

Rev. Cummings Pays Tribute to Mr. Bliss's Individual Character

Rev. J. B. Cummings, a close personal friend of the mayor, was one of the funeral orators, and devoted his address principally to a statement of salient characteristics of the deceased as an individual—a man of high ideals, uncompromising convictions and freedom from resentfulness and animosity toward persons with whom he differed in matters of public policy. Mr. Cummings said, in part:

Mr. Cummings's Tribute.

"We have assembled to pay the last tribute of love and respect, of patriotism and religion, to an adopted son, whom our city honored with the highest office within her gift, and who in return gave to Pensacola the best he had of faithful service; yea, his very life itself.

"While, even his opponents were compelled to acknowledge his devotion to what he believed were the city's best interests, yet only those who knew him most intimately realized how all his dreams and hopes, his ambitions and plans culminated in self-sacrificing effort to make Pensacola not only the city beautiful, but also the city great and good.

"On the day before he was stricken, as he sat in the midst of his family group and gazed out upon the sunlit waters that he loved so well, he exclaimed, 'Dear old Pensacola, how I love her; yes, I love her as my own life!'

"In a very recent conversation with your speaker, he unfolded some of his plans for the future of the city. They involved all departments of its life, and looked to its material development, its attractive beautification, and its moral and social uplifting.

"And Pensacola honors herself today in honoring the memory of this noble man and faithful official, who labored so incessantly and unselfishly for her best good.

"I feel deeply and personally bereaved by the death of Mr. Bliss, for from our first acquaintance he impressed me as a man of high ideals

and noble purposes. It was in the midst of a heated political campaign, and he had been assailed on many sides, and yet from him I heard no word of bitterness or of harshness for any of those who opposed his plans or assailed his character. He did not forget the dignity of his office or the obligations of a gentleman.

"Mr. Bliss was a self-made man, and though battling constantly with physical infirmities, yet with strong determination and iron will he pressed onward and upward in the way of life until he worthily received, and as worthily wore, the honors of the high office with which your confidence crowned him.

"He was a man of high moral character and unswervingly devoted to the right as he saw it. 'Pure and clean in his own life, his influence was always on the side of morality and virtue and good government. And here permit me to say I am somewhat acquainted with the moral conditions in a number of southern cities, and in none of these is the moral tone higher, nor is there a greater respect for law and good government, than in Pensacola, and I believe that much of the credit for your high standard of citizenship is due to the man who sleeps so peacefully before us. Fortunate is the city, and blessed is the people, who have had, and who still have such men for their civic leaders.

"Mr. Bliss had high and noble conceptions of friendship. No man grappled closer to him than did he, with hooks of love and self-sacrifice, those whom he called friends. A friend could always count on his faithfulness in an emergency, in the hour of test and trial.

"But while faithful to his friends, he cherished not animosities, nor nourished hates and spleen. With a chivalric bearing and courage, he was as ready to forgive and forget as to contend and to fight."

Mr. Cummings closed by speaking of the beautiful home life and strong religious convictions of the deceased.