

"We would rather have you take it than not," said the president. "We have paid that much to your opponent, and I see no reason why you should not be paid as well as he."

"Well," pursued the governor, "the president continued to insist, and at last I told him that if he was determined upon it he could pay my expenses. It would cost me \$50 to fill the engagement, and that was all that I could accept. I asked them to send the money to my home, for, do you know, I do not believe I could have done my best with that money in my pocket."

Still, Governor McKinley makes a great number of public speeches. He cannot fill one of a hundred of the requests which he receives, and of late years his speeches have covered a wide range. He has spoken at soldiers' reunions, has given literary addresses at university commencements and has discussed religious questions at the conventions of the Epworth League and the Christian Endeavor. He is a strong speaker, and the impressions which he makes are lasting. He has a round, sonorous voice, and he can make himself heard in any crowd. He has a fine presence upon the stump. His features are much like those of Daniel Webster. He has the same full, characteristic forehead, the same deep-set, piercing eyes looking out from under heavy brows, and his jaw is equally broad and massive. He is a finer-looking man than Webster. His features are more cleanly cut, and the honesty which shines out of them was not so apparent in that greatest orator of the last generation. McKinley speaks for hours without diminution of force or repetition of ideas. He uses short sentences and makes it a principle never to speak unless he has something to say. He believes in plain Anglo-Saxon and avoids classical phrases. During my talk with him today I asked him how he prepared his speeches. He replied:

"When I have an important speech to make it absorbs me. It is hard work, and it takes all there is in me. I go over the subject again and again in all its phases in my mind. I read all I can get hold of upon it, and the speech gradually grows until it is ready for delivery. It is one that has to be given to the press, I dictate it to my stenographer and see that the copy is given out beforehand. This clarifies my thought, and though I seldom make exactly the same speech that I have dictated, it is substantially the same."

"Do you like to speak?"

"No, I do not," replied Governor McKinley, emphatically. "I dread it. My heart goes down into my boots whenever I get up before an audience, and I tremble until I have begun to talk. This is always so, and still I have been making speeches for twenty three years."

"Do you remember your first public speech?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed; very well," replied the governor, with a laugh. "It was upon my return home with the troops at the close of the war. I lived in the little village of Poland, near Youngstown, and a reception was given in honor of the soldiers. One of the judges of the county made the welcoming speech, and I was chosen to give the response. I was then just twenty-one years old."

"How old were you when you went into the army, governor?" I asked.

"I was just seventeen," was the reply.

"I was acting as a country school teacher at the time the war broke out. My father was anxious to give me a good education. He moved with his family to the little town of Poland, in order that I might go into the academy there, and when I was about fifteen or sixteen he sent me to the Allegheny College at Meadville, Pa. I fell sick there and had to come home. When I became better I took up teaching and got a country school near Poland. This I left to go to the army."

"By the way, governor, what did they pay you for teaching?"

"My wages were I think, \$25 a month, and I boarded around. My parents, however, lived only three miles from the school house, and the most of the time I stayed with them and walked to the school and back every day. Six miles would be a big walk for me now I suppose, but it did not seem much then."

"Well, while I was teaching," continued Governor McKinley, "Fort Sumter was fired on, and every one was wild to go to the war. A company was formed in Poland, and I enlisted. Gen. John C. Fremont inspected and mustered in the company. He examined me. I was then very slight, not much bigger than you are. General Fremont, I remember, seemed a great man to me, a boy of seventeen, whose mind had been thrilled with the story of his wonderful adventures in the west. I remember he pounded my chest and looked square into my eyes, and finally pronounced me fit for a soldier."

"In what regiment were you, governor?"

"My first service was in the twenty-third Ohio, and I remained in that regiment throughout the war."

"What was your rank when you entered?"

"It was that of a private," replied Major McKinley. "The first colonel of my regiment was Rosecrans, who afterwards became general. Our lieutenant colonel was Stanley Matthews, afterwards United States Senator and justice of the Supreme Court, and our major was Rutherford B. Hayes, who was to become a general and afterwards to serve as governor of Ohio and as President of the United States."

"It was a remarkable regiment, wasn't it?" said I.

"Yes," replied the governor, "and the great body of the regiment was worthy of the great commanders."

"And you were a private, governor?" said I, as I looked into the bright gray eyes of the man who may yet be President of the United States. "Won't you tell me something about your life as a private soldier?"

"It was just like that of the other soldiers," replied Governor McKinley. "My experiences did not differ from those of a million young men who went into that great war. There was nothing uncommon about it. It was simply the incidents of camp and march and battle common to the soldier in general. We carried our muskets and marched along together. We all of us felt our importance, I suppose."

"But you did not remain a private?"

"Yes, I did," replied Governor McKinley. "I remained a private for over a year. I was then promoted to be sergeant of the company. This was after the battle of Antietam. Rutherford B. Hayes—he had become colonel—brought

me my commission, and later on I served on the staffs of General Hayes, Major General Crook and Major General Hancock. In 1864 I was made a major by brevet by President Lincoln."

"Think of your first battle, major, and tell me how you felt for the first time under fire."

"I really do not remember," replied Major McKinley. "Our first engagement was the battle of Carnafax Ferry. It was a long time ago. There was plenty of bullets, and I suppose I was terribly frightened. Most men are at such times. I got through, however, and I was with the twenty-third in all its battles and stayed with it until the close of the war."

"How did you like military life, governor?"

"Very much, indeed, was the reply. "I wanted to remain in the army. My friends among the officers urged me to do so, and I would probably be in the military service today if my father and mother had not seriously objected. Somehow or other, they did not think much of my being in the army in the time of peace. The result was that I came home and studied law. I went to a law school at Albany, and then hung out my shingle in Canton, as a young practitioner. I continued to practice law until I was elected to Congress."

"Do you remember your first law case, governor, and what do you think of law as a profession? Financially, and otherwise, is it worth the best work of a man's life?"

"I will answer your last question first," replied Governor McKinley. "I consider the law the best of professions. There is enough in it to bring out all there is in any man, and under proper conditions it is financially profitable. As to my first law case, it was a suit for replevin, which Judge Belden of Canton asked me to try for him."

"How did it turn out?"

"It was successful."

"What did you get for it?"

"Twenty five dollars."

"In looking back over your career, governor, have you ever wished that you had stuck to the law and kept out of politics?"

"Yes," replied Governor McKinley. "I have, a number of times. But I think perhaps it is just as well as it is. The things we want in this life, you know, are the things we have not got. I do not suppose there is a man in any profession who does not at times think he would have done better in some other, and this has been the case with me."

"How did you get into politics?"

"My first office was that of prosecuting attorney. My friends made me a candidate in 1869. I was elected and served for two years. After that I practiced law until 1876, at which time I was nominated for Congress. I was not anxious to be the candidate at that time. I thought I was too young to go into politics. I had a good business, and I was not well enough off to enter public life. Still, I was nominated and elected by a large majority."

"How long did you remain in Congress?"

"I served in the House for fourteen years, and was then elected governor of Ohio."

"Do you like the governorship?"

"Yes, very well," replied Governor McKinley. "It is an important posi-