

CHAPTER XV.

Obsequies of Our Martyred President—Extraordinary Demonstrations of Public Sorrow—Body Lying in State at Buffalo—Immense Throngs of People Passing the Bier—Short and Simple Funeral Services.

IT had rained fitfully through the night, but as the morning advanced a genial sun dispelled the heavy clouds. The morning to which Buffalo awoke was balmy, and seemed to have done with its sorrow. But the people had not; they had learned that services for the dead President would be held at the Milburn house, and that later the body of the murdered President would lie in State at the City Hall.

By general consent they resolved to await the latter opportunity of looking upon his face in death which a short nine days before they had seen in ruddy life. The streets were astir early, but the movement was that of a people sorely oppressed with grief, and the gentle sunlight did but give it a silver lining. At the roped barriers drawn around the City Hall they gathered and waited patiently. Down the abutting streets they stretched out, two abreast, for half a mile in two directions, silent or talking in low tones, most of them wearing white badges with "We mourn our loss" and the late President's portrait in black. As for a brother, a father, were they mourning, without the smallest tinge of affectation.

Along the main streets mourning insignia of black, black and white and purple had been placed. The displays were many, but scarcely one was worthy of particular note. A broad crape streamer dependent from a half draped flag was the most effective emblem seen. The washed out flags put up in joy over the Exposition were too many for the little mourning material used, but the tender respect was there all the same.

As it was Sunday, the commercial false note common to such

occasions was not heard. The street fakirs who on Saturday had hidden their Pan-American souvenirs and had substituted for them stocks of funeral emblems, were out of sight. Nothing marred the dignity, the decorum of the day. The police had little to do in managing the crowds. A word was silently obeyed. Democracy was preaching a powerful sermon, and all that happened until nightfall bore it out. All was for ordered liberty among equals before the law. The thrill of emotion made it as human and living as it well could be.

The new President, bodily tired and mentally worn out, had slept well in the pillared house on the avenue. There was no waking, alas, for him whom the new one had succeeded. At the Milburn cottage, where lay the remains of William McKinley, the sunshine was fitfully busy, making arabesques of shadows on the lawn, over which the sentries still were pacing. At the distant barriers of rope there was no great crowd.

ON THE WATCH FOR ASSASSINS.

There was close scrutiny of all who wished to pass. This was so not merely because of the desire to limit the number near the house of death, but also because of the dread that in some friendly guise another murderer would pass, and this is the curse of crime. Like the enemy in the night, it scatters tares of distrust between man and man where the wheat of loving confidence should grow. The uniformed police were watchful and not a little feverishly nervous, and secret service men swarmed at every elbow.

In the cottage the simple preparations had been made for the service. Perhaps in holding the services at the cottage simplicity had been over strained. The smallest church will hold more people than the parlor of the largest cottage. Great care had been taken in limiting the invitations, but even nearly half of those who came could not enter and remain. Doubtless other and more delicate considerations ruled in making the order of things what it was.

By half-past ten a goodly number had arrived. In tall silk

hats, black coats and black gloves they stood in groups upon the lawn and waited. Some came on foot, but most in carriages, the ropes being lowered and raised as the carriages went past. Hard on eleven the hearse with its four high stepping, coal black Flemish horses, its fringed black hammercloth and silver-plated carriage lamps, drove up—a simple equipage enough, such as any well to do private family might engage. Why not a catafalque for the nation's dead? Again a nice discretion ruled, a deference to the well known law of the simple ways of life and death that marked William McKinley.

Anon the rhythmic tramp of many feet is heard, and the armed escort is marching by. Barely two hundred men they seem, and chosen from all the arms of the service. Sailors in their brown-leggined short dress, marines with a touch of red on their blue uniform, a company of regulars, a couple of companies from the National Guard, a handful from the Hospital Corps—that was all.

THE CABINET IN ATTENDANCE.

Members of the Cabinet began to appear. Postmaster-General Smith and Secretary Wilson, the latter the more venerable looking, with his gray beard, entered the house. Governor Odell, very erect, waited on the lawn. General "Dan" Sickles, in a Grand Army hat, hobbled out of his carriage on his crutches. He was coming to see another old soldier of the civil war—another comrade—laid to rest.

Secretary Root, very careworn, came on foot with some ladies. Senator Hanna, the gravity of a great loss brooding over him and making him forgetful at moments of what was said and done about him, stood apart. Secretary Long, who is proverbially forgetful of the small things of life, came in a straw hat; but the hat was so much in his hand, and his strong, earnest face was so seamed with grief, that the unconventional headgear was noticed by few.

Six members of the Cabinet were on the lawn or in the house when, at a minute or two before eleven, President Roosevelt stepped out of his plain carriage. He was dressed in tasteful

black, and raised his tall hat in salute many times as he walked through the crowd on the lawn, now lined up with a passage between. The sun was still shifting from glow to shadow as the lines on the lawn followed the President into the house.

Entering beneath ivied porch and turning to the right in the wide hall, one was at once in the room where all that was not immortal of President McKinley lay. No attempt had been made to alter this parlor and library into a mortuary chamber. So the black shadow did not fall so heavily across one on entering. Another step, and the coffin on its trestle was before one.

THE HISTORIC ROOM.

It is a large, oblong room, and book shelves line it in places. It has two windows that let light in through thin white curtains. A large photograph of the mutilated winged victory caught much of this light, and seemed painfully emblematic of what was doing there, standing out as it did from the wall paper, which showed great bunches of red flowers on a white ground. The upper part of the coffin cover had been removed, and a national flag draped about the lower part, on which rested wreaths of white asters, yellow roses and a large one of purple asters. Other wreaths there were around the trestles.

As the mourners entered they passed up to the windows and down on the left side of the coffin, gazing on the dead face with his own tide of emotion within his breast. Some lingered and gazed, and many tears fell, but not a word was spoken, save a whispered one to those who wished to pass out rather than bear the oppressive moments that were to follow.

The dead President's head rested on a pillow of tufted white satin; his left hand lay across his breast. They had dressed him in black, a black tie, a white stand-up collar. In the lapel of his coat was a bronze Grand Army button, sole ornament, sole emblem of what he had been—a lover of his country, faithful unto death. The features were somewhat shrunk and drawn with suffering, and the skin was yellowish; but the sacrament of a great peace was upon his closed eyelids, and the bony modeling of chin and

forehead and the clear line of the silent lips showed that his type was noble, and that the heart which refused to beat longer was true while it could pulsate.

Opposite the house on the other side of the avenue the band of the Sixty-fifth was stationed, and, as the coffin was borne on the shoulders of eight corporals, one from each branch of the united services, came down the path a long roll came from the muffled drums, and then the President's favorite hymn was played as the coffin was placed in the hearse. The following are the words of the hymn :

I.—Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a Cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

II.—Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

III.—There let the way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that Thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

IV.—Or if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon and stars forgot,
Upward I fly—
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

President Roosevelt and the Cabinet followed the coffin and entered the first two carriages. Governor Odell and Senator Hanna rode together, the latter's broad face still wet. So they followed, foreign diplomats with stolid faces, Senators and officials and former officials. The son of former President Harrison was about. Former Attorney General Bissell, a relic of Cleveland's time, and so like Mr. Cleveland, passed from the house on foot.

The military escort deployed from column of four to column of platoons, and, led by the band, to the tap of a single drum, passed slowly down the avenue, the regulars carrying a furled flag, with a draping of crepe. On each side of the hearse was a guard of honor of eight sailors from the Michigan. The people below the barriers awaited the passing of the funeral cortege in respectful sympathetic silence, and so saw it pass slowly by in solemn dignity.

CROWDS AROUND THE CITY HALL.

Down about the City Hall, a handsome pile of granite in the heart of Buffalo, two miles away, the crowd had become enormous, but Chief Bull has learned to handle crowds, and there was no pushing, no confusion. Such of us as did not go with the funeral procession went at once to the City Hall, where the preparations for a public view of the dead President had been admirably made, and, as it proved, strictly carried out. Scarcely, however, had we entered the hall than a torrential downpour of rain began. The procession was still nearly a quarter of a mile away, the strains of Chopin's funeral march coming faintly to our ears. Every man not in a closed carriage must have been soaked through and through.

On the spacious main floor of the City Hall, which is reached by a flight of stone steps, the walls were hung in black and the large recesses on either side tastefully banked with palms and palmettos. Near the center of the hall, at a point midway between four lighted six branch chandeliers, was the slightly inclined platform for the coffin. Up the steps it was borne by its eight bearers, who turned deftly—they carry the dead, feet foremost—and

lowered their precious burden gently into its place, the lid was removed, some adjustments made, and then the lower part of the lid replaced, while President Roosevelt and the chief mourners stood on either side. When all was in place, the President and Cabinet, again looking on the body within, passed out of the rear of the hall to their carriages.

The rain was falling at intervals, but it could not keep the crowd of citizens away. It was the hour of the people, and a little rain could not keep them back. On, in moist garments, they came, two by two, in two streams, looked sharply down at the form in the coffin and were hurried along and out. Hour after hour the living stream continued. At each side of the coffin and at each end stood a man on guard. A sailor with drawn cutlas, an officer with drawn sword, a marine and a regular with fixed bayonets. There was no time for incidents beyond hurrying the few, inconsiderate of those behind, who wished to linger because they loved and pitied. But all was done gently, and the tide was kept flowing.

INDIANS AS MOURNERS.

It was toward four o'clock that the most picturesque visit was made. One hundred and fifty Indians, chiefs, braves, squaws, and papposes from the Exposition, dressed in their many colored blankets, with painted faces, entered the hall. A great wreath of asters had preceded them, bearing an inscription to the Great White Chief. As they came into the hall in a great group they looked wildly about them, but the hush of it all, the solemnity, the casket under the lights, the statue like figures of the guard, had an awesome effect upon them, and they fell into a line of two abreast at a word from their white leader, and so passed up to where the coffin lay. As each Indian chief or brave came up he halted, drew a white aster from the folds of his blanket and gently placed it on the coffin. Then with some muttered word passed on.

Long had they wished to see the Great White Father; that wish was the final lure that drew many of them to the Exposition. Day after day they had come to their white leader. "When will the Great Father come?" He came, they saw him, and then they

heard he was shot. Great was their anger, great their desire to see vengeance wreaked upon the murderer. They would hunt him. He was caught, they were told. If the President died the murderer would be put to death. Oh, no; that was not their idea. Give him to them and let them give him the terrible Apache formula.

The Sioux, the Arapahoes could torture him with many varieties of pain, but to kill him quick, like that, clapping their hands, Oh, infamous. Do you love your great chief that you kill the treacherous murderer in a flash? Long after the Indians had passed the grave white people continued to come and go. A river of love and compassion, and as night was falling and the stars were coming out in the clear vault of the deep blue sky the line still was moving without apparent end.

RED MEN'S FAREWELL TO THE GREAT CHIEF.

The following touching inscription accompanied a wreath of purple asters, the tribute of the Indians at the Pan-American Exposition:

"Farewell of Chief Geronimo, Blue Horse, Flat Iron and Red Shirt and the 700 braves of the Indian Congress. Like Lincoln and Garfield, President McKinley never abused authority except on the side of mercy. The martyred great White Chief will stand in memory next to the Saviour of mankind; we loved him living; we love him still."

Another account of the simple services at the house contains the following particulars: By the head of the coffin on its right stood President Roosevelt, upright as at attention, his hat held to his breast, his eyes fixed on the face of the dead. Secretary Root and the other members of the Cabinet were in line with him, and below these was Governor Odell and behind him Senator Hanna. The room was now uncomfortably full. The hall was full and across the dining room was full. Many passed out and stood bareheaded on the lawn, for now the services were beginning.

Unseen of all below and on the floor above the widow of the

dead remained with Mrs. and Miss Barber by her, and Dr. Rixey caring for her. She said little one heard, only begging that if her dead were to be taken away for the people to see that he be brought back to the house again, that she might watch with him till morning—and all this with little or no outward sign of grief, for she sees but dimly through the veil. Those who are without and within think of her.

Magnificently impressive, by reason of their simplicity, were the services at Buffalo over all that remained of William McKinley save the memory that will linger in the hearts of the American people, whom he loved and who loved and trusted him. The grandeur and pomp that oftentimes lift, at the last, men of mean attainments to a pinnacle of suppositious greatness were not present. They would have been so far out of place as to be a shock to the sorrowing hearts that gathered at the Milburn cottage in Delaware avenue at eleven o'clock.

EXTREMELY SIMPLE CEREMONIES.

Could President McKinley have directed the ceremonies himself, those who knew him best are united in the belief that he would have changed none of the details. It was a simple ceremony. Except for the presence of many of the most distinguished men in the nation, the services in the house might have been the last words said over any one of a hundred thousand men, so far as one unacquainted with the facts could have observed.

Barely two hundred people were admitted to the house, and those only by special invitation. Except for the newspaper men, the military escort, and the guard of police there were few people within a block of the cottage while the services were in progress.

During the morning the casket was taken down stairs and was placed in the large library at the front of the house, just off the hall. It rested between the two front windows, with the head toward the street and about two feet from a large pier glass. The upper half of the casket was open, and on the lower half rested a large wreath of purple violets, red roses and white chrysanthemums. Two other wreaths of red roses and white chrysanthemums

rested on a marble shelf at the base of the mirror. The carpet itself was draped with a large American flag.

Shortly after 10 o'clock those invited to the ceremony began to arrive. At first they came singly or in small parties, and there was considerable intervals between the arrivals of the carriages, but as the hour for the service drew nearer, carriages drove up in rapid succession. Until just before eleven o'clock very few entered the house, preferring to remain on the lawn, where they, for the most part, stood in silent groups, awed by the sad mission on which they had come. Most of them, however, had gone in when, at three minutes of eleven, President Roosevelt drove up in a carriage with Mr. and Mrs. Ansley Wilcox. He shook hands in silence with several members of the Cabinet, who met him at the carriage, and then slowly walked to the piazza and into the house.

MILITARY AND NAVAL ESCORT.

Meanwhile, a company of regulars of the Fourteenth Regiment, from Fort Porter; a detail of marines from Camp Haywood, at the Pan-American Exposition; a company of marines from the steamship "Michigan," and a company each from the Sixty-fifth and Seventy-fourth Regiments, of the National Guard of New York, had drawn up in Delaware avenue, and, stretched out in a long line, facing the house, stood at rest.

At each door and window in the room in which lay the casket a regular or marine had been posted. At one of the front windows stood a soldier and at the other a sailor. At the door leading into the hall stood a marine and a regular; at the door leading into the dining-room at the rear a marine was posted, and a sergeant stood at the door leading into a smaller library on the north side of the house.

In this small library were most of the members of the McKinley family and a few of their closest friends. Mrs. McKinley, the chief sufferer of all, did not come down stairs during the services. With Mrs. Barber, Miss Barber, Mrs. Hobart and Dr. Rixey, she sat at the head of the stairs leading into the main hall. All the doors were open, and she could hear

every word of the minister's earnest prayer, and the sweet strains of the choir reached her in her seclusion as they sang the President's favorite hymns.

Not once did she break down, but sat through it all silent and possessed. It seemed as if her great grief had exhausted her power for suffering. With a handkerchief at her eyes, she buried her suffering in her broken heart as she sat there, hardly stirring, until just before the casket was carried out. Then she was gently raised from her chair and led away to her own room.

It was a quarter before eleven o'clock when the people who had been waiting on the lawn entered the house and in single file passed into the room where the casket lay. Casting a last look on the features of the President, most of them returned to the main hall, but enough remained to fill every available spot in the library. Senator Hanna was the first man of national prominence to enter the room. He was followed by the Cabinet members, who took seats on chairs that had been reserved for them to the left of the casket, while the Senator sat down beside Governor Odell on the right side of the room.

COMPANY ROSE IN HIS HONOR.

President Roosevelt entered the library from the small room where the members of the family sat at one minute before 11 o'clock. As he came in every one rose. Gravely he walked past the line of the Cabinet members to the head of the casket. For a moment he gazed on the face of McKinley. His eyes were suffused with tears and his mouth twitched, but with a superb effort he mastered his emotions, and during the remainder of the service his face was set and grim.

Turning, Mr. Roosevelt spoke in a low voice to Secretary Long, who stood next to him. He evidently requested that Cabinet precedence be observed, for Secretary Root took Secretary Long's place in the line. Back of Mr. Root stood Postmaster-General Smith, and then, in order, Secretary Long, Attorney General Knox, Secretary Hitchcock and Secretary Wilson.

At this moment the Rev. Dr. Charles Edward Locke, of the

Delaware Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, son of that Dr. Locke who for many years was the McKinley pastor at Canton, entered the room through the double doors connecting with the dining room.

He went to the door leading into the outer hall so that his words might be audible to Mrs. McKinley, who sat at the head of the stairs leading up from the hall, and there took his stand. The quartet from the First Presbyterian Church had been stationed in the dining room, and with the sweet strains of "Lead, Kindly Light," the services were begun. Eyes that before had been dry and hard filled with tears as this verse was sung with exquisite feeling and pathos.

DIVINE AID EARNESTLY SOUGHT.

Dr. Locke raised his hands as the music died away. For a moment there was intense silence, then in prayer, his words uttered so that they reached the ears of the woman sorrowing for her dead, he made this eloquent appeal:—

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

"We, Thy servants, humbly beseech Thee for manifestations of Thy favor as we come into Thy presence. We laud and magnify Thy holy name and praise Thee for all Thy goodness. Be merciful unto us and bless us as, stricken with overwhelming sorrow, we come unto Thee. Forgive us for our doubts and fears and faltering faith; pardon all our sins and shortcomings, and help us to say, 'Thy will be done.' In this night of grief abide with us till the dawning. Speak to our troubled souls, O, God, and give to us in this hour of unutterable grief the peace and quiet which Thy presence only can afford. We thank Thee that Thou answerest the sobbing sigh of the heart, and dost assure us that if a man die he shall live again.

"We praise Thee for Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Saviour and

Elder Brother, that He came 'to bring life and immortality to light,' and because He lives we shall live also. We thank Thee that death is victory, that 'to die is gain.' Have mercy upon us in this dispensation of Thy Providence. We believe in Thee—we trust Thee—our God of Love, 'the same yesterday, to-day and forever'.

"We thank Thee for the unsullied life of Thy servant, our martyred President, whom Thou hast taken to his coronation, and we pray for the final triumph of all the divine principles of pure character and free government for which he stood while he lived and which were baptized by his blood in his death.

PRAYER FOR NEW PRESIDENT.

"Hear our prayer for blessings of consolation upon all those who were associated with him in the administration of the affairs of the Government. Especially vouchsafe Thy presence to Thy servant, who has been suddenly called to assume the holy responsibilities of Chief Magistrate. O, God, bless our dear nation, and guide the Ship of State through stormy seas. Help Thy people to be brave to fight the battles of the Lord, and wise to solve all problems of freedom.

"Graciously hear us for comfortable blessings to rest upon the family circle of our departed friend. Tenderly sustain thine handmaiden upon whom the blow of this sorrow most heavily falls. Accompany her, O, God, as Thou hast promised, through this dark valley and shadow, and may she fear no evil, because thou art with her.

"All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us when we pray to say:

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God

the Father, and Communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen."

As Dr. Locke began the Lord's Prayer the mourners joined with him, and all bowed low their heads as he pronounced the benediction. For a moment there was a hush. The services were finished, but no one moved. President Roosevelt stood immovable at the head of the casket, the Cabinet members in a line at the side. Then a man who seemed suddenly to have grown old slowly rose from his seat beside Governor Odell and slowly, very slowly, walked alone past the line of Cabinet officers and to the side of the new President. His hands clasped behind his back, his head bent down on his great chest, Senator Hanna stood and gazed on the face of the man he loved.

SADLY LEFT THE ROOM.

It seemed to the mourners that he stood looking down at his dear friend's face for fully five minutes—in reality it was nearly two minutes—before he turned and slowly, sadly retraced his steps across the room. His eyes were suffused with tears and on his face was a drawn, haggard look that was almost startling in its intensity. His were the last eyes to look on the face of the martyred President in the house where he had died.

As Senator Hanna sat down the casket was closed, and the soldiers and sailors advanced from the points where they had been stationed, and lifting it gently but firmly on their broad shoulders they slowly began their solemn march to the hearse which stood waiting outside. Close behind the casket followed President Roosevelt, with Secretary Root on his left and the other members of the Cabinet following. Slowly they made their way into the hall, out the front door, down the steps and down the walk to the hearse, while a band posted across the street softly played "Nearer, My God to Thee." Lifting their precious burden into the funeral carriage they closed the doors.

The hearse was driven across the street, and one after another the carriages came to the curb. In the first carriage President Roosevelt, Secretary Root, Postmaster-General Smith and Attor-