took place in May 1786. -

The reputation of my grandfather as a lawyer was as high as that of any lawyer in Virginia of his day. He was called upon, for more opinions than any other either before or since his time; and his opinions were always considered as conclusive by all who saw them. I have seen many of them since I came to the bar. They were remarkable for their clearness and brevity; and all I ever saw I thought I ever saw I thought unquestionably correct. So early as the year 1745 he was appointed by the Assembly one of the committee to revise its laws; and the revision of 1748 as it is called, was the work of his hands almost exclusively. He was very regular in his attendance as one of the members of the Assembly, while he continued such; and was one of the most active and influential members of that body. Through his exertions the

121

enormous fraud committed upon the Treasury by the Speaker Robinson, in 1766 was first ~~detected~~ detected; and his efforts upon this occasion drew down upon him for a time, the resentment of many of the speaker's friends, some of whom were amongst the most conspicuous men in Virginia at that day. — My grandfather was a very laborious man of studious and very regular habits, who notwithstanding his numerous public engagements still found time to read a great deal. He was an excellent scholar, and kept alive his scholarship learning until his death. In his family he was ever kind affectionate and cheerful, living beloved by all who knew him, and he died regretted by a numerous circle of friends comprehending almost every man of note in the country at that day. — He left many children at his death, and had lost several who had married and died during his life, amongst these my mother was one. Of his family, so far as I knew any thing of it the following will be found a correct account. His eldest child Martha, married Mr William Taylor, a most respectable man who was clerk of the county of Lunenburg, where he resided. This lady is still living there, and has a numerous family, none of whom however are known to me except two, Waller Taylor her son, who was last year a member of the U.S. Senate from the State of Indiana, and a young gentleman — her grand-son, now a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy. His second child Molly, married Mr John Tayloe Corbin of Laneville in the County of King & Queen, an amiable and very wealthy man. She died many years ago leaving a numerous family also. — I was intimately acquainted with her three eldest sons, and served for several years as a member of the Virginia Assembly, with Richard Corbin the eldest of them, who represented first the County of Middlesex, and afterwards that of King and Queen. — They are all now dead leaving descendants. — His third child Mr John Waller, who was bred up by his father in the Secretary's office, and received from Secretary Nelson the appointment of Clerk of Spotsylvania, before the Revolution while he resided in this part of the country he married a Miss Page of Hanover, and my grandfather, who had purchased from his elder brother the old family seat in King Williams, to which he had added other contiguous lands, giving him this estate. Mr John Waller resigned his clerkship, and moved to King William. After the death of my grandfather, he purchased an estate in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg, and removed thither. He died some years since leaving several children. My mother was the fourth

child of my grandfather; and Ann's fifth; she married Dr John Boush, a very
 wealthy and worthy man, who was the clerk of Norfolk County, and died without issue
 during her father's life. Benjamin Carter Waller was my grandfather's sixth child
 He was led by his father to the bar and practised the law in the neighbourhood
 of Williamsburg with much success. To him my grandfather resigned his clerkship of
 James City and gave him the estate adjoining Williamsburg on which his son
 Robert P. Waller now resides. He also married a Miss Page, the sister of his brother's
 wife, and died a few years since in Williamsburg, where he had always resided.
 I shall have occasion to speak of him hereafter. - My grandfather's seventh child,
 was Clara. She married first Captain Edward Travis, an officer of the Navy,
 who greatly distinguished himself at the battle of the Great Bridges. - By him
 she had several children; and Captain Travis dying she again married a Dr
 Mordecai Booth of Frederick county after the death of her father. - She died several
 years ago, leaving many children by that marriage also - Dr William Waller was
 my grandfather's eighth child. He was bred a merchant and established himself
 first at Hanover Town. While living there he married a Miss Dracoon of that
 county, and disliking his situation, he quitted merchandize, bought him an
 estate called Belfield situate on York river above York town where he
 removed. He resided here ever afterwards until his decease, which occurred
 in 1799. He also left children. To him my grandfather devised the estate
 in Greensville, which he had purchased during the war. - Robert Hale
 Waller was my grandfather's youngest son, and his ninth child. He was
 also brought up by his father as a clerk; and soon after he came of age
 my grandfather obtained for him the clerkship of James the county of
 of York. - To this my uncle added many years afterwards the clerkship
 of James City also, which he got from his brother. To this son my
 grandfather gave his family mansion in Williamsburg and a small
 estate he owned in the county of James City. He married a Miss Cannon,
 a daughter of the former President of Williams and Mary, by whom he
 left several children, and died many years ago since in Williams-
 burg, where he always resided. The tenth and youngest child of my
 grandfather whom I ever saw was a daughter Sarah. She was the only
 daughter who remained single at his death. She afterwards
 married a Dr John Smith of Matthews county, by whom she left
 several children, and died many years ago. - My grandfather had had
 other children, all of whom died young and before I knew them.

All four of my uncles lived in or in the vicinity of Williamsburg when I began my professional career there. They were all warmly attached to me, and I derived great advantage from their society, especially from the countenance, knowledge and experience of my uncles Benjamin and Robert, the former of whom was still engaged in the practice of the law, and the Clerk of York and James City courts when I commenced my practice in those courts. They none of them equalled my grandfather in genius or acquirements, but all were worthy, respectable men, of much consideration where they resided, and with the exception of Mr. Robert Waller (whose frequent offices precluded him from being there) each of them represented the counties of James city and of York, where they resided.

All my grandfather's daughters who married during his life were most respectably and happily connected with men of property and worth. The two who married after his death however (for Mr. Travis was then a widow) formed connexions every way beneath them, and died in poverty.

Having thus given a brief account of my excellent grandfather and his family, let me now resume my own ^{narrative} ~~practice~~, this I have brought down to my eighth year, when I again returned to Williamsburg, and was once more happily established under the roof of my revered grandfather. This event as I have stated occurred in 1782.

At that time there existed no good Latin school in Williamsburg. During the war the College of William and Mary had been broken up and the professorship of humanity put down by the visitors entirely. Soon after my return to this place however, The Rev. John Bracken who had formerly been the professor of Humanity in William and Mary when this professorship was abolished, opened a private grammar school at his own house and I was immediately placed under his tuition. My education had not been neglected before this, for I had been very regularly by my grandfather, than whom there was no one better qualified to improve me; and my uncle Robert who wrote a most excellent hand, taught me to write. I did not receive much benefit from Mr. Bracken's tuition, during the short time I remained with him for altho' a very good scholar himself he was testy and petulant and my meek temper required much more gentle treatment than I received at his hands, but the kindness and care of my grandfather, amply compensated me for this; and I still continued to

learn much more from him, than I did at school. In the year 1783, some private business calling Dr Bracken to England, he broke up his school, and I was again happily dependent upon my grandfather alone for instruction. His mode of educating me was most excellent. Besides my customary lessons, which I was made to recite to him twice a day, if any circumstance occurred during our recitations, or in the course of our conversations together, (for we were very seldom separated,) upon which he could lay the foundation of any anecdote or story, calculated to interest a child, he immediately told it, in a way most calculated to arouse my curiosity. As soon as he had excited my attention and interest to a high pitch, he soon affected to have forgotten some circumstance connected with his narrative, and I was sent to the study for a book in which stated, to assist his memory. From this book I was made to read to him the whole account, in which he never failed to find numerous new stories to whet my curiosity, and to produce an ardent desire to gratify it by continuing the reading of the book we had begun, or some other of a like kind. By such means I was induced to read with great attention, the whole of the Bible, all Plutarch's lives, many treatises on the Heathen mythology, and large portions from the Greek and Roman histories, as well as from the History of England and many of the English poets, before I was twelve years old. These occupations gave no interruption to our regular studies, which went on unceasingly so that by the year 1784 I was well grounded in my Latin syntax, had gone through the Colloquies of Cordery, and the dialogues of Erasmus, and could write a fair hand and understood sufficiently well, the first rules of Arithmetic. In February 1784, Walker Drury, who had formerly kept a grammar school with some reputation in the County of Orange finding that there were none such ^{then} in Williamsburg, removed thither and soon afterwards obtained an Act of Assembly, giving him the use of the old Capitol there, in which he kept the most numerous and for some years the best regulated grammar school I have ever seen. I was placed in this school so soon as it opened, and in a few days afterwards joined a class, which then began Eutropius. I remained at school with Dr Drury for several years, during the greater part of which time, by the unvaried assistance of my grandfather, to whom I always recited my lessons before I went school, and who examined and instructed me very minutely in every thing concerning them, I kept at the head of a very numerous class, although much the youngest and smallest boy in it. And here

155
125

I 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 Dr. Drury, to have occasional public examinations of his scholars. These examinations were generally made by, and always in the presence of, the visitors, governors, and professors 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, Dr. 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 mere biographical sketch, as to excite even his astonishment, for I had not then attained my tenth year. When the examinations were ended, he called one to him and in the presence of my tutor and all the other gentlemen, extolled my exhibition in such flattering terms, that I was ever 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 Dr. Wythe. They had been very intimate in their early days; and altho' my grandfather never went out then and Dr. Wythe very rarely, yet he made it a point to call to see my grandfather once or twice every year, and to spend an afternoon with him. When I came in Dr. Wythe immediately recognized me, and seeing my grandfather care for me as he did, he repeated to him with high eulogies the occurrences of my examination. Pleased to hear this ^{account} ~~account~~ (which I had ~~before~~ told him) from Dr. Wythe himself, my grandfather requested him to examine me again; and he did so. I was then reading Caesar's Commentaries, and Dr. Wythe taking the book from me, made me recite several passages and to accompany my recitations with ~~an~~ account of the circumstances introductory to ~~the~~ passages read. To these my grandfather added many questions relating to this part of the Roman history and to ancient Geography of the Roman Empire at that time. I answered all the questions, and ~~as~~ I have stated that was required of me so entirely to Dr. Wythe's satisfaction into holy

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. Wyke) 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. Wyke 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.

During the year 1785, while on a visit to my father, to whom my grandfather always
 sent me every Sunday, when he was at home, after I had been to church, I
 had the misfortune to shatter my left arm and shoulder in a very dreadful
 way, by a fall from a very high tree. This accident occurred to me near my
 father's house, to which I was carried, and where I remained confined to
 my bed for several months. The pain I suffered was very great, but was
 not greater certainly than that endured by my poor old grandfather in
 being deprived of my company and in witnessing my sufferings. - Altho'
 he had never left his house for several years, yet so long as I was confined
 at my father's, the old gentleman paid me a visit at my father's regularly every
 day, and passed all his mornings at my bedside, soothing my anguish, and inspiring
 me with fortitude, by his kind affectionate and cheerful conversation. As
 soon as I was in a situation to be moved he insisted upon taking me home
 with him again; a movement for which I felt and expressed equal solicitude
 with himself. - The injury I had sustained was so serious, that even after the
 fractured bones had knit, I had no use of my left arm; and least I should sustain
 further injury in my then situation, from the heedless wildness of my numerous
 playfellows, I was kept from school for some months after I returned to my grand-
 father's house. My education was not neglected however during this interval. My grand-
 father again took me under his care and instruction, and attended to me so
 well, that when I again returned to school, I found myself much in advance of
 my class. - To my knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, I had also
 added during my absence from school, some acquaintance with the French
 school, my grandfather perfectly understood. At this critical period of my
 every thing I had begun *levers* and *Virgil* in the Latin and *Homer & Demophon*
 class, although sustained the heaviest misfortune which I had ever felt in the

127

Loss of my much revered grandfather, who died in May 1786 in his seventieth year. The shock I experienced at this calamity bent me to the earth, and I felt that I could never rise again. — My long and intimate and endearing connexion with this good man, had weaned me from all other attachments, and my regard for him absorbed all my affections. As he seemed to live but for me, so I had lived for him alone. Although my father had ever been most kind and affectionate to me, yet up to this period I had seen so little of him, and been so little with him, that I felt for him no other sentiments, than that of respectful duty; and this because my grandfather had ever inculcated such a sentiment and cherished it in me. My whole heart was given to my good grandfather and in loving him I seemed to have lost all I valued on earth.

My father was absent when my grandfather died, but very soon afterwards returned, and sought me out. He took me home with him and tried every means in his power to comfort the affliction, and revive the spirit of his disconsolate and almost broken hearted boy. His efforts were at first unavailing, but as the sorrows of childhood are rarely of long continuance, he at last succeeded in reconciling me to my new situation. At that time a boy about my own age lived in my father's house; his name was Edwin Wall. He was the youngest son of Major James Wall who had married an aunt of my father's. This boy was also a scholar in Mr Murray's school. He was idle dull and very wickedly disposed. Residing in the same house with me, we soon became constant companions, and I was presently initiated in all his bad habits. I still continued to go to Mr Murray after my grandfather's death, but wanting the encouragement and assistance which he used always to afford me, and strongly tempted to idleness by my dissolute companion, I became indifferent to my lessons, and very soon lost much of the high standing I had previously maintained in the school. Mortification at this roused me to occasional exertion, but my renewed efforts were but short lived, and I very soon relapsed into my former idleness and negligence. Although I was on the high road to ruin, and should very soon have been utterly lost, the engagements of my father prevented him from discovering my situation. Fortunately however before my destiny was irreversibly fixed, Mr Murray having entered into holy orders, broke up his school in Williamsburg and removed to Norfolk. My dangerous companion then returned home and I never saw him afterwards. His fate may be readily conjectured from what I have stated. Mr Murray removed from Williamsburg, having entered into holy

orders, in the summer of 1786, and after his removal I 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 Dr. 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 occupations, 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 Dr. 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 charges. My father was delighted at this unexpected overture, to which he very willingly assented and the very next day I was sent to attend Dr. Wythe, who resided but a short distance from our house.

Before I proceed to give any further account of myself, let me make ^{somewhat} you acquainted with this great and good man, under whose tuition I passed several of the succeeding years of my life. Dr. 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 woman 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. Soon 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,

129
and Natural Philosophy. He therefore may very properly be considered as
one of the ~~rarely~~ rare examples that could have 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, Dr Wythe
by his unrearied industry, soon acquired a very extensive knowledge
of this science, in all its branches, and obtaining a licence, returned
to his native country, where he commenced the practice of the Law about
the year 1748. He was then elected a member of the house of ~~delegates~~
Burgeesses, 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.} ~~assembled.~~
At this bar, his indefatigable industry, extensive knowledge, and profound
research, speedily acquired for him very high and well merited dis-
tinction, 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 Dr Pendleton
was most popular, and his manners more courtly than those of Dr 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 Dr Wythe were very polished indeed, and
full of dignity and grace. Mixing much more with the world, and more
conversant with men than Dr Wythe, Dr 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 whom he in like manner upheld. While the stern integrity
and unyielding firmness of Dr Wythe's character, carried him always
straight to his object, so soon as he was convinced it was proper and

in the pursuit of what he thought right, he was heedless and utterly indifferent 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 that they had not been fully represented to him; while Mr P., considering the subject more correctly, felt no scruple in exerting 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 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 be inferred, that Mr Pendleton was the more successful politician, 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 round 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 of this much revolution. Mr 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 as essential to the liberty of the people. While Mr Pendleton actively presided as chief of the Executive in the Committee of safety,

131

Dr Wythe altho' then an old man, presented himself in his hunting shirt to Col. James proposing to enter the ranks of his detachment as an 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. Dr Pendleton was elected by the Convention (of which he was a member) to be one of the delegates in the first Congress, that assembled in Philadelphia in Sept: 1774. Upon the death of Dr Randolph during the next year who had long presided both in the Assembly and Convention, the latter body then assembled in Richmond, chose Dr Pendleton as their President and appointed Dr Wythe to succeed him in Congress. In this situation he had a great share in preparing the declaration of independence, the production of his pupils and colleagues Dr Jefferson. When the new Government of Virginia went into operation in 1776, and the dissolution of the old government took place, a complete and complete revision and re-modification of all the statutes became necessary. For this important duty Dr Jefferson, Dr Pendleton and Dr Wythe were selected by the Assembly. The execution of this important task making it necessary for Dr Wythe to relinquish his situation in Congress, and Dr Pendleton having then retired from the Assembly, in 1777 Dr 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 Dr Pendleton, Dr Wythe, and Dr Nicholas, were made Judges of the Court of Chancery. While occupying this situation in the year 1786 Dr 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 Dr 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. Dr Pendleton was elected the President of this body, and Dr Wythe presided over its deliberations, as Chairman

of the Committee of the Whole. When the Courts were re-organized in 1788 Dr Pendleton was made the chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, and ~~Dr~~ Dr 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, a relation of his, who he undertaken to educate, and who afterwards convicted of having committed many forgeries of cheques in his patrons name.

Amongst many singularities in Dr 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 embarrasments 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. Dr 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 superintend 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. Whenever 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 and enable him to reach a higher eminence than without this aid such a one would ever rise.

This disposition will explain the conversation he had with my grandfather relative to me in the year 1786, 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 Dr Wythe. I lived with my father, but attended Dr 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 every thing connected with the life and opinions of this great and good man must be interesting, I will here describe it. I attended him

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 ~~Latin~~ book, to which any accidental circumstance 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 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 Geometrical 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 common.

These evening occupations were ~~repeated~~ 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 Dr. Wythe had supplied him with a stroke

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 one to acquire 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 attentive memory however, I acquired a great deal and 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 Dr. 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 Dr. Wythe. In the autumn of next year 1787 my father having purchased Kingsmill, and being about to remove there, and Dr. 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 Dr. 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

148
155 7

I had already examined the preceding day become the selected books for our next day's reading. This previous preparation, and the benefit derived from uninterrupted intercourse with my venerable tutor and from his instructive conversation made my progress and improvement much more rapid than it ~~could have~~ ^{had ever} been. I now became a great favourite 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 Dr. Wythe imported a very complete Electrical machine together with a very fine air pump and sundry other parts of a 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 ~~head~~ 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 Dr. Wythe, what almost any other man in 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 burthens; He therefore 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 Dr. Wythe my father placed me with our friend Dr. John Wickham. I have mentioned this gentleman before. When hostilities ceased with

Great Britain in 1782, he left Dr 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 Prentiss's, and afterwards with an old man by the name of Taliaferro, who resided near Dr Wythe whom I continued to attend regularly as I had done previously. Deprived now of the use of Dr 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 Dr Wickham, and from my intercourse with two young gentlemen of Petersburg, who now became scholars of Dr Wythe also, and boarded near me. These young gentlemen, Charles Turnbull, and John Thompson, were both of them 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 Lucius 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 then were in the same pursuits with myself.

Early in the year 1789 the reorganization of the courts, which had then recently been effected by imposing upon Dr 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 ^{Williamsburg,} ~~Richmond~~ and fixed himself in Richmond, where he

continued to reside until his death. When Dr. Wythe left Williamsburg, my father and Dr. 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 Dr. Wickham as before, but attended all the Professor's daily. When I entered college I had but just attained my fifteenth year, and as their courses were then more than half finished by the several professors, I did not derive much benefit from any of them save only the Mathematical professor with whom my previous studies under Dr. Wythe enabled me to keep up very well. - Although I desired but little benefit from attending college during this broken course however, I did not mispend my time. By the advice of Dr. Wickham I began a regular course of history, which I prosecuted with but little interruption during this and the succeeding year as my leisure permitted, and then completed. During this period I not only revised all my reading of Ancient history, but went through a very good course of the Histories of Modern Europe. -

In the year 1790 Dr. Wickham contemplating a removal from Williamsburg to Richmond - which he accomplished during that year, it became necessary for my father to provide for me some other home. This he did accordingly, and placed me in the house and under the special direction of Bishop Madison, the President of William and Mary college - I now commenced with much zeal and ardour a new career, in this guided by the advice of my very worthy preceptor, and stimulated by the example of my friend Thomson, who also entered college at this time, I never flagged or abated my exertion in any material degree. - I read a good deal and reflected much upon what I did read, and made myself well acquainted with it. I performed all my college duties and exercises with great punctuality and in such a mode as always gave me the highest standing in all my classes, and often attracted the particular notice and high commendation of each of the professors.

In this way was passed the whole of this year, to me, the most useful and profitable I think of any I had then passed I think

An accident however occurred to me at this time which had very nearly put a period to all my hopes and terminated my existence. It has no connexion with my future story but as it made a very strong impression upon me at the time, and very probably interest you I will here relate it

The winter of 1790-91 was uncommonly severe, the cold was so intense that all the water courses were blocked up and James river itself frozen over a great way below my father's house for several weeks in succession. During this winter

Mr Wickham had married my father's half sister, and Kingsmill was a place of a good deal of gaiety - While the frost was most severe, I invited two of my ~~schoolfellows~~ fellow-students (Robert Carter who lived in the same room with one at Mr Madison's) and Robert Bannister, to go down with me to my father's on a visit. A creek which bounded my father's estate westwardly, ascended to within a short distance of the College and our plan was to skate down this creek to its mouth, and ^{thence} down the river opposite Kingsmill. Accordingly after dinner ~~was~~ prepared our skates, and walking to the head of the creek, descended it rapidly to its mouth, and there entered James river. The cold was so intense that the river had frozen while it was agitated by the air, and we found the ice here therefore very very rough, and being covered by a slight fall of snow the skating upon it was not agreeable - In the distance however we discovered a field of ice, apparently quite smooth and black, which seemed to promise much more pleasant amusement. Thither therefore we proceeded, I lead the way, and arriving at this smooth spot first, dashed upon it at once, and crossed the field with great celerity and much pleasure. When I reached the opposite and turned round, I discovered both my companions still standing on the rough ice, as if afraid to venture on that over which I had just passed safely. I therefore set off to re-cross the field and to assure them there was no danger. My example induced Bannister no longer to hesitate, and he immediately came off to join me. The ice although sufficiently strong to sustain one, was not thick enough to bear us both and as soon as we approached each other, the ice gave way with a horrible crash under our united weight, and we were plunged into the river. Carter seeing us both sink took it for granted we were both lost forever, and immediately made for the nearest land, shrieking most loudly. We soon rose however and being both good swimmers we didn't find much difficulty in sustaining ourselves above water, even incumbered as we were. So soon as we recovered from the first shock we saw, that the only hope of escape was, to break the ice before us, (which was smooth as glass,) until we reached the rough ice, for the smooth ice was so slippery we could get no hold of it. We immediately entered upon this task with desperate efforts. The sharp edges of the ice mangled our limbs and bodies each instant we broke it, and on blood