

CHAPTER XXII.

Personal Traits of Mr. McKinley—Reminiscences of His Boyhood—Anecdotes and Incidents—His Kind Heart—Affection for Old Friends.—Never Swerved from the Path of Duty.

LOYALTY to old friends, absolutely without regard to their worldly station, was a conspicuous trait of Mr. McKinley's character. It is related that at the second inauguration among the White House guests were Jack Adams, who runs the President's farm near Canton, and his friend, Mr. Alexander, a tinsmith from Minerva, Columbiana county, O. Mr. Adams came to Washington at the President's invitation, but had no idea of doing more than "eating one meal in the White House," as he expressed it. Here is Mr. Adams' own story of how he happened to be stopping at the White House during the inauguration week:

"Just before the inauguration of 1897, Mr. McKinley asked me if I did not want to come to Washington. Well, I was pretty busy fixing up things on the farm just then, so I said no, I would come to the next one. The President laughed and said to remind him and he would send me a pass. I got it. When my friend Alexander and I went up to the White House the President held out his hand and said: 'I'm glad to see you,' and asked me about my health and my family and how everybody was doing. I told him I had just come to town and got a room.

"He said: 'Not a bit of it. You are to stay right here in the White House, you and your friend.' I said that I did not like to impose upon him, but he replied that it was no imposition, and that I must bring my grip and stay the week out as his guest, and he would see that I had a good time and do everything for me that he could do. He made out a ticket that passed us to the grand stand to see the parade, and also gave us seats at the Capitol and admission to the inauguration ball."

A lady in Ohio has a souvenir of Mr. McKinley which she prizes very highly. It is a stanza written by him when twelve

years old, conveying to this lady, who was then a schoolgirl, a sentiment which impressed his mind at that time. The following is a fac-simile of the stanza, penned, as the reader will see, in the careful handwriting of a schoolboy:

Friend Lucy

*A heart of heavenly purity
Is laid within thy breast
And e'er for the weary soul
It breathes some words of rest*

Nov 12th 55 Pland O Wm McKinley

In this little incident we see revealed the character of the man. Probably if Mr. McKinley in his last days had seen the stanza he wrote to his "Friend Lucy," he would have smiled at the innocence of boyhood, but he would not have disapproved of the sentiment he then expressed.

COLONEL BONNER'S REMINISCENCES.

Colonel J. C. Bonner, Collector of Customs, was probably closer to President McKinley personally than any other man in Toledo. When the nation lost a President, Colonel Bonner lost a friend—a friend so near and dear that he does not hesitate to say that to him he owes his success. Colonel Bonner credits the late President with starting him on the road which has led to his present position. When interviewed, Colonel Bonner, deeply affected, paid the President, his friend, a great personal tribute, and, on solicitation, related several incidents, personal recollections, which had been impressed on his memory.

He told of his first acquaintance with Mr. McKinley. Away back in the earliest nineties Colonel Bonner was engaged in the manufacture of brushes. Politics was then with him a pastime, and relaxation from business cares. At that time Colonel Bonner

was Chairman of the Lucas County Republican Executive Committee, and Mr. McKinley was then Congressman McKinley, and Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

The tariff bill which bears Mr. McKinley's name was at that time being prepared. Mr. Bonner, in the manufacture of brushes, was painfully aware that the American made goods were kept out of the American markets because of the cheapness with which the German product could be manufactured and placed on sale here. He determined, if possible, to effect a remedy.

He went to Washington, called at the office of Congressman McKinley, which the latter always called his "den," and without ceremony or red tape of any sort, was received. At first sight Mr. Bonner was much impressed with him, and, as afterwards proved, the liking was mutual. Mr. Bonner stated his business. The country was being flooded with foreign made goods; in this instance, toothbrushes, which were sold at so low a price that the American made product could not well compete.

TWICE ACROSS THE OCEAN.

The bones of which the handles were made were sawed up in Chicago, then shipped to Germany, made up and shipped back and sold at a lower price than Bonner and the five other firms in this country could furnish them at.

"But I am told," said Mr. McKinley, "in letters from great houses in Philadelphia and New York, that they are satisfied with the present conditions, and that they do not think it necessary for a tariff on toothbrushes."

He named the firms, and then Mr. Bonner explained that these were great wholesale houses which bought all their goods in Germany when possible, only patronizing the local manufacturers when forced to.

"I see," said the Congressman, "I thought there was something wrong here. How much of a tariff do you believe to be necessary to protect American interests?" Mr. Bonner said forty per cent. would do. "Forty per cent. it shall be," said Mr. McKinley. And forty per cent. it was made and remained.

When President McKinley first ran for governor it was proposed that he should make a speech in Toledo. The candidate had appeared but once before in this city and then only at a banquet at which he had responded to a toast. There were factional differences in the Republican camp in Lucas county at that time, and it was feared that the meeting would have the appearance of a frost, but Mr. Bonner and several others determined that Mr. McKinley should be heard there.

Some thought that a committee of two was all that was necessary to go down to Sandusky and meet him, and escort him. But opinions differed and twenty prominent citizens guaranteed \$200 in the way of tickets and the Wheeling & Lake Erie road put on a special train, allowing the local managers to put on whatever crowd it desired.

A GREAT TURN-OUT.

The result of it was that nine carloads of people were taken to Sandusky to greet the candidate and bring him to Toledo. A flat car was fitted up and decorated and festooned and an artillery battery was placed on board. On the way to Sandusky, through the Democratic fastnesses of Ottawa and Sandusky counties the cannon boomed out Republican defiance to Democratic hosts, and it was feared that the return trip would be marred by the assembly of angry crowds and vengeance wreaked in some manner.

Sandusky reached, Candidate McKinley was certainly surprised at the size of his reception committee, and after a street parade the train was boarded for the trip to Toledo. All along the route, where cannon had boomed an hour before, great crowds assembled.

Impromptu platforms had been built and nothing would do but the candidate must make a speech. This was repeated at every station. The news spread to Toledo and when he arrived the streets were crowded, packed, jammed. So great was the crowd that but a small percentage could pack within Memorial Hall, and it was necessary for the candidate to speak at several places along the march to the hall.

At the corner of Jefferson and Superior streets one speech was made, and outside the hall itself another. The "Father of the McKinley Bill" had set the town on fire. There was no longer any doubt as to how he would be received in Toledo. Neither this nor subsequent visits were frosts.

When Mr. McKinley was elected governor he appointed Mr. Bonner upon his personal staff in spite of great pressure from great powers to make the appointment in another direction. To illustrate how strictly President McKinley did his duty, despite what effect it might have upon him personally, Colonel Bonner tells of an incident which occurred during a political convention at Columbus, when McKinley was governor, and when Mr. Bonner was chairman of the state committee.

DURING THE GREAT STRIKES.

It was during the great mining troubles and railroad strikes in the Wheeling Creek district and the State was in an uproar because of them. Colonel Bonner was much about the governor's office, at the latter's invitation, having charge of the convention arrangements and it being thought advisable that he should be in touch with Governor McKinley, thus being an eyewitness of the incident. At this time, it must be remembered, the friends of Governor McKinley were booming him for the presidential nomination.

Private Secretary James Boyle came in and announced that a prominent politician was without and desired to speak to him. The governor was occupied and it was so reported to the gentleman. "Tell him," said the politician, "that it is a matter of great importance." This was done. The Wheeling Creek rioters were at that time sullen and growling.

Every means had been used to quiet them without a show of force. The subject of calling out the militia had been broached. The prominent politician sent in this message to the governor: "Tell him," said the message brought in by Mr. Boyle that "in my opinion if he calls out the State militia he will never become President of the United States."

Quick as a flash, with the delivery of this message, Governor McKinley turned to his secretary and said: "You return to this man and tell him that we will take care of the strike first, and the presidency afterward."

Inside of three hours every regiment of the State militia, except the First regiment, had been called out, and was en route to the scene of the trouble. The strike was settled, not a life was lost in the settlement, and despite the warning of the politician, Governor McKinley became President not only once, but twice.

When McKinley was governor, a daring bank robbery occurred at Columbus Grove. The robber entered the bank and shot down an innocent bystander. An arrest for murder followed, and conviction. The case went to the governor. Great stress was laid on the fact that the evidence upon which the man's guilt was established was circumstantial. The governor went into the case, examined it thoroughly and convinced himself that the prisoner was guilty. When the day before the execution came, Governor McKinley came to Toledo the guest of Colonel Bonner. He wanted to get away from the influence of the men who would move heaven and earth to save their friend.

FOLLOWED BY TELEGRAMS.

But his escape from Columbus had been discovered and score upon score of telegrams followed him here, or even preceded his arrival. Colonel Bonner told the governor that there were a lot of telegrams for him.

"Just keep the telegrams," he replied. His face was drawn and showed suppressed emotion as it always did when he was excited. A man's life was in his hand—he was confident that he was guilty—he knew it to be his duty to allow the law to take its course—and yet the greatest sort of pressure was being taken to force him to pardon or to reprieve.

"Bonner," he said, as the evening grew into the night and the hour for the execution of the law's victim approached, "isn't there some way of telegraphic communication with Columbus, with the prison?"

A walk down to a newspaper office was suggested. Arrived there the hour was growing close to midnight, and the day was close to Friday, hangman's day. The first intimation of the approaching tragedy was the bulletin to the effect that the penitentiary warden had entered the prison cell and had read the death warrant. Other particulars followed rapidly, but nothing of what the governor was waiting for. The death march was bulletined, the last clang of the cell doors, the heavy respiration even of the accused and convicted. The governor's emotion was intense.

MADE A FULL CONFESSION.

"Is there nothing from the man himself?" he exclaimed. Finally it came, a full confession, just before the last act. The governor's face illumined. He had been right—the man was guilty—the man had admitted it. Again had duty been done.

Quite as impressive as anything else in the developments of the tragedy was the clear light in which they showed how President McKinley's personal charms and qualities as a man won the affection of the country. Particularly was this noticeable in Washington, where, from his long service in Congress and for more than four years in the Presidential chair he became known personally as to no other part of the country, except, perhaps, to his neighbors in Canton. Dr. David J. Hill, Assistant Secretary of State, once remarked to a friend when Mr. McKinley's personality was under discussion, that if "the Lord had ever breathed the breath of life into a more gracious and amiable man than Mr. McKinley," Dr. Hill had yet to find it out. This was a thoroughly characteristic estimate, and one that was by no means confined in its expression to occasions of grief.

Mr. McKinley, according to the best estimates, always did the amiable and courteous thing. If he ever had any feeling of injured dignity or ill-temper, he never let it be discovered even by those nearest to him. Everybody who went to the White House came away pleasantly impressed, whether he were Republican, Democrat, Populist, anti-Imperialist or Socialist; a negro, a Chinese or a Caucasian. It has not been uncommon with other

Presidents for men of more or less prominence to come away from the White House saying rather unpleasant things about the treatment they had received.

With McKinley it was different, and in that personal equation doubtless lay a large share of his success, as a public man and party leader, in securing acceptance of the policies for which he stood. When before, it was frequently asked, has a President carried the House of Representatives in three Congresses in succession? When before has a President sustained such friendly relations with the Senators that they have rejected none of his nominations for office, or that he, in turn, has had to veto none of their bills? For this was substantially the situation.

UNUSUAL COURTESY.

The very few vetoes and rejected nominations, and their number was trifling, were rarely unwelcome to the other side, but were rather in the nature of the correction of errors due to newly discovered evidence.

When the Secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League first visited Washington the President came out of a Cabinet meeting to receive him—a most unusual courtesy. Many a President who had been flattered as McKinley was would have taken affront at some of the utterances of the League, and, standing on his dignity, have refused altogether to see its representative. One of McKinley's predecessors steadily refused to see, during his term of office, an eminent doctor of divinity who several times called on public business, because he had as a preacher alluded to his alleged Sabbath-breaking propensities.

President Arthur, with all that graciousness of manner which has associated itself with his name, proved a hard master for the clerical force in his immediate employ. If he desired a letter or a paper from the files for any purpose, he could brook no delay, and was seemingly unwilling to grant that time might be necessary even for those who served a President.

In fact, those who know the White House best, in its various aspects toward the public, are able to relate a great many inci-

dents showing considerable human nature on the part of the various Presidents who have occupied it, but of McKinley they have nothing to relate but pleasant things, kindly acts, and genial ways. He seemed never offended at those who most severely criticised him. We read in the newspapers that Senator Tillman declared that McKinley was gradually becoming a dictator, to the subversion of the old Republic; the next day we read that Mr. Tillman went to the White House to ask for a small consulship for one of his constituents, and, strange to relate, that, although an opposition Democrat, he readily obtained it.

A PERFECT GENTLEMAN.

In fact, Tillman said in a public way that in his opinion no finer gentleman from George Washington's time to the present had ever occupied the Presidential chair. He never went to the White House in the latter part of Mr. Cleveland's administration, just as there were many Republicans of prominence that were not very neighborly with Mr. Harrison, and others, to be sure, who did not like Mr. Arthur.

It has long become notable to outside observers, who have talked with public men, who have come away from a conference with the Chief Executive, how generally he made their wishes his own. In the organization of the first Philippine Commission, one of the men provisionally selected hastened to Washington to tell Mr. McKinley that he was not much of a believer in his expansion policy, and that, probably knowing this, Mr. McKinley would want somebody else to serve.

"Quite the contrary," was the President's answer. "We need just the element of opinion on the Commission which you represent. I am glad that you feel as you do about it." Another man whom McKinley was about to appoint to a high office expressed in the same way his skepticism on the subject of protection, as identified with Mr. McKinley's name. In the same spirit, Mr. McKinley assured him that the view of the case which he held was the very one which the President was eager to have represented.

Mr. McKinley was so able to see both sides of questions, to recognize personal and local limitations, that his relation with the world and with the American public was wonderfully pleasant. It will be recalled how enthusiastic the Democratic South became when, on his visit to that section, he allowed a Confederate badge, pinned playfully on the lapel of his coat, to remain there all day, and how he recommended that the Federal Government join with the Southern States in the care of the cemeteries in which were buried the Confederate dead. Wherever he went, North, East, West or South, he fell in so acceptably with the prevailing views and aspirations of the people as to win their most marked favor. By his diplomatic way, he led a great many persons to his manner of thinking, when they did not realize that they were being led.

Among the facts belonging to President McKinley's career must be placed the heroic struggle of medical skill and science to prevent that career from being ended so suddenly. The story of what went on in the sick room reads more like fiction than reality.

THE DOCTORS ENDORSED.

"The Medical News," in its issue of September 21, printed a review of President McKinley's case from a medical point of view. The article recited the circumstances of the shooting and reprinted the official report of the autopsy and certain unofficial statements credited by the press to the doctors in attendance. It then takes up the subject of the gangrenous condition of the wound and in this connection says:

"Gangrene, extensive as it was, seems to us not so different from others observed under analogous circumstances as to require the assumption of exceptional causes for its explanation. Necrosis of tissue of a thinner or thicker cylinder along the track of a bullet is thought to be the rule, and ordinarily it is easily taken care of by liquefaction and absorption. And necrosis, even of a considerable extent, in feeble patients, about a sutured wound is certainly not unknown, even if rare, and is explained by inter-

ference with the local circulation either by tension or by the spread of coagulation within the blood vessels.

"The spread of the process in a patient of low reparative power would not be so very exceptional or surprising. Was the President such a patient? Apparently he was. According to Dr. Wasdin, when the incision was reopened toward the end of the fifth day 'no effort' was required to open it throughout its entire length, although only the track of the bullet was affected. That expression would hardly have been used unless he had intended to indicate that the amount of repair usual after that lapse of time had not taken place. Then, the President was fifty-eight years of age, had led a sedentary, laborious and anxious life, and had a complexion and appearance which, for some years, had been commented upon as indicative of impaired vitality.

ACTED WITH PROMPTNESS.

"It is evident that the surgeons, notably Doctors Mann and Mynter, with whom the first decision lay, acted with commendable promptitude and courage in undertaking the operation, and showed excellent judgment in its course and skill in its execution.

"They did all that could properly have been done and nothing that should have been left undone. The usual causes of death after such injury and operation were escaped or removed or prevented, and their patient succumbed to a complication which is so rare that it could not reasonably have been anticipated, and could not have been averted.

"The President died because he could not carry on the processes of repair and because the effort to do so was more than the vitality of the tissues involved could support. This, of course, excluded the possible presence of poison brought by the bullet or of destructive action by the pancreatic juices. If either of those was a factor, it needs only to substitute it in the statement for the assumed defective vitality of the patient. Whatever cause acted, it was unrecognizable at the operation and uncontrollable then or subsequently.

"There has been some criticism of the confident assurance of

recovery made by those in attendance after the fifth day. To us the progress of the case up to that time appears fully to have justified those assurances and the public anxiety to have required them."

The review of the case closes with the following reference to the doctors: "They did their work skillfully and judiciously, their behavior was dignified, restrained and worthy of the best traditions of the profession, and they have the misfortune, when success seemed to have been secured, of seeing it overthrown by a complication which could not have been foreseen or avoided. They deserve our admiration and sympathy, not our criticism."