

## JAMES G. BLAINE

AS AN AMERICAN AND A STATESMAN

BY EDWARD J. SULLIVAN, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Friday, January 27th, 1898, will ever remain memorable in the annals of American history, as that date chronicles the death of the greatest statesman of this generation and the most prominent figure in American politics.

When nature had clothed Mother Earth with a mantle of snow, and within eight of many thrilling incidents of political life, surrounded by his beloved wife and the surviving members of his family, and amidst the universal sorrow of the American people, the spirit of James Gillespie Blaine took its flight, and the fertile brain, eloquent tongue and patriotic heart was stilled forever.

No sooner had the words "Blaine is dead" been flashed over the wires, than partisan and political prejudices vanished like vapor in mid-air, and the magnanimous hearts of the American people beat in unison over the loss the country had sustained. Blaine was the embodiment of all that was grand in American statesmanship; his country was his idol, and his name will be forever enshrined in the bosom of his countrymen.

James G. Blaine was the second son of Ephraim I. Blaine and Marie Gillespie, and descended from an illustrious and patriotic family. His grandfather, Colonel Ephraim Blaine, was one of the patriots of '76, and an intimate friend of Washington. He was closely identified with the Revolutionary struggle and was appointed commissary general in 1778, and held that position until 1783. The subject of this paper was born in a plain dwelling in the quaint old town of West Brownsville, in Union township, Washington county, Pa., January 31st, 1830, and not far from the spot where Gen. Braddock met his defeat at the hands of the Indians. His father was of Scotch-Irish extraction and a Presbyterian in religion. His mother was of Irish descent and a devout Catholic. In a visit to West Brownsville in the summer of '88, I saw the place where he was born, the early scenes of his boyhood, and the graves of his parents, side by side in the Roman Catholic cemetery of that town. With deep reverence and uncovered head I knelt on the graves of the parents, whose son was the brightest ornament of our day. On the occasion of my visit I made the most diligent inquiries as to Mr. Blaine and his ancestry, and all with whom I conversed were enthusiastic in their admiration of him, and recited for me many notable anecdotes of his early life, his warm attachment to friends and his love for his native place.

In 1881, being the 100th anniversary of Washington county, he wrote: "I shall always recall with pride that my ancestry were and are not inconspicuously connected with its history, and that on either side of the beautiful river in Protestant and Catholic cemeteries, five generations of my own blood sleep in honored graves." The cemetery in which his parents lie buried is located upon a hill overlooking the beautiful Monongahela river, and their graves are marked with a handsome monument, the tribute of a worthy son.

When only eleven years old, Mr. Blaine was sent to Lancaster, Ohio, and placed under the care of his relative, Hon. Thomas Ewing, who was then secretary of the department of the treasury at Washington. Two years later he entered Washington college in his native county. Towards the latter part of that year he was admitted to the freshman's class and graduated in his eighteenth year. During his college days he displayed no marked ability as an orator, but was remarkable for his powers of retention. One of his biographers has written: "Everyone thought and said Blaine would go through the world quiet, studious and the quintessence of mediocrity."

H. H. M. Pussey of Iowa, one of his classmates, said: "James Blaine, as I remember him, was a well built boy and a hard student. He had an impediment of speech, however, which prevented him from joining in our debates and declamations, but he could distance all his classmates in the matter of study, and his memory was remarkable. We had in our college a literary society of which I was president, about the time Blaine was sixteen years old. One day he came to me and said, 'B-hill, I would like to be president of the literary. Can you f-f-x it for me?' I answered: 'Why,

what do you know about the literary society? You have never taken part in the debates, and have always preferred to pay your fine to taking active part. Do you know anything about parliamentary practice?' He replied: 'No, but I c-c-can commit Cushing's Manual to memory in one night.' Well, the result was that at the next meeting I 'fixed it' for him, and at the meeting next week Blaine was elected president. As he had promised, he committed the entire contents of Cushing's manual, and he proved the best president the literary society of the college ever had."

In his young days, Mr. Blaine's chief pastime and delight was in hunting the fox, and his constant companion was a negro named Randolph Tearle.

A rather amusing anecdote is related of him. One day his father gave him a dollar and told him to go to market to buy a turkey, and he brought his purchase home; but no sooner had the old, faithful colored cook examined the purchase, when he exclaimed to the elder Mr. Blaine: "Mars Blaine, dat dar turkey what Mars Jim buyed des mawin' an de quarest turkey I's ever seen." "Deed 'tis, Mars Blaine." Closer examination revealed the fact the so-called turkey was found to be a ten-year-old goose. His father said he ought to feel ashamed, a boy of fifteen years old can't tell a turkey from a goose. Young Blaine hung his head and said: "Why, how's a boy going to tell a turkey from a goose when its feathers are off?"

Respecting Mr. Blaine's religious faith, under date March 10th, 1876, he wrote: "My ancestors on my father's side were, as you know, always identified with the Presbyterian church, and they were prominent and honored in the old colony of Pennsylvania; but I will never consent to make any public declaration upon this subject, and for two reasons: First, because I abhor the introduction of anything that looks like a religious test or qualification for office in a republic where perfect freedom of conscience is the birthright of every citizen; and second, because my mother was a devout Catholic, I would not for a thousand presidencies speak a disrespectful word against my mother's religion, and no pressure will draw me into any avowal of hostility or unfriendliness to Catholics, though I have never received and do not expect any support from them."

A few months after graduating Mr. Blaine went to Blue Lick Springs, Ky., and became a professor in the Western Military Institute. He became very popular among the students and won their admiration. Miss Harriet Stanwood, a native of Maine, had been sent to a seminary for young ladies at Millersburg, Ky., which was twenty miles distant from where young Blaine was located, and it was there he formed the acquaintance of this noble-hearted young woman, whose acquaintance resulted in marriage in a little more than a year. Soon afterwards he returned to Pennsylvania where he studied law, but never presented himself for admission to the bar. While prosecuting his studies he devoted his spare moments to literary pursuits, and contributed many forcible and interesting articles to newspapers and magazines. In 1852 he became a teacher in a deaf and dumb asylum in Philadelphia, and remained there until 1854 when he removed to Augusta, Maine, where he entered into partnership with a prominent lawyer of that city, Mr. Joseph Baker, and they purchased the "Kennebec Journal." Mr. Blaine becoming editor, being then in his twenty-third year. While it is true the paper brought him into considerable prominence, yet viewed from a financial standpoint, it cannot be said he was successful in the field of journalism. In 1857 he became editor of the "Portland Daily Advertiser." In 1858 he was elected to the state legislature and abandoned the journalistic profession, his connection with the press extending over a period of six years. At the age of 25 he was a prominent figure and a leading spirit in the councils of the republican party. At 29 he was elected chairman of the executive committee of the republican organization in Maine. In 1862 he was elected to congress. In the convention which first nominated him for that high office, he said: "The great object with us all is to subdue rebellion—speedily, effectually and finally. In our march to that end we must crush all intervening obstacles. If slavery or any other 'institution' stands in the way, it must be removed. Perish all things else, the national life must be saved."

These were the sentiments of a patriotic heart, at a critical juncture when rebellion raised its head. After a period of six years in congress he was made speaker of the House, and friends and foes alike were compelled to bear testimony to his great ability and the conscientious manner in which he performed those arduous duties. In 1867 he was appointed United States Senator by the Governor of Maine to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Senator Morrill, who became Secretary of the Treasury. During his term of office he delivered many powerful and argumentative addresses, and in all the great public questions he took an active and prominent part. Mr. Blaine was always distinguished for his unswerving Americanism. In 1867, '68 and '69 a very complicated question arose as to the arrest in England of Messrs. Burke, Warren and Costello, and other naturalized Irish-Americans for complicity in the Fenian movement. England put forward the plea that once an Englishman or a subject of England always an Englishman. Mr. Blaine took an active part in their interest, notably in the case of Mr. Costello. He was arrested while in Ireland in 1867 for a speech he delivered in 1865 as an American citizen in New York. He was convicted and sentenced to sixteen years penal servitude. Mr. Blaine brought the matter under the attention of congress, and by his efforts Mr. Costello and other Fenian prisoners were set at liberty. The matter was further agitated and resulted in a treaty with England, in which they completely abandoned the doctrine of "perpetual allegiance."

Of Mr. Blaine's prominence as a candidate for the presidency in 1876 it is now unnecessary to dwell, and of the famous speech Col. Ingersoll delivered when placing his name in nomination at the national republican convention at Cincinnati. The closing remarks of that speech are now worth reproducing: "Gentlemen of the convention," said Mr. Ingersoll, "in the name of the great republic—the only republic that ever existed upon this earth—in the name of all her defenders and all her supporters; in the name of all her soldiers living; in the name of all her soldiers who died upon the field of battle, and in the names of those that perished in the skeleton clutch of famine at Andersonville and Libby—whose sufferings he so eloquently remembers—Illinois nominates for the next president of this country that prince of parliamentarians, that leader of leaders, James G. Blaine."

Immediately after Mr. Garfield was elected to the presidency Mr. Blaine was tendered by him the portfolio of state, and began his career in that capacity March 5th, 1881. Scarcely four months passed, when the president was shot down at the hands of an assassin; and Mr. Blaine's loyalty to his chief was amply demonstrated during the period Mr. Garfield lingered in his death bed. After this sad and tragic end, Mr. Blaine was selected by congress to deliver the eulogy of Mr. Garfield, and on Monday, February 27th, 1882, in the presence of the most notable men in the nation, he delivered his eulogy, and which goes into history as the greatest speech of his life. The eulogy occupied an hour and a half in its delivery, and the last solemn words picturing the death of the martyred president, are worthy of the man and the occasion. He said, "Let us believe that in the silence of the receding world, he heard the great waves breaking on the further shore and felt already upon his wasted brow the breath of the eternal morning."

In 1881 Mr. Blaine retired from the cabinet, and the following year began writing his great work entitled "Twenty Years in Congress," a work which shall stand during all time as an everlasting monument to his memory. Personally, I regard it as the greatest political and historical work of our time. In 1884 Mr. Blaine was nominated for the presidency, was defeated at the polls and returned to Augusta, where he continued his literary work. In 1887 he went to Europe to recuperate his impaired health, and his refusal to accept the nomination for the presidency is well known to every student of political events. In 1889 he was appointed secretary of state, and the diplomacy and statesmanship displayed by him are worthy of the respect of friends and foes. During his tenure of office he grappled with many intricate subjects, formulated his reciprocity ideas, and brought to a successful termination the extradition and other treaties.

In 1892 he resigned as secretary of state, and the events which transpired on the occasion are of too recent origin to need recapitulation. It was my proud pleasure to have formed the acquaintance of Mr. Blaine, the first occasion being in 1888, and the last some months subsequent. During my interviews with him I was deeply impressed with his intense earnestness, his genial disposition and his forcible and convincing manner of argument. The last time I saw him the cares of life were visible on his noble features. I shall always remember and recall with pride the honor of having met personally the greatest statesman of our time. Farewell, departed spirit of the illustrious dead. A nation mourns your irreparable loss, but deep down in the hearts of the American people will be treasured a monument more enduring than either brass, granite or marble, of your service in the cause of your country.

The end has been reached; the last sad chapter in the book of life is closed forever. Loving and tender hands have borne him to the last resting place amidst the sorrow and gloom of the people he had loved so well. "The green grass will grow freshly around the grave, where he sleeps his last sleep. The winter gales will come and go untouched by the breath of spring, the wild flowers will blossom there through succeeding years, but never again will a nobler mind, a more uncompromising American, a patriot more brave, more chivalrous, or more true, to give his heart to the cause of the country he loved with intense admiration, than the silver-haired, care-burdened statesman whom they bore to rest in Oakhill Cemetery on January 30th, 1898."

How forcibly are we reminded in the words of the poet that: "Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime And departing, leave behind us Footprints in the sands of time."

EDITING A PAPER. Editing a paper is a pleasant business—if you like it. If it contains much political matter, people won't have it. If the type is large, it don't contain much reading matter. If we publish telegraph reports, folks say they are nothing but lies. If we omit them, we have no enterprise, or suppress them for political effect. If we have a few jokes, folks say we are nothing but rattleheads. If we omit jokes, folks say we are nothing but fossils. If we publish original matter, they abuse us for not giving selections. If we give selections, people say we are lazy for not writing more, and giving them what they have not read in some other paper. If we give a complimentary notice, we are censured for being partial. If we don't, all hands say we are a great hog. If we insert an article which pleases the ladies, the men become jealous, and vice versa. If we attend church, they say it is for effect. If we remain in our office attending to our business, folks say we are too proud to mingle with other fellows. If we go out, they say we don't attend to our business. An Irishman once remarked that for a nice, easy, clean job he'd like to be a bishop, but that fellow evidently hadn't felt the Elysian pleasure of an editor. In fact, all an editor has to do, aside from accepting free street car, railway and theatre passes and invitations to dinner is to acknowledge the receipt of money order subscriptions from his patrons and occasionally "roast" somebody he doesn't like. It's a sure enough leadpipe sinecure.

Removal Notice. The Welch Light company have removed to No. 28 North Fitzhugh street. Old friends and new are welcome. Gray & Hitchcock. Millspaugh & Green. Deliver Delaware & Hudson coal to suit the customer. In bags or not, as you prefer. Office, 136 Powers block, yard, Clarissa street bridge. C. S. Kellogg, manager. Lang's "Gilt Edge Coal." None better on or in the earth. Yards on North avenue, near railroad and corner South Clinton and Alexander. Main street office, Triangle building. See that the name "Culver" is stamped on all crackers you buy. They are reliable.

What is Transpiring in the Different Fraternities—Current Calendars. Central Council, C. R. & B. A. The large and enthusiastic meeting held March 21st demonstrated beyond a question of doubt that the sentiment of a majority of the delegates to continue the central body was very strong, and that hereafter any minor difficulties would not be allowed to interfere with the work of the board. The trouble that existed on account of the withdrawal of the delegates of Council 40, thereby depriving Bro. Himmelsbach of his membership in the council and at the same time depriving him of the presidency of the central body has been adjusted. Bro. Himmelsbach by withdrawing from Council 40 and attaching himself to Council 56, and also being sent as a delegate from the last named council, was in a position to be re-elected president of the central board provided the members so desired. Inasmuch as there was no opposition to Bro. Himmelsbach being placed in the chair of which he was deprived by the action of his former council, shows that the sentiment of the members was in his favor. That he will make a creditable presiding officer during the coming year is conceded by all. Every member, whether delegate or visitor, was called upon for remarks. Very nearly all favored continuing the central body. Thus the council starts out anew. The past will soon be forgotten, the C. R. & B. A. will continue to do good work; the different councils will be visited and encouraged, and the good work that will follow the action of those who are sincere in their efforts will show itself in the near future.

NOTE. The meeting was one of the most harmonious gatherings that ever assembled in the hall. Bro. Nolan was made temporary chairman.

"We won't have him on the floor so much," says Bro. O'Connor. Bro. O'Connor seems to have been mistaken.

Bro. Henry is rapidly going to the front as an orator. He can express anything.

Bro. Heyerson was limited to one hour; it was hard for him to keep within the time.

Bro. Garvey is getting to be a very fluent speaker. The men will have to look out.

New rules are to be adopted at the next meeting—not more than a foot long.

A committee composed of Ex. Halls, Bro. O'Connor and Nolan, were appointed to visit the councils and report.

The members of Branch 139 will receive Holy Communion in a body Sunday, April 4th, at the 9 o'clock mass. All brothers are requested to assemble in the meeting room at 8 o'clock sharp on this occasion.

Requiem mass was offered up Monday morning by Rev. Father Leary, by request of Branch 139, O. M. B. A., for their deceased brother Dennis Dooley, at Corpus Christi Church.

Auxiliary 7 have elected Dr. George Rogan as their physician.

The members of Branch 51 will receive Holy Communion in a body on Sunday, April 4th.

Easter Monday Evening, April 13, the Central Council will give a concert and entertainment at Plymouth hall, first class talent has been secured and an excellent entertainment can be looked for.

The following resolutions were adopted by Branch 131, C. R. & B. A.: Whereas it has pleased almighty God in his infinite wisdom to remove from our midst by the hand of death, Bro. Bernard Schum, one of the charter members of Branch 131, C. R. & B. A. Ever since Bro. Bernard Schum was a member of this branch he was a living example to all in his daily life, and also that we have lost a faithful member whose kindly soul will be missed by all.

Resolved that the family have lots and loving father, the church a staunch supporter, and the country a useful citizen. Therefore, be it resolved that we extend to the widow and children of the deceased our sincere sympathy in their deep affliction which they have sustained, and be it further resolved that our charter be draped in mourning for the usual period of time, and that the resolutions be published in the Catholic Journal, and also that a group of the same be sent to the family of the deceased and a copy to be entered in our minutes.

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## CATHOLIC SOCIETIES.

What is Transpiring in the Different Fraternities—Current Calendars.

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The following resolutions were adopted by Branch 131, C. R. & B. A.: Whereas it has pleased almighty God in his infinite wisdom to remove from our midst by the hand of death, Bro. Bernard Schum, one of the charter members of Branch 131, C. R. & B. A. Ever since Bro. Bernard Schum was a member of this branch he was a living example to all in his daily life, and also that we have lost a faithful member whose kindly soul will be missed by all.

Resolved that the family have lots and loving father, the church a staunch supporter, and the country a useful citizen. Therefore, be it resolved that we extend to the widow and children of the deceased our sincere sympathy in their deep affliction which they have sustained, and be it further resolved that our charter be draped in mourning for the usual period of time, and that the resolutions be published in the Catholic Journal, and also that a group of the same be sent to the family of the deceased and a copy to be entered in our minutes.

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## HOLY APOSTLES.

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