

Proceedings of the Senate
State of Minnesota

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In Memoriam
Of the Life and Services of the late
Patrick Fitzpatrick

January 28, 1909



HON. PATRICK FITZPATRICK

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Extract from the Official Journal of the Senate

January Twenty-eight, Nineteen Hundred Nine

Memorial Services, Patrick Fitzpatrick

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THE HOUR having arrived for the memorial service in memory of the late Patrick Fitzpatrick, addresses were made by Messrs. Works, Thorpe, Collier, Wilson, McGowan, Schaller, Gunderson, Farrington, Stephens, Nelson and Peterson.

Mr. Works offered, on behalf of the committee, the following preamble and resolution:

The Honorable Patrick Fitzpatrick, who was born at Galena, Illinois, 1851, was a member of the Minnesota State Senate for two full terms and one session of the third, died August 31, 1908.

As a member of the senate, his work was marked by fearlessness, honesty and courage, coupled with a courtesy that won the love and admiration of his associates. He loved the interest of his adopted state and was extremely jealous of anything that tended, however remotely, to impair her material welfare.

His was one of those rare minds which dwelt not only in the present, but appreciated the past, yet seemed to grasp the possibilities of the future. A man of strong religious convictions who believed in his church with his whole heart, yet was catholic-minded enough to respect and honor those who differed from him. It was only natural that a man of that stamp should impress himself forcefully upon

his associates and wield a silent but potent influence over them, and while he was naturally of a silent and retiring disposition, I am safe in saying that no man was ever listened to with closer attention than he when addressing the senate upon any question.

It is therefore but fitting that we, who were associated with him, should, in token of the high esteem in which he was held in his life, pay just tribute to his memory by placing upon the minutes of this body a permanent record of the high esteem in which he was held; therefore be it

Resolved, That the foregoing, as an expression of our high regard for him in his life and the sincere regret in his death and the honor in which we hold his memory be spread upon the records of the Senate of the State of Minnesota, and that an engrossed copy be furnished to his near relatives and also to each Senator who served with him during the session of the Thirty-fifth Legislature.

George P. Wilson,
L. O. Thorpe,
S. D. Works,
F. H. Peterson,
Committee.

S. D. WORKS

Mr. President: Death is always clothed in mystery and shrouded in darkness, and wise is he who can see a single gleam of light when his footfall sounds in our midst. It certainly comes with sadness in the striking down of a strong, vigorous man in the height of his usefulness, who, like Patrick Fitzpatrick, was crowned by the virtues we all love, even though we see them afar off.

Therefore when we look simply at the physical fact of his death we are in deepest gloom, but as we draw aside the curtain of his past life and see, even

briefly and fragmentarily, something he has accomplished, we forget the death and rejoice that one like him has lived.

His life, to my mind, can be best illustrated by the imposing classic columns of this building. As we look at the massive dome and lovely arches, their strength seems in keeping with their surroundings, but the genius of the architect was not satisfied with strength alone, so the capitol was supplied with the chaste adornment and we have that which beautifully typifies the life and character of Patrick Fitzpatrick, namely, strength and beauty combined.

His life was characterized by such simplicity as to be almost severe. To be convinced of the righteousness of an act was equivalent to his hearty support, and personal friendship and even personal interests fell before the greater ideal of righteousness.

The position he occupied in the Senate of 1907 was unique. A member of the so-called minority party in so far as alignments of this character could confine one of his free tendencies, he could always be relied upon to champion the causes of the weak and unpopular and oppressed. He had political opponents, as every strong, independent thinking man must and should have, but Patrick Fitzpatrick had not a single personal enemy, and happy, indeed, the man, when the burdens of life are laid down, can give expression to similar fact.

Of personal memories of him, I have many, and they are precious, for they reveal to me something of the inner life of the man. The lips of the "old man eloquent" are silent in death. No more shall his voice be heard reverberating down the halls of this Senate. The simple, busy life is finished, and as we close the book, emphasis has been given to a great truth in "that an honest man is the noblest work of God."

L. O. THORPE

When the duty of placing a wreath to the memory of our departed friend and co-laborer, Senator Fitzpatrick, was assigned to me, I considered the task a sad one, while in another sense it is pleasant. No explanation can be needed as to why I used such apparently contradictory terms. On the day the news of his death came I wrote an article in one of our local papers, from which I will quote the following:

"Tuesday evening the daily papers brought the sad news that Senator Fitzpatrick of Winona died that day. To the average reader, who is accustomed to have deaths, accidents and all kinds of happenings spread before him daily, the simple announcement of this death can awaken but little interest. I feel, however, that your readers should know a little more about this man, as he has been a member of the law-making body during the past ten years.

"The new members naturally try to 'size up' the older senators and figure out as best they can what kind of men they are to work with during the two sessions. These new men would generally conclude that Senator Fitzpatrick was a man of little consequence. He had apparently very little ability and was of homely appearance, dressed in cheap, rather ill-fitting 'store clothes,' very reserved and intruded his company on no one. He seemed to take little interest in the small matters and routine work that consumed much time, but suddenly when some bill involving a constitutional question, where the rights and liberties of the people were at issue, this plain and unpretentious man would take the floor and the new senators would gaze and wonder. What could he have to say? They saw a changed man, a man on fire, defiant, aggressive and eloquent. When he 'let go' all was stillness and rapt attention, not a word nor a motion could be lost. The eloquence, argu-

ments, Irish wit and sarcasm combined to make it an occasion long to be remembered. He was easily in the front rank as an orator. When in Winona during the latter part of the session I made some inquiry about my good friend, and found nothing but kind words for him. Remember, Senator Fitzpatrick was living at that time and people in his home town spoke well of him. Among other things, they said that as an attorney he was truly a defender and helper of the poor, the sick and the unfortunate."

Of him it can be truly said that he did his duty faithfully, fulfilling the purpose for which he was created, and built up in himself a manly character. As Burke said of a powerful nobleman---"his virtues were his means." Fitzpatrick seemed to have in his life followed the advice given by Burns' father to his son:

"He bade me act a manly part, tho' I had ne'er
a farthing,
For without an honest, manly heart no man was
worth regarding."

F. H. PETERSON

My acquaintance with Senator Fitzpatrick dates back only to the beginning of 1903, but this period includes three sessions of the Legislature, in the last two of which he sat on my immediate right, and I came to know him so well that it seemed as if our acquaintance had been lifelong.

Patrick Fitzpatrick was one of the noblest, one of the very best men it has ever been my good fortune to meet, and the Senate honors itself and the great state which it represents by pausing at this hour and uncovering at his tomb.

I speak with profound sorrow because of the great loss which we have sustained in his death, and yet sorrow is mingled with gratitude to the All

Father because such a man as Mr. Fitzpatrick lived in our state, took part in our counsels and influenced our thoughts and acts for so many years.

No one in the short period devoted to these memorial exercises can portray his character or do justice to his memory. Of a truth the elements of life were "so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man.' "

His personal life was as pure as the sweet breath of spring. During all the hours he spent with me no impure word or suggestion ever passed his lips. And his devotion to the state was as the devotion to purpose of the sainted knight of old who set forth on his pilgrimage to wrest from the heathen the tomb of the Master.

W He was a devoted son of the Church, yet his religion was broad and tolerant enough to include all who honored his Lord. His home relations were beautiful and his friendship ideal. He was a man of scholarly attainments and a close student of history and politics.

He belonged to the minority party in this body and in modesty shrank somewhat from giving his name to measures of reform, fearing that he might not be so successful with them as others, but the record of his vote during all the years he was a member of this body is so clean and pure and honest that it constitutes an ideal service which we may all study with profit.

He rarely took the floor; on all ordinary questions he was content to express his thought by his vote, but upon questions of great moment or where some moral issue was involved, when the dividing line separated right from wrong, where the sanctity of home or the sacred relations of family were called in question, then the strength born in him by generations of struggle for the mastery by virtue over license, and good over bad, became concentrated in his thought, and his speech came as a

rushing torrent of overwhelming logic and eloquence, and though it sometimes failed to stir us to active good, it rarely if ever failed to restrain us from positive wrong.

So walked Fitzpatrick among us in the prime of his manhood. But suddenly the silver cord loosed, the golden bowl broke, the dust was returned to the earth whence it came, and the spirit departed to God who gave it.

To the aged death comes as sunset to the summer day---when all the beauties of light and color are gathered in the western sky for a brief hour, as if the door of the unseen world were opened and its glories allowed to shine out upon us.

But the fatal arrow struck down our friend while his sun was at meridian, while his hand and brain were still vigorous for the battle of life, while it was still a great privilege to be a man and live and work.

We mourn his loss, but can we say his death was untimely? I have an abiding faith that life and death are not matters of accident or chance, but that man in the performance of his duty is as immortal as the undying spirits.

Life and death are great mysteries which no man by reasoning may find out. But when reason fails, faith begins, and it leads us to the feet of the Infinite.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

Dear friend, we turn from thy grave to face the problems and perplexities of the future---the great, magnificent, matchless future thou wouldst bravely have faced with us.

May thy noble impulses leap over the narrow void from death to life and quicken us to renewed energy and zeal in every good work.

GEORGE P. WILSON

Very beautiful and touching tributes have been paid to-day to the memory of our late colleague, Senator Fitzpatrick, and I am unwilling to forego the privilege of endorsing what has been so eloquently said concerning his life and character and of briefly voicing my personal admiration.

This occasion is unique in this: Memorial exercises are seldom held, and tributes of praise are seldom spoken, in memory or in praise, of those who have led a life of self-effacement as did our deceased brother. He was extremely modest and extremely reserved, always preferring others to himself. In no respect was his a spectacular life. It was only those who came near to him by close association who fully appreciated that in everything he said or did he was actuated by the purest of motives. He was simple and unaffected, and his very soul seemed to be clothed in humility. He seldom asserted himself. It was only when his conscience was touched, when some position was taken or asserted, which he deemed radically wrong in principle, or some measure was proposed which, in his judgment, encroached upon the constitutional right of the individual citizen, and his silence might be construed as acquiescing, that he asserted himself. On such occasions he would most earnestly and eloquently assault what he deemed to be wrong and assert and defend that which he deemed to be right. It was only on such occasions and under such conditions that he laid aside his innate modesty and displayed his moral courage and intellectual power.

But few, if any, of his associates in this body knew until after his death that for almost a year prior to his death he had been seriously ill, and but few, if any, of his associates here knew of his death until they saw in public print the announcement of his burial.

So far as we are concerned, therefore, he went to his grave unhonored and unsung, but cherishing

his memory as we do, because of his nobility of character and worth as a citizen, it is appropriate that we place upon the records of this body, in perpetuation of his memory, the resolutions reported by the committee.

R. G. FARRINGTON

Ever since the first day of the session when resolutions were adopted setting apart this day for a memorial to the Honorable Patrick Fitzpatrick, I have looked forward to this hour, but had intended to maintain a silence, for it seemed more appropriate and fitting to me that what was said in his honor should fall from the lips of men who had seen longer service with him than it was my privilege to enjoy, and this morning as I sat listening to the sentiments that have already been spoken and to the spirit of the resolutions that have already been adopted, I wished I had the power of language to pay to his memory the tribute that it deserves. As we walk down the path of life that is laid out for us, we meet all manner of men---most men are good men---most men are honest men---some men are endowed with rare genius and ability, and here and there we find a real natural gentleman; and I may say that in all the days of my manhood, I do not believe it has been my privilege to meet another man who better combined the kindly, amiable graces of the true gentleman with the brilliancy of a trained and grand intellect and the industry of a laboring nature that makes for the good of the commonwealth. He was indeed a great man! It was said a moment ago---some remark was made with reference to the feelings that come over new members when they first come to the chamber. I remember well my feelings two years ago when I first came here, and I presume the same comes to every other member of us who are new--- we study our colleagues, and I cannot forget that as we sat at this desk, the Senator from Dakota County was here at my side and pointed to an old gentleman, and said, "Farrington,

there is the orator of the Senate," and subsequent events proved to me the verity of his statement. As you all know, he did not address the Chair as often as his colleagues, but when he did, we all leaned forward to listen, because we knew we were going to hear words of matchless eloquence--- hear the pulsations of a noble heart. His face would light up, his eyes flash--- he seemed to have a magic presence--- there was a splendid modulation of his voice, and his grand and sweeping gestures seemed to magnetize the Senate.

It has been my privilege to listen to many of the great orators of the day, but I can truthfully say that I have never heard any man who interested me more than did our old friend. He was a grand, good man. I never saw him until I met him in this chamber, but I learned to know the value of his service. Almost always he was at his desk, constant in attendance to his duties in both committees and the chamber, and always for the people in every measure for which he voted. He worked and labored, and did his duty well.

I do not know that I can add anything more to what has been said this morning, but there is one thought that comes to me in the reading of these resolutions, and that is for the members of his family---I do not know them---I have never had the honor to be a guest at his home, but if there are those who have been bound to him by ties of blood, let us have for them the kindest thought today. Few there are among you who have not some time been called to stand beside the open grave of one you loved, have felt that awful grief that seemed to bear you down to earth, that darkened hopeful skies and made you breathe the very breath of anguish. Let us have for them our kindest thought and may we hope and believe with them that if over on the other side of the dark river a place is appointed for them who have done their duty well, who have left this world better because they lived in it, if after the long dark night there comes a glorious dawn-

ing, then Patrick Fitzpatrick lives again in the gorgeous sunlight of an everlasting day.

J. T. McGOWAN

It is one of the beautiful things in life to observe the charity this world bestows upon the memory of its departed brothers. The lives of most of us are such that we have reason to feel grateful to know that after we have passed over the portal of time and gone to our everlasting home, our good deeds only will live in the memory of those whom we have left behind. Our dear dead friend, whose memory we honor to-day, does not need the charity of an earthly forgiveness. His life was such an example of honor, purity and virtue that he has gone to meet his Creator with a soul so clear and spotless that he is now undoubtedly enjoying the eternal reward which his Creator and ours has promised all the souls of the just.

In our mad rush during life for the enjoyment of pleasure, wealth and fame, we are occasionally halted by visitations of sickness and of misfortune which cause us to check our onward course and break away from earthly pursuits and for a time at least consider the higher objects of life, recognizing the mission in life for which we were created. Sickness and misfortune may be cured by earthly prescriptions, but when the hand of Death places its icy fingers upon our frail and mortal form, we have naught to do but to accept the inevitable, and prepare to present the account of our life work to the all-powerful Judge whom we shall meet in eternity. It is then that we would ask protection of the charity promised by the teachings of the Redeemer when he held the hope of salvation out to us, providing we have but made an honest effort to break away from the passions and vices of flesh and sought the forgiveness of those whom we have injured or offended.

While I know that our departed friend was moulded from the same human clay as we, and sub-

ject to the same evils of flesh and blood as other men, yet I believe that Patrick Fitzpatrick during his lifetime hewed closer to the line of honesty, integrity, and pure brotherly love than a majority of men, and for that he received while in contact with his associates their esteem, love and respect, and now when gone beyond their presence, their everlasting gratitude and remembrance.

Senator Fitzpatrick was eloquent, and while on many occasions he filled the halls of this grand building with the beauty of his magic voice and held his spectators spell-bound by his clear and forceful logic, he never used those talents to gain the applause of his listeners, or to receive a favorable or extended comment from the public press. His was a simple, honest, unassuming character, with all those elements of virtue extended into his daily life, and while I should like to say more on this occasion to add to the expressions of love, esteem and respect which have already been so beautifully placed by the members of this body over the memory of our absent friend, I could offer no words so eloquent or express no sentiment so beautiful as the words spoken by our beloved brother himself when two years ago on this same floor he joined with the members present here to-day in a like memorial to another of our distinguished, deceased members. On that occasion he said:

“Our deceased friend and former fellow Senator was a man who performed more than he promised, and it may not be inappropriate for me on this occasion in this chamber, the scene of his late public activities, and in the presence of his former associates who honored and respected him, surrounded by the friends who loved him and now mourn his loss, to say those beautiful words, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant.’ ”

On motion of Mr. Works, the resolutions were adopted by a rising vote of the Senate.

On motion of Mr. Calhoun, as a further token of respect to the memory of the late Senator Fitzpatrick, all further business of the Senate for the day was dispensed with, and the Senate adjourned until 11 o'clock a. m., January 29, 1909.

Attest:

Geo. W. Peachey,
Secretary of the Senate.