

The Outlook

Published Weekly

Vol. 67

March 23, 1901

No. 12

Benjamin Harrison President McKinley, in his proclamation ordering official honors for ex-President Harrison, happily summarized the statesman's life and character by saying: "In the Senate he at once took and retained high rank as an orator and legislator, and in the high office of President he displayed extraordinary gifts as administrator and statesman. In public and in private life he set a shining example for his countrymen." Elsewhere we speak of the influence and character of General Harrison; here we may briefly outline the more important events of his life. Born in Ohio in 1833, his early years at college (Miami), and as a young lawyer in Ohio and Indianapolis, were marked by energy and intelligence. He soon became interested in politics, but left a promising political career for the army, in which he rose from the grade of lieutenant to that of brevet brigadier-general; his last promotion was for ability and gallantry in several engagements. Returning to civil life, he soon earned a high reputation as a lawyer, and up to the time of his death was regarded by the profession as one of its ablest members in matters which required broad views and the exercise of high reasoning faculties. His name was suggested in connection with the Presidency in 1880, but was withdrawn at his own request. He vigorously supported General Garfield and was offered by him a Cabinet place, but preferred to enter the National political arena as United States Senator, an honor gladly accorded him by the Indiana Republicans, then in the majority; but in 1886 a Democrat was chosen to succeed him by a small legislative majority, and Mr. Harrison soon became prominent as the candidate of the Republican party to oppose Mr. Cleveland. The campaign of 1888 was chiefly fought on the protection issue and was

closely contested in all the doubtful States, but ended in Mr. Harrison's election.



As President The chief historical features of the Harrison administration were the passing of the McKinley tariff law, the defeat of the Force Bill (a measure earnestly supported by Mr. Harrison), and the compromise on the silver question in the passage of the Sherman silver-purchase act. In the middle of his term of office a political reaction set in against the Republican party and a Democratic House was elected in 1890. This made a natural block in political legislation, although it was alleged that a coalition was arranged with Democrats opposed to the Force Bill who were willing, in exchange for its defeat, to yield their demands on the silver question. No personal or political scandal marked the administration, but among some politicians there was a cooling of sentiment toward the President growing out of Mr. Blaine's hostility, culminating in his resignation as Secretary of State. Nevertheless Mr. Harrison was renominated on the first ballot in 1892; the only other candidate who developed great strength being Mr. McKinley, who refused to countenance any attempt to stampede the Convention in his favor. Mr. Cleveland's election was by a large and sweeping majority; he carried almost all doubtful States, including even Illinois and Wisconsin. The Hawaiian question came into prominence between the election and the end of President Harrison's term; he urged, but without success, the ratification of a treaty by which the Hawaiian Islands should become part of the United States, declaring that annexation was preferable to a protectorate, and that the only choice was really between these two courses. Also in this period occurred the Chili

incident: American sailors had been mobbed in Valparaiso because of popular belief that the American Minister to Chili had aided revolutionists; Chili was slow in offering apology and reparation, and there was some fear of war; the Administration was firm and even threatening, but in the end trouble was avoided. In the matter of appointments President Harrison was praised by non-partisans for his selection of Supreme Court Justices and other judicial appointments, of which he had an unusual number to make; it cannot be said, however, in general, that his administration took a strong stand for Civil Service Reform.



Later Years It can hardly be disputed that there has been a perceptible increase in the public regard felt for General Harrison since the close of his Presidential service. He has been before the people in several ways, and in all has evinced clearness of judgment and unusual powers of argument. He has frequently written for important periodicals on questions of the day of moment, has spoken both with wit and eloquence at great public meetings, and has often been asked for his views on current topics. In an interview had just before his last illness, for instance, he expressed himself freely and forcibly on the Boer war, the creed question in the Presbyterian Church, the duty of the United States toward Cuba, the forthcoming Supreme Court decision relating to the Philippines and Porto Rico, and the regulation of Trusts. On all these unrelated subjects, whether one agreed with him or not, General Harrison had something to say that indicated thought and careful study. On the colonial question he may be defined as an anti-expansionist; he believed that the Constitution extended as a matter of course over all territories under the sovereignty of the United States. He regarded the Trust as fairly within the reach of legislation that would commend itself to the common sense of all good people, and expressed a belief that a corporation should not be admitted to do business in any State unless it carried on its principal business in the State where it was organized, and was an actual and bona-fide corporation of that State,

not only in law, but in fact. His articles in the "North American Review" on "The Status of Annexed Territory and its Inhabitants" and "Musings on Current Topics" will be recalled by most of our readers. In this and other ways he admirably illustrated his own theory that there ought to be a place in unofficial public service for an ex-President, where, to quote his words, the ex-President might be permitted to live "somewhere midway between the house of the gossip and the crypt of the mummy." Otherwise, he argued, decapitation of ex-Presidents might be advisable, adding: "Upon great questions, however, especially upon questions of Constitutional law, you must give an ex-President his freedom or the ax, and it is too late to give me the ax." General Harrison served as counsel for Venezuela before the Arbitration Commission of Paris, and was Arbitrator for the United States on the Commission appointed as a result of the Hague Peace Conference. His death took place on Wednesday of last week, after an illness of only a week, pneumonia growing out of a chill and an attack of grip. The funeral, which took place on Sunday last, was attended by President McKinley, several members of the Cabinet under President Harrison, the Governors of Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana, and many other distinguished men.



The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty

It is a matter for universal regret in America, and should be in England, that the English Government has refused to accept the amendments to the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty adopted by the United States Senate, and that thus this treaty, which promised the amicable settlement of a long-standing difference between the two countries, has been suffered to fall to the ground. We have heretofore stated (see *The Outlook* for December 22, 1900, page 968, and December 29, 1900, page 1011) the reasons why, in our judgment, England should find in these amendments nothing to which she could reasonably take exception. The question which now addresses itself to the American people is, What steps shall America take to secure that interoceanic waterway which is essential to her well-being? Three courses appear to us