

**THAT WINELESS DINNER**

Rochester (N. Y.) Union-Advertiser: Columns upon columns of comment have been printed concerning Secretary of State Bryan's wineless dinner to the diplomatic corps, but this, from the Toronto Mail and Empire, is at least pertinent: "What good is a diplomat if he can not pretend to enjoy a wineless dinner provided by so important a person as the United States secretary of state? From all the talk that has arisen about the absence of stimulating liquids from Mr. Bryan's table, it might be thought that he was entertaining the bartenders' union or the hotelkeepers' protective association." It may be that the diplomats would have enjoyed the dinner more, had wine been served, but is it possible that they had to have it? It may easily be that they cared more for Secretary Bryan and the company and the table talk than for what they ate and drank.

Waterloo (Ia.) Times-Tribune: Under the circumstances it ill becomes England and still more continental nations to ridicule Secretary of State Bryan's stand on the question of serving or permitting the presence of intoxicants at his table at any time and still less upon state occasions when ambassadors of the chief nations of the globe are seated at his table.

Of course there is this to be said in defense of such serving of intoxicants: "Custom permits and would seem (at first glance) to demand it, but custom has permitted, nay commanded, many follies in the past now generally considered not only obsolete but actually barbarous.

There is this to be said in particular for the custom inaugurated by Mr. Bryan: If there is a position held under any government in the world that calls especially for a clear, keen mind and undulled perceptions, for a careful tongue and expert usage of language, it is that of the diplomat representing his country at home or abroad as chief in her state actions and plans and England, as well as other nations, has been more frequently called to mourn over secrets disclosed and unfortunate statements made that fully verified the old saying, "In vino veritas," than for all other human weakness combined, not even excepting women and no nation need go far back in its state archives to find the proof.

Mr. Bryan may be a fanatic in this matter, but so long as he is secretary of state of these United States her men of finance and of commercialism, to say naught of her army and navy, will sleep the sounder and sweeter for the knowledge of his fanaticism.

Milwaukee (Wis.) Free Press: Why all this fuss over Secretary Bryan's banishment of wine from the Washington table? Every man is master of his own board, be his entertainment private or official.

No guest, if he is well bred, presumes to dictate what shall be set before him.

If there is anything to be criticised in the secretary of state's recent "innovation," it was that he made any reference, candid and pleasant though it was, to the absence of wine from his menu.

A host owes no more explanation to his guests if he fails to serve wine than if he fails to serve an ice.

A peculiar notion appears to lodge in certain minds that there exists a sort of compulsion relative to the service of wine at the dinners of high federal officers. Because such service is the custom in diplomatic Europe they suppose that good taste dictates its acceptance here.

We can not subscribe to such a

notion. The service of wine or any other viand is a matter of individual judgment with the host, whether his table be officially spread or not; just as the participation in any dish is a matter of individual choice with each guest.

The guest who covers his glass when the wine is poured or leaves the filled glass untouched calls forth no comment from the well-bred host. The rule works both ways.

The diplomats at Mr. Bryan's recent dinner politely applauded his explanation. The chances are that most of them admired the characteristic Americanism which would not permit a social convention to get the better of an individual viewpoint.

As for those who don't like the premier's table because it is unfamiliar with the juice of the grape, theirs is the privilege to profess a previous invitation the next time.

In the meanwhile we hope that Mr. Bryan will continue to prepare his dinner menu to suit his own sweet self. That is his personal right as the master of his table, his undoubted privilege as an American official.

Above all, let us have no more moralizing, either way, on an event which is purely one of social observance.

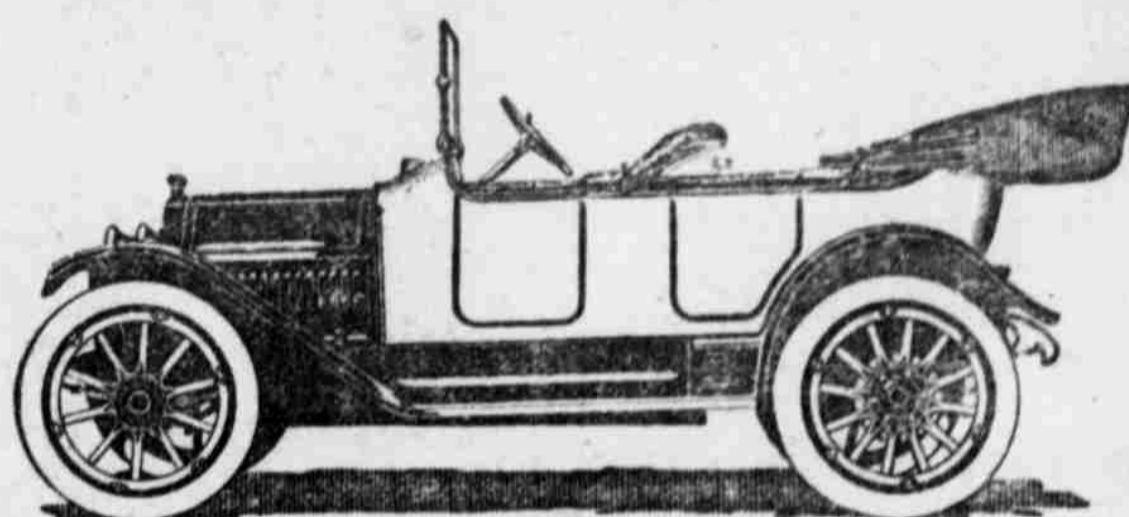
Washington Herald: It will be surprising to many people to know that grape juice has been a helpful factor to the administration, and yet such is the case.

We do not always get the proper perspective in Washington. We are apt to view public sentiment through our own atmosphere, which is not entirely free from distortion. We fondly imagine that the great mass of the people are giving atten-

tion to grave and serious problems of administration. The fact is that it is the apparently trivial and simple thing which most affects public sentiment. Congressmen who are keeping in touch with their constituencies, and especially those members who represent rural communities, are unanimous in the expression that Mr. Bryan's stand for temperance has greatly strengthened the administration. The banishment of wine and the substitution of a harmless beverage was a thing which did not require extraordinary intelligence to understand. It was a fact intimately connected with the home and thus struck a universal chord. Little things have more than once affected the course of history. It may seem absurd in a city to regard grape juice as a political factor, but out in the country there is a different point of view.



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HARRY R. RADFORD,  
Vice President and General Manager.

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