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ORATION  
OF  
J. WARREN KEIFER,  
AT THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF  
JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
(May 12th, 1887.)

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*Mr. President, Comrades, Countrymen :*

On this spot, in the shadow of the National Capitol, and hard by the memorials of our illustrious dead, it is fitting that this enduring statue of James Abram Garfield should stand.

The statue we unveil to-day, silently to take its place among the many others here, is not alone in honor of a citizen distinguished for good qualities of head and heart; nor alone to a scholar eminent for his attainments; nor alone to a soldier renowned for bravery and successful high command; nor alone to a statesman and politician as wise and prudent as he was outspoken and bold; nor yet alone to a Chief Magistrate who wielded the scepter of power in the interests of the citizen; but to one who combined within himself all these various characters and illustrated all these qualities in a single life.

This statue is mainly a tribute from General Garfield's immediate companions of the Army of the Cumberland with which he served, and in which as Chief of Staff, he bore so conspicuous a part. But though love, born of camp, bivouac and battle, prompted its erection, yet, in a larger sense it is the nation's tribute to the memory of a citizen, educator, soldier, statesman and ruler.

The artist (J. Q. A. Ward, of New York) typifies and symbolizes General Garfield's characteristics on the base of this monument in three principal phases of his life—those of student, warrior and statesman.

Recognizing that Garfield, at an early age, as in all after life, was a student, the artist, by the figure of a youth in primitive dress and in a thoughtful, studious attitude poring over some problem written on a piece of bark, represents him as struggling with obstacles which he is yet determined to overcome.

The soldier phase of Garfield's life—when the appeal was made from eloquence and argument to the sword and when he stood forth to repel force with force—the sculptor symbolizes by the muscular figure of a warrior in ancient German costume, who, roused by the trumpet's call, grasps his sword for action. The costume points the



observer to the vigorous Saxon origin of Garfield's ancestry, and suggests *force*.

The third figure on the base represents him as a statesman in repose, suggestive of the "calm majesty of the law"—unswerving integrity; wisdom to frame just laws and courage to support them. This figure is draped in costume, more refined and classic, indicating an intellectual domination.

In these figures the pliant sensibility of youth, the force of manhood, and the calm repose of knowledge and power, are singularly exemplified. These qualities were retained in the character of General Garfield to the close of his life.

The principal statue represents him in the act of public speaking—delivering his inaugural address as President of the United States; but not confined alone to this particular occasion or incident. The attitude and gesture given the figure are intended to be characteristic of the moment when he would close an emphatic period in any public speech.

The artist has expressed much of the force, firmness and strong convictions of the man who intelligently and enthusiastically labored for his country and who felt the weight of his responsibility for the trusts assumed by him.

The eye of the learned in art will readily discover in the monument many other suggestions of the natural qualities possessed by General Garfield.

This heroic figure is not an idol to be worshiped, but a model of perfect manhood; not physical alone, but with all the outward semblance that man, in the sublime image of his Creator, presents, of the God-like intellect and the immortal soul within. It is in the similitude of the "temple of God in man."

*There* is represented the strong arm of power; the swift foot of freedom; the heaving breast of majesty; the towering brow of independence.

Signifying so much, the statue is worthy to stand here through the cycles of time, exemplifying the virtues of a great life and pointing out to the sons and daughters of the Republic the highway to happiness and success.

To enable us to decide what manner of man President Garfield was, he must be tried by the standards of greatness of his own day.

All is relative in this world. To be great or to achieve greatness in his time required higher moral and mental qualities than were requisite in any other era of the world's history. To be esteemed a worthy citizen in the time and of the

country in which he lived, a man must be possessed of more fulness of life, more generosity of soul and more love for his fellowmen than was accounted necessary to good citizenship in past generations. Citizenship in our country includes sovereignty and power, or capacity to command or direct the affairs of state.

More is expected, more is required and more is essential to make a good citizen of our constitutional free government than is or was ever expected and required or is or ever was essential to constitute a good citizen or subject of any other government on earth.

A citizen of our country must be filled with the philanthropy incident to the perfected civilization, grown up over the grave of the barbarism of the dead past. He must also, in his life, exemplify the teachings of the Christian religion as it has shone with increased resplendency upon the world through nineteen centuries.

To be an educator, equal to the age in which Garfield lived, a man must drink deeper of the fountains of knowledge than was necessary for others, distinguished for knowledge, who lived before him. He must explore all the fields of science, history and literature to become a learned man of his day.

To be a soldier capable of meeting the requirements of this epoch in the world's progress, mere natural genius to command will not suffice. The warrior must know the science and art of war as it has developed abreast of all the inventions in arms, armor, projectiles and materials of war. What was strategy or grand tactics in the days of Alexander the Great, the Cæsars and even in the more recent time of Napoleon and Wellington, would count for little in a modern campaign or on a modern field of battle.

It must not be forgotten that our recent war was waged with ferocity and fatality far in excess of most other wars. The dead lists prove this.

A single battle of the rebellion resulted frequently in more casualties, in either contending army, than in all the campaigns of some former prolonged wars. The killed and wounded in a single brigade, during the war, frequently outnumbered the American killed and wounded in the seven years of the Revolution.

Many of the comrades now before me saw more of the terrors of bloody conflict in a single day, than were witnessed in the whole military life of General Washington.

The wise and worthy statesman of this Union, in the afternoon of this century, besides being

possessed of all the estimable qualities of useful citizenship, must be equipped with a political knowledge coextensive with the history of governments, ancient and modern, both republican and monarchical in form.

The citizen-sovereigns of the United States, being individually capable of self-government, are, as a consequence, exacting of those, who, for the time being, are at the head of affairs.

The people of this purified Union being imbued with a spirit of personal integrity, demand of the statesman, freedom from corruption, and an exalted policy in keeping with their own lofty character.

The ideal statesman must be scrupulously careful of the people's personal and property rights and privileges, broad and philanthropic enough to promote universal education and the arts and sciences; and with heart enough to amply provide for the comfort of the unfortunate through public charitable institutions.

Under our constitutional form of government the defined functions of the President would seem to limit his power for evil or for good. This may be true, in a certain sense, yet our Chief Magistrate, for the duration of his term, impresses upon the whole country much of his

individual character, and, if so disposed, he could oppress the people and render them unhappy. Besides being the Chief Executive officer and Commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, he is, through the veto power, given by the constitution, a factor in national legislation equivalent to one-sixth of each House of Congress.

Garfield lived in an age and country where pure patriotism stamped the citizen with the majesty of greatness more than in any other age or government.

A nation without battle-fields would be devoid of patriotism—and a nation without patriotism in the people's breasts, is a feeble one and is doomed to a short life.

Art and letters may satisfy restless genius, but physical heroism is necessary to inspire patriotism.

The history of the empires of the world, that have risen and passed away, affords many examples where national decay, precursor to ultimate overthrow, dates from the time when painting, music, sculpture, the fine arts and letters were preferred to the pursuits of war.

The flag of the Union and the integrity of the nation were saved by the blood of a heroic people at a cost of untold treasure. The times and

institutions of the Government demanded a high type of patriotic manhood.

Humanly speaking, President Garfield was morally, mentally and physically a perfect man; and, if in his nature he had faults, they only served to demonstrate his predominating good qualities.

He was born November 19, 1831, and died September 19th, 1881.

Almost fifty years, taken from the middle part of this eventful century, were covered by his life.

How singularly momentous were these years when contemplated in the light of this nation's material growth, and the world's advancement!

Discoveries of science, profundity of learning, progress in government, inventions, explorations, growth in civilization, and in moral and mental stature, advancement in civil and religious liberty, all marked the period covered. Born to no high title, he was trammelled by no expectancy.

He won his titles of nobility upon life's battle-fields. He had no superiority thrust upon him, save such as is incident to the sovereignty of freedom, and hence he had the glory of personally achieving everything for himself.

His birthright was freedom, and right loyally he clung to it to the end.

He was born of parents, who gave to him the heritage of a sound body, a sound brain, together with zeal and energy to use both, and a laudable spirit to be distinguished among the good and illustrious through true merit.

He had also the supreme advantage of being reared by a pious mother in the seclusion and quiet of the country, free from the enfeebling conditions of city life. The frequent solitude of the country boy compels him to think, and if of fair natural aptitude, to become an independent and accurate thinker.

He grew to manhood in far from affluent circumstances, acquiring habits of industry and economy, and, by mingling with the people, became familiar with their wants and needs. Thus his early experience made him wise and strong in the vocations of after-life.

General Garfield early developed a natural inclination for learning and investigation.

The physical labor performed by him in early life crystallized him into perfect physical manhood.

His head was cast in a large mold, like Daniel Webster's, with a breadth of brow and a weight of brain resembling Michael Angelo's.

In the transition from humble birth to the



highest position in life, he singularly exemplified his own beautiful description of the inestimable advantages of our institutions:

Our society, (said he) resembles rather the waves of the ocean, whose every drop may move freely among its billows, and may rise toward the light until it flashes on the crest of the highest wave.

As a teacher of the young his clearness of comprehension and logical reasoning, his enthusiasm in pursuit of knowledge, together with his wonderful descriptive powers, insured his success. These qualities characterized him through life, and when called on to instruct, convince and sway the multitudes in turbulent times, or to control legislative bodies on momentous occasions, he was master of the situation.

He did not refuse to ascend the pulpit, and as a devout follower of his Divine Master became a preacher of our holy religion.

Had he not matured at a time when a great crisis was imminent in our government, and especially had not the great moral problem growing out of human slavery been ripe for solution by legislation and war, there is good reason to believe that Garfield would have contented himself with permanently devoting his life to education, literature or the pulpit.

In a letter to a friend at the opening of the war, Garfield gives the state of his mind while he

was being metamorphosed from a citizen into a soldier:

I have, (he says) had a curious interest in watching the process in my own mind, by which the fabric of my mind is being demolished and reconstructed to meet the new condition of affairs. One by one my old plans and aims, modes of thought and feeling, are found to be inconsistent with present duty, and are set aside to give place to the new structure of military life. It is not without a regret, almost tearful at times, that I look upon the ruins. But if, as the result of the broken plans and shattered individual lives of thousands of American citizens, we can see, on the ruins of our national errors, a new and enduring fabric arise, based on larger freedom and higher justice, it will be a small sacrifice indeed. For myself I am contented with such a prospect, and regarding my life as given to the country, am only anxious to make as much of it as possible before the mortgage upon it is foreclosed.

He promptly took a stand among the anti-slavery men. This led him into politics early in life. Immediately preceding the war—(1860 and 1861) he held a seat in the Ohio Senate and there gave evidence of his future greatness as a statesman.

When the torch of treason lighted up this land the voice of the statesman was drowned amid the tumult of war.

Concession and compromise had been tried in vain to perpetuate the Union and at the same time preserve a wrong against God and humanity. Seventy years of constitutional government had more than sufficed to prove the impossibility of living, under one rule, half slave and half free.

Slavery, in efforts to foster itself, was necessarily aggressive. Wrong always is aggressive,

and so long as it dominates, it must even, in a sense, be progressive.

The timid of the North and South stood aghast over the prospect of a dissolved Union; the thoughtless brave precipitated the crisis; the thoughtful lovers of liberty and country, filled with faith in God's immutable justice, paused, then passed at once from peaceful citizens to warriors.

General Garfield, with no military education or training, with thoughts and aspirations thitherto directed to natural science and the arts of peace, now found himself impelled by zeal for his country's safety to take up the science and art of war. He was commissioned Colonel of the 42d Ohio Volunteer Infantry, to rank from August 14th, 1861. His regiment was not completely mustered into service until November 27th, 1861. Twenty days after, in midwinter, it was moving to active service.

On the 20th of December, 1861, he assumed command of a brigade and entered upon a campaign in Eastern Kentucky against General Humphrey Marshall, an officer of experience in more than one war, who held a position, with 5,000 men, on the Big Sandy River. With the skill and celerity of a veteran of many campaigns,

Colonel Garfield hurled his small, undrilled command upon his adversary, passing over bad roads, through a strange and unfriendly country, and on the 8th and 10th of January, 1862, at Paintville and Prestonburg, respectively, attacked and defeated the enemy, and thus within twenty days after his command was organized, closed a campaign of much immediate importance; the first of a series of brilliant triumphs that carried our arms to the Cumberland and the Tennessee. For this he was commissioned by the President Brigadier General of Volunteers to rank from January 10th, 1862.

This incident in the military life of General Garfield demonstrates his soldierly qualities and shows his ready adaptation to great emergencies, and illustrates the facility with which the free citizen may be transformed into a good soldier.

War, notwithstanding its barbaric scenes; has always brought out the better, stronger and higher characteristics and talents in man.

The higher the types of civilization a country can boast, the more readily it can adapt itself to a state of war. If not renowned as a leader of a great and successful army, General Garfield was a citizen soldier superior to his opportunities in a supreme emergency.

He was transferred from the scenes of his first military triumph, in March, 1862, to the main army of the Ohio, and participated in the second day's battle at Shiloh.

He took part in the eventful campaigns in the spring and summer of 1862, and performed, that year, much military service. In January, 1863, becoming Chief of Staff to General Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, he at once became charged with military duties upon a more extended scale. In this capacity he served through all the campaigns of that army till October, 1863.

"For distinguished and gallant services in the battle of Chickamauga," he was, by President Lincoln made a Major-General, to rank from September 19th, 1863.

He resigned this commission December 5th, 1863, to enter upon the duties of Representative in the 38th Congress, to which he had been elected, in 1862.

From General Garfield himself I have this incident: Regretting his election to Congress, and the consequent necessity of withdrawing from the army, he went in person to President Lincoln and so informed him, and expressed to the President his purpose not to resign his Major General's commission, and asked to be again assigned

to duty in the field. The President listened attentively to his statement, then kindly took him by the hand and said: "I can make another Major General, but I cannot make another Representative, and at this juncture the government stands in need of heroic statesmen as well as brave soldiers." The President then added that he could not be spared from Congress. The President's wish changed the General's determination, and his resignation from the army was at once tendered and accepted.

Brilliant and promising as his army service was, he was about to enter upon a higher career of usefulness in which he was, in the years to come, to be ranked among the foremost statesmen of his own or any other country.

When Garfield first stood upon the floor of the House of Representatives he was but thirty-two years of age. In that House were many trained parliamentarians and educated statesmen of long experience. With these he was at once to cope. In keeping with his army experience, he opened his legislative career both valiantly and well. During the almost two years of war, slavery still held its citadel. President Lincoln was just then poising his pen to write the Proclamation of Emancipation, war's decree of liberty.

General Garfield's history as a statesman can only be referred to here. His speeches and reports, touching all the living leading questions of the day, may be mainly found in the public records covering a period of eighteen consecutive years of congressional labor.

These were years of marvelous industry for General Garfield, who was ambitious, and zealous in the discharge of duty. During most of these years he bore the heat and burden of legislative encounter, in debate, and did toilsome work at the head of principal committees. He flew from his arduous legislative duties to the people and on all the momentous issues of the day, with that mighty power of oratory possessed by him, persuaded them to uphold the hands of the government through each recurring crisis.

He early favored the amendment to the Constitution of the United States abolishing slavery. Slavery in its day, especially here in this beautiful Capital City, exhibited itself in its worst, most defiant and dangerous form. Within the limit of the sound of my voice, was to be seen, when the war began, the slave auctioneer's pen and block, wherein and whereon the bodies and souls of men, women and children, bearing the image of God, were bought and sold.

*Here*, on this consecrated ground, where now only notes of freedom are heard, there was then heard the agonizing wail of the slave-mother weeping for her children.

*Here*, not long before the war, Daniel Drayton was tried in a Court of Justice (?) and convicted of *larceny*, his crime consisting in setting men and women free.

*Here*, in pulpit and forum, priests and statesmen argued that slavery was of divine right. Holy writ was invoked to deny a law of the human soul. The Bible was quoted to prove it a Book of Death; not a Book of Life.

Even the originally designed Statue of Liberty crowning yonder dome of the Capitol did not escape the desecrating hand of one of slavery's votaries. The then Secretary of War\*, (1856), ordered struck from the sculptor Crawford's model of that statue, the "liberty cap," because that cap, in art, had an "established origin in its use, as a badge of the freed slave." Slavery, jealously watching to suppress even the semblance of the emblems of liberty, feared that the "liberty cap," a symbol of freedom in art, though in bronze, would point the slave to freedom. A nondescript-hood, meaningless in art or nature, was, under official orders, reluctantly substituted

\*Jefferson Davis.



by the artist. General Garfield's appeal in Congress to the lovers of slavery, to surrender their idol, while the amendment to abolish it was under consideration, is filled with sublimity. On January 13th, 1865, in closing his last speech on that question, he said:

To me it is a matter of great surprise that gentlemen on the other side should wish to delay the death of slavery. I can only account for it on the ground of long continued familiarity and friendship. I should be glad to hear them say of slavery, their beloved, as did the jealous Moor—“*yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.*”

Has she not betrayed and slain men enough? Is not the Moloch already gorged with the bloody feast? Its best friends know that its final hour is fast approaching. The avenging gods are on its track. Their feet are not now, as of old, shod with wool, nor slow and stately stepping, but winged like Mercury's to bear the swift message of vengeance. No human power can avert the final catastrophe.

How true and prophetic these words were!

With Lincoln, Stevens and others, long since registered with the immortal dead, Garfield witnessed the death of slavery.

He supported the 14th amendment, securing citizenship to all; also the 15th, giving universal suffrage. His voice and vote were for all the important measures of reconstruction. They were for the unity of the Republic; for universal amnesty; for equal rights; for equal laws; for protection to the lowly and for the elevation of the human race. Next to these things he favored legislation looking to the prosperity of the nation financially. In any crisis in Congress or before

the people his voice was to be heard appealing for justice to the oppressed, and for the preservation of the nation's honor.

If he were absent in an impending danger to his country, his friends would cry as the host of Clan Alpine at the battle of Beal an Duine :

*“ One blast upon his bugle horn were worth a thousand men.”*

We are yet too near the events of the war, and the immediately succeeding reconstruction measures, to judge them and their fruits according to their importance ; likewise we are too near our hero and others of his day to do him and them and their deeds complete justice.

They were great among the great things and events of their day, and consummately great in comparison with great men of other days. Men called great in earlier times often won their claim to fame by deeds that would be insignificant in this age.

As a public debater Garfield excelled. He was a splendid scholar, a fine rhetorician ; as a writer he had rare powers, but it was his singular good fortune to be able to think and come up to his supremest intellectual strength on his feet, under the excitement of public speech, rather than with his pen when in his seat. His speeches

were not distinguished for florid rhetorical display, but rather for strong, concise statements which in themselves were better than ordinary arguments. Facts well summarized he knew the value of and therefore used them as the basis of all his oratorical powers. Often his best friends appealed to him not to correct the notes of his speeches, lest in his desire to conform his language to the highest standard of refined rhetoric and purest diction, he would leave them shorn of some portion of their power and strength.

Garfield was by nature left-handed, and sometimes on great occasions when he rose to speak, he at first seemed awkward. This all disappeared as his genius flashed out in his fervid, masterly treatment of his subject. He then appeared an oratorical giant—a superb human machine in action, delightful to behold. His gestures were mainly with his open uplifted left hand, and made emphatic by striking it down, sometimes clenched, into his open upturned right hand. He had a magnificent voice, resonant, well modulated, full, under complete control, capable on occasions of great vehemence, yet always pleasant to the ear.

He was not fitful or uncertain in his speeches. He commanded attention always, and by reason

of careful preparation and versatility of learning, never spoke without impressing his hearers with new ideas.

His whole soul was aflame and concentrated in his oratory; and though a most frequent participant in debate, his mind lit up uniformly, and made him always seem at his best. He was never dull and prosy; but always spoke with enthusiasm and generally with vehemence.

He loved legislative and parliamentary controversy, but he loved still more, by his great persuasive power of oratory, to sway the masses.

His speeches everywhere attest his greatness. They are argumentative, full of facts, persuasive, captivating, sympathetic and instructive. His antagonists fell by the precision of his blows and from the weight of his metal.

His orations over the dead in the Halls of Congress are numerous. He ranged the whole field of personal eulogies and gleaned the choicest gems to bestow as tributes to the memory of his dead friends. It was his custom to refer to the old Hall of the House of Representatives in the Capitol, which contains so many marble statues of America's illustrious men, as "*The third House wherein the dead spake.*"

In due time, as this nation grows older, the

forest of statues of the distinguished dead gathered in this beautiful city, will be spoken of as the mute power in the nation's capital.

He was in no way an uneven man. The quality and fiber of his mind were good. Its warp and woof were alike uniform and strong. He was ambitious, but his aspirations were laudable; and his genius, equal to his ambition, enabled him to reach the summit of well earned fame.

His natural desire for distinction was not such as to goad him to strive for it at the expense of his fellowmen. He would have rejected a crown or a diadem for his own head, if it could only be worn at the expense of the people's welfare.

His ambition did not manifest itself in selfishness. He was unselfish in his estimate of others. In the struggle for place or power among men, it is not always easy, nor perhaps possible, for all men to see the full worth of others who may be rivals.

To General Garfield this was in an eminent degree possible, and it seemed often that the success of others gave him more gratification than did his own; and his own work was not to eclipse others, but to reach the high and worthy standards he had placed before himself.

He was social by nature, possessing the highest conversational powers, whether with an individual or in the family or social circle. He was respectful and gentle to all; though he gave little heed to the mere forms of politeness or etiquette when in society. He was always too busy with momentous affairs or in pursuit of knowledge to give much attention to purely social matters.

He had no rough element in his character. His kindly nature made him shrink from personal brawls and conflicts, though always possessed of great physical powers. He was more disposed to yield to the demands of an imperious or dominating friend, than to contend with him, though in the right.

When calm in spirit, his utterances were quiet, and would be soothing to the nerves of the most timid; but when moved by the storm of indignation or required by the sacredness of duty, his voice could be raised above the din, tumult and thunder of battle.

He belonged to the common cast of man, rather than to that dangerous class of exceptional geniuses. His genius was of the true kind, and belonged to him as part of his perfectly rounded manhood. He did not seek to "*ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm.*"

He was a thinker, rather than an agitator.

He was a patron of advanced science, and was never known to withhold his support from any measure that would promote it. He did not despise, but delighted in, details, and no investigation was irksome to him, which promised to reveal a hitherto unknown principle or law of nature. Yonder National Museum, already bursting its walls with the rarest collections of inestimable interest to the historian and the scientist, is a monument to his wise forethought. As a Regent of the Smithsonian Institute for many successive years he did much to promote investigation and to disseminate useful knowledge. He always advocated liberal aid to charitable institutions. His soul thrilled with a Divine delight, when through public and private instruction he heard the dumb speak; and his generosity and philanthropy was so moved that he would willingly have poured out for their relief all the treasures of earth, had they been at his command. Jesus had caused the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear in the mountains of Judea, but the ambition of our hero-philanthropist became so great that he believed the time was near at hand when the deaf and dumb of all the nations of the world could be made to speak.

Through public benefaction he would bring delight and joy to:

*“The ear sequestrate, and the tuneless tongue.”*

If miracles could no longer be performed, by which the eyes of the blind could be opened and the distempered spirits of the insane could be forthwith cured, he at least believed in substituting for the blind the sight of knowledge, and for the maniac the sanctuary of comfortable repose, reigned over by tender God-like care.

The unfortunate of all classes had, in him, a friend and advocate at the seat of power.

The soldier or sailor of the Union, who had laid the hopes and joys of this world upon his country's altar, and, with broken health and body, still lingered in suffering for the end to come, had an especial friend in him. He sought assiduously to bind up the wounds of the suffering and to care for the nation's wards: the widows and orphans left by the war.

Garfield had a deep religious nature. He believed in the immortality of the soul; in the Bible; in a Savior of the world; in God. He believed in doing good. Learning from the example of Christ, who fed the hungry before he ministered to them, he believed in satisfying the suffering people before requiring much in return.



General Garfield studied and practiced law, though no considerable portion of his life was given to that noble profession. He, however, appeared in some important cases in the Supreme Court of the United States and in other courts, and made law arguments worthy of his erudition. Had he devoted his time to the jealous mistress of the law he would have doubtless become as eminent before the bar as in the forum.

General Garfield was strong in tempest as well as in fair weather. Preserving his equanimity when others did not, but through no indifference, he would, on special occasions, calmly assume responsibilities others shrank from.

As Chief of Staff at the Headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland, he counseled an early aggressive movement on the enemy, against the judgment of the Commanding General and nearly all the corps and division commanders of that army. In this was exhibited in a peculiar light the bold and independent spirit of a man ready to act when all around him hesitated, and willing to stand or fall by the event.

When Lincoln was murdered, the people in the great cities, awe-struck at first, soon changed into a fury of indignation, threatening to rise up and avenge the monster crime. General Garfield

was in the metropolis (New York) of the Republic. He there witnessed the swaying, tumultuous masses, tempest tossed with indignation, and with fear for our government. Majestically and calmly he viewed the threatening, stormy scene. He knew the awful power of the uncontrolled and unguided people.

Standing in their presence, with head uncovered, hands uplifted and face turned heavenward, in solemn, reverential voice he proclaimed:

*“God reigns; and the Government at Washington still lives!”*

He thus, invoking the Supreme power, in imitation of the Son of God, who stilled the tempest on the Sea of Galilee nineteen hundred years before, stilled the tempest raging over that sea of humanity, and with his words echoing from ocean shore to shore, brought peace and hope to the troubled spirits of his countrymen.

He had his enemies, some personal and more political. He had done too much good not to incur the displeasure of the devotees of evil. He had, through honesty and personal integrity, attained too exalted a place in the hearts of his countrymen not to incite the envy and jealousy of those, whose highest ambition in life and whose hopes for popular recognition rest upon their

ability to defame and assassinate the character of others. He was at times violently, unjustly, yea, cruelly assailed. He knew, however, that such enemies were like the discriminating mongrel-curs that neglect to bark at the slow moving freight train, but become fiercely demonstrative at the flying express. He was strengthened by these assaults as the sturdy oak is strengthened by the storms of Heaven careening through its boughs. Through all the assaults, born of envy and jealousy, which were made upon him, he preserved a heroic calmness and equanimity of spirit, belonging only to the truly great.

He declined to let his enemies control his thoughts and actions or to disturb his plans and purposes; and moved steadily on. He was, however, swift to forgive them.

General Garfield was nominated and elected President of the United States in 1880, after a more than usually exciting campaign. He did not seek the nomination; it came to him.

While he did not personally enter the political canvass succeeding his nomination, yet, at railway stations and in response to delegations and committees, he made scores of short addresses, sublimely beautiful in sentiment, grand in thought, noble in ideas and sound in principle.

He was elected to the United States Senate before his nomination to the Presidency, but on being elected President, he resigned as Senator and never took his seat in that body.

March 4th, 1881, he was inaugurated President of the United States. His intimate knowledge of all departments of the government and his ripe manhood qualified him for this high office, but in the four months, during which he exercised the functions of President, he had not time to deal with many of the graver affairs of State. The Congress was not in session during his rule.

On July 2d, 1881, the bullet of the assassin laid him low.

The joys of life of a still strong man; the most brilliant expectations of a man of singularly buoyant spirit; the most exalted aspirations of a man who had ascended through his own effort to the highest governmental office in the world, all, ended with that fatal shot. His wound was mortal; yet hope reigned so strongly within him and his will power was so great that he almost defeated cruel fate. He was told he had one chance in a thousand for life. Buoyantly and almost cheerfully he said: "*I will take that one chance.*"

While his wound was yet bleeding, I had, in company with General Sherman, a last interview

with him. The pallor of death was on his brow. His thoughts ran back to the House of Representatives in which he had so long served. His final request to me was: "*Remember me to the members of the old House, Keifer.*"

The prayers of an outraged people ascended on high for his recovery.

During eighty days of uncomplaining heroism he suffered; then, by the sea, symbolic of his great, busy, restless, turbulent existence, with high duty nobly fulfilled behind him, and with the soundless waves of eternity before him, his noble life went out, and his immortal spirit winged its way to join his twin presidential martyr, his dead comrades of the army and faithful dead congressional colleagues and friends before the throne of God.

My comrades: He now musters with that larger part of the Army of the Cumberland, who, having paid the penalty of devotion to cause and country and fulfilled life's earthly mission, have passed on, to join the Grand Army of the Republic beyond the grave.

Thomas, your beloved commander, who stood, with his corps, as a rock of adamant, on the left at Chickamauga, who directed the Army of the Cumberland to victory up the rugged heights of

Missionary Ridge, and under the brilliant leadership of Sherman, with his army, held the center in the bloody campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and at Nashville defeated and destroyed the last great Confederate Army in the West, is there; McPherson, the gallant young commander of the Army of the Tennessee, who won laurels on many fields and who fell "booted and spurred" amid the clash of muskets and sabers and the cannon's roar, is there; Meade, the modest, thoughtful soldier, who, within seven days of the time he was elevated to the command of the Army of the Potomac, met and overthrew the best army of the Confederacy under its idolized leader, Lee, at Gettysburg, and safely led his army through the bloody Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, around Petersburg and at Appomattox, is there; Hooker, who fought the Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville, and subsequently led his corps victoriously up the craggy steps of Lookout Mountain, and in the mist and above the clouds, commingled the peals of battle with the thunders of the skies, is there; Burnside, who, while commander of the Army of the Potomac, gallantly fought it at Fredericksburg, and who, later on, rolled back from Knoxville the rebel hosts and took and held East

Tennessee, to the inexpressible joy of the Union people, is there ; McClellan, who fought the Army of the Potomac around Richmond, and defeated the enemy at Malvern Hill and Antietam, is there ; Hancock, the superb, who fought valiantly for the Union on many fields of blood, and especially distinguished himself at Gettysburg, is there ; Logan, that fiery spirit, the Chevalier Bayard of our war, the hero of hard fought fields on the Mississippi, around Vicksburg, at Chattanooga, from thence to Atlanta, is there ; Grant, Grant, who, from the day he caused the eagles of the Union to soar to victory above the ramparts of Fort Donelson, marshaling with cadenced step, later on, a million of loyal soldiers in battle array, to the supreme moment when he unostentatiously took the sword of Lee at Appomattox, was the central figure of the war, is there ; Farragut, who taught new lessons in naval warfare in taking forts and batteries in the mouth of the Mississippi, and who, lashed to the mast of his flag ship, amid shot and shell, sailed into Mobile Harbor at the head of his dauntless fleet, is also there ; Foote, Dahlgreen, Cushing and Dupont, who each majestically trod the ship's deck in mortal combat, on river, lake, gulf and the billowy sea, are there.

All that long list of dead officers and soldiers and sailors of the army and navy of the Union are there. What a galaxy of heroic dead!

We are all soon to be there, and muster again as one reunited host.

More people mourned the death of James Abram Garfield than ever before mourned the death of military hero, statesman, scholar, king, emperor or ruler. The fifty millions of citizens of this Republic stood around his bier and shed burning tears of sorrow; and the good of the world mourned sincerely with them. Britain's proud Queen laid a floral tribute on his funeral casket. The most humble citizens of this nation were the sincerest mourners at his tomb.

In the hour of the nation's deepest sorrow, how many, from the anguish of their souls, cried out:

*"God reigns; and the Government at Washington still lives!"*

Garfield dead! Commanding the highest art of the most gifted sculptor-artist of this advanced age, his comrades of the field, aided by his country, have placed this statue here in commendation of his good deeds in life. What he so willingly and so often helped to do for others of his comrades, we now reverently do for him.

Before the periods of which authentic history



speaks ; earlier than when history blends off into tradition ; at the first dawn of civilization, and since, heroes of bloody deeds, statesmen of distinction, emperors and kings have been perpetuated in memory by triumphal arches, statues, or monuments chiefly of their own creation.

Rulers in times past have, in life, at the public expense reared their own monuments.

Unlike these, this one springs from the hearts of a grateful people.

Comrades : This splendid statue is worthy of you who conceived it, and it is worthy of the great sculptor who created it ; and it is also worthy of him whose life and character is so imperfectly described by me, and so grandly symbolized by the artist.

Enduring as this bronze statue may be, the ruthless vandal or iconoclast may demolish it, or time, that destroyer of all things not fashioned by Omnipotence, will crumble it to dust. What the artist has done, and what we may do or say here to preserve and perpetuate his name or fame may pass away and be forgotten. But the Sun of *his* glory has risen, full orb'd, high in the firmament of eternal truth and justice, there to shine on, and on through the ages.

Socrates was condemned to drink the fatal cup

of hemlock, and thus give up his mortal body, but his philosophy the poison could not kill; it was immortal.

So Garfield was doomed to fall by a fatal bullet and thus surrender his mortal body, but his words and deeds did not die; they belong to eternity; they, too, are immortal.

My comrades: Inspired by the example of our dead friend; conscious of having performed a duty, which, in the providence of God, became ours to perform, and knowing that we shall soon have to answer the final roll call on earth and awake to the reveille call in another world, let us here consecrate ourselves anew to the unfinished duties of life and try to be worthy and prepared to meet him and our dead comrades beyond the grave.

My countrymen: The duties of citizen, educator, soldier, statesman and ruler, so singularly fulfilled by him of whom we have spoken to-day, have much in them to give us courage and hope; much to guide and cheer us in the future.

Grand, heroic and useful as the life of General Garfield was; much as there is in it to emulate and follow, we must not forget that we live in an age of progress; present and future duties being paramount to those of the past.

Our hero cared little for past example compared with present duty ; he believed in a morning star of progress reigning perpetually in the firmament of our Republic, to set, only, when :

“ \* \* \* \* the eternal morning,  
Pales in its glories all the lights of Time.”

So, may we, guided and controlled by this bright star of progress, continue, with the best light within us, to perform towards our fellow-men and our country the full mission of the purest life ; remembering that—

“ New occasions teach new duties ; Time  
makes ancient good uncouth ;  
They must upward still, and onward,  
who would keep abreast of Truth ;  
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires ! we  
ourselves must Pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly  
through the desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future’s portal with  
the Past’s blood-rusted key.”







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ORATION  
AT THE  
UNVEILING OF THE STATUE  
OF  
JAMES A. GARFIELD  
BY  
J. WARREN KEIFER.

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GLOBE CO., SPRINGFIELD, OHIO.

Faint, illegible markings or text, possibly a stamp or signature, located in the upper right quadrant of the page.













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