

**PRESIDENT CHESTER A.
ARTHUR: ADDRESS,
AT FAIRFIELD, VERMONT
ON AUGUST 19, 1903**

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President Chester A. Arthur: Address, at Fairfield, Vermont on August 19, 1903 by William E. Chandler

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WILLIAM E. CHANDLER

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ARTHUR: ADDRESS,
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**PRESIDENT
CHESTER A. ARTHUR**

ADDRESS BY

WILLIAM E. CHANDLER

AT FAIRFIELD, VERMONT

ON AUGUST 19, 1903

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMPLETION BY THE
STATE OF VERMONT OF A MONUMENT AND
TABLET TO MARK THE BIRTHPLACE OF
PRESIDENT CHESTER A. ARTHUR**



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Lawrence S. Mayo

PRESIDENT ARTHUR.

SYNOPSIS OF ADDRESS.

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HIS FRIENDS.

MR. CHANDLER'S ADDRESS.

This occasion must have a prevailing tone of sadness, first, because we cannot fail to take notice that while the four years' term for which Garfield and Arthur were elected is only eighteen years behind us, the leaders and nearly all the members of the administration have passed from earth. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away and another generation cometh."

SADNESS OF THE OCCASION.

Garfield was inaugurated March 4, 1881, and was fatally stricken by the bullet of the assassin on the 2d of the next July. Arthur survived his term, which ended March 4, 1885, only until November 18, 1886. Blaine, Windom, Kirkwood, and Hunt; Frelinghuysen, Folger, Howe, Brewster, McCulloch, Gresham, and Hatton have gone from earth. Only McVeagh and James, Teller, Lincoln and myself—five out of thirteen—still live as the survivors of an administration not so very long ago in existence. "For we are but of yesterday and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow and there is none abiding." "Man is like to Vanity. His days are as a shadow that passeth away."

In accordance with invariable custom, as the impressive beginning of the inauguration of Pope Pius X a torch of flax was held aloft which flamed up for a few seconds and then wholly died out, whereupon the chaplain chanted the anthem, "*Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

Moreover, the gloomy thoughts thus suggested are deepened as we approach consideration of the career of President Arthur, by the solemn fact that he came to occupy and administer his high office only by reason of the untimely taking off by assassination of the president elected by the people. It has been my fortune to know and to converse with eleven presidents, beginning with President Pierce, from my own state, who employed me as a boy in his pleasant service in the summer and fall of 1852, and made me his guest at the White House in March, 1855. By the three martyred presidents I was treated with exceeding kindness and consideration. President Lincoln, in March, 1865, signed my commission as judge-advocate-general of the navy, and decided upon my subsequent transfer to the treasury department as assistant secretary, which, however, did not take place while he was alive. President Garfield nominated me for solicitor-general in the department of justice; and President McKinley in many ways by his courtesies and other evidences of good will gained my deepest affection. These personal facts it is proper for me to mention in order to emphasize the effect upon me of the recollection of the tragic endings of the lives of these presidents of the Republic.

Waiting a few weeks ago in the ante-room of Presi-

dent Roosevelt, and noticing the absence of all mere form and ceremony and of all signs of power at the White House, the same as in the days of 1865, 1881, and 1897, it was to me most difficult to realize that I had been very near to and had almost witnessed the shooting to bloody death of three presidents by the foul hands of brutal assassins. Are the unostentatious chiefs of a Republican state, holding their offices for only four years, who are powerless to take away any liberties or privileges of the people, to be no safer from the bullets and bombs of regicides than the tyrant upon a despotic throne, who, if not forcibly removed, may for the whole of a long lifetime oppress his helpless subjects?

Great as was the horror and grief of the American people at the murders of their presidents, it is some relief to realize, as we now do, that in each of the three cases the assassin stood practically alone in his deed of murder, and represented no desire of any considerable number of persons of any class, either south or north. Thank Heaven, our future presidents have no lessons in conduct to take to heart by reason of the frenzied and fatal assaults on three of their predecessors, made by wretched beings as to each of whom it may be said that his motive cannot be comprehended, and that the responsibility for his senseless act was his alone.

THE TRIBUTES TO ARTHUR'S MEMORY.

But, however painful may be the feelings first aroused on the recollection of the circumstances of the accession of Chester A. Arthur to the presidency, there is nothing but joyousness in recalling the man himself, his charac-

ter and conduct, and his relations with his fellow-men in private and public life. Tributes to his memory have been spoken since his death by friends who knew and loved him well. When the legislature of the state of New York honored their citizen by appropriate proceedings in the capitol at Albany on April 20, 1887, Benjamin H. Brewster spoke with elegance of diction and deep emotion concerning the characteristics of the president whom he had admired and served as attorney-general in his cabinet. At the same time Chauncey M. Depew, with more than his usual felicity, depicted Arthur's "high qualities;—his magnanimity, his gentleness, and all the other traits of his nature which have commanded our love and honor." At a stated meeting of the bar of the city of New York on December 13, 1887, Daniel G. Rollins laid upon the altar of the memory of the president, with whom he had been most intimate, a recital of affectionate and judicious praise.

Ben Perley Poore, in the *Bay State Monthly* for May, 1884, while Arthur was living, gave a brief sketch of his career, and, as a journalist of wide experience, expressed in terms of moderation his favorable judgment of the president and his existing administration.

On June 13, 1899, personal friends unveiled in Madison Square a bronze statue of President Arthur, and its formal presentation to New York city was made by Elihu Root, our present secretary of war, who spoke of Arthur as one of his personal associates and friends in his home, "who knew him as he was and admired and loved him long before the world knew him."