

## *THE CHARACTER OF WASHINGTON.*

**A** perusal of any historical work discloses to us the names of a number of personages who, in their own particular lines of action, have proved themselves superior to the ordinary class of mortals. Every nation has her skilful statesmen and her vaunted heroes; every people love to sound the praises of their own most gifted sons, and to hold them forth to the applauding world, as

“The pillars of a nation’s hope  
The centres of a world’s desire.”

But amidst all this panorama of glittering, gorgeous, magnificent ornaments of human nature thus held forth for our admiration and respect, few there are who are wholly deserving of the epithet “great;” few there are who merit a full measure of praise unmixed with blame, and whose stainless escutcheons and unblemished reputations entitle them to have their names engraved in bold and indelible characters on the tablets of the world’s history. And very conspicuous among these few appears George Washington.

The writers of his own land never tire of extolling the wonderful qualities of mind and body which characterized the “Father of his Country;” while the historians of every other nation with which he ever had any dealings are unanimous in commending his ability, his integrity and his honor. “First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen,” may be as truly said of him to-day as when,

grown old in the service of his native land, and wearied with years of earnest, unceasing labor in her behalf, but still solicitous more for the well-being of the Republic than for his own personal comfort and convenience, he addressed for the last time his beloved fellow-citizens, intent on passing his remaining years amidst the endearing scenes of his childhood at Mount Vernon. Justly indeed has the world proclaimed him “great,” and truly do we find in him a character worthy of our study, applause, and admiration.

Unlike Byron, who “awoke one morning and found himself famous,” Washington did not become great in a single night. He ascended not the ladder of fame by a single fortunate leap; but slowly and steadily, rung by rung, his love of country urged him on; till at length, thanks to his ability, his perseverance, and the righteousness of his cause, he found himself at the topmost round, the glory of his countrymen, the terror of his enemies, the admiration of the world. When a mere boy, we are told, Washington was remarked for a discretion and sobriety, much beyond his time of life. His little playfellows had always looked up to their neighbor of Mount Vernon as their guide, director, friend—as indeed everybody seemed to do who came in contact with that simple and upright young man. Himself of the most scrupulous gravity and good breeding, he seemed to exact, or at any rate to occasion the same behavior