

THE

SIMILARITY

OF

WASHINGTON AND HARRISON,

AS TO

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR EARLY LIVES,
TRAITS OF CHARACTER, KIND OF TALENTS,

AND

KIND OF SERVICES RENDERED THEIR COUNTRY,
TRACED FROM THE MOST AUTHENTIC
SOURCES OF INFORMATION,

"GIVE US FACTS."

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P R E F A C E.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES :

You will soon perform a most important act of your rightful sovereignty by electing an individual to serve you as President of the United States for the term of four years. The more knowledge of unquestionable facts you have as to the qualifications of the candidate for your suffrage, the better you will be prepared to perform that act in a manner to promote your true interest. The more, on the other hand, you give heed to mere irresponsible party statements, respecting either candidate, the more likely you are to be misled, and to endanger those interests.

The eminent qualifications of Washington for the Presidency, you all admit. That to possess some of the same qualifications and others similar, is a recommendation to any candidate for the Presidency, you will also admit.

The object of the following sketch is to lay before you a few unquestionable facts in the lives of both Washington and Harrison, that you may compare them and form your own opinion from them, whether the latter does not possess some of the same qualifications as the former, and others similar to them in kind, if not equal in degree.

These facts are drawn chiefly from Spark's, Marshall's, and Bancroft's Lives of Washington, Dawson's Life of Harrison, Hall's Memoirs of Harrison, Outlines of the Life of Harrison, by the Hon. Caleb Cushing, and Brackenridge's History of the late War.

W. H. S.

SIMILARITY

OF

WASHINGTON AND HARRISON.

BOTH Washington and Harrison were sons of Virginia planters. Their families are related. The minds of both were early imbued with the great principles of piety, virtue and true honor. Each lost his father before coming of age. Washington inherited from his father more property than Harrison; yet not enough to tempt him to neglect useful industry. Washington finished his school education at the age of sixteen, when he became a practical surveyor and followed that business several years. In that employment his nights were often passed in rude log cabins and he became accustomed to privations.

The father of Harrison, having expended most of his estate during the Revolution in support of the Declaration of Independence which he signed, left but little inheritance to his son. Young Harrison finished his early education about the age of sixteen and began to prepare himself for active life.

Washington was appointed by the Government of Virginia a Major in the militia for the defence of the colony against the French and Indians in his nineteenth year. This was his first military commission.

At the same age Harrison received from the hand of Washington then President of the United States, the intimate friend and correspondent of his father, his first military commission as an Ensign in defence of our North Western borders against the Indians. His military duties

made him intimately acquainted with log cabins and the hardships of the wilderness.

Washington soon distinguished himself in the service, received a vote of thanks from the Legislature of Virginia, and was promoted. Harrison soon distinguished himself for similar qualities, received the commendation of his commander, and was promoted. He soon again distinguished himself, received the thanks of General Wayne in general orders, and was again promoted.

Washington, at the age of 23, was selected by General Braddock, to be one of his aids. Mr. Sparks tells us, that "during the unfortunate battle of Monongahela, Colonel Washington behaved with the greatest courage and resolution. He rode in every direction, and was a conspicuous mark for the enemy's sharp shooters." Harrison, at the age of 19, was selected by General Wayne, to be one of his aids. The General giving an account of his memorable and decisive victory over the Indians in his despatch to President Washington, says, "Lieutenant Harrison rendered the most essential service by communicating my orders in every direction, and bravely exciting the troops to press for victory."

Neither Washington nor Harrison were soldiers by trade; neither of them made war a profession. Early in life they were both called to act in a military capacity by the exigencies of the times. Both were afterwards called to act more conspicuously in a civil as well as military capacity, both by the exigencies of the times and the general voice of their fellow-citizens.

Washington served until the French and Indian war was brought to a close, when he married and settled at Mount Vernon, where he was engaged in his favorite agricultural pursuits, sixteen years, frequently serving his country as a civil magistrate, a member of the Virginia Legislature, and afterwards as a member of the Continental Congress.

Harrison finding after Wayne's victory that his military services were not needed by his country, resigned his commission, married, settled on a small farm, where he remained without military employment about sixteen years, serving his country, at different times, as secretary of the Northwestern Territory, Lieutenant-Governor ex-officio, a commissioner to treat with the Indian tribes, superintendent of Indian affairs, a delegate in Congress, and Governor of the vast territory of Indiana.

The ability and fidelity with which Washington discharged his duties in the civil capacities above named is not questioned. Neither has the ability and fidelity of Harrison in civil as well as military affairs, been questioned until very lately. The fact that in the excitement of the present canvass they have been questioned by some, renders it proper to call the reader's attention to the following extracts :

“General Harrison negotiated thirteen important treaties with the different Indian tribes, and obtained cessions, on the most advantageous terms, of not less than *sixty millions* of acres of land, embracing a large portion of the richest region in the Northwest.”—*Outlines of the Life of Harrison, by the Hon. Caleb Cushing, p. 18.*

“Had the bill,” (Harrison's bill before Congress, providing for the sale of lands in small parcels within the means of industrious poor men,) “been delayed one year, it is more than probable that a large portion of Ohio would have been sold off in 4000 acre lots to the capitalists, to the exclusion of that useful class, which has since given a spring to the prosperity of the state.”—*Hall's Memoir of Harrison, p. 63.*

When Louisiana was separated from Indiana, the citizens of St. Louis expressed their sentiments as follows.

“This change will not take effect without a respectful expression of our sentiments to you for your assiduity, at-

tention and disinterested punctuality, in the temporary administration of the government of Louisiana.”

The officers of the militia of St. Louis, on the same occasion use the following language. “Accept, Sir, these sentiments as a pledge of our affectionate attachment to you and to the magnanimous policy by which you have been guided. May the Chief Magistrate of the American nation duly estimate your worth and talents, and long keep you in a station where you have it in your power to gain hearts by virtuous actions, and promulgate laws among men who know how to respect you, and are acquainted with the extent of their own rights.”

The officers of the militia of Knox county say of Governor Harrison—“The great facility and care with which he manages our affairs induce this meeting to have great confidence in him as eminently qualified to govern this Territory, not only because of his superior talents, but also his integrity, patriotism and firm attachment to the General Government.”

In 1809, the House of Representatives of Indiana in a resolution unanimously requesting the President and Senate to re-appoint Governor Harrison after he had served nine years, say; “This House cannot forbear recommending to and requesting of the President and Senate, most earnestly, in their own names and in the names of their constituents, the re-appointment of their present Governor William Henry Harrison :—because he possesses the good wishes and affections of a great majority of his fellow citizens; because they believe him to be sincerely attached to the Union, the prosperity of the United States and the administration of its government; because they believe him in a superior degree capable of promoting the interest of our Territory, from long experience and laborious attention to its concerns, from his influence over the Indians and his wise and disinterested management of that depart-

ment; and because they have confidence in his virtues, talents and republicanism."

Speaking of the period just before the Revolutionary war, Mr. Sparks says, "The claims of the officers and soldiers to lands, granted as a reward for their services at the beginning of the French war, met with innumerable obstacles for a long time, first from the Ministry of England, and next from the authorities of Virginia. By Washington's unwearied exertions, however, and by these alone, and mostly at his own expense, the matter was at last adjusted. Nor did he remit his efforts till every officer and private soldier had received his due proportion. Where deaths had occurred, the heirs were sought out and their claims verified and allowed."

Speaking of Harrison, Mr. Hall says, "His efforts in favor of the military pensioners and of the claims of the surviving soldiers of the Revolution will not soon be forgotten by the decendants of those heroes. His exertions, joined with others, prevailed in rescuing those meritorious men from the evils of neglect and poverty." *Hall's Memoir of Harrison, published in 1836, p. 300.*

The Hon. Caleb Cushing says, "The strenuous exertions of General Harrison when in Congress in behalf of the claims of the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution, deserve to be mentioned for their intrinsic importance and the value of his efforts with regard to them." *Cushing's Life of Harrison, p. 59.*

Mr. Sparks, in his life of Washington, page 69, says, "It was known that Washington gave prudent counsel to Gen. Braddock, which was little heeded. On the evening preceding the action, a body of Indians offered their services. Col. Washington urged the importance of these men as scouts and out guards; their knowledge of the ground, and skill in fighting among woods. Relying on the prowess of his regular troops and disdaining such allies, the General peremptorily refused to receive them. Had a scouting

party of a dozen Indians preceded the army, they would have detected the enemy in the ravines and reversed the fortunes of the day."

Harrison discovered the same characteristic caution and foresight in anticipating the violence of Tecumseh at the council of Vincennes, and posting a guard near. This measure probably prevented a bloody massacre of the whites on that occasion.

He showed the same caution and foresight in his mode of conducting the celebrated expedition to Tippecanoe. Before leaving Vincennes, he drilled his men to the peculiar mode of Indian warfare. On his march he formed them in line of battle so frequently, that they became perfectly familiar with the movement; so that if attacked, they could form at once and without confusion.* The want of this caution was the great defect of St. Clair's management.

After Harrison reached the Prophet's Town, the Indians endeavored to throw him off his guard by fair promises; but when the army encamped, he ordered every thing kept in readiness for a night attack. "The troops lay," says the Hon. Mr. Cushing, "as they were to rise for battle, in all their clothes and accoutrements—the dragoons with their swords and pistols in their belts, and the infantry with their arms by their sides; and it was the Governor's invariable practice to be ready to mount his horse at a moment's warning. The entire camp was surrounded by a cordon of sentinels, so posted as to give timely notice of any attack, and thus preclude, as far as possible, the danger of loss, or confusion by surprise."

Mr. Brackenridge, in his history of the late war, says, "The order given to the army in the event of a night attack, was for each corps to maintain its position until relieved. The Commander in Chief was ready to mount

*Statement of a gentleman in that expedition, to the writer.

his horse at a moment's warning." Had it not been for these cautionary measures, there can be no doubt that our army would have been surprised and defeated by the fury of the Indian host with dreadful slaughter. Harrison adopted the same cautious management at Fort Meigs and at the Thames as the details of those actions will fully show. Are not caution, prudence and foresight, so indispensable to a successful military commander, to be esteemed important qualifications for the Presidency of the United States?

Harrison also resembles Washington in the amiable trait of humanity. This may be thought a trifle. But while, on the one hand, the pardoning power of the President should not be exercised through weakness, it should not on the other, be withheld by a want of humanity.

A Mr. Gist who returned home through the woods with Washington on foot, from his mission to the French Commandant, says, "While travelling with an Indian guide whom both suspected, the Indian made a stop and turned about. Major Washington saw him point his gun towards us. He fired and ran forward to a large white oak tree and began to load his gun. We were soon up with him; I would have killed him but the Major would not suffer me." *Sparks' Life of Washington*, p. 33.

Harrison shewed the same humane disposition in sparing the life of the negro man who was sentenced to be shot for an attempt to murder him. "The fact was," says the General, "I began to pity him and could not screw myself up to the point of giving the fatal order." In general orders after his success against the Indians, Harrison says, "It is with the sincerest pleasure that the General has heard that the most punctual obedience was paid to his orders, in not only saving all the women and children, but in sparing all the warriors who ceased to resist; and that even when vigorously attacked by the enemy, the claims of mercy prevailed over every sense of their own danger."

Is not that combination of qualities in a public man which secures the public confidence, useful in a President of the United States?

The character and talents which Washington had exhibited before the Revolution, impressed the public mind with his fitness to be Commander in Chief of the American armies. Under this impression, Congress elected him to that office and conferred on him discretionary powers so extensive as to be almost unlimited. The public confidence was not misplaced; for in no one instance did he abuse these powers.

Soon after the late war had commenced and Hull's surrender had cast a gloom over the whole country, the character and talents which Harrison had already exhibited, turned every eye towards him as the man to retrieve that disaster. He was appointed Commander in Chief of the Northwestern army, with powers almost as extensive as were conferred on Washington. The instructions to Gen. Harrison contain these words "You will exercise your own discretion and act in all cases according to your own judgment." The public confidence was not misplaced in this case. Nor did Harrison ever abuse those powers. He was never guilty of a single rash, cruel, illegal, sanguinary, or despotic act.

The power of overcoming difficulties and removing obstacles, is another trait of character in which Harrison resembles Washington remarkably. The situation of both was more difficult than that of generals appointed to command troops already disciplined to their hand. Washington's was the task of creating a disciplined army with limited means and surrounded by discouragements. He overcame all obstacles,* and brought the war to a virtual close by the capture of the British army under Lord Cornwallis.

* Mrs. Washington, describing the difficulties her husband had to encounter at Valley Forge, in a letter to a friend, says, "The General's apartment

“This event occasioned great rejoicings throughout the country. Congress passed a special vote of thanks to each of the commanders and to the officers and troops. Two stands of colors, taken from the enemy at the capitulation, were given to General Washington as tokens of the national gratitude for his services.” *Spark's Life of Washington*, p. 370.

The situation of Harrison was similar to that of Washington in this respect ; that his forces were either undisciplined recruits, or militia and volunteers enlisted for limited periods, to be prepared to contend successfully with British veterans. Though the task of Washington was more arduous on the whole, that of Harrison was more so in respect to the vast extent of wild impassible country, which was the theatre of his operations. Harrison's was, indeed, a more extensive command than has ever been entrusted to any other officer of the United States, since the Revolution. Notwithstanding all obstacles, Harrison effected every object of his instructions. In less than a year he drove the British and their Indian allies out of our territory, recaptured Detroit, and pursued, defeated and captured the British army at the Thames, in Upper Canada. This event, like the capture of Cornwallis, in the former war, afforded a presage of the favorable termination of this. It undoubtedly had more influence in procuring the treaty of Ghent, than any other victory which we obtained on land during the war. The news of this great victory was received throughout the United States with universal rejoicings and congratulations. President Madison, in his message to Congress, of December 7, 1813, said this result was “highly honorable to Major-General Harrison, by

is very small ; but he has had a log cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first.” This fact, taken in connexion with his lodging in log cabins when a surveyor, fully entitles him to the appellation of a “Log Cabin candidate” for the Presidency. The appellation is certainly not ominous of defeat.

whose military talents it was prepared." "This victory," said Mr. Cheves, on the floor of Congress, "was such as would have secured to a Roman General in the best days of the Republic, the honors of a triumph."

Governor Snyder, of Pennsylvania, in his message to the Legislature of that State, said, "The blessings of thousands of women and children rescued from the scalping knife of the ruthless savage of the wilderness, and the more savage Proctor, rest on Harrison and his gallant army."

The following resolution was passed by both Houses of Congress, and approved by the President :

Resolved, That the thanks of Congress be, and they are hereby presented to Major-General William Henry Harrison, and Isaac Shelby, late Governor of Kentucky, and through them to the officers and men under their command, for their gallantry and good conduct in defeating the combined British and Indian forces under Major-General Proctor, on the Thames, in Upper Canada, on the 5th day of October, 1813, capturing the British army with their baggage, camp equipage, and artillery ; and that the President of the United States be requested to cause two gold medals to be struck, emblematical of this triumph, and presented to General Harrison, and Isaac Shelby, late Governor of Kentucky.

One of the secrets of Washington's success both as a general and a chief magistrate, was his faculty of securing the respect and good will of those under his command. This was fully illustrated by the fact that when his army, about to be disbanded at the close of the war with no other pay than depreciated paper money, were, not without some reason, on the point of a general mutiny, the address and influence of Washington alone, quieted their minds and induced them to yield to a present inevitable wrong and to confide in the future justice of their country. In

this confidence, thanks be to General Harrison and others, they have not been disappointed.

Harrison had a similar personal influence with his soldiers. An instance of this occurred at Fort Defiance. One regiment of his army mutinied and resolved to abandon the object of retrieving Hull's disaster and to return immediately home in spite of all their officers could say to them. But after General Harrison addressed them, they all returned to their duty and continued faithful soldiers ever afterwards.

Harrison being asked how he could control the militia he led to victory, said, "By treating them with affection and kindness, by always recollecting that they were my fellow citizens, whose feelings I was bound to respect, and by sharing on every occasion the hardships they were obliged to endure."

A deliberate expression by the People of their opinion of the previous services of their public servants, is certainly better evidence of the real value of those services to them, than newspaper paragraphs on either side during the excitement of a contested election.

After Washington had served the People as President of the United States one term, he was called to the Presidency again by the unanimous vote of the electors.

After Harrison had served *nine* years as Governor of the immense territory then included under the name of Indiana, he was again appointed by the President and Senate of the United States to that high and responsible office for four years more, on the unanimous request of the House of Representatives of that Territory.*

The circumstance which imparts a singular and superior lustre to Washington, when compared with many other great men, is the purity of his moral principles and character. "Duty," says Mr. Sparks, "was the ruling prin-

* See page 6.

ciple of his conduct." He was not satisfied with devoting his rare intellectual endowments to the defence and service of his country, but to these he added the force of a good example in order to advance her happiness by promoting her virtue. The vices of gambling, profanity, private assassination and duelling, of which some of our talented men are notoriously guilty, receive nothing but rebuke from the example of Washington. He had the complete control of his passions. His conduct was ever marked by strict integrity and his language by moral propriety. This weight of character and example in the community for good, is certainly an important qualification for the Chief Magistrate of a great, free and enlightened people. It is difficult to conceive that any real friend of his country can think otherwise.

Harrison resembles Washington in the above respect. Who ever heard of General Harrison's misleading and corrupting the youth of this nation by his example of gambling, of using profane and blasphemous language, of being concerned, as some of our leading men have been, in duels, brawls and attempts to stab and shoot his fellow citizens?

There is another trait of character in which the resemblance between Washington and Harrison is very striking; and that is, not only in their strict integrity, but in their singular liberality in respect to pecuniary concerns. Neither of them ever showed the least disposition to make money out of his country.

When Washington was appointed by Congress, Commander in Chief of the American armies, he said, "I beg leave to assure Congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those I doubt

not, Congress will discharge ; and that is all I desire." *Spark's Life of Washington*, p. 141.

Washington's estate had necessarily suffered a diminution during the war. Rigidly adhering to the resolution he had formed when he accepted the command of the army, he would not receive any remuneration from the public either in the shape of pay or other pecuniary remuneration. *Spark's Life of Washington*, p. 405.

Though Harrison's more limited means did not allow him to adopt the disinterestedness of Washington to the extent above mentioned, yet while Governor of Indiana and Indian Superintendant he refused to accept any of the perquisites which before his time had been customarily paid. In these capacities, "large sums of money passed through his hands to be distributed at his discretion, and with few of the checks now provided in reference to such things. 'The Government had no guaranty for the faithful application of these funds entrusted to him, but his prudence and honesty. But he was conscientiously true to his duty ; neither accumulating wealth by speculation upon the public money or land, nor becoming a debtor to the government.'" "For his services as commander of the expedition to Tippecanoe, he never received or asked compensation. While Commander in Chief of the Northwestern army, his expenses exceeded his pay, and the balance came from his private purse." *Hon. Caleb Cushing*, pp. 60, 61, 62, 63.

At the close of the Revolution, Washington resigned his commission and retired to his favorite agricultural pursuits at Mount Vernon, whence he was soon called to serve his country as the first President of the United States. The wisdom and integrity of his administration is admitted by all. His services justly entitled him to be called "THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY." At the close of the late war, Harrison resigned his military commission and retired to his farm. Since that time he has been called to serve his

country as Chief Commissioner in negotiating treaties with many large and powerful Indian tribes, as a Representative in Congress, a Senator in Congress, a member of the Legislature of Ohio, and as our Minister Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Colombia. The estimation in which Gen. Harrison's past services, both civil and military, are held where they are best known, appears by the fact that he is commonly called in the Western States, "THE FATHER OF THE NORTHWESTERN TERRITORY." He is also called "The Washington of the Northwestern Territory." Since his return from Colombia, he has lived in comparative retirement upon his farm at North Bend, in Ohio, in the enjoyment of the unimpaired vigor of body and mind, which his active and temperate habits of life have secured to him, and in the conscientious discharge of all the relative duties of the just man and the sincere christian."

The compiler of the preceding facts and statements has endeavored to avoid all party misrepresentations and personal invectives, because he believes them to be unprincipled, and, on the whole, unwise; an abuse, not only of the administration and of the public at large, but of the cause of General Harrison, by treating that cause as if it required such aid. He sincerely believes the facts and statements which he has presented, to be strictly true. If true, the public ought to know and considers *them* among others, before the coming election. If false or erroneous, in part, or in whole, not a single voter ought to be misled by them. The compiler therefore invites the most rigid scrutiny into his facts and statements. In order to aid such an examination he has named the principal sources of his information.

With these remarks he cheerfully leaves the public to decide whether General Harrison does, or does not possess some of the same qualifications for the public service that General Washington did, and others similar to them in kind, though perhaps, not equal in degree.