

LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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Life in the eighteenth century by George Cary Eggleston

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GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

**LIFE IN THE
EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY**



Colonial Mansion, residence of the late William Bull Pringle, Charleston, S. C.

A Little History of Colonial Life

LIFE IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By
GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

Author of

"OUR FIRST CENTURY"

"A CAPTAIN IN THE RANKS"

"RUNNING THE RIVER," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

THE social and political institutions of every country are the outgrowths of that country's life conditions, except in so far as institutions may be imposed upon a people by an authority outside of themselves.

In our country outside authority has never been able thus to impress itself upon the minds and lives of the people. The development of American institutions, American ideas, and American life, has been exclusively from within. Our system, from top to bottom, is the creation of the people who live under it. It is therefore peculiarly well adapted to their needs, and peculiarly an expression of their common thought and aspiration.

The men and women who founded the English colonies in America, and the men and women who built those colonies up into great, self-governing commonwealths, were from the beginning men and women in revolt against the life conditions into which they were born. They were inspired by a

determined purpose to better those life conditions, to organize society and the state in accordance with their own needs and in answer to their own aspirations of liberty and self government.

In this volume and in the one preceding it, "Our First Century," an effort has been made to show how the colonists and the earlier native Americans did this work of social and political construction. It is a story which every American must know thoroughly if he would understand the institutions, the ideas, and the natural impulses of the Great Republic as they now are.

Surely there could be no more enlightening story than that of our country's beginnings and early development; for out of those beginnings and through that development there has come into being the greatest, richest, freest and most potent nation that has at any time existed on the face of the earth. It is at the same time the happiest, best fed, and most prosperous of nations. It is the only civilized land in which every man has an equal share with every other man in the government, the only land in which the conditions of life are such that the poorest laborer may have meat on his table every day in the year, while his children, with education free, and with no barriers of caste to fix their status or to say

may to their ambitions, may freely and hopefully aspire to the very highest achievement.

It has been the author's endeavor to tell the story of all this briefly, and with only so much of detail as is necessary to a just understanding of events, while showing forth what manner of men and women the builders of the nation were, what conditions surrounded them, how they lived, what clothes they wore, what sort of habitations they built, how they cooked and ate, what schools they had, and everything else that constituted their environment, including their ignorance of sanitation, their lack of pavements, sewers and water supply in towns, the imperfection of their means of intercommunication, their consequent isolation and the like. Attention has been given to their sports, their punishments, their methods of farming and fighting, their commerce, their manufactures, their fisheries. Their deprivation of many things that in our time are accounted common necessities of life, is contrasted with their indulgence in luxuries of dress and living which we should now regard as foolish extravagance and ostentation.

In the preceding volume—"Our First Century"—the period of Colony planting is dealt with. In the present volume the steady and resistless advance

of the colonies toward National Independence is traced, as the most vital fact of American life during the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, and one which dominated and colored all other conditions of the life of that time.

In this volume, as in the previous one, the author and publishers have availed themselves of the aid of many illustrations which show forth the conditions of life in aid of the written text.