

# Oration of Hon. Albert S. White

With Other Proceedings, at Lafayette,  
Indiana, on the Occasion of the Death of  
Gen. William H. Harrison, Late President  
of the United States



WHITE, ALBERT S. (ALBERT SMITH), 1803-1864



ORATION

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WITH OTHER PROCEEDINGS,

AT LAFAYETTE, INDIANA,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH

OF

GEN. WILLIAM H. HARRISON,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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Published by Committee of Arrangements.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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LAFAYETTE, April 19, 1841.

Sir:—The Committee of Arrangements have instructed me to request of you a copy of your Address, delivered at the Presbyterian Church on the 17th inst, for publication.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY OILAR,  
Ch'n of Committee

Hon A. S. WHITE

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LAFAYETTE, April 20, 1841.

Sir:—Without apology for the imperfections of an address which was rather the spontaneous offering of the heart upon the first intelligence of the late national calamity, than the slower product of intellect, I submit the paper to you for publication according to your request, if you think proper to make that use of it.

With sincere respect,

Your friend and serv't,

ALB'T S. WHITE.

HENRY OILAR, Esq.,

Ch'n of the Committee of Arrangements.

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## PUBLIC MEETING.

### DEATH OF GENERAL HARRISON.

On receiving the official intelligence of the death of the President on Tuesday evening, April 13th, 1841, a meeting of the citizens of Lafayette was immediately called, to assemble at the Court House at candle-lighting. At the time appointed the Court Room was filled with an assemblage which in the sadness of the moment seemed to have forgotten all former distinction of parties.

On motion of Dr. O. L. Clark, Dr. E. Deming, was appointed President; and on motion of A. Hatcher, Esq., Benj. Henkle was appointed Secretary. The solemn occasion for which the meeting had assembled was in a few words very impressively stated by the chair, after which Dr. O. L. Clark offered the following resolution.

*Resolved*, That a committee of five be appointed by the President to consider and report such resolutions and arrangements as may be proper to express our sensibility to the national bereavement in the death of the President of the United States.

Which was adopted, and the chair appointed O. L. Clark, Sam'l Hoover, A. Hatcher, T. T. Benbridge and J. L. Scott said committee, who after having retired a few minutes, reported the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Submitting with humble reverence to the dispensations of an all wise Providence, under whose guidance is the destiny of all nations, *Resolved*, That we deeply deplore the death of WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, late President of the United States.

*Resolved*, That it is due, not only to the public services of the deceased, but also to the exalted office of Chief Magistrate of this Union, to which he had been called, that suitable demonstrations of respect be paid to his memory, and that our gratitude be manifested for his long career of patriotic service to his country.

*Resolved*, That the Hon. A. S. White be appointed to deliver an address on Saturday, the 17th inst., commemorative of the life, character and public services of WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, late President of the United States.

*Resolved*, That the Rev. S. R. Johnson be appointed to act as Chaplain upon the occasion.

*Resolved*, That the chair appoint a committee of arrangements, consisting of fifteen citizens to superintend the execution of the foregoing resolutions.



*Resolved*, That when this meeting adjourns, it will adjourn to meet on Saturday next, at one o'clock, and that the citizens of the country be respectfully invited to attend.

And as a committee of arrangements under the 5th resolution, the chair named the following gentlemen, viz. Col. H. Oilar, Col. D. Brawley, Col. W. M. Jenners, John Pettit, Esq., H. W. Ellsworth, Esq., A. Ingram, Esq., Maj. J. L. Pifer, Wm. P. Heath, Israel Speucer, Maj. D. Mace, S. Kennedy Esq., Dr. O. L. Clark, Ab'm Fry, W. F. Reynolds, A. Hatcher, Esq.

E. DEMING, Pres't.

B. HENKLE, Sec'y.

SATURDAY, April 17, 1841.

This being the day fixed upon by a previous meeting of the citizens of Lafayette, for the purpose of paying suitable demonstrations of respect to the memory of Gen. WILLIAM H. HARRISON, late President, of the United States; a numerous concourse of citizens assembled at the Court-House at the hour appointed, and amidst torrents of rain a procession consisting of several hundreds of persons was formed, which proceeded to the Church in the following order:

President and Vice President.

Orator and Chaplain.

The Clerergy Generally.

Committee of Arrangements.

Soldiers of the Revolutionary and late War.

Citizens Generally.

The incessent rain (for it rained all the afternoon,) seemed to have but little influence in preventing an attendance upon the solemn ceremony, as the Church was crowded to overflowing. At 15 minutes to 12 o'clock the Rev. S. R. Johnson announced, in a most solemn and impressive manner, the mournful objects of the meeting, which he followed by a most fervent address to the throne of grace. The Hon. A. S. White then pronounced an oration, replete with soul-stirring eloquence.



## ORATION.

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### *Fellow citizens of the County of Tippecanoe:—*

I rise to discharge the mournful and affecting duty that has devolved to me by your request, overpowered with emotions, which, while they bear the stamp of nature to the sacredness of that duty, almost forbid its performance. A great man has fallen in Israel! The Chief Executive Magistrate of a powerful nation, bearing a trust with which he had been clothed by the suffrage of sixteen millions of free people, has been suddenly called from the highest responsibility on earth, to render for himself, his final account at the throne of the Eternal! The last enemy of our race, respiting for a moment his warfare upon the humble and the poor, abashes the pride of man by entering with the stride of a conqueror into the seat of power, and by snatching from the sacred shrines of human authority, the trophies of human sovereignty, and the dread symbols of earthly government.—There, where the American people had deposited their sovereignty; where they had concentrated their mighty will, where they had garnered up their energies, where their justice, their virtue, their strength and majesty were represented, even in those very abodes where their honor dwelt, and where their perpetuity was planted, grim visaged death in mockery of mortal effort, hath done his work of spoliation. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON sleeps with his fathers, and another holds his office.

“Where now, ye lying vanities of life!  
Ye ever tempting ever cheating train!  
Where are you now?”

From the olden time, before the wand of this gaunt messenger the mitre and the sceptre have both fallen, and now also the scroll of the Constitution. But though mitre, and sceptre, and parchment be all buried in the dust, death is yet the conqueror but of our mortal part. The church shall flourish till its final triumph, and religion continue to afford its consolations upon earth. Human Governments shall still rest on their deep foundations, dispensing justice and security to social man. There shall not fail to David a son to sit upon his throne; and though the scroll of the Constitution may be burned, and its every letter obliterated, its spirit shall



survive, and the principles of liberty which it declared shall remain warm and active in millions of bosoms; the Constitution shall be re-written from those living, burning characters, and its protection be delegated to other Presidents through a thousand successions.

While then, we lament the fall of a great and a good man, high in authority, we mourn not the decay of principles, nor the downfall of institutions, of which he was the delegated guardian, and the sworn defender. It is the chord of human sympathy which is touched—it is man bereaved of his brother, whose memory is hallowed by a multitude of elevated and affecting associations; in the present case, of an elder brother who has stood to us in the place of a parent, our companion, and at the same time our protector, our equal, yet our adviser. In the whole circle of human relations, there are perhaps none more tender, or more touching, than those which have existed between the late President WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, and the People whom I have now the melancholy honor to address. What needs it that your orator should recall to your memory the history of those stirring events, in which for more than the period of an ordinary lifetime of labor, General Harrison in this new empire of the West, illustrated a character, which, in ancient times, would have secured to him all the honors of cotemporary applause, and at his death an *apotheosis*? Events, which in less than half a century have multiplied the resources of our country a thousand fold, have planted the free seat of empire in the agricultural States behind the turreted Alleghanies, have removed the Occident a thousand miles towards the Pacific, and which, having now, to a certain extent, accomplished their purposes here, are beginning to react with a restoring and beneficent energy upon the old Colony of Jamestown, and upon the settlements of the descendents of the Pilgrims. Of these, Harrison if now living, might in the frankness and modesty of his generous nature, say with Æneas “all of which I saw, and a great part of which I was.”—What needs it, that I should appeal to the memory of your past hardships, to your border strifes, to your hearths profaned by the savage massacre of beauty and innocence, to the dawn of peace and the triumphs of civilization, to your advancement in arts, science, and agriculture, to the proud and growing commerce of your great waters, to your interior systems of manufactures and improvements, to your schools adorning the face of society, to your holy temples improving the morals, and reforming the life—in a word, the magic change from helpless infancy, beset with danger, and environed with gloom, to the splendid and manly



achievements of the present day, and to those lofty expectations which, like the gorgeous tints of our autumnal evening sky, illumine the horizon of the future—and remind you of that soldier of fortune—no, not of fortune, but of liberty, upon the morning of whose existence, while reclining in ancestral halls of wealth and honor, visions of all these things dawned through the tract of futurity? Of that son of a revolutionary worthy, who, shaking off the sloth of affluence and repudiating honors which were won by no other claim than descent, rushed with his sword at his side, but clad in a stronger armor of virtuous resolution, to pursue a career, which, in its military character, (to use the language of the Senate's address to President Adams, in reference to the venerated Washington,) was whiter than it was brilliant; and to meet a destiny more fortunate than falls to the lot of Kings?

It is an impulse of our nature to regard with a grateful veneration those who have exposed their lives for their country upon the battle field. This sentiment, though oftentimes misguided, is as honorable as it is natural. It is founded in a proper appreciation of those great principles which make war justifiable. There is no cause but that of one's country, which may be brought to the arbitrament of blood. For a friend, for a parent, to carry vengeance from afar (except in the immediate defence of life or limb,) is murder; and to rush on distant destruction, in even such a cause, is suicide. But patriotism consecrates the last resort of injured nations, strips the mortal combat of its ferocity, and crowns the victor with the hero's wreath. It is indeed the military operations of a people, which mainly give cast and feature to the era, in which they occur. Marathon and Plataea, Phlippi and Actium, Hastings and Bannockburn, Bunker Hill Tippecanoe and New Orleans, speak whole pages of history, and impress upon the countries which claim them a character of ages; but it may well be doubted, whether in the military annals of any people, although achievements more dazzling and brilliant may be recorded, there are any to compare as illustrations of the nobler and more heroic virtues, with that long and painful series of conflicts, which attended the settlement of the valley of the Mississippi. In the character of the western soldier, courage was not the mere vain and empty thirst for glory; it was not the habitual recklessness of the train-band legions, accustomed to look upon life with contempt, because they regarded war as a trade; it was not the unscrupulous ferocity of the mercenary, nor the cruelty of the buccaneer or bandit; nor was it constantly excited and stimulated by



the drum's alarms, and by the pomp and circumstance and glitter of a marshalled array—but it was the firm and patient and inflexible contest of the pioneer and of the husbandman fighting for a domicil and for an altar around which his strongest affections had not even yet learned to cling, because that home was new and not consecrated by old associations—contending, too, against all odds, with an enemy who held in disregard the laws of war, and to whom the principles of honor and religion were equally unknown—a merciless savage who spared neither age nor sex. He fought against the opposing elements, in a distant and inaccessible wilderness, and often without munitions or supplies, where every conquest had to be maintained by the same gallantry and risk which won it, and where there was no visible or probable termination to the campaign. It was through such a conflict, covering with more or less activity, the period of a third of a century, that the Western country was settled, under circumstances calculated to evoke every energy of a free and bold and lofty nature, in which woman, too, laying aside her characteristic timidity, proved herself by her devotion in the hour of greatest need, worthy of a soldier's pride, and a free-man's love.

The military and colonial settlements of the Romans against the surrounding barbarians, were stimulated by the hope of agrarian plunder, but even they were poorly maintained,—and their distant armies returned frequently from a provincial campaign, to share the honors of a triumphal entry into the eternal city. No such honors, no such inducements tempted the prowess of the Western hunter and pioneer. It is remarkable that the army of Gen. George Rogers Clark, by whose gallantry undoubtedly the boundary line of '83 was fixed at the Mississippi instead of the Ohio, were, for a period of 18 months while the war of the Revolution raged, actively employed in the heart of a savage country, a thousand miles from relief, without a single supply during that whole time being transmitted from, or a single despatch sent to the government of Virginia, by whose authority they were enrolled.

It was to such a country as this, then unknown, and unclaimed by the prophets of civilization for perhaps centuries to come, at its very midnight of peril, while the lurid glare of conflagration pointed out the fatal fields of Harmar and St. Clair, and the yell of the Indian, fresh from his gloated carnage proclaimed him like an enchanting wizard, the invincible lord of these forests, that the genius and ardor of the youthful Harrison led him, untrained as he was to a military life, and undisciplined in hardships, to prove what a virtuous



constancy may do; to vindicate as he has nobly done the honors of an illustrious ancestor, and to reflect back new honors greatly eclipsing those of his sire. Looking back now from our seats of security we can scarcely realize the fearless generosity of those impulses, and that moral grasp of intellect and genius, seeming already to possess the future, which prompted Harrison and his zealous copatriots to attempt against the very brow of fate to establish a name for himself and his country. Happy and fortunate man to have realized more than the dreams of youthful fancy could have painted! Unconquerable spirit to have pushed such efforts through half a century without turning backwards or courting a moment's repose!

It is not often that to those stern and rugged qualities which fit a man for the adventures of border conquests, and for the military occupancy of a hostile country, are united in the same person, the milder attributes which the duties of civilization impose. The field of the highland chieftain's glory is in the fastnesses where he has struggled for the liberty of his ancestors, and the American pioneer has seldom exchanged the hunting shirt for the robes of state—throughout all history, viceroys, proconsuls, and military commandants to whom has been assigned the government of distant provinces, have marked their careers with acts of tyranny and systems of plunder which the rulers of metropolitan governments, however arbitrary, have seldom dared to exercise. The extravagance of the court has been fed, and partizan services have been rewarded from the spoils of provinces and dependant territories. How different has been the spectacle presented in the annals of the North Western Territory! It is with the history and growth of that territory that the life and glory of General Harrison, are most intimately connected.—And there is scarcely a trait in that eventful life but is calculated to excite our admiration. The settlement of the Western country involved questions and relations of the most momentous and delicate character. Not the least among them, were those springing from the existence and occupancy of the aboriginal tribes. However we may recognize as founded in nature and in justice, that great law of society, that the earth was made for civilized man, and that barbarous tribes must surrender their hunting grounds to civilized and christian races, the practical expulsion and forcible extermination of the native inhabitants, was not a measure of unquestioned right, nor readily reconciled to conscience. It was contrary to the humane character of our institutions, and against the legacy of our fathers, that our settlements should be made by fire and



the sword. And yet to a certain extent the law of terror was the only authority which could bind the treacherous Indian. He had been taught to regard the Americans as his natural enemies, whose encroachments would ultimately drive him into the great Ocean, and by bribes and stimulants of every character, his jealousy and hatred had been inflamed to the highest pitch. It is evident, and our subsequent experience in another section of the Union has given us most unwelcome proofs of the fact, that the manner in which the administration of the North Western Territory was conducted, would determine, for an age at least, the character of our relations with the Indian tribes. His management of this delicate duty redounds forever to the honor of Gen. Harrison's name—at various periods he negotiated with the Indians thirteen different treaties, extinguishing their title to more than 60,000,000 of acres, nearly three times the area of the State of Indiana. Not one single act of cruelty or injustice has ascended to heaven to be recorded against him. And yet his authority was respected and a subordination enforced among those lawless tribes which perhaps no other man than one ever victorious in battle could have secured.

What immense advantages accrued to our people from such results in the rapid and secure growth of our settlements, in the acquisition of the Indian trade, and in the establishing of that friendship and respect which has enabled us subsequently to push our explorations, and extend our intercourse to the remotest corner of the Indian country, is too apparent to need elucidation. It has often been remarked with what scrupulous fidelity General Harrison disbursed the large and discretionary amounts of money with which he was entrusted in the conduct of our Indian affairs. I should do great injustice to his memory to claim for him any extraordinary merit on this score. In poetry, the sentiment may be beautiful enough that "an honest man's the noblest work of God," but Cicero who is a better moralist than Pope, has placed justice at the foundation of all duty. To be honest requires but a mean capacity; to be just, is the prerogative of the Gods. Gen. Harrison's honesty saved the government a few thousand dollars which might have been peculated or squandered; his justice has saved it millions in avoiding the consequences which a contrary policy would have produced. If dishonest, he would have contaminated himself; if unjust, he would have involved his country in his own defilement, and the cry of the Indian would have borne witness even against posterity.

To the American Philanthropist, to the Statesman, there is no topic of more painful and anxious solicitude waiting the



development of time, than the future condition of our Indian tribes. Nature seems to have set her eternal decree against the blending of the two races, and the same irresistible law has determined that that dominant race which sprung from the mountains of Caucasus, having overrun Europe with their arts and arms, and bounded over the mountain wave of the Atlantic, shall have their victorious march arrested only at the shores of the great Pacific. Whither then shall the Indian fly, several millions of whom yet remain upon this continent? It is one among the many causes of painful regret which now wrings the heart of a great nation that its constitutional head, the last link of the heroic age should have been so prematurely cut off, he of all others most likely under Providence, to have settled upon some firm and successful basis our irresolute counsels in reference to the Indians. Much longer that great measure cannot be deferred—more than an hundred thousand emigrant Indians of various tribes are now concentrated upon our western frontier, skirting about 600 miles of our interior border. The stipends and annuities upon which they now subsist and by which tie alone they appear to be bound to our government, are each year drying up, and the capacity of the Indian to obtain his sustenance from the earth, is but imperceptibly increasing. In a very few years under the existing organization, famine and want must produce discontent, the immediate parent of vengeance, among the emigrant tribes. Twenty thousand warriors with arms in their hands are ready upon the incitements of hunger or upon the instigation of any nation with whom we may be at war to spread fire brands and death all along our borders. And besides the wild hordes lying south west of these emigrant tribes, the whole region of the upper Missouri and its tributaries contains an Indian population as yet unacquainted with the white man, who each year are wantonly thinning for the mere sport of the chase those immense herds of buffalo upon which they might have subsisted for centuries.

What is to be the ultimate fate of these savage tribes, is a question for the justice and humanity of this great nation yet to settle. It happens to him who is now addressing you personally to know that our late President entered upon the discharge of his high duties with sensibilities fully aroused to the importance of the Indian question. Receiving upon his induction into the august station which had been conferred upon him, the personal congratulations of thousands of his fellow-citizens who had repaired to the Capital upon that occasion, and abating not one particle of that liberal hospitality which was kindred to his nature, he snatched not from the festal



moments which his rejoicing countrymen demanded, but from sleep, the hours which a wearied constitution craved for repose, to devote them to that important interest of his country involved in the most pressing aspect of our Indian affairs, the Florida War—ardently and with that *esprit du corps* which we might expect from the old Governor of the Indiana Territory, and from the Commander of Tippecanoe, he appropriated the first hours of his official life to a laborious personal examination of this troublesome subject, upon which the blood and treasure of the nation have been so profusely expended. From the sagacity of such a mind, and the authority of his name and office, the most favorable issue of that war might have been anticipated. By a fatality which seems almost appropriate to the history of Gen. Harrison, his last and expiring labours were for the peace of the frontier, and the interests of one of our Territorial Governments. He has not an enemy, if there be such a man, but must regret that death did not allow those labours to become mature.

However the public mind may have been excited upon many topics which would have engaged the deliberations of our late President, if his life had been spared, and perhaps in some degree have been shaped by his authority, and however men may have differed in their estimate of the man and of his capacity, from the solemnities of the grave the truth now proceeds that for the care of many of our dearest interests Providence had given him a peculiar adaptation. It is characteristic of a republican people to be sternly watchful of living rulers and jealous of those who exercise power. These are the safe guards of liberty. But in no other form of government are the rewards of patriotism so great. There being no privileged orders, he who has distinguished himself in the public service has been enabled to do so by the aids voluntarily contributed by his fellow citizens. And when he has applied the power thus conferred, in a manner to produce successful and honorable results, there is a sort of generous selfishness, if the expression may be allowed, which prompts the country to award heartily and without stint or envy the meed of praise. In our public rejoicings the voice of the parasite is never heard. So in our solemn assemblies the funeral dirge is chaunted only from hearts of sensibility. No hollow pageantry, no idle ceremony is this to day. It consecrates the memory of him who though dead survives in our living hearts. We gather in mournful procession around the mortal remains of Harrison, because we revere his virtues and love his character. By our own voices we made him the father of his people, invested



him with our highest dignities, elevated him to a place in our conception above the throne of the Bourbons or the Plantagenets, committed to his hands the sacred ensigns of our power. These honors were tendered because we considered him worthy. And when in the face of men and angels, his hoary locks uncovered to the wind, with uplifted hand and a loud voice he swore to preserve protect and defend our Constitution and faithfully to perform the high duties of his office, the prayers of millions of people accompanied that vow to heaven in aid of his solemn purpose. That compact, the most sublime which man can make with his fellow, is scarcely registered by the Eternal, before the affiant is summoned to the world of spirits, and absolved from all but the pure purpose with which it was made. Without a murmur, but in silent wonder at the ways of Providence who has not so dealt with our fathers, we grieve that so affecting a relation has been rent asunder. Our grief is sincere. It is consecrated even by piety. While it is a tribute which our imperfect natures may pay to departed worth, it is prompted no less by devotion to the interests of our country, than by an affectionate remembrance of him who is forever lost to its councils and its hopes. Clouds and darkness rest upon these dispensations of Providence. We cannot penetrate the counsels of Omnipotence nor resolve the mystery why the Chief Magistrate of so numerous a people should be removed by death, almost at the altar where his vow was offered, e'er his career of usefulness had begun, and just when the public heart was throbbing with the highest expectation. If, as christain men, we honestly believe that the deity often interposes by unseen agencies in the affairs of nations, surely this is an occasion when touching the heart-strings of a community by an unwonted calamity we have good reason to conjecture that he intends some purpose of significant import to this republic. Whatever that mysterious purpose may be, we should be recreant to the impulses of conscience if we did not as citizens improve such a visitation by the most serious reflections, and it will not be without its consolations if it shall teach us this single lesson, that we are brethren.

Except the calamity of war, this nation, since the morning when its independence was declared, has floated upon the unobstructed tide of prosperous success. Those fathers of the State, the predecessors of our last Chief Magistrate, who have departed from life, had first surrendered their trusts to their country and in a good old age have carried with them the benedictions which their finished works did claim. Some were fortunate even in death, and their spirits tired of



a wearied frame were borne to heaven upon the day of their country's jubilee. Now for the first time we mourn the death of an incumbent of the Presidential Chair. Like the leader of the Israelites, General Harrison has accompanied his people for forty years through the wilderness, and now from the top of Pisgah this Moses must lay down his life. The inscrutable decree of heaven has removed our leader before the banks of the Jordan had been reached, and just when the full promise of a well regulated and useful life was spread before the view of his whole country, and for the enjoyment and security of which to them and to their children they had summoned him to preside in their councils, confiding in the assurance of more than forty years' laborious preparation. Apart from all other and profounder feelings, a misgiving, a sense of disappointment, a mournful augury of possible blessings which are lost, are calculated to make such an event peculiarly afflictive. In hereditary governments, where the reigning monarch assumes the crown for life, it is in the natural order of things that his subjects should at some time mourn his demise—it is an expected event. The accession of an infant, the intervention of a regency, are things of so obvious occurrence as to produce no shock upon the public mind. The action of the government is not apt to be changed. The responsibilities of the ministry remain the same. In an elective government like ours, the head is always selected in reference to his presumed fitness, for his eminent wisdom or distinguished patriotism. Although he is the Representative of the nation and supposed to reflect their will, yet we look to his counsels, to his discretion, to his vigilance, and his labors to give direction and success to our public affairs. Instead of being paralysed by the will of his constituents, it is that will which like the nerves of the natural system, proceeding from the great popular sensorium, acts upon the muscular power of the President with which the constitution has invested him, giving him like the son of Titan, the strength of an hundred hands, as well as the wisdom of many heads. It was this rational responsibility which one of our virtuous Ex-Presidents, (who yet survives to receive the blessings of his country) in an official message proclaimed to the world. It was a glorious boast that a government may be free without losing its strength, and a proper exhibition of the popular majesty in aid of the enterprise of a conscientious functionary who dared not to shrink from his duty, nor to devolve responsibility where the Constitution had not placed it. Such then being the reliance which in this free government of ours the people place in their Chief Magis-



trate, and' correctly too in a government of reason, I shall not, I am sure, wound the feelings of a single hearer when I say that the late President, endeared to the country as he was by a life signally devoted to its interests, enjoyed in an eminent degree that confidence, and concentrated in his official person, expectations and hopes as various and momentous as it has been the lot of any of his predecessors to bear. The condition of our domestic affairs, especially in reference to our commerce, revenues and finance—the delicacy of some of our foreign relations—and the temper of the times, all proclaim the truth of this remark. Far be it from your orator to profane the present solemnity by the advancement of a single partizan sentiment. The fame of our great men belongs to the country. The dead cannot be eulogized by partizan adulation. Is there a man in this assembly who can withhold his sympathy on such an occasion as this, which but to mention "the conscious heart of charity would warm?" That man is not an American. Is there a man who, when a President, not of his choice, is removed by Providence from the Chair of State, is not willing to forget his faults and to herald his virtues as the common and boasted fame of the nation? But more than all, is there a man who will not render to the dead the tribute of truth? In these unvarying scales, and posterity may hold them, every friend of our late venerated President will desire that his actions may be weighed. In the long career of prosperity and honor through which every patriot hopes that his country has yet to run, President Harrison, had he lived, was destined to have contributed an impulse so powerful as to have been felt for ages. His education, his habits, his associations were all with the people. There is not a citizen from Maine to Georgia whose welfare may, in the remotest degree, be affected by the action of the government, but would have found in our late President a sympathizing heart and a consenting head. Happily removed, during several of the last years of his life, from the strife and turmoil of political discussion, venerable by his age and illustrious for his services, there was no name which like his, could have charmed the turbulent spirit of faction, and in whose success the triumphs of party would have been forgotten in the stronger sentiment which makes us feel that we are one people, and that we have one country, one destiny. Having no resentments to indulge, his administration would have had respect to the good of the whole Union. Men schooled in diplomacy have intrigued for office, and without any thing like a settled depravity, have even while practising an ambidexterous course in the exercise of power,



telt that their own honor was concerned in a just administration. But higher sanctions, and a purer purpose governed the conduct of Harrison. It is recorded by the elegant and philosophic historian of Rome, that Augustus was of such capricious morality as at one time to have proved himself the enemy and again the father of his country. The farewell admonition of the immortal Washington against the vile influences of party, is too much disregarded by us all. It well befitted the patriot and sage who lately occupied the seat of Washington to give the sanction of his official and personal authority to those wise maxims of his illustrious predecessor—Hear what he says in his inaugural address, in which, like Washington, he now speaks from the tomb:

"To me it appears perfectly clear that the interest of that country requires that the violence of party spirit by which those parties are at this time governed must be greatly mitigated, if not entirely extinguished, or consequences will ensue which are appalling to be thought of. If parties in a Republic are necessary to secure a degree of vigilance sufficient to keep the public functionaries within the bounds of law and duty, at that point their usefulness ends; beyond that they become destructive of public virtue, the parent of a spirit antagonist to that of liberty, and eventually the inevitable conqueror. And so under the operation of the same causes and influences it, (the spirit of liberty) will fly from our Capitol and our forums. A calamity so awful not only to our country but to the world must be deprecated by every patriot, and every tendency to a state of things likely to produce it immediately checked—such a tendency has existed, does exist. Always the friend of my countrymen, never their flatterer, it becomes my duty to say to them from this high place to which their partiality has exalted me that there exists in the land a spirit hostile to their best interests—hostile to liberty itself. It is a spirit contracted in its views, selfish in its objects. It looks to the aggrandizement of a few even to the destruction of the interest of the whole. The entire remedy is with the people. Something however may be effected by the means which they have placed in my hands. It is union that we want not of a party for the sake of that party, but a union of the whole country for the sake of the whole country. As far as it depends upon me it shall be accomplished."

These were not adventitious opinions forced by the concurrence of circumstances, but the settled and habitual principles of a statesman, who, owing nothing to political cabals preferred his country to a party—they are the opinions of one who never knew the weight of authority unless it was magnetised



by reason—they are the sentiments of the author of the letter to Bolivar.

This is not the time nor the occasion to record the life of Harrison. Recent circumstances have familiarised us with most of the incidents of a life more than ordinarily eventful. When the unfortunate divisions of the present day shall have been forgotten with the transient objects that produced them; when, perhaps, a too willing partiality or a blinded prejudice equally culpable shall, in the glass of retrospection regard realities instead of the phantasies which party spirit is perpetually conjuring up before a disordered fancy, then will the pencil of history assign to Harrison that space which he must ever fill on the tablet of fame. There are, however, reflections arising from the acknowledged portions of his history, which it would be criminal in the speaker, and unjust to his audience not to notice. His life abounds with self-devotion and a magnanimous disinterestedness. Born to hereditary honors, too often the bane of our young men, he burst the trammels of indolence, and spurned the temptations of luxury. The young Ensign who, at the age of eighteen, crossed the Alleghanies, could not have had in view the mere excitement of adventure, or one campaign would have sufficed to satisfy it. Joining the army of Wayne in the following year, (to which the honor virtually belongs of closing the war of the revolution,) he lured his fortunes with the growing destinies of a country which, though young, has seen many generations in the transient character of its inhabitants. Few who came to the west with Harrison had the boldness and the energy to remain, and scarcely one of that hardy band of border warriors who stood the successive shocks of merciless Indian warfare through that trying period, have distinguished themselves in the arts of peace, or contributed to build up the state of which they were the gallant founders. "The dark and bloody ground" can tell many a tale of chivalry which would have graced the ages of the Troubadours, but those knights of the forest have never earned the honors of Legislators, Governors, and Ministers of State. It was reserved for Harrison in his solitude of glory, to pass through all these stages. Successively filling the offices of Secretary of the north-western Territory, Delegate to Congress from the same, and Governor of Indiana Territory, which last commission he held thirteen years, he passed not only through them all with a stainless reputation, but evinced in an administration so full of new contingencies and trying emergencies, an accuracy of judgment, a patience and a sagacity which has so far outstripped all modern experience in simi-



lar spheres, as to make that period an era for reference, and a standard for comparison with all the lights that now surround us. Rome boasted the virtues of her Romulus, and claimed that her stakes were driven by the God Terminus. Indiana asserts no fabulous origin, but proudly looks back upon her early history, and rejoicing in her present greatness more durable than the base of the Capitoline hill, affectionately remembers her first Governor, and recognises the auspices under which she has marched to triumph and renown. But through how many perils, under what discouragements and hardships was all this accomplished! Let the inhabitant of old post St. Vincent speak! Let the mothers who have reared their infants in block houses, tell the tale! Your orator is too young. Or if all these are mute, (and the dead speak not,) we summon from the field of Tippecanoe, those heroes who, in that midnight affray, shed imperishable lustre on our infant arms. We invoke the shades of Owen, Spencer, Daviess, Warrick, Randolph, Baen. We invoke thy spirit, Harrison, from the ethereal fields to which it is now translated. Alas, they come not to our call! Is there no witness of that last scene of fearful peril which ushered in the morning of security and happiness, upon a generation too apt to condemn the labors of their predecessors? Some honored relics yet remain. Long may they live to share the gratitude of their country, and when late they return to heaven, may they bear full expiation to their comrades in arms for our momentary forgetfulness in the pride of our prosperity!

It is not the object of your orator to trace the history of a man who has stamped the impress of his character upon the whole surface of our country, and with the point of a diamond upon the West, but availing himself of so excellent a model to deduce from occasional passages of his history, morals and reflections which may excite others to a virtuous emulation. The good which men do is not interred with their bones, let what cynical philosopher pleases, declare the doctrine. For the honor of human nature, we believe that not much of that envy exists which will "track the steps of glory to the grave." On the contrary, and let it be proclaimed wherever desponding virtue fears to lift its head, and dreamed an unjust judgement, that

"Truth crush'd to earth will rise again  
'Th' eternal years of God are hers."—

Let the youth whose pathway uncheered by the sun of patronage or the smiles of greatness, may seem to lie through thorns and brambles, remember that though



"It is not in mortals to command success  
They may do more—deserve it"

but that fortitude, temperance, justice is the key which will open its treasures. Let him remember that the young Lieutenant in Wayne's legion who bore his orders to the most dangerous points, rose through successive gradations to the highest honors in the Republic, and left to his country a reputation more valuable than her proudest dignities.

An ancient writer has said "that it is glorious even to fail in a great undertaking." No one who peruses the history of the early life of Harrison but must believe that his purposes extended beyond the present hour. We do not imagine that even to his clear mind that was revealed which now in the retrospect we can hardly separate from fiction, the astonishing and rapid growth of the country watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries. Indeed for several years after Harrison came to the West the Mississippi bounded our dominions, and it was only within the present century that the purchase from France added to those dominions the vast expanse of Louisiana—at the time too of Harrison's emigration to the west and for several years thereafter, our land system was not established, and in fact no guaranty or promise was afforded that these fertile plains would for an age be wrested from the dominion of nature and the savage so as to furnish a theatre for the exercise of the talents of civilized man. But as in the expanse of the heavens there are stars of the first magnitude which, by their superior brilliancy seem to illumine the track of the lesser planets and to unfold to our delighted vision the gorgeous drapery of the skies studded with a thousand gems, so in the ranks of men, there are some bold and lofty spirits who impatient of opportunity, seem to overstep the bounds of fate and to forestall success, opening in the void through which they have moved a passage for men of lesser stature or of feebler mind. Such were Harrison and his brave cotemporaries who made the west for themselves and opened the avenues through which population, wealth, enterprise and intelligence have since poured in with such a ceaseless and overwhelming flood. Whatever his purposes were, and no prophet could have revealed the success which awaited them, they were liberal, far sighted, magnanimous and bold. This is honor enough in the conception, and all the people will say that the author of such an enterprise deserved the fruit which he has reaped. Among the benefactors of their race will ever be classed the settlers of our western wilds, whether we regard the arduousness of their labors or the splendour of their results.



Having hitherto fixed our eye most attentively upon that portion of the life and actions of Gen. Harrison, where we find him connected with the building up of our frontier settlements, and with the development of society in the west, we shall despatch the residue of our duty with a hurried glance, relieved as we are by the conscious sentiment of millions of our fellow citizens, and by the operation of causes now in mighty progress of exhibition. This is the period of his history upon which we most delight to dwell. As citizens of Indiana, we share the honor which he earned in this preparatory school. The good man struggling with the storms of fate, is said to be a spectacle in which the Gods delight. Equally arduous is the labor of him who shall tame the savage mind, who shall build an empire in the woods, who shall carry laws, literature and religion into rude and untrodden lands, and earn for himself a niche in the same temple with Numa, with Charlemagne, with Alfred, and with Peter the Great. It is the process by which great minds work their ends, more than the consummation which interests and instructs us. In the language of Gifford, "We love to dwell on every circumstance of splendid preparation, which contributes to fit the great man for the scene of his glory. We delight to watch fold by fold, the bracing on of his Vulcanian panoply, and observe with pleased anxiety the leading forth of that chariot, which, borne on irresistible wheels, and drawn by steeds of immortal race, is to crush the necks of the mighty, and sweep away the serried strength of armies."

Undoubtedly, the character of General Harrison received its stamp in that laborious school where we have been chiefly contemplating him, and which terminated with the resignation of his military commission in the spring of 1814 as Commander in Chief of our North Western Army during the second war with Great Britain—yet it was his destiny thereafter to adorn many high stations in the other spheres. In 1816 he was elected from Ohio a member of the House of Representatives of the United States. Activity and usefulness in every department of duty were his ruling traits, and no less in the halls of legislation than in the camp or upon the frontier. Participating honorably in a variety of the business of Congress during his term as a Representative, he entered, however, with most peculiar zeal into the subject of a re-organization and improvement of our militia establishment a subject which has engaged the attention of every administration from Washington to the present time, but presents such difficulties as yet to have baffled all adjustment. As early as the year 1810, when war with Great Britain became pro-



bable, the military and cautious mind of Harrison foresaw how much in such an event we must rely upon our citizen soldiers, and in a series of letters to Gov. Scott of Kentucky, he pressed the subject of militia reform with great zeal and ability upon the attention of the nation. The several able reports and plans for that purpose submitted by him while in Congress must ever remain among the brilliant monuments of an illustrious life. To his latest hours the improvement and elevation of our militia occupied his most serious thoughts; and when the events of his life shall have been compiled by the historian it will be found that in various letters and conversations he has given to this interesting subject as well the weight of his private influence and long personal experience, as of official recommendation. In 1819 he was elected to the Senate of the State of Ohio, and in 1824 was chosen a Senator of the United States from the same State. Of the subjects that received particular attention from him during this legislative career, time allows us only to quote a synoptical statement from some outlines of his life recently published.—Such are the organization of the militia; the introduction of a more equal system of military education than now exists; the recognition of the independence of the Spanish American Republics; the improvement of the moral condition of the army by augmenting the inducements to respectability on the part of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers; the introduction of uniformity as to military pensions; and above all, his strenuous exertions in behalf of the claims of the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution.

In 1828 he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Colombia, but a change of administration very soon producing his recall from that station, there are no monuments left of his diplomatic career. There is peculiar fitness that one who through a long life of vicissitude and labor had borne the most dangerous posts of honor at home, should when age had set the seal of wisdom and authority on his brow, participate in the glory of representing our national dignity abroad. Who so well qualified to reflect at the turbulent courts of those new Republics at the south the example of a virtuous and free people, as that soldier of liberty, himself the founder of a State, the accomplished civilian and scholar? The single semi-official act of Harrison while Minister at Colombia, his letter to Bolivar, will be read in after ages, and admired by every magnanimous lover of liberty.

For twelve years after his return from Colombia, General Harrison lived in retirement upon his farm at North Bend.

His summons from that retirement to preside over the des-



tinies of this nation, is an event more marked and distinguishing in its character than any which has occurred in the history of free governments. It has been a problem with political philosophers whether the continuance of an elective government was practicable. The advocates of the hereditary system admit that it must excite an indignant smile to relate that on the father's decease the property of a nation like that of a drove of oxen descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity. But they contend that although satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in their most dazzling colors, our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice that establishes a rule of succession independent of the passions of mankind. They say, that though in the cool shade of retirement we may easily devise imaginary forms of government in which the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community, experience overturns these airy fabrics and teaches us that in a large society the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest or to the most numerous part of the people.—That the army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to enforce them on the rest of their fellow citizens. That the acknowledged right of birth extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch.

Among the lessons which our institutions have taught mankind, these two stand prominent—that governments may be supported without standing armies, and that their organization may be sustained by the voice of the people. "I contend" said Gen. Harrison in his letter to Bolivar "that the strongest of all governments is that which is most free. Not so much from the terrors of the guillotine and the gibbet as from the aroused determination of the nation, exhibiting their strength and convincing the factious that their cause was hopeless." In the elevation of Gen. Harrison to the Chief Magistracy we have seen a mighty nation with all its passions excited, with two rival parties nearly equally balanced contending with the most unlimited licence of freedom, when all the elements of society had been aroused into sensitive and vigorous action, proceeding to change the chief administration of their government, without violence and without disorder. So far from Ate with her fire brands inflaming the minds of men to faction and to blood, the election proceeded with the sounds



of rejoicing and with the transports of good will. Such a spectacle, sublimely beautiful, was worth a thousand party triumphs. It was the genuine triumph of liberty in which every American was a victor, it was the consummation of popular government!

But he in whose person the chief glory of our institutions was so brilliantly illustrated, has suddenly surrendered his unfinished trust to God. As he was elevated by the *people* so the only official address which he was permitted to make, was to those people. Removed from political strife before his election, his official memory as President rests upon those durable principles of free government announced in his inaugural. No partial measures, no divided opinions detract from the entirety of his fame. Happy in his death as in his life, his whole energies have been given to his country. Commending in his inaugural address that country to the guidance of the supreme ruler of men and nations, and invoking the mild influences of religion upon all its counsels, his latest breath was an aspiration for the welfare of our government and for the eternity of its Constitution.

To you who knew him it is unnecessary to speak of his private life distinguished throughout by unvarying honor and self-denying benevolence. He has left the scene of his labors and his earthly honors, and nothing now remains of Harrison but his bright example. Virtue alone survives. He came like the son of Jesse unarmed with power and with patronage to a giant wilderness; and having lived to see those waste places smile like a cultivated garden, to see five millions of freemen in the full enjoyment of the highest order of civil and religious liberty where the footsteps of civilized man could not be traced before, to be honored with the title of venerable father of that new though mighty community, he has returned in the name of that people and of our common country in civic triumph to the capitol, and from the summit of human ambition has now gone to reap his reward in heaven!

Such imperfectly, is the life of the first American President from the north-west territory. No higher fame can crown the future history of that Territory, than to have furnished many more such sons.



## RESOLUTIONS.

At the conclusion of the oration, Dr. O. L. Clark offered the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted.

It having pleased the Almighty disposer of human affairs, to terminate the mortal existence of the President of the United States:

*Resolved*, That with humble submission to this sudden and afflicting dispensation of Providence, we deeply lament the irreparable loss of our country.

*Resolved*, That we sympathize with our fellow-citizens, throughout the Union, in the bereavement visited upon the nation.

*Resolved*, That as citizens of the West, the theatre of the long career of military and civil services of William Henry Harrison, we are doubly bereaved in the loss of the Chief Magistrate of the nation, and the early defender of the western settlements.

*Resolved*, That as citizens of Indiana, ever grateful for the eminent and distinguished services of our first Governor, we are especially called on to mourn over his sudden severance from the discharge of the high and important earthly trusts to which his country had so recently called him.

*Resolved*, That as a testimonial of respect for the character and public services of the illustrious deceased, we will wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

*Ordered*, That the proceedings of this meeting, with the foregoing Resolutions be published: And the meeting adjourned.

E. DEMING, Pres't.

R. S. FORD, Vice Pres't.

B. Henkle, Sec'y.



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