

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS.
Assistant Editor: T. J. McCORMACK.

Associates: { E. C. HEGELER.
MARY CARUS.

VOL. XV. (NO. 10)

OCTOBER, 1901.

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ROBERT WILHELM BUNSEN.

(1811-1899.)

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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WILLIAM MCKINLEY.

DIED SEPTEMBER 14, 1901.

BY THE EDITOR.

MAN'S worst enemy is man. The greatest hindrances to the welfare of the human race are the errors, the passions, and the evil intentions in the souls of those that are mentally or morally diseased. President McKinley has been assassinated in cold blood by the hand of a demented youth! And why? The assassin does not hate the man, but the office. The President represents social order, law, and government.

The nation stands aghast at the crime, and the lover of liberty is perplexed at the problem of how to deal with those unruly elements who prefer the bullet to the ballot, who spread their doctrines not by argument but by sowing hatred and inciting to murder, and whose idea of progress is slaughter and destruction. How liberty shall be benefited by the deed and how progress can be promoted through the terrorism which the enemies of our social order try to spread, is incomprehensible; but who can disentangle the twisted knots of the logic of a fanatic?

America is the land of liberty, but liberty is possible only by the restriction imposed upon every one through a respect for the rights of others. Laws are devised for no other purpose than to insure the liberty of all. We must grant that there are wrong laws, laws which do not serve this purpose, but the tendency of our national development is toward progress on the lines of freedom, and there is reason to hope that bad laws will in time be abrogated. Certainly there is no ground to denounce law itself because some laws are not right. The greatest hindrance to progress is the false notion that one can kill ideas or abolish institutions by

slaying their representatives. The assassination of kings in Europe has so far only strengthened the reactionary powers, and the assassination of a president in America will certainly not weaken the people's belief in our constitution.

William McKinley became conspicuous by his vigorous defence of a high tariff, but he would never have risen into national prominence had not the Democratic party raised the cry for free silver,—a step that would have led to the deterioration of our money standard. The people's enthusiasm for a high tariff is gone, and Mr. McKinley would never have been elected upon his favorite issue. But when there was the choice between honest money and repudiation, the people elected him by an overwhelming majority, in spite of his stand on the tariff.

In his administration President McKinley endeavored to do his best. It may be granted that he made mistakes, but he felt the responsibility of his high office, and he grew with the expanse of his duties. We must remember that new problems offered themselves with the conquest of new territories, and our administration had to grope its way to find the proper solution. Whatever enemies Mr. McKinley may have had, partisan hatred, envy, and cavil ceased at the bedside of the stricken man. Both the North and the South, Republicans and Democrats, see in him the representative of the nation, and all unite in their admiration of his courageous behavior in the hour of trial and in the face of death.

The halo of martyrdom now surrounds his head, and history will gladly and fully recognise the merits of his administration. His memory will be kept sacred by the side of his predecessors Abraham Lincoln and James A. Garfield.