

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE DEAD PRESIDENT.

OUR last number had passed from under our hands before the grim Conqueror, with the odds tremendously in his favour, had ended the play of life and death which for eighty days had drawn all eyes to the bedside of the stricken President, and in spite of a nation's prayers and a world's solicitude, had closed a tragedy which will live long in the hearts of millions. Elsewhere in the present number the mournful event, which well lends itself to treatment by the elegiac muse, receives a fitting, sympathetic tribute. But here, also, we may be permitted to hang the garland of a few prose-words upon the tomb of a true man, who, seeking neither honour nor place, but in the path of duty called unexpectedly to the highest seat in the nation, won both imperishably. The universality and spontaneity of the grief which the death of President Garfield has called forth has only been equalled by its intensity, an intensity which the minute detail of each day's record of progress or relapse from the period when the miscreant's bullet sped its way into the sufferer's side, did much to call forth. But there was more than this to quicken the sympathy and to deepen the sorrow of the millions on both sides of the Atlantic who daily scanned the bulletins for tidings of the President's condition, and who were at last to learn that the struggle was over and that the surgeon's skill and the tending hand of love could do no more. There was more even than the spectacle of pain resolutely endured, of heroic fortitude and Christian resignation. There was the knowledge that the chosen of a great nation had fallen a martyr to the disease which has long been preying upon its vitals, and who, strong in a patriot's strength, had given his life to cleanse it of its foulness. Nor was the sacrifice that

of a mere politician, actuated by the motives of his kind, and looking no higher than the downfall of a clique opposed to him. The man and the work were far other than this. Death, no doubt, brings its idolatries, and the press has probably spoken extravagant words of Garfield. But this is true of the man, that in him were embodied the worthiest qualities of human nature. Few, indeed, have come to the Presidential office better fitted, morally and intellectually, to preside over the nation. His whole career as a public man testifies to this. But of the elements that were great in him none shine so conspicuously as his honesty and his courage. Eighteen years of public life left no stain upon him, while his loyalty to duty and his fearlessness in pursuit of it, whether as soldier, schoolmaster, or statesman, are noble incentives to his countrymen. His sense of honour was ever acute, and he frowned upon boss-rule as if it were the plague. Had he lived what work, we ask ourselves, would he not have done! How he would have repressed machine politics, and what a crusade he would have led against the spoils system! But alas, this was not to be, and the chance that was the nation's has for the present passed by. Yet do we hope that whatever is good in the nation has received a new impulse from his life and death. Those who believe in the deep, strong current of the Divine influence in human affairs will feel that certainly there was a design in the sacrifice he was called upon to make. An event which so impressed itself upon all, hushing the clamour of faction and quelling, we trust not merely momentarily, much of turbulence and wrong, was surely fraught with some lasting, beneficent purpose. The surge of moral emotion throughout two continents, which bespoke reverence for exalted worth and keenest sympathy with the mis-