Middle Year Essay

Clara A. Beck

Seminary

June 24th
1876
"The Women of 1776

The Women of 1776. Do they not deserve honor as well as the men? Did they take no part in the great struggle for liberty? Since they did not give their lives on the battle field, yet they gave what was as dear to them, their husbands, their sons, and their brothers. It was not without pain that they did this and yet they bore this and all the privations and hardships bravely. The time around the fire side was spent by the women during the Revolution, in working for their country. They did not sit with folded hands renouncing their hard lot, but were
employed in making clothes and providing comforts for their brave defenders.

It is said that at some places companies of young women went around to the farms, and if they found the men gone, they cut and garnered his crops! Many of the women showed spirits of bravery and patriotism of which any man might be proud.

Deborah Sampson when the Revolutionary war commenced disguised herself in men's apparel went to the American Camp and enlisted under the name of Robert Shurtleff. She took part in several daring enterprises, and was twice severely wounded. On recovering from an attack of brain fever...
the commanding officer, ordered her to carry a letter to General Washington. This she did with reluctance now feeling sure she was known. Washington, after reading it, discharged her and as a reward for her services as a Revolutionary soldier, gave her a pension and a grant of land. 

Elizabeth and Grace Martin, now for themselves fame during the Revolution, are a heroic and daring adventure. Being left alone during the absence of their husbands and hearing that two British officers with important dispatches were to pass near their house that night, they disguised themselves and taking pistols with them hid...
near the road, when the officers passed they sprung from their place of concealment and demanded the dispatches. Being taken by surprise the men readily gave up the papers. Having accomplished this they immediately sent the dispatches to General Greene.

Camilia Sarah Bach, the daughter of Ben. Franklin, did a great work during the Revolution. She assisted in supplying clothes for the soldiers, and did all in her power to arouse the Pennsylvania ladies to work. The Marquis de Chastellux gives an account of a visit he paid to her. She speaks of her as being very benevolent and her meekness very simple. She showed him into a
room which contained articles of clothing lately finished by the ladies of Philadelphia. This work consisted of a number of shirts for the Pennsylvania soldiers, the ladies had bought the linens from their own private money, and had made them themselves. The whole number amounted to 2000. This work and her patriotism certainly make her a worthy example to her country women.

Mary Washington impressed on the mind of her son those grand and essential qualities which in after life gained for him so much fame. It is said that the home of Mrs. Washington was always a pattern of good order; while she never
suppressed, the enjoyments in which
of their indulgence, yet they were kept
within bounds of moderation and
propriety. Her son was early taught
the duties of obedience which so well
fitted him to command.
To her last moments she yielded
to her will, and felt for her
the highest respect and fondest
affections. Such were the influences
under which the character of
Washington was formed.
During his life, even up to her
eighty-second year, she continued to
set a most excellent example
in the management of her household affairs. She was not ambitious
for honor, nor her plainness and dignity
of manners were not altered when the
sun of glory, shown upon her house. The Marquis de Lafayette, speaks of a
parting visit he made her before
repairing to Europe.
Conducted by one of her grand
sons, he approached the house, when
the young gentleman observed,
there, Sir, is my grand mother.
Lafayette beheld, working in the
garden, clad in domestic made
clothes, her head covered with
a straw hat; the mother of his
hero.
She Bates saluted him kindly
observing—"Ah Marquis, you see
an old woman, but come I can
make you welcome to my poor
dwelling without the parade of
changing my dress."
During their conversation he spoke of his return to his native country and of his love and admiration for his illustrious son. To this she replied, "I am not surprised at what George has done, he was always a very good boy. Until the power of greatness was new, but had it not been for the guidance, solicitude and judgment of such a Mother, Washington instead of giving to the world examples of virtue and patriotism, might have been added to the number of those whose fame rests upon the faculties they have abused."
Happy for the women of our Country that they have this illustrious example of Maternal devotion, and this bright reward of filial success.

Martha Washington was faithful in the performance of every duty. In her household she was the presiding genius that kept action and order in perfect harmony. As a wife she was true and faithful, one who was worthy of her husband's trust. What higher celebrity could any woman desire than the love and confidence of the greatest man the world has ever seen? The illustrious example of
Mary and Martha Washington should have an influence over every American Woman.

E. A. B.