



CHAPTER XXVII.

BURIAL OF PRESIDENT MCKINLEY.

Private Funeral Services—Lying in State at Buffalo and Washington—
Interment at Canton.

AS THE daily life of William McKinley was marked by the greatest simplicity, so were the last rites and services over his casket.

The private funeral services were held at the Milburn residence, Sunday, September 15, at eleven o'clock in the morning. The casket had been placed in the library, with the silken folds of an American flag draped about it. Red roses, white chrysanthemums and wreaths of purple violets lay at the foot of the bier.

Two hundred cards had been issued and shortly before the appointed time the invited few began to arrive. Senator Hanna was among the first. President Roosevelt arrived just before the appointed time for the services. The immediate members of the McKinley family gathered in a

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room adjoining the library. Mrs. McKinley was not with them. Surrounded by Mrs. Barber, Miss Barber, Mrs. Garret Hobart and Dr. Rixey, she was seated in the upper hallway where every word pronounced over the casket that contained all that she held dear in the world could reach her.

Senator Hanna was the first man of national prominence to enter the library. He was followed by the Cabinet members, who took places on the left of the casket. As President Roosevelt entered every one rose. He walked gravely to the head of the casket. For a moment he gazed on the face of McKinley. Turning, he spoke in a low voice to Secretary Long, who stood next. He evidently requested that cabinet precedence be observed, for there was an immediate change in the positions of the Cabinet members.

When the funeral services were held at the Milburn house Mrs. McKinley was unable to come down stairs. Sedatives had been given her and the President's remains had been taken away without her knowing of their removal.

At this moment 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.

The quartette of the First Presbyterian Church, made up of Miss Kate Tyrell, Mrs. Clara Barnes

Holmes, Raymond O. Rietpeister and George C. Sweet, had been standing in the dining room, and with the sweet strains of that favorite hymn of the late President, "Lead Kindly Light," the services were begun.

As the last strains died away Dr. Locke began reading the chapter in the I. Corinthians, that, from its sad associations, has become so familiar. In a low but clear voice he read it to its conclusion.

There was a moment's pause after he had finished, and then the quartet sang the four verses of that other hymn, so dear to the man above whose bier the mourners stood, that as he passed into the last unconsciousness, his lips formed its words after the strength to speak had gone.

Silently the assembled men and women framed with their lips the words of "Nearer, my God, to Thee," as the choir sang it through. Dr. Locke raised his hands as the music died away. He made this eloquent appeal: "Let us pray:

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 humble servants, 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.

In this dark 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 dost answer 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 Savior 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.

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 our 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 the problems of freedom.

Graciously hear us for comforting 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 has promised, through this dark valley and shadow, and may she fear no evil, because Thou art with her.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

As Dr. Locke began repeating the Lord's prayer the mourners joined with him, and all bowed low their heads as he pronounced the benediction.

Then a man, who seemed suddenly to have grown old, rose from his seat beside Governor Odell and 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 for the last time on the face of the man he loved. It seemed to the mourners that he stood there looking down at his dead 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.

As Senator Hanna sat down the casket was closed and the soldiers and sailors advanced from the points where they had been stationed. Lifting it gently 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, very slowly, they took 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."

As the funeral cortege passed slowly down Delaware avenue the little host that had listened to the services, filed quietly out of the house.

Mrs. McKinley did not accompany the cortege from the house. As the services were nearing an end she exhibited marked signs of exhaustion and Dr. Rixey and her other companions gently lifted her from her seat and led her to a room.

Then they closed the door that she might not hear the rhythmic tread of the marching soldiers as they escorted the casket from the house. She was utterly worn out and within a few seconds had lapsed into slumber.

The funeral cortege left the Milburn house at 11:45 o'clock. Slowly and solemnly, in time to the funeral march, it moved between two huge masses of men, women and children, stretching away two miles and a half to the city hall. Nearly two hours were required to traverse the distance.

During the afternoon and night the President's body lay in state in the city hall. Such a spontaneous outpouring of people to show their regard for a man whom they had admired and loved from a distance was never equaled on this earth under like circumstances.

The hours during which the public was to be permitted to view the remains had been set from 1 to 6 o'clock. More than twice as many as could hope to get through the lines in that time came from all over western New York until fully 200,000 were massed during the morning. In the face of such a concourse the limit was extended, but the

patient thousands did not know it. They merely stayed on through the storm and hoped.

For nearly ten hours they streamed through the city hall corridor where the President lay, passing in two lines which formed faster than they melted. Ten thousand an hour flowed past until weather and physical collapse wore out other thousands and the thin line ended at 11 o'clock at night.

In the afternoon Mrs. McKinley begged to be taken to her husband. When told that the body had been carried to the city hall, where the people were to have an opportunity to see it, she demanded that it be brought back to her. He was her husband, she had a right to him. The people had all his best years, his strength, his life. In death he was hers, and she would have her rights.

Hysterically she cried aloud for him again and again. A council of the family was hastily called, and some favored sending for the remains of the President in order to calm the anguish of the widow with the soothing sense of possession. But at this moment Mrs. Hobart, widow of the Vice President, succeeded in convincing Mrs. McKinley that it was her duty to let the people see the face of their beloved President.

Thanks to the strong influence which Mrs. Hobart has always exerted over her friend, Mrs. McKinley was finally calmed and induced to lie down and try to sleep. Dr. Rixey prepared an-

other glass of medicine and the crisis was momentarily over.

Later in the day the unhappy woman again demanded the body of her husband, but for the second time she was comforted by her loving friends.

Mrs. McKinley's anguish over her loss was the saddest and most pathetic demonstration in the awful tragedy.

After lying in state at the Buffalo city hall the remains of President McKinley were brought to Washington by special train, September 16. The route was 420 miles long, passing through dense masses of people in every city, town and hamlet. Everywhere were signs of deepest mourning. The train drew into the depot at Washington at 8:38 in the evening, and the body was taken to the White House, where it was guarded during the night by veterans of the Civil War.

At 9 o'clock on the following day the funeral parade formed at the White House and started for the rotunda of the capitol where the funeral services were held. These were opened by the choir of the Metropolitan M. E. church, where Mr. McKinley had been a worshiper, singing "Lead, Kindly Light." The Rev. Henry R. Naylor offered the invocation and Bishop Andrews delivered the funeral address. This was followed by the choir singing "Some Time We'll Understand." The bene-

diction was pronounced by the Rev. W. H. Chapman. Following this came one of the most dramatic incidents of the ceremony. The choir began to softly syllable the first lines of the hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee." For several lines the choir alone followed the melodion in the time. Then the volume of the song was audibly increased. A few of the audience, unable to restrain themselves, had joined their voices with those of the chosen singers. Their example was followed timidly by others until the dome rang with the notes of the solemn and beloved song.

President Roosevelt murmured the words of the song along with the other auditors. The lines of his face, which had been hard with the rigidity of the trial and grief, softened into an expression of the tenderest sympathy as his lips moved in singing the hymn. Grover Cleveland, the very embodiment of stately dignity, seemed even more dignified as his lips parted with a barely perceptible motion in response to the rhythm of the hymn. Officers of the army and navy, who had seen death in its worst form without a tremor and possibly who had not sung a church hymn for many years, hummed the tune when they could not remember the words. All eyes were streaming with tears.

A respectful silence followed the end of the hymn which marked the conclusion of the funeral services. A few moments elapsed and then the rotunda was

cleared for the body to lie in state to be viewed by the great multitude who were crowding the steps ready to pass through in double file on either side of the coffin. The flag was draped back from the head of the casket, the velvet-covered lid was removed and the President's face was exposed to the light which poured in through the upper windows of the dome.

In the evening the body was removed by special train to the McKinley home in Canton. All along the route were evidences of the deepest mourning. Everywhere people had gathered to catch a glimpse of the train that was bearing away forever all that was earthly of their beloved President.

The funeral services at Canton were held Thursday, September 19. The removal of the remains from the old homestead to the First Methodist Church, where the services were held, levied the hardest tribute upon the sorrow and love of the people of Canton. Mrs. McKinley lingered by the bier up to the moment it was lifted to be borne from the house to the hearse. She wept hysterically and refused to be comforted when led away to her room. She did not attend the church services or the ceremonies at the receiving vault in the cemetery.

The casket was covered with purple orchids and white roses. Every head within a block of the residence was bared when the hearse, drawn by

four black horses, and under heavy escort, led the way to the church.

The pulpit was a wilderness of flowers, purple predominating. There were forty-six large pieces on the platform, 200 in the vestibules. A small portrait of the dead President was placed at the head of the bier, which was spread with the national colors and caught in a knot of black cord at the corner.

Just above the pulpit was a panel of red roses with a harp made of white immortelles. At the right of the platform was a mammoth shield worked in roses and bearing the letters "G. A. R.," and on the opposite wing of the platform was a wreath of white and purple roses bearing the inscription "Our Comrade." This was presented by the late President's old regiment, the Twenty-third Ohio. All the floral decorations were caught with white and purple ribbons. The balconies were festooned with graceful curves of black cashmere, while the vestibules were a solid mass of black.

All was hushed when the great church organ played Beethoven's "Funeral March." Some of the auditors wept, others strained their eyes toward the sable vestibule where it was expected the casket would enter. Still others looked ruefully at the old pew of President McKinley, which was entirely covered with black cloth. This pew is four seats from the front in the left center sec-

tion of the church. It was not occupied during the services.

While the fingers of the organist still lingered over the keys, a band without played "Lead, Kindly Light," and the flower-laden casket containing the remains of the late President was borne into the church and laid on the bier. President Roosevelt led the funeral party. He was ushered into the second pew from the front of the right central section.

After the casket was placed the organ rendered "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Rev. O. B. Milligan, pastor of the Canton Presbyterian church, offered prayer. A ladies' quartet then rendered an original hymn, entitled "The Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." A mixed quartet sang "Lead, Kindly Light." This was followed by a scripture reading from the nineteenth psalm, by Dr. John A. Hall, pastor of Trinity Lutheran church. Rev. E. P. Herrick, pastor of the Trinity Reformed church, read from Corinthians xv, 41-58.

Rev. C. E. Manchester, pastor of the church, delivered the funeral sermon. No text was announced. The purpose of the speaker was to pay a tribute to his friend and parishoner. The sermon abounded in personal anecdotes illustrating the Christian character of the illustrious dead.

At the close of the sermon Bishop L. W. Joyce, of Minneapolis, offered a fervent prayer. "Nearer,

"My God, to Thee" was sung again. It was the benediction to a notable service. A moment's silence, a word of prayer and the guard again bore aloft the casket. The funeral was over.

Through a parted sea of humanity extending more than two miles the funeral car of the dead President was drawn to its long home in Westlawn cemetery. With measured tread and slow stride Lieutenant General Miles headed the file of army and navy officers who walked at the right of the hearse.

President Roosevelt could be seen through the open windows of his carriage, but his face was as expressionless as alabaster, save for the expression of sorrow which overcast the features of all. Chopin's funeral march was the prevailing strain in the band music, while minute guns played from the crest of Westlawn cemetery as the solemn column wound its way westward and northward.

As the funeral party neared the approach to the cemetery the way was strewn with sweet peas, which had been sent in large quantities to Canton by the school children of Nashville, Tenn. Members of the Twenty-third Ohio, McKinley's old regiment, wept as they picked up the pretty flowers and tucked them away in the lapels of their coats.

The mausoleum where the body of the dead President will await the great monument that will be erected in his memory was a bower of roses.

When the funeral party reached the receiving vault the casket was received by the old guard of regulars and jackies and borne to the vault between two lines. President Roosevelt was the first to move towards the vault. He was escorted by Colonel Bingham and took a position at the right of the mausoleum door, Secretary Root standing at the head of the left line. The members of the cabinet were disposed on both sides of the pathway leading to the vault, with the army chiefs on the right and navy officials on the left.

As the flower-laden casket reached the portals of its resting place a salvo of artillery was fired. Abner McKinley, the President's brother, and his wife followed the remains to the door and were succeeded by other members of the family.

Bishop Joyce read the Methodist burial service, consisting of the chapter in Revelations describing the vision of the holy city, and offered a brief prayer. Secretary Wilson wept as the preacher spoke the solemn lines: "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

After the relatives had returned to their carriages, taps were sounded by eight buglers of the G. A. R. As the last silvery note of the bugles died away sentries were posted at the door of the receiving vault and the party turned to go. The beloved fellow citizen had been laid to his final rest amid the weeping of a nation.