

Our people have always been fortunate in the candidates presented for their suffrages for that highest position on earth—the Presidency of the United States. They never have had a better example of the results of American liberty and opportunity than this brilliant and faithful soldier, this industrious and honest citizen, this wise and practical statesman, this sincere and loyal husband and friend—William McKinley.

Chauncey M. Depew

CHAPTER I.

PERSONAL SKETCH OF HON. WILLIAM MCKINLEY,
BY HON. JOHN SHERMAN.

BY request I write this sketch of the life and traits of Hon. William McKinley, nominee of the Republican party for the high office of President of the United States.

He was born at Niles, Ohio, January 29th, 1843, and is, therefore, just past fifty-three years of age. He is now in the prime of vigorous manhood, and his powers of endurance are not excelled by any American of his age. The best evidence of this is the many campaigns which he has made during his public life in behalf of the Republican party. He has proved his ability and endurance by the number and perfection of the speeches which he has delivered.

His education, for reasons that could not be surmounted, was limited to the public schools of Ohio, and to a brief academic course in Allegheny College. He taught school in the country and accumulated the small means necessary to defray the expenses of that sort of education. This is the kind of schooling that

has produced many of the most eminent Americans in public and private life.

McKinley entered the Union Army in June, 1861, enlisting in the Twenty-Third Ohio Infantry, when a little more than seventeen years of age. This was a noted regiment. Among its earlier field officers may be mentioned General W. S. Rosecrans, General Scammon, General Stanley Matthews, General Rutherford B. Hayes, General Comley, and many other conspicuous men. He served during the entire war, rising from the position of a private to the rank of major. He was a soldier on the front line, served in battles, marches, bivouacs and campaigns, and received the official commendation of his superior officers on very many occasions. He returned to Ohio with a record of which any young man might well be proud, and to which the old soldiers of the country point with enthusiasm now that he is honored by a presidential nomination. There are in the United States at this time more than a million soldiers of the late war who served on the Union side, still living and voting, and they have sons and their relatives, all of whom, taken in the aggregate, become a power in a presidential election. His military career, while he was not in high command, is full of heroic incidents, which are proven not only by contemporaneous publications in the newspapers, but by official reports of his superior officers. He was not only a gallant soldier, full of endurance and personal energy, but he was the calm, judicious staff

officer, who won the commendations of his superiors by the exhibition of good judgment and wise administrative capacity.

Returning from the war he found it necessary to choose his employment for life, and without further schooling he entered earnestly upon the study of law in the office of Judge Poland, and was a careful, faithful, industrious, and competent student. He entered the Albany Law School, and graduated from that institution with high honors. He then began the practice of law in Canton with the same enthusiasm and devotion to duty which he had always manifested. As a practitioner at the bar he at once exhibited superior qualities, careful, studious, and faithful. He was elected Prosecuting Attorney of his county, and distinguished himself by his learning, fidelity, and efficiency in the discharge of his duties to the public and his clients.

He was elected a member of the 45th Congress, and served in that Congress and the 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, and was certified as elected to the 50th, but was excluded by a Democratic majority in a contest, but was returned to the 51st, making his congressional career nearly fourteen years. As a member of Congress he was attentive, industrious, and untiring, working his way gradually until he reached the post of leader of the Republican majority of the 51st Congress. He did not attain this position by accident or by any fortuitous circumstance, but by constant attention to his duties and a careful study of

the public measures of importance. He was a candidate for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 51st Congress. Mr. Reed, the successful candidate, appointed him as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and he entered upon the duties incident to that position with great energy and intelligence. There was a necessity and a well-defined public demand for tariff legislation in that Congress. The Republican party had come into power by the election of Mr. Harrison, with the understanding and pledge that tariff revision should be accomplished at once. The tariff laws of 1883 required amendment and improvement on account of the lapse of time and change of circumstances. In 1890 it was decided to present a complete revision of the tariff, and to this work McKinley devoted himself with untiring industry. He had upon that committee many competent assistants, but the chief burdens necessarily fell upon the chairman. Mr. Speaker Reed was in hearty sympathy and earnest co-operation, and the House of Representatives, on the 21st day of May, 1890, passed the bill known as the McKinley Tariff Bill. Any one turning to the great debate in the House of Representatives pending the passage of that measure in the Committee of the Whole will appreciate the great scope of McKinley's knowledge of the subject-matter of that enactment.

It has never been claimed by McKinley's friends that he was the sole author of the McKinley bill. Not only did he have able supporters and assistants,

but he yielded to them under all circumstances opportunities for demonstrating their leadership upon subjects connected with the bill, and over and over again expressed in public and in private his great admiration for the assistance contributed by his colleagues in the Committee. But it is fair to say that McKinley mastered the whole subject in Congress in detail. He has made the subject of protective tariff a life study. Born and reared within the sounds of the rolling mill, and beneath the smoke and flame of furnaces, and with the full knowledge of the calls of labor and the necessities of capital, he has grown up from childhood a student of the economic questions involved in American legislation, and so he brought to this task in the 51st Congress remarkable knowledge of details and thorough equipment for the great work devolved upon him. McKinley is a man of conspicuous modesty. He never claimed the exclusive authorship of this measure, but it must be admitted that he contributed more than any one else to the policy of combining in a tariff law ample provision for sufficient revenue to meet the expenditures of the Government, and at the same time to protect and foster impartially all domestic labor and production from undue competition with the poorly paid labor of foreign nations.

It is often asserted that the McKinley Act failed in providing sufficient revenue to support the Government. This is not true, as it did furnish revenue to meet expenditures, but it did not provide a surplus

equal to the sinking fund for the reduction of the public debt. This was not the fault of McKinley or of the House of Representatives, but of the Senate, which insisted upon reciprocity clauses which largely reduced the revenue provided by that Act.

It was the misfortune of the McKinley Act that it took effect at the opening of a Presidential contest, and when "Labor Troubles" excited the public mind. The election of 1892 fell with demoralizing and almost crushing weight upon the Republican party of the country. The law of 1890 was everywhere, by Republicans and Democrats, denominated the McKinley Law, and from ocean to ocean the common people learned to so denominate it. At that time Major McKinley not only did not seek to evade the responsibility of his position, but frankly and openly admitted it, and he counselled courage and fortitude, and gave assurance of his strong faith in the ultimate triumph of the Republican party upon the very principles which then seemed to be repudiated by the people.

Addressing himself to an audience of discouraged Republicans in February, 1893, he said:

"The Republican party values its principles no less in defeat than in victory. It holds to them after a reverse as before, because it believes in them, and, believing in them, is ready to battle for them. They are not espoused for mere policy, nor to serve in a single contest. They are set deep and strong

in the hearts of the party, and are interwoven with its struggle, its life, and its history. Without discouragement our great party reaffirms its allegiance to Republican doctrine, and with unshaken confidence seeks again the public judgment through public discussion. The defeat of 1892 has not made Republican principles less true nor our faith in their ultimate triumph less firm. The party accepts with true American spirit the popular verdict, and challenging the interpretation put upon it by political opponents, takes an appeal to the people, whose court is always open, whose right of review is never questioned.

"The Republican party, which made its first appearance in a national contest in 1856, has lost the Presidency but three times in thirty-six years, and only twice since 1860. It has carried seven Presidential elections out of ten since its organization. It has more than once witnessed an apparent condemnation of Republican policy swiftly and conclusively reversed by a subsequent and better considered popular verdict. When defeat has come it has usually followed some measure of public law or policy where sufficient time has not elapsed to demonstrate its wisdom and expediency, and where the opposing party, by reason thereof, enjoyed the widest range of popular prejudice and exaggerated statements and misrepresentation."

This was the language of a bold leader of public opinion. There was no trimming, no hiding from

responsibility, no shirking from the great question of protection.

After the passage of the Tariff Act of 1890 the country rang with the designation "McKinley Law" as a term of reproach. The man who had given his name to that Act when it was denounced, boldly proclaimed his responsibility for it. When the tide turned in its favor he heartily acknowledged the aid of his colleagues.

My familiar association as a Senator from Ohio with McKinley during his service in the House of Representatives enables me to say that he won friends from all parties by uniform courtesy and fairness, unyielding in sustaining the position of his party upon every question on the floor of the House. His leadership was, nevertheless, not offensive or aggressive, and while he carried his points, he was always courteous to his opponents, impersonal in debate, and always ready to concede honest motives to his opponents. At the close of the 51st Congress, and when his services as a Congressman ended, he retired without leaving behind him a single enemy, and yet he had been unswerving in party fealty and uncompromising upon every question of principle. His name became linked with the great measure of that Congress by the common voice of the people of the whole country, and by the world at large.

He, shortly after his service in Congress, entered upon the campaign for Governor of Ohio. He was

nominated by acclamation in 1891. The State had been carried in 1890 by the Republicans by a very close majority, and the drift in the country was against the success of the Republican party. The discussion by Major McKinley in Ohio of the tariff and currency questions was one of the most thorough and instructive of all the debates in that State. It was a counterpart, in large measure, of that of 1875, when, after a series of defeats throughout the country, growing out of the use of irredeemable paper money, President Hayes, then a candidate for Governor of Ohio, boldly advocated the resumption of specie payments, and was elected on that issue. It was a campaign where principles won against prejudices. So, in the campaign of 1891, Governor McKinley, disregarding threatened disasters, adhered without compromise to the platform of principles involved in the tariff legislation of Congress. He neither apologized nor modified his position, and his election by upwards of twenty thousand majority in that year was the significant result.

The office of Governor of Ohio was to McKinley a new field of action. It was the first executive office he had ever held. It was his first experience in administrative duty. His success in that department of the public service was as significant and conspicuous as his experience in the legislative department of the general government had been.

He was Governor during a period involving excitement and intense commotion in Ohio—the strikes

among the coal-miners, the organizing of bands of tramps, and the passage across the State of great bodies of turbulent people. All these things tended to precipitate commotion and disorder. His administration as a Governor was without reproach or just criticism. He was faithful to every duty, firm, unyielding, and defiant in the administration of the law. When necessary he called out the troops and crushed disorder with an iron hand, but before doing so he resorted to every proper expedient to maintain order and the law. He was diplomatic, careful, persuasive, and generally restored order and good government.

The great depression of 1894-5 brought a condition of suffering to many of the leading industries of the State. Charity was appealed to by the Governor and aid rendered promptly and efficiently. In January, 1896, he retired from the office of Governor at the end of his second term with the hearty goodwill of all the people of the State. He had yielded to no unworthy influence, made duty, honor, integrity, and fidelity the criterion of his administration, and he took his place in the ranks of the private citizens of the State in the town from which he had first entered Congress.

It has been said that Governor McKinley's knowledge is limited to a single subject, and that his speeches have been confined to the tariff question. This is a great mistake. His studies and speeches embraced a great variety of subjects and extended to

nearly every measure of importance discussed while he was in Congress, and his addresses to the people, a long list of which has been published, cover every variety of subjects appropriate to the time and place when they were delivered.

On the vital question of the currency he has held the position of the Republican party. When under the stress of war the United States was compelled to use irredeemable money, he acquiesced in conditions he could not change, but every step taken to advance the credit and value of United States notes while he has been in public life he has supported. He supported the Act for the resumption of specie payments and the successful accomplishment of that measure. I know of no act or vote or speech of his inconsistent with this position. He advocates the use of both gold and silver coins as money to the extent and upon the condition that they can be maintained at par with each other. This can only be done by purchasing as needed the cheaper metal at market value and coining it at the legal rate of 16 of silver to 1 of gold, and receiving it in payment of public dues. Gold is now the standard of value. With free coinage of silver that metal will be the standard of value and gold will be demonetized. Governor McKinley is opposed to the free coinage of silver, and has so repeatedly declared in his speeches. McKinley is in favor of honest money.

In his last Gubernatorial canvass in Ohio Governor McKinley made this response to the declaration

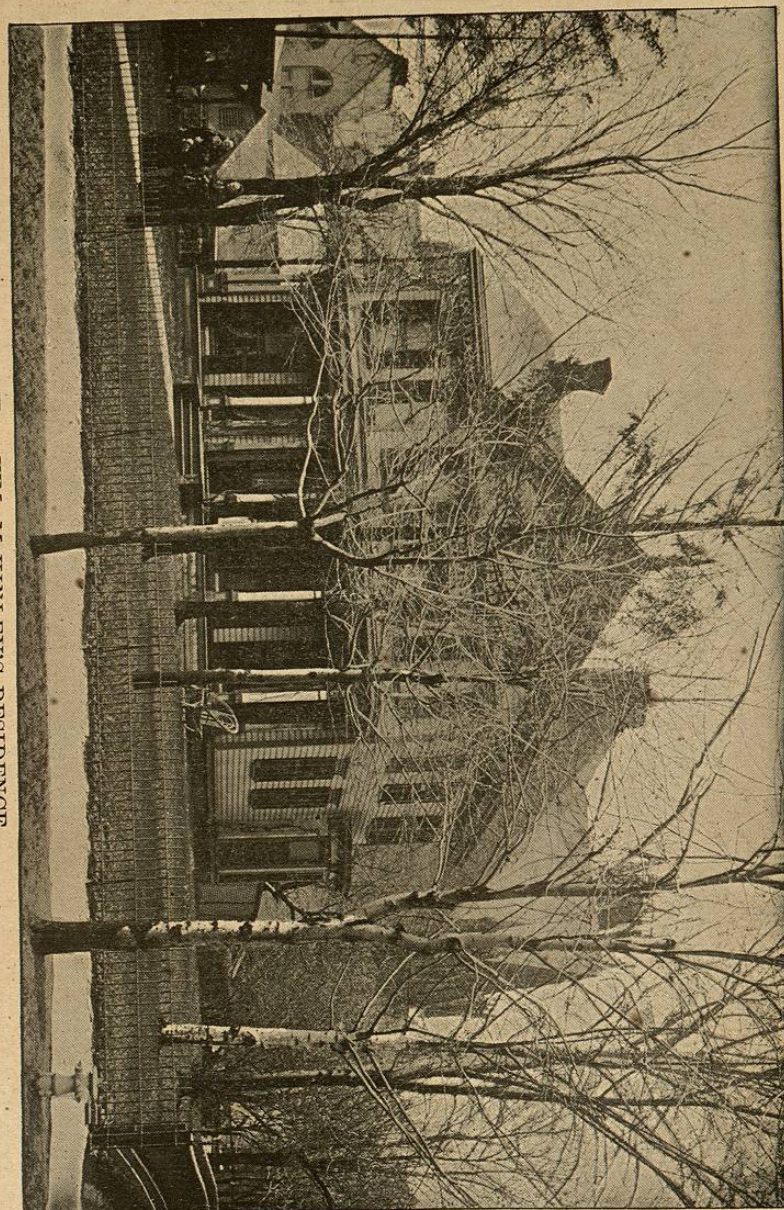
of his opponent, ex-Governor Campbell, that he was willing to "chance it" on silver:

"My worthy opponent should not 'chance' anything with a question of such vital and absorbing interest as the money of the people. The money of America must be equal to the best money of the world. Unlike my opponent, I will not ask you to take any chances on this question; I will clearly and unequivocally say to you that my choice and influence are in favor of the best money that the ingenuity of man has devised. The people are not prepared to indulge in the speculation of free and unlimited coinage.

"The Republican party stands now, as ever, for honest money, and a chance to earn it by honest toil. It stands for a currency of gold, silver, and paper that shall be as sound as the government and as untarnished as its honor. I would as soon think of lowering the flag of our country as to contemplate with patience, or without protest, any attempt to degrade or corrupt the medium of exchanges among our people. The Republican party can be relied upon in the future, as in the past, to supply our country with the best money ever known—gold, silver, and paper—good the world over."

It has been said that the recent Ohio platform does not declare against free coinage of silver and for honest money. This is not a fair construction of that declaration. The people of Ohio are for that money which has the highest purchasing power, that

HON. WM. MCKINLEY'S RESIDENCE.





HON. WM. MCKINLEY IN HIS STUDY.

which yields to labor the highest wages to be paid in the best money, and to domestic productions the highest price in the best money, and that is gold coin or its equivalent in other money of equal purchasing power. This, I believe, is also the opinion of Governor McKinley, and is the doctrine of the Republican party.

In his domestic life Governor McKinley is a model American citizen. It is not the purpose of the writer of this sketch to use fulsome language or to comment upon his private life, beyond the mere statement that he is, and has been, an affectionate son of honored parents, his mother still living, a devoted husband, and a true friend. In his family and social life, and in his personal habits, he commends himself to the friends of order, temperance, and good morals. In private he is exemplary, in public life a patriotic Republican. It may be said of him with great propriety that no man can more fully represent in his own career than he the great issues upon which the Republican party contested the election of 1896.

John Sherman