

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Published Daily Except Sunday, by the News Publishing Co.

NEW YORK OFFICE: Frank R. Northrup, Manager, 220 Broadway, Telephone 120, Cortland.



MONDAY FEBRUARY 22.

10 PAGES

TWO PARTS.

THE SECRET OF WASHINGTON'S POWER.

This day throughout New England the praises of a Virginia slaveholder will be recited and sung. In Old England the London Exchange takes a holiday in honor of the man who first in modern times brought Great Britain to her knees. In the Democratic South, the great Federalist is held in the highest esteem. In many an humble cottage the career of the born Aristocrat is held up to the young hopefuls as one to be imitated. What is it that has kept the character of George Washington on such a high plane through the years of calumny and criticism; until now his greatness is a household word and the mention of that greatness becomes pertinent?

He was not a brilliant soldier. As a young man he distinguished himself as the leader of small forces in the French and Indian War. But there was constant dissatisfaction with his conduct of military affairs. In the Revolution, felt by many of the purest American patriots. His victories under his personal direction were few and his defeats many and disastrous. The crossing of the Delaware and the sudden blow at Trenton stand out as the brightest spots in his military career. His march to Yorktown to complete the overthrow of Cornwallis was another successful stroke. And yet in comparison with the fame of Lee and Jackson or a half dozen other military chieftains of the Civil War his military record was by no means glorious.

As a statesman he held theories of government that his country has long ago outgrown. He had little conception of real democracy, a real government by the people. The instincts of aristocracy were too strong in him for him to have trusted the people as Jefferson, for instance, insisted that they should be trusted.

What is it then that makes Washington great? For great he undoubtedly is. There are only one or two men in America that even dispute with him the claim of being the greatest American. It seems to us that the obvious answer to this question is really the best lesson that could be given to the rising generation of hero-worshippers. Washington was great because he did what was right, as it was given him to see the right, without regard to the consequences. If he was not brilliant as either a soldier or a statesman, he was more than brilliant, he was wise. Wisdom has been often defined, but the true wisdom is that which orders conduct on moral lines without turning or swerving. And it is this that made Washington the saviour of his country. With all his failures as a military commander, he was yet the best man the colonists had to occupy the position of commander-in-chief. A more selfish man, a weaker man, would have given up the contest with envy and calumny, and resigned his commission. In his long fight with Congress, full of weaklings and cowards as that body was, a smaller man would have thrown upon those representatives of the people the burden that he was forced to carry. But he was too wise. He believed in the justice of the American cause. He believed that the right would win. He felt that it was necessary for him to endure, what is hardest for an honest man to endure, the feeling of those interested in the cause that he is in the way and should retire.

In the same way, as President, he sought for the unification of the colonies first. That accomplished, even if there were left in the constitution the seeds of the Civil War, other things could wait. Washington was great because he was wise, in the sense in which the Wise Man speaks of wisdom. He followed the light of truth. He kept the line of the right. And such wisdom is greater than genius in war or in statecraft. Therefore the world rejoices on this twenty-second day of February to know that a man-child was brought into the world who should leave to men the record of high and unselfish devotion to the loftiest of all ideals, without a shadow to cloud his memory.

RUSSIAN DEFEAT.

As outlined here a few days ago the victory of Japan in wresting from Russia the control of the Pacific has had far-reaching consequences. The withdrawal of the Russian forces to Herbin as headquarters is the virtual ac-

knowledge of defeat of long-cherished plans. That means almost inevitably the capture of Port Arthur and the driving of the Russians out of Manchuria. Of course the chances of war cannot be counted on, but the little brown men are apt to give a good account of themselves in the land battle which they seem now minded to force. If a land victory follows the sea triumph, then Russia has probably lost Manchuria for good and all, including Port Arthur as the outlet for her great Siberian Railway.

Russia is like a giant with one arm bound. Her army is immense and it is an army of fighters. Were her quarrel with Germany or Austria, we might see a triumphal entry into Berlin or Vienna after a few days of war. But the Russian fleet is bottled up. Russia did not dare to increase her Pacific squadron to a larger size than that of Japan for fear that war would be declared for such an "unfriendly act." Her Black Sea squadron will not be allowed to pass the Dardanelles, as long as there is a British Squadron in the Mediterranean to dispute the passage. Her Baltic Squadron is necessary where it is, unless the risk is taken of leaving St. Petersburg defenceless. The alliance between England and Japan prevents the interposition of a third power like France, as worse than useless, for it would mean the English fleet at St. Petersburg and probably the Russian and French fleets both wiped off the seas. In short Russia is just about whipped already.

And that is the reason for the excitement in European capitals of which our dispatches tell us. Russia would seem to be preferring a general European war to the swallowing the bitter medicine of defeat by little Japan. For fifty years Russia has been planning the conquest that Japan now forbids. She needs a harbor on the Pacific that is not icebound for a good part of the year as is Valdivostock. Without Port Arthur the whole scheme is failure.

The condition of the Pro-Cleveland, Pro-Panama papers is really comic. The Brooklyn Eagle comments upon Mr. Cleveland's paper without ever mentioning the fact that he had said anything about the national immorality involved in the seizure of Panama. Others have been trying to explain ever since that the Old Man really did not mean what he said and that while he did not approve of the Roosevelt methods he would approve of a vote for the treaty. We believe Mr. Cleveland too honest a man to condone a wrong action. Tomorrow the treaty will be voted for, right or wrong. Senator Hoar will pair himself, as usual, speaking one way and voting another, justifying once more the famous criticism of James G. Blaine. But the majority of the Democratic Senators who will put themselves on record as opposing the treaty will present the party at large and the conscience of the nation as well.

We are glad that it is called the Loomis-Varilla treaty. Secretary Hay should be glad. He is just now making a ten-stroke with the eighth commandment, saying to Russia, Thou Shalt Not Steal. It would be bad if Russia should be able to speak of the Hay-Vanilla treaty as a rather shameless and open breach of that commandment.

But what we started out to say was that Mr. Cleveland's usually clear and definite language seems never before to have been so hard to understand.

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