Example of Washington's
Washington's Birthday.

Vol 7 - No. 2

Address
to Cadets - U.S. M.A.
Feb 22, 1881.

Washington's Birth Day.

1.

One hundred and forty nine years ago today George Washington was born. His name is as familiar in America to every child of ten years as that of his school companion or playmate, — a halo of preciousness & sanctity clusters about this name so that among ~~name~~ forty millions of people within the boundaries of his country who speak the name and write it & print it, it is invariably done with a show of reverence & affection in the utterance or the statement. ~~that contains it~~. There is a hidden meaning in the name of Washington for it excites a singular, a unique interest among all the civilized nations of the Earth. This preciousness, this sanctity, this reverence, this peculiar & universal interest which no other mortal name has yet attained have

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2.

for foundation character. No mere physical superiority, neither feats of strength nor supplents of framework could have produced such an accumulation of noble qualities.

Neither the powers of Lawrences or of Vulcan could touch them.

No expansion of intellect, whether massive like Webster's ~~[illegible]~~ crafty like Jacob's, grasping ~~destructive~~ like Napoleon's or shrewd as Sagola's has produced a similar, lasting impression.

The nobility of form, manly presence and vigor of constitution, we are thankful to say, belonged to our first ~~president~~ general & first president. The well balanced mind, sound judgment and fair culture have left their volumes record in the history of his eventful life. But oh, how like nothing would this mere so affording appear, were than

3. not ~~the wholeness of soul~~ those behind of the solid structure of uprightness; genuine honesty, purity, love directly, without, within, above: in brief, that wholeness of soul which the word integrity has garnered, solidified and crystalized.

Who of us is not proud of the name of Washington? Whose heart does not go out toward him, toward his faithful & devoted mother and his well-beloved wife and all the intimates of his boyhood & youth with unmoulted interest and singular affection? If in the years of contention we the people of these United States forgetful of his lion upon lion & precept upon precept, forgetful of his warnings & his self-denying example which was left to us for our admonition, ~~we people~~ have cherished ~~of~~ and sometimes idolized other names those than his, both the worthy & unworthy, let us today turn

4 back to our earliest & best hero, and to the contemplation of some of those qualities which made up his character and which if we ~~[illegible]~~ steadily imitate & steadfastly follow, we shall each fill no mean place in history ~~life~~ and at least have the consciousness that ~~the~~ somebody is happier & better because ~~of~~ we are living in the world.

It is a good thing for a young person to learn early in life the distinction between character & reputation; one's reputation shows what is possible to good; Certainly it is important to have a fair record; a good name is better than rubies, more precious than ointment and delightsome to our friends — but how many thousands of men of grand powers & brilliant acquirements have made their reputation the object & end of existence — and have not ~~being~~ ~~[illegible]~~ been sufficiently careful of the means of acquiring & preserving

5) M. They have woefully failed in the ~~rather~~ ~~of~~ Keeping ~~[illegible]~~ and enjoying the fruits of their efforts. Whereas the man in search of a genuine character, the man who makes his character the object of his ~~strife~~ thought & his toil, can never ~~cannot~~ really fail.

The reputation which one enjoys is rather what to his companions or other men he appears to be. in its true sense A man's character is what he actually is. As the fruit grows from the vine so the reputation proceeds from the character is complete of course &

The character of every man has epochs in its growth & developments.

These epochs are often very, very important. They are forks in the roadway of life - go one way, your life grows better stronger & happier - go the other way and your life becomes the worse, the weaker & perpetually troubled.

How wise then to study these epochs & examine well every pathway that branches

6) to the right & to the left.

With what interest have I observed these burning words in my own life & those who were my companions 30 years ago.

It is not my object to ~~repeat~~ give abstract homily, or a dogmatic discourse often so wholesome to the flesh, but to put as much of my thought as possible into a concrete form. Let the mind ~~is nothing~~ rest upon the noble, the exalted character of Washington. I invite you first to the cradle of its formation. It was with ~~an~~ that best gift of God, a good mother.

We enjoy Irving's reference to his early years: He says: "George as his intellect dawned, received the rudiments of education in the best establishment for the purpose that the neighborhood afforded, viz an "old field school house"; humble enough in its pretentions & kept by one of his father's tenants named Hobby. The instruction doled out by him must have been the simplest kind, reading writing & ciphering, perhaps; but George had the benefit of mental & moral culture at home, from an excellent father."

But shortly after this teaching his father died. George was then but ten years old.

7. That is about the age when a boy begins to ~~most~~ especially to need a fathers discipline and is most sensibly affected by a fathers example. It is a great loss, I have felt it in my own life - but think the Lord who spared to our Washington the last of mothers. The same author remarks of her: "Endowed with plain, direct good sense, ~~through~~ thoroughly conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly but kindly, exacting deference which she inspired affection. George being her eldest son, was thought to be her favorite, yet she never gave him undue preference and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper and a spirit of command, but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain & govern that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity & justice."

These glimpses into the nursery and the home life afford all the revelations that we need.

I.

8. It is a West Point custom to take pupils back to first principles, to axioms.

It were very plain, even if we did not know of the position moral & religious teaching given to this ~~to~~ child, so full of promise, by his father & mother, that he early learned one fundamental principle of character.

It is one of which the late "Scientific Method" reduces from a divine precept to a mere human maxim.

It is one that a Herbert Spencer would derive from cultured selfishness delicately refined.

It is one that the ~~infidel orator~~ infidel who holds up to public contempt the short comings of his parents, has long since learned to despise.

Yet the undisputed fact of history is written in our Scriptures. "And God spake all these words. Among them in the second table we find: Honor thy father and

9) thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

These ancient words, with other precepts were graven upon two tables of stone and the same inspired authority declares: And the tables were the work of God and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables.

I know a fine appearing manly youth of about twenty years; he is a student away from his home. A friend of his family living near his Academy thus told his father: "I heard your son say that he would not willingly do what he knew his father would disapprove." God will bless & prosper such young men. They have a rich inheritance in the only Commandment of the ten with a promise.

Washington was so studiously observant of this divine law of reverence & love towards his careful, judicious, christian mother, that he denied himself a much coveted position, which

~~not~~ was opened to him before he was fifteen. It was the ~~commission~~ warrant of a Midshipman in the British Navy. There was much entreaty by his brother & himself, many powerful friends urging it. The mother was over-persuaded and about to yield when a letter from her brother then in England recalled her former misgivings & solicitude. The mother's heart, like the mother of Jesus, often has prophetic impressions for the child of her love. She again made strong objections and Washington who, in time became the man of a wonderful decision of character yielded, then a mother's persuasions & gave up the prospects so delightsome & satisfying to his ~~heart~~ young & ardent wishes.

If he could have opened the windows of the future & have beheld events in the order & color in which they were to appear on the stage of his life, he could not have decided better.

11) General George H. Thomas, who, a southern man, had to make his most important decisions in the line of self-denial, and who above any ~~[illegible]~~ officer in the late war of rebellion won the abiding confidence & love of his soldiers & companions in arms, was unceasing in his devotion to this principle of loyal duty: "Children must be made to obey their parents. Obedient children will not grow up to despise & resist a proper authority." When sent to by a college authority in his District & informed that the College boys were made restless & ungovernable by the presence of certain U.S. troops ~~and~~ that it would be best to withdraw the offending cause of trouble, he replied: "There is but one way to deal with refractory & disobedient boys. They should be properly punished. The troops stay in the bad conduct ceases." (There turning to his adjutant he said:)

A far better way is that inaugurated by Washington — namely, "Honor my mother & yield her obedience

12. because it is right. So to do. It is the law of God written in the Book & on our heart.

II. A second principle of character is contained in the words: "her (Mrs Washington's) early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern that temper,— that "high temper & spirit of command" which he had inherited.

How prone is a man, who has a high temper, to yield to a sudden impulse and contravene the best purposes & plans of his life. This temper unrestrained, like an unchained tiger, usually leads to dire calamities, terrible destruction and sudden death. Where is there described a brighter specimen of noble manhood than the ancient King who stood head & shoulders above his comrades? Yet the power of an ungoverned temper threw down from the pedestal of his glory and has left for him an ignominious record of injustice, failure, unsurpassed misery & finally & fittingly self-destruction. Charles the twelfth of Sweden, who for a time shone like a meteor, lacked the self-control that his country needed. His boldness, quickness & genius gave him extraordinary victories — and left to his great enemy a disastrous defeat. Yet the

13) victory & self confidence of Charles was but the beginning of the end. The meteor ~~is~~ remembered only for its brilliancy disappeared as suddenly as it came. While Peter the great, his enemy & rival, profited more by defeat than by victory; for he brought under restraint ~~control~~ his own fiery temper and forced himself to labor & to wait till he obtained ~~victory~~ & reaped its abundant fruits. Of Washington, in ~~the~~ a higher & better sense, with a soul under self-control because loyal to duty & to God, no adverse circumstances, no suffering of his soldiers, no unexpected defeats and no treachery of supposed friends ever so disturbed that high ~~of temper so troubled~~ temper, ~~which~~ like a noble war steed under rein, it safely & securely carried him through all the battlefields of his wonderful ~~life~~ career.

IIII A third ~~principle~~ element of character is plainly deducible from the mother's early ~~provision~~ teaching and enforcing that teaching by her own example viz. the exact principles of equity and justice.

This equity and justice constitute the righteousness of the Bible. In the Decalo

(14) Testament ~~[illegible]~~ the word which we translate justice is always used for the term righteousness. There is a good old word that I used to hear in my boyhood which perhaps better expresses the thought: rectitude. One of our old professors, here and with the oldtime honest workers ~~[illegible]~~ whom I served, ~~and~~ whose face I miss on my return to this Academy because he has gone to his reward. The reward of the good & faithful public servant, especially comes to my mind in this connection.. I mean Professor Albert E. Church - our professor in mathematics - Rectitude ~~[illegible]~~ was stamped on his forehead. In his heart & in his life the scales of justice appeared delicately poised. It is one thing to love justice & quite a different thing to do justice. To do justice needs clearness of moral vision ~~[illegible]~~ a developed faculty of penetration and which comes by the repeated acts of uprightness - a habit of justice. Among numerous other graduates these. Thomas & Seymour McPherson occur to me as eminently just men. They each

15. possessed & exhibited a rectitude of purpose and life and showed such a facility for making upright decisions that few men were found who would appeal from their judgments. By the study of such lives ~~we can~~ now familiar to us, the lives of those men whose monuments adorn our public squares and give interest to our academic grounds, we can bring into closer observation & sympathy the uprightness in the life of Washington. We can rejoice that his noble mother held him so steadily to the practice of just dealing in his early youth, in that formative period, so that he ever after, the more easily conformed to the claims of duty..

There is no other institution in this land besides our where the officers & pupils take upon themselves so solemn & imperative obligations to be just & to do justice. No mere espionage will answer. The sense of righteousness must be in our own individual hearts. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." No mere eye service will make uprightness of mind. A right regulation is for the good of

16 of the Academy. the army. the service.
It is established in justice for the benefit of all who come under its operation.
Had Washington been a cadet possessing the character that he had he would have said to himself "the regulation is to be kept and I will do my best to keep it. Had he been an officer he would have said the regulation is to be enforced & my duty is to contribute to its enforcement.

IV. Another element of character to be traced to the earliest years - perhaps inherited from both parents. is ~~purpose~~ a constancy of purpose.

> Carlyle once asked an Edinburgh student—who tells the story [redacted]—what he was studying for. The youth replied that he had not quite made up his mind. There was a sudden lightning flash of the old Scotchman's eye, a sudden pulling down of the shaggy eyebrows, and the stern face grew sterner as he said: "The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder; a waif, a nothing, a no man. Have a purpose in life if it is only to kill and divide and sell oxen well, but have a purpose; and having it throw such strength of mind and muscle into your work as God has given you."

Daniel as a child purposed in his heart that he would not eat of the King's meat forbidden to his people nor drink of the King's wine.
He purposed in his soul to call upon his God for wisdom & knowledge - he obtained his request. He purposed that he would never bow down to any graven image. He suffered the penalty. but with indefeasible courage trusting in the Almighty he met the extreme dangers of his position and received for reward not only the

16½ approval of his God & his conscience, but of the King & the nation, whose cause was so dearly & fiercely seeking his life.

According to Lieutenant F. V. Greene.

Skobeleff, of whose victories we are reading in the daily journals is a man of "stupendous military genius". Among the youngest & unjustly held back from his proper command; he obtained permission to go to the great war as an Aide de Camp of another General. At the close his reputation was the brightest on this page of its history. Greene ranks him beside Wellington, Grant and Von Moltke. He uses this expression with regard to him. "His one thought was how to use his life so as to make an impression on his men and gain such a control over them that they would follow him anywhere." In this he had abundant success. For he fulfilled Napoleon's ideal, "Greatness of character or moral courage which produces resolution (purpose); coolness or physical courage which masters danger

17. ; 3 knowledge of his profession; and 4 a capacity to see things as they are. A maxim that he carried out in his own conduct and enforced in those under his command was "never hesitate in what you have to do."
The author further states concerning Skobeleff: "Though he has lived but thirty five years, he has commanded twenty thousand men in battle; he has received the surrender of an entire army of nearly forty thousand men; he has led more assaults than any living man but Grant, and in no one of them has he failed to carry the line he assaulted, though in one case he was subsequently overwhelmed with numbers and driven out." These examples show what I mean by firmness of purpose.
You will trace the same marks of genius in in George Washington - in his steady application at school; in his surprising industry when left to his own guidance - working successfully at the direst problems of mathematics, surveying, ~~to~~ geometry, logarithms, forms of business, copying & recopying with exactness; in his games & sports of his childhood & youth - preferring to take his manhood to the utmost even in them until he excelled; in the ordinary

18. work of surveys in the valley of Va. requisite accuracy, innumerable & great physical endurance, performed ~~[illegible]~~ yet lost a leg; in his perilous expeditions among wild Indians & white enemies to the then far west; in his ~~first~~ maiden battle where he moderated the effect of Braddock's terrible defeat and then ever after thro. the most marvellous career of ~~defeats~~ disappointments, defeats & ~~[illegible]~~ inconsiderable victories which, like the discipline of the children of Israel in the wilderness prepared the way for all the glories of the future for this great ~~nation~~ prosperous & happy nation of freemen. ~~[illegible]~~

We see these results and we may well ~~say~~ recognize the fact that our Leader always had a plan in his mind & a purpose in his heart.

The famous Dr Bushnell gave a discourse on the subject entitled: "The plan of God in every man's life." A young man starts out in the dimmest dawn. He sees at first but a few yards before his face. He will often make mistakes in his projected journey. But God himself in providence & action well surely moulds & shapes the plan of the young man ~~adheres to his own~~ does his best. I am not sure that the divinity is not always present in the breast

19 of a sincere youth to give the required the light just so soon as it is needed.

However this may be it is absolutely necessary to a youth who would make anything of himself to have a plan & purpose of his own.

There are other elements of character which gave strength & consistency to the thoughts, words and acts of George Washington which for the benefit of this example I had proposed to discuss but I find that such discussion will extend my remarks to be too much extended for this occasion. so I conclude by mentioning them.

1. Truth. Simple straightforward candid statements that became more & more mighty as ~~respect for the man~~ knowledge of the man widened and respect for him increased.

2. Reverence toward God. Profane words did not pollute his lips.

3. Faith in an ever present & helpful Divine Master and that one satisfied his pressing wants in hours of darkness, by the appointed method of prayer.

4. Love. Sincere & devoted from the inner circle to the Mother in whose creation he bore so prominent a part; from the Saviour whose self denying image he bore to all the children of men for whose ~~sake~~ sufferings and that Saviour died.

20.) One has to study closely & search long to find evidence of the weaknesses & faults that George Washington doubtless had & manifested as do other true, brave, generous high minded, noble, God-fearing men — but the fact that such weaknesses & faults have gone into oblivion, disappearing with the party spirit that at one time did make a handle of them, shows us the advantage of living such a life.

When Washington stood upon the ~~mountain~~ pinnacle of his highest ambition and looked forth upon a free & happy people whose he ~~was about~~ was, soon to take the final leave — he spoke whitening with age concluding words that we may always repeat with profit:

[introduce from pg. 705 portion marked]
(See insertions marked 20½)

Doubtless my main object in presenting these thoughts ~~on the Character of Washington~~ has been very plain throughout. My desire is to do something to lift up our minds & hearts be it ever so little. For this purpose ~~nothing~~, on

"The situation in which I now stand for the last
"time in the midst of the representatives of the
"people of the United States, naturally recalls
"the period when the administration of the
"present form of government commenced, and
"I cannot omit the occasion to congratulate
"you and my country on the success of the
"experiment, nor to repeat my fervent supplications
"to the Supreme Ruler of the universe and
"Sovereign Arbiter of nations, that his providential
"care may be still extended to the United States;
"that the virtue and happiness of the people
"may be preserved, and that the government which
"they have instituted for the protection of their
"liberties may be perpetual."

21 This anniversary of his birth nothing appears ~~fitter~~ to be a better text for such a discourse for a sermon than the reference to the elements of Washington's remarkable character.

Having just returned to my Alma Mater after an absence of nearly a quarter of a century, and being required to perform a post as yet new to me, I am especially desirous to understand those with whom I have to do & to be understood by them.

This mutual knowledge will obtain in time and by the regular, well digested & time honored methods. There is no harm however & there may be great good in a few words of explanation.

The other day speaking of intoxication in the army a member of Congress on the floor of the House of representatives said: "I do not say that we should mitigate the offense of using intoxicating liquors; but I do say that if every officer of the army of the United States should be dismissed by court martial for an offence of this character, we would not

22. Have enough commissions in the Army perhaps to take charge of a platoon."

Again the same member says: "We select men for this business of throat-cutting and brain bespattering, this general business of death-dealing, because of their courage, because of their ability to command, because they are fitted for that particular service."

Again another intimates that if we discharge a man because of a solitary instance of intoxication "the effect might be that we should have no army at all." The case in hand was one of drunkenness on duty.

Let me say, young gentlemen, that the foregoing is not the character of our army officers. For a test, at the post where I have been serving of twenty two officers & eighteen of them did not habitually drink intoxicating liquors at all, and I never for the term of two years that I was at that post saw either of the others under the influence of drink. My accounts from other parts of the army are in this respect most favorable. Army officers are not as a rule men given to drink. Certainly intoxication is a vice

23.) of the past.

Again I protest most respectfully & most solemnly against the portraiture of the character & requirements of our profession.

The Roman centurion the commander of 100 men, whom our Lord complimented for the strength of his faith is the type of a Christian soldier.

While we stand for our rights, for the constant protection of the rights of others who are exposed, and hold solidly to the claims of self-defense and the claims of our country upon us to protect its vital interests by arms even at the extreme risk of our own lives; we cannot & must not surrender our consciences, nor become mere blind bulletins for any tyrannical assumption of power.

No. No a thousand times no to every doctrine that attempts to take from the soldier the high character to which ~~he is~~ under our government, he is entitled.

The American officer has a model before him in Washington, a model of high & pure character - a gentleman - a man. Let our aspiration be to the highest & best attainment of which we are

24) outside, as a soldier, a cadet, an officer, a man. We have a right to truth, frankness, honesty, ~~sobriety~~ temperance, charity, loyalty to man & to God or to any & all of the other virtues against which there is no law.

Any young man who by his vices brings disgrace upon this academy, the United States service or the flag of his country is not worthy to belong to the army. He is not a true son of the first General who commanded its forces.

While we should not be over exacting with young men, who in the carelessness & thoughtlessness of youth ~~do many~~ make many mistakes & have many shortcomings; still let the young man ever keep his eyes up; let him set ~~set~~ before himself a high standard, even the highest & best. Many must close.

A young man may fail here; but he with a proper feeling, a proper disposition to do right because it is right, he need never fail from his conduct.

25.) I have found from a long experience, as well as from reading & observation that a close & regular discipline is the best — in time it makes all parties happier as it makes them better. The army cannot be conducted successfully neither can any portion of it like a town meeting, something of individuality & opinion must be surrendered to the head.

This being the case, how much better it is for every man in the army cheerfully to do his best without quarrelling, without irritation & without resistance to perform as well as he can the part allotted to him.

There is one final subject that I approach with a feeling of delicacy for I think it a blemish wherever it exists. It may not be as bad here as formerly. I refer to a practice of Ostracism. I cannot say that one should take to his bosom a thief, a liar, or even a profane swearer, or common drunkard; but I do say that a combination of three or four young men, to prevent the

26) ostracism of another & that often for a mere opinion, an idiosyncracy, or some unpleasant habit not yet corrected by our code of good manners, is wrong..

General McPherson, a man of great independence of character & purity of life, refused to ostracise a member of his class at the call of a clique, which had already succeeded in making the youth lonely & wretched.

My thought is that there is no demand that can be made upon us here that shall debar us from all the rights & privileges of a christian manhood.

Let the heart of the youngest be clear & bright, let him emulate the virtues of the thousands of veteran graduates who feared to look no man in the face - who shrank from no danger or difficulty but would rather die in their tracks than do a deliberate wrong. George Washington was their forerunner & true exemplar.

(Over)

Shall we not aim equally high and compass at least a measure of this true nobility?