

banners floating in their midst? Lightnings flash no more from their blood-soiled weapons. How many are there? Child, reckon them well. Twenty, nineteen, eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, twelve, eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one?

"One! There is not even one. It is done. Master of the house, you may go in with your dogs, kiss wife and children, clean your arrows, put them away with your ox-horn, then lie down over them to sleep. By night the eagles shall come and eat the crushed flesh, and the bones shall whiten in eternity."

The popularity of the legend would seem to show that the defeat was a more important one than the brief historical mention would indicate. The "Song of Roland" itself is founded on these words of Eginhard: "In this disaster perished Hruolandus, prefect of the marches of Brittany."

This poem is written in lines of ten syllables, the heroic pentameter, with the break after the fourth syllable. It is divided into "laisses," or stanzas, of twelve or fifteen lines in almost every instance, all the lines of each stanza ending with the same vowel sound. And this assonance, as it is called, is not meant for the eye, but for the ear. It should be borne in mind that the poem was meant to be sung or recited.

Almost all the stanzas end with a mysterious, untranslatable word—*aoi*. At one time it was thought to be a war-cry, and this accorded with the Taillefer story; but then it was said to be an old musical notation; and there is another theory that it is a sort of wailing refrain, like the *ahe*, or *ay*, at the end of many old lyrics in all the Romance languages.

The mourning for Roland has been thought to remind one of the passage in the Georgics describing the omens of Cæsar's death. The enumeration of the French and Saracen nobles, and of the different peoples that composed the heathen host, is Homeric, as well as the constantly recurring epithets, and the vast amount of single combats that make up the battles; but our trouvère, probably a Norman of the eleventh century, most likely knew nothing of Homer or Virgil.

Roland is a cosmopolite. A valuable MS. copy of the poem is extant in Venice, and our hero has stood in stone with his friend and companion in arms, Oliver, at the doorway of the cathedral in Verona for seven hundred years. Pulei, Aretino,

and Ariosto have all sung of his renown. Our Shakspeare knew the two friends, and has handed down to us "a Rowland for an Oliver." There is an English version of the poem, dating from the thirteenth century. Germany has her "Ruolandusliet," and the Icelandic peasant of Reikiavik can recount the deeds of Roland. In Denmark and the Netherlands the story is popular, and the Spanish version most in vogue relates that the nephew of the great Emperor was defeated by Bernardo del Carpio. According to Gautier, while all nations of Europe have been delighted to copy or translate this Iliad, literary France in the sixteenth century became so absorbed in Æneas that she forgot Roland, and this ingratitude has lasted three hundred years. In 1836, however, M. Francisque Michel installed himself in the Bodleian Library, and brought out the first French edition from that famous Oxford MS. Since then there has been a revival of interest in old French, and our poem bids fair to be again popular in the land of its birth. We can not feel as we lay it down that the "great century" of Louis the Fourteenth, or the Second Empire either, is all there is of French literature.

#### WASHINGTON'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY.

NONE of the biographers of Washington have given a circumstantial account of the various causes which produced in him a long hesitation before he consented to become the first President of the United States. As a study of character this hesitation is not less interesting than the circumstances which gave rise to it are important to a true appreciation of the risks which the Constitution encountered after it had been framed. We have lived so long under its beneficent sway that the history of its early perils is in some danger of being forgotten; and we of the present generation have suffered so much in saving it from the greater perils of recent times that we can scarcely form an idea of the hazards which attended its first establishment, or estimate rightly the service which Washington rendered to his country when he consented to become the Chief Magistrate under whom the new government was to be inaugurated.

It is by no means an extravagant supposition that if we had had no Washing-



ton we should have had no Constitution—not because his agency in framing it, or his direct exertions for its adoption, were greater than those of others—they were, in fact, much less than the agency and exertions of many others—but because the hope and expectation that he would be the first President operated as a great moral force to incline the people to accept it as an experiment, and to give it a trial under the best auspices. The reader is probably aware that Washington at both his first and his second election received every electoral vote in the Union. As the Constitution then stood, the electors were required to vote for two persons, without designating which of them they wished to make President, or which Vice-President, but the person receiving the highest number of votes was to be declared President when the votes were opened and counted, and the person receiving the next highest number was to be declared Vice-President. At the first election Washington received sixty-nine electoral votes, which was the whole number that the States then in the Union were entitled to give. Mr. John Adams received thirty-four votes, which made him Vice-President, the remaining thirty-five votes being scattered among different persons. The extraordinary unanimity in regard to General Washington was the result of a popular conviction that no other man could be so safely intrusted with the first administration of the new government, and the history of the time abundantly proves that the hope of obtaining his consent became so strong and general, immediately after it was known that there was to be a chief executive magistracy, that long before his consent to take the office had been obtained, this hope had ripened into a belief, which had a potent influence in bringing about a ratification of the Constitution by the requisite number of States.

The proposed Constitution of the United States had been promulgated scarcely more than a week, in the month of September, 1787, when a newspaper published in the city of Philadelphia gave expression to the general sentiment of the country by declaring that Washington must be the first President. This was somewhat premature, for although the new government was framed, it was by no means certain—indeed, it was not highly probable—that it would be established. A long and anxious interval was to be passed before the friends

of the Constitution could see it made the organic law of the Union. But it is interesting to observe this prompt suggestion that Washington, who had retired a few years before to enjoy, as he hoped, the tranquil pleasures of private life, must again be called into the service of the country. As men read that new instrument of government, and pondered what it contained; as they saw that it was to create what free America had not then known—a supreme executive magistracy, to be filled by a single person, an office which in some form, monarchical or republican, society naturally craves—their thoughts turned at once to Washington. The first popular impulse leaped by a natural process to the most natural of conclusions. That the office of chief ruler, the head of the state, should be united with the highest form of character, is a thought that lies in the unprompted instincts of the human heart.

The idea of rewarding Washington, of remunerating him by this grand new dignity of the Presidency for what he had done and what he had been, never entered into the imaginations of the people. How could he be rewarded for that long, disinterested service of his Revolutionary career, so successful, so peculiar, in which the acquisition of an influence entirely unexampled had been followed by an entirely unparalleled resignation of all claims to power so soon as the liberties of his country were established? Neither the character of Washington, nor his relations to the people, nor their feelings toward him, admitted the idea of bestowing anything upon him as a recompense. The people saw before them the creation of a supreme magistracy, and the fitness of uniting it with the highest virtue was all that occurred to them.

But there were persons whose views were uninfluenced by the popular enthusiasm, yet who began at a very early period to present to Washington's mind the necessity for a compliance with the call which they now saw would be made upon him. When, in that affecting scene which occurred in the city of Annapolis on the 21st of December, 1783, he resigned into the hands of the Congress his commission as commander-in-chief, at the close of the war, the public men of the country, whether civilians or soldiers, probably had no expectation of ever seeing him again in a public station. They could scarcely have



imagined a course of events which, within a little more than five years, would bring him from the repose to which, with so much melancholy mingled with so much gratitude, they then saw him retire. The war was over; the treaty of peace was signed; the independence of the United States was acknowledged: Washington's task was apparently done.

Nevertheless, for the country all was uncertain and perilous. The loose and feeble government of the Confederation had been able, with Washington's powerful aid, to get through the war. But now came the trial of peace, which was to reveal its incapacity and to break down its structure. The four years of failure, imbecility, and disappointment which succeeded at length produced that political education of the people of the United States which made the Constitution a necessity and a possibility.

The development which may be traced in the history of this instructive period is seen in nothing more remarkably than in the intellectual growth of those American statesmen who were concerned in the futile experiment of the Confederation, and who devised the more hopeful experiment of the Constitution. They had the wisdom to perceive how indispensable it was to the success of the new system that the proposed head of the government should possess that weight of character and degree of public confidence which would disarm the effort, if it should be made, to prevent its establishment, and would carry it safely through those inevitable conflicts of opinion and feeling to which its first administration must give rise. While the world at large *believed*, they *knew*, that Washington possessed the powers and qualities demanded by this great exigency. They knew that he would exercise the rare faculty of deciding without partiality, and that he would have the rare felicity of high elevation above party or personal aims. From the nature of the government and the circumstances of the country, the office in which they desired to see him could not be invested with that mysterious influence which attends the person and authority of a monarch. A republican Chief Magistrate, the voluntary choice of freemen as the political head of a nation for a limited time and under a limited Constitution, was alone to be selected and instituted. For this reason there must be found in personal

qualities all that would command popular reverence, and in an illustrious reputation all that would attract the confidence of mankind.

Washington was singularly endowed for the occasion by his character, and by the impression which it had produced upon his countrymen and upon foreign nations. In his person and deportment, according to all contemporary testimony, there was an indescribable majesty, untinged, however, with the slightest haughtiness; an ineffable dignity, the expression of his balanced and elevated nature, speaking through the grace of a fine stature, and grave but courteous manners. His reputation was unlike the reputations of that or any former age. Before it all other reputations might "pale their ineffectual fires." There had been more consummate captains; but no leader of a revolution, fighting for the liberties of his country, had achieved success on so great a theatre against so many and such various difficulties. There had been more brilliant and more accomplished statesmen; but no man had ever acted so largely in public affairs, and had such opportunities for personal aggrandizement, of whom it could be said, as it could be said of Washington, that he was a stranger to ambition.

So soon as there appeared a reasonable prospect of the adoption of the Constitution by the number of States required to give it effect, Washington was made to understand that another great sacrifice of his personal inclinations would be demanded of him. One of the earliest of these intimations appears to have reached him at about the time when the Constitution had been ratified by the six States of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, but when the Conventions of Maryland and South Carolina were about acting, when that of New Hampshire stood adjourned for a future day, and when the most serious consequences were anticipated from the effect of this postponement upon New York and Virginia.

This intimation came from one of his old companions in arms, General Armstrong.\* Washington replied to it on the 25th of April, 1788, saying that he was so wedded to a state of retirement and to rural occu-

\* Major-General Armstrong, of Pennsylvania, *not* the writer of the Newburgh Addresses.



pations that to be drawn again into public life, at his advanced age, would require a sacrifice that could admit of no compensation. His age was then fifty-six.

A few days afterward he wrote in the same strain to Lafayette, who, on the other side of the Atlantic, had foreseen that the adoption of the Constitution must result in calling his illustrious friend from retirement. From this time forward, as each succeeding event rendered more and more probable the establishment of the new government, every post brought letters of the same purport from persons the weight of whose opinions and wishes he could not but feel. It is not to be doubted that the suggestion, nowever flattering, gave him great embarrassment, and even pain. The causes for these feelings lay partly in his own temperament, and partly in the circumstances in which he was placed.

Washington was a man of singular modesty, and it must, I think, be admitted that he was, at least at this period of his life, without ambition; for if ambition be that longing for farther distinction which leads men to covet posts of honor and responsibility, and to reach the highest attainable position, it is certain that Washington, after he had passed the middle period of life, never did one of the acts which usually indicate the existence and influence of this passion. There is no evidence and no contemporary suggestion that he sought or desired the appointment of commander-in-chief at the beginning of the war: and he was closely observed by those who would have noted his efforts to obtain the appointment, and would have caused them to be known to posterity, if he had made any. He himself solemnly assured his wife, in a letter that could have been intended for no eye but hers, that so far from having sought it, he had used every endeavor to avoid it, not only from an unwillingness to part with her and his family, but from the consciousness that the trust was too great for his capacity. To his brother Augustine he made the same declaration.

But although he was unambitious, he was careful of his fame: and when he received from all quarters the offer, so to speak, of the Presidency, his reputation, which filled the civilized world, was rather an impediment than an incentive to new exertions in untried fields of labor.

His judgment was so calm that he could distrust his own powers—an exertion of the judgment to which more brilliant and more aspiring men, who have had much success in life, have often been unequal. He felt a strong reluctance to put at hazard the glory that he had gained, by assuming a position and a responsibility so new to him.

In addition to this, he had a real love of private life, of the pursuits of agriculture, and of domestic pleasures. He was fond of the exercise of hospitality, and accustomed to a large indulgence of his social tastes. His personal situation was all that such a man, with such feelings and such a life to look back upon, could desire. His estate was ample, and under his management productive. He was an object of the deepest interest to the enlightened of every nation, and no stranger who could be introduced to him thought of leaving our shores without seeking his house. By his neighbors and friends, by the whole body of his countrymen, in truth, he was revered as no other man has ever been. What he had accomplished, and the reputation which it had gained for him, were enough for any mortal happiness. So calmly, however, so justly, and with such moderated feelings, did he look backward and forward, that he promised himself no higher felicity than to glide smoothly on through an old age of domestic happiness to what might remain for him beyond the grave. Why should such a man covet public station? Why, rather, should Washington have been willing to accept that new, weighty, and hazardous responsibility?

Fond as he was of private life, and careful as he was of his fame, Washington held his personal advantage in all things and at all times constantly subordinate to the public good. We know that he so acted when he consented to take the command for the Revolution, and when he yielded to the earnest desire of his friends and became a member of the Convention which framed the Constitution. On both occasions he put a great deal at risk: he incurred the risk at once, as soon as he saw the duty, but he hesitated until the duty was plain to him. We may trace a similar operation of his mind through that long period of suspended decision, from the time when the Presidency was first suggested to him, in the spring of 1788, to the close of that year and the be-



ginning of the next. There was the same struggle caused by his personal inclinations and his depreciation of himself; and it is abundantly apparent that one of his chief reasons for his extremely cautious replies to those who wrote to him on the subject was that he could not see the necessity for his services in the same light in which others saw it. He was, however, a good deal under the constraint arising from the uncertainty of the adoption of the Constitution down to the end of July, at which time the States of New Hampshire, Virginia, and New York were known to have ratified it.

All uncertainty, therefore, respecting the adoption of the Constitution by the necessary number of States was thus dispelled. But a new and apparently unexpected hazard was yet to be encountered. The mode in which the Constitution was to come into operation, according to the plan devised by the Convention, required that the ratification of the States should be returned to the existing Congress, and that the time of choosing the electors of the President, and the time and place for the new government to commence its proceedings, should be determined by that body. The Constitution designated no place as the permanent seat of government for the United States, but it embraced a clause authorizing the future Congress to establish such a seat in a district not exceeding ten miles square, to be obtained by cession from any of the States. This provision was regarded as the declaration of a settled policy in favor of the final establishment of the government in a central situation, and away from the commercial cities; and when taken in connection with the reference made by the Convention to the Congress of the Confederation to fix the place for the new government to commence its proceedings, it evidently contemplated that the Congress to be assembled under the Constitution would, at a proper time, undertake the duty of carrying out the policy thus declared by the Convention and by the States which had ratified the instrument. But so great were the local jealousies on this subject, and they had become so much increased by the inconveniences which had been experienced by the old Congress, that when that body was called upon to determine the place for the commencement of the new government, it was feared that the designation of a place would

greatly embarrass the future question of removal and settlement elsewhere.

These jealousies were not altogether unreasonable. Practically, the question of a temporary seat lay between the cities of New York and Philadelphia. It was now five years since the Congress of the Confederation had been obliged to leave Philadelphia, where the great measures of the Revolution had been conducted by their predecessors. During nearly two years of the five they had been almost an ambulatory body, making abortive efforts to agree on a permanent place, until at length they found themselves in the City Hall of New York. Here they had been established for nearly three years, when they were called upon to decide at what place the new government should begin to act. There was an obvious convenience in having its proceedings commenced where the Federal offices and archives were then established. But if this step were likely to make the city of New York the permanent seat of government—and it would evidently have some tendency to do so—the selection would be extremely objectionable. Eight only of the twenty-six Senators of the new government, and seventeen only of the sixty-five Representatives, would come from the States east of New York; sixteen Senators and forty-two Representatives would come from States south of her. On the other hand, Philadelphia was scarcely more central in reference to the convenience of the Southern members; it was open to the same objection with New York of being a commercial city; and its adoption as the temporary seat of government might have the same tendency to prevent the acquisition of a Federal district, and the establishment of a permanent seat in a more central position.

The body which was to decide this delicate and difficult question, and was to exercise, as it appeared, an immense power over the destinies of the country, was an assembly in which each State had a single vote. The States of North Carolina and Rhode Island had not adopted, and did not then seem likely to adopt, the Constitution. But whether they were present or absent, or whether they voted upon this question or abstained from voting, they were counted among the thirteen States, and thus it was necessary that seven votes should be thrown for some particular locality before the question could be settled



and the new government could have an actual existence. Even with the most patriotic purposes, too, and with the most friendly sentiments toward the Constitution on the part of the leading members of that Congress, it was possible that conscientious differences of opinion on a doubtful question of expediency might totally prevent the organization of the new government. Six of the members had sat in the National Convention—Madison, Hamilton, Gilman of New Hampshire, Yates of New York, and Few and Baldwin of Georgia. Of these, Yates was hostile to the Constitution; the others were its firm friends; the first two were, of course, its earnest and anxious advocates.

But at the time when the ratification of New Hampshire, the ninth State, was received and officially laid before the Congress, Madison and Hamilton were both absent. The former had been in the Convention of Virginia, which had ratified the Constitution, but this event was not then known at New York, and Madison had not yet arrived there. Hamilton was still in the Convention of New York, at Poughkeepsie, endeavoring to procure the ratification of that State. Sedgwick, of Massachusetts, who became a delegate in this Congress before this question was settled, and who was an earnest Federalist, had not yet taken his seat. On the reception of the ratification of New Hampshire, a motion was made for the appointment of a committee to report an act for putting the Constitution into operation, according to the resolutions of the National Convention. The States of North Carolina and Rhode Island did not vote upon it, and Yates alone of all the delegates recorded his vote in the negative.

The committee do not appear to have agreed on a place for the new government to commence its proceedings, but they reported a time for the choice of electors of the President, a time for their assembling and voting, and a time for the commencement of the government. In this attitude of the matter, Madison arrived from Virginia. Soon after his arrival a motion was made to establish the government temporarily in Philadelphia, and he, with the rest of the Virginia members, voted for it, but it was not carried. In a few days, Hamilton, whose labors in behalf of the Constitution in the Convention of New York had just been crowned with success, appeared in his place in the Congress, and

on the next day he was followed by Sedgwick. They acted together in endeavoring to procure a vote in favor of the city of New York, while Madison as steadily exerted himself to have the new government first assembled at Philadelphia. This diversity of views between Madison and Hamilton on this question renders the motives of each of them an interesting subject for inquiry.

It was in truth a case of reasoning upon similar principles, but leading to different results, because the reasoning was drawn from different premises. Mr. Madison's opinions were formed under the influence of an occurrence which gave him an entirely wrong impression concerning the objects of Hamilton and the other Federalists of New York. The Convention of that State was dissolved, after having ratified the Constitution, a few days before Madison returned to his seat in Congress. He found that the circular letter of that State, recommending another General Convention to amend the Constitution, was made use of by its opponents, particularly in Virginia, to inculcate the idea that the government was fatally defective; and he formed the opinion that the Federalists of the New York Convention had concurred in that measure as the means of purchasing an immediate ratification, in order to save to the city of New York the chance of becoming the seat of the new government. That the Federalists of New York were anxious to have the Constitution immediately ratified by their State there can be no doubt; and I have elsewhere suggested, what seems to me very plain, that they could have obtained a ratification only by conceding to their opponents the measure of the circular letter. This measure certainly had an unfortunate tendency, but it would have been still more unfortunate to have permitted the State of New York to remain out of the new Union. The result shows that it was in the highest degree fortunate for the country that the city of New York should have been able to press its claim to become the temporary seat of the government, and to have that claim so far admitted at last as to make that city the place for the assembling of the First Congress, because it was there that the First Congress was able to decide finally on the future permanent residence of the government, and to agree that its residence should in the mean time be at Philadelphia. If the latter city had



been the place of the first meeting of Congress, far greater difficulties would in all probability have attended the settlement of this question. Madison, however, supposed at this time that there was a much greater difference between Hamilton's purposes and his own than there really was.

They differed, in fact, only with respect to the best mode of reaching substantially the same result. Madison did not desire to have the government permanently established in Philadelphia; Hamilton did not wish to see it permanently placed at New York. The latter desired that the First Congress should be compelled to settle the question of a permanent seat of government under the operation of the inconveniences attending its residence at New York. Madison wished for the delay that would follow a temporary residence at Philadelphia as more favorable to the good selection of a permanent seat.

The four States which lay east of New York steadily concurred with the vote of that State in resisting the selection of Philadelphia as the place for the first meeting of the new Congress. New Jersey, with a territory contiguous to New York on the one side and to Pennsylvania on the other, would have been content with either city for the temporary residence of the government, but had hopes of its final establishment within her own limits on the banks of the Delaware. The six States south of Pennsylvania, with the exception of South Carolina, favored the present claims of Philadelphia. These divisions appeared soon after the arrival of Hamilton and Sedgwick, and they continued for six weeks. More than twenty different votes were taken, on motions and counter-motions, on various preambles and declarations, without any result. At length, according to Mr. Madison, the opponents of the city of New York saw themselves "reduced to the dilemma of yielding to its advocates, or of strangling the government in its birth." He himself became convinced of the necessity of yielding much sooner than others. But it was finally agreed by all to be the safest policy to keep the government at the city of New York until a permanent seat could be chosen. There was some danger that the new Congress might not select a spot further south than the Delaware, or, at most, than the Susquehanna. When, however, the opposition to the exertions of Hamilton and Sedgwick in favor of a

temporary residence at New York gave way, it appears to have been understood on all sides that the government would finally be carried to the banks of the Delaware, the Susquehanna, or the Potomac. In this expectation, the Congress, nine States being present, unanimously agreed to a resolution appointing a time for choosing the electors of President, a time for their voting, and a time for commencing proceedings under the Constitution, and making the city of New York the place.

On the day on which this vote was passed, Henry Lee, one of the Virginia delegation in Congress, wrote an earnest and impressive letter to Washington, urging his acceptance of the Presidency. It drew forth a guarded and cautious reply, from which it does not appear that Washington's feelings on the subject had undergone much change. But in the course of a few days he received a letter from Hamilton, which evidently produced a stronger impression upon him than any similar communication had done. From their former relations, we might expect to find Washington much influenced by Hamilton's arguments. But the letter itself was so able, and it presented so clearly the considerations which alone could have weight with the person to whom it was addressed, that it may properly be considered to have been of the greatest importance, if it did not even cause the decision to which Washington came.

The characters and positions of the two men, and the momentous question of duty which Hamilton thus undertook to present to the mind of Washington, invest this correspondence with a high personal interest as well as great historical importance. The mode in which the question was stated would appear to have been chiefly the dictate of a consummate tact, inspired by an intimate knowledge of Washington's character, if we did not see in the letter proof that Hamilton felt that he was stating the case of his country as well as arguing to reach the mind that he addressed. There is not a sentiment in this letter of the vulgar material on which ambition feeds. The situation in which Washington is placed is viewed with the eye of one who comprehends all its relations. Due consideration is given to his wish to be exempted from further public service; the risk to his reputation is justly weighed; the bearing of his de-



cision on the respectability and renown with which the new government will commence its operations is stated with the clearness and precision characteristic of the writer; the implied pledge that was given by his taking part in the framing of the Constitution is skillfully suggested; and then the whole is summed up in a proposition which rests upon the immutable basis of all patriotism. "In a matter so essential," said Hamilton, "to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for."

This frank, manly, and forcible presentation of the subject was of the utmost service to Washington, for it gave him what he greatly needed—the opinion of one who was so placed as to be able to see every element in the case. No man in the country had more carefully or more anxiously studied the public mind respecting the Constitution than Hamilton. He was able to say to Washington, and to say it from a very wide observation, that the conviction of the necessity for his taking the Presidency was universal, and therefore that he would be likely to incur no uncanonid imputation in any quarter by accepting it. He was able, moreover, to tell him that there was but one question in the case, and that was a question of duty.

Washington was evidently relieved. He had been so constrained by his situation that he had been obliged to refrain from asking the counsel of his best friends. His delicacy shrank from the thought of presenting, or even appearing to present, himself as a candidate. Now that he had been written to freely by a person to whose judgment he would have appealed if he could have done so, he answered without reserve, and with an evident yielding of some of his doubts. But he still thought that there was one very serious obstacle to his consent. While he was willing to admit that the friends of the Constitution might be disposed to think that his administering the government would give it strength, he suggested to Hamilton that the same opinion might influence its enemies to oppose his election. He supposed that such persons would find their way into the electoral colleges, and that they would extend their opposition to any man likely to thwart their measures. He be-

lieved that the anti-Federalists had formed a systematic plan of opposition, extending through the States.

Hamilton answered this objection by assuring Washington that he was the only person in the country who could sufficiently unite the public opinion, or give the requisite weight to the office, in the commencement of the government; that in all probability his refusal would throw everything into confusion—certainly that it would have a very disastrous influence.

It can not now be ascertained at what precise period Washington may be said to have gained his own consent to the step which he was thus urged to take; for although some of his objections were overcome by the arguments of Hamilton and his other personal friends, still the year was closed, and the time for the choice and action of the electors had drawn near, before we discover that any decided answer had been given by him, even in his private correspondence, and he was approached in no public or official way on the subject. Happily, in those early days of the republic, and in the inauguration of the Constitution, there were no defined and organized parties, with their machinery of nominations, platforms, and conventions. The nation "nominated" Washington, and they waited decorously for the official communication to him of the votes of the electors, to learn that he had accepted. What his feelings were, as the hour for a final decision approached, we know from an unreserved communication of them to one who had served him faithfully, and whom he ever regarded with strong affection—Jonathan Trumbull.

"I believe you know me sufficiently well, my dear Trumbull," he wrote, in December, "to conceive that I am very much perplexed and distressed in my own mind respecting the subject to which you allude. If I should, unluckily for me, be reduced to the necessity of giving an answer to the question which you suppose will certainly be put to me, I would fain do what is in all respects best. But how can I know what is best, or on what I shall determine? May Heaven assist me in forming a judgment! for at present I see nothing but clouds and darkness before me. Thus much I may safely say to you in confidence: if ever I should, from any apparent necessity, be induced to go from home in a public character again, it



will certainly be the greatest sacrifice of feeling and happiness that ever was or can be made by him who will have, in all situations, the pleasure of professing himself yours," etc.

What a relief it were could we know whether these dark shadows which then cast themselves over that serene and tranquil nature did not continue to the last! What would we not give could we receive his own final estimate of the happiness or unhappiness which his last public service gave him—could weigh with him—against the waywardness of faction, the resistance of the bad, the short-comings of the well-meaning, the obstructions, the failures, the disappointments, the pangs, which ingratitude may have given him; also of that vast sum of present and prospective good which he accomplished by presiding over the government for the first eight years of its existence! Did he

know it all, did he feel it all, did he comprehend it all, in the brief interval of rest which was afforded to him before that sharp, quick summons to the tomb which came ere he had yet reached what may be called old age? It may be that it is not always given to the great benefactors of our race to be fully conscious of the importance of their own lives and characters. Of Washington we know at least that as he gave himself without reserve to the welfare of his country, as neither ambition nor any personal object animated him, so his happiness could not have been exposed to the causes which afflict the aspiring and self-seeking; that as he was not a man of genius, so he did not suffer the pains of genius; and that all the enduring satisfaction which great deeds, wise counsels, and disinterested services can give to the heart of man must have been his.

#### A SMALL TELESCOPE, AND WHAT TO SEE WITH IT.

THE impression is quite common that satisfactory views of the heavenly bodies can be obtained only with very large telescopes, and that the owner of a small one must stand at a great disadvantage alongside of the fortunate possessor of a great one. This is not true to the extent commonly supposed. Sir William Herschel would have been delighted to view the moon through what we should now consider a very modest instrument; and there are some objects, especially the moon, which commonly present a more pleasing aspect through a small telescope than through a large one. The numerous owners of small telescopes throughout the country might find their instruments much more interesting than they do if they only knew what objects were best suited to examination with the means at their command. There are many others, not possessors of telescopes, who would like to know how one can be acquired, and to whom hints in this direction will be valuable. We shall therefore give such information as we are able respecting the construction of a telescope, and the more interesting celestial objects to which it may be applied.

##### THE MAKING OF THE TELESCOPE.

Whether the reader does or does not feel competent to undertake the making

of a telescope, it may be of interest to him to know how it is done. First, as to the general principles involved, it is generally known that the really vital parts of the telescope, which by their combined action perform the office of magnifying the object looked at, are two in number, the *objective* and the *eye-piece*. The former brings the rays of light which emanate from the object to the focus where the image of the object is formed. The eye-piece enables the observer to see this image to the best advantage.

The functions of the objective as well as those of the eye-piece may, to a certain extent, each be performed by a single lens. Galileo and his contemporaries made their telescopes in this way, because they knew of no way in which two lenses could be made to do better than one. But every one who has studied optics knows that white light passing through a single lens is not all brought to the same focus, but that the blue light will come to a focus nearer the objective than the red light. There will, in fact, be a succession of images, blue, green, yellow, and red, corresponding to the colors of the spectrum. It is impossible to see these different images clearly at the same time, because each of them will render all the others indistinct.

The achromatic object-glass, invented