

commanded by Coulon de Jumonville, and a skirmish ensued in which De Jumonville was killed, and the rest of his party either slain or made prisoners. Shortly after, Col. Fry was killed by a fall from his horse, and Washington succeeded to the chief command.

When the news of De Jumonville's disaster reached the French at Fort Du Quesne, his brother, Commandant De Villiers, was sent by Contrecoeur with a force of 600 men to attack the English, who fell back to a place called the Great Meadows, on a branch of the Youghiogony, and there threw up hasty defences. These, however, they were unable to hold; and on the 3d of July Washington and his force surrendered. The French had maintained that De Jumonville had been sent to parley with the English, and that the death of that officer was an "assassination"; and this word Villiers inserted in the articles of capitulation, which Washington signed, thereby subjecting himself to severe censure. He pleaded that, as he did not understand French well, Captain Van Braam of his command had translated the articles to him by word of mouth, and had softened the ugly word "assassination" to "death."\*

This mishap caused great alarm, especially in the southern Provinces, and the governors set about raising men and supplies. The home government also bestirred itself. Sharpe had already been raised to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and commissioned to take command of the operations against the French; and in October two regiments of foot commanded by Sir Peter Halkett and Col. Dunbar were ordered out to Virginia. Dinwiddie began the construction of a stockade fort on Wills' Creek, which he named Fort Cumberland, in honor of the victor of Culloden; and Sharpe exerted himself to raise and equip forces for effective operations in the spring. But the English government resolved to send out a general officer to take the command in the field; as it was rightly judged that Sharpe and the other governors would have their hands full in enlisting men, procuring supplies and means of transportation, and extorting funds from their respective legislatures. The officer selected was Edward Braddock, whose arrival, movements, and disastrous end, will be found chronicled in the following pages.

The difficulties with which Sharpe had to contend were many and great. As a commissioned officer under the crown, he had to strain every nerve to procure the requisite men and supplies; as the representative of the Proprietary, he was bound to guard against any encroachment of his rights; as the governor of the Province, it was his duty to shield the inhabitants from wrong and injustice. It is evident that he endeavored to execute his duty, amid these conflicting claims, with justice, prudence, and moderation.

The war and its concomitants were not the only difficulties with which Sharpe had to contend. The Proprietaries of Pennsylvania, not satisfied with having robbed Maryland of all the territory between the present

\* A copy of the articles of capitulation was found in the Calvert Papers, and is printed on p. 78.