THE DAILY EVENING TELEGRAPH--PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1868.

GENERAL GRANT.

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BY THE REV. E. H. NADAL, D. D.

Like the rest of the nation and the world, we have studied General Grant, and would be and to give others the results of our thinking. The Great Captain, with alt his childlike simplicity and freedom from pretension, is a somewhat mysterions character. The contrast ba-tween the grandeur of his life and the modesty of his deportment utterly misleads some people and confuses others. On his acting side, he is immense; on his talking side, very small. True greatness must find expres-sion, and when grand deeds have given it niterance, only profound natures will understand them: for the masses of men, and especially for the shallow, the hero must explain himself in words. But such an explanation is weakness; it reveals egotism, and, therefore, in the highest greatness, is well-nigh impossible. Grant will never write essays on his own eampaigns, nor make speeches to illustrate the glory of his own career. Posterity must study and history understand him.

This absence of speech in Grant is hardly what men call reticence. Reticence, as usually understood, carries with a touch of art, and is conscious of an ulterior aim. A splendid statesman may be an orator of rare eloquence, and yet may be noted for reticence. With him, it is cultivated as an element of strength. He is never silent for the want of something to say. On the contrary, he holds back, and drowns, in the silence of his own mind, a thousand brilliancies, because he knows that much talk, even if fine, would make him common. Speech is his trade; it is the substance and form of his deeds: there must, therefore, be nothing little to disparage what is great, but, as it were, a field of silence, in which fine

words shall be set in gorgeons clumps. In Grant there is a reticence which is a thing of nature. It is reticence of word, of face, of action. It can hardly be said that he is careful about his words; but if he be, the deeper truth is that nature was careful in planning him. He never makes a striking remark, either in public or in private, in his letters or in conversation, and he can well afford to be without ambition in that direction. The disposition to shine in this sphere is a sad defact in some otherwise great men. The time spent in getting ready for a pun or a bon mot is thrown away on a littleness, and the wish to be fine in talk is itself a weakness. The absence of this in Grant has, no doubt, dampened his popularity, for the fine sayings of a public man are the windows through which the people suppose they look in upon his in-terior life. Many passages in Webster's speeches, and many witty sentences of Hanry Clay and of President Lincoln, appear to be of this sort. They are the flowers that grow out of the fissures in the great rock, or they are the magnetism that makes the adamant attractive. In Grant the rock is solid and bare, and the attraction is a recondite element, strongly felt only by kindred souls.

This is one reason why politicians have not been more drawn to him. Especially does this hold of many distinguished radicals. It was not to be expected that such men as Horace Greeley and Wendell Phillips, and others of their sort, whose trade has been in sharp talk, should become enthusiastic for Grant. They had stirred up the nation with tongue and pen; their powerful eloquence, clothing their honest testimony against slavery, had been in the highest degree effective, and when their talk had culminated in a successful war, they naturally sought a distinctly pronounced man for a political leader. Grant was not ready with a speech or a letter, and they looked upon him coldly. Such man have followed, not led public opinion in Grant's support.

This reticence of the Great Captain extends to his appearance, to his face, to his gait, and, indeed, to his whole manner. In Sherman, a tall, wiry, mercurial man, with an unquiet face, whose every lineament is instinct with restless thought, the people see their own passions reflected, and share the wild en-thusiasm before them. Sheridan, too, has au inspiring person, The popular idea paints him as a great rider, ever mounted and flying: the enemy on the wing bafore him; the fire in his eye; the hot blood burning in his cheeks: and the wild rallying cry ringing from his lips-a very picture of valorous, daring, irre-sistible, dashing, patriotic force. The thought of him brings a hurrah into the throat. Not so Grant. His very person looks silent. Round, compact, short, his step equable and grave, his eye steady, its fire lying deeper than the crowd sees, and yet certainly there, though in the coal rather than the blaze, his forehead not high; his beard rigid, his under jaw protruding, and giving a sort of hardness to his expression, and that expression a kind of quiet, modest protest against speech-the people must fall back upon history for enthusiasm, and shout rather upon conviction and a sense of duty than from impulse. But even in the sphere of action, we see in Grant the same reticence, the same severe self-restraint, though unconscious here as elsewhere, he is so intent on one thing that the rest is ignored or perhaps utterly forgotten. Here his reticence, which may look like a defect elsewhere, becomes the minister of genuine strength-a power of concentration. It grows into a form of devotion to his country, so complete as to become almost impersonal. A striking example of this reticence in action occurred in the writer's own presence during the war. I happened, on a certain day, to be in the hall of the House of Representatives in Washington, and, hearing my own name called, I turned and saw Mr. Odell, of Brooklyn. He was with General Grant, who had been summoned from the vicinity of Richmond to give testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War. To my great sur-prise, he stated that this was the first time he had ever visited the Capitol. He had been to Washington a number of times, on business with the President and the War Department, but kad never been in the Capitol until called there as a witness. The fact was a most singular one. The man whose fame was filling the civilized world, about whom Congress was talking by the hour day after day, who at that moment was making a most wonderful epoch in history, had often been to Washington, but had never entered the Capitol till now, and even now only because called to the spot on the business of the country. This seemed to us a most striking instance of retinence in action, and utter silencing of all demands of curiosity and pleasure-a power of keeping the eye shut to all but one thing. Another and most beantiful example of the same thing is seen in the Useat Captain's treat-ment of Sherman, when the Gavernment Gavernment found it necessary to revoke the terms sty to the Rebel General Johnston at the time of his surrender. Grant was despatched to North Carolina to set aside what his brave but mistaken lieutenant had done. He was now lifted by success into the foremost position of the world. His steady foot had just trodden out the last spark of the mightiest rebellion on record. If anything in the world could have elated him and jarred his equanimity, this must have done it. But he was perfectly serene. As he had been magnanimous toward the enemy, so now he was generous and fraternal toward his fellow-soldier. He did, in-deed, the needful thing, but hid his own hand and did it by Sherman himself. A different sort of a victor would have acted in a different

spirit, and, catching fire from the public indignation, or feigning to do so, would have shown his own personality in the matter, and humiliated the noble but misjudging soldier. Still another illustration of this sublime reti cence in action was afforded by a personal conversation between the Great Captain and the writer of this article soon after the close of the war. Among other things said, we asked the General the question:-"How did you feel during the dreadfal days of the bat-tles of the Wilderness, when your men were talling in such vast numbers, and the ground before you was contested with such stubborn-ners ?" After a panse, the sole answer way _"I felt that we had to go to Richmond." The reply seemed to ignore philosophy, if not generalship, and yet it contained the quintessence of both philosophy and generalship. It proved that he had fixed, beyond the possibility of change or of doubt, the aim and end of the campaign; that there was no provision for failure, nor conception of its possibility, and that all parts of the campaign, all plans, all means were portions of the one pathway to Richmond. That this wonderful power of self-abnega-

tion, and of excluding from his mind all but the one great object, lay at the root of Grant's success, we do not doubt. We admit he is a military genius—one of the most daring aud profound of all history. His military learn-ing may be inferior to McClellan's, and to that of fifty others; but it is the characteristic of genius to transcend the schools, and to go straight to its mark, in ignorance or in con-tempt of the old paths. Without attempting to define that subtle something called genias, which hides itself in the very tissue of its own creations, in the case of Grant it is clear to us that his genius wrought in the overthrow of the Rebellion by means of his power of selfrestraint and concentration. The essential condition of the success of his genius was that he should resolutely shut out everything extransous and sink himself so deeply in his own thoughts and abide so steadily in them, that his whole plan, with the various aspects and possibilities of the situation, might become, not a transient vision, but, as it were, a picture in oil, in which he foresaw what he and we afterward saw.

This peculiar power revealed itself in other forms, quite as essential as the power itself. Every citizen knows only too well how the cause of the Union suffered in the early part of the war from dissensions among the chiefs of the armies. Some of the generals seemed quite as hostile to their brother officers as to the Rebels themseives. Many a battle was lest by this contemptible littleusss. No chief had as yet appeared whose genius was commanding or whose spirit was assimilating. A man was wanting large enough to see that one brain, however graud, was not sufficient for the terrible emergency; a mau with insight into men sufficient to enable him to make the best selection of commanders; a man not afraid to choose the best, when they were found, lest they should be rivals; and, in a word, a man generous enough, and magnetic enough, and powerful enough to fuse into unity with himself, and around himself, and one with another, the commanders so selected. Grant precisely met this want. He harmonized and united the military intellect of the nation. Under him and Sherman and Thomas and Sheridan, and their numerous and able subordinates, the campaign became one. Grant gave the outline -his mind and heart inspired it-but generous and confiding scope was given to the in-dividuality of each of his lieutenants. Between him and his chief captains, history records no shadow of jealousy, no moment even of coldness. He found the heads of the army in a deadly wrangle, and made them a harmonious family; and, to this day, he and Sherman and Thomas and Sheridan are united like "Damon" and "Pythias." As their fame is one, so their hearts are one.

During their campaign, there came a time when Grant was commalied to lie income more wonderful than his successes. There he sat during the long winter, and the nation watched and waited in breathless susperse To many he seemed to have reached the end of his string and to be doing nothing but emoke. Sherman was marching from Tennessee to the ocean. Atlanta, Savannah, Charleston fell; the world resounded with Sherman's renown. He was said to be greater than Grant. Thomas was winning laurels in the West, and Sheridan was appropriating the hearts of the people by his exploits in the valley of the Shenaudoah. What a terrible thing it is to an ambitious soldier to be forgot. ten ! to stand on the loftiest eminen e of command, and yet to see his laurels gliding, in popular estimation, from his own brows to those of his lieutenants ! There are generals we know of who, in Grant's position at that time, would have gone stark mad. They would have rushed down South and snatched the reins of the war-chariot from Sherman, or taken possession of Sheridan's charger in the Valley, or of Thomas' position in the West, or all three by turns, so as to have their names in print, and to keep in advance of their too aspiring and too successful subordinates. But there sat Grant before Richmond, not green or livid with jealousy, but radiant with joy. Sherman and Sheridan and Thomas were his own boys; their victories belonged to the firm, and the grateful praises of the people, falling on the heads of his generals, were heantifully completed by those of the man sitting idle before Richmond. But the Great Captain was in at the death. Appomattox, with Grant presiding, finished the rising climax of victories, and the long-pursued game fell at last into the bag of the chief hunter. The war has now been over for several years, and Grant, the sort of stuff out of whom the Old World civilizations make emperors and autocrats, still continues one of the most modest and simple of men. Indeed, it might be doubted whether a thorough examination of our whole population would not result in declaring Grant to be the most notable example of modesty in the nation. And now, deficient as Grant may be in the lighter elements of popularity, it is clear that he possesses all the nobler and profounder attributes of strength. If his words have only in a few instances passed into the talk of the people, his great deeds have slowly but certainly reached and mastered their heart and their jadgment. The qualities that made him the great soldier of the age, that united jarring elements of military rule, are the such as fit men wisely and calmly to lead and to govern in any and every sphere of public life.



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