

## What Dreamers Have Done

Patrick Henry, Wendell Phillips and their Kind Were Necessary and They Won in the End

Senator Beveridge gives us the following as his estimate of Mr. Bryan:

"Let no man denounce Mr. Bryan. Such men are necessary to human progress. Always such men have been the voice of a protest, but never the statesman of a cause. Always they have been the urgers of reform, but never the doers of the work.

"Mr. Bryan is an Aaron, but not a Moses; a Henry, but not a Washington; a Wendell Phillips, but not an Abraham Lincoln. He is the storm of unrest which clears the atmosphere, but not the trade winds that carry to port the freighted ships of a people's hope.

"Four years ago, in his own home, paying tribute to his character and mind, I called him a dreamer who beholds happy visions but achieves no useful deed. His is the mind that thinks of the barren field bending with grain; but his is not the plowman's hand, the sower's craft or the gleaner's husbandry. The poet's dream of an undiscovered Utopia has cheered us all, but the Pilgrims, actually landing on Plymouth Rock, planted the real tree of liberty, beneath whose real shade we rest and by whose real fruits we live."

The distinguished senator does well to liken Mr. Bryan to a man who looks upon a barren waste of land and dreams of fields of golden grain. Some dreamer on beholding the barren wastes at the foothills of the Rocky mountains dreamed of mighty dams in the mountain fastnesses above, holding back the waters furnished by the melting of the eternal snows, and of thence conducting these waters through miles of canals to the arid plains below, there to make the parched earth into fields of waving golden grain. But the "dreamer" did more than dream—he aroused the American congress and today his dream of mountain dam, canal and fields of waving grain is realized—and the American desert is desert no longer.

What but a barren waste of insufferable oppression aroused Patrick Henry to supreme flights of oratory! What but the barren waste of "man's inhumanity to man" aroused Phillips so that he went forth a sower of good seed—a power unto salvation for the colored race. Verily the "wrongs of man did make the love of God more plain," who sent forth both sower and reaper and the harvest was a slave free America. "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man" and that man lists through the ages and this world of men be his name Him whom I may not mention here, a Washington or Henry, Phillips or Lincoln.

Senator Beveridge has not read history aright when he forgets that Patrick Henry's eloquence aroused the Virginians to a sense of their danger and placed armies at the command of Washington; that Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison and Mrs. Stowe, were not unimportant factors, but were the only factors who aroused the American people to the conviction that the enslavement of man by man was a crime against humanity and that their "thirty years war" alone made Lincoln and the emancipation proclamation possible. For thirty years they were denounced as impractical theorists, dreamers, and reviled and hated as Mr. Bryan only has been denounced, reviled and hated; but truth and justice finally prevailed; John Brown died on the scaffold, saying in spirit at least,

"As He died to make men Holy,  
Let us die to make men free."

But that scaffold "swayed the future" and Lincoln became president and the negro free. Phillips, Garrison and Mrs. Stowe kept the faith with brave, true hearts, and never faltered, through dark fortune and through bright, as has Mr. Bryan, with a courage that Senator Beveridge may well emulate.

Patrick Henry, in his way, no less than Washington, was necessary to the success of the revolution; Phillips, Garrison, Lowell and Mrs. Stowe alone made Lincoln possible; these were the men and the one woman who dominated the pioneer period of the movement for personal and political freedom; these were the ones who swayed the minds and aroused the patriotism and conscience of the men and women of their day, as Mr. Bryan has in ours. These were the dominating pioneer forces which culminated in

The Declaration of Independence and the emancipation proclamation.

So William Jennings Bryan in his advocacy of the past twelve years has alone made it possible to, in some small measure, "write conscience and humanity on our statute books." For all these reforms Bryan and Bryan alone has done the pioneer work; he has led the way and has made plain to the people as has no other man the dangers of our times. His was the clarion voice calling in the midnight darkness, in the morning light, at high noon and at even tide, "Watchman what of the night?" Without the aid of his "disciples" in congress not one of the reforms of which the senator is so proud could have been enacted into law.

"Let no man denounce Mr. Bryan," says Senator Beveridge, and he might well have added, "but let all men hail him as the pioneer, the one only earnest, sincere man, who for twelve years has patiently done his work amid a world of villification and abuse and who now stands out in bold relief as one among all, the dominating mind in this new onward movement for the betterment of the social condition of mankind everywhere.

I said at Alliance:

Every movement that has marked an epoch in the uplift of man and extension of representative government has been marked by the individuality of some great dominant mind. Cromwell easily became the head of the English revolution which freed England from the tyranny of her kings; Washington left his impress on the conflict that rescued America from European domination; Napoleon restored order out of anarchy and rescued France from the horrors of her revolution; while Lincoln was the commanding spirit in the days of the anti-slavery struggle. So today this great onward social movement, wider in its sweep than any other in our history, and greater than any other in its union of moral and intellectual forces, and destined to be more effective than any other, is dominated by the superb personality of William Jennings Bryan. Emerson said of some one that he not merely wrote his impress on the thought of his day and generation, but he ploughed it in. So it may be said of Bryan and this new movement that he has not simply written his name in the history of our time, but he has ploughed it in.

Bryan a dreamer—says the senator, but he should remember that all of the great men who have left their impress on the world's history were at times viewed with distrust and received as impracticable dreamers and fanatics. This is true of the leaders of men in every avenue of human activity. It is said that when the inventor of the locomotive engine appeared before a committee of parliament to explain his invention, that he proposed to place wooden cross ties on the graded earth, with securely bolted iron rail on these cross ties, and to place his engine on this prepared track and thus draw heavily laden coaches from point to point at the rate of ten miles per hour. Questioned if he thought it would be possible to increase this speed to twelve miles per hour he answered yes; fifteen miles per hour was suggested and again the answer came yes; twenty miles an hour was asked and again came the answer yes; though this time with some hesitation. Thereupon it is said the committee reported they could have nothing to do with such an impracticable scheme of such a dreamer. So with the electric telegraph, the ocean cable, the telephone, and in our day the wireless telegraph, and so has every man been received who has thought in advance of his time. You remember the story of how Joseph was regarded by his brethren, and received with the remark, "Here comes the dreamer," and they sold him into Egyptian slavery. But the bondman of Egypt came to sit at the right hand of the king and his brethren who sold him into bondage came to crawl at his feet begging bread that they might have the wherewithal to live. So today the one time reviled and despised theorist, the "Boy Orator of the Platte," has come to be the foremost private citizen of the world, and those who spat upon him a decade ago are now stealing political bread from his political table that they may have the wherewithal to continue their political existence. Surely the man who adheres to the truth and sincerity comes in time to his own reward.

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### PRESIDENTIAL TESTS

(Louis F. Post, in The Public)

William J. Bryan has announced a test for the democratic nomination for president in 1912. He mentions three requisites. The first is negative, that the aspirant shall not represent the

interests. The second relates to regularity, that he shall have supported the presidential ticket of the democratic party, not merely in 1904 but also in 1896 and 1900 and 1908. The third relates to the kind of politico-business company he keeps, the character of his chief sponsors.

Now brace yourselves, brethren, for ponderous editorial homilies in plutocratic papers on the "selfishness of Bryan." They will tell you that the first of Bryan's requisites is good. The democratic aspirant must not represent the interests; no indeed, and indeed! But they will also tell you to beware, lest you judge with the improper severity which the third Bryan requisite demands; and they will "tut-tut" the notion that a candidate is a representative of the interests merely because he keeps company with "safe and sane" business men. Dollars to doughnuts, O gentle reader, that the plutocratic editorial will chide the "selfish Bryan" as to those two points, the first and the third, not for demanding that the candidate be no representative of the interests, but for narrowness in insisting that he must not be a work-a-day chum and a presidential protege of high priests of the interests.

It is for his demand for a record of regularity, however, that "Bryan's selfishness" will be made to shine like a revolving light on a dangerous reef. But Bryan is right. That second requisite is the best of all, insofar as any of three essential parts of a whole can be better than the others. The second is the practical test. An aspirant for the democratic nomination might be all right on points one and three; but point two gives the significant reaction. The democrat who shrinks from that test may be trustworthy, but unless his record otherwise is so markedly democratic as to be convincing, it will be prudent to let him drop by the test of Bryan's second requisite.

What! Reject a democratic democrat because he bolted Bryan in 1896? Precisely. It is incontestably true that the campaign of 1896 was the first great battle at the polls between democracy and plutocracy. Genuine democratic democrats who failed to see the signs of the times high up in the political heavens then, may be forgiven for their error; but presidential timber is not so scarce as to necessitate recourse to any of their number for the democratic nominee for president. If they bolted democracy or sulked in 1896, because they liked plutocracy, they cannot be trusted now. The episode of the repentant thief? Yes, we acknowledge that as good religious doctrine; but as a precedent for presidential politics it is too risky. So much for those who knew what they were doing when they bolted or sulked. If they didn't know, if they only failed to recognize democracy as democracy by its strange "silver" shibboleth of the passing moment, it comes in the end to the same thing as if they did know; for then they are intellectually unfit for the presidential nomination of a democratic democracy. The genuine democrat who in 1896 could not see what the forces really were that fought each other, lacked political perceptive power then and he may lack it yet. He is just as likely to get muddled over misleading names and superficial appearances in the future, as he was in 1896. This is not to say that such men are intellectually deficient in a general way. They may be able enough. They may be excellent for political fellowship and secondary political places. The point is that, judged by their past, they probably do not possess the kind of ability a democratic democrat must have as president in these days of struggle between democracy and plutocracy. Better presidential timber of the fundamentally democratic variety is to be found in the republican party. And mark it well, a goodly number of democratic voters will prefer a republican nominee of this kind to a democratic nominee of the other kind.

### IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The western railroads have decided to accept the decision of the inter-state commerce commission prohibiting an increase in rates. The eastern roads are considering the matter, but several eastern lines have already accepted the decision. The patrons of the roads thus save some twenty-seven millions annually—quite a snug sum—that would have gone to the roads under the old plan of allowing the roads to decide these questions for themselves. Regulation is vindicated. And what about the now exploded theory that the railroad managers are the only people who are wise enough to fix railroad rates? It looks as if the members of the commission had some sense, too. As The Commoner has had occasion to say before, the world moves forward.