

MARSHAL FOCH

For many years a nation honored a man she had learned to love; for many many months that nation watched with anxiety as he lay on his bed of pain; and for many weeks she knelt in prayer as he struggled against death, until he could struggle no longer, and then she wept in tears beside his bier. The nation was France and the man Ferdinand Foch. Foch, the grand old man of France, the man who led the greatest army in history, was dead. What a deep veil of mourning fell over the world when it was broadcast that France had lost her noblest son. Tongues uttered prayers, heads bared in respect, and flags of every nation dropped from their pole tops, while guns boomed their nation's grief.

When the world mourned Marshal Foch, it mourned a military genius who possessed the strategy and art of a Napoleon and the humility and piety of a St. Francis. Among the qualities which made Foch the greatest general of modern times was his extraordinary will power and foresight. It was his will power that triumphed and saved France when defeat seemed inevitable; Foch knew he must never give up, but that he must keep on and win back for France, as he promised, what she lost in 1871, and with this in mind he carried on amid the greatest difficulties, until finally he bore to the ground the Teutonic enemy that opposed him. By his exceptional foresight Foch won many battles before they actually took place, for he never started an attack that he had not already won. Each and every offensive was so minutely planned by him that it could result in nothing but victory.

It was these qualities that prompted the Minister of War, Painleve, to recall Foch from his apparent disgrace and make him Chief of the General staff of the French army. Painleve again acknowledged the greatness of Foch when he sent him into Italy to defeat the new offensive tactics of the combined German-Austrian forces. This, like his first commission to Foch, he never regretted, for when Foch left Italy he left the Italian situation secure. But it was later in 1918 that Painleve, now Premier of France, paid his highest tribute to the great soldier, when he declared before the Allied Countries that there was but one man who could lead the armies of the many nations to victory, and that man was the French general, Foch.

His appointment as Generalissimo, like the many others he received, he accepted with the greatest humility. It would have been hard to find a man in France, and in fact in the world, who was as humble as Foch. At the height of his glory, when he made his triumphant entry into Strasburg on November 28, 1918, he was the same unassuming modest Frenchman, who in 1871 heard with a breaking heart, that his beloved France was defeated by the proud Prussians.

It was in the early days of the Great War that this noble virtue shone brightest. After the battle of the Somme, Foch was asked to resign because of his failure to pierce the impenetrable German battle line. In his heart he knew that, what was apparent failure and defeat, was in reality a brilliant victory, but Foch, like the true soldier, did not resent, but obeyed. It was not for him to judge, but to obey, and that he did. That, which was then considered defeat, is today placed in the category of his greatest moments. For Foch had, at the battle of the Somme, held the overwhelming forces of the enemy with a handful of French troops; without Foch at that point the Germans would have broken through, perhaps to Paris. And it may have been at that time that Foch saved France and not some years later.

Throughout his whole career Foch always trusted in God. Before he attempted any undertaking he went to his God and asked for assistance and protection. In the dark and doubtful days of 1918 he knew that what was expected from him was beyond the power of man, so he went to God, and poured forth his troubles and problems, asking in return help and guidance. Marshal Foch, who held the destiny of nations within the palm of his hand, always found time to repair to some secluded spot, and there, while angry nations warred about him, he held conference in peace with the Almighty One. Oh! what an example! Would that those, who hold positions parallel to that once held by the man of prayer, follow him and ask guidance from Providence.

To-day the mortal remains of that general lie in Les Invalides, beside the dust of his secular patron, Napoleon; and we feel that his immortal soul is with his spiritual patron, St. Joan of Arc. By imitating Napoleon he became, like him, a master in the art of warfare; but it was not with pride and glory he triumphed over his enemies,

but with a feeling that he was fulfilling a moral obligation. He did not wish to conquer his fellow men in humanity, but he wished only to deliver his country from the power and control of a tyrannous autocracy. Like Joan of Arc, he stopped his advance and considered terms of peace, when he felt his mission was accomplished. Once he freed his country, he knew, like the Maid of Orleans, when she saw her King crowned at Rheims, that his work was completed. He realized and after said, that his genius was the genius of an Almighty God, declaring that he was but a feeble instrument in His hands.

After the Great War many thought that warfare was over, and that in the future, international disputes would be settled by peaceful means. This we hope is true, but let us listen to the words of a dying man who made a life-study of war and all that pertains to it. Some time before he died, Foch, speaking to a friend, said that he believed war was inevitable in this world, and that sooner or later the terrible scourge of humanity would blaze forth again. This statement is one that must be taken seriously, for it comes from a man who knew war in all its phases. Thus it is that we should beseech Almighty God that, should such happen, He would raise up a man like the late Marshal Foch, who will right the wrongs and carry out the Eternal Will.

We, who today enjoy peace and happiness in a free country, governed by democratic principles, should not forget that noble man who saved us in the time of our peril. It was then the little gray marshal prayed that he might save us; now he is gone, but we are still here, so let us utter a little prayer for the repose of the soul of that humble man of France.

L.J.C '30

Among the changing months May stands confest
The sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed.

—Thomson

There is none,
In all this cold and hollow world, no fount
Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within
A mother's heart.

—Mrs. Hemans