

## THE STORY OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD'S ILLNESS,

TOLD BY THE PHYSICIAN IN CHARGE.

[THERE have been so many and such varying reports concerning the events of President Garfield's illness that we believe our readers will be interested to see the following authentic and untechnical record of it by the physician in charge, containing, as it does, some points of interest which have not hitherto been published.—  
ED. CENTURY MAGAZINE.]

At the earnest solicitation of friends whose claims cannot be disregarded, I attempt a description of the illness and death of the late President, James A. Garfield. While I crave no indulgence, it is but just to say that brain and heart have not yet rallied from the strain to which they have been subjected. In trying to attend to long-neglected duties, I have found no rest. My words, therefore, must be spontaneous, and, perhaps, not always best chosen. Those of my great audience who desire mere literary excellence, may veil their eyes at sight of our common sorrow.

The record which I wish to make now is not that of the surgeon, so much as that of the man who loved his patient. The official and professional reports are presumably complete. There can be little to add to them, save what unprofessional criticism may furnish.

My present story is of a very different kind. During the terrible ordeal through which the nation, and a large part of the civilized world, have recently passed, I have found but little rest, and still less time for any notes, other than those which the rigid rules of surgery require as matters of record. With feelings of no ordinary affection, respect, and sorrow, I dictate this account, believing that if I shall not entirely fail in manner of statement, the story will stand as the legend of a great soul sorely stricken, and of patience under suffering at which the world watched and wondered.

Of all that constitutes moral and physical courage, and that high self-poise which found examples in the annals of Christian martyrdom, President Garfield and his heroic wife were the embodiments. The sad story of those dreadful eleven weeks exhibits the beauty and consistency of the true Christian character as I never, in a long and eventful experience, witnessed before. While the perusal of these pages will start many tears of sympathy, let us thankfully draw consolation from the beautiful lesson of strength, bravery, and devotion which is taught.

In the plenitude of mental and bodily power, having gained the proudest station to which a man can aspire, happy in every rela-

tion of life, with a loving and devoted wife, a family growing with promise toward manhood and womanhood, with every prospect of happiness and peace, this great man became the victim of an assassin, at a moment when, freed in part from cares of state, he was starting upon a journey which should give him rest and renewed vigor. Yet no murmur escaped him. Neither on the day of the dastardly act, nor during the long history of sorrow, agony, and death, did he manifest by word or look aught but thankfulness for attention, and kind consideration for all about him. I may safely say that I do not believe physician ever had such a patient before. His calm obedience and cool courage would possibly have secured recovery without scientific aid, had not the injury, as we now know, been fatal from the first. The incidents of the case which I am about to record are by no means exceptional or selected, but rather such as recur to my mind in the few moments of leisure which I am able to command for this purpose. My desire is to avoid, as far as possible, all technical reference, and to give such an account of the case as may best describe its progress, and in some measure illustrate the character of the great dead.

My first acquaintance with the late President was as a lad, at Chagrin Falls, Ohio, about the year 1844. His mother's farm was about two miles from my father's residence. I knew him as an earnest, industrious boy, a little younger than I, whose ambitions were evidently far above his apparent advantages. His faithfulness and high purposes not only gave assurance of future success, but were also a stimulus to his boyish associates. While our paths of life diverged, I still followed him with watchful confidence, fully assured that he would prove himself worthy. His successes as teacher, soldier, and statesman followed one another more rapidly than his most sanguine friends could have anticipated. Knowing, as I did, his private worth and public greatness, few can appreciate my feelings on receiving Secretary Lincoln's message which summoned me to the care of the wounded President.

Passing over the scenes at the depot, where

the chief magistrate lay helpless,—feebly asking to be transferred to the Executive Mansion; the anxious consultations of surgeons regarding the safety of removal before reaction; his descent from the second story, borne upon the strong arms of men who would have died for him; the transit through a dense crowd whose only voice was that of subdued weeping; the arrival at the south front of the Executive Mansion; the safe placing of the prostrate form in the family room,—we come next to the first formal consultation, in which some of the most prominent medical men in Washington took part. These gentlemen have received the thanks of the President, but I cannot refrain from expressing here my high sense of their skillful, earnest, and valuable aid. Feeling thus deeply, I append their names as a part of this simple record.

Dr. Smith Townshend, Health Officer, D. C.

Dr. C. M. Ford.

Dr. P. S. Wales, Surgeon-General, U. S. N.

Dr. C. B. Purvis.

Dr. C. C. Patterson.

Dr. Basil Norris, U. S. A.

Dr. N. S. Lincoln.

Dr. J. B. Hamilton, Surgeon-General, Marine Hospital Service.

Our patient lay on the wounded side, for reasons known to surgery. A sighing respiration, feeble and almost imperceptible pulse, the lines of the face hippocratic, frequent movements of the lower limbs, indicating severe pain, grave apprehensions of approaching dissolution evidenced by the anxious and even tearful faces of his official and professional attendants—these constitute an imperfect picture of the scene on Saturday afternoon. Mrs. Garfield was absent. The President having left, as was understood, for a journey, the force of attendants was unorganized, save as good sense and devotion regulated their conduct. They stood in watchful silence, endeavoring to read the faces of the physicians for indications of hope or disaster, listening eagerly for the roll of the carriage-wheels which should announce the arrival of the absent wife, and without spoken word, perfectly understanding that it was feared that she would never see her husband alive. Our anxieties increased each hour. No indications of reaction could be discovered, even by the most sanguine. The regurgitations from the stomach were more and more frequent, indicative of the profound collapse which all the other symptoms showed. We measured the time with beating hearts, hoping that the illustrious sufferer might again in life see the face he loved so well. The President several times made inquiry as to the

cause of Mrs. Garfield's delay, and, appreciating the gravity of his injury, was extremely anxious lest she should be too late for an intelligent interview. Upon her arrival, he requested that their interview should be entirely private. Thus the prostrate and apparently dying husband met his wife. She remained by his side not more than five minutes. The words of love, hope, and cheer given him are known only to themselves and to God. It is a fact, however, that within an hour the President's symptoms began to indicate reaction.

The President rarely spoke of his condition, seldom expressed a want, and only once, in my hearing, referred to the circumstance of his shooting. He asked of the Secretary of State, in the afternoon, the name of the assassin. On being told, he said:

"Why should he have wished to shoot me?"

It was explained that he had probably been disappointed in seeking some office.

The hourly bulletins of this first day, which, in the absence of an organized force of physicians, were issued by me, are a record of the early fears and anxieties of those near the President, until, reaction being decided, hope sprang exulting in our breasts. During the night of suspense which followed, Doctor Reyburn and myself did not close our eyes in sleep. Colonel Rockwell, General Swain, several members of the Cabinet, Miss Edson, and Steward Crump were also at hand to render any needed aid. The President enjoyed, upon the whole, considerable refreshing sleep, broken about every half-hour by regurgitation of the contents of the stomach. The morning of the 3d of July found him comparatively cheerful and hopeful, and with a full appreciation of his surroundings. At this time he inquired of me what his chances of recovery were, saying, in his bright and cheerful way, that he desired a frank and full statement—that he was prepared to die, and feared not to learn the worst. He added that personally he was willing to lay down the heavy burden thrust upon him. I replied:

"Mr. President, your injury is formidable. In my judgment, you have a chance for recovery."

He placed his hand upon my arm, and, turning his face more fully toward me, said, with a cheerful smile:

"Well, Doctor, we'll take that chance."

After the morning consultation, and the dressing of the wound, having at my request decided upon his permanent professional attendance, he desired me to thank individually the physicians who came to his assistance so promptly. While the condition of the President continued critical, the day was compara-

tively uneventful. In the evening it was decided to summon the distinguished counsel from Philadelphia and New York, Doctors D. Hayes Agnew and Frank H. Hamilton. The excessive heat caused great discomfort to the President and anxiety to all. One of our first cares was to avert the dangers thus threatened. When we at last succeeded in procuring for him an adequate supply of cold and dry air, his relief was shown by some of the most touching displays of gratitude that I ever witnessed. I cannot recur to this period without feelings of mingled pain and satisfaction. Crippled, helpless, yet gallantly enlisted in a desperate fight for life, my heroic patient turned upon me such glances of approving thankfulness as I can never forget. Here I remark that, during his whole illness, I never approached him without meeting an extended hand, and an expression of thankful recognition of the efforts being made for his comfort and recovery. The time which passed until the 23d of July, when the first rigor occurred, was remarkable chiefly for the quiet, cool determination of the sufferer. Quite ready for, and evidently expecting, the worst, his demeanor was that of the man whose great intellect and wonderful will enabled him to give the most intelligent aid to the physician. Apparently indifferent as to the result, so far as it should affect him alone, he still watched every symptom, even making inquiry after each examination as to the temperature, pulse, and respiration, and every measure of relief adopted, with evidently firm determination to live for others, if possible. At this time, as is known, a simple but painful operation was rendered necessary by the formation of a superficial pus-sac. When, after consultation, I informed the President of the intention to use the knife, he, with unflinching cheerfulness, replied: "Very well; whatever you say is necessary must be done." When the physicians entered the room, I handed the bistoury to one of the counsel, with the request that he make the incision. Without an anæsthetic, and without a murmur, or a muscular contraction by the patient, the incision was made. He quietly asked the results of the operation, and soon sank into a peaceful slumber. This operation, though simple in itself, was painful, and the manner in which it was borne by the President in his enfeebled condition was, perhaps, as good an instance as any of the wonderful nervous control which characterized his whole illness. This power of mind over body was also daily exhibited at the dressings of his wound, which were unavoidably painful, and yet invariably borne without indication of discomfort; and also at subsequent operations, always painful.

Nearly all the nutriment received by the President during his illness was administered by the physicians, but up to within an hour of his death he almost invariably took the glass in his hand and drank from it without assistance; he took pride in his ability to do this. We watched every indication which gave hope of possible assimilation without cloying. He did not draw a breath which was not heard by those incomparable nurses, General Swaim, Colonel Rockwell, Doctor Boynton, Miss Edson, Steward Crump, or by Doctors Reyburn, Woodward, or myself. We knew that as complete alimentation as possible was the primary indication. When the stomach failed, resort was had to other modes of administering food, which were repeated at proper intervals for four or five days, at several periods of his illness. We saw him slipping from our hands through inanition. We suspected and dreaded some internal injury which no mortal could have dared to explore. We sought every available means of supplying waste known to modern physiological science. Why we could not finally succeed, is shown by the autopsy. During all, the President intelligently discussed each condition with me. He often spoke with feeling wonder of the marvelous aids which science could and did give a sufferer in his condition, saying on one occasion, "What relief these so-called artificial methods of nourishment have given me! We should be thankful that science has so advanced that we can avail ourselves of it in this crisis."

About ten days after the first subscription was made to the fund for Mrs. Garfield, some one of the household informed him that a large sum of money was being raised for her in the event of his demise. At this he was very much surprised and said, "What?"—adding with evident emotion, as he turned his face to the pillow, "How kind and thoughtful! What a generous people!" He was then silent and absorbed for a long time, as if overwhelmed with the thought. I never heard him allude to the subject afterward.

Shall I try to describe the days and nights of incessant watching, the incredible patience of this great man in the weariness of constrained position, and the monotonous silence of the sick-room? Shall I attempt to phrase the terrible sense of responsibility which rested upon each and all of us who had charge of him, feeling, as we did, that the pulse of the nation was under our fingers? Removed from the affectionate regard ripened in a life acquaintance, and from that professional loyalty which had budded and blossomed in the sick-chamber, was the keen sense that not only our own, but all civilized nations, were prayerfully, tearfully watching. For my own part,

I can assert that the cares and responsibilities of a life-time were compressed into the narrow limits of those eventful eighty days.

To illustrate his persistent cheerfulness, as well as his desire for relief from the terrible monotony of his situation, it may be remarked that on several occasions he expressed a desire to be able to play a game of cards—an amusement which had been one of the minor attractions of his home-life. On the very evening of his death, with a significant look at Colonel Rockwell, he made a motion with his right hand as if dealing cards.

Hundreds of letters and telegrams daily, containing urgent advice as to the treatment of a patient never seen by the writers,—threats of death if he should die, and similar ones if he should live; in short, every imaginable communication from every quarter of the globe,—all these formed a necessary part of our ordeal. It is very gratifying to remember that, in all this mass of correspondence, nothing excelled the manly and heartfelt expressions received from the South, in most instances from ex-Confederates. One, from Texas, said:

"If you need or desire it, I can furnish a corps whose loving hearts and loyal arms shall bear the wounded President to Elberon as tenderly as mother ever carried babe."

There can, in my judgment, be no stronger evidence than this that sectional jealousies and animosities, if not entirely healed, are in the certain road to cure.

Among the events of the outer world which came to his knowledge was the termination of the memorable political struggle at Albany. On receiving the information of Mr. Lapham's election, he said with great earnestness, in the presence of Colonel Rockwell and myself:

"I am glad it is over. I am sorry for Conkling. He has made a great mistake, in my judgment. I will offer him any favor he may ask, or any appointment he may desire."

The President early expressed a desire to be removed to his old home. His dislike to formal attendance became more and more apparent. The retinue of professional and personal attendants, the sense that he was in some sort a state patient, and the desire for a more quiet, home-like convalescence, where the presiding genius should be his devoted wife, daily grew stronger. He said to me on one occasion: "Doctor, how soon do you think we can take our wives and go to Mentor?" I comforted him with the hope that he might soon be so far recovered as to make the journey, though in my inmost heart I feared he never would.

When the journey to Elberon was decided upon, no man ever had more efficient

and consistent aid than was afforded me by Colonel Rockwell, General Swaim, and those already named, in carrying out its details. It had been suggested to extend the railroad track from the Washington Monument to the White House. After due consideration, this was decided unnecessary, as we preferred that the supplementary track should be laid at Elberon, in order to avoid the possible detention by a rain-storm. Here, in Washington, we were in no danger from such conditions, and, moreover, the perfectly even surface of Pennsylvania Avenue really rendered such an expenditure needless. The train intended for the trip was duly equipped and sent to Washington, and a trial trip was made of nearly twenty miles, to determine the amount and nature of the motion of the bed. The attendants who were to bear the enfeebled sufferer to the wagon were so drilled as to make a mistake almost impossible. Every movement had been studied over and again, so as to preclude the possibility of an accident. For the transfer to the depot, we thought best to use a huge express wagon. A vehicle of this size, weight, and solidity would not only afford ample room, but be far less liable to sudden and unpleasant motion than a lighter one.

At six o'clock, on the morning of the 6th of September, I quietly stepped to the bedside of the President and said:

"Mr. President, we are ready to go."

He replied:

"I am ready."

He was carried by no strange hands. Those nearest to him lifted him upon the sheet on which he lay, placed him upon the stretcher, and gently bore him to the great vestibule of the White House. Twice, in the passage, he waved his hand in recognition to those of his household whom he was leaving behind. The bed he had just left had preceded him. He was immediately placed upon it, and, without the least apparent discomfort, raised into the wagon. Every precaution was taken to avoid exposure.

Of this procedure Mrs. Garfield was a silent spectator. She refused to enter her carriage until she had seen the President safe upon his bed in the wagon. This being accomplished, with a long-drawn sigh of relief, she too departed, to meet him on the train. He seemingly enjoyed the proceedings until the car was reached. The hour was too early for any great congregation of people, yet many who expected the movement were present on the streets. In perfect silence, with men guarding the heads of the horses (which, by the way, were not attached until the President was safely in the wagon, and were

detached the moment the car was reached), we slowly wended our anxious way to the waiting train. Twelve soldiers grasped the wheels of the wagon, as the horses were detached, and rolled it to the car containing the bed, to which the President was then transferred without the slightest disturbance. The word was given to the master of the train, and we began our journey to the sea.

I must now say that this whole journey was a marvel even to myself. I had arranged that if prostration occurred, the train might stop at any given point. These arrangements were so perfect that, at any place on the whole route, the President could have been immediately removed to a private dwelling. The rate of speed varied from twenty to seventy miles per hour, and when it was the greatest, I asked the President if the motion was uncomfortable. He smiled and said, "Let them go," evidently meaning to quiet any anxiety I might feel, and to assure me that his vital force was still to be relied upon.

While stopping at a coaling station, I think in Delaware, we gave him a bath. About an hour before we reached Elberon, I suggested a second, but he replied, with a sparkle of the eye, "Let us reach the end of our journey first. That is most important." I mention this as showing how close an observer of his own condition the President was, yet, save when questioned, he never made a remark relating to his own feelings. The journey, as all know, ended safely. Under no other circumstances could this have been accomplished. Through those miles of strained attention and anxious doubt, while train hands vied with one another in quiet transmission of the doctor's orders as to speed and motion, no sound of bell or whistle was heard, either from our own or from the large number of trains passed. At every station crowds of men and women appeared, the former uncovered, with bowed heads, the latter often weeping. When not engaged with the President, I saw and wondered at these sights.

Mrs. Garfield sat by the side of her husband during the first part of the trip, cheering and re-assuring him as no one else could, and visited him afterward, frequently, from her car. On arriving at the track recently laid to the Francklyn Cottage, we were surrounded by a large concourse of people, who braved the heat of the day in their anxiety lest the journey might have resulted disastrously. The engine had not weight and power sufficient to push us up the steep grade. Instantly hundreds of strong arms caught the cars, and silently, but resistlessly, rolled the three heavy coaches up to the level. Arriving at the cot-

tage, the President was placed upon a stretcher, and borne, under the canopy previously arranged, to the room wherein the remainder of a noble life was spent. The admirable arrangements at the Francklyn Cottage, as well as the details of agreement with the great railroad companies, owe their completeness to the sagacious and liberal management of Attorney-General MacVeagh. I shall always remember with thankfulness his quiet energy, thoughtfulness, and zeal, by which this great journey was rendered possible.

The fatigues of the trip were shown in the pulse and also in the facial expression, but the President expressed himself as glad to be at the sea-shore, and was inclined to think he ought to have been moved before. His satisfaction was evident to all. The sound of the waves, the salt and bracing air, all afforded him the greatest delight. For eight or ten days, his condition visibly and continuously improved. Upon the evening of the 15th of September, a noticeable change took place,—a more frequent pulse, higher temperature, and increasing feebleness all indicated deep-seated mischief, which his physicians could not localize, but could only recognize symptomatically, as due to the general septic condition.

On this day I was absent from him for five hours, the only occasion on which I left him during the eighty days. I left him comfortable, and on returning from New York, found him only presenting the signs of fatigue usual at that hour (5 P. M.). Upon my return he held out his hand, and attempted the familiar smile. I said:

"Mr. President, I have been away for a few hours, as you know, but they seemed like an age."

He answered:

"Doctor, you plainly show the effect of all this care and unrest, and I am glad you were forced to take this temporary relief. Your anxious watching will soon be over."

The history of the next four days was that of anxious apprehension. All the symptoms pointed to profound disturbance, which might at any time cause a fatal result. The disposition to converse was not so marked. The wandering mind, easily and instantly recalled by a word, or the touch of a hand; the occurrence of occasional rigors,—sometimes severe,—and the almost entire failure to assimilate food, all indicated the inevitable, fatal end. I think that then, and probably long before, the President fully believed that he could not survive. Perfectly calm, sentient,—even inclined to be jocose and humorous,—there was still an under-current of conviction which all our optimism could not stem.

This opinion is borne out by the remark already related, made to me, and by the incident of the 17th of July, when, signing his name upon a tablet held in his left hand, he added "Strangulatus pro Republicâ." Later, upon the day before his death, he addressed Colonel Rockwell as follows:

"Old boy! do you think my name will have a place in human history?"

The colonel answered:

"Yes, a grand one, but a grander place in human hearts. Old fellow, you mustn't talk in that way. You have a great work yet to perform."

After a moment's silence he said, sadly and solemnly:

"No; my work is done."

And now we approach the fatal hour. After a comparatively comfortable afternoon, having taken and retained the usual quantity of nourishment, restful and cheerful, comforted and supported by the presence of his wife during most of the day and all of the evening, we had hopes of a better night than the previous one. Here I must again allude to a most touching trait of this illustrious man. The thoughtfulness shown for all about him endured even to the end. Often during his sickness, in his great care for her rest, after the fatigues of the day, he gently urged Mrs. Garfield to retire from the bedside, even when she herself could scarcely bear to leave. His heart was not only great, but tender as that of a child.

Upon this last evening I had just inquired of her if she was not in danger of too great fatigue. She replied:

"The General seems so comfortable and quiet that it has rested me to remain."

After making some arrangements for the President's comfort, and after the arrival of General Swaim, who was the nurse for the first part of the night, she left the sick-room and retired. I afterward reëntered the room, took the pulse, and left the President quietly sleeping. I then returned to my room to prepare the directions for the night, where I was visited by Colonel Rockwell, who earnestly discussed with me the probability of a favorable night. The colonel was to relieve General Swaim at 2:30 A. M. I myself did not intend to sleep until after twelve o'clock, as I had some special observations to make at that hour, should the President be awake and his condition favorable. Colonel Rockwell left the room to seek his much-needed rest. At 10:10 I was looking over some of the wonderful productions of the human imagination which each mail brought me, when the faithful Dan suddenly appeared at the door of communication, and said:

"General Swaim wants you, quick!" He preceded me to the room, took the candle from behind the screen near the door, and raised it so that the light fell full upon the face, so soon to settle in the rigid lines of death. Observing the pallor, the upturned eyes, the gasping respiration, and the total unconsciousness, I, with uplifted hands, exclaimed, "My God, Swaim! the President is dying!" Turning to the servant, I added, "Call Mrs. Garfield immediately, and on your return, Doctors Agnew and Hamilton." On his way to Mrs. Garfield's room, he notified Colonel Rockwell, who was the first member of the household in the room. Only a moment elapsed before Mrs. Garfield was present. She exclaimed, "Oh! what is the matter?" I said, "Mrs. Garfield, the President is dying." Leaning over her husband, and fervently kissing his brow, she exclaimed, "Oh! why am I made to suffer this cruel wrong?" Meantime, by what seemed some mysterious means of communication, the whole household was present at once. Mrs. Garfield, Mrs. Rockwell, Miss Mollie Garfield, Miss Rockwell, Mr. C. O. Rockwell, Mr. J. Stanley Brown, Dr. Agnew, Dr. Boynton, the servants, and myself, were the witnesses of the last sad scene in this sorrowful history.

While summoning Mrs. Garfield, I had in vain sought for the pulse at the wrist, next at the carotid artery, and last by placing my ear over the region of the heart. Restoratives, which were always at hand, were instantly resorted to. In almost every conceivable way it was sought to revive the rapidly yielding vital forces. A faint, fluttering pulsation of the heart, gradually fading to indistinctness, alone rewarded my examinations. At last, only a few moments after the first alarm, at 10:35, I raised my head from the breast of my dead friend, and said to the sorrowful group, "It is over." So gradual was the final passage across the dark river, that for a few moments I doubted the accuracy of my senses. The President's worn face changed but little in death.

"We thought him dying when he slept,  
And sleeping when he died."

I cannot describe this scene. The vital spark had gone. No human skill or courage of heart could longer avail. The once magnificent physique, which had been so constantly and tenderly watched, lay untenanted before us. There was no sound—not even of weeping. All hearts were stilled.

Noiselessly, one by one, we passed out, leaving the broken-hearted wife alone with her dead husband. Thus she remained for

more than an hour, gazing upon the lifeless features, when Colonel Rockwell, fearing the effect upon her health, touched her arm and begged her to retire, which she did.

In closing this brief account of suffering, so long and patiently borne, I should fail in duty to myself, as well as to others, if I omitted the tribute of my heart to those to whose untiring devotion and vigilant help so much is owed. The fidelity and loyalty of the President's attendants can never be surpassed.

First, to Mrs. Garfield—brave, self-contained, helpful, always superior to considerations of self. I can, perhaps, best illustrate her character by relating an incident which occurred just before the suppurative period of the parotid gland was complete. The problem had been to sustain the President until the gland should break down. On the 26th of August, the situation was exceedingly grave. According to custom, Mrs. Garfield was informed at 6 A. M., by her maid, of the condition of her husband. She arose and quickly presented herself at his bedside. Without suggestion from any one, and with a quiet imperturbability all her own, she at once spoke to him words of cheer and hopefulness. He looked earnestly at her, to see if she were not dissembling, but her heart never failed. Her radiant face and perfect control of feature aided the innocent deception. It succeeded. She then entered the surgeons' room, and with a very different countenance, asked: "How do you feel about the General this morning?" I replied that his condition was unpromising and critical, giving specific reasons for the opinion. She said he was evidently low-spirited and apprehensive, and that she had just tried to cheer him up. I went into the room to supplement her efforts. His appearance had already visibly improved. The brave, quick-witted wife had given him by her words and looks a stimulus which medicine knows not. Two hours afterward, at the morning con-

sultation, it was found that the pus-discharge had taken place, and the long-wished-for relief had been obtained. Thus the ruse of the loving wife was swiftly justified by actual improvement.

Next, to Colonel Rockwell, his classmate and devoted friend, generous and noble-hearted; General Swaim, equally attached, and a close friend of many years; Doctor Boynton, his cousin, alert, disciplined, quick to learn a want or to descry a danger; Miss Edson, the devoted friend of the family, thoughtful, earnest, and intelligent; Mr. C. O. Rockwell, always judicious and faithful, and Steward Crump, whose unceasing and loving work early disabled him; and lastly, Mr. J. Stanley Brown, the President's private secretary, who, with a ready judgment superior to his years, in a thousand ways guarded and aided those who were watching the President,—to these proved and trusty aids in our great labor of love, I desire to express my sense of the value of their services.

The professional counsel, who rendered skilled and generous help, were always harmonious. The gravity of the problem hushed all possible discord. Every bulletin, even, was carefully and thoughtfully considered, every sentence, every statement of fact was weighed, in the attempt to convey to the public the unanimous views of the council.

This will readily be seen to be but a very imperfect record of the incidents of this most dreadful affliction. Much which might be said must remain forever unspoken. Can we picture the anguish of a husband at thought of leaving his wife and children, just at that period of life when honored and happy years yet lay before him? Can we portray in language the nobly repressed sorrow of the loving wife? Can we delineate the grief of those children, whose filial love and ambitions centered in the great heart now stilled? We enshrine in our memories this sorrow, for the expression of which mere words are inadequate.

## THE LAST WORDS.

[LAST words written by Dr. Holland, October 11th, 1881,—referring to President Garfield.]

*His sympathy with the humble  
drew to him the hearts of the world*

### I.

We may not choose! Ah, if we might, how we  
Should linger here, not ready to be dead,  
Till one more loving thing were looked, or said,—  
Till some dear child's estate of joy should be  
Complete,—or we, triumphant, late, should see  
Some great cause win for which our hearts had bled,—  
Some hope come true which all our lives had fed,—  
Some bitter sorrow fade away and flee,  
Which we, rebellious, had too bitter thought;—  
Or even,—so our human hearts would cling,  
If but they might, to this fair world inwrought  
With heavenly beauty in each smallest thing,—  
We would refuse to die till we had sought  
One violet more, heard one more robin sing!

### II.

We may not choose; but if we did foreknow  
The hour when we should pass from human sight,  
What words were last that we should say, or write,  
Could we pray fate a sweeter boon to show  
Than bid our last words burn with loving glow  
Of heart-felt praise, to lift, and make more bright  
A great man's memory, set in clearer light?  
Ah yes! Fate could one boon more sweet bestow:—  
So frame those words that every heart which knew,  
Should, sudden, awe-struck, weeping turn away,  
And cry: "His own hand his best wreath must lay!  
Of his own life his own last words are true,—  
So true, love's truth no truer thing can say,—  
'By sympathy, all hearts to him he drew.'"

October 12th, 1881.

