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The  
President's
 **Death**

BY EDWARD E. HALE

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The President's Death.



Address delivered on the day of the President's
funeral, in the South Congregational Church, Boston,

By EDWARD E. HALE.

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THE PRESIDENT'S DEATH.

HERE are the central and sacred words in which the Saviour of men founded civil government :

“ Whosoever would be great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever would be first of you shall be your bond-servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

This is a statement drawn from him by two office-seekers with their mother. It may be called the Golden Motto of Democracy.

I need not attempt, what from my lips would be an imperfect statement of Mr. McKinley's character and life. I can read -- what cannot be read too often, the verdict of his friend -- who had served him so faithfully in his cabinet :

“ President McKinley of blessed life is now, and more and more as time goes on, will be of blessed memory. The asperities which afflict a public servant during his official career, but

which have been much less attendant upon President McKinley than upon other presidents of like prominence, notably Lincoln, will quickly be forgotten ; and the calm just verdict of history will pronounce him a man of ideally pure, true character, a patriot of single and disinterested devotion to his country, and a statesman unexcelled for tact, prudence and practical competency. His domestic life is one of the precious sanctities of American sentiment. His amiability, poise of temper and genuine sympathy, not assumed, but instinctive, with his fellow men, identified him with them, and put him in kinship with them to an extent never surpassed. His long legislative career, in which he rose to leadership, not only gave him facility in that line of work, but enabled him, when he became President, to put himself in such relation with Congress, as no other President ever had. He enjoyed with that co-ordinate branch of the government such influence and such responsive co-operation as he enjoyed as a President. His administration has been a series of remarkable achievements. It has been attended by great military successes, by an abounding prosperity, by the revival of business and industrial enterprise, and by the practically unanimous approval of the whole country. It has put out the last embers of

national bitterness. It has been marked by appointments of high character and especial fitness to places of great trust. The tone of the public official, the efficiency of the civil service, the integrity and ability of all departments and branches of its executive government were never so high as today. President McKinley leaves an unblemished record in public and private life; and a record not merely free from blemish, but bright with good deeds done, with great services rendered; the world better because he lived in it, and his country greater and happier because, giving it in war and in peace his youth and his manhood, he was its citizen, its servant and its President."

The author of this tribute to his memory is our own Governor Long, who had served under Mr. McKinley so well; himself a statesman of world-wide breadth and foresight, and an executive officer prompt and successful.

Such a life as is thus described is to be a lesson and incentive to our nation. The history of such a life, as from year to year it is better and better known, gives us the best training for the building up of good citizens. It is the best and the most attractive. At the Rivington Street "Set-

tlement House" in New York, a model home for hundreds of street boys from the slums of emigrant life there, I asked in their library what the boys wanted to read most. "History," was the immediate reply. "And what history?" "Oh! the history of their new country of America." Absolutely indifferent, every boy of them, to the lives of Frederic, of Blucher, of Bismarck, or of Moltke! "History, indeed," said the Librarian, "means to these boys the lives of Washington and of Lincoln. Send me one hundred volumes of such lives and I will show you one hundred boys ready for them here the next evening."

"Therefore speak I unto them in parables." And the best parable is the life that is true. This farmer's boy enlisting in the army; the young sergeant dealing out his coffee and his hard-tack under fire to the regiment which he served. The teacher in an Ohio school while he studied Law and studied it to a purpose. The favorite of all sorts and conditions of men, so that they chose him to Congress over the heads of all competitors in a district manufactured to keep such men out: this keen eyed observer

who knows men so well that he knows how to learn from them what they know, -- this simple, unconceited child of God who really wants to have God's will done, and who really believes that God means to take the man through who is at work that way. Here is the man whose life is to be read, perhaps by the light of pine knots, by boys who read Washington's life, and Lincoln's, and Franklin's. It is going to teach them what text books and catechisms cannot teach them. It is going to quicken them and uplift them, and develop them, as no examination does and no medal, and no diploma. Such a handbook for the training of the citizen is to be added to the gospels -- all too few -- for our political and social education.

His political opponents were sometimes annoyed that he had what they would have called that gift of "putting things," which is so omnipotent in debate, when the adversary has no such power, and especially when he is wrong. But you could not help it. Mr. McKinley's gift that way was the outcome simply of the conviction that in the end the Moral Forces are the only Forces which will endure. In them no

Dry Rot, no Wet Rot, no moth, no rust, no expansion, no contraction; the same yesterday, today and forever! When the American Revolution began, the wise men of Europe said that the two reliable leaders whom the rebels could rest upon were those "accomplished English soldiers" Charles Lee, and Horatio Gates, who knew all the arts of strategy, in war. "What a misfortune for Liberty, that her cause was handicapped, because these great leaders were under the command of a Virginia tobacco planter named George Washington, who had never seen two thousand men in line of battle!" Well! History taught its lesson in but few years. There needed but two years and Lee, the more "distinguished" of these great commanders, had sold himself to General Howe of the British army. Three years more and Gates, the second of them, was riding north as fast as his horse would carry him from his own defeat at Camden. And the Virginia planter, who from first to last, had relied on the Moral Forces as the guides in strategy, in experience and in all the teachings of the past, he proves to be the foremost man in all the world.

The cunning of the fox, the blood-thirstiness of the wolf, any of the mere animal gifts, whether of brain, or muscle, or appetite, are nothing and nowhere, when you need a leader who can "endure to the end." It is that leader who "is saved," and who saves his country. And the three leading principles which abide and continue forever are the three Eternities, Faith, Hope and Love.

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A day of prayer is this! And for what are we to pray? We have prayed that God would direct the surgeons and physicians, the nurses and servants; that God would give the sufferer courage—that his human life might be spared. The prayer was answered in part, but his life was not spared. Courage, patience, science, skill have not undone that which the murderer has learned to do too well. We cannot undo the past. God cannot. We must look forward and not back.

First, to be sure that such horrors do not recur—if we may say "be sure." Three Presidents from twenty-five in all, have been murdered because they were Presidents. This is

quite too many. You cannot say this of Kings or Emperors in modern times. "We, the people of America," that is, "We the Sovereign of America" must not sacrifice in such wise the lives of those who serve us. As we say with a shudder that we ought not to send our Second Regiment to Cuba without the new smokeless powder, we ought to say now that we will not bring up murderers among our people, and we will not expose our servants to their craft or madness. As God lives, crazy people shall not kill those who are trying to serve us, whom we have ordered to serve us. As God lives, no conspirators shall do this. We will guard, as only a Sovereign can, the citizen Servants of ours who owe their distinction to their Loyal Service.

Our national vanity has received here a lesson much needed. When the pistol was fired, the whole land began to declaim against foreigners and their training of despotism. "We must watch the arrivals at our ports more carefully, we must send back the anarchists." True enough. But while we debated such plans, it proved that this man is not a foreigner. He was born under


the Aegis of Freedom. He had his chance with the best in the land for the training of the public schools. He had his chance for that religious training, which we are told every day is under the best system yet devised. Nay, it is even said that we have trained him in our army, and that he receives a pension for the wound he received in our service.

Let this result check our vain-glory till in some happy day we can show that we do Educate men where now we only instruct them. Let church and school be quicker and stronger in giving God's children the training which is divine. Let preacher and teacher, the old with the young, the mistress with the servant, the father with the daughter, the mother with the son, vie with each other and out-do the past, as they seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness. First, second and last, let teacher, preacher, father, mother, master, mistress, foreman, captain, manager and superintendent — let every one who claims the name of Leader inspire and instill the Wisdom which is "First pure, then peaceable, then gentle and easy to be entreated, without partiality and without hypocrisy."



Indeed, as this week has passed, I have fancied one could see already some slight improvement here. The public and private exhibitions of grief seem to me to offer some ground for hope, which—in a grim, cheerless way—offers a sort of alleviation to the misery of the catastrophe.

We may observe a world-wide distinction between the national display of grief and the grief of a nation which has lost a King or an Emperor. The Sovereign of America is the People of America. This People entrusts its affairs to thousands of officers, and the central executive duty to a President. The very name is significant: he presides over the work of those who serve the Sovereign. He is the Chief Magistrate. He is not the Ruler of the nation. The People is the Ruler, and the People rules him and all its other officers. For a Republic follows in literal truth the statement of the Saviour, that “he who is greatest among you shall be your bond-servant.” It is a statement where he compares such men’s duty and place to his own. The true Son of Man comes not to be ministered unto, but to minister.



I say I think there is, therefore, a tone of personal indignation in the outcry of grief. I think that every American whose chief servant has been wounded, feels that he thrust that president forward. Every citizen is himself attacked, wounded, insulted. "I bade this man take this duty. I sent him on this errand. When you kill him it is to me that you are responsible!" This is not the tone-- nor can it be --of the subject of a hereditary king or emperor.

Let the Nation take to heart this lesson. The Old World cannot understand it. No matter! We can! The People is the Sovereign.

When our fathers here founded this Commonwealth, they said that they did it "That this may be a government of Laws, and not of men."

On this, or in the noble words of the Prophet that "their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them," on this Rock the Nation stands. Mr. McKinley is the Chief Magistrate of the Nation, --not its Ruler. He also bows before the Supreme Court. Mr. Roosevelt is the Chief Servant of the Nation. You and I, John here and Michael there have bidden them take these duties.

They must do it. They may not withdraw. As the soldier must climb the steep at Santiago, as the sailor must nail the colors to the mast, these men must obey the American People!

Let the American people see to it then that no man defames, insults, attacks, or abuses its officers -- not in light talk, not in the newspapers, not by the hand of murder. Let the American people preserve them from insult and from injury. Let it demand that the State shall be respected. As the church in church-ruled lands demands respect for its processions and ceremonies, so the People must demand respect for Law, for Order, for the State itself. No words of insult! No usurpation of authority! No mean imputation of indecent motive! All for each and each for all! Behind parties, behind politics, behind men and names is the Country, and she is your Country.

Her homage is to Law and Order. Her servants are the ministers of God -- whose kingdom is the reign of law and order. To honor these servants, to strengthen their hands, to protect them from insults -- this is what we promise, this is what we expect when we say, "Thy kingdom

come, Thy will be done, here in our Country as it is everywhere in Thy Heaven."

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Mr. McKinley had been rightly believed to be a cordial friend to all theories of International Peace. To the last moment he hoped to prevent the Spanish War. For that war the Congress of the United States made itself responsible by the most remarkable display of unanimity with which that body ever acted. Under the Constitution the Congress of the United States has the only power to declare war, and to raise armies. Mr. McKinley has been abused by fools that he regarded its instruction. Or it has been thought, perhaps, that he could have obeyed in a half-hearted way, --that he could have pretended to obey. Indeed, the same people who call him an emperor are the people who say he meanly obeyed the people, because "he did the thing he was set to do," because he was the commander in chief of the American Army, through the hundred days of the Spanish War.

All the same, he has been one of the leaders in the cause of Universal Peace. When the time came, he made peace in the face of all

opposition. The very same men who abused him for making war are the men who blame him for making peace. It is to such conflict and criticism that our servants are exposed when we place them in responsibility.

When the history of the peace negotiations is brought to light, all the verdict of the future will be a verdict of thankfulness to this man to whom was given the maintenance of the peace of the world. He maintained it. The inner secret of his heart was disclosed when he said in Buffalo the day before he was murdered, "Let us ever remember that our interest is in concord, not conflict, and that our real eminence rests on the victories of peace, not those of war."





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