

**MEMORIAL ADDRESS UPON THE
LATE JAMES G. BLAINE:
DELIVERED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES AND INVITED
GUESTS ON FEBRUARY 23, 1893**

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Memorial Address Upon the Late James G. Blaine: Delivered Before the House of Representatives and invited guests on february 23, 1893 by William E. Barrett

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WILLIAM E. BARRETT

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R. A. Raymond,
New Bedford,
Mass.

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MEMORIAL ADDRESS

UPON THE LATE

JAMES G. BLAINE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AND INVITED GUESTS

ON FEBRUARY 23, 1893,

BY THE

HON. WILLIAM E. BARRETT,

IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION
OF THE HOUSE

BOSTON:

1893.

1735



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MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

MR. SPEAKER:—This crowded hall, these suspended legislative duties, this atmosphere of respect accompanying the consideration of resolutions to the memory of our late most illustrious private citizen,—are themselves the token of how fitting the exercises of this hour may be.

The history of generations often clusters about a single name. Great movements of thought and action, in field and forum, are identified with an individual. That one is the fitting centre about which to focus the understanding of popular movements. One Cromwell, one Washington, one Jackson, one Lincoln, represents in the concrete to us a great army of men, whose aggregate action and its results are personified in him.

Time, with its mellowing touches, shall place in their true perspective those who have led in the tremendous scenes of the generation now almost gone. Such a panorama the world never saw as the development of this nation during the past forty years. A great people has written in lasting characters the long questioned truth that republics may survive all assaults. In all the pageant of those who have been leaders in this mighty train one name will live. Upon the new-made grave which it will mark we lay to-day our tribute.

In all America what fairer spot exists than along the 40th parallel, over which range our broadest and fairest

fields, and beneath which lie our most prized mineral treasures? Here heaven and earth unite under propitious skies to welcome man to favorable, but not enervating, conditions.

Along that line where climatic extremes merge have also met in mixture of kin and interest those two great strains of Anglo-Saxon blood which have borne in this land a long succession of struggles for supremacy, resulting, we believe, after the death grapple of the civil war, in those closer relations which now promise the final restoration of true national feeling, long delayed by unworthy institutions and false beliefs.

In all this border land, no fairer spot was ever known than that which lies within the guarded valleys of the Monongahela, for whose possession the first battle was fought in the great struggle between the Titans of Europe for the control of the continent. Here, in magnificent foresight, Washington declared that the fate of the future must be settled, and here he struck his own first blow in the drama which demonstrated that English blood and institutions should possess the new world.

Into this region, after the revolution, came many a veteran to settle and acquire lands. Among them was the commissary general of the continental army, Ephraim Blaine. He was a soldier, but more; he was a large-minded man of affairs, rich for his day, travelled, a man of importance. Dying, he left his estate to a son, his namesake, well nurtured, a man of no mean parts, but too liberal to retain the fortune which he had inherited. He was intended for public life, but the Scotch thrift of the family did not cling to him, and at middle age he

was beginning to feel that with the scattering of the ancestral acres he must have recourse to employment. He was made prothonotary, and moved to the county seat. This was in 1843, and James G. Blaine, his son, was then thirteen years of age.

Named for his grandparents on either side, he had an unusual environment. The family was a cultivated one. Reduced in circumstances, perhaps, but not in pride and standing, his parents ranked among the first of their surrounding.

As has been said, this border land was sought by people of all connections of birth, social condition and religion. None of the prejudices existed then that a half-century ago were noticeable with us. The father of Blaine was a Presbyterian, his mother, of equally good blood, a Roman Catholic. They disagreed in religion, and were at one in everything else. Seeing perhaps the greater opportunity that would come to them, the mother consented that the sons should be reared in the father's faith, and he that the daughters should follow in her footsteps. From boyhood through life Mr. Blaine was a Protestant of the sternest sect, in all his mature years a communicant of the church with which he naturally allied himself. The fact that his mother and many of his kin were Roman Catholics induced opponents often, by charge, insinuation and suggestion, to endeavor to involve him in theological dispute. It was in vain. Steadfast to his own tenets, he refused to discuss church antagonisms as having any relation to politics. Least of all would he consent to utter a word which would by implication disparage a communion which had been to a devoted mother a steady light of

peace. That natural chivalry, which from a boy never deserted him, knew no bounds. It was as sweet to the dead as to the living.

So the boy grew up, self-reliant, forceful, ambitious, jealous of his name, not poor, not rich. He had an educated father, a mother whose virtues are not yet forgotten where she lived, and nothing to temper the natural confidence of youth.

At eleven he went to the family of his uncle, Thomas Ewing of Lancaster, O., then secretary of the treasury. Here he lived two years, studying books under a tutor, and we can readily believe absorbing a quick sense of the questions then beginning to challenge attention, in the solution of which he was yet to play no inconsequential part.

In the county seat to which his father removed was located Washington College. Here young Blaine was entered at thirteen. Here for four years, in a college of one hundred students, he obtained his education. I love to dwell upon it. The youngest of his class, he graduated second, gaining with ease his lessons, revelling in the new paths of acquisition which opened before him. Compare that faculty with those of the universities to-day. Notice its scanty eight members, five of them devoted to languages and literature, not great men, but their reservoirs of learning sufficed to give large draughts to the hungry student. He absorbed from all, in daily contact, and the taste for reading, for forensic disputation, for the finer things which even a moderate touch with literature brings, all acquired in that little college, never deserted him. He mastered the same problems, parsed and