EULOGY ON THE LATE PRESIDENT GARFIELD

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JAMES G. BLAINE

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Trieste

J. A. Garfield

EULOGY

ON THE LATE

PRESIDENT GARFIELD,

DELIVERED IN THE

HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEBRUARY 27TH, 1882,

BY THE

HON. JAMES G. BLAINE.

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BLAINE'S EULOGY

OF THE LATE

PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

MR. PRESIDENT:—For the second time in this generation the great departments of the Government of the United States are assembled in the Hall of Representatives to do honor to the memory of a murdered President. Lincoln fell at the close of a mighty struggle, in which the passions of men had been deeply stirred. The tragical termination of his great life added but another to the lengthened succession of horrors which had marked so many lintels with the blood of the first-born. Garfield was slain in a day of peace, when brother had been reconciled to brother, and when anger and hate had been banished from the land. "Whoever shall hereafter draw the portrait of murder, if he will show it as it has been exhibited where such example was least to have been looked for, let him not give it the grim visage of Moloch, the brow knitted by revenge, the face black with settled hate. Let him draw, rather, a decorous, smooth-faced, bloodless demon; not so much an example of human nature

in depravity and in its paroxysms of crime, as an infernal being, a fiend in the ordinary display and development of his character."

From the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, till the uprising against Charles I., about twenty thousand emigrants came from old England to New England. As they came in pursuit of intellectual freedom and ecclesiastical independence rather than for worldly honor and profit, the emigration naturally ceased when the contest for religious liberty began in earnest at home. The man who struck his most effective blow for freedom of conscience by sailing for the colonies in 1620, would have been accounted a deserter to leave after 1640. The opportunity had then come on the soil of England for that great contest which established the authority of Parliament, gave religious freedom to the people, sent Charles to the block, and committed to the hands of Oliver Cromwell the Supreme Executive authority of England. The English emigration was never renewed, and from these twenty thousand men, with a small emigration from Scotland and from France, are descended the vast numbers who have New England blood in their veins.

In 1685, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV., scattered to other countries four hundred thousand Protestants, who were among the most intelligent and enterprising of French subjects—merchants of capital, skilled manufac-

turers and handicraftsmen, superior at the time to all others in Europe. A considerable number of these Huguenot-French came to America; a few landed in New England and became honorably prominent in its history. Their names have in large part become anglicized, or have disappeared, but their blood is traceable in many of the most reputable families, and their fame is perpetuated in honorable memorials and useful institutions.

From these two sources, the English-Puritan and the French-Huguenot, came the late President —his father, Abram Garfield, being descended from the one, and his mother, Eliza Ballou, from the other.

It was good stock on both sides—none better, none braver, none truer. There was in it an inheritance of courage, of manliness, of imperishable love of liberty, of undying adherence to principle. Garfield was proud of his blood; and, with as much satisfaction as if he were a British nobleman reading his stately ancestral record in Burke's *Peerage*, he spoke of himself as ninth in descent from those who would not endure the oppression of the Stuarts, and seventh in descent from the brave French Protestants who refused to submit to tyranny even from the Grand Monarque.

General Garfield delighted to dwell on these traits, and, during his only visit to England, he busied himself in discovering every trace of his forefathers in parish registries and on ancient

army rolls. Sitting with a friend in the gallery of the House of Commons, one night after a long day's labor in this field of research, he said, with evident elation, that in every war in which for three centuries patriots of English blood had struck sturdy blows for constitutional government and human liberty, his family had been represented. They were at Marston Moor, at Naseby, and at Preston; they were at Bunker Hill, at Saratoga, and at Monmouth, and in his own person had battled for the same great cause in the war which preserved the Union of the States.

Losing his father before he was two years old, the early life of Garfield was one of privation, but its poverty has been made indelicately and unjustly prominent. Thousands of readers have imagined him as the ragged, starving child, whose reality too often greets the eye in the squalid sections of our large cities. General Garfield's infancy and youth had none of their destitution, none of their pitiful features, appealing to the tender heart and to the open hand of charity. He was a poor boy in the same sense in which Henry Clay was a poor boy; in which Andrew Jackson was a poor boy; in which Daniel Webster was a poor boy—in the sense in which a large majority of the eminent men of America in all generations have been poor boys. Before a great multitude of men, in a public speech, Mr. Webster bore this testimony:—