

Following the natural bent of his mind, he devoted himself to questions of finance and revenue, to the essentials of the national housekeeping. He took high rank in the House from the beginning. His readiness in debate, his mastery of every subject he handled, the bright and amiable light he shed about him, and above all the unfailing courtesy and goodwill with which he treated friend and foe alike—one of the surest signatures of a nature born to great destinies—made his service in the House a pathway of unbroken success and brought him at last to the all-important post of chairman of Ways and Means and leader of the majority. Of the famous revenue act which, in that capacity, he framed and carried through Congress, it is not my purpose here and now to speak. The embers of the controversy in the midst of which that law had its troubled being are yet too warm to be handled on a day like this. I may only say that it was never sufficiently tested to prove the praises of its friends or the criticisms of its opponents. After a brief existence it passed away, for a time, in the storm that swept the Republicans out of power. McKinley also passed through a brief zone of shadow, his Congressional district having been rearranged for that purpose by a hostile Legislature.

Some one has said it is easy to love our enemies; they help us so much more than our friends. The people whose malevolent skill had turned McKinley out of Congress deserved well of him and of the Republic. Never was Nemesis more swift and energetic. The Republicans of Ohio were saved the trouble of choosing a Governor—the other side had chosen one for them. A year after McKinley left Congress he was made Governor of Ohio, and two years later he was re-elected, each time by majorities unhopèd-for and overwhelming. He came to fill a space in the public eye which

obscured a great portion of the field of vision. In two National Conventions, the Presidency seemed within his reach. But he had gone there in the interest of others and his honor forbade any dalliance with temptation. So his nay was nay—delivered with a tone and gesture there was no denying. His hour was not yet come.

There was, however, no long delay. He became from year to year, the most prominent politician and orator in the country. Passionately devoted to the principles of his party, he was always ready to do anything, to go anywhere, to proclaim its ideas and to support its candidates. His face and his voice became familiar to millions of our people; and wherever they were seen and heard, men became his partisans. His face was cast in a classic mould; you see faces like it in antique marble in the galleries of the Vatican and in the portraits of the great Cardinal-statesmen of Italy; his voice was the voice of the perfect orator—ringing, vibrating, tireless, persuading by its very sound, by its accent of sincere conviction. So prudent and so guarded were all his utterances, so lofty his courtesy, that he never embarrassed his friends, and never offended his opponents. For several months before the Republican National Convention met in 1896 it was evident to all who had eyes to see that Mr. McKinley was the only probable candidate of his party. Other names were mentioned, of the highest rank in ability, character and popularity; they were supported by powerful combinations, but the nomination of William McKinley as against the field, was inevitable.

The campaign he made will be always memorable in our political annals. He and his friends had thought that the issue for the year was the distinctive and historic difference between the two parties on the subject of the tariff. To



this wager of battle the discussions of the previous four years distinctly pointed. But no sooner had the two parties made their nominations than it became evident that the opposing candidate declined to accept the field of discussion chosen by the Republicans, and proposed to put forward as the main issue the free coinage of silver. McKinley at once accepted this challenge, and, taking the battle for protection as already won, went with energy into the discussion of the theories presented by his opponents. He had wisely concluded not to leave his home during the canvass, thus avoiding a proceeding which has always been of sinister augury in our politics; but from the front porch of his modest house in Canton he daily addressed the delegations which came from every part of the country to greet him in a series of speeches so strong, so varied, so pertinent, so full of facts briefly set forth, of theories embodied in a single phrase, that they formed the hourly text for the other speakers of his party, and give probably the most convincing proof we have of his surprising fertility of resource and flexibility of mind. All this was done without anxiety or strain. I remember a day I spent with him during that busy summer. He had made nineteen speeches the day before; that day he made many. But in the intervals of these addresses he sat in his study and talked, with nerves as quiet and a mind as free from care as if we had been spending a holiday at the seaside or among the hills.

When he came to the Presidency he confronted a situation of the utmost difficulty, which might well have appalled a man of less serene and tranquil self-confidence. There had been a state of profound commercial and industrial depression from which his friends had said his election would relieve the country. Our relations with the outside world

left much to be desired. The feeling between the Northern and Southern sections of the Union was lacking in the cordiality which was necessary to the welfare of both. Hawaii had asked for annexation and had been rejected by the preceding Administration. There was a state of things in the Caribbean which could not permanently endure. Our neighbor's house was on fire, and there were grave doubts as to our rights and duties in the premises. A man either weak or rash, either irresolute or headstrong, might have brought ruin on himself and incalculable harm to the country.

Again I crave the pardon of those who differ with me, if, against all my intentions, I happen to say a word which may seem to them unbecoming the place and hour. But I am here to give the opinion which his friends entertained of President McKinley, of course claiming no immunity from criticism in what I shall say. I believe, then, that the verdict of history will be that he met all these grave questions with perfect valor and incomparable ability; that in grappling with them he rose to the full height of a great occasion, in a manner which redounded to the lasting benefit of the country and to his own immortal honor.

The least desirable form of glory to a man of his habitual mood and temper—that of successful war—was nevertheless conferred upon him by uncontrollable events. He felt it must come; he deplored its necessity; he strained almost to breaking his relations with his friends, in order, first to prevent and then to postpone it to the latest possible moment. But when the die was cast, he labored with the utmost energy and ardor, and with an intelligence in military matters which showed how much of the soldier still survived in the mature statesman to push forward the war to a de-



cisive close. War was an anguish to him; he wanted it short and conclusive. His merciful zeal communicated itself to his subordinates, and the war, so long dreaded, whose consequences were so momentous, ended in a hundred days.

Mr. Stedman, the dean of our poets, has called him "Augmenter of the State." It is a proud title; if justly conferred, it ranks him among the few whose names may be placed definitely and forever in charge of the historic Muse. Under his rule Hawaii has come to us, and Tutuila; Porto Rico and the vast archipelago of the East. Cuba is free. Our position in the Caribbean is assured beyond the possibility of future question. The doctrine called by the name of Monroe, so long derided and denied by alien publicists, evokes now no challenge or contradiction when uttered to the world. It has become an international truism. Our sister Republics to the south of us are convinced that we desire only their peace and prosperity. Europe knows that we cherish no dreams but those of world-wide commerce, the benefit of which shall be to all nations. The State is augmented, but it threatens no nation under heaven. As to those regions which have come under the shadow of our flag, the possibility of their being damaged by such change of circumstances was in the view of McKinley a thing unthinkable. To believe that we could not administer them to their advantage, was to turn infidel to our American faith of more than a hundred years.

In dealing with foreign Powers he will take rank with the greatest of our diplomatists. It was a world of which he had little special knowledge before coming to the Presidency. But his marvellous adaptability was in nothing more remarkable than in the firm grasp he immediately displayed in international relations. In preparing for war and in the res-

toration of peace he was alike adroit, courteous and far-sighted. When a sudden emergency declared itself, as in China, in a state of things of which our history furnished no precedent and international law no safe and certain precept, he hesitated not a moment to take the course marked out for him by considerations of humanity and the national interests. Even while the legations were fighting for their lives against bands of infuriated fanatics, he decided that we were at peace with China; and while that conclusion did not hinder him from taking the most energetic measures to rescue our imperilled citizens, it enabled him to maintain close and friendly relations with the wise and heroic Viceroy of the South, whose resolute stand saved that ancient empire from anarchy and spoliation. He disposed of every question as it arose with a promptness and clarity of vision that astonished his advisers, and he never had occasion to review a judgment or reverse a decision.

By patience, by firmness, by sheer reasonableness, he improved our understanding with all the great Powers of the world, and rightly gained the blessing which belongs to the peacemakers.

But the achievements of the nation in war and diplomacy are thrown in the shade by the vast economical developments which took place during Mr. McKinley's administration. Up to the time of his first election, the country was suffering from a long period of depression, the reasons of which I will not try to seek. But from the moment the ballots were counted that betokened his advent to power, a great and momentous movement in advance declared itself along all the lines of industry and commerce. In the very month of his inauguration steel rails began to be sold at \$18 a ton—one of the most significant facts of modern times. It meant



that American industries had adjusted themselves to the long depression—that through the power of the race to organize and combine, stimulated by the conditions then prevailing, and perhaps by the prospect of legislation favorable to industry, America had begun to undersell the rest of the world. The movement went on without ceasing. The President and his party kept the pledges of their platform and their canvass. The Dingley bill was speedily framed and set in operation. All industries responded to the new stimulus and American trade set out on its new crusade, not to conquer the world, but to trade with it on terms advantageous to all concerned. I will not weary you with statistics, but one or two words seem necessary to show how the acts of McKinley as President kept pace with his professions as candidate. His four years of administration were costly; we carried on a war which, though brief, was expensive. Although we borrowed \$200,000,000 and paid our own expenses without asking for indemnity, the effective reduction of the debt now exceeds the total of the war bonds. We pay \$6,000,000 less in interest than we did before the war and no bond of the United States yields the holder two per cent. on its market value. So much for the Government credit; and we have \$546,000,000 of gross gold in the Treasury.

But, coming to the development of our trade in the four McKinley years, we seem to be entering the realm of fable. In the last fiscal year our excess of exports over imports was \$664,592,826. In the last four years it was \$2,354,442,213. These figures are so stupendous that they mean little to a careless reader—but consider! The excess of exports over imports for the whole preceding period from 1790 to 1897—from Washington to McKinley—was only \$356,808,822.

The most extravagant promises made by the sanguine McKinley advocates five years ago are left out of sight by these sober facts. The debtor nation has become the chief creditor nation. The financial centre of the world, which required thousands of years to journey from the Euphrates to the Thames and the Seine, seems passing to the Hudson between daybreak and dark.

I will not waste your time by explaining that I do not invoke for any man the credit of this vast result. The captain cannot claim that it is he who drives the mighty steamship over the tumbling billows of the trackless deep; but praise is justly due him if he has made the best of her tremendous powers, if he has read aright the currents of the sea and the lessons of the stars. And we should be ungrateful if in this hour of prodigious prosperity we should fail to remember that William McKinley with sublime faith foresaw it, with indomitable courage labored for it, put his whole heart and mind into the work of bringing it about; that it was his voice which, in dark hours, rang out, heralding the coming light, as over the twilight waters of the Nile the mystic cry of Memnon announced the dawn to Egypt, waking from sleep.

Among the most agreeable incidents of the President's term of office were the two journeys he made to the South. The moral reunion of the sections—so long and so ardently desired by him—had been initiated by the Spanish war, when the veterans of both sides, and their sons, had marched shoulder to shoulder together under the same banner. The President in these journeys sought, with more than usual eloquence and pathos, to create a sentiment which should end forever the ancient feud. He was too good a politician to expect any results in the way of votes in his favor, and



he accomplished none. But for all that the good seed did not fall on barren ground. In the warm and chivalrous hearts of that generous people, the echo of his cordial and brotherly words will linger long, and his name will be cherished in many a household where even yet the lost cause is worshipped.

Mr. McKinley was re-elected by an overwhelming majority. There had been little doubt of the result among well-informed people, but when it was known, a profound feeling of relief and renewal of trust were evident among the leaders of capital and industry, not only in this country, but everywhere. They felt that the immediate future was secure, and that trade and commerce might safely push forward in every field of effort and enterprise. He inspired universal confidence, which is the lifeblood of the commercial system of the world. It began frequently to be said that such a state of things ought to continue; one after another, men of prominence said that the President was his own best successor. He paid little attention to these suggestions until they were repeated by some of his nearest friends. Then he saw that one of the most cherished traditions of our public life was in danger. The President saw it was time to speak, and in his characteristic manner he spoke, briefly, but enough. Where the lightning strikes there is no need of iteration. From that hour, no one dreamed of doubting his purpose of retiring at the end of his second term, and it will be long before another such lesson is required.

He felt that the harvest time was come, to garner in the fruits of so much planting and culture, and he was determined that nothing he might do or say should be liable to the reproach of a personal interest. Let us say frankly he

was a party man; he believed the policies advocated by him and his friends counted for much in the country's progress and prosperity. He hoped in his second term to accomplish substantial results in the development and affirmation of those policies. I spent a day with him shortly before he started on his fateful journey to Buffalo. Never had I seen him higher in hope and patriotic confidence. He was gratified to the heart that we had arranged a treaty which gave us a free hand in the Isthmus. In fancy he saw the canal already built and the argosies of the world passing through it in peace and amity. He saw in the immense evolution of American trade the fulfilment of all his dreams, the reward of all his labors. He was, I need not say, an ardent protectionist, never more sincere and devoted than during those last days of his life. He regarded reciprocity as the bulwark of protection—not a breach, but a fulfilment of the law. The treaties which for four years had been preparing under his personal supervision he regarded as ancillary to the general scheme. He was opposed to any revolutionary plan of change in the existing legislation; he was careful to point out that everything he had done was in faithful compliance with the law itself.

In that mood of high hope, of generous expectation, he went to Buffalo, and there, on the threshold of eternity, he delivered that memorable speech, worthy for its loftiness of tone, its blameless morality, its breadth of view, to be regarded as his testament to the nation. Through all his pride of country and his joy of its success runs the note of solemn warning, as in Kipling's noble hymn, "Lest We Forget."

Our capacity to produce has developed so enormously and our products have so multiplied that the problem of more markets requires our urgent and immediate attention. Only



a broad and enlightened policy will keep what we have. No other policy will get more.

Reciprocity is the natural outgrowth of our wonderful industrial development under the domestic policy now firmly established. . . . The period of exclusiveness is past. The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem. Commercial wars are unprofitable. A policy of goodwill and friendly trade relations will prevent reprisals. Reciprocity treaties are in harmony with the spirit of the times; measures of retaliation are not.

I wish I had time to read the whole of this wise and weighty speech; nothing I might say could give such a picture of the President's mind and character. His years of apprenticeship had been served. He stood that day past-master of the art of statesmanship. He had nothing more to ask of the people. He owed them nothing but truth and faithful service. His mind and heart were purged of the temptations which beset all men engaged in the struggle to survive. In view of the revelation of his nature vouchsafed to us that day, and the fate which impended over him, we can only say in deep affection and solemn awe: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Even for that vision he was not unworthy.

He had not long to wait. The next day sped the bolt of doom, and for a week after—in an agony of dread, broken by illusive glimpses of hope that our prayers might be answered—the nation waited for the end. Nothing in the glorious life that we saw gradually waning was more admirable and exemplary than its close. The gentle humanity of his words when he saw his assailant in danger of summary vengeance, "Don't let them hurt him;" his chivalrous care that the news should be broken gently to his wife; the fine

courtesy with which he apologized for the damage which his death would bring to the great Exhibition; and the heroic resignation of his final words, "It is God's way; His will, not ours, be done," were all the instinctive expressions of a nature so lofty and so pure that pride in its nobility at once softened and enhanced the nation's sense of loss. The Republic grieved over such a son—but is proud forever of having produced him. After all, in spite of its tragic ending, his life was extraordinarily happy. He had, all his days, troops of friends, the cheer of fame and fruitful labor; and he became at last,

On fortune's crowning slope,  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire.