

## CHAPTER V.

### AS AIDE-DE-CAMP.

In spite of the way in which the fight at Great Mead-ows came to an end Gov-er-nor Din-wid-die made up his mind that the troops, led by Wash-ing-ton, should cross the hills and drive the French from Fort Du-quesne.

Wash-ing-ton thought it a wild scheme; for the snow lay deep on the hills, his men were worn out, and had no arms, nor tents, nor clothes, nor food, such as would fit them to take the field. It would need gold to buy these things, as well as to pay for fresh troops.

Gold was placed in the Gov-er-nor's hands to use as he pleased. Our force was spread out in-to ten bands, of 100 men each. The King's troops were put in high rank, and Col-o-nel Wash-ing-ton was made Cap-tain. This, of course, was more than he could bear, so he left the ar-my at once, and with a sad heart.

In a short time Gov-er-nor Sharpe of Ma-ry-land was placed by King George at the head of all the force that was to fight the French. He knew that he would need the aid of Wash-ing-ton, and he begged him to come back and serve with him in the field. But Wash-ing-ton did not like the terms, and paid no heed to the call.

The next Spring, Gen-er-al Brad-dock came from Eng-land with two large bands of well-trained troops, which it was thought would drive the French back in-to Can-a-da. Our men were full of joy, and thought the war would soon be at an end. Brad-dock urged Wash-ing-ton to join him in the field. Wash-ing-ton felt that he could be of great use, as he knew the land and the ways of red-men, so he took up the sword once more, as Brad-dock's aide-de-camp.

Ben-ja-min Frank-lin, who had charge of the mails, lent his aid to the cause, and did all that he could to serve Brad-dock and his men. Brad-dock, with his staff and a guard of horse-men, set out for Will's Creek, by the way of Win-ches-ter, in A-pril, 1755. He rode in a fine turn-out that he had bought of Gov-er-nor Sharpe, which he soon found out was not meant for use on rough roads. But he had fought with dukes, and men of high rank, and was fond of show, and liked to put on a great deal of style.

He thought that this would make the troops look up to him, and would add much to his fame.

In May the troops went in-to camp, and Wash-ing-ton had a chance to learn much of the art of war that was new and strange to him, and to see some things that made him smile.

All the rules and forms of camp-life were kept up. One of the head men who died while in camp, was borne to the grave in this style: A guard marched in front of the corpse, the cap-tain of it in the rear.

Each man held his gun up-side down, as a sign that the dead would war no more, and the drums beat the dead march. When near the grave the guard formed two lines that stood face to face, let their guns rest on the ground, and leaned their heads on the butts. The corpse was borne twixt these two rows of men with the sword and sash on the top of the box in which he lay, and in the rear of it the men of rank marched two and two. When the corpse was put in the ground, the guard fired their guns three times, and then all the troops marched back to camp.

The red-men--the Del-a-wares and Shaw-nees came to aid Gen-er-al Brad-dock. With them were White Thun-der, who had charge of the "speech-belts," and Sil-ver Heels, who was swift of foot. Half-King was dead, and White Thun-der reigned in his stead.

The red-men had a camp to them-selves, where they would sing, and dance, and howl and yell for half the night. It was fun for the King's troops to watch them at their sports and games, and they soon found a great charm in this wild sort of life.

In the day time the red-men and their squaws, rigged up in their plumes and war paint, hung round Brad-dock's camp, and gazed spell-bound at the troops as they went through their drills.

But this state of things did not last long, and strife rose twixt the red and white men, and some of the red-skins left the camp. They told Brad-dock they would meet him on his march, but they did not keep their word.

Wash-ing-ton was sent to Will-iams-burg to bring the gold of which there was need, and when he came back he found that Brad-dock had left a small guard at Fort Cum-ber-land, on Will's Creek, and was then on his way to Fort Du-quesne. He would give no heed to those who knew more of the back-woods than he did, nor call on the red-men to serve as scouts and guides. He was not used to that kind of war-fare, and scorned to be taught by such a youth as George Wash-ing-ton.

The march was a hard one for man and beast. Up steep hills and through rough roads they had to drag the guns, and Brad-dock soon found out that these new fields were not like the old ones on which he had been wont to fight.

Hard as it was for his pride to seek the aid of so young a man, he was at last forced to ask Wash-ing-ton to help him out of these straits.

They had then made a halt at Lit-tle Mead-ows. Wash-ing-ton said there was no time to lose. They must push on at once.

While at this place Cap-tain Jack, and his brave band of hunts-men came in-to camp. They were fond of the chase, and were well-armed with knives and guns, and looked quite like a tribe of red-skins as they came out of the wood.

Brad-dock met them in a stiff sort of way. Cap-tain Jack stepped in front of his band and said that he and his men were used to rough

work, and knew how to deal with the red-men, and would be glad to join the force.

Brad-dock looked on him with a gaze of scorn, and spoke to him in a way that roused the ire of Cap-tain Jack. He told his men what had been said, and the whole band turned their backs on the camp, and went through the woods to their old haunts where they were known and prized at their true worth.

In the mean-time Wash-ing-ton, who had had a head-ache for some days, grew so ill that he could not ride on his horse, and had to be borne part of the time in a cart.

Brad-dock--who well knew what a loss his death would be--said that he should not go on. Wash-ing-ton plead with him, but Brad-dock was firm, and made him halt on the road. Here he was left with a guard, and in care of Doc-tor Craik, and here he had to stay for two long weeks. By that time he could move, but not with-out much pain, for he was still quite weak. It was his wish to join the troops in time for the great blow, and while yet too weak to mount his horse, he set off with his guards in a close cart, and reached Brad-dock's camp on the eighth of Ju-ly.

He was just in time, for the troops were to move on Fort Du-quesne the next day. The fort was on the same side of the Mon-on-ga-he-la as the camp, but twixt them lay a pass two miles in length, with the stream on the left and a high range of hills on the right. The plan was to

ford the stream near the camp, march on the west bank of the stream for five miles or so, and then cross to the east side and push on to the fort.

By sun-rise the next day the troops turned out in fine style, and marched off to the noise of drum and fife. To Wash-ing-ton this was a grand sight. Though still weak and ill, he rode his horse, and took his place on the staff as aide-de-camp.

At one o'clock the whole force had crossed the ford north of the fort, and were on their way up the bank, when they were met by a fierce and sharp fire from foes they could not see. Wild war-whoops and fierce yells rent the air. What Wash-ing-ton feared, had come to pass.

Brad-dock did his best to keep the troops in line; but as fast as they moved up, they were cut down by foes screened by rocks and trees.

Now and then one of the red-men would dart out of the woods with a wild yell to scalp a red-coat who had been shot down. Wild fear seized Brad-dock's men, who fired and took no aim. Those in the front rank were killed by those in the rear. Some of the Vir-gin-i-a troops took post back of trees, and fought as the red-men did. Wash-ing-ton thought it would be a good plan for Brad-dock's men to do the same. But he thought there was but one way for troops to fight, and that brave men ought not to skulk in that way. When some of them took to the trees, Brad-dock stormed at them, and called them hard names, and struck them with the flat of his sword.

All day long Wash-ing-ton rode here and there in the midst of the fight. He was in all parts of the field, a fine mark for the guns of the foe, and yet not a shot struck him to do him harm. Four small shots went through his coat. Two of his steeds were shot down; and though those who stood near him fell dead at his side, Wash-ing-ton had not one wound.

The fight raged on. Death swept through the ranks of the red-coats. The men at the guns were seized with fright. Wash-ing-ton sprang from his horse, wheeled a brass field-piece with his own hand, and sent a good shot through the woods. But this act did not bring the men back to their guns.

Brad-dock was on the field the whole day, and did his best to turn the tide. But most of his head-men had been slain in his sight; five times had he been forced to mount a fresh horse, as one by one was struck down by the foe-man's shot, and still he kept his ground and tried to check the flight of his men.

At last a shot struck him in the right arm and went in-to his lungs. He fell from his horse, and was borne from the field. The troops took fright at once, and most of them fled. The yells of the red-men still rang in their ears.

"All is lost!" they cried.

"Brad-dock is killed!"

Wash-ing-ton had been sent to a camp 40 miles off, and was on his way back when he heard the sad news.

But Brad-dock did not die at once. He was brought back to camp, and for two days lay in a calm state but full of pain. Now and then his lips would move and he was heard to say, "Who would have thought it! We shall know how to deal with them the next time!"

He died at Fort Ne-ces-si-ty on the night of Ju-ly 13. Had he done as Wash-ing-ton told him he might have saved his own life, and won the day. But he was a proud man, and when he made up his mind to do a thing he would do it at all risks. Through this fault he missed the fame he hoped to win, lost his life, and found a grave in a strange land.

His loss was a great gain to Wash-ing-ton, for all felt that he, so calm, so grave, so free from fear, was the right sort of man to lead troops to war. Those who had seen him in the field thought that he bore a charmed life, for though he stood where the shot fell thick and fast he was not hurt, and showed no signs of fear. But Wash-ing-ton was weak, and in need of rest, and as the death of Brad-dock left him with no place in the force, he went back to Mount Ver-non where he thought to spend the rest of his days.

The fight which he took part in as aide-de-camp, and which had so sad an end, goes by the name of Brad-dock's de-feat.