

"Warnings of a Parting Friend."

"The disinterested warnings of a parting friend," is the way George Washington referred to the admonitions contained in his farewell address. The observance of the birthday of that great American will be of no value to this generation unless the American people shall turn seriously and intelligently to an inspection of the things which made this man great, and a careful study of the warnings which his love for his country prompted him to place before the American people.

Washington's birthday is a national holiday, and it will be very generally celebrated throughout the country. And yet at this time the men in charge of our national affairs are violating every admonition contained in the farewell address of the soldier and statesman whose memory all should revere.

It was Washington's solicitude for his country's welfare, which he declared could not end but with his life, that prompted him to give detailed warnings against the dangers which his experience and foresight anticipated for this nation.

Liberty and the Constitution. Washington wrote of the love of liberty as being "interwoven with every ligament of your hearts," and, he added, that no recommendation of his was necessary "to fortify or confirm the attachment." If Washington lived today, would he not be justified in suspecting that this attachment was in need of at least some "fortification?"

Washington urged that "the free constitution which is the work of your hands may be sacredly maintained." Can it be said that this hope has been fulfilled when today the executive branch of the government violates with impunity the letter and the spirit of the constitution?

Washington expressed the hope that the happiness of the American people "under the auspices of liberty" might be so complete that the people might acquire the glory of recommending liberty "to the applause, the affection and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it." Can it be said that this hope approaches fulfillment at a time when we have turned our backs upon two republics in South Africa, whose people are fighting for freedom, and when we are sending armed forces to the Philippine Islands to subjugate a people who aspire to liberty?

Overgrown Military Establishments. Washington urged us to avoid the necessity of "those overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty." And yet today our national authorities have just completed an "overgrown military establishment," and the army and navy appropriation, exclusive of pensions, made at the present session of congress amounts to \$253,696,870.

Washington declared that "the constitution, which at any time exists till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all." How widely did Washington's views differ from those of the republican leaders of today? A republican congress violates the constitutional requirement that tariff duties shall be uniform, and ignores the constitutional prohibition against a tax on exports. A republican president in the absence of congress

sional authority declares war, signs an agreement whereby purchase is the method for emancipation on United States territory, transfers to a commission of individuals appointed by himself the power to make laws, to collect and disburse the revenues, and to exercise all powers of sovereignty in a territory which our national authorities claim to be subject to United States jurisdiction.

The Spirit of Innovation. Washington warned us to "resist with care the spirit of innovation" upon the principles of our government, "however specious the pretexts." Have we manifested the anxiety on this point which Washington would have had us cultivate?

Washington warned us against a disposition toward factionalism, pointing out that "sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors would turn this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation on the ruins of public liberty." It is not difficult to see how this admonition has been ignored at a time when congress and president have abdicated their privilege of originating and enacting wholesome measures, have surrendered their duty of disposing of public questions in the light of public interests all in favor of one individual, whose public importance is due to the skill he has displayed as a politician.

The Spirit of Encroachment. No more striking warning was given by Washington than when he said:

"It is important that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department any encroachment upon another.

The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against innovations by the others has been evinced by experiments, ancient and modern, some of them in our own country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them.

Of all of Washington's warnings none are more pertinent to the present day than this. In every instance where one department has encroached upon the other, it has been on the pretense of public good, and on this point Washington gave to us an explicit admonition. "Though this in one instance," said Washington, "may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield."

Foundation of The Fabric. Washington held that virtue or morality was "a necessary spring of popular government," and he added that no sincere friend to free government "can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric." What has become of this "necessary spring" when ship-subsidy grabbers, trust magnates, and other representatives of a privileged class are accorded

high seats in the national councils, and make and unmake laws according to their own whims and to the advantage of their own interests? What has become of the "necessary spring" when we are appropriating millions of dollars in order to carry on a war of conquest, in order to subjugate a people who are fighting for principles declared by Washington and the men of his time to be true principles, and in their truth eternal as the stars?

Washington admonishes us to economy in all public affairs, and at this moment there is drawing to a close a congressional session that is appropriating, or will appropriate before its conclusion, very nearly a billion dollars.

Insidious Wiles of Foreign Influence. Washington admonishes us against inveterate antipathies toward any nation, and at the same time took occasion to remind us that "affectionate attachment for any nation should also be excluded." And yet today our national authorities are cultivating a devotion toward Great Britain so ardent that it precludes us from building a canal on American soil without British consent; that prevented us from protesting against the American flag being hauled down on territory which for thirty-two years had been United States property, and that denied us the traditional privilege of expressing sympathy with two republics struggling for existence and doing battle against the encroachments of an empire.

Washington warned us against foreign influence, and so earnest was he on this point that he pleaded: "I conjure you to believe me, my fellow citizens." Pointing out the wide difference between the interests of a government by free men and a government by monarchs, Washington said: "Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, my fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government." Americans of today are in a position to realize the value of this admonition; and Americans of today are in a position to know that Washington prophesied well when in warning us against "excessive partiality for one foreign nation" he said: "real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools, and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests." In the opinion of some of the men of today, the John Hays, whose favorite pastime is exchanging compliments with British ambassadors, are statesmen and patriots of the highest character; while men who protest against the "insidious wiles" of British influence are enemies to national progress and dangerous foes to national order.

Counsels of An Old and Affectionate Friend. These admonitions were, in the language of Washington, "the counsels of an old and affectionate friend." He said he dared not hope they would make the strong and lasting impression he could wish; but they did make a strong impression, and, written in 1796, they were lasting for a period of 100 years. Until the days of the present administration they provided the rules for our national conduct. That these principles are yet strong in the American heart cannot be doubted. Washington himself said that if these suggestions might "now and then recur" to warn "against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare by which they have been dictated."

If it was ever important that interest be revived in a great state paper, it is important at this time that interest be revived in Washington's farewell address.