

DAILY NEWS.

NEWBERNE, N. C.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1881

Significance of the Yorktown Celebration.

[New York Herald.]

The real relative significance of events in American history is rarely impressed upon the youthful mind. It requires later years of deep consideration and actual familiarity with the theory of free government to qualify the citizen to read aright the annals of his country. Hence it is that the taking of Yorktown, with the military operations immediately preceding it, occupies a smaller space in the imagination of the people—the lens through which all history is judged—than almost any other general encounter between the opposing forces of the Revolution. Heretofore the results which had been gained had been mainly due to native valor and self-sacrifice, but in this emergency, which presented the one brilliant opportunity of the war, success almost entirely depended on the co-operation of a distant ally. In reading of this period, which was then closing, the mind involuntarily sympathizes with the coldness and apathy which had crept over the hearts of so many of the colonists. It was a time of the greatest gloom, and only the heroic resolution of a few illustrious men like Washington, Franklin and Morris prevented the end from being ruin and submission. The French alliance had borne as yet but little fruit, and it had caused at least one disaster. Thus far its greatest value had been a moral one; it had produced an impression on the mind of England which her army and navy were unable to dispel. This help, alone considered, was invaluable. Tyranny in the Old World was outbalanced in force by the woes it had created, and France simply interpreted the sympathy of the majority of mankind in stretching out a sisterly hand across the ocean—the hand of the people and not of the dynasty.

In 1781 American credit was almost dead. The army was destitute and Congress was without resources. The colonists, who had proven that they could not be conquered by the sword, were in the sore strait of financial starvation. It was like a despairing cry, that last appeal to France, which was voiced by Washington in words as simple as they were noble. The answer turned the scale and decided the acknowledgment of American independence. The cause might long before have failed had not Lafayette, the early representative in action of the political teachings of Rousseau and Voltaire, set the example of unselfish friendship. We should not lavish, however, all of our wreaths and eulogies upon this name. Though not so conspicuous by brilliant deeds and associations, those of Steuben, De Kalb and Pulaski deserve an equal place. History does not give a finer example of disinterested devotion to a cause than that of the Great Frederick's aide-de-camp, who refused the dazzling prospect of military preferment under the Emperor Joseph II. to identify himself with the precarious fortunes of the new and struggling Republic. As drill-master of the Continental army he made it equal to the best European troops—a service which can only be measured by the victories which it won. In his whole life he never sought to turn his military achievements to his personal aggrandizement, and, as during the war he had often placed his only franc in the hand of a soldier who had won his approbation, so to the hour of his death he divided the small rewards which Congress voted him among the members of his military family. A more generous heart and a nobler spirit than Steuben's never existed. De Kalb and Pulaski anointed the young Republic with their blood—a holier essence than that which is poured on the heads of kings. Nor must we be oblivious of the individual sympathy and enthusiasm of the officers and soldiers

whom Louis XVI. sent hither. To the tact, sincerity and patience of De Rochambeau was almost entirely due the effectiveness of the French aid. And lastly, had not the Ministers of Louis XVI., who received Colonel Laurens on his visit to Versailles, kept the promises of their predecessors there could have been no siege and no surrender of Yorktown. It has been the ungenerous peculiarity of some historians to dwell only briefly on the alliance of France and to admit but grudgingly its value to the revolutionists. The American public even recently has failed to evince an adequate sense of its obligation to the French people. May the occasion of the 19th of October, as glorious for France as for ourselves, repair that forgetfulness and apparent ingratitude to which republics are said to be prone.

The revival of Revolutionary memories should also strengthen the reconciliation of North and South, who now will meet on sacred ground, where the forefathers of the men of both regions shed their blood for the same cause. Yorktown, too, has its grand significance for the world. Deciding our own Revolution, it hastened that of France; and all the popular movements which have since occurred, tending to increase the sum of human freedom, owe their inspiration, in some degree to the influence of this event. It came like a thunder-clap to England, and virtually ended her efforts to whip back the colonies to their forfeited allegiance.

Hopeful Signs in the South.

One of the most recent of the advance sheets of the forthcoming census volumes throws a new and most encouraging light on the industrious condition of the South. Prior to the late war the landed estates of the Southern portion of the Republic were the largest in the world. In the British empire and on the continent of Europe there were some few nobles and princes who owned more acres than any Southern planter; but taken as a class, the planters of the South were the most powerful landed aristocracy the world ever saw. And they give the evidence of their power in waging for four years one of the greatest wars history has recorded. At the close of the rebellion Mr. Thaddeus Stevens had a conception more or less clear of the danger to the country arising out of this vast landed monopoly, and he sought to change it by legislation. It was his favorite theory when emancipation had been effected that every freedman should have forty acres. Having conquered the South in battle he was in favor of confiscation of all Southern landed property. So extreme a measure could not, of course, succeed. The end he aimed at, however, is in a fair way of being accomplished in another way and by purely natural agencies. According to the figures of the census the vast estates are being broken up at a rate that in the course of ten years will give the South as large a number of landed proprietors as any other portion of the country. In Georgia, for instance, there were at the beginning of the war, only sixty-two thousand landed proprietors. Today there are more than twice that number. The same is true of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Virginia. Planter rule in the South is passing away, in fact has passed away, and what may be called that of peasant proprietorship has begun.—New York Herald.

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New Berne, N. C., Sept. 1st, 1881.

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J. W. MORRIS, Forwarding Agent.

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