

**MEMOIRS AND
LETTERS OF
DOLLY MADISON**

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Memoirs and letters of Dolly Madison by Dolly Madison

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OF

DOLLY MADISON

II

WIFE OF JAMES MADISON, PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES

EDITED BY

HER GRAND-NIECE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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MEMOIRS AND LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

IN undertaking a little sketch of this nature, I am quite conscious that a relative has peculiar temptations to be partial, — a temper of mind which Mrs. Madison, in the great simplicity of her character, would most cordially have disliked; and therefore, though the skill may be wanting, the endeavor will be to give facts, anecdotes, and letters, as they were handed down by near relatives, privileged to live in her household and enjoy her confidence, suppressing nothing that could interest the many who admire and respect her memory. As those who have seen Mrs. Madison's features and heard her voice are becoming yearly fewer, the number who take an interest in bygone days, and the prominent men and women who fig-

ured in history and society, when our country was yet in its infancy, is rapidly increasing; indeed, our great-grandmothers and grandfathers shape themselves before our eyes, and assume new interest, as pictures of the life and influences of those early days are brought before us.

I propose to lay before the public a series of private letters, written, without the most remote idea of publication, by a woman to her nearest and dearest relations; and their value consists in the fact, capable of no misconception, that they furnish an exact transcript of the feelings of the writer, in times of no ordinary trial.

If it were possible to get at the expression of feelings by women in the heart of a community more frequently, recorded in a shape designed to be confidential, it would serve to present the surest and most unfailing idea of its general character.

Whether deliberating in the Senate, or fighting in the field, our strength against Great Britain was never that of numbers, nor of wealth, nor of genius; it drew its nourishment from a more potent source: from the sentiment that pervaded the

dwellings of the entire population. How much this sentiment did then, and does now, depend upon the character of our women will be too readily understood to require explanation.

The domestic hearth is the scene of the almost exclusive sway of women, and great as the influence thus exercised undoubtedly is, it escapes observation in such manner that history rarely takes much account of it. The maxims of religion, faith, hope, and charity, are instilled by them into the teachings of infancy, thus supplying the only high and pure motives of which mature manhood can, in its subsequent action, ever boast.

John Payne, the grandfather of Mrs. Madison, was an English gentleman of wealth and education, who emigrated to this country and settled on the James River, in the county of Goochland, Virginia. He married Anna Fleming, granddaughter of Sir Thomas Fleming, second son of the Earl of Wigton, of Scotland, and also an emigrant to the Colony, who landed at Jamestown and established himself in Kent County, where he lived until his death.

John Payne the second, the father of Mrs. Madison, left home at an early age to take charge of a plantation in North Carolina given him by his father. He there married Mary Coles, daughter of William Coles, a native of Enniscorthy, Ireland. Her mother, whose maiden name was Philpot, was an aunt of Virginia's orator, Patrick Henry.

The devout believer in the transmission of family qualities will be content with the inheritance of Dolly Madison from this mother and grandmother, both noted for their beauty and popularity. Mary Coles was a great belle, having many admirers, — among them the young Thomas Jefferson, whose promising talents were even then appreciated. In spite, however, of the persistency of friends, John Payne was the favored suitor, and shortly after his marriage purchased an estate in Hanover County, Virginia, within driving distance of Coles Hill, the residence of his father-in-law.

Towards the close of her life, Mrs. Madison frequently recalled the home of her childhood, dwelling upon the great black marble mantelpieces, supported by white

figures. The house was called Scotch-town because of the emigrants, and was surrounded by a number of small brick houses, attached to the main building, which was very large, having as many as twenty rooms on a floor.

John Payne was the father of six children, of whom the second is the subject of this memoir. Much might be said of unusual charms discovered by adoring parents during her infancy. Dorothy Payne first opened her eyes on this world, which she was destined so thoroughly to enjoy, on the 20th May, 1772, in North Carolina, where her parents were visiting; and was named Dorothy for her mother's aunt, Mrs. Patrick Henry.

Both father and mother were strict members of the "Society of Friends," and Dolly's childhood was passed quietly in their country home until she reached the age of twelve years. A favorite with all, she was the particular pet and companion of her grandmother, who often made her happy by surreptitious presents of old-fashioned jewelry, and not daring to wear them before her father and mother, she sewed them into a bag, which was tied