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**Some Lessons from the Assassination**

OF

**President William McKinley,**

BY

REV. FRANCIS J. GRIMKE, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIFTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Delivered September 22, 1901.

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“Righteousness exalteth a nation :  
But sin is a reproach to any people.”

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"And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there, that he died."---2 Samuel iii, 26.

These words have reference to an event which occurred many centuries ago in the Jewish nation. Abner was the leading spirit in the remnant of Saul's kingdom that was left after the battle of Gilboa, in which he and his son Jonathan were slain. For a time efforts were made, under the leadership of Abner, to continue the old order of things; but finally he made up his mind to cast in his lot with David, and bring about a union between the two factions. And for this purpose he had made his visit to Hebron. Everything was satisfactorily arranged, and he was on his way home when he was recalled by Joab, without the knowledge of the king, and basely assassinated. The news of the dastardly deed sent a thrill of horror through the nation. It was not only the fact that he was murdered, but the circumstances under which the deed was done, which rendered it all the more infamous. It was under the guise of friendship, and while he was on a mission of peace. David was horrified. The record is, "And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his

voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented for Abner, and said, As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall. And the people wept again over him."

The foul deed that was perpetrated at Buffalo on Friday, the 6th of this month, and which culminated, in the early morning of the 14th, in the death of President William McKinley, finds us as a nation in a similar condition. First we were startled, horrified, then indignant, and now plunged into profound grief. It is impossible to have followed the newspapers from the moment that he was stricken down until he was laid to rest at Canton without realizing the tremendous hold which this man had upon the American people and the warm place which he occupied in their hearts, irrespective of party.

My purpose this morning, however, is not to eulogize the dead President. That has already been done and will be done by thousands who are far better qualified for the task than I am; my object is rather to call attention to some of the lessons which may be gathered from this sad fact and which it is fitted to emphasize.

And (1) It calls attention to the uncertainty of life, to its evanescent character. James asks the question, What is your life? And the answer which he makes is, It is a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. How striking is that expression, "vanisheth away," suddenly disappears. David, on one occasion, said, "There is but a step between me and death." A step--and that may be true of any of us. The next may plunge us into eternity. Death is also sometimes compared to the sudden swoop of an eagle upon its prey. So it may come to us; so it does come to many. It isn't well to calculate upon the future. As the inspired writer expresses it, "Go to now, ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into this city and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." President McKinley doubtless looked forward confidently to the completion of his second term, to nearly four years of public official life, and then to close his years in quiet at his home in Canton, in the bosom of his family; but it was not to be so. Three weeks ago nothing seemed more improbable than the sad fact which confronts us to-day. But yesterday, as it were, among the living, in the prime of life, in health, with everything to live for--to-day he lies in the cold embrace of death. It is almost impossible to realize even now that he is really no more.

This coming of death suddenly, unexpectedly, in a moment when we think not, when we are least expecting it, is a fact

with which we should all be profoundly impressed. And it should lead us to think seriously of that future into which we may be suddenly plunged.

"It is not all of life to live  
Nor all of death to die."

We think about a great many things, I know, but do we think of this, of the life to come? When this mortal coil is shuffled off, what of the future? What are the prospects for you, for me, beyond this little narrow span we call life? Are we making any preparation for it? Have we any hope; and if so, upon what is it founded? Jesus Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. He that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." He also says, "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and smote upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." If we are to be prepared for that mysterious change, which may come to us at any time, and which we call death—the thought of which is forced upon us by the sudden taking off of our martyred President—we must get right with God, and we must do this while we are here, before death comes. We must forsake our sins; we must believe in Jesus Christ; we must walk in the way which he has marked out. His blood cleanses from all sin; and his word is a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. There is no other way. And this fact, I want us to remember, as we think of the new-made grave at Canton, and reflect upon the fact that some day we, too, must pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

(2.) We are forcibly reminded of the limitations which beset human knowledge. After all, how circumscribed is the vision of man. We are living in a wonderful age. In almost every department of knowledge there has not only been progress, but the advance has been marvelous. And especially has this been true in the science of medicine and surgery. The world has made tremendous strides. The germ theory of disease, the improved treatment of wounds by aseptic and antiseptic methods are only a few of the many evidences of the



vast strides that have been made in medical science. I saw a statement not long ago, in one of the journals, to the effect that the things which made Professor Gross famous in surgery in his day are the mere commonplaces of the profession to-day, which any ordinary practitioner can perform with perfect ease and safety. And yet, although the patient sufferer at Buffalo was surrounded by the best medical skill, the record shows three things: (1.) They were unable to locate the bullet. The same was true in the case of President Garfield. (2.) They all agreed that the patient was doing well; that the probabilities amounted almost to a certainty that he would recover. So certain were they that the danger line was passed that Senator Hanna went to his home and the Vice-President went off on a hunting expedition. The whole country felt, in view of the bulletins that were issued, that it would be only a short time before the President would be able to resume his duties. There seems, so far as we can judge from the newspaper reports, that there was perfect unanimity among the physicians in this view of the case. (3.) The post-mortem revealed the fact that the immediate cause of death was gangrene, and that the upper part of one of the kidneys was shattered, of which there was not the slightest inkling or intimation in the bulletins that were issued. It was even said that, from a surgical standpoint, the wounds were doing so well that the President needed a physician really more than he did a surgeon. It is clear that there were elements in the case which none of those who were in consultation perceived or appreciated. They failed, one and all of them, to grasp the case in its entirety, to take in fully the situation. I do not say that even had they fully understood the case that the result would have been different, but the fact is that they did not fully understand it. After all, in spite of the boast of science, how little we really know. How often we are simply like moles burrowing in the dark, circumscribed by our ignorance and powerless because of our ignorance in the presence of a catastrophe like that which befell the President at Buffalo. How pitiable is the sight to see the noble profession of medicine, in the light of all the vast strides that have been made, and in the persons of its highest representatives, blundering and floundering about and confidently asserting, only to find that it was mistaken. Such a fact is well fitted to humble the pride of man. In spite of all our vaunted boast of knowledge, how limited is our vision. What we know, in comparison with what remains to be known, is like one little pebble compared to the sand along the sea-shore. Tennyson has well said---

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell"---

a deeper, a profounder sense of our own ignorance and littleness. And the more we realize this the more will we be clothed with the spirit of humility and the more earnestly will we exert ourselves to broaden and deepen the scope of our knowledge.

(3.) I noticed among the statements touching the President, during those eventful days, as he hung between life and death, that his heart was weak and that that was decidedly against him. I noticed also the statement that he was an inveterate smoker, and that his smoking had much to do with the enfeebled condition of his heart. It is a fact, which careful scientific investigation has put beyond all peradventure, that the tobacco habit is decidedly injurious to the heart. An eminent authority says that "while there is no evidence to show that smoking alone is capable of producing structural changes either in the valvular mechanism or the muscular fibre of the heart, that functionally there can be no doubt of its injurious effect. It produces debility of that organ and irregular action."

It is not my purpose to dwell upon this aspect of the subject. I have simply noted it in passing in order to direct attention to the fact that we can not afford to indulge in anything which will affect injuriously any function or organ of the body. We can not tell what emergency may arise in our lives when we may need the very power which some habit or appetite is gradually undermining. We often hear the statement, when some operation has been performed and has resulted fatally, or when one has succumbed to a disease, his age was against him, or something else was against him. Let us beware of the things which make against us, which tend to unfit us to meet the shocks that may come to us or the strains that may be laid upon us in life. The tobacco habit is not one of the things that will help to turn the scales in our favor, or to give us a better fighting chance for recovery when life hangs in the balance. It is the man who has eschewed all such things that is likely to come out victorious. Let us, therefore, take the lesson and profit by it. As we stand with bowed heads in the presence of this great calamity, and bewail the nation's loss, let us pledge ourselves to put far away from us this thing which helped to weaken the heart power of our martyred President and therefore reduced the chances of his recovery, and to teach our children to do the same. His heart was weak, and it was weak through the insidious influence of tobacco.

(4.) Another item which impressed me in connec-

tion with the tragedy at Buffalo was that when the President was shot down, his first thought was for his wife. Ever since Mr. McKinley has occupied the White House the whole nation has been made aware of his rare devotion to his invalid wife. Nothing has been allowed to stand in the way or to divert his thought for a moment from her. However busy he might be, however absorbed in grave state affairs, he was always ready to respond to any call which she might make upon him. In fact, he seemed to live for her; everything else seemed to be only incidental. She was the center around which his thoughts seemed to revolve. And even when that fatal shot was fired, when he saw his life's blood ebbing out and found himself sinking from exhaustion, when it was natural, and would have been perfectly excusable for him to have been concerned only about his own condition, his first thought was still of his wife. He was afraid of the effect of what had occurred might have upon her, and was anxious that everything should be done that could be done to relieve the situation and to bring it to her attention in such a way as to make the shock as light as possible. How thoughtful! How noble! How beautiful! There is something really sublime, and at the same time pathetic, in his breaking away, as it were, from thought of self in such an hour as that and going out towards that frail, delicate flower which he had so tenderly cared for during so many years, and to whom he had been the greatest of earthly props. Some one has said:

"Love is a star, whose gentle ray  
Beams constant o'er our lonely way;  
Love is a gem, whose pearly light  
Oft cheers us in the darkest night."

And another has described it as---

"the steadfast and the true,  
The immortal glory which hath never set;  
The best, the brightest boon the heart e'er knew  
Of all life's sweets, the very sweetest yet."

How completely this noble ideal was realized in this man's life. No more splendid example of what a husband ought to be has ever appeared in our annals. His was a devotion, not only to his wife, but to an invalid wife, to one who had been a constant care to him for years, and yet it was a care that was the joy of his heart. In the average home the wife gets but little

attention, and the invalid wife gets still less. She is more apt to be regarded as a burden. The thing you call devotion is rarely ever seen. Before marriage there may have been a good deal, but after it most wives look for it in vain. But it was not so with this man. Invalidism, instead of drying up the fountains of his love, seemed to make them flow all the freer; instead of making him less thoughtful, less considerate, it made him all the more so.

His noble example is worthy of all imitation. And I desire this morning to hold him up, in this respect, to a nation cursed by innumerable divorces; a nation made up of hundreds and thousands of unhappy homes; a nation made up of hundreds and thousands of men who have failed to live up to their marriage vows to love and cherish their wives. This man was true to the heart's core to the woman whom he took for better, for worse. And there is nothing in his whole career for which he is more heartily respected and admired, and which has so endeared him to the American people as this fact. Long may his example live in the memory of the people, and may the time speedily come when in all the homes of this land shall be found husbands of the same stamp as William McKinley; husbands whose devotion to their wives will be no less marked and genuine.

(5.) The tragedy at Buffalo calls attention to the Negro, and in a way that is worthy of more than a passing notice. The part which Parker played in that scene, which sent a thrill of horror throughout the nation, was magnificent. It was his strong right arm which struck down the assassin and which prevented a third shot. It is true that did not save the life of the President, but that fact can not alter in the least the character of the act. Without thought of self, in the consciousness of the fact that the nation's head was imperilled, he threw himself with all the power that he could command upon the assassin. It was heroic! It was an act that was worthy of any man! I thank God for every such exhibition of courage, of daring, of heroic self-forgetfulness, by whosoever exhibited, but I am especially thankful that, in this particular instance, it happened to be a Negro. The nation needed, and never more so than at this time, just such an object lesson to bring to its attention the true character of its black loyal citizens. What Parker did at Buffalo is what the Negro has ever stood ready to do in every crisis of its history. His strong right arm has always stood ready to strike down all foes, foreign or domestic. In the Revolutionary War, in the War of 1812, in the great Civil War, in the War with Spain, he made a glorious and imperishable rec-



ord for himself. And at Buffalo he has given another proof of the fact that he may always be depended upon. There are no black traitors in this land, and never have been. There are no black anarchists in this land, and never have been. It is impossible to write the history of this country, to speak of its patriotism, of its valor, of its heroism, and leave the Negro out.

Parker's splendid deed at Buffalo---Parker, as the representative of ten millions of loyal Negroes in this land---I want to hold up this morning before the American people, and ask the nation if it can afford to treat slightly a people which is capable of such deeds, and which has been so true to it in all its history? Let this deed of Parker's be lifted up; let us make much of it; let it be spread far and wide, in the hope that the eyes of the nation may be opened to see the true value of the people whom he represents, and that its conscience may be quickened to do right by this people.

A good deal has been said about getting up some form of testimonial, of rewarding in some way this black hero, which is all well. Let the subscriptions that have been opened in various parts of the country go on; but if I understand the mind of this man Parker; if I may venture to read his heart, as a self-respecting, race-loving Negro, who has lived in this country, and who has felt the iron heel of oppression upon his neck simply because of the color of his skin, I know what he would say: "I thank you, gentlemen. Get up these testimonials, if you will; but don't stop there. If the nation wants to show its appreciation of what I have done, let it manifest it by throwing around my race the strong arm of its protection; let it see to it that it is secured in the enjoyment of all of its rights---civil and political---just as other citizens are. If the business and laboring men want to show their appreciation, let them manifest it by throwing wide open their places of business and labor organizations to the members of my race, as to other races, and give them the same opportunity of earning an honest and honorable living as is given to others. It wasn't the desire for notoriety that prompted the deed; nor was it in the hope of receiving any financial reward. It was simply from a sense of duty; because I felt that it was the right thing to do. I am no pauper, gentlemen; I have always been able to take care of myself. The same strong arm that struck down the assassin is still able to earn a living. Money is not an unacceptable gift; but nearer to my heart, a thousand times, than millions of dollars, are the sacred, God-given rights that belong to me and my race as men and as American citizens. Though you piled your gifts of money to the skies and withheld from me and

mine these rights or stood by and saw us despoiled of them, I would spurn your gifts."

And those are the sentiments of this black race all over this country, if I read its heart aright. It isn't notoriety that it wants; it isn't financial reward that it is seeking for all of its splendid services to the Republic. No! What it wants is its rights--rights guaranteed under the Constitution; what it wants is to be treated as other citizens of the Republic are treated. It has a right to expect that, and the nation ought to be ashamed of itself, in view of its past splendid record, to treat it otherwise. The heroism of this man, Parker, at Buffalo, is a challenge to the nation to show reasons why this black race should have its rights abridged and its privileges curtailed; why it should be treated with less consideration than other citizens of the Republic, and it is a challenge which the nation can not and ought not to ignore.

But I hasten on. The (6) and last thing of which I desire to speak in connection with the tragedy at Buffalo is of the fact that it directs attention, and in a way that ought to make itself felt, to the dangerous character of the spirit of lawlessness that is running rampant in this land, and to the necessity of taking some very vigorous measures to suppress it. The special form of lawlessness which came to the front at Buffalo, and which has plunged the nation in grief, is what is called anarchy. The man who shot the President claims to be an anarchist. And what is an anarchist? He is defined in the dictionary as "a malcontent respecting all existing institutions, regarding them as essentially tyrannical; especially, one who would use violence to destroy the existing social and civil order of things; or one who advocates anarchy, or absence of formal government, as a social and political ideal." Since the shooting of the President, the papers have been full of the subject. It has been discussed everywhere, and everywhere resolutions have been passed condemning anarchy, and calling upon the Congress of the United States, and the various State Legislatures to enact laws for the suppression of all anarchistic organizations and anarchistic utterances. To all of which I say, Amen. Let anarchy be suppressed; let laws be enacted against it; make the penalty as severe as you will; let it be driven out. The sooner the country is rid of anarchists and all who sympathize with them the better it will be. Such men are the enemies of the human race, of progress, of civilization, of all the higher interests of man. There are about 5,000 of these people, we are told, in the United States. Not a very large number, but 5,000 are

too many; one is too many. We want none of them anywhere in this land.

But, while we are talking about anarchy, and getting all stirred up on the subject, and seeking to set into operation influences that shall uproot it, it may be well for us to remember that anarchy, technically so-called, is not the only form of lawlessness in this land, nor, in my judgment, is it the most dangerous form. In the Southern section of our country you will find, not 5,000--the number of the anarchists--but tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men who have boldly set at defiance, through iniquitous legislation, the Constitution of the United States, the highest law of the land; hundreds and thousands who have again and again banded themselves together, and have shot to death, burned, hanged, mutilated black citizens of the Republic, without trial, without judge or jury, in defiance of law. And the Government of the United States has looked on and has done nothing; and the State governments have looked on and have done nothing, and the people have looked on and have done nothing. There is scarcely a day in that section in which the laws, as they respect the rights of Negroes, are not trampled upon, and trampled upon because those in authority are not disposed to enforce them. For years this condition of things has gone on in the South; this spirit of lawlessness has been rampant, has gone unchecked. And it hasn't stopped there. It has been spreading; its baleful influence has been diffusing itself all over the nation. Lynch law is no longer confined to the South. Murderous mobs are no longer peculiar Southern institutions. Everywhere you may discover symptoms of this evil. The man who shot President McKinley would have been lynched, even in Buffalo, had he not been rescued and conducted to a place of safety, to await the due process of law. Shortly after the shooting, an editorial appeared in one of the Columbus papers somewhat criticising the President--which was certainly, in view of all the circumstances, a very unseemly thing to do--but, after all, it was a matter between the editor and his own conscience. There was no law on the statute books which forbade such criticism. Straightway, however, a mob repaired to his place of business, took all of the papers containing the editorials and made a bonfire of them, and would have wrecked the building had it not been dispersed by the police. A few days afterwards, the papers spoke of a minister who was taken from a meeting and tarred and feathered because he ventured to speak in a similar strain. And only last Thursday, in the market, I heard two men talking; the one said, "I see they are giving him," referring to the

assassin, "a speedy trial;" the other said, "They ought to shoot him without trial." "Without trial;" yes, and that is the lesson which the South is teaching, and has been teaching for years. It has persisted in trampling upon law and in encouraging its citizens to do the same. The poor Negro has suffered under it; but so has the whole nation. He has been shot down with impunity; his life has been held and is still held very cheaply; but you can not cheapen his life without cheapening the life of others as well; you can not trample upon his rights without preparing the way to trample upon the rights of somebody else. Speak about anarchy; paint it as black as you may, is it any worse, is it any more to be reprobated than the spirit that has been ruling in the South for years? Anarchy has shot down one victim; the spirit of lawlessness in the South has shot down hundreds and thousands. But anarchy, you say, is a blow struck at government. How is it with the blow struck by the mob? Do mobs tend to uphold government, to increase respect for government and law? The spirit that struck down the President is an iniquitous, hell-born spirit, and ought to be condemned and driven out; but can the men in the South, who have been allied with mobs and who have been shooting down, in defiance of law, black American citizens, and the men in the North who have been looking on in silence, consistently condemn it? True, the one victim of the anarchists happened to be the President of the United States; but, in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, in a democratic republic, ought the life of the President to be any more sacred than the life of the humblest citizen?

It was the spirit of anarchy, we are told, that struck the President down. Was it anarchy alone? Had the spirit of the mob, which has had sway in the South, and which has been diffusing its poison all over the country, teaching the people to trample upon law and to disregard constituted authority, nothing to do with it? I believe it had. Has there been nothing in this widespread lawlessness in the South upon which the spirit of anarchy could feed? What has been the teaching of the mob? Has it not been: "It is its right to trample upon law, right to overthrow government; right to murder?" Even in the Senate of the United States, that chamber that ought to be sacred to liberty, the inner sanctuary, as it were, of the spirit of loyalty to the Constitution and to the great principles of the Declaration of Independence, a representative of the mob, in the person of a Southern Senator, dared to say, "Yes, we have shot down niggers at the polls, and we are not ashamed of it." He was rebuked, of course?



Every Senator was instantly upon his feet to call him to an account? No; not one. Even old Massachusetts, which has always been true to liberty and the Constitution, was silent. In his first great speech, in Faneuil Hall, Wendell Phillips, in replying to the Attorney General, who had compared the murderer of Lovejoy to the patriots who threw the tea into Boston harbor, said, pointing to the pictures of Otis and Hancock, of Quincy and Adams, as they hung upon the wall: "I thought those pictured lips would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American." But in that august chamber of the nation there was not one among the living representatives of the majesty of the law who was patriotic enough, and brave enough, to rise in his seat to rebuke such sentiments. Think of it! In the Senate of the United States the spirit of the mob, of lawlessness, showed itself, boldly, defiantly, and was allowed to pass unrebuked!

In the light of such facts, what right have we to be surprised that there are anarchistic organizations in this country? What right have we to be surprised that the President was shot down by the hand of an assassin? The encouragement which has been given to lawlessness in high places by silence or cowardly connivance, as well as the spirit which has dominated the South, is responsible, I believe, largely, for the blow which has plunged the nation in grief. In the assassination of the President we see the spirit of the mob culminating. Charge this foul murder to anarchy if you will; make it so hot for anarchists in this country that they will find no resting-place for the soles of their feet in any part of it, but let us remember, unless the spirit of the mob is also suppressed, though every anarchistic organization be uprooted, there is no guarantee that the same thing will not occur again. If this spirit of lawlessness is allowed to run rampant, as it has in the past, not only will other noble lives be sacrificed but the very life of the Republic itself will be imperiled. The nation that insists upon just laws and the impartial execution of those laws, and that inculcates upon its citizens everywhere respect for law, is the nation that will live. If it does otherwise, it is simply digging its own grave. It will die, and it ought to die.

Deeply as I deplore the untimely death of our martyred President, yet, if it will have the effect of directing the attention of the American people to this evil of lawlessness that has been stalking abroad in this land for years, and of arousing them to a sense of the importance of taking vigorous measures to put it down, his blood will not have been shed in vain. Oh, if the American people had manifested, years ago, the same interest in

putting down the mob spirit as they are now manifesting in putting down anarchy, President McKinley might have been living to-day instead of lying in the cold embrace of death.

We have been absorbed in foreign conquest, in building up great syndicates of wealth, in enlarging our navy, in extending our commerce, in uttering meaningless platitudes about the flag being the symbol of liberty, and of our mission to carry freedom to the oppressed peoples of the world; in bridging over the bloody chasm dug by our great Civil War, in bringing about a better feeling between the North and the South; but we have given little or no attention to the weightier matters. We have allowed the spirit of the mob, which has been infusing its poison into the very life-blood of the nation--this cancer which has been eating at its vitals---to go right on unnoticed, without concerning ourselves very much about it. And it has grown, and is still growing, and yet we think all is well. So thought the physicians who were in attendance upon President McKinley. They said that he was doing well; that he would soon be able to take up his accustomed duties; but suddenly there was a collapse, and in a moment he was gone. The fatal gangrene was at work, which they took no account of, or were ignorant of. The spirit of the mob is the gangrene in the nation's life, which it may overlook and pretend not to see, but it is there and is working all the same, and will be sure, sooner or later, to make itself felt. Of what avail is it to have foreign possessions and great moneyed syndicates, and a world-wide commerce, and a powerful navy, and a united North and South, if there is no respect for law, if there is not power enough in the Government to hold in check lawlessness? Is a nation safe, be its external signs of prosperity ever so flattering, if its citizens, even the humblest of them, can be seized by mobs and shot and burned at the stake without redress? Is a nation safe when it sits quietly by and sees its own highest laws ignored, repudiated, trampled upon?

By that new-made grave at Canton; by that heart-broken widow, who sits in sack-cloth and ashes in her loneliness, this nation is called upon to arouse itself and to lay hold of this demon of lawlessness, and to throttle it to death. The cry that went up from Buffalo, "The President is shot," is similar to the cry that has been going up for years all over the South, and the scenes that are transpiring in the home at Canton have been repeated over and over again in many a Negro cabin and home in the South. We weep over our martyred President; our hearts go out in tenderest sympathy to his stricken widow; but, oh, in the name of God, I ask, Have these black widows

and orphans in the South, whose husbands and fathers also fell by the bullet of the assassin, no claim upon the sympathy of the nation?

Because of the untimely death of the President by the hand of violence, the decree has gone forth pronouncing the doom of anarchy in this country. What about the untimely death by the hand of violence of the hundreds and thousands of Negroes who have been shot down in the South? Shall the spirit of anarchy, which basely murdered the President, be driven out and the spirit of the mob, which shoots to death black American citizens, be allowed to remain? If one goes the other ought to go. They are the same in character. Both must go. And it is the duty of the nation to see that they go. This, to my mind, is the great lesson of the assassination. It directs attention to this giant evil of lawlessness, and calls aloud for its suppression in every section of the land.

From the depths of my heart I am sorry for this sudden taking off of the President, and especially for the manner of his taking off. More sorry still am I that there was to be found even one individual within our borders who was capable of such an act. And, deeper still is the sorrow that wrings my heart when I think of the condition of the nation, as revealed in the treatment which it has accorded to its black citizens, of the oppression, injustice, and brutality which it has permitted and still permits to be perpetrated upon them; in its growing indifference to matters of human rights and to the things that go to make a nation truly great.

God have mercy upon this nation. God strike the scales from its eyes, and lead it out into the light, to the recognition of the fact that it is righteousness alone that exalts a nation.

“God of our fathers, known of old;  
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line,  
 Beneath whose awful hand we hold  
 Dominion over palm and pine;  
 Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget---lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
 The captains and the kings depart;  
 Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
 An humble and a contrite heart.  
 Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget---lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire;  
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre;  
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget---lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
Wild tongues that have not thee in awe;  
Such boasting as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the law;  
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget---lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard,  
For valiant dust that builds on dust,  
And guarding, calls not thee to guard;  
For frantic boast and foolish word,  
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!

Amen."