CHAPTER V.

FRENCH OCCUPATION AT THE HEAD OF THE OHIO — WASHINGTON'S CAMPAIGN OF 1754 IN THE YOUGHIOGHENY VALLEY.

THE result of Washington's expedition was to show beyond all doubt that the design of the French was to occupy, in force, all the country bordering the headwaters of the Ohio River. Thereupon, Governor Dinwiddie transmitted Washington's statement to England, and meanwhile, without waiting for instructions from the home government, commenced preparations for raising a force to be sent to the "Forks of the Ohio" (Pittsburgh), to take possession of that point, and to construct a defensive work to enable them to hold the position against the French. A party had already gone forward from Virginia across the mountains for the same purpose, it being the one alluded to in Washington's journal of the trip to Le Bœuf, where he says, "The 6th (of January, on his return from Gist's to Wills' Creek) we met seventeen horses loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the fork of the Ohio, and the day after some families going out to settle." But these were not troops sent by Dinwiddie, or under provincial authority; they were merely employés and colonists going out under the auspices of the "Ohio Company," to locate and to build a fort or block-house for the protection of themselves and the company's interests on the frontier.

The first military force that moved westward having the Ohio River for its objective point was a company under Captain William Trent, which marched from Virginia in January, 1754. From Wills' Creek Captain Trent moved his force of about thirty-three men[1] over the same route which Washington had traversed to the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny (at the present village of Somerfield), and thence to Gist's settlement. From Gist's he marched to the Monongahela, at the mouth of Redstone Creek, where his men were for a time employed in erecting a storehouse (called the "Hangard") for the Ohio Company. After completing it they continued their march to the present site of the city of Pittsburgh, which place they reached on the 17th of February, and there met Christopher Gist and several others. They immediately commenced work in the construction of the fort, preparation for which had been begun by the party which Washington met on his way to Wills' Creek.

Not long after the commencement of the work, Captain Trent returned by way of the Hangard and Gist's to Wills' Creek, and Lieut. Frazier went to his home on the Monongahela, at the mouth of Turtle Creek, leaving the other commissioned officer, Ensign Ward, in charge of the men engaged in the construction of the fort.

The work progressed slowly (on account of the severity of the weather) for about two months, when suddenly, on the 17th of April, Ensign Ward found himself confronted by a hostile force of about seven hundred French and Indians, having with them eighteen pieces of light artillery. This force, which had come down the Allegheny River in sixty bateaux and a great number of canoes, was under command of Captain Contrecœur, who at once demanded a surrender of the work and position. The responsibility lay wholly with Ward, as he was the only commissioned officer with the force; but the Half-King, Tanacharison, who was present, and firm as ever in his loyalty to the English, advised the ensign to reply to Contrecœur, that as he was not an officer of rank, and had no authority to answer the demand, he hoped that the French commander would wait until the arrival of his superior officer, whom he would at once send for. But Contrecœur refused to accede to this, and demanded immediate surrender, saying that, in case of non-compliance, he would immediately take possession by force of arms.

It was of course impracticable for this ensign's command of about thirty-three men to hold the position against a force of more than twenty times their number, with artillery; and, therefore, the unfinished fort was surrendered without further parley. The French

[1] That the strength of Trent's company did not exceed thirty-three men is stated in the deposition (elsewhere given in this work) of Ensign (afterwards Major) Ward, the officer in command when the company and the fort which they were building at the head of the Ohio were surrendered to the French about two months later. There appears no reason to doubt Ward's statement, as he was certainly in a position to know the facts; yet it is difficult to reconcile it with what is found in a letter addressed by Governor Dinwiddie, of Virginia, to Governor Hamilton, of Pennsylvania, dated Williamsburg, March 21, 1754, and also in a letter from George Croghan to Governor Hamilton, dated March 23, 1754. In the letter first referred to, Dinwiddie says, " . . . In January I commissioned William Trent to raise one hundred men; he had got seventy and has begun a fort at the forks of the Monongalio." And Croghan (who had then just returned east from the Ohio) said in his letter, "Mr. Trent had received a commission from the Governor of Virginia, and had enlisted about seventy men before I left Ohio. I left him and his men at the mouth of Monongalio building a fort, which seemed to give the Indians great pleasure and put them in high spirits." (*Colonial Records*, vi., page 21.) Perhaps Croghan included soldiers and laborers, while Ward had reference only to the former. There seems to be no other explanation of the discrepancy in the statements.

commander received Ensign Ward with great politeness, invited him to supper that evening, and entertained him for the night. On the morning of the 18th, Ward took his departure, marched his men up the valley of the Monongahela, and on the 19th arrived at the mouth of Redstone Creek. From that point he pushed on across the territory of the present county of Fayette, by way of Gist's, and thence to the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny, and arrived at Wills' Creek on the 22d of April. The fort which Ward had been compelled to surrender to Contrecœur was completed by the French force with all practicable dispatch, and named "Fort du Quesne" in honor of the Marquis du Quesne, the French Governor-General of Canada.[1]

While the events already related were in progress, troops, intended for the occupation of the "Forks of the Ohio," were being raised and organized under the authority of Governor Dinwiddie, in Virginia, and the first detachment of these was sent forward under command of Lieut.-Col. George Washington, who, on the 31st of March, had received from the Governor a commission (dated March 15th) of that grade in the Virginia regiment, of which Col. Joshua Fry was the commanding officer, with others to take the troops then quartered in Alexandria, and to march them to the Ohio, "there to help Capt. Trent to build forts, and to defend the possessions of his Majesty against the attempts and hostilities of the French."

The detachment thus ordered forward under Washington, consisted of two companies of infantry, commanded respectively by Capt. Peter Hogg and Lieut. Jacob Van Braam.[2] Besides the commanding officer and the two company commandants, the force consisted of "five subalterns, two sergeants, six corporals, one drummer, and one hundred and twenty soldiers; one surgeon,[3] and one Swedish gentleman, who was a volunteer."

On Tuesday, the 2d of April, at noon, the force marched out of Alexandria with two wagons, and camped that night six miles from the town. From that time nothing of note occurred in fifteen days' marching, except that the detachment was joined by a small company under Capt. Stephen,[4] bringing the total strength of the command up to about one hundred and fifty men.

Washington kept no regular journal on the expedition, but he made hasty notes of many occurrences; which notes were captured by the French at the battle of the Monongahela in 1755, and were by them preserved and published, though Washington said afterwards that they had distorted parts of them. One memorandum, dated April 19th, is to this effect: "Met an express who had letters from Capt. Trent, at the Ohio,[5] demanding a reinforcement with all speed, as he hourly expected a body of eight hundred French. I tarried at Job Pearsall's for the arrival of the troops, where they came the next day. When I received the above express, I dispatched a courier to Col. Fry, to give him notice of it.

"The 20th.—Came down to Col. Cresap's [Old Town, Md.] to order the detachment, and on my route had notice that the fort was taken by the French. That news was confirmed by Mr. Ward, the ensign of Capt. Trent, who had been obliged to surrender to a body

[1] The following from the "Calendar of Virginia State Papers and other Manuscripts, 1652 to 1781, preserved in the capitol at Richmond; arranged and edited by William Palmer, M.D., under authority of the Legislature of Virginia, vol. i., 1876," gives authentic information as to Captain Trent's operations at the head of the Ohio, and the surrender of the partially constructed fort by Ensign Ward to the French commander, viz.:

"Deposition taken March 10, 1777, at the house of Mr. John Ormsby, in Pittsburgh, &c. Agreeable to Notice given to Col. George Morgan, Agent for the Indiana Company, before James Wood and Charles Simms, pursuant to a resolution of the Hon^ble the Convention of Virginia appointing them Commissioners for Collecting Evidence on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia against the several Persons pretending to claim Lands with in the Territory and Limits thereof, under Deeds of Purchases from Indians.

"Major Edward Ward Deposeth and saith that in the beginning of the year 1754, William Trent Esquire was appointed by Governour Dinwiddie of Virginia, Captain of a Company to be raised, of which this Deponent was appointed Ensign, by the said Trent. Who assembled the Chiefs and Deputies of the Six Nations, and requested of them permission to Erect a Trading House at the Junction of the Allegheny and Monongahale Rivers, to carry on a Free and open Trade with the Six Nations, and their dependants; which was granted by the said deputies, with this restriction, that he was to form no Settlements or improvements on the said Land, but on the Contrary to Evacuate the same when required by the Six Nations.

"After which the said Capt. Trent inlisted a number of men not exceeding thirty-three, and proceeded to erect a Fort at the place before mentioned. That on the 17th of April following, and before the Fort was nearly completed, this Deponent, who commanded in the absence of Capt. Trent, was put to the necessity of surrendering the possession to a Superior number of Troops. Commanded by a French Officer, who demanded it in the name of the King of France; at which time the Half-King, and a number of the Six Nations in the English Interests were present. This deponent further saith that in the year 1752, and before his surrender to the French, there was a small Village, Inhabited by the Delawares, on the South East side of the Allegheny River, in the neighborhood of that place, and that old Kittanning, on the same side of the said River, was then Inhabited by the Delawares; that about one-third of the Shawanese Inhabited Loggs Town on the West Side of the Ohio, and tended Corn on the East Side of the River—and the other part of the nation lived on the Scioto River. That the Deputies of the Six Nations after the surrender Joined the Virginia Forces, Commanded by Colonel George Washington, who was then on his march at the Little Meadows, and continued with him in the service of Virginia till after the defeat of Monsieur La Force and a party of French Troops under his Command. And the deponent further saith that subsequent to the defeat of Colo. Washington at the great Meadows, the Shawanese, Delawares, and many of the Western Tribes of Indians, and an inconsiderable number of Renegades of the Seneca Tribe, one of the Six Nations, joined the French, and Prosecuted a War against the Frontiers of the States of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, till the conclusion of the Peace with the Indians in the year 1759, but that he ever understood that the Body of the Six Nations continued the firm Friends of the English. . . ."

[2] The same person who, in the preceding autumn, had accompanied Washington to Fort Le Bœuf as French interpreter.

[3] Dr. James Craik, afterwards the family physician of Washington, and his intimate and life-long friend.

[4] Afterwards Gen. Stephen, of the Revolutionary army, under Washington.

[5] Capt. Trent appears to have attempted to conceal the fact that he had absented himself from his command at the Forks of the Ohio, leaving Ensign Ward in charge, an offense for which he was severely censured by Gov. Dinwiddie, who, on discovering it, proposed to have him court-martialed for it.

of one thousand French and upwards,[1] under command of Capt. Contrecœur, who was come down from Venango with sixty bateaux and three hundred canoes, and who, having planted eighteen pieces of cannon against the fort, afterwards had sent him a summons to depart."

Ensign Ward, as before mentioned, arrived at Wills' Creek on the 22d. Washington, on receiving Ward's account of the surrender of the fort to the French, convened a council of war at Wills' Creek to determine on the proper course to be pursued in this exigency. The council was held on the 23d, and decided "that it would be proper to advance as far as Redstone Creek, on Monongahela, about thirty-seven miles on this side of the fort, and there to raise a fortification, clearing a road broad enough to pass with all our artillery and baggage, and there to wait for fresh orders." The reasons for this decision were, "First, That the mouth of Redstone is the first convenient place on the river Monongahela. Second, That stores are already built at that place for the provisions of the company, wherein our ammunition may be laid up; our great guns may be also sent by water whenever we should think it convenient to attack the fort. Third, We may easily (having all these conveniences) preserve our people from the ill consequences of inaction, and encourage the Indians, our allies, to remain in our interests." When the council had arrived at this decision, Ensign Ward was sent forward to acquaint Governor Dinwiddie with the facts as well as to make his own report, taking with him an interpreter, and one of the young Indians, while another Indian runner was sent to the Half-King, at the Ohio, to notify him of the projected advance of the Virginians.[2] "I thought it proper also," said Washington, "to acquaint the Governors of Maryland and Pennsylvania of the news."

After a few brief preparations Washington's forces moved out on the path leading to the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny, cutting out the road as they proceeded; so that it was not until the 9th of May that they reached the Little Crossings (Castleman's River). While they were at this place (May 11th) Washington sent out a reconnoitring party of twenty-five men under command of Capt. Stephen and Ensign Peyronie, with orders to scout along the line of advance, as far as Gist's place, "to inquire where La Force[3] and his party were,—and in case they were in the neighborhood, to cease pursuing, and take care of themselves;" and, also, "to examine closely all the woods round about," and if any straggling Frenchman should be found away from the others, to capture, and bring him in to be examined for information. "We were exceedingly desirous," said Washington, "to know if there was any possibility of sending down anything by water, as also to find out some convenient place about the mouth of Red Stone Creek, where we could build a fort."

Washington's forces remained three days at the Little Crossings. Some accounts have it that they made the long halt at this place for the purpose of building a bridge over the river, but this is rendered improbable by the following entry, having reference to the day on which they moved on from their three days' encampment, viz.: "May the 12th.—Marched away, and went on a rising ground, where we halted to dry ourselves, for we had been obliged to ford a deep river, where our shortest men had water up to their arm-pits." On the same day Washington received, by courier, letters informing him that Col. Fry was at Winchester with upwards of one hundred men, and would start in a few days to join the advance detachment; also that Colonel Innis was on the way with three hundred and fifty Carolinians. On the 16th the column met two traders, who said they were fleeing for fear of the French,—parties of whom had been seen near Gist's. These traders told Washington that they believed it to be impossible to clear a road over which wagons or artillery-pieces could be taken to the mouth of Redstone Creek. On the 17th, Ensign Ward rejoined Washington, having come from Williamsburg, with a letter from the Governor, notifying him that Captain Mackay, with an independent company of one hundred men, exclusive of officers, was on the way, and that he might expect them at any day. Two Indians came in from "the Ohio" the same evening, and reported that the French at Fort du Quesne were expecting reinforcements sufficient to make their total force sixteen hundred men.

On the 18th the column reached the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny (Somerfield), where the companies encamped, and remained several days. The halt at this place was necessary to wait for lower water in the river, which had been swollen by recent rains; but besides this, the young commander wished to examine the stream below, hoping to find that it was navigable for bateaux, or canoes of sufficient size to carry cannon and stores. It is not improbable that the opinions so confidently expressed by the two fugitive traders, who came in on the 16th, and others, as to the impossibility of opening a practicable road for guns and heavy material to the mouth of Redstone Creek, had impressed him so strongly as to cause him

[1] Ward overestimated the numbers of Contrecœur's force, as it was very natural that he should do, under the circumstances.

[2] The Half-King had sent by some of his Indians to Washington, at Wills' Creek, an address or speech with belts of wampum. To that speech Washington now sent back by the runner a written reply, assuring him of the friendship and gratitude of the English, and that they were moving towards the Ohio in force, and clearing a road for a much larger army, with great guns. He also requested the Half-King to come up and meet him on the way, to assist him by his wise counsel. To this request Tanacharison responded by meeting Washington between the Youghiogheny and Gist's, as will be seen.

[3] La Force was a Frenchman, who had been sent out from Fort du Quesne about the first of May with a small party of French and Indians ostensibly for the purpose of capturing deserters; but Washington, who had received information from an Indian runner sent by the Half-King, believed they had other purposes in view, and therefore ordered the reconnoissance.

to entertain the idea of making his military base on the Youghiogheny instead of on the Monongahela as first intended.

Whatever may have been his reasons, it is certain that Washington decided on, and made, the exploration, commencing the voyage on the 20th, in a canoe, "with Lieut. West, three soldiers, and one Indian." Following "the river along about half a mile," they were obliged to go ashore, where they met Peter Suver, a trader, who spoke discouragingly of their chances of finding a passage by water, "which," says Washington, "caused me to alter my mind of causing canoes to be made; I ordered my people to wade, as the waters were shallow enough, and continued myself going down the river in the canoe. . . . We gained Turkey Foot by the beginning of the night."

On the morning of the 21st they remained some time at Turkey Foot, "to examine the place, which we found very convenient to build a fort.[1] From there they passed down the river, finding nearly every variety of channel, sometimes rocky and rapid, and then still and deep, until at last, at a computed distance of about ten miles below Turkey Foot, "it became so rapid as to oblige us to come ashore." Thus ended Washington's exploration of the Youghiogheny, and then the party returned to the camp at the Great Crossings.

Upon the return of Col. Washington from his exploring trip the troops were put in motion, and crossing the Youghiogheny without bridging (the high water having then in a great measure subsided), marched on northwestwardly towards the Great Meadows, at which place they arrived on the 24th, at two o'clock in the afternoon. In the morning of that day, when the column was a few miles southeast of the Meadows, two Indian runners came in from the Ohio with a message from the Half-King saying that "the French army" was already on the march from Fort du Quesne to meet the advancing force of Washington, and also notifying him that Tanacharison and the other chiefs would soon be with him to hold council, as Washington had requested in the dispatch sent to him from Wills' Creek.

On the same afternoon that the troops arrived at the Great Meadows, a trader came in saying that he had come from Gist's, where the evening before he had seen two Frenchmen; he also knew that a strong French force was in the vicinity of Stewart's Crossings on the Youghiogheny. This report confirmed the news received from the Half-King, and thereupon Washington decided to remain for a time at the Meadows, and avail himself of the advantage offered by the position. There were here, as he said in his notes, "two natural intrenchments," which he caused to be strengthened to some extent artificially, and within these slight defenses he placed a part of the troops with the wagons. The troops worked two or three days in strengthening the position, and on the 27th of May Washington wrote: "We have, with nature's assistance, made a good entrenchment, and by clearing the bushes out of the meadows, prepared a *charming* field for an encounter." Probably he never afterwards used so unmilitary an adjective in describing the construction and surroundings of a fortification.

On the 25th several small detachments were sent out from the camp with orders to reconnoitre the road[2] and the Indian trails, to examine the woods and every part of the country thoroughly, "and endeavor to get some news of the French, of their forces, and of their motions." But these parties returned in the evening of the same day without having made any discoveries. On the 26th a messenger (Mr. William Jenkins) arrived, bringing dispatches—though of no great importance—from Col. Fairfax, who, with Governor Dinwiddie, was then at Winchester.

Early on the morning of the 27th, Christopher Gist arrived from his plantation, and reported that at about noon on the preceding day a French detachment of about fifty men had visited his house and committed considerable depredation there. He also said he had seen their tracks within five miles of the Virginians' camp. On receipt of this information, Washington sent out a detachment of seventy-five men under Capt. Hogg, Lieut. Mercer, and Ensign Peyronie, in search of the French force. Information had already been received that a party of Indians, under the friendly Half-King, had come up the Monongahela, and was probably not very far from the Great Meadows. On the evening of the 27th, an Indian messenger from Tanacharison came to Washington with the information that the Half-King—whose camp, he said, was only six miles away—had seen the tracks of two Frenchmen, which he followed stealthily, and had thereby discovered the French party encamped in a rocky ravine, secluded, and difficult of access, and situated about half a mile from the trail.[3]

On receiving this intelligence, Washington was

[1] This seems to show that he then had in contemplation a change in the original plan of operations by making his base on the Youghiogheny instead of the Monongahela.

[2] That is, the path which had been slightly cleared by Capt. Trent, and the Ohio Company's party which had preceded him in the previous winter.

[3] "On the 27th of May the Half-King sent Col. Washington Notice that a Party from the French Army was hankering about his Camp, if he would march some of his People to join them, he did not doubt of cutting them off. Col. Washington marched that Night and came up to the Indians; one of the Indian Runners tracked the French Men's Feet and came up to their Lodgment; they discovered our People about one hundred yards distant, flew to their Arms, and a small Engagement ensued. We lost one Man and another wounded; the French had Twelve killed and Twenty-one taken Prisoners, who are now in our Prison; the Indians scalped many of the dead French, took up the Hatchet against them, sent their Scalps and a String of black Wampum to several other Tribes of Indians, with a desire that they should also take up the Hatchet against the French, which I hope they have done."—*Letter of Gov. Dinwiddie to Gov. Hamilton, of Pennsylvania, dated June* 21, 1854. *Colonial Records*, vi., p. 55.

suspicious that the secret movements of the French were part of a stratagem to draw some of his forces away from the camp and then attack it. He therefore ordered the ammunition to be placed in a safe position, under a guard strong enough to prevent it from capture in case of attack, and then set out immediately, with the rest of his men,[1] for the camp of the Half-King. The night was rainy and very dark; the path over which they traveled was narrow, rough, and hard to distinguish; but they persevered, and in the morning at a little before sunrise reached the Half-King's camp,[2] where, at a council, held with the old sachem, it was determined to proceed at once to attack the French camp.

The party whose movements had been reported by Gist and others was the "French army," of whose departure from Fort Du Quesne Washington had been apprised. In some historical accounts of the campaign it has been stated that it was under command of M. La Force, but this was not the case; it was commanded by M. de Jumonville,[3] a French ensign, who was accompanied by La Force, but the latter was simply a volunteer, and held no military command in the expedition. Afterwards the French authorities and writers claimed that Jumonville himself was not engaged in a military enterprise, but that he was merely an envoy or bearer of dispatches charged by the commandant at Fort du Quesne with the duty of delivering a communication to the commanding officer of the English force; and that the military party which accompanied him was acting simply as his guard while performing this service. But if it was simply a guard to a peaceful envoy, then certainly its leader adopted a very strange cour e in lurking near Washington's encampment for two days, and hiding his men in an obscure and gloomy glen among rocks and brushwood.

It having been determined to attack Jumonville's party, Washington's men and Tanacharison's Indians left the headquarters of the latter, and marched "Indian-file" to near the French camp,[4] where a line was formed, with the English on the right and the Indians on the left, and in this order the combined forces moved to the attack. It was not a complete surprise, for the French discovered their assailants before they were within rifle-range. The right, under Washington, opened fire, and received that of the French. The conflict lasted only about a quarter of an hour, when the French surrendered. Their loss was ten killed and one wounded. Among the killed was M. de Jumonville.[5] All the dead men were scalped by Tanacharison's Indians. Washington's loss was one man killed and two wounded.

The prisoners, twenty-one in number (among whom were La Force, M. Drouillard, and two cadets), were marched to the Half-King's camp, and thence to the Great Meadows. Two days later, they were sent to Winchester, Va., with a guard of twenty men, under command of Lieutenant West, who was also accompanied by Mr. Spindorph.

On the 30th, Washington "began to raise a fort with small palisadoes, fearing that when the French should hear the news of that defeat we might be attacked by considerable forces." The defenses which his men had constructed at the Great Meadows' camp prior to this, probably consisted of parapets, formed of logs (laid horizontally) and earth, along the crests of the "two natural intrenchments," which have already been mentioned, and the discovery of which at the Great Meadows, together with the advantage of a small stream that flowed near them, seems to have been a principal reason for his selecting that

[1] Most accounts have it that the force which Washington took with him on that night consisted of only forty men; but the language of his notes—though not entirely clear—indicates that the number left to guard the ammunition was about forty, and that the remainder of his force accompanied him on the expedition.

[2] Mr. Veech places the site of the Half-King's camp on that night, "near a fine spring, since called *Washington's Spring*, about fifty rods northward of the *Great Rock*," in the northwest part of the present township of Wharton, and very near the old National road.

[3] Following is a translation of the orders given by M. de Contrecœur to Jumonville for this expedition:

"Be it known that the captain of a company belonging to the detachment of marines, commander-in-chief at the Ohio Fort du Quesne, Presqu' Isle and Rivière aux Bœufs, hath given orders to M. de Jumonville, an ensign of the troops, to depart immediately, with one officer, three cadets, one volunteer [La Force], one English interpreter, and twenty-eight men, to go up as far as the High Lands, and to make what discovery he can; he shall keep along the river Monongahela in Periaguas, as far as the Hangard, after which he shall march along until he finds the road which leads to that said to have been cleared by the English. As the Indians give out that the English are on their march to attack us (which we cannot believe, since we are at peace), should M. de Jumonville, contrary to our expectations, hear of any attempt intended to be made by the English on the lands belonging to the French King, he shall immediately go to them and deliver them the summons we have given him. We further charge him to dispatch a speedy messenger to us before the summons be read, to acquaint us of all the discoveries he hath made; of the day he intends to read them the summons, and also to bring us an answer from them, with all possible diligence, after it is read.

"If M. de Jumonville should hear that the English intend to go on the other side of the Great Mountain [the Alleghenies] he shall not pass the High Lands, for we would not disturb them in the least, being desirous to keep up that union which exists between the two crowns.

"We charge M. de Jumonville to stand upon his guard against every attempt, either from the English or the Indians. If he should meet any Indians, he shall tell them he is traveling about to see what is transacting on the King's territories, and to take notice of every road, and shall show them friendship. Done at the camp at Fort Du Quesne, the 23d of May, 1754. (Signed) CONTRECŒUR."

[4] "Jumonville's Camp," says Mr. Veech, "is a place well known in our mountains. It is near half a mile southward of Dunbar's Camp, and about five hundred yards eastward of Braddock's road,—the same which Washington was then making. . . . There is not above ground in Fayette County a place so well calculated for concealment, and for secretly watching and counting Washington's little army as it would pass along the road, as this same Jumonville's Camp." The spot is now well known by residents in that part of the county, and is frequently visited by strangers from motives of curiosity.

[5] The killing of Jumonville was stigmatized by the French as the assassination of a peaceful envoy, and their writers have covered thousands of pages with accusations against Washington as commander of the attacking force. Even a greater amount of writing has been done by American historians to refute those false allegations. But the character of WASHINGTON needs no vindication, and certainly none will be offered in these pages.

place as a site for his fortified camp and temporary base of operations.

The little stockade, which Washington built after the fight at Jumonville's camp, was evidently a very slight and primitive affair, for on the 2d of June it was completed, and religious services were held in it. In the previous evening the Half-King had arrived, bringing with him some twenty-five or thirty families of Indians, who had fled from the lower Monongahela and the neighborhood of Logstown for fear of the vengeance of the French. The fugitive party numbered between eighty and one hundred persons, including women and children. Among them was "Queen" Alliquippa and her son. Her heart had evidently been touched in its tenderest chord by Washington's present of a bottle of rum to her in the preceding December, and now she came to place herself under his protection, she doubtless had visions of future favors from him. But the presence of these refugees was very embarrassing to the young commander on account of prospective scarcity of provisions, and for many other reasons; and the inconvenience was afterwards increased by the arrival of other parties of non-combatant Indians. One of these was a party of Shawanese, who came to the fort on the 2d of June, and others came in on the 5th and 6th. Washington wished to be disencumbered of these hangers-on, and tried to have a rendezvous of friendly Indians established at the mouth of the Redstone Creek, but did not succeed in effecting his purpose.

On the 6th of June, Christopher Gist arrived from Wills' Creek, with information that Col. Fry, commanding officer of the Virginia regiment, had died at that place on the 30th of May while on his way to the Great Meadows with troops. By his death Washington succeeded to the command of the regiment. On the 9th, Major Muse arrived from Wills' Creek with the remainder of the regiment, and nine small swivel-guns, with ammunition for them. But although the last of the regiment had now arrived, the total force under Washington was but little more than three hundred men, in six companies, commanded respectively by Captains Stephen, Jacob Van Braam, Robert Stobo, Peter Hogg, Andrew Lewis,[1] Polson, and George Mercer. Among the subalterns were Lieutenants John Mercer and Waggoner, and Ensigns Peyronie and Tower. Major Muse, as a man of some military experience, was detailed as quartermaster, and Captain Stephen was made acting major.

Major Muse, on his arrival, reported that Captain Mackay, of the South Carolina Royal Independent Company, had arrived with his command at Wills' Creek, and was not far behind him on the march to Great Meadows. He (Mackay) arrived on the following day (June 10th), having with him a force of about one hundred men, five days' rations of flour, sixty cattle on the hoof, and a considerable supply of ammunition. As Capt. Mackay was a regular officer in the royal service, he displayed from the first a disinclination to act under the orders of a "buckskin colonel" of Virginia provincial troops. This feeling extended to the private soldiers of the Carolina company, but no act of pronounced insubordination resulted from it.

Two days after the arrival of Capt. Mackay, some of Washington's scouts brought in word that they had discovered a French party, numbering, by estimate, about ninety men, between Gist's and Stewart's Crossings of the Youghiogheny. This intelligence caused the colonel to start out with about one hundred and thirty men and thirty Indians to find them; but before leaving the meadows, he took the same precaution that he observed when he went out to attack the party under Jumonville,—that is, he directed all his ammunition and stores to be placed in the safest possible position within the palisade, and set a strong guard over it, with orders to keep the strictest watch until his return; for he still feared that the reported movement by the French was part of a stratagem by which they hoped to capture the work in the absence of a large part of its defenders. On moving out with his party, however, he soon met an Indian party, who informed him that the alarm was unfounded, for, that instead of the reported party of ninety, there were but nine Frenchmen, and these were deserters. Thereupon he returned to the camp, leaving a small party to take the deserters and bring them in, which they accomplished soon afterwards.

Finding that there was as yet no French force in his vicinity, Washington now resolved to advance towards Redstone, and accordingly, on the 16th, moved out on the Nemacolin path towards Gist's, taking with him his artillery pieces, some of the wagons, and all his men, except the Carolinians, under Mackay, who were left behind at the fort to guard the stores. This was done to avoid a possible conflict of authority with Mackay, who was indisposed to have his company perform its share of labor in clearing the way for the passage of the train.

This labor was found to be so great that the force under Washington was employed thirteen days in making the road passable from the fort to Gist's, though the distance was only thirteen miles. Before reaching Gist's (on the 27th) Capt. Lewis was sent ahead with Lieut. Waggoner, Ensign Mercer, and a detachment of seventy men, to attempt the opening of a practicable road beyond Gist's, towards Redstone. Another detachment, under Capt. Polson, was sent out in advance to reconnoitre.

On the 29th of June Washington arrived at Gist's, and there received information that a strong French force was advancing up the Monongahela. Thereupon, he at once called a council of war, at which it was re-

[1] Afterwards General Lewis, who fought the battle of Point Pleasant in Dunmore's war of 1774. He was a relative of Washington, and it is said that in 1775 the latter recommended him for the appointment which he himself soon after received, that of commander-in-chief of the American armies.

solved to concentrate all the forces at that point, and there await the French attack. Intrenchments were immediately commenced and pushed with all possible vigor; a messenger was sent towards Redstone, to call in Lewis's and Polson's detachments, and another to the Great Meadows, with a request to Capt. Mackay to march his force without delay to Gist's. He promptly responded; and Lewis and Polson also came in the next morning, having cut through nearly eight miles of road from Gist's towards Redstone. On their arrival Washington called a second council of war, which reversed the decision of the first, and resolved, without a dissenting voice, to abandon the work at Gist's and retreat to Wills' Creek, over the route by which they had advanced. This decision was at once acted on.

In the retreat, the means of transportation being very deficient,[1] it is said that "Colonel Washington set a noble example to the officers by leading his own horse with ammunition and other public stores, leaving his baggage behind, and giving the soldiers four pistoles to carry it forward. The other officers followed this example. There were nine swivels, which were drawn by the soldiers of the Virginia regiment, over a very broken road, unassisted by the men belonging to the Independent Company [Mackay's], who refused to perform any service of the kind. Neither would they act as pioneers, nor aid in transporting the public stores, considering this a duty not incumbent on them as King's soldiers. This conduct had a discouraging effect upon the soldiers of the Virginia regiment, by dampening their ardor and making them more dissatisfied with their extreme fatigue."[2]

The journey between Gist's and the Great Meadows, which Washington, on his outward march, had been unable to perform in less than thirteen days, was now made in less than two days, notwithstanding the insufficiency of transportation and the severe labor which the men were obliged to perform in hauling the artillery pieces and military stores; and the retreating column reached the fortified camp at Great Meadows on the 1st of July.

It had been the intention, as before noticed, to continue the retreat to Wills' Creek, but on the arrival at the Meadows, Washington found that it was impracticable to go on, for, says Sparks, "His men had become so much fatigued from great labor and a deficiency of provisions, that they could draw the swivels no farther, nor carry the baggage on their backs. They had been eight days without bread, and at the Great Meadows they found only a few bags of flour. It was thought advisable to wait here, therefore, and fortify themselves in the best manner they could till they should receive supplies and reinforcements. They had heard of the arrival, at Alexandria, of two independent companies from New York, twenty days before, and it was presumed they must, by this time, have reached Wills' Creek. An express was sent to hasten them on with as much dispatch as possible."

When it had been decided to make a stand at the fortified camp at Great Meadows, Washington gave orders for the men to commence, without delay, to strengthen the rude defenses which had already been erected. More palisades were added; the stockade was extended, and salient angles formed, and a broad but shallow ditch was made outside the fort, materially adding to the strength of the work. Outside this ditch there was constructed a line of defense, similar in character to the modern *rifle-pits*,—but all joined in one extended trench,—further protected in front by a low parapet of logs, embanked with the earth thrown from the trench. The work was done under the supervision of Capt. Robert Stobo, who had had some experience in military engineering. When completed, Washington named it "Fort Necessity," as expressive of the necessity he was under to stand there and fight, because of his inability to continue the retreat to Wills' Creek, as he had intended. The extreme scarcity of provisions, and other supplies too, made the name appropriate.

Washington's selection of a site for his fortification has been often and severely criticised by military men as being badly calculated for defense, and commanded on three sides by high ground and closely approaching woods. The location was undoubtedly chosen partly on account of the peculiar conformation of the ground, which Washington called "natural intrenchments," and which materially lightened the labor of construction, and still more on account of the small stream (a tributary of Great Meadows Run) which flowed by the spot, and across which, at one point, the palisade was extended, so as to bring it within the work, and furnish the defenders with an abundant supply of water, a consideration of vital importance if the fort was to be besieged.

The size and shape of Fort Necessity have often been described by writers, but the different accounts vary in a remarkable manner. Col. Burd, who visited the ruin of the work in 1759, five years after its erection, says, under date of September 10th, in that year, "Saw Col. Washington's fort, which was called Fort Necessity. It is a small, *circular*, stockade, with a small house in the centre. On the outside there is a small ditch goes round it, about eight yards from the stockade. It is situated in a narrow part of the meadows, commanded by three points of woods. There is a small run of water just by it. We saw two iron swivels."

Sparks, in describing the fort and its location, says, "The space of ground called the Great Meadows is a level bottom, through which passes a small creek, and is surrounded by hills of moderate and gradual

[1] Sargent says, "Two miserable teams, and a few pack horses being all their means of transporting their ammunition, the officers at once added their own steeds to the train; and, leaving half his baggage behind, Washington, for four pistoles, hired some of the soldiers to carry the remainder."

[2] Sparks.

descent. This bottom, or glade, is entirely level, covered with long grass and small bushes [Washington mentioned the clearing away of the bushes which covered the ground when the work was commenced], and varies in width. At the point where the fort stood it is about two hundred and fifty yards wide from the base of one hill to that of the opposite. The position of the fort was well chosen, being about one hundred yards from the upland or wooded ground on the one side, and one hundred and fifty on the other, and so situated on the margin of the creek as to afford easy access to the water. At one point the high ground comes within sixty yards of the fort, and this was the nearest distance to which an enemy could approach under shelter of trees. The outlines of the fort were still visible when the spot was visited by the writer in 1830, occupying an irregular square, the dimensions of which were about one hundred feet on each side. One of the angles was prolonged farther than the others, for the purpose of reaching the water in the creek. On the west side, next to the nearest wood, were three entrances, protected by stout breastworks or bastions. The remains of a ditch, stretching round the south and west sides, were also distinctly seen. The site of this fort, named Fort Necessity from the circumstances attending its erection and original use, is three or four hundred yards south of what is called the National road, four miles from the foot of Laurel Hill, and fifty miles from Cumberland, at Wills' Creek." If Sparks had been in the least acquainted with military matters, he probably would not have spoken of a fortified position as being "well chosen" when it was commanded on three sides by higher ground, in no place more than one hundred and fifty yards distant, with the opportunity for an enemy to approach on one side within sixty yards under cover of woods.

The best, and it is believed the only reliable description of the form and dimension of the fort, is found in Veech's "Monongahela of Old," as follows: "The engraving and description of Fort Necessity given in Sparks' Washington are inaccurate. It may have presented that diamond shape in 1830, but in 1816 the senior author[1] of these sketches made a regular survey of it with compass and chain. It was in the form of an obtuse-angled triangle of one hundred and five degrees, having its base or hypothenuse upon the run. The line of the base was about midway sected or broken, and about two perches of it thrown across the run, connecting with the base by lines of about the same length, nearly perpendicular to the opposite lines of the triangle. One line of the angle was six, the other seven perches; the base line eleven perches long, including the section thrown across the run. The lines embraced in all about fifty square perches of land, or nearly one-third of an acre. The embankments then (1816) were nearly three feet above the level of the meadow. The outside "trenches" were filled up. But inside the lines were ditches or excavations about two feet deep, formed by throwing the earth up against the palisades. There were no traces of 'bastions' at the angles or entrances. The junctions of the meadow or glade with the wooded upland were distant from the fort on the southeast about eighty yards, on the north about two hundred yards, and on the south about two hundred and fifty yards. Northwestward, in the direction of the Turnpike road, the slope was a very regular and gradual rise to the high ground, which is about four hundred yards distant."

Leaving Washington and his little army in occupation of their frail defenses at the Great Meadows, let us take a brief glance at the enemy which was approaching them from Fort du Quesne by way of the Monongahela Valley.

The French force, which was marching in pursuit of Washington, was commanded by M. Coulon de Villiers, from whose journal of the campaign a few extracts are here given: "June the 26th.—Arrived at Fort du Quesne about eight in the morning, with the several [Indian] nations, the command of which the General had given me. At my arrival, was informed that M. de Contrecœur had made a detachment of five hundred French, and eleven Indians of different nations on the Ohio, the command of which he had given to Chevalier le Mercier, who was to depart the next day. As I was the oldest officer, and commanded the Indian nations, and as my brother[2] had been assassinated, M. de Contrecœur honored me with that command, and M. le Mercier, though deprived of the command, seemed very well pleased to make the campaign under my orders. . . . .

"The 28th.—M. de Contrecœur gave me my orders, the provisions were distributed, and we left the fort at about ten o'clock in the morning. I began from that instant to send out some Indians to range about by land to prevent being surprised. I posted myself at a short distance above the first fork of the river Monongahela, though I had no thought of taking that route. I called the Indians together and demanded their opinion. It was decided that it was suitable to take the river Monongahela, though the route was longer.

"The 29th.—Mass was said in the camp, after which we marched with the usual precaution.

"30th.—Came to the Hangard, which was a sort of fort built with logs, one upon another, well notched in, about thirty feet in length and twenty in breadth; and as it was late, and would not do anything without consulting the Indians, I encamped about two musket-shots from that place. At night I called the sachems together, and we consulted upon what was best to be done for the safety of our periaguas (large ca-

[1] Freeman Lewis.

[2] Meaning M. de Jumonville, who was Villiers' half-brother.

noes), and of the provisions we left in reserve, as also what guard should be left to keep it.

"July the 1st.—Put our periaguas in a safe place. Our effects, and everything we could do without, we took into the Hangard, where I left one good sergeant, with twenty men and some sick Indians. Ammunition was afterwards distributed, and we began our march."

The force of De Villiers consisted of five hundred Frenchmen, and about four hundred Indians.[1] Marching from the Hangard in the morning of the 1st of July (at which time Washington's force was approaching the Great Meadows on its retreat from Gist's plantation) the French and Indian column moved up the valley of Redstone Creek (over nearly the same route which was afterwards traversed by Col. Burd's road) towards Gist's, where De Villiers expected to find Washington, his Indian scouts having reported the English force to be at that place.

"At about eleven o'clock," continues the journal, "we discovered some tracks, which made us suspect we were discovered. At three in the afternoon, having no news of our rangers, I sent others, who met those sent before, and not knowing each other, were near upon exchanging shots, but happily found their mistake; they returned to us and declared to have been at the road which the English were clearing;[2] that they were of opinion no body had been that way for three days. We were no longer in doubt of our proceedings being known to the English."

At daybreak in the morning of the 2d the French force left its bivouac of the previous night and marched towards Gist's. "After having marched some time we stopped, for I was resolved to proceed no farther until I had positive news; wherefore I sent scouts upon the road. In the meanwhile came some of the Indians to me whom we had left at the Hangard; they had taken a prisoner, who called himself a deserter. I examined him, and threatened him with the rope if he offered to impose on me. I learned that the English had left their post [at Gist's] in order to rejoin their fort, and that they had taken back their cannon. Some of our people, finding that the English had abandoned the camp, we went thereto, and I sent some men to search it throughout. They found several tools and other utensils hidden in many places, which I ordered them to carry away. *As it was late,* I ordered the detachment to encamp there.[3] . . . We had rain all night."

When day broke on the morning of the 3d of July the weather was still wet and gloomy, but De Villiers moved forward at once with the main body, scouting parties having been sent in advance the previous evening. The rain continued, and increased during the long hours of the march towards Fort Necessity, but the French column pressed on with energy, and with all possible speed, for, said De Villiers, "I foresaw the necessity of preventing the enemy in their works." It also appears that he took the pains to ride away from the road into the woods, to make a flying visit to the rocky defile where Jumonville had lost his life five weeks before. "I stopped," he says, "at the place where my brother had been assassinated, and saw there yet some dead bodies," and then proceeds: "When I came within three-quarters of a league from the English fort I ordered my men to march in columns, every officer to his division, that I might the better dispose of them as necessity would require." His column was now within striking distance of the fort, after a drenching and dreary march of seven hours from Gist's.

Meanwhile, at Fort Necessity, Washington had been apprised of the arrival of the French at Gist's on the 2d, and had been constantly on the alert during the night. Not long after sunrise on the 3d, some of the advance scouts of the French were seen, and one of Washington's men on picket was brought in wounded, but after this three or four hours passed without further demonstrations. In the middle of the forenoon word came by scouts that the enemy in strong force was within two hours' march, and afterwards reports of their progress were brought in from time to time. Washington formed his forces in line of battle outside the defenses, awaiting the enemy's appearance, and hoping to induce him to attack in the open field. Finally, at a little before noon the French appeared in the edge of the woods towards

[1] The force of "five hundred French and *eleven* Indians," which De Villiers mentions in his journal as having been detached under command of Mercier for this expedition, had been augmented by the large Indian force which De Villiers brought with him down the Allegheny to Fort du Quesne.

[2] It will be recollected that Capt. Lewis, with about seventy men, had been sent forward on the 27th of June to attempt the opening of a road from Gist's to Redstone, and that they were recalled on the 29th. It is probable that the French scouts had come upon some part of the work done by Lewis's party, northwest of Gist's, but not the track between Gist's and the Great Meadows.

[3] De Villiers' narrative of his march to Gist's is very different from the account given by Veech, who says, "Hearing that the objects of his pursuit were intrenching themselves at Gist's, M. de Villiers disencumbered himself of all his heavy stores at the Hangard, and leaving a sergeant and a few men to guard them and the periaguas, *rushed on in the night,* cheered by the hope that he was about to achieve a brilliant *coup de main* upon the young 'buckskin colonel.' Coming to the 'plantation' [Gist's] on the morning of July 2d, the gray dawn revealed the rude, half-finished fort, which Washington had there begun to erect. This the French at once invested, and gave a general fire. There was no response; the prey had escaped! Foiled and chagrined, De Villiers was about to retrace his steps, when up comes a half-starved deserter from the Great Meadows, and discloses to him the whereabouts and destitute condition of Washington's forces."

But De Villiers says the deserter was brought to him while he was on the march to Gist's, and from him he learned that the camp at that place had been abandoned by Washington, who had taken his cannon with him; that, having learned this, they went to the place and "searched it throughout," finding tools and utensils concealed there; and finally that, instead of reaching Gist's place in "the gray dawn" of the second of July, they arrived there so late in the day that the commander decided to go no farther, and made his camp there for the night. As to the statement that the French, on coming to the stockade at Gist's, "at once invested it and gave a general fire," it is hardly to be supposed that an officer of De Villiers' experience would have shown such headlong impulsiveness as to pour a volley of musketry against the inanimate logs when no living thing was in sight.

the northwest and began firing at long range, but did no execution. After a time, finding that the enemy manifested no disposition to make a general attack, Col. Washington withdrew his men within the defenses, the Carolinians occupying the rifle-pit trenches behind the low log parapet which formed the outer line (though they were afterwards driven out, not by the enemy's fire, but the torrents of rain that inundated the trenches in which they were posted). The French, finding their fire ineffectual from their distant position in the woods to the northwest,[1] moved to the left, where, on the eastern and southeastern side of the fort, the forest-line was within fair musket-range of the work. From this new position they opened fire with more effect; the battle became general, and continued through the remainder of the day. An account of the conflict at Fort Necessity is thus given by Sparks:

"At eleven o'clock they [the French] approached the fort and began to fire, at the distance of six hundred yards, but without effect. Col. Washington had drawn up his men on the open and level ground outside of the trenches, waiting for the attack, which he presumed would be made as soon as the enemy's forces emerged from the woods, and he ordered his men to reserve their fire till they should be near enough to do execution. The distant firing was supposed to be a stratagem to draw Washington's men into the woods, and thus take them at a disadvantage. He suspected the design, and maintained his post till he found the French did not incline to leave the woods and attack the fort by an assault, as he supposed they would, considering their superiority of numbers. He then drew his men back within the trenches, and gave them orders to fire according to their discretion, as suitable opportunities might present themselves. The French and Indians remained on the side of the rising ground which was nearest to the fort, and, sheltered by the trees, kept up a brisk fire of musketry, but never appeared in the open plain below.

"The rain fell heavily through the day, the trenches were filled with water, and many of the arms of Col. Washington's men were out of order and used with difficulty. In this way the battle continued from eleven o'clock in the morning till eight at night, when the French called and requested a parley.[2] Suspecting this to be a feint to procure the admission of an officer into the fort, that he might discover their condition, Col. Washington at first declined listening to the proposal; but when the call was repeated, with the additional request that an officer might be sent to them, engaging at the same time their parole for his safety, he sent out Capt. Van Braam, the only person under his command that could speak French except the Chevalier de Peyronie, an ensign in the Virginia regiment, who was dangerously wounded and disabled from rendering any service on the occasion. Van Braam returned, and brought with him from M. de Villiers, the French commander, proposed articles of capitulation. These he read and pretended to interpret, and some changes having been made by mutual agreement, both parties signed them about midnight."

It was a mortifying close to Washington's first campaign, and the scene must have been a most dismal one when he signed the capitulation at dead of night, amid torrents of rain, by the light of a solitary spluttering candle,[3] and with his dead and wounded men around him; but there was no alternative, and he had the satisfaction at least of knowing that he had done his best, and that all his officers, with a single exception,[4] had behaved with the greatest coolness and bravery.

The articles of capitulation were of course written in French. The following translation of them shows the terms granted to Washington, viz.:

"ARTICLE 1.—We grant leave to the English commander to retire with all his garrison, and to return peaceably into his

[1] De Villiers' account of the opening of the fight was as follows: "As we had no knowledge of the place, we presented our flank to the fort when they began to fire upon us, and almost at the same time I perceived the English on the right, in order of battle, and coming towards us. The Indians, as well as ourselves, set up a great cry, and advanced towards them, but they did not give us time to fire upon them before they sheltered themselves in an intrenchment which was adjoining to their fort, after which we aimed to invest the fort, which was advantageously enough situated in a meadow within a musket-shot from the woods. We drew as near to them as possible that we might not expose his Majesty's subjects to no purpose. The fire was very brisk on both sides, and I chose that place which seemed to me the most proper in case we should be exposed to a sally. We fired so briskly as to put out (if I may use the expression) the fire of their cannon with our musket-shot." But, concerning the first part of the above account by De Villiers, Washington afterwards wrote: "I cannot help remarking on Villiers' account of the battle of and transaction at the Meadows, as it is very extraordinary, and not less erroneous than inconsistent. He says the French received the first fire. It is well known that *we* received it at six hundred paces distance."

[2] The account given by De Villiers of the closing scenes of the battle, and of the call for a parley, is as follows: "Towards six at night the fire of the enemy increased with more vigor than ever, and lasted until light. We briskly returned their fire. We took particular care to secure our posts to keep the English fast up in their fort all night; and after having fixed ourselves in the best position we could we let the English know that if they would speak to us we would stop firing. They accepted the proposal; there came a captain to the place where I was. I sent M. le Mercier to receive him, and I went to the Meadow, where I told him that as we were not at war we were very willing to save them from the cruelties to which they exposed themselves on account of the Indians; but if they were stubborn we would take away from them all hopes of escaping; that we consented to be favorable to them at present, as we were come only to revenge my brother's assassination, and to oblige them to quit the lands of the king my master. . . ."

[3] An officer who was present at the capitulation wrote: "When Mr. Van Braam returned with the French proposals we were obliged to take the sense of them from his mouth; it rained so hard that he could not give us a written translation of them, and we could scarcely keep the candle lighted to read them by."

[4] When, in the following August, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a vote of thanks to Washington and his officers "for their bravery and gallant defense of their country" at Fort Necessity, the names of all the officers were mentioned except that of the major of the regiment, who was charged with cowardice in the battle, and Capt. Van Braam, who was believed to have acted a treacherous part in interpreting the articles of capitulation.

own country, and promise to hinder his receiving any insult from us French, and to restrain, as much as shall be in our power, the Indians that are with us.

"ARTICLE 2.—It shall be permitted him to go out and carry with him all that belongs to them except the artillery, which we reserve.

"ARTICLE 3.—That we will allow them the honors of war,—that they march out with drums beating and one swivel gun; being willing thereby to convince them that we treat them as friends.

"ARTICLE 4.—That as soon as the articles are signed by both parties the English colors shall be struck.

"ARTICLE 5.—That to-morrow, at break of day, a detachment of French shall go and make the garrison file off, and take possession of the fort.

"ARTICLE 6.—As the English have but few oxen or horses left, they are at liberty to hide their effects and to come again and search for them when they have a number of horses sufficient to carry them off, and that for this end they may have what guards they please, on condition that they give their word of honor to work no more on any buildings in this place, or any part on this side of the mountains.

"ARTICLE 7.—And as the English have in their power one officer, two cadets, and most of the prisoners made at the assassination of M. de Jumonville, and promise to send them back with a safe guard to Fort du Quesne, situate on the Ohio, for surety of their performing this article, as well as this treaty, MM. Jacob Van Braam and Robert Stobo, both captains, shall be delivered as hostages till the arrival of our French and Canadians above mentioned. We oblige ourselves, on our side, to give an escort to return these two officers in safety, and expect to have our French in two months and a half at farthest."

The capitulation was signed by Washington, Mackay, and Villiers. The latter had cunningly caused the articles to be so worded that the English officers (who knew nothing of the French language) were made to sign an apparent acknowledgment that the killing of Jumonville[1] was an act of *assassination*. It was suspected that Van Braam, the so-called interpreter, knowingly connived at the deception, and this opinion was firmly held by Washington, who afterwards wrote in reference to it as follows: "That we were willfully or ignorantly deceived by our interpreter in regard to the word *assassination* I do aver, and will to my dying moment, so will every officer that was present. The interpreter was a Dutchman, little acquainted with the English tongue, therefore might not advert to the tone and meaning of the word in English; but whatever his motives were for so doing, certain it is he called it the *death* or the *loss* of the Sieur Jumonville. So we received and so we understood it, until, to our great surprise and mortification, we found it otherwise in a literal translation."

The numbers of the English forces engaged in the battle at the Great Meadows are not precisely known. The Virginia regiment went in three hundred strong, including officers, and their loss in the engagement was twelve killed and forty-three wounded.[2] Capt. Mackay's company numbered about one hundred, but its losses in killed and wounded were not officially stated. On the French side, according to the statement of De Villiers, the losses were two Frenchman and one Indian killed, fifteen Frenchmen and two Indians seriously and a number of others slightly wounded.

On the 4th of July, at break of day, the troops of Washington filed out of the fort with drums beating and colors flying, and (without any transportation for their effects other than was afforded by the backs and shoulders of the men, and having no means of carrying their badly wounded except on improvised stretchers) moved sadly away to commence their weary journey of seventy miles over hills and streams to Wills' Creek.

Upon the evacuation of the fort by Washington the French took possession, and immediately proceeded to demolish the work, while "M. le Mercier ordered the cannon of the English to be broken, as also the one granted by capitulation, they not being able to carry it away." The French commander very prudently ordered the destruction of some barrels of rum which were in the fort, to guard against the disorder and perhaps bloodshed which would probably have ensued if the liquor had been allowed to fall into the hands of the Indians.

De Villiers felt no little anxiety lest the expected reinforcements to Washington should arrive, which might place him in an unpleasant position and reverse the fortunes of the day. He therefore lost no time, and took his departure from the Great Meadows at as early an hour as possible, and marched about two leagues before he encamped for the night. On the 5th, at about nine o'clock in the forenoon, he arrived at Gist's, where he demolished the stockade which Washington had partially erected there, "and after having detached M. de la Chauvignerie to burn the houses round about," continued on the route towards Redstone, to a point about three leagues northwest of Gist's, where his forces made their night bivouac. In the morning of the 6th they moved at an early hour, and reached the mouth of Redstone at ten o'clock. There they "put their periaguas in order, victualed the detachment, carried away the reserve of provisions which they had left there, found several things which the English had hidden," and then, after burning the "Hangard" store-house, embarked, and went down the Monongahela. In the passage down the river, says De Villiers, "we burned down all the settlements we found," and about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 7th of July they arrived at Fort du Quesne.

As to the manner of the departure of Washington's troops from the surrendered fort, De Villiers said, "The number of their dead and wounded moved me to pity, notwithstanding my resentment for their

[1] "We made the English," said Villiers, "consent to sign that they had *assassinated* my brother in his camp."

[2] By Washington's own official statement.

having in such a manner taken away my brother's life. The savages, who in everything had adhered to my wishes, claimed the right of plunder, but I restrained them; however, the English being frightened fled, and left their tents and one of their colors." But Washington, commenting on these statements of De Villiers, said, in a letter written not long afterwards, "That we left our baggage and horses at the Meadows is certain; that there was not even a possibility to bring them away is equally certain, as we had every horse belonging to the camp killed or taken away during the action, so that it was impracticable to bring anything off that our shoulders were not able to bear, and to wait there was impossible, for we had scarce three days' provisions, and were seventy miles from a supply, yet to say that we came off precipitately is absolutely false, notwithstanding they did, contrary to the articles, suffer their Indians to pillage our baggage[1] and commit all kinds of irregularity. We were with them until ten o'clock the next day; we destroyed our powder and other stores, nay, even our private baggage, to prevent its falling into their hands, as we could not bring it off. When we had got about a mile from the place of action we missed two or three of the wounded, and sent a party back to bring them up; this is the party he speaks of. We brought them all safe off, and encamped within three miles of the Meadows. These are circumstances, I think, that make it evidently clear that we were not very apprehensive of danger. The colors he speaks of as left were a large flag of immense size and weight: our regimental colors were brought off, and are now in my possession."[2]

From his camping-ground, three miles southeast of the demolished fort, the Virginia regiment, with Mackay's South Carolinians, moved forward in the morning of the 5th of July, and fording the Youghiogheny at the Great Crossings, retraced their steps over the route previously traveled, and reached Wills' Creek after a slow and very toilsome journey. From that place Washington went to Alexandria, and the Virginia troops returned to their homes. Mackay's Carolina company remained at Wills' Creek, and together with two independent companies from New York,—all under command of Col. James Innes,—erected the fortification afterwards called "Fort Cumberland." This was then the western outpost of English power, and in all the country west of the mountains there was left no bar to French occupation and supremacy.

[1] "We all know that the French are a people that never pay any regard to treaties longer than they find them consistent with their interest, and this treaty [the Fort Necessity capitulation articles] they broke immediately, by letting the Indians demolish and destroy everything our people had, especially the Doctor's Box, that our wounded should meet with no relief."—*Extract from a letter written by Col. James Innes to Gov. Hamilton, dated Winchester, July* 12, 1754.

[2] It appears that the Half-King Tanacharison had a poor opinion of Washington's ability as a military commander, and freely expressed that opinion to the Indian agent and interpreter, Conrad Weiser, who reported it as follows:

"The colonel [Washington] was a good-natured man, but had no experience. He took upon him to command the Indians as his slaves, and would have them every day upon the scout, and to attack the enemy by themselves, but would by no means take advice from the Indians. He lay in one place from one full moon to the other, without making any fortifications except that little thing on the Meadow, whereas had he taken advice and built such fortifications as he [Tanacharison] advised him, he might easily have beat off the French. But the French in the engagement," he said, "acted like cowards, and the English like fools."

[3] There were, however, two other expeditions projected,—one against Niagara and Frontenac, under Gen. Shirley, and another against Crown Point, under Gen. William Johnson; but the principal one was that intended for the reduction of Fort du Quesne.

[4] These regiments, however, were far from being full, numbering only about five hundred men each.