CHAPTER II.

ANCESTRY—YOUTH—IN THE ARMY—STUDENT OF LAW—PROSECUTING ATTORNEY—HOME LIFE.

THE life of William McKinley is that of an American boy who made the best of his opportunities, continually striving for better, with no vain longings, but a continuous willingness to work that he might learn. It is such a story as should be included in every school-book, not only as a lesson and an inspiration to the young, but as a reminder of the possibilities of American citizenship to those called upon to help children in their studies. He was born at Niles, Ohio, January 29th, 1843, and is now in his fifty-fourth year; his hair is but lightly sprinkled with gray, and he is robust and alert. McKinley was descended from a long line of citizens who in times of peace were foremost in industry, and in the days of war always at the front. On his father's side his people were High-

land Scotch, brawny and brainy men, who needed only the opportunities and enlightenment of education. They were not of the royalist tribes of Scotland, but a sturdy set, with a determined though imperfectly developed idea of freedom. Liberty of conscience was real with them, and they left the Highlands for the north of Ireland, seeking independence, and thence to America for the greater liberty they found and helped to perpetuate.

James McKinley, a fine Scotch-Irish lad of twelve years, was the first to come to America. He was the father of David McKinley, the great-grandfather of the Republican candidate for the Presidency. William McKinley came to America with James, and settled in the South, where his descendants have been and are men of distinction. David McKinley was a revolutionary soldier, one of the sort not remembered in history, except under the grand classification of privates.

On his grandmother's side McKinley comes of equally good and sturdy stock, Mary Rose, who married James McKinley, the second, having come from Holland, where her ancestors had fled to escape religious tyranny in England. The first of the Rose family to emigrate to America was Andrew, who came with William Penn and was one of the representatives of the thirteen colonies before the rebellion against Great Britain. He owned the land on which Doylestown stands to-day. It was his son, Andrew Rose, who was the father of Mary Rose, the mother

of William McKinley, Sr. This Andrew Rose did more than double duty in the war for freedom against Great Britain. He fought and made weapons to fight with.

This is an ancestry typically American, one of soldiers and workers for the country's welfare and wealth, and McKinley's good fortune cast his lot in a happy home, where the true mother imbued the children with love of God and the country.

In the small town of Niles, in the county of Trumbull, Ohio's great son, whom the Republicans have just nominated for the Presidency, was born in an unpretentious frame building, a house that was partly dwelling and partly country store, the dwelling very neat and bright—a good home. There was no silver spoon in William McKinley's mouth, though his parents were comfortably situated. The Major was the seventh child, and after him there were born a girl and a boy.

If William McKinley is not a member of the "Sons of the American Revolution," he has a perfect right to become one, for he has Revolutionary ancestors on both sides. His great-grandfather, David McKinley, a Pennsylvanian, served in the Revolutionary War, enlisting at twenty-one, serving for one year and nine months. His great-grandfather on his grandmother's side was not only a soldier but he was a good mechanic, and molded bullets and made cannon balls for the men who were fighting for freedom. He was enlisted in the Revolution, and added

to his services the mechanical genius which he possessed. This union of the excellent qualities of a soldier and mechanic was of excellent service to the cause.

David McKinley's second son, James, married Mary Rose, daughter of Andrew Rose, Jr., the revolutionary soldier and founder. James McKinley raised a large family. Indeed, that seems to have been characteristic of the stock. His second son, William, born in Pennsylvania, was the father of the present Republican candidate for President. William McKinley, Sr., married Nancy Campbell Allison. The Allisons were good stock. They came from England to Virginia and multiplied, the branch from which Mrs. William McKinley, Sr., sprung emigrating to Pennsylvania. Major McKinley's grandfather, Abner Allison, married Ann Campbell, in Green County, Pennsylvania, in 1798. Ann Campbell was of Scotch-German origin. The family moved to New Lisbon, Ohio, where their ten children were born. It was at New Lisbon, in 1827, that William McKinley, Sr., married Nancy Campbell Allison. It may be interesting to state that, could the lines be fully followed out, it would be found that Major McKinley is a third or fourth cousin, possibly fifth or sixth, of William B. Allison, of Iowa, who was a candidate for the Presidency at St. Louis. The Allisons spread through the western country, some of them settling in the vicinity of Chillicothe. It was probably from the Pennsylvania

branch that William B. Allison sprung, for he was born in Ohio, in a portion of the State not far from New Lisbon.

It is noticeable that the McKinleys and the families into which they married were all industrious, hard-working people, religiously inclined, patriots and pioneers—a hardy race that baffled with difficulty and helped in carving a civilization out of a wilderness. The McKinley-Rose-Allison families were all Pennsylvanians originally, and a people with a trend toward the iron business. The Roses were iron founders, so was McKinley's father, while his mother's people were farmers. The combination of tillers of the soil and molders of the ore was a good one, and added much to the strength of character and the industrious application that is so characteristic of Major McKinley.

Mr. and Mrs. William McKinley, Sr., settled first at Fairfield, Ohio, another small town. There, in Columbiana County, which is now a part of the Eighteenth Ohio District, which his son represented for fourteen years in Congress, the father established an iron foundry, and for two decades he had interests in iron furnaces in New Wilmington, Ohio. It is interesting to observe that McKinley's ancestry makes it possible to trace his character. The lines of activity pursued by his forefathers were such as to leave their impress upon their offspring, and much as Major McKinley owes to his own energy and labor, the tendency to study, to activity, and to

continued effort was inherited. He had opportunities for application, and to his credit be it said he did not neglect them. He had openings and chances broader and better than his ancestors, and took advantage of them. It is seen from this short reference to his ancestry that Major McKinley was one of the people born in plain, respectable, and religious surroundings. He did not have the advantages nor the embarrassments of a great name, but proceeded by his own effort, by his own continuity of purpose, by study and energy, to make his name great.

William McKinley had a good mother. That she is now living, strong and well, with as active an intellect as ever at eighty-seven, is one of his great joys. Vigorous and energetic and strong as his father was, William McKinley, Jr., had the benefit of a mother's training, of her love and devotion, of her gentle guidance, of her religious instruction. Mrs. McKinley, as most mothers of large families, was enabled to do more for her children because they were numerous than had she but one or two. The danger of being spoiled was obviated, and the association with brothers and sisters naturally produced a thoughtfulness for others, a regard for different opinions, and at the same time helped develop an ability to care for himself, since in a family of many members, no matter how harmonious and loving it be, there is always a struggle for supremacy, particularly when there is an inheritance of aggressiveness.

William McKinley's mother is a Christian woman. She loved her country ways, and trained her son to patriotic views, and willingly offered him for sacrifice when she consented to his entering the army to help put down the rebellion when he was not yet eighteen years old. She has pride in his abilities and world-wide reputation, and is undoubtedly rejoiced that he has been named for the greatest and most exalted office in the world. But such a mother as McKinley has would count this honor as nothing, would be unhappy, if it had been secured unworthily. Truly Mrs. McKinley's greatest happiness lies in the fact that her son is an honorable man and respected even by his enemies, because his life has been free from stain. That good old mother lives in Canton now, happy in her son's preferment, and sad only because her good husband was taken away three years ago, before he could see his son the Presidential candidate of his party.

The family moved to Poland from Niles when William McKinley was still young. The mother desired her children to have educational advantages, and there was in Poland, Ohio, an academy which in those days had a wide reputation for the abilities of its teachers. There Major McKinley's sister, Annie, became a teacher and William a scholar. The young boy made friends always by his quiet dignity and serious habits—a student always, but withal a manly fellow, who could play as hard as he studied. The McKinley family was held in high esteem in Poland, and to this day it is remembered with affection and pleasure. The testimony of old friends, the stories of childhood, are always true indications of the character of a young man, and of McKinley there is nothing in criticism said. Everybody liked him as a boy, and, of course, bright and thorough in his work as he was, there were prophecies that he would make a great man. That often happens with likeable children, but, alas! it too seldom is verified by the future.

The town of Poland was an agricultural and mining village, only eight miles from Youngstown, and consequently near the Pennsylvania State line, a city in the now prosperous and fertile Mahoning Valley, which is as famous in Ohio as the Connecticut Valley is in New England. Poland never grew much. It was too near Youngstown, but the citizens of the town are proud that small as it is, the draft was never enforced there, for the men volunteered from patriotic motives. In fact there were always more volunteers than Poland's quota justified.

A boy, while studying in the public schools, the educational advantages he gained made him one of their best friends and advocates. To him the magnificent school system of Ohio is a matter of pride In the days of McKinley's youth men and boys often did chores to help the family along, and that was what McKinley himself did. McKinley was a clerk in the Poland post-office when he entered the war. He was studying and working at the same

time. One had a feeling of pride in the advancement of a young man who struggled for his education. So many have been educated without having to work to pay for it, and have not properly regarded the educational advantages, that there is a tingle of satisfaction in seeing a man succeed who earned his education literally by the sweat of his brow.

In June, 1861, two months after the surrender of Fort Sumter, when McKinley was a youth not yet eighteen, there was a meeting at the tavern in Poland. In a small town the hotel is a meeting place, just as a store is in a village. Here the citizens had assembled, thirty-five years ago, to discuss the secession of States. A speaker in a fiery talk asked who would be first to defend the flag. The boys of Poland came forward, one by one, and among them was our next President, a slight, pale-faced young man, of studious mien. Two years before he had joined the Methodist church, and was a member of the Bible-class, who was constantly seeking information. Before the war, at seventeen, he had gone to Allegheny College, but an illness called him home. He did not return, but took to teaching school—a youth instructing scholars at a country school, some of them as old as he.

McKinley at that meeting enlisted in Company E of the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteers, a regiment that produced such men as Stanley Matthews, afterward Senator and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; President Hayes, and of which W. S. Rose-

crans was first colonel. He served fourteen months as a private. Speaking of McKinley's connection with the regiment, General Hayes said: "At once it was found that he had unusual character for the mere business of war. There is a quartermaster's department, which is a very necessary and important department in every regiment, in every brigade, in every division, in every army. Young as he was, we soon found that in business, in executive ability, young McKinley was a man of rare capacity, of unusual and unsurpassed capacity, especially for a boy of his age. When battles were fought or service was to be performed in warlike things, he always took his place. The night was never too dark; the weather was never too cold; there was no sleet or storm, or hail or snow, or rain that was in the way of his prompt and efficient performance of every duty."

That is a great tribute from a great man. McKinley soon went on General Hayes's staff, when the then major became commander of the regiment, and he served in that capacity for two years, and served so well that Hayes knew "him like a book and loved him like a brother." That friendship continued, and the writer remembers at the funeral of the ex-President, in 1892, Governor McKinley, who was there with his staff, cried like a child when he looked at the body of his old commander and personal friend.

At the battle of Antietam on September 17th, 1862,

probably the bloodiest day of the war, McKinley was commissary sergeant in the Twenty-third Ohio. General Hayes says of his services then: "That battle began at daylight. Before daylight men were in the ranks and preparing for it. Without breakfast, without coffee, they went into the fight, and it continued until after the sun had set. Early in the afternoon, naturally enough, with the exertion required of the men, they were famished and thirsty, and to some extent broken in spirit. The commissary department of that brigade was under Sergeant McKinley's administration and personal supervision. From his hands every man in the regiment was served with hot coffee and warm meats—a thing that had never occurred under similar circumstances in any other army in the world. He passed under fire and delivered with his own hands these things so essential to the men for whom he was laboring. Coming to Ohio and recovering from wounds, I called upon Governor Todd and told him this incident. With the emphasis that distinguished that great war governor, he said: 'Let McKinley be promoted from sergeant to lieutenant.' And that I might not forget, he requested me to put it upon the roster of the regiment, which I did, and McKinley was promoted."

Speaking of his war service, Major McKinley said, just before he retired from the governorship of Ohio: "I always look back with pleasure upon those fourteen months in which I served in the

ranks. They taught me a great deal. I was but a school-boy when I went into the army, and that first year was a formative period in my life, during which I learned much of men and of affairs. I have always been glad that I entered the service as a private and served those months in that capacity."

At the battle of Kernstown McKinley was on General Hayes's staff. Crook's corps had been expecting an easy time when it appeared that the enemy was in force at Kernstown, about four miles from Winchester, where Crook's troops were. There had been some misinformation regarding the Confederate general Early's movements, and the force about to be met was that of Early, which outnumbered Crook's corps three to one. When the battle began one of the regiments was not in position, and Lieutenant McKinley was ordered to bring it in. The road to the regiment needed was through open fields and right in the enemy's line of fire. Shells were bursting on his right and left, but the boy soldier rode on. He reached the regiment, gave the orders to them, and at his suggestion the regiment fired on the enemy and slowly withdrew to take the position where they were assigned. It was a gallant act of the boy soldier, and General Hayes had not expected him to come back alive.

At the battle of Opequan he was on General Hayes's staff still. There he distinguished himself for gallantry, for good judgment, and military skill. He had been ordered to bring General Duval's troops to join

the first division, which was getting into battle. There was a question as to the route to take. The young officer knew it intuitively, and, acting on his own responsibility, directed Duval the way to go, and brought the troops up in good style, taking great chances in doing so, but succeeding nevertheless. Other equally courageous and dangerous things the Ohio officer undertook. He served with General Crook as a staff officer later on, and was finally assigned to duty with General Hancock. He entered the war a private, one of the several hundred thousand, a boy of seventeen, and left it a major in the United States Volunteers by brevet, and he earned every promotion by his own skill. Think of it, a major at twenty-one! Major McKinley still has his brevet commission. It was given him in 1864, and reads: "For gallant and meritorious services at the battle of Opequan, Cedar Creek, and Fisher's Hill." Who signed that? "A. Lincoln." It is a testimonial of bravery, of patriotism, and of manliness, and Major McKinley is proud of it. Who blames him? There are other records more brilliant; others, but none displayed more courage, and few had equal responsibilities at his age. His horse was shot from under him at Berryville. He can appreciate the hardships of the private soldier's life, for he endured them himself. He knows the worries of the officer, for these also he experienced. He understands the duties of a staff officer, for he was one. There is everything in his record that is creditable, and nothing that is discreditable. He was a typical American citizen soldier.

After the surrender at Appomattox, and after he was mustered out, Major McKinley was offered a commission in the regular army. It was a temptation hard to resist, for four years in the army, at the formative period of his life, gave him a love for military service that was hard to overcome. What might have been his career had he remained in the army no one can tell. There is little chance for advancement there, but he would probably have ultimately commanded a regiment, and with the prejudice against officers appointed from civilian life he might never have risen higher and perhaps might not have attained that rank.

Acting on the advice of his father, he entered civil life. He studied law in Mahoning County, under Judge Glidden, who was one of the noted men at the Stark County bar. Under him McKinley studied for a year and a half, and his family made sacrifices to enable him to do so. Their unselfishness enabled him to go to the Albany Law School, which has developed many men of brain and ability. In 1867, twenty-nine years ago, he was admitted to the bar and chose Canton, then a small town of about 6,000 people, for his home. Canton was not important then, though the county of Stark was destined to develop and prosper under the policy of protection which he advocated. Great manufactories were to develop there, and the Mahoning Valley was

to be smoke laden by the industry and the sky above it to be lightened by the blazing chimneys of furnaces.

Major McKinley had been a good debater at school. He was often the winner in such contests. After he got back from the war he entered a political debate, and was overcome by his opponent. Naturally a sensitive man, he was chagrined, and resolved that never again would there be the opportunity given for a similar defeat. The subject of the debate was protection, and McKinley knew his view was right. Though worsted in the argument, he had no question as to the logic of his reasoning; but he needed more facts, greater study to support them, and he immediately applied himself to acquiring them.

Though a newcomer, he had gained a reputation for legal ability in Stark County, which was Democratic. It appeared as if it would be a herculean task to carry it. McKinley had a natural aptitude for politics, and his life as an attorney tended to increase it. The Republicans wanted a candidate for Prosecuting Attorney. Some say McKinley was chosen simply because of his ability, and others that while his capacity was recognized, the Republicans did not think the place worth fighting for when defeat seemed certain, and gave it to McKinley, a new man, as a mark of recognition. Now Major McKinley never in his life entered a fight to lose it. He never confessed himself beaten. The stern de-

MRS. WILLIAM McKINLEY.