The Commoner.

"Ballot No. 46," and Other Things

J. C. McNealus in the Dallas (Texas) Democrat, writes the following: Ballot No. 46; Wilson, 990; Clark, 84; Harmon, 12; absent, 2. By this recorded vote, the national democratic convention at Baltimore handed the proxy of William J. Bryan to Woodrow Wilson, to be held by him during the next four years. I say "proxy of William J. Bryan," because that was the practical effect of the convention's action. Wilson had won the votes of the delegates, but, Bryan had won their hearts. To the old guard he was still the old commander, and to new followers he had become a political idol.

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The convention had lasted from June 25 to July 2. The proceedings had been full of excitement and much disorder. Precedents had been shattered and the unusual in political history made. One man, strong in character, firm in conviction, aggressive in action, uncompromising in spirit, the recognized leader of progressivism, had faced what appeared, at the beginning, to be overwhelming odds of an intrenched opposition, and, by dogged determination and a supreme confidence in himself and the ultimate triumph of right over might, had beaten down the battlements of the reactionaries and rescued his party from the blighting grasp of special privilege. This, in brief, is the concrete outcome of the deliberations of the national democratic convention at Baltimore.

Will Woodrow Wilson be able to guide his party successfully in the path blazed at Baltimore by Bryan? I feel that Wilson and Marshall is a strong ticket, as presidential tickets are ordinarily estimated, and that it is going to be successful at the polls next November But a greater duty has been assumed and a greater burden taken up by the regenerated democracy than has been its assumptions since the days of Samuel J. Tilden. Progressivism in the administration of government has come to stay-at least, so far as the democratic party is concerned. Bryan, as president, could make successful the application of its principles and policies, because he is a seasoned veteran in this particular line of fighting, and has the confidence of the American people; not only of a majority of the voters in his own party, but also of a majority of the voters in all other parties. How far can Wilson command this combined confidence? In view of what he has shown during the past thirty days, in the matter of firmness of political character. I believe Woodrow Wilson, with the indorsement and support of William J. Bryan, can come as near commanding this combined confidence as can any other man in the American union. And if he shall do so, he will give to this country an administration satisfactory to the people and assure to the democratic party a long lease of direction in national administrative affairs. When that resolution (the Belmont-Ryan resolution) was presented by Mr. Bryan, the fact flashed upon every mind-foe as well as friend-that he was not a trimmer or a compromiser; that he was not a candidate for the nomination; that he was sincere in all his professions; that he would rather be right than be president; that he would prefer to break the power of Wall street and its allies in the affairs of the national democratic party in the administration of government than to receive

the unanimous nomination at the hands of the convention. Bryan, in my estimation, at that moment rose to a height never before attained by any American publicist or politician. Gladstone, in England, nor Bismarck, in Germany, never showed more of the character of the true statesman on the one hand, or the qualities of the man of "blood and iron" on the other, than did William J. Bryan in this emergency of the fate of himself and his party. It was clear to everybody present that he had staked all on that one call of the roll of the states; that he had burned every bridge behind him and that the climax in his career as a democratic leader had been reached. If he won, he would be greater than if he were president. If he lostwell, he would have to fight again, harder than ever, with perhaps the old guard only following their old commander, and having as their motto: "No question is ever settled until it is settled right!"

But Bryan won in the climax! He is greater today than if he had received the nomination for president. There is an old saying in sporting circles, that "the only way to make a gambler respect you is to win his money." This sentiment might well be paraphrased, to the effect that the only way to win the respect of Wall street is to thrash the political arrogance and insolence out of it. Wall street today respects William J. Bryan-but it does not love him. He made Murphy and his "90 wax puppets" count for no more than any other ninety individual democratic units in the convention. Might did not prevail over right, at the finish.

The Texas delegation at Baltimore acquitted itself creditably and conscientiously. It obeyed its instructions and was accorded as large a measure of recognition as was any other delegation in the convention. It did as much to help Bryan and Wilson on to victory against their opponents as did any other delegation. Regardless of factional or personal political differences, the democrats of Texas may well feel proud of its representation in the Baltimore convention.

THE NEW PHASE

Editorial in Detroit News: William Jennings Bryan achieved a record unique in our political annals when he survived and thrived on sixteen years of continuous defeat. It has always been recognized that it requires a personality of unusual strength, variety, attractiveness, force and honesty to have such an achievement to its credit. But, as all the angles of the recent months are gathered up and weighed, it appears that Mr. Bryan has still a greater thing to his credit-he has survived the death of Bryanism. And he emerges from the shell in which his character and influence took their first forms, with a personality, power and influence more luminous than ever, though severed by the very forces of maturity from Bryanism in all its forms. It goes without saying that within three weeks there has been a profound revision of the estimate which a large section of the country placed on Mr. Bryan. As a supposedly perennial candidate he has been the butt of enough jest to smother the doughtiest public character. As an adjudged dog-in-the-party-manger he has aroused such powerful hatreds as should utterly have ruined another political career. As an outspoken reformer on the liquor question and others such as the shrewd politician usually sidesteps, he has seemed to court oblivion time and again. More epitaphs have been printed over his alleged political death than any man of his time has had to endure. He has been defeated in every form it is possible for defeat to take-and yet the fact is that he is today a bigger man, a bigger and more national character than at any time of his career. All this is particularly noticeable in the changed tone of the press of the country. Bryan has advanced beyond the stage wherein he served as the butt of the paragrapher's spleen on a dull day. Powerful organs which formerly affected to despise him, now speak of him in their most respectful tone. The fight he made at Baltimore, with its tremendous emphasis on the moral issue, with its full degree of selfeffacement so far as official advancement was concerned, made a deep impression not only on his party but on the country at large, and when he emerged from that nine days' battle he seemed to have gained stature.

was a progressive, but an immature progressive, speaking to a time that was not able to receive what he had to say. He came in the spring of the times, so to speak, and when all the fruit was green and hard upon the trees, but come are the latter times when progressive ideas have ripened and matured. He most publicly of all proclaimed an embryonic progressiveness. The country at that time was just emerging from a period of stringency to one of prosperity, and the voice of McKinley, with his suggestion of markets and increased commerce, was a more potent voice than that which came out of the west with such unheard-of suggestions as popular election of United States senators, currency reform and the control of the courts. In time, however, the country learned the hollowness of mere material progress. Under cover of "the full dinner pail" was masked the great trust and tariff movement which jeopardized the fullness of that useful receptacle by greatly increasing the cost of its contents. We began to see that mere material prosperity was a blind. a snare; that our affairs were in such shape that shrewd men in control could throw us a sop or stop our victuals at a given signal. Turning from the full dinner pail, we turned our eyes to the senate chamber, to Wall street, to the courts, and then, acting on what we saw, the great progressive movement began in earnest. Other men arose, notably Theodore Roosevelt, who combined with Bryan's idealism a practical administrative ability which the people did not credit Bryan with having. But whether he has this ability or not, it is unavailing to evade the fact that steadily and by insensible degrees, the ideas which Bryan urged as a revolution, ideas as green and callow as the young man who so passionately proclaimed them, have come to be the dominant notes of the decade's political thought. This much is not too great praise for Bryan's part in the education of the nation the last sixteen years.

Capping this work, Bryan was the one man whom his party had to carry these ideas against great opposition to triumphant assertion in a democratic national convention, and, regardless of what exterior forces contributed to the result, the glory of the victory rests chiefly with William Jennings Bryan.

That is the reason for the changed note throughout the country when the name of Bryan is mentioned. He endured a terrible test and came through unscathed. He simply took his stand on the most elemental principle, and stood there until his party came round to him. He may never be president of the United States-he has probably given up definitely that hope-but when his services as a public man have been fairly gauged he will take his place in our history with those other men-Clay and Webster and Blaine-who were great servants of the nation, though the nation disappointed their desire for the highest office.

CIRCULATE THE COMMONER

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An old-time reader of The Commoner 0 0 0 writes: "Wherever The Commoner is 0 0 regularly read the democratic vote in-0 0 creases. One of the most effective \odot methods of increasing Governor Wilson's 0 0 0 vote would be by the circulation of The 0 0 Commoner (particularly among men 0 0 who have heretofore voted the republi-۲ 0 can ticket) in every state of the union. ۲ 0 I suggest that you make a special rate 0 0 for campaign purposes and I am sure 0 0 there are many hard working democrats 0 0 who will take advantage of that rate to ۲ 0 put The Commoner regularly into the ۲ hands of their republican neighbors." 0 ۲

The Commoner will be sent to any 0 one from now until the close of the 1912 0 campaign for the sum of 25c, or four 0 subscriptions will be entered until the 0 close of the campaign for \$1.00. 0

And the change seems to be very agreeable

GETTING AN IMPROVED VIEW

Editorial in Springfield (Mass.) Republican: Senator Tillman is not among the old friends of William J. Bryan who whoily misinterpreted his policy in the democratic national convention and fell to hotly abusing him. The South Carolina senator confesses that at the moment he thought the commoner unnecessarily bitter, "but as soon as I could analyze and unravel what he was doing and realized the great stake for which he was playing I came to feel more and more admiration for him.

"He certainly is a great leader and an unequaled fighter, and the promising condition in which the party now finds itself after the second fiercest battle in its history must be attributed to his wisdom, foresight and magnificent courage. He comes out of this battle the greatest American living and will go down in history as a far greater man than if he had been elected president. He did things which must have been very painful to him but controled alone by patriotism and love of principle, he never faltered for an instant. He sternly brushed aside both friend and foe in the pursuit of right and justice for the people. He deserved all the credit that any one man can get out of this great victory."

Thomas M. Osborne said much the same thing at the first Wilson rally held in Auburn, N. Y .:

"There was one man in Baltimore to whom the democratic party owes a tremendous debt. That man is William Jennings Bryan. I differed with him in the distant past, but I want to say to you that he is the greatest democrat in America today. His fight at Baltimore for courage and shrewd political action is the finest thing to all sections and parties. The Bryan of old we have ever seen in the history of American