

How Father Voted---A Touching Description of the Discharge of a Patriotic Duty

AN APPRECIATION

This true incident in the life of my father is recorded in print as a testimony to many sterling qualities which have manifested themselves in his life, not the least of which is his high sense of duty as an American citizen, which at all times amounts to patriotic devotion. To him the ballot has always been a sacred instrument to be used with great discretion to express his honest convictions, never his dislikes or prejudices. His judgment may not always have been infallible, but his honesty and sincerity could never be called into question. If the majority of voters possessed his sense of the importance and sanctity of the ballot box, many of the ills which afflict our political system would have instantaneous cure.

Aurora, Neb.

J. G. ALDEN.

The night preceding election day mother awakened and being curious to know the hour snapped on the electric light which hung by her pillow. The hands of the clock pointed to half past twelve. Turning to observe if father were asleep she noted that his eyes were wide open as if they had not yet tasted sleep.

"Mary," he observed in a quiet voice, "if I had known you wished to know what time it is I could have told you that it is half past twelve."

"Haven't you been asleep?" asked mother.

"No," replied father, "my thoughts have been busy and I have only just now begun to feel drowsy."

There was silence for a few moments and then father asked: "Mary, does Maud always get up when Arthur does?"

"Usually she does," was mother's response. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, I have been wondering if she would have time in the morning to press my best pants before I get up."

"Sure she will have time, and she will be pleased to do it for you."

Again there was silence for a time and then father said: "Mary, I want to get up real early in the morning. You be sure and call me just as soon as my coffee is ready. And don't forget to put the flat irons over when you first get up. I have many things to do in the morning. I wish to clip my beard and shine my shoes before I go down to vote. So call me early so that I will have plenty of time."

"All right," promised mother, "I'll see that you get up in time."

"Be sure those creases are in my pants good and deep," was father's parting admonition before he dropped off to sleep.

About eight o'clock next morning mother went in to call the anxious citizen. He said he was not feeling well and would lie awhile. Not long after though he came out of his bedroom partially dressed. His back had a bow in it and his face wore a dejected look. He was in the grip of his old time enemy. He sat by the fire a while and warmed himself. Then he drank his coffee and ate his breakfast. His preoccupied look suggested labored thought and soon his spirits rose and with them vanished aches and pains. His duty as a citizen was now sweeping away all obstacles in the way of its fulfillment.

He arose from the table with alacrity and called for his best pants. His request had been well heeded—a lasting crease adorned each leg. He surveyed them with satisfaction and donned them. Then he shined his shoes until they reflected the glow that was in his face. Next he clipped his beard with great care and this process consumed much time for his hand shook with weakness. He called on mother to trim the ragged edges of his hair and when it was done to his liking he fastened his collar and tied his cravat with much precision. The forenoon was half gone when his exacting preparations were finished. He found his hat and started for the door. Then he turned and came back to survey the part of his hair in the mirror. Mother had been an amused and interested wit-

ness to all these painstaking details in his toilet.

"Why, father," she inquired with a suspicion of impatience in her voice, "is it necessary that you have your hair just so when you go to vote?"

Father turned on her a look of mild reproof. "Mary," he said, solemnly, "I need to have my hair look well for when I go into the booth to vote for president I always take off my hat in deference to my candidate."

Smoothing the last strayed lock, he carefully removed his glasses, put on his hat and left the house. As he went down the alley mother noted that his shoulders were straight, his head high, his step quick and sure, and he bore the manner of one who was engaged in the performance of a profound and honored duty.

He was not long absent and when he returned there was in his face a look of contentment which follows a duty well done. "I told the men there," he remarked, "that I would like a place for my hat for I always took off my hat when I voted for president. A smile went round among the men but one of them took my hat and held it until I was through. I did not mind the smile. I was there to perform my duty and I had the assurance that I was doing my full duty as a man and a citizen."

And so he had. Through the long campaign he had read with care and weighed argument against argument, man against man in the attempt to come to a righteous judgment. When he had digested the facts he reached a decision which for stability and unchangeability rivalled the Rock of Gibraltar. In the pride of his citizenship and in the exercise of a solemn and honored privilege he went to the polls and cast a vote which represented his hard-earned judgment. And whether his vote swelled the majority of his chosen candidate or was lost in an avalanche of negative ballots, it mattered not to him. He had performed his duty as a citizen in accord with the promptings of his conscience and its silent approbation forestalled any sense of loss or sting of defeat.

USING OUR EX-PRESIDENTS

An Associated Press dispatch from Washington says: A plan to admit ex-presidents, ex-vice presidents and ex-speakers of the house of representatives to the floors of the two houses of congress, with the privilege of debate, but not of voting upon measures, was broached here recently by William J. Bryan. Mr. Bryan's statement was coupled with a declaration that he favored a change in the time of convening congress, so that the new sessions would begin shortly after new members took office, March 4.

"The question is often asked, 'What shall we do with our ex-presidents?'" Mr. Bryan said.

"Now that we soon will have two ex-presidents and three ex-vice presidents, it might be worth while to consider what means could be employed to utilize their experience and accumulated information. It seems to me that the nation might avail itself of their services and at the same time afford them a dignified means of keeping in communication with the public."

"It has occurred to me that both these ends could be attained by a law giving an ex-president the privileges of the floor in both the senate and house, with permission to take part in debate, without of course the privilege of voting or serving on committees. The retiring vice president should be given privileges of the floor of the senate under the same limitations, and I see no reason why they should not be accorded to an ex-speaker of the house if he retires from congress."

Asked if his plan contemplated salaries, Mr. Bryan replied:

"Not necessarily; in fact it ought to be considered from the standpoint of benefiting the persons to whom the privileges should be granted. "At this time, the plan proposed would find its benefits in the main to republicans, as there is now one republican ex-president and soon will be another, while there are two republican ex-vice presidents and one republican ex-speaker and one democratic ex-vice president, Mr. Adlai E. Stevenson."

"It looks now, however, as if we were entering upon a democratic era, and that the proposed law would not be a one-sided one. Be-

sides, such a matter ought to be looked at from a higher standpoint than that of political advantage."

Mr. Bryan made suggestions similar to this many years ago. During Mr. Roosevelt's term of vice president he urged a plan for making the office of vice president more serviceable than it now is. At that time he wrote for *The Commoner* an editorial in which he said:

"It has been intimated that Vice President-elect Roosevelt is desirous of receiving more consideration at the hands of the president than has, as a rule, been given to those occupying his position. Whether or not the report is true is not material, but the ambition, if he does entertain it, is an entirely worthy one. Why has the vice president been so generally ignored by the chief executive in the past? It is said that Mr. Breckenridge was only consulted once by President Buchanan, and then only in regard to the phraseology of a Thanksgiving proclamation. This incident was related to a later vice president who was noted for his skill at repartee, and he replied, with a twinkle in his eye: "Well, there is one more Thanksgiving day before my term expires." According to the constitution, the vice president succeeds to the office in case the president dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes unable to discharge the duties of the office. The public good requires that he should be thoroughly informed as to the details of the administration and ready to take up the work of the executive at a moment's notice. The vice president ought to be ex-officio a member of the president's cabinet; he ought to sit next to the president in the council chamber. Receiving his nomination from a national convention and his commission from the people, he is able to furnish the highest possible proof that he enjoys public respect and confidence, and the president should avail himself of the wisdom and discretion of such an adviser. While the responsibility for action rests upon the occupant of the White House, he is entitled to, and of course desires, all the light possible before deciding on any question. Congress can, by law, impose upon the vice president the duty of giving such assistance to his chief, or the president can of his own volition establish the pre-

cedent, and it would, in all probability, be observed by his successors. Many public men have avoided the second place on the ticket for fear it would relegate them to obscurity; some of Colonel Roosevelt's friends objected to his nomination on that ground. A cabinet position has generally been considered more desirable than the vice presidency, but the latter in dignity and importance is, in fact, only second to the presidency, and the occupant deserves the prominence and prestige which would come from more intimate official association with the executive."

GREATEST PRIVATE CITIZEN

Raleigh (N. C.) News-Observer: The best thing said by any citizen since the election was by William J. Bryan, when he declared that instead of singing the songs the third term party had tried to monopolize he felt like singing the old orthodox tune:

"This is the day I long have sought,
And mourned because I found it not."

The Baltimore Sun, which was one of the earliest and most influential factors in securing the nomination of Woodrow Wilson, on the day after the election paid this high and deserved tribute to the great commoner of Nebraska:

"In the midst of democratic jubilation let us not forget the man who fought so bravely at the Baltimore convention for the nomination of a candidate acceptable to the people. Moses led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt and through the wilderness, and gave them a code of laws which has come down to us through many centuries, but he was not permitted to enter the promised land. Mr. Bryan's experience has been similar in character, and though he has been a great leader of his party, as well as political thought, he has been shut out from the happy land of Canaan."

"But the country does not forget the splendid service he has rendered during all these years, nor his part in making certain the nomination of Wilson. Like Clay, he may never reach the summit of political ambition, but there will be room and opportunity for him in national affairs during the next four years."

Not a few people, who did not know the spirit