

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 Sumenes. 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 me to him and in the presence of my tutor and all the other gentlemen, extolled my exhibition in such flattering terms, that I was 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 Mr. Wythe. They had been very intimate in their early days; and altho' my grandfather never went out then and Mr. 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 Mr. Wythe very immediately recognized me, and seeing my grandfather caress me as he did, he repeated to him with high eulogies the occurrences of my examination. Pleased to hear this account (which I had ~~account~~ ~~which~~ ~~he~~ before told him) from Mr. Wythe himself, my grandfather requested him to examine me again; and he did so. I was then reading Caesar's Commentaries, and Mr. 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 portion of the Roman history and to ancient Geography of the Roman Empire at that time. I answered all the questions, and performed all that was required of me so entirely to Mr. Wythe's satisfaction, that he (p. 126) 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. Wythe) 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. Tythe 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 us 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 suffering- Altho' he had never left his house for several years, yet so long as I was confined at my father's house 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 headless wildness of my numerous playfellows, I was kept from school for some months after I returned to my grandfathers house. My education was not neglected however during this interval. My grandfather 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 which my grandfather perfectly understood. At this critical period of my life just as I had begun Cicero and Virgil in the Latin and Homer & Xenophon in the Greek, I sustained the heaviest misfortune which I had ever felt in the (p. 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 connection 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 sentiment, 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 losing 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 irrevocably 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 (p. 128) 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 Mr. 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 occupation, and examined me very closely as to my studies. He said he 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 Mr. 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 fathers absence, he very kindly offered to take me under his charge. My father was delighted at this unexpected overture, to which he very willingly assented and the very next day I was sent to attend Mr. Wythe who resided but a short distance from our house.

Before I proceed to give any further account of myself, let me make you somewhat acquainted with this great and good man, under whose tuition I passed several of the succeeding years of my life. Mr. Wythe was a native of the county of Elisabeth - City. I have often heard him say that he was interely 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. Long 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, (p. 129) and Natural Philosophy. He therefore may very properly be considered as one of the ~~rare~~ rare examples the world has 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, Mr. Wythe by his unwearied industry, soon acquired a very extensive knowledge of this science, in all its branches, and obtaining a licence, returned to his native county, where

he commenced the practice of the law about the year 1748. He was then elected a member of the house of delegates Burgess, and continued to represent the County of Elizabeth<sup>City</sup> 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 assembled collected. At this bar, his indefatigable industry, extensive knowledge, and profound research, speedily acquired for him very high and well merited distinction; 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 Mr. Pendleton was most popular, and his manners more courtly than those of Mr. 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 Mr. Wythe were very polished indeed, and full of dignity and grace. Mixing much more with the world, and more conversant with men than Mr. Wythe, Mr. 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 Mr. Wythe's character, carried him always straight to his object, so soon as he was convinced it was proper and (p. 130) in the pursuit of what he thought right, he was headless and utterly indifferent ~~indeed~~ 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; which 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. <sup>P</sup>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 practitioner, 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 sound 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 thus 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 skill 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 length in uprooting the basis upon which society itself rested, rather than hazard the success of the scheme, he deemed so essential to the liberty of the people. While Mr. Pendleton calmly presided as chief of the Executive in the Committee of safety, (p. 131) Mr. Wythe altho' then an old man, presented himself in his hunting shirt to Col. Lewis proposing to enter the ranks of his detachment as a 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. Mr. Pendleton was elected by the Convention (of which he was a member) to be one of the delegates to the first Congress, that assembled in Philadelphia in Sept. 1774. Upon the death of Mr. Randolph during the next year who had long presided both in the Assembly and Convention, the latter body then assembled in Richmond, chose Mr. Pendleton as their President and appointed Mr. 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 Mr. Jefferson. When the new Government of Virginia went into operation in 1776, and the dissolution of the old government took place, a complete a complete revision and re modification of all the statutes became necessary for this important duty Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Wythe were selected by the Assembly. - The execution of this important task making it necessary for Mr. Wythe to relinquish his situation in Congress, and Mr. Pendleton having then retired from the Assembly, in 1777 Mr. 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, Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Wythe, and Mr. Nicholas, were made Judges of the Court of Chancery. While occupying this situation in the year 1786 Mr. 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 Mr. 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. Mr. Pendleton was elected the President of this body, and Mr. Wythe presided over its deliberations, as Chairman (p. 132) of the Committee of the whole. When the Courts were re-organized in 1788 Mr. Pendleton was made the chief Justice of the Court of Appeals which and Mr. 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, 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 Mr. 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 embarrassments 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. Mr. Jefferson was greatly indebted to him for the aid he rendered in improving and forming his

blind; 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. Wherever 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 1785, 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 Mr. Wythe. I lived with my father, but attended Mr. 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 everything connected with the life and opinions of this great and good man must be interesting, I will here describe it. I attended him (p. 133) 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 ~~excellent~~ book, to which any accidental circumstances 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 me 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 Mathematical 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 however 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 Mr. Wythe had supplied him with a stock (p. 136) almost

in exhaustible, which he told in a manner calculated to excite such 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 me to acquire such 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 Mr. 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 Mr. Wythe. In the autumn of next year 1787 my father having purchased Kingsmill, and being about to remove there, and Mr. 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 Mr. 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 (p. 195) I had already examined the preceding day became the selected books for our next days reading. This previous preparation, and the benefit I derived from uninterrupted intercourse with my venerable tutor and from his instructive conversation made my progress and improvement much more rapid than it had ever been. I now became a great favorite 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 witness some of my performances. About this time Mr. 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 him 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 Mr. Wythe, what almost any other man than 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 burdens; 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 Mr. Wythe my father placed me with my friend Mr. John Dickham. I have mentioned this gentleman before. When hostilities ceased with (p. 136) Great Britain in 1782, he left Mr. 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 Prentis's, and afterwards with an old man by the name of Talliaferro, who resided near Mr. Wythe whom I continued to attend regularly as I had done previously. Deprived now of the use of Mr. Wythe's valuable library for my preparatory studies, and losing much of the benefit I had derived by a perpetual association with him, my improvement in some respects, was certainly not equal to what it had been during the last year; but I derived full com-

penetration for this less probably, in the society of my friend Mr. Wickham, and from my intercourse with two young gentlemen of Petersburg, who now became scholars of Mr. 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 Curtius 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 were in the same pursuits with myself.

Early in the year 1789 the re-organization of the Courts, which had then recently been effected by imposing upon Mr. 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 Richmond Williamsburg, and fixed himself in Richmond, where he (p. 137) continued to reside until his death. When Mr. Wythe left Williamsburg, my father and Mr. 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 Mr. 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 these several professors, I did not derive much benefit from any of them save only the Mathematical professors with whom my previous studies under Mr. Wythe enabled me to keep up very well. - Although

I derived but little benefit from attending college during this broken course however, I did not mispend my time. By the advise of Mr. Wickham I began a regular course of history, which I prosecuted with but a 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 Mr. 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 advise 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 an 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 above below my father's house for several weeks in succession. During this winter (p. 138) 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 school-fellows fellow-students (Robert Carter who lived in the same room with me at Mr. Madison's) and Robert Hannister, 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 we 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 affraid 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 Hannister 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 our blood (p. 139) streamed copiously. But it was the only chance we had to save our lives, and we did not desist. At length Hannister, whose strength was nearly exhausted, made some violent effort, which failing he sunk. He was drifted immediately upon us however and I caught him by the hair, and so saved him from drowning, and even afterwards by some means of which I am not now conscious, I fortunately succeeded in extricating my self, and pulled him out after me.

But our danger was not over yet. When we got into the air our wet clothes immediately froze upon us and became so stiff and heavy and the soles of our boots so slippery that we could not walk. We therefore assisted each other in cutting these off, the only means by which we could rid of them. And in this situation, bareheaded, barefooted and without coats we commenced our journey for the nearest land which was distant much more than an mile from us. It was now nearly dusk, and before we proceeded far, either our vision failed us, or it became so exceedingly dark that we could not discern the land, and were directed solely by conjecture. How long we continued wandering about in this manner I know not, we began to experience however that drowsiness and

torpor which always results from stagnating circulation and felt an uncom-  
querable disposition to sleep. We were both fully sensible of the cause of this  
and that if we went to sleep, we should awake no more and therefore for a time stim-  
ulated each other to further exertions. But at last we could no longer resist  
the inclination and stretched ourselves upon the ice to sleep. In the very effort  
act of doing so a shriek of despair was wildly uttered by us both, that was instantly  
answered by a halloo very near us. Roused by this I raised myself up for a moment  
and hailed in reply begging for assistance. I could do no more but, again sunk  
down by the side of Hannister who already slept soundly. Before I closed my eyes  
however, a sailor stood beside me, who finding our situation took Hannister on  
his back and me by the hand, quickly carried us to his vessel, which lay  
but a little way off frozen up in the ice, but concealed from our view by the  
darkness. When we got on board the vessel we were both stripped naked by the good  
sailor, who after bathing us first all over with cold water, and chafing our limbs  
and bodies, at last rolled us up together in the same blanket, and putting us into  
his narrow berth kindled a large fire in his cabin and closing the door, left us  
to go to my father's house for assistance. He had scarcely left the vessel,  
when the fire was communicated to the wooden chimney, and setting that in a blaze  
would soon have consumed the vessel and all in it but for his instantaneous  
return. With admirable presence of mind he instantly threw the chimney over-  
board, and throwing our wet garments upon the fire soon extinguished it. Our  
lives were thus twice preserved by this good man for we were both fast asleep  
and knew nothing of the fire and although so near us.

Having secured every thing better, he set off a second time for my father's  
house, and returning to the shore near us with a carriage and dry clothes for

us, we were soon conveyed to my father's house where we arrived about midnight, our limbs swollen to an immense size occasioned by the cold, and the irritation of the numerous wounds we had received on the ice. For my part I never felt the slightest inconvenience afterwards from this dreadful occurrence, except what was produced by the pain of the wounds into which the cold having penetrated deep, they were long in healing and very troublesome. Poor Banister did not escape so easily- He caught a violent cold, that falling on his lungs terminated in a pulmonary consumption, which brought him to his grave during the next year. Nothing particular occurred to me during the residue of the year 1791. I still lived with Bishop Madison, and my college studies and duties went on regularly as before. In the spring of the year 1792 after an examination of all the classes, Mr. Madison being much pleased with my performance, advised me to prepare myself to apply for a degree. I refused at first, not believing him in earnest, but upon communicating this to my friend Thompson, added his persuasions so strongly, that I at last determined to do so. The mode of obtaining a degree in William and Mary was very different then from what it was afterwards. The course was this. The student who wished to obtain a degree, notified this wish to the President, and applied for an order for his examination. This order the President immediately gave him, directed to some one of the professors. When the examination by this professor was completed, (which usually occupied several days) the student received from him a sealed report directed to the President. Upon presenting this, he received from the President a new order for examination directed to some other professor, who pursued the same course with the first. When all these reports were presented if a majority of them were unfavourable to the applicant he was told by the President that he was not considered as sufficiently (p.141) prepared to receive a degree. But if some one or two only of the reports were unfavourable,