

JAMES A. GARFIELD.

The death of President Garfield is one of those events, occurring in the history of nations, that excite the popular mind to grief and sorrow beyond the power of language to express. During the long weeks when he lay upon his death-bed, the nation, and the whole enlightened world, learned to respect his character. The heroism of that noble wife will pass down into history with the record of his own great and good life and premature death. The pathetic story will be told so long as poetry and prose shall be used to recite legends of the noble dead.

It is seldom that time offers to history so simple, pure and pathetic a narrative, as that which contains the life and death of James A. Garfield. Born to the humblest station, with all the prizes of life seemingly far above his reach, he realized to the full the great American theory and practice of human equality. He rose step by step, through all the grades of life, from the canal boy who did his duty well, to become a self-supporting student, in time a teacher, then a legislator. When the tocsin of war rallied the strong and brave to defend the Union, he roused his countrymen to the cause and enlisted in it himself. Here he proved that the citizen can become a soldier, and the rapid promotion he received was well earned. His career in the army showed skill and courage and ability to command himself and others in the greatest emergencies.

Chickamauga has two heroic figures: General George H. Thomas, who undauntedly used the left wing to protect the Union army from irretrievable disaster, and James A. Garfield, who would not retreat in the panic that overwhelmed Rosecranz, but worked his way mid untold dangers to Thomas's side and sustained him well through that tremendous struggle. That brief picture shows the manfulness of the man.

Called from the army to represent his district in Congress, Garfield soon established his reputation as a statesman of no mean order. For eighteen years that have ensued his influence on legislation, and his tact and political science in times of emergency, have not been equalled by any other living American, though he arrogated so little to himself

that, while he was the foremost man in Congress, the public attention has often been fixed on more showy politicians, whose "stalwart" qualities embroiled the people, as well as Congress, in bitter partisan struggles, that it required the tact of Garfield to allay.

The time came when the National Convention of his party was staggered by a factional issue that seemed to paralyze its efforts and mock all hopes of unity and success. Some man, who perhaps spoke wiser than he knew, named Garfield as a presidential candidate. Like the rush of flames upon the prairies that name swept the Convention, and it presented him to the Nation for endorsement. Perhaps it is not too much to say that only in such an unexpected contingency could the party have been induced to act so wisely as it did when, laying aside the claims of aspirants, it named a man whose ambition had not soared so high. The end justified the wisdom of the selection.

The campaign of 1880 was remarkable in many respects. Each national party placed in nomination a man of whom the whole nation had reason to be proud. The people rallied to the support of the one who had grown up from their own ranks, winning position by labor as well as deserving success by unblemished character. They pictured him as the "canal boy." They recognized the representative features of his history as illustrating the principles of our free government. They made him President of the United States.

As we examine the career of Gen. Garfield we find it bears inspection. He was human, and therefore was not perfect. He had not the great poise and wonderful dignity and self-respect that belonged to Washington. He did not have the pathetic traits of character—the wonderful meekness and the untiring patience—that shrine the memory of Lincoln, in addition to his original powers of mind. But Garfield had brilliant and remarkable qualities that had made him irresistible in his own state—Ohio. He combined in his individuality scholar, soldier and statesman. Occupying high position in public life during periods of great excitement, when opportunities for self-aggrandizement tempted so many, he never became rich, and the property he leaves represents only the modest sav-

ings of a laborious life. Through the hard labors of his youth and the severe strain upon the mental forces of his prime, he read and studied a wider range of topics than men of simply studious leisure often master. His mind was a rich treasure house, stored with wealth of all nations and the classics of all time. His death is a loss to scholarship as well as to statesmanship. The world may well grieve that he cannot live to graft upon his age the fruits of his genius and research.

Coming down from thoughts of pure culture to contemplation of perfect manhood; if we stand beside the freshly stricken victim, before the surgeons have made the examination that shall give hope of life or certainty of death, we find him, though faint and helpless, perhaps the most self-possessed of all. Life for him had all the realization of success. He was inaugurated as the newly elected chief of the greatest nation on the earth. The hopes of fifty millions of people centered in his life and its preservation. Before the world his position was magnificent. While he could not hope for anything greater, he had the prospect of continual honors as long as he might live. While not rich, he could count on retiring from the presidential office with sufficient means to secure every earthly enjoyment, and to enable him to prosecute those studies and cultivate those tastes that make the life of such men so truly enjoyable. But from the outset he met the anxiety of his friends with the assurance that he had no fears of death. Through the long period of his suffering he showed the greatest qualities of manhood, the tenderest love for his family and friends, the most utter abnegation of self, the most cheerful hoping against hope that man can be capable of. It is this hourly record of his manliness and courage, lasting to the faintest breath and to the latest hour, that has drawn the heart of the nation to him and makes all humanity his mourners.

There is another chapter of this mournful episode that wins the admiration of the world and with its pathetic tenderness invites the pitying love of every human heart. Garfield as husband and father never came before the public, or could be called in question, until this cruel fate brought humanity to his bedside. The picture of domestic life—of the simple and pure affection that ex-