

Dedicatory Address Unveiling of Morton Monument

JULY TWENTY-THREE
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVEN

J. FRANK HANLY

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DEDICATORY ADDRESS
OF
GOVERNOR J. FRANK HANLY

AT THE

Unveiling of Morton Monument

JULY 23, 1907

44-27-08
"Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Commission:

On behalf of the people of the State of Indiana, I accept from your hands this tribute of granite and bronze erected and dedicated to the memory of Oliver P. Morton. In erecting and dedicating it you have rendered a signal service to your countrymen. The deed you now and here complete will make this day and this spot historic.

By means of the sculptor's art you bring back to us the form and features of a much beloved and long departed son, and enable us to give expression to the affection and veneration in which we have ever held and still do hold him; also to the faith we have in the institutions for which he stood and for which he did heroic battle. For this service I thank you in the name and in behalf of all the people of the Commonwealth.

Oliver P. Morton is dead. His mortal body has gone from our sight and found rest beneath the soil that gave him birth. The earth has claimed her own. His work is finished. His sun is set. For him 'life's fitful fever's ended.' A mound within the cemetery—a stone inscribed with loving word—where each recurring spring immortal nature weaves anew a garland of myrtle and forget-me-nots; these our hands have fashioned to mark the spot where sleeps his mortal part.

He is gone. For thirty years he has not been among us. He will walk in the flesh with us no more forever.

The powerful arm upon which the martyred Lincoln leaned;

the mighty hand that kept a wavering state within the Union's gates, whose unerring finger-point the way to victory led, through strife and sacrifice, have long been limp and lifeless. A breath or touch of air would make them formless as the dust beneath our feet.

The tongue, whose logic, trenchant as a soldier's blade, dissolving sophistry and doubt, carried conviction, straight as a ray of light, to the minds of listening multitudes, is stilled. For three decades it has coined no phrase and uttered no word, no syllable.

The voice, inspiring as a bugle call impelling armies to the frenzied charge, which moved the people of this Commonwealth to do his will, and later, bent a stubborn Senate to his unfaltering purpose, is hushed in death. For years its clarion notes have not been heard.

The lustrous eyes through which his rare, intrepid soul looked out upon his fellows, at whose kindling light the stooping, frightened friends of freedom stood erect and faced the uncertain issues of civil war, and at whose fierce gleam and piercing glance his country's foes within the state he ruled slunk away, abashed, trembling and afraid, have long been closed and sightless.

The spacious dome beneath his massive beetling brow, where trooped like marching squadrons the virile children of his giant brain, is tenantless and empty. The mansion of his soul is desolate. He is no more. But we do not forget him. We cannot forget him, for he, and such as he, are unforgettable. A nation still walks in the path by him hewn out and to him unconscious homage hourly pays. The coinage of his tongue continues to pass current among us. His voice still inspires to lofty purpose, stirs to ardent action, and impels to consecrated service. Something of his clear vision and keen insight remains and falls anon athwart our path as amid the night's encircling gloom we grope our way to the higher plane of life and duty. The children of his mighty intellect live on. The concepts of his mind, the utterances of his tongue, have not died. They were not buried in the grave with his mortal dust. They could no more be buried there than truth itself, of which they are a part, could be confined within the limits of the tomb. Winged with the breath of divinity, they are enduring and eternal. Thus it is with them and thus it is with him. The grave out yonder in Crown Hill Cemetery holds only his physical form—the habitation in which he dwelt. The master of the house is not there. Standing by its open portal, after the lapse of thirty years, we look in vain for him we loved. We gaze upon the waste and ruin time has

wrought. We behold the changes nature works in matter. We stoop and lift within our hands his lifeless, formless dust. Standing so, we remember that 'this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality.' Through the centuries and across the limitations of space, from the far-away land of Palestine, there comes to our inner consciousness the reassuring promise: 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Standing thus and hearing this promise, we know that he whom we seek is not there; that the dust we hold is not he; that the great soul we knew and loved and honored has long since joined the Infinite—that immortality and the 'life everlasting' are his forever.

His body is dead and mingled with the elements; his spirit, freed from its tenement of clay, has swept in splendor into the Great Beyond. But in a sense he still lives and will long live and dwell among us. The influence of his deeds is still about us. The nobility of his life still uplifts us.

Assembled about this pedestal are the patriarchs of a past age, the gray-haired survivors of a generation now all but gone, the nestors of the Commonwealth, who carved a state from the wilderness and planted civilization in the solitudes of the prairies.

To you, sirs, this occasion must indeed be big with meaning, and fraught with feeling profound and deep.

As you look upon it the immobile face of this bronze image stirs to life a thousand memories of the days when in the plenitude of his power, he whose counterpart this stately statue is, led you in heroic effort and sublime endeavor to the saving of a nation's life. These mute lips, silent and inanimate as the insensate granite beneath, do speak to you, and to us, and will speak to our children when we are gone. They tell the story of a people's crucial trial; of cogent speech and stirring message; of appeal and sharp command; of muster camps and marshaled armies; of supplies assembled; of equipment found and funds obtained; of millions handled without the taint or stain of graft or peculation; of rugged honesty that would not yield though temptation stood on every side; of the exercise of power outside the law, without abuse; of an overpowering, overmastering will that could not brook resistance; of enemies at home, foiled, rebuked and silenced; of criticisms unjust as hate, of calumnies cruel and venomous as the envy and malice that gave them birth; of love and pity and tender care for the sick and wounded, the widowed and the fatherless; of a state betrayed and yet preserved; of days of toil and nights of waking;

of high resolve, of solemn consecration; of carnage and of sacrifice; of wounds and death and prison walls; of a land redeemed; of a race set free; of liberty enthroned; of a nation glorified; of a government saved from dishonor and dismemberment; of the establishment of national solidarity, of peace achieved, of a union reconstructed; of slavery abolished by constitutional enactment; of clearing skies and differences reconciled; the story of a great man's life, of service high and holy, of years of sickness and never-ending pain; of holding death at bay, of final dissolution.

This, in brief, is the story this silent figure tells. Fortunate the state, happy the nation, if we and our children hear and understand as you, our fathers, heard and understood.

This man was no transient citizen of the state. He was 'to the manor born.' From the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, his home was within her borders. If duty to her called him elsewhere, his love was but intensified by his absence and he returned to her with higher consecration and holier purpose. The substantial whole of his adult life was given to her service. As a citizen, as judge of the circuit court, as the Governor of the Commonwealth, as United States Senator, he devoted to her his every faculty. He never in all his life gave her a divided service. Body, mind and heart, all were given.

He loved the state and was jealous of her sovereignty. Encroachments upon her rights he would not tolerate even from the Federal government. Within her sphere he held her to be supreme. But he knew her sphere. He comprehended the dual form of our scheme of government. To him the 'many in one' was no mystery. We were many states, but one people. Between the states and the national government there was no just basis of contention, no intermediate ground subject to the conflicting jurisdictions of the two. He loved the Union, loved it with a consuming passion, loved it because he loved the state and believed the state could only find its highest destiny within the Union. He believed in its solidarity, in its unity, and in its indivisibility. With him the coercion of a rebellious state was but the enforcement of the law. He believed the president to be without discretion in the premises; that the constitution and the oath of his high office enjoined upon him the enforcement of the laws and the preservation of order throughout the Union, and that he could not be absolved from the responsibility thus devolved upon him. He would not admit the right of secession to exist in any state, and was unwilling to concede independence in any instance to anything short of successful revolution.

There was no way out of the Union for a state except at the point of the bayonet, and then only after our best efforts had failed to compel her submission. The idea of a dismembered Union and the formation and establishment of hostile nations within her territory was fatal to the nation and to the states alike, and was therefore intolerable. He did not believe the fragments of a dissolved Union could live together in prosperity and peace, but that war would follow upon war until despotism should succeed anarchy, and liberty be destroyed. He freely admitted that it would cost much to save the Union (how much none knew better than he), but insisted that it would cost everything to lose it.

He believed in the constitution and was unwilling that it should be amended by judicial construction. And when it was sought to so amend it in behalf of human slavery he boldly challenged the right of the court to exercise such power and appealed from its decision to the people of the nation.

He was a patriot at all times and in all places. He did not count the cost. His patriotism was pure and constant. Its flame never diminished. It often found expression in words of eloquence and power, but it was never content with these. Mere lip service would not do. It sought action and was impatient until the word became a deed. It was a living, vital force, magnetic in quality—capable of begetting its kind. It made him earnest. It gave him profound conviction, and what we may term elemental strength. It was the primal source of his greatness, and in it lay, in large part, the secret of his power over men.

He was a lawyer of 'superior talents and real learning.' He knew the value and possessed the genius of preparation. Until he was prepared he would not speak, and then he spoke as one having authority. His mind was orderly, logical and discriminating. He laid his premise with painstaking care and accuracy and built his argument thereon with such clear and powerful reason that his conclusion followed as an inevitable result. Indeed, every speech he ever made, whether on the hustings, in the courts, or in the senate chamber, was an argument, leading with unerring logic and irresistible force from premise to conclusion. His power of lucid, forceful statement was unsurpassed. He realized that a proposition clearly and accurately stated is half argued. His language was simple, but alive with Anglo-Saxon strength. He spoke directly to the subject in hand. His earnestness and profound conviction, backed by a character of granite, gave him a directness and a simplicity of speech rarely equaled. This made him truly eloquent and

enabled him slowly but surely to take possession of those who listened, and at the end to hold them with tentacles of steel. He piled argument upon argument until the culminative effect became crushing and overwhelming. He was master of invective and used it at times with annihilating force. He hated error and loved the right. His attack upon the one was only equaled by his defense of the other. These qualities gave him leadership everywhere, in the forum, in popular assemblage and in the senate. And this leadership he assumed and held. From the day he took the oath of office as Governor until he died, he was the acknowledged leader of his party in Indiana. Within it he had no rival. He shaped its policies, dictated its platforms, dominated its councils, led its campaigns and won its victories. During the sixteen years of his public life there were in the leadership of the opposing party at least four great men—Hendricks, McDonald, Vorhees and Turpie—men noted for brilliancy, for solid attainments and for their ability to reach the popular mind, but, as a campaigner, in debate and in intellectual power, he surpassed them all. Indeed, the state has never had his equal in this regard. Nor was his leadership confined to Indiana. He entered the United States Senate without legislative experience, at a time when great fundamental questions touching the very existence and life of the government, engaged its attention, and when it was filled with trained statesmen, possessing really great parts, but even these made way for him and yielded him leadership almost from the beginning. For ten years he was the master spirit of that great body, and this in spite of the fact that he could not walk to his seat or stand while speaking. Sheer intellectual force, urged on and directed by an unyielding and unconquerable will, and supplemented by an industry that knew neither weariness nor lagging, gave him leadership in every sphere of action.

He became Governor of the state at thirty-eight, in the flower of magnificent manhood, at the beginning of the most crucial period of our national history. Secession was fast becoming an accomplished fact as far as conventions and resolutions and armed preparation could make it such. Every moment was tense with expectancy. Uncertainty, doubt and irresolution were everywhere except in the South. Even strong men held their tongues, afraid to speak. Compromise was demanded by many. Peaceable acceptance of secession was openly advocated. Horace Greeley and the New York Tribune were preaching non-resistance. Thousands of loyal and well meaning men could see no legal way of resisting

secession. This was Morton's hour. He saw and understood and rose to meet the issue as only the really great can see and understand and rise. There was in him elemental strength, and with it stalwart courage, adamant purpose and a will that never broke or wavered. The war was a crucible into which were poured the elements of human greatness; from these and in its stress and heat and flame, his character was forged, and in the cast there was no flaw. He filled the occasion to the brim. In a meeting held in the court house in the city of Indianapolis, on November 22, 1860, he put the issue before the country as it really was, in such lucid terms, with such cogent reasoning and such masterful statement of the Nation's right and the duty of loyal men, as to challenge its thought and carry conviction to the minds of the thousands who heard and read. The citizen of Indiana who has not read this speech has yet a duty to perform before he is really qualified to discharge the obligations of his free citizenship. There is in literature no more lucid, forceful statement of the doctrine underlying national solidarity and unity than that made by him on this occasion. Its value can only be appreciated by those having full and accurate knowledge of the circumstances under which it was uttered and of the doubt and uncertainty then pervading the country.

It was delivered eight days before Chase found the courage to declare for the 'enforcement of the laws of the Union at all hazards and against all opposition,' and weeks before he had uttered his famous epigram 'Inauguration first, adjustment afterward.' The effect was electrical. It broke the spell, made rifts in the clouds and let the sunlight of patriotism into many hearts. Lincoln heard it in his Springfield home and knew instinctively that it contained a statement of the principles which alone could save the Union.

When at last the issue passed 'from the field of argument to the solemn fact of war,' Morton became almost ubiquitous. Lincoln's proclamation calling for troops was answered by telegraph, tendering twice Indiana's quota, before the ink was dry upon the paper where it had been inscribed. From that time on his efforts never ceased. He bombarded Washington with telegrams and knocked in person at slothful department doors. Arms and munitions could not be obtained fast enough. Action, action, action, rang continuously through message, word and deed; not thoughtless, spasmodic, erratic action; but intelligent, far-sighted, sustained and incessant action. The days became too short and their hours too few. He could neither do enough himself nor get others to do enough. The field was so wide, the need so great. A recreant and

disloyal legislature refused to receive his message written and sent to it under the mandate of the constitution its members had sworn to support, and adjourned without making provision for the prosecution of the war or for the maintenance of the state government. Then for two years Morton became the State. He raised funds, disbursed and applied them as the needs of the case required; assembled supplies, and mustered and equipped an army. And what an army it was—208,000—many more than fought under McClellan at Antietam or under Meade at Gettysburg. Would you know the history of that army? Go read the annals of the mighty struggle into whose red vortex its successive regiments were hurled, some to drop on the weary march, some to sicken and die of disease, many to fall facing their country's foes at the battle's front, others to perish from starvation and thirst in prison pens, others to return home after months of pain and suffering, maimed and broken in body and health, and all to fight their way to deathless fame and fadeless glory.

He acted sometimes outside the constitution and beyond the law, but always for public good. The necessities of the struggle to preserve the state and the nation compelled him at times to go beyond the limitations of both; but he always acted in the open and never abused the power he assumed.

In the midst of preparation, the enlistment and equipment of fresh troops and of recruits to fill the thinned ranks of regiments already gone, he did not forget the value of sanitation in camp, or overlook the needs of the sick and wounded. Thousands of hearts were cheered and lives saved by timely succor sent by him. He found time to go to the front and walk amid the dreary hospitals of pain to see for himself and literally to bind up the wounds of the men who had gone into battle under the inspiration of his word and deed. Nor did he forget the widowed and the fatherless. Indiana soldiers soon came to know that this stern, unyielding man was as gentle as a woman and as tender as an angel of mercy when he looked upon their wounds and beheld their suffering. It was then that they learned to love him; as to how well they loved him, let the devotion with which they followed him for sixteen years make answer; let this monument of granite and this statue of bronze give evidence; let the thousands of their surviving comrades here assembled be living witnesses.

Nor did this many-sided man overlook civic affairs or social needs. Under his recommendation and direction a state normal school was established, an agricultural college founded and a law

enacted creating a reform school for incorrigible boys. Reforms were inaugurated in the public service and strict accountability required of all who handled public funds. In his nature avarice had no place. He lived and died an honest man. He left a statement of what constitutes a test of a political party's integrity, so apt, so lucid and so forceful, and which meets the need of the present day so perfectly, that I commend it to the thoughtful consideration of all men of all parties. It comes to me with the consolation of an epistle from the Apostles. Standing here in the presence of his silent image, let us hear it, receive its message, carry it away with us and build upon it a higher conception of our own obligation to party, to society and to the state:

'The true test as to whether any party is honest is found in the fact that when it finds an offender or scoundrel in its ranks, it will punish or expel him. If upon discovery, it lop off the rotten member, and put away the uncleanness, it vindicates its character as an honest party. If, on the other hand, it defend the criminal, palliate his guilt, and shield him from punishment, then its members become partners in his crime, alike corrupt and deserving of the condemnation of all men.'

Morton's services during the war were really national in character. He comprehended almost from the beginning the magnitude of the struggle, and did much to prepare the mind of the country for the awful sacrifice it was to make. The position of Indiana was of pivotal importance. Under his leadership and the inspiration of his word and the impelling force of his effort, her stand became decisive and her place in the contest unquestioned. He lifted her to eminence and gave her a proud place among the states.

The value of Kentucky to the Union was quickly seen and appreciated and none did more to decide her wavering course than he. He urged the importance of the opening of the Mississippi river upon the president with persistent earnestness until it became an accomplished fact. He repelled invasion at home and saved the principal city of a neighboring state from capture. His example of lofty patriotism, ceaseless effort and unchanging purpose became an inspiration to the whole nation.

When he died his mantle was laid away. There was no Elisha to receive it, nor has there since been. There were great men in Indiana before him; there were great men among his contemporaries; there have since been great men among her sons, and there will yet be great men born to her, but none

have had such opportunity, such setting as he. Nor have any been so well prepared to meet such opportunity as came to him, or so well fitted for such setting as that which environed him. The very times in which he lived were elemental. A great man met a great occasion. The result was a mountain peak in human history. So it was with Luther, with Cromwell, with Garibaldi, with Washington and with Lincoln. So it will always be with the world's supremely great. He who is able to recognize and prepared to meet a great occasion needs but the striking of the hour to write his name among the immortals. Oliver P. Morton was able to see and was prepared to meet great occasion. He saw more clearly and was better prepared than other men. When it burst upon him he rose in strength and grandeur, and by his deeds proved his kinship to the first born of the centuries gone or yet to come—the benefactors of mankind—the unforgettables of the race. Before him the state had not known his equal, nor shall we know his like again, till in the unfolding purpose of the Infinite another crisis great as that in which he lived bursts upon the land, and his great soul reincarnated returns to earth to lead again his countrymen through its gloom and sacrifice.

Today, with love and tender recollection not unmixed with awe, we dedicate this monument and unveil this statue to his memory, fondly hoping it may stand through all the multiplying years as a reminder to our posterity of his greatness and our esteem.

But better than monuments and statues, more enduring than marble and bronze, are the impress he left upon his time, the uplift he gave to American ideals, the revivifying power of his patriotism, the enduring influence of his example, and the gathering glory of his achievements. Monuments and statues may fall, marble and bronze may crumble and lie in dust beneath the trampling feet of thoughtless multitudes that 'cannot know and do not care,' but the memory of these shall endure while the nation lives or liberty continues to be the heritage of man."