

GOING TO SEA

"I should like to be a sailor," said George Washington. "Then I could go to many strange lands and see many wonderful things. And, by and by, I might become the captain of a ship."

He was only fourteen years old.

His older brothers were quite willing that he should go to sea. They said that a bright boy like George would not long be a common sailor. He would soon become a captain and then perhaps a great admiral.

And so the matter was at last settled. George's brothers knew the master of a trading ship who was getting ready to sail to England. He agreed to take the boy with him and teach him how to be a good sailor.

George's mother was very sad that he was going, for his uncle had written her a letter saying:

"Do not let him go to sea. If he begins as a common sailor, he will never be anything else."

But George had made up his mind to go. He was headstrong and determined. He would not listen to anyone who tried to persuade him to stay at home. At last the day came for the ship to sail and it was waiting in the river. A boat was at the landing, ready to take him on board. The little chest that held his clothing had been carried down to the bank, and George was excited at the thought of going.

"Good-by, mother," he said.

He stood on the doorstep and looked back into the house. He saw the kind faces of those whom he loved and he began to feel very sad.

"Good-by, my dear boy!"

George saw the tears in his mother's eyes. He saw them rolling down her cheeks. He knew that she did not wish him to go, and he could not bear to see her grief.

He stood still for a moment, thinking. Then he turned quickly and said, "Mother, I have changed my mind. I will stay at home and do as you wish." Then he called to the boy, who was waiting at the door, and said, "Tom, run down to the shore and tell them not to put the chest in the boat. Send word to the captain not to wait for me, for I have changed my mind. I am not going to sea."

Who has not heard of George Washington? It has been said of him that he was the "first in war, the first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." He was our first and most famous president and has been called the Father of our Country.