



ADDRESS
OF THE
HONORABLE LEE MANTLE

At the Exercises in Memory of the Late

Thomas Henry Carter

Auditorium, Helena, Montana
SUNDAY, OCTOBER THE FIFTEENTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND ELEVEN



Programme



MUSIC

MARCH

PONTIFICALE

GOUNOD



INVOCATION

REVEREND JAMES F. McNAMEE



MUSIC

STRING QUARTETTE

SELECTED

GRIEG



ORATION

HONORABLE LEE MANTLE



MUSIC

MARCHE

FUNEBRE

CHOPIN



BENEDICTION

REVEREND D. B. PRICE

Address of Mr. Mantle

Friends: Let me say that it was with many misgivings that I accepted the courteous invitation to address this assemblage upon the subject which has brought us together today, much doubting my ability to do justice to the memory of the distinguished man whose death we all so deeply deplore. However, it is a satisfaction to the people of the State, I am sure, that this day has been set apart and this opportunity offered to his many friends and fellow citizens to show their appreciation of his life, and to pay a last tribute of respect now that he has gone from among us. I believe there is no more commendable trait in humanity than its custom of honoring its dead; a custom which appears to be well nigh universal among all people in every land, and in every walk and condition of life, and which is inspired by sentiments that are at once chastening and ennobling. It finds expression in various ways; we observe it in the sad processions which pay their last sorrowful tribute by following the lifeless clay of some near and dear one; of some relative, or friend, comrade or neighbor, to its narrow home in the "Silent city of the dead;" by the gift of flowers whose fragrance may perhaps mingle with the tears of stricken mourners and help somewhat to assuage their grief; by erecting monuments to mark their last resting place; and, again, by gatherings such as this today for the purpose of extolling their virtues, of recounting their good deeds, of reviewing their lives and of dwelling in affectionate remembrance on those qualities and virtues which endeared them to us in life. But whatever form this elevating custom takes; in whatever manner the beautiful sentiments which inspire it find their outward expression, the effect upon the living is exalting. It broadens our sympathies, helps soften the asperities of life, makes us more tolerant of our common failings and links us more closely together in the ties of a common brotherhood.

Halted on Life's Journey.

And so, my friends, in conformity with this beneficent custom, we have come here today so that by our presence and with sober and earnest words we may show our respect and pay a tribute of justly deserved commendation to the honored memory of Montana's most distinguished son who but a few days ago, becoming weary, halted on life's journey and laid himself down to rest.

In endeavoring to do honor to the memory of Senator Carter, it is only necessary to say that which truth requires and justice demands, for in view of the magnitude of his labors and the value of his public services to both the state and nation, there is scant opportunity for exaggerated eulogy. There is, indeed, much more likelihood of failing to do full justice to a character so strong and well poised, to a record so replete with achievements, and to a life so filled with usefulness and high purpose.

On the 17th day of September, last, the citizens of Montana, without division of sentiment, were shocked and grieved beyond expression by the startling and depressing intelligence, which came like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky, that ex-United States Senator Thomas H. Carter, had suddenly expired. So wholly unlooked for and unexpected was this event, and so large a place had he filled in the public mind, that the sad news of his death was in the nature of a public calamity, and for days no other thought was in the minds of the people, no other expression upon their lips than a sense of profound regret and irreparable loss. It seemed incredible that one so familiarly known to us all; one

who had so recently left us apparently in the full vigor of body and mind and in the plenitude of his splendid intellectual powers, should so quickly and without apparent warning fall a prey to the "Grim Destroyer." Few at first could realize the full import of the blow which had so suddenly robbed us of a beloved friend, and neighbor and fellow citizen, and plunged an entire commonwealth into mourning.

This was the feeling throughout the length and breadth of the state, for there is scarcely a nook or corner within its wide boundaries; hardly a spot amid its towering mountains or up and down its broad valleys where his eloquent voice has not been heard, where the grasp of his hand has not been felt in friendly greeting, or where his name was not a familiar household word. And what was true here at home, among his own people, in his own state, was largely true also in the capital of the nation, where his long and conspicuous service in the House and Senate and in other high official positions, together with his striking personality, had made him an equally familiar figure and had won for him a profound respect and admiration.

Gifts of High Order.

I think it may truthfully be said that Senator Carter's great natural gifts, joined with his many attainments, were of such a high order that he would have made his mark and acquired distinction in any walk of life he might have chosen, but it is in the domain of politics and of statesmanship that we must look for the splendid record of his great career. He was an ardent believer in the faith and tenets of the Republican party, proud of its history and a devout worshiper at the shrine of its patron saint, Abraham Lincoln, for whom his reverence and admiration knew no bounds. He was a strong, vigorous partisan, advocating and defending his political beliefs with a force and eloquence rarely surpassed; addressing his arguments to the enlightened self interest and reason of the people rather than to their passions and prejudices.

By reason of his energetic partisanship and his great prominence as a leader, he was often bitterly assailed by political antagonists as all strong men are who have risen to eminence and become exposed to the fierce light of political discussion. But partisanship of the right order is not an evil, it is, indeed, to be commended because political parties are absolutely essential in our form of government. They afford the only channel through which concerted and united action can be secured for the accomplishment of needed reforms. Senator Carter's partisanship was of a high order; it was patriotic because it was based on an earnest desire to secure the supremacy of those policies which he fervently believed would most redound to the honor and glory of his country, and to the happiness and prosperity of all its people.

He was a political leader of sound judgment and rare skill; resolute and resourceful in emergencies and possessed, in an eminent degree, of the indispensable faculty of inspiring confidence and arousing enthusiasm among his followers. It is true he had many determined and relentless political enemies, but it is equally true that no man ever had more intensely loyal and devoted friends.

The Great Pacificator.

It is creditable to our humanity that whatever sense of injury, whatever heartburnings and animosities may have existed in life, they are seldom carried beyond the grave. The grave is the great pacificator. As some one has beautifully written: "It buries every error, covers every defect, extinguishes every resentment. From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections." Death is the great leveller. In the "democracy of the grave" all that is mortal of friend or

foe, of victor and vanquished, the high and low, the rich and poor, meet upon a common level. And as we meet here today to honor the memory of our dead friend, it is a source of deep satisfaction to realize that there is yet much of the milk of kindness left in the human breast, and that notwithstanding that the storms and assaults of bitter political strife had beaten pitilessly upon his devoted head in life, yet, no sooner had he been laid low in death than all acrimony disappeared, all censure was hushed and that many of those who most strenuously opposed him while living were among the very first to bear generous testimony to his zeal and fidelity and great worth.

Occupying his conspicuous position and with the responsibilities of party management and leadership resting upon him, it was natural that he should arouse some enmities, even in his own party. Misunderstandings are easy and disappointments many in the stress and strife of politics. And, justly or not, the party leader, with patronage at his disposal, is usually held accountable for all the failures and disappointments of those who seek and fail to secure office, and doubtless much of the personal criticism of Senator Carter had its origin in this source. Beyond doubt, he had his faults, and who has them not? Unquestionably he made mistakes, but who does not? But, whatever may have been his faults and errors they were insignificant and unworthy of consideration in contrast with the magnitude of his public services and the splendid results achieved. Let us, therefore, adopt the beautiful motto of a great organization to which he belonged, and bury his faults in the sands where the waves of time will quickly obliterate them from view, leaving only his transcendent abilities and his many virtues to be remembered.

His Broadmindedness.

One of the most admirable traits of Senator Carter's character was his broadmindedness. It was an exceptional case indeed, if he carried political differences into his personal relations. No matter how bitterly partisan warfare might be raging, he could always meet his antagonists in friendly social and personal intercourse. There were times when his closest friends and political associates differed with him and felt that they could not follow where he led, but rarely ever was there any abatement in their mutual regard. In fact it was well nigh impossible for coolness to exist when subjected to the genial warmth of his personal presence.

Knowing him as well as I did and the tremendous extent and the exhausting nature of the prodigious labors, both physical and mental, in which he never spared himself, I cannot help but feel that he really sacrificed many years of his useful life to the public welfare. He died too soon, not for himself—for his fame was secure, but for his state and country, which he served so faithfully and well. He has left a record of which his state may well be proud, and has written his name high up on the scholl of her illustrious sons in characters that will shine with increasing brightness as the years go by.

In Highest and Best Sense.

Senator Carter was a politician in the highest and best sense of the term. He sought and enjoyed political power and office because they gave him a broad opportunity for the gratification of his natural tastes and bent of mind, and for the exercise of his exceptional qualifications for public life. He was politically ambitious but his ambition was tempered with a deep love of country, a glowing pride in its traditions and an earnest desire for the welfare of its people. And it can truthfully be said that no public servant ever labored more zealously in the interests of his constituents that he. For him "All seasons were summer and all places

a temple" in which to sound the praises of his beloved state and its enterprising and hospitable people. His public labors ran over a period of nearly a quarter of a century and covered such a wide area of activity that it would take volumes to enumerate them in detail. Into them he poured freely of his time, strength and vitality and of the reserves of his great brain. There was no task too difficult, no distance too far for him to travel, no sacrifice of personal comfort or convenience he did not cheerfully make when the needs of the state or its people required it.

The time at my disposal does not permit of an extended recital of Senator Carter's long and active political record or of his many notable achievements. These in the main must be reserved for the future historian who will find in them a rich store of interesting and entertaining material, which will amply repay him for his labors. I may, however, briefly refer to a part of them which stand out most conspicuously.

My acquaintance with him began about the year 1888, when it became my pleasant duty to place him in nomination as the Republican candidate for delegate in congress, an office to which he was elected by a large majority, although Montana, then a territory, had theretofore for many years been apparently irredeemably Democratic. Little did I or any of us who participated in that convention, dream that we were giving to the service of state and nation one who was destined thereafter to develop into a figure of national proportions.

Montana was just then preparing to discard the swaddling clothes of its territorial existence for the majestic robes of statehood, and before his term had expired we had been ushered into the grand galaxy of sovereign states and the rising star of the new-born commonwealth had added its bright lustre to the national diadem.

His Entrance in Politics.

This campaign signalized his entrance into politics, and during its exciting progress he demonstrated that remarkable physical endurance, those powers of oratory, and ability to sway and influence men and draw them to his standard, which distinguished him in so many later campaigns and had thus early laid the foundation and given unmistakable evidence of the notable career which was to follow. And from that moment, until death claimed him, he grew in usefulness and expanded in knowledge and power until his reputation had spread beyond the narrow boundaries of his own state and he had become a recognized figure of national importance; the welcome associate of the greatest intellects in the nation; the peer of the ablest statesmen in the land; the trusted friend and counsellor of presidents.

Upon Montana's admission to statehood he was elected as its first representative in Congress where his quick grasp of parliamentary procedure, his vast store of knowledge upon public questions combined with his readiness in debate and his great personal popularity, enabled him to at once stamp the impress of his strong individuality upon his associates and gained for him a standing and influence rarely attained except after years of service.

In 1890 he was appointed secretary of the Republican congressional campaign committee.

In 1891 President Harrison, recognizing his special fitness for the place, appointed him commissioner of the general land office. His appointment to this important position was hailed with delight by the people of the west who had suffered much from the unjust restrictions and vexatious rules, due to ignorance of western conditions, which then prevailed in that department of the government. Under his intelligent and vigorous administration, its policies were immediately liberalized, its burdensome rules suspended, its business facilitated and placed upon a reasonable basis.

Remarkable Tribute.

In 1892, less than four years from his first appearance on the stage of local politics, he was selected as chairman of the National Republican Committee, the highest position attainable in the management of national party politics. This was a most remarkable tribute to his abilities as an organizer and of the confidence reposed in him by the great party leaders. I doubt if in the annals of our political history there is another instance of such a rapid rise from comparative obscurity to political and national prominence.

In 1895 he was elected to the senate of the United States where he almost immediately became a recognized factor of importance, due to his already comprehensive knowledge of public affairs, as well as to his well known abilities. It was in the last session of this term in the senate that he made his famous ten hour speech against the unpopular river and harbor bill, the congress expiring while the speech was yet unfinished. This was a most remarkable effort which attracted the attention of the whole country and gave him a national reputation. Notwithstanding its great length and the fact that it was delivered without rest or intermission, it was full of interest, replete with facts, figures and illustrations, and interspersed throughout with caustic satire and scathing ridicule. It succeeded in its purpose of killing the bill, which carried vast appropriations mainly in the interest of the eastern section of the country, and in compelling future recognition of the just demands of the west for government aid in the reclamation of its vast areas of arid lands. This, I believe, was one of the principal purposes of the speech, and from the moment of its delivery the ultimate success of the reclamation movement was assured. Appropriations followed, and soon thereafter the initial steps were taken in the construction of those stupendous irrigation projects which are today the wonder and admiration of the scientific world.

His Work for Reclamation.

To Senator Carter, next to Theodore Roosevelt, must be given the place of honor in securing this great constructive legislation which is bringing such vast benefits to our own state and to the west in general. He was one of the pioneers, the very ablest champion and advocate of the movement that led to these mighty undertakings which have since transformed into smiling fields and fruitful orchards, as if by the magic touch of the magician's wand, millions of acres of barren soil, and have, in very fact, made the desert to blossom as the rose.

And here I may pause to add, incidentally, that not only did this splendid exhibition of courage and remarkable power of sustained effort and forensic skill, insure the future success of the plan for reclamation, but it was current rumor at the time that it had saved President McKinley the unpleasant, and in certain quarters, the unpopular alternative of vetoing the bill, which had aroused the indignant protest of the country because of its gross waste and extravagance.

In 1905 he was elected to his second term in the senate and towards its close he had formulated and introduced his bill for the creation of the system of postal savings banks. He had long been impressed with the absolute public need of this legislation and had devoted a vast amount of time and labor and research to a thorough study of the subject and to its operation in other lands. The bill met with powerful and stubborn opposition from the very outset and every inch of its progress was vigorously contested. But nothing could withstand the force, eloquence and persistence with which he urged it, and none could successfully controvert the facts, figures and logic with which he so ably defended it. And finally the victory was won and he enjoyed the intense gratification of seeing this beneficent product of his creative genius, into which he had thrown his whole heart, power and influence, become a law of the land.

His Greatest Achievement.

In my humble judgment, this measure outranks in importance any measure passed in recent years in the interest of the whole people, and will prove a blessing to millions in the humbler walks of life whose scant savings, too often exposed to the greed of unscrupulous speculators, will, hereafter, be as safe and secure as the faith and credit of the government itself. The law has already amply vindicated the statesmanship and foresight of its author and has become a fixed and vital part of our governmental policy which no power or influence can ever repeal. Its enactment was the climax, the crowning act, of Senator Carter's brilliant legislative career, and will stand, a lasting and worthy monument to his name and fame.

Senator Carter was essentially the architect of his own fortunes. He inherited nothing but a stout heart, a strong will and a love of work. Nothing came to him by chance or favor. Stone by stone, with unflagging energy and unceasing industry, he laid the firm foundation of knowledge and character upon which was reared his success in life, demonstrating the truth of the lines, that:

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night."

We shall search in vain for a more distinguished example of the possibilities of American citizenship under our beneficent form of government which opens wide the doors of opportunity to all who will enter; where every avenue that leads to honor and distinction is available to that youth and that man, no matter what their station in life, who has the energy, the will and the perseverance to strive for them.

Was Without Vanity.

He was one of the most affable and approachable men in public life; wholly without vanity because of the great honors which were his. He was born and reared among the common people; that element of American citizenship which the great Lincoln loved so well. He was familiar with their lives; he knew their ways, their thoughts and feelings and was in sympathy with their hopes and aspirations. He was equally at ease on a cattle ranch on Montana's plains, or on the floor of the senate of the United States; in some old prospector's cabin in the hills, or in the company of the chief justice of the supreme court of the nation. No man enjoying his exceptional honors and distinction was ever more democratic, more unassuming, or depended less for his prestige and popularity upon the mere accessories of official power and position. He strove tenaciously and manfully for the reward which came to him, suffering the "Slings and arrows of outraged fortune," which frequently found in him a shining mark, with patience and fortitude. He was undismayed in defeat and magnanimous in victory, and no man, I think, was ever more ready or willing to condone a personal injury or to forgive a wrong.

Senator Carter's public life was an unbroken record of unceasing labor. His whole heart was ever in his work and he brought to it a combination of extraordinary qualities such as are seldom found in one man. Among his able colleagues and associates there were some who doubtless excelled him in some particular quality, but in the aggregate of those rare gifts, endowments and attainments which mark the statesman, and in all those exalted sentiments which denote the patriotic American, none surpassed him.

He was of a philosophical mind and gave much thought to the grave problems of life and death. He received the end of life's activities with the same philosophic calm and fortitude with which he met all its changing fortunes and vicissitudes. He shared with the great mass of mankind that faith, hope and belief planted deep down in the human heart by an All Wise Creator, in the immortality of the soul.

With Byron he could say:

"I feel my immortality oversweep all pains, all tears, all times, all fears, and peal, like the eternal thunders of the deep into my ears this truth—thou livest forever!"

Belief in the Future.

It is this well nigh universal faith and belief in a future existence that cheers and sustains humanity in sorrow and adversity, strengthens it in the hour of temptation, and encourages it in the paths of righteousness, and which robs death of its terrors. Dark and gloomy indeed, stripped of its light and beauty, shorn of its lofty aspirations to nobler living, would be this life were this faith and hope denied us.

When we turn to the social side of Senator Carter's character, we find ourselves at once in a gracious atmosphere of pleasing recollections which will linger long and regretfully in the memory of those who enjoyed the rare pleasure of meeting him in social intercourse. His nature was kindly, his personality attractive and magnetic, his manner frank, cordial and engaging. In conversation he possessed an unusual charm, always entertaining, always instructive. He was the soul of geniality, animated, vivacious and sympathetic; his memory was stored with apt stories and reminiscences pungent with refreshing humor. He was, all in all, a delightful companion, an ever loving source of pleasure, a welcome and favorite guest at every social and festive gathering.

He had become such a vital factor in the political life of the state and in its general progress and development, so prominent in its social economy, so deeply and actively interested in all that appertained to its welfare, that it is well nigh impossible, even now, to think of him as dead; to realize that the voice which was wont to fall so pleasantly on our ears is forever stilled; that we shall no more enjoy the rare privilege and pleasure of his genial companionship, and that kindly face, beaming with friendly warmth and interest, will never more be seen among us. Well may we exclaim with the great Burke:

"What shadows we are! What shadows we pursue!"

An Honored Memory.

But yesterday, as it were, our departed friend was a living, moving force, his heart pulsating with generous emotions, his active mind engaged in the consideration of the grave problems of national concern recently committed to his care. Today he is but a memory; yet a memory prized and honored beyond words, a memory that will long remain, an influence for good, an incentive to patriotism, an inspiration to high resolves and noble effort. He has joined "the innumerable caravan," that never ending procession in whose ranks sooner or later we must each and all take our place: for,

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Beautiful Home Life.

Distinguished as was Senator Carter's career, great as were the honors that were his, able and influential as he was, yet the crowning blessing of all was in his beautiful home life. There, beside his own fireside, in the loving company of his devoted wife and affectionate children, he found his happiest moments. There, he ever found sunshine, shelter and cheer; a sweet haven of refuge from the storms of passions and prejudice that too often beat without. They were at all times the objects of his deepest solicitude and tenderest care, and to them, in this time of their inexpressible sadness, there goes out from every hearthstone in the state a heartfelt sympathy. There is the greater loss, theirs the deeper sorrow, but they will find healing and consolation in the many sweet and sacred memories which belong to them alone and in the knowledge that he has bequeathed to them that most priceless of all legacies, a noble character and a good name. To say that Senator Carter will be missed but feebly expresses the void created by his loss. In his death a star of the first magnitude has been suddenly struck from the political firmament and our commonwealth has lost one of its richest and brightest jewels.

Really and Truly Great.

As yet we are perhaps too close to the canvas to see and judge clearly of his character and life's work, but when time, with its mellowing touch, shall have softened and blended its colors and given a truer perspective, it will, I am sure, be the judgment of posterity that in the true elements of greatness—in manly virtues, as a typical representative of earnest, patriotic American citizenship; a wise, constructive legislator, of high purpose, and as a lawyer, orator and statesman, Thomas H. Carter was really and truly great.

His last words were that he would sleep, and gently, peacefully as the tired child sinks to slumber in its mother's arms, he fell into that dreamless sleep which knows no earthly awakening.

Out, through the darkness of death, beyond the glittering splendors of the setting sun, his spirit passed; not to oblivion, not to annihilation, but let us fervently hope and believe, to life and light eternal.

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