

INCREASE MILITARY STRENGTH

Now that the appointment of the Venezuela commission has been made and the country is satisfied with the men selected, there will be a diminution of war-talk for a time. The examination which the committee is to make will occupy a lengthy period of time, and till their report is made no further action will be taken at Washington. So in the great rush of events the attention of people will be turned to other themes, and the issue raised by the promulgating of the Monroe doctrine will for a while, at least, be allowed to slumber. In the meantime some of the lessons which the late flurry of impending war excitement has taught, should not be overlooked. The country has shown it is not lacking in that quality of patriotism which is so necessary to continued prosperous existence. From all over the land came hearty offers of men to wage the country's battles, and within a short time an army could have been raised the counterpart, in numbers, of Xerxes' host.

Another fact which has been painfully impressed upon observing people is the critical condition of our means of offense and defense. Since President Cleveland's message was announced attention has been strongly attracted to the military conditions attending this country in the event of a foreign war. The consensus of opinion is that our condition is lamentably weak, and no time should be lost in rectifying the errors which our legislators have committed in allowing our sea coast defenses to fall into the deplorable state in which they are, and in not raising our army and navy to a point of greater usefulness in conflict. Among the many who have studied this matter, none have done so more carefully than Colonel Jackson, of the regular army, now stationed in Portland. In a recent address Colonel Jackson said:

"Patriotism of itself will not save the republic; coupled with it must be power. Weakness for defense or offense is another, and perhaps the greatest menace to the permanence of the republic. Among the 'great military powers' rank and consideration are accorded in proportion to the ability of a nation to defend itself, or its interests, and to inflict injury in these respects upon other nations. It does not need much research in ancient or modern history to know that weak governments have received, but little consideration and short shift when their interests or existence ran counter to those of strong military powers. Current history, with which you are all familiar, shows us that the world is no better in this respect today than in the past.

"At the close of the civil war this country was rated as one of the most powerful of nations. Nothing but our great war strength and willingness to use it induced the British government to consent to arbitration in the Alabama claims, and when we declared that the Monroe doctrine would be enforced, and sent 70,000 veterans to the Texas frontier, France took the hint and retired from Mexico. Does any one suppose that within ten years of the close of the civil war Great Britain would have neglected our repeatedly expressed wish to have the Venezuela boundary question submitted to arbitration, or have persisted in the seizure of territory in a friendly republic, or in the extension of the boundaries of British Columbia in Alaska?"

"The nation that would survive in a world where force is law, must itself be the most forceful, and there is no disguising the fact that we are dangerously weak as compared with other nations; neither is there any doubt that the great military powers will not hesitate to take advantage of any weakness of ours to hamper our progress and despoil our commerce to their own advantage; that also is a part of the struggle for existence, and to hold our own in the battle for national life and prosperity we should at all times be sufficiently strong, not only to prevent encroachments upon the soil of American continents to our disadvantage, but to promote and defend measures necessary to the success of our trade relations with other countries."

These words of Colonel Jackson should be heeded. They express a truth which however unpleasant, is no less vital. It would be good for the country if the majority of men in congress were like Colonel Jackson, who can see the need of the country and would not hesitate at supplying the remedy. If the United States is going to stay in the front rank of nations it must possess the necessary requisites.

Oregon is beginning to receive attention in the eastern magazines. An article entitled "Coasting Down Some Great Mountains," by H. L. Wells of Portland, appears in the current issue of the Cosmopolitan. The piece is descriptive of the ascent of Mt. Hood by several interesting views. The Great Northwest can hold its own with the rest of the world in magnificent scenery, climate or natural resources for business pursuits.

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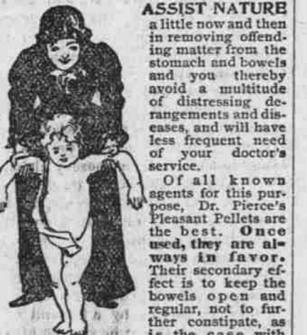
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