

TOM JOHNSON AND THE STATUE

BY KATHERINE H.

[Tom Johnson Day, Cleveland, Ohio, July 18, 1913]

"Though lost to sight, to memory dear."

ALL that is mortal of our departed Mayor lies buried in a distant cemetery far away from the city and its people he did so much for. There is no tomb, nor any spot of earth sacred to his memory here, where those who sincerely bemoan his loss may go and drop a flower, maybe a tear, while thinking of Tom Johnson and "the days that are no more." A children's playground, or a tribune *for men*, dedicated to free speech, or both, may conform to his wishes, but there will remain a feeling in the hearts of a vastly large number of those who believed in him and respected him, who are no longer children, nor are they so-called spellbinders—that something yet is lacking in the proposed memorial.

We had thought he would remain with us, our fellow citizen, to a full age, in his happy, hospitable home he had provided here, and in the end his city would be his last resting place, his home our Mecca. Great was his all-around ability, his grasp of constructive ideas, his energy and withal, his human kindness, all of which he devoted freely to the common good.

It seems to me that whatever form the memorial may take, there should be an enduring likeness of our friend and benefactor at some point in our city easily accessible and free from the hindrance and extortion of an extra car ride and car fare to our citizens and all strangers desirous to look upon him. It should be a statue of white marble, the most beautiful material mother earth affords us for the personation of those who have "gone before," symbolizing in its whiteness the soul of him who has departed; and it should be sheltered by a suitable canopy from the inclemency of winter.

There are those who say "marble will not last." But there is a dainty statue in Wade Park—the place of monuments—the prettiest of them all; in spite of removals, neglect, need of repair and exposure to the rigor of our Northern winters, it has endured for more than fifty years. It is the great Commodore in marble, and his little girl middies.*

Let those who prefer bronze go and view, at Wade Park, the bronzed features of our late Senator Hanna, even at this time turned black as



Interrupted by a burly railroad hireling who followed him from tent to tent and called him a liar!

Fatanitzta in the play.† It's a pity. I had supposed that a commemorative statue was something dedicated to look at, not shy at like a scared horse.

Our Mayor was a noble specimen of robust manhood to look upon in his life, and such a monument of him would be a glory to behold. He should be represented as in a standing posture as in one of his campaign-tent scenes when orating to the people, and with that smile on his splendid face, we used to say, "never came off."

Though many citizens of the Republican party, prominent in business and professional circles, doubted that "a street car fare for three cents with a penny for transfer" was possible, and, therefore, distrusted his motives and opposed him, they yet admitted that he "made good" as Mayor of the city beyond any precedent. Justly, they could have said, that he so managed its affairs that it experienced a "new life" of progress in growth of population and business, and "got a move on it" that "will not down."

Nor will he be forgotten, though partizan enemies may stand upon his shoulders and claim his laurels, who in point of ability and unselfish patriotism were not worthy to unlatch his shoes, for from his restless brain came the plans and suggestions he sought to work out, and which awakened the people to the importance of its transmutation from this "overgrown country town" the traveling salesman from the younger cities of the West styled it, into "a city," as the far-seeing Mayor expressed it, "better to live in, better to attract business and to do business in, and to die in."

And even now, after his untimely "passing," what he did and proposed here lives after him and it is the bright light of his genius which inspires us and guides us "onward" to the consummation of that "Greater Cleveland" he hoped to see and of which he was the father and promoter.

And now, after the battles he fought and the sacrifices he made for our common rights and welfare, such as had never before been known to the annals of our city, he sleeps that sleep that knows no waking, and we mourn a man "His like we may never see again."

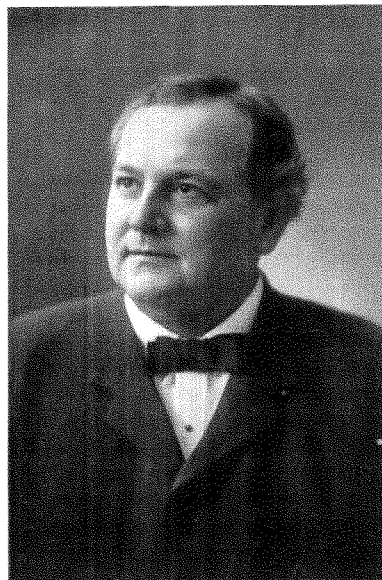
Could I have my way—but I'm only a woman—I would set such a statue of him on a granite base amidst the flower beds in our public square, to be seen of all men and women and the children. Blessed be his name, and



As he looked in 1910, upon the termination of his nine years' service as Mayor of Cleveland

though it be humble and though his life was stormy, may it be written in heaven by the Angel, in his book of gold, side by side with that of that immortal man of peace whom you may know in the poet's‡ story as Abou Ben Adhem, "who loved his fellow men."

* The Alford sisters. † "And she turned black from love." ‡ Leigh Hunt.



Mr. Johnson while Mayor and in his prime