

OUR MARTYRED PRESIDENT.

WILLIAM M'KINLEY

The Story of His Career From Log Cabin to the White House—His Life as Soldier, Statesman, Husband and Man—Why He Was Regarded as a Typical American.

In the tragic death of William McKinley the nation has lost more than a president. It has lost a man of whom it was proud to say, "He is a typical American." Just how great is this loss can best be realized by a review of the life of our third martyred president. It is a life which can stand the searching rays of publicity, for the career of William McKinley bears no blot, reveals no blemish, from its humble beginning to its illustrious but sorrowful ending.

He was born Jan. 23, 1843, at Niles, Trumbull county, O.

When he was nine years old, his parents removed to Poland, where he passed the rest of his boyhood and school days.

In 1860 he taught school, clerked in the Poland postoffice and finally, in June of that year, enlisted as a private in Company E, Twenty-third Ohio volunteers.

In 1862 he was promoted to be commissary sergeant and later to second lieutenant on the staff of Rutherford B. Hayes. He distinguished himself in several engagements.

In 1863 he became first lieutenant.

In 1864 he was promoted to captain and detailed as acting adjutant general of the first division, First Army corps.

In 1865, having been brevetted a major of volunteers and honorably discharged, he returned to Poland and resumed the study of law.

In 1867 he was admitted to the bar and began practice at Canton.

In 1871 he was married to Miss Ida Saxton of Canton.

In 1876 he was elected to congress, serving as a representative from Ohio for fourteen years.

In 1890 he acted as chairman of the ways and means committee which framed the bill that afterward became known as the McKinley tariff law.

In 1891 he was elected governor of Ohio.

In 1893 he was re-elected governor of Ohio.

In 1896 he was elected president of the United States.

In 1897 he was inaugurated president.

In 1898 he personally supervised the conduct of the Spanish-American war.

In 1899 he shaped the policy which resulted in the extension of our domain far beyond its former borders.

In 1900 he was re-elected president by a popular plurality of 852,000.

In 1901 he had begun his second administration with the establishment of

civil government in the Philippines and was preparing to inaugurate home rule in Cuba. Early in the spring he made a memorable tour of the country from Washington to San Francisco, the journey being interrupted by the serious illness of Mrs. McKinley. With the returning health of Mrs. McKinley he accepted an invitation to visit the Pan-American exposition at Buffalo, and it was at the close of his third day there that he was shot.

M'KINLEY'S BOYHOOD.

To speak at length of William McKinley's ancestry would be to repeat facts that are already well known. That he was descended from sturdy Scotch-Irish ancestors, that he was the child of William McKinley, a pioneer in the iron puddling business in Ohio—these facts have been thrashed over again and again.

Though the town of Canton is most intimately associated with the name of McKinley, it was not his birthplace. He was born in Niles.

The old inhabitants of that quaint little village claim to remember him, but their memories are vague, for he was only a boy when the family moved to Poland, Mahoning county, O. His people were not rich then, neither were they very poor.

Young William was sent to the village school at Niles, but his father felt that better educational advantages for the children could be secured elsewhere. Accordingly he moved to Poland, and the future president was sent to what was known as the "academy" in that town.

He stood well among his school fellows in all his studies, but his work in the debating society seemed to give an early hint of the eloquent oratorical

powers which later enabled him to sway multitudes with even more ease than at that time he swayed the school fellows who gathered to hear the debates.

At the early age of 16 he left the Poland academy for Alleghany college in Meadville, Pa. Here, however, a sudden illness forced him to give up his studies and to return home. On top of this misfortune came what practically amounted to the business failure of his father. Everything was not lost, but the family was so reduced in circumstances that it was impracticable to send William back to college.

He was still little more than a boy, but anxious to do all in his power to aid in the support of his family, he took a position as district school teacher, with the munificent salary of \$25 a month.

And then came the war, and the young schoolteacher, burning with the desire to aid in the great cause of liberty, was one of the first to enlist in the army.

HOW M'KINLEY ENLISTED.

Robert P. Porter in his "Life of William McKinley" gives this description of the young man's enlistment:

Poland had strong enlisting propensities. It was the banner township. The boys went to the front just as soon as the national government would take them. Poland's pride today is that



M'KINLEY AS A SOLDIER.

she never stood the draft. Her quota was always full and overflowing. Said an enthusiastic Poland-er to the writer:

"Of this she is rightly proud. When the war-cloud had burst over our heads, Poland came to the front with more than her share of treasured sons as her offering. And the preliminaries were, as a rule, conducted at the Sparrow House. One day in June, 1861, a crowd had gathered in this old tavern. An impassioned speaker pointed to the stars and stripes which hung on the wall and exclaimed, with much expression:

"Our country's flag has been shot at. It has been trailed in the dust by those who should defend it, dishonored by those who should have cherished and loved it, and for what? That this free government may keep a race in the stage of slavery. Who will be the first to defend it?"

"A deadly silence reigned in that hotel parlor. Many beating hearts there were in the room. Many young patriots stood there who longed to serve their country and yet had not the courage to make the first move.

"Presently a space was cleared in front of the eloquent speaker. One by one some of the choicest of the young men of Poland stepped forward. Among them a slight gray-eyed boyish figure might have been observed.

"Too much impressed with the seriousness of the situation to put himself in evidence, he stepped up with the rest. He was only a boyish private then."

The company that was formed then was carefully drilled in the few days that it had before its departure for camp. On the day that they left Poland half of the town followed them almost to Youngstown in their eagerness to keep the brave boys in sight as long as possible.

At Youngstown the train was boarded and the journey for Camp Chase at Columbus begun. Here Company E of the Twenty-third Ohio regiment pitched its tents, and among those who lay under that scant shelter was William McKinley, just starting on the career that has brought him such honor and such gratitude from a whole nation.

PROMOTED FOR GALLANTRY.

McKinley's executive ability brought him into notice almost immediately. He was made commissary sergeant and for two years was on the staff of President Hayes, who was then in command of the regiment.

On what President Hayes had called the bloodiest day of the whole war—the 17th of September, 1862, in the battle of Antietam—Sergeant McKinley's conduct was such that his commander in person recommended his promotion.

Under the hottest fire, with men lying dead and dying all about him, with men suffering bitterly from the want of a bite to eat and a drop to drink, Sergeant McKinley, with the staff that he had organized so well, was everywhere on the field, distributing the food and the coffee that the fighting men so much needed, cheering them on with his brave words and never for an instant seeming to care for the shot and the shell that were flying so fast about him.

Major Hayes noticed the young man with admiring eyes. While recovering from his wounds he called upon Governor Tod of Ohio and told him of the incident. The governor immediately ordered the promotion of Sergeant McKinley and ordered further that the promotion should be placed upon the roster of the company.

Step by step after that the young man won his way up until three months before he was mustered out he was made major by brevet "for gallant and meritorious service at the battles of Opequan, Cedar Creek and Fisher's Hill."

His commission was signed "A. Lincoln."

HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

Returning home from the war, McKinley studied law with Judge Charles E. Glidden of Canton and at the Albany Law school. He was admitted to the bar

in March, 1867, and settled in Canton, which became his permanent home. He soon attracted attention as a lawyer of ability, and, although Stark county was Democratic, he was elected prosecuting attorney in 1869, but he was defeated for the same office two years later. From this time forward Major McKinley gave much attention to politics.

The seeming disasters in McKinley's career brought only greater honors. When McKinley offered himself as a candidate for speaker of the house of representatives, he found that two other western men—Burrows and Cannon—were asking for the place. Reed was the only eastern aspirant, and he won handsily. It is a tradition in the house of representatives that the speaker shall appoint his most formidable opponent chairman of the ways and means committee, and this chairman becomes ex officio the leader of the majority. This lot fell to McKinley. It was his opportunity, and he took advantage of it by formulating the McKinley tariff bill. The outcome is known to the world.

Two years later, after McKinley's district had been changed so as to make the normal majority against him more than 3,000, he was defeated for congress, but he made a strong showing by cutting his opponent's vote down to a margin of 300. This led to his nomination as governor of Ohio, and his next step was to the White House.

Had McKinley been successful in his candidacy for the speakership, and had he appointed Reed chairman of the committee on ways and means, in all probability he never would have been president.

But McKinley kept to his work. He had no false notions of luck. In one of his addresses to young men he said, "Luck will not last." The president held that.

The fortunate is he whose earnest purpose never wavers, whose slightest action or inaction serves the one great aim.

So this brace of temporary setbacks that he experienced merely afforded him time and space in which to get a fresh hold on the lines of his destiny.

In 1884 he was a delegate at large from Ohio to the national convention, and helped to nominate James G. Blaine. At the next national convention he represented the state in the same manner, and supported John Sherman. At that convention, after the first day's balloting, the indications were that McKinley himself might be nominated. Then his strength of purpose and his high ideas of loyalty and honor showed themselves, for in an earnest and stirring speech he demanded that no votes be cast for him.

In 1891 he was elected governor of Ohio by a majority of 21,000 over ex-Governor James E. Campbell, the Democratic candidate. The issue then at stake was chiefly the tariff, but McKinley also placed himself in opposition to the free coinage of silver.

In 1892 he was again a delegate at large to the national convention at Minneapolis, and was made permanent chairman. Although his name was not brought before the convention, yet he received 182 votes. He himself was a strong supporter of President Harrison.

In 1893 Major McKinley was re-elected governor of Ohio by a majority of 80,935. At the expiration of his term he returned to Canton. He had been a political speaker and leader in congress, known and admired throughout the country, and his popularity and the confidence of the people in his principles and purposes were constantly increasing; hence there was little surprise when he was nominated on the first ballot at the Republican national convention at St. Louis in 1896.

M'KINLEY AS A SPEECHMAKER.

Experienced campaigners declare that McKinley was an ideal candidate. He had all the courtesy of a Kentucky colonel, and his gallantry was unfeigned. His memory for names and faces was phenomenal. Though not effusive, he was ever urbane. He had tact and in all the relations of life was a living exemplification of the suaviter in modo.

His home at Canton, O., during the progress of his two canvasses for the presidency was the Mecca of thousands of admiring supporters. The

tramping out of the grass in his front yard, even down to the roots, grew to be a national jest, yet it was no exaggeration.

Brief speeches were to the president's liking. Two characteristic addresses will suffice to illustrate his methods of address—one is no longer than Lincoln's masterpiece at Gettysburg, and the other required not more than three minutes for delivery in his most deliberate style.

At Canton, O., speaking of the progress of the war with Spain, the president said:

Our glorious old flag, the symbol of liberty, floats today over two hemispheres. During the recent war we had exhibitions of unprecedented

patriotism on the part of the people and unmatched heroism on the part of our soldiers and sailors. Our second great triumph is the triumph of prosperity. The busy mills, the active industries, the general prosperity, have scattered plenty o'er a smiling country. Our third great triumph is the triumph we have had over sectionalism. We are no longer a divided people, and he who would stir up animosities between the north and south is denied a hearing in both sections. The boys of the south and the boys of the north fought triumphantly on land and sea in every engagement during our war.

At Chicago, three days later, he gave utterance to the following:

The United States never struck a blow except for civilization and never struck its colors. Has the pyramid lost any of its strength? Has the



MOTHER OF PRESIDENT M'KINLEY.

republic lost any of its vitality? Has the self governing principle been weakened? Is there any present menace to our stability and duration? These questions bring but one answer. The republic is sturdier and stronger than ever before. Government by the people has been advanced. Freedom under the flag is more universal than when the Union was formed. Our steps have been forward, not backward. From Plymouth rock to the Philippines the grand triumphant march of human liberty has never paused.

As a maxim maker the president gained fame, and searchers of history have declared that monarchies and aristocracies have produced few maxims makers, this form of thought and expression having flourished most during periods of popular government.

One of the first maxims put forth by McKinley in his first campaign against Bryan was, "It is better to open the mills than to open the mints."

The president once sought to win acceptance of his policy of confidence and hope by saying, "A patriot makes a better citizen than a pessimist."

To indicate his confidence in the course that he was steering the ship of state, he declared, "The country is not going backward, but forward."

For younger men McKinley gave voice to this oracular saying: "Luck will not last. It may help you once, but you cannot count upon it. Labor is the only key to opportunity."

HIS HOME LIFE.

When Major McKinley first went to Canton to consult his sister on the choice of a profession, he met Miss Ida Saxton, the pretty daughter of James Saxton, a well to do banker of Canton.

He was young and good looking; she was sweet sixteen. The acquaintance was of short duration, for he had to go to Albany to study law and she had to return to school, but the first thing that he did on his return to Canton was as a full fledged lawyer was to seek her out and woo her for his wife.

They were married on the 25th day of January, 1871, and he always declared that it was the best suit he ever won.

The young couple began their house-keeping in the old Saxton home at Canton. Two children were born to them, but both died in infancy. Since the birth of the second child Mrs. McKinley has been an invalid, but yet a happy and contented one, for the devotion of her husband was untiring. She followed his political career closely, and often he was indebted to her for valuable advice. During the convention which renominated McKinley for the presidency, when the private wire was ticking the news, there was no one so deeply interested in the result as Mrs. McKinley, and when it came and her husband entered the room with the message in his hand there were tears in the eyes of the others present as, tenderly bending over her, he kissed her and said, "I congratulate you, my dear," and she replied with a look that spoke more than words.

One of the president's most strongly marked traits was his devotion to his mother and to his wife.

While his mother was alive he scarcely allowed a day to pass without sending her some message to let her know that all was well with him. His solicitude for his invalid wife was equally touching. He even went so far at times when she was suffering more than usual to attend to some of the little details of the household management in order to relieve her as much as possible from the strain and anxiety of such duties. Very frequently during the time he was at the White House, even when some important conference was being held, he would excuse himself and run up stairs to spend a few moments with the invalid woman who was so thoroughly in sympathy with him. And no matter how dark or threatening the situation may have seemed to him he invariably presented to her only the most cheerful side.

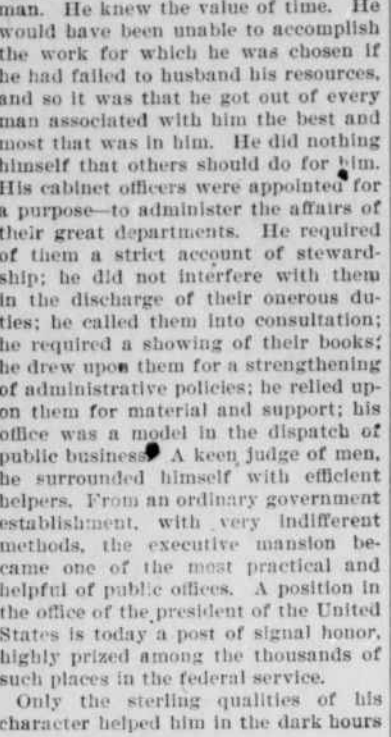
Perhaps the most pathetic part of it all was that a man of such tender devotion to his family should have so little real home life. For the last twenty years or more his efforts were given so entirely to the service of his country and he was forced to move from place to place so continuously that there has been little chance for that domestic happiness which a man of his nature so covets.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Mr. McKinley was a plain liver. He smoked moderately, but did not use intoxicating liquors. He was clean of speech as he was of character. He was a model husband, a devoted son and brother and in all the walks of life so carried himself as to leave the impress of a noble character. He was strong

mentally and physically. He had no physical weakness. He walked with a decided and energetic step. While his face had a certain pallor under excitement, it habitually wore the fine glow of a man in rugged health. He was frequently seen upon the streets of Washington and was not hedged about by the usual pride and circumstance of rulers. He was the most reasonable, the most accommodating of men. No citizen was too lowly, no cause too poor to enlist his sympathy, but with all this he was a business man. He knew the value of time. He would have been unable to accomplish the work for which he was chosen if he had failed to husband his resources, and so it was that he got out of every man associated with him the best and most that was in him. He did nothing himself that others should do for him. His cabinet officers were appointed for a purpose—to administer the affairs of their great departments. He required of them a strict account of stewardship; he did not interfere with them in the discharge of their onerous duties; he called them into consultation; he required a showing of their books; he drew upon them for a strengthening of administrative policies; he relied upon them for material and support; his office was a model in the dispatch of public business. A keen judge of men, he surrounded himself with efficient helpers. From an ordinary government establishment, with very indifferent methods, the executive mansion became one of the most practical and helpful of public offices. A position in the office of the president of the United States is today a post of signal honor, highly prized among the thousands of such places in the federal service.

Only the sterling qualities of his character helped him in the dark hours



FATHER OF PRESIDENT M'KINLEY.

of personal suffering which came to him during the last few months of his life. All public men train themselves in the hard school of self control, but none was more successful than William McKinley. The nation still remembers the calm patient man who watched for many hours at the bedside of his wife and whose unbending will smothered every outward trace of the emotion which tore at his heart-strings. Even in that recent tragic moment when he had been felled by the assassin that grand moral strength of his enabled him to endure pain with a calm face. It was he who tried to reassure his friends, although his life-blood was even then ebbing away. Such was the stuff of which our third martyred president was made.

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