

Welcome Mr. Bryan

(Editorial by Robert Montgomery in The Puyallup Valley Tribune of July 24, 1915, Puyallup, Wash.)

The people of the northwest are glad and proud to welcome William J. Bryan. They recognize in him one of the foremost Americans, and so they are glad to see him. They draw the inference that he knows he is among friends, and so they are proud. The individual in a nation of a hundred millions of people who, by the force of his character, the blamelessness of his life, the loftiness of his ideals—aye, by his tenderness of heart and greatness of soul—has won his way to leadership, is a genius. He is a potent force for good. And Mr. Bryan, divested by his own act of official station, going among his fellows as a private citizen, bearing a message of peace, is a leader. He exalts love. As he speaks of peace, in all his speech there shows the influence of the gentle Master, and his face seems to be illumined as with a glow reflected from the countenance of the Prince of Peace he worships. A man of courage that never flinches, of high purpose from which no proffer of personal advantage can swerve him, of fervent patriotism, of broadest sympathy that would extend to all the world the benison of tranquillity and enwrap all peoples in the bonds of affection, Mr. Bryan stands forth a noble figure. Vituperation assails vainly, for it does not disturb his poise nor weaken his faith in human nature. Falsehood's poisonous shafts fall broken from his armor of truth. Still his voice uplifted in behalf of liberty, fraternity and righteousness, and he seeks to hasten the great day of his vision, the day when wars shall cease forever. And when this day shall have dawned, and the grateful world be asking who was its harbinger, who, under God, its prophet, then will the name of William J. Bryan shine from the pages of history, and the nations of the earth honor his memory.

Sometimes tribute is paid to those who have wrought well and departed. There are tears and flowers then, and words of appreciation that, to the ears of the dead, are nothing. We believe in a tribute to the worth that still abides and still engages in lifting humanity to a better plane; in making the world a happier place and the race spiritually richer through a pervading comity. It is manifest that this is a common feeling, albeit not always given definite expression. It is expressed in the throngs that listen to Mr. Bryan, crowding to get within range of his voice, eager to clasp his hand. This is tribute indeed. They look upon him as the embodiment of their own desires; as thrilled with the emotions they themselves have felt, but to which they could not give utterance. Here is one who speaks as though with lips touched of fire, and his words burn and smite evil or, with exultant and sonorous majesty, glory in the coming triumph of good. There is not in this world another private citizen whose presence is able to summon such a following; and yet Mr. Bryan offers no reward, asks nothing, save only to be heard that his message may reach the understandings of the people, of whom he is one set apart by the splendor of his gifts, the loftiness of his benign desire.

Thousands listened to him at San Francisco, and they were drawn into complete unison of purpose with him. They knew they had heard a great man, a good man; they were carried away by his logic, his elo-

quence, his sincerity. At Los Angeles the scenes were duplicated. Vast gatherings pressed to get within sound of his voice. On the fringe of each such gathering, and stretching away into the distance, were uncounted thousands more who, although they could not hear, caught the spirit of the occasion and, as the waves of applause reached them, took them up and passed them on clear to the outermost rim. Hardly could they be induced to disperse. Again at San Diego, the orator had a similar experience. A man of the people, voicing the knowledge and the hope stirring in the breast of each, or planting there the seed of a holy ambition to promote peace.

Who shall analyze this remarkable man? What has he done? Wherein lies his greatness? He has been governed by CONSCIENCE. He has adhered to his principles. He has put the welfare of his country before his own. He has been far above the political level that the briber has dared to invade. The mission that seemed to be his destiny he has regarded as a sacred trust. All the strength of his body and mind has been devoted to the performance of duty. He has shirked nothing because of sloth or indifference. He has sought nothing under the impulse of greed. Such honors as came to him he accepted when he believed acceptance to be wise; otherwise he would have thrust them aside. His utter unselfishness was demonstrated afresh when he resigned the post of secretary of state. There was an act that required courage, self-abnegation. His position made him a prominent factor in the affairs of civilization. It caused his name to be heralded in all lands. He esteemed President Wilson. Politically he had made President Wilson. To do this required all the mighty influence he was able to exert. His pride must have been involved in the success of the administration. The natural impulse would have been to remain, but he resigned, because he was possessed of the stupendous thought of a world without war, and believed he could do more to advance this plan—and at the same time make easier the efforts of the president to set the Old World a good example—if loosed from official ties. Now he is free, and is making the most of his freedom, not with bitterness towards those who hate him, who had sought to embarrass him, misrepresent his conduct as secretary, and his purpose in leaving. All that he can do for the president he is doing. It was his conviction that he could accomplish more by the course he took than by any other course, that decided him. Personally, the sacrifice was vast. It meant the relinquishing of authority. It waived distinguished honors. A small man could not have done it. Bryan did not hesitate.

The career of Bryan has been unique. Three times has he been candidate of the democratic party for the presidency, each time conducting a notable campaign. More votes have been cast for him than for any other candidate of his party ever before the country. Yet he never forced himself forward. When he went forward it was from the impulse of inherent strength. So did he tower above rivals that the choice was inevitable. He had been in Nebraska politics, and had served in congress. There, hardly more than a boy, he had been pitted against Bourke Cockran in debate, and the veteran orator knew speedily that he had met a worthy foe. This debate, together with his masterly

speech on the Wilson bill, had much to do with making Bryan known to the country at large. Then at the Chicago convention he made a speech that set him at once in the forefront of partisan statesmanship and won him fame as an orator. This fame he retains. He is a speaker of gracious manner, with a diction that charms, phrasing in strength, simplicity and beauty his rapidly flowing thoughts, and winning by his earnestness. Twice since his first nomination has he been chosen to bear the standard. And who does not remember his titanic achievement in the St. Louis convention in 1904—the year Parker was nominated? Packed by the reactionary element in the democratic party, Bryan, as a member of the resolutions committee, had on the stage of the convention—contending almost single-handed and alone—thwarted their attempt to invite plutocracy's favor for repudiation of certain cardinal tenets of the two former democratic platforms. In the history of American politics no such triumph, against odds so seemingly overwhelming, had ever before been scored to the credit of one man. In 1912 when again he was not a candidate, still he swayed the organization to his will, and caused the nomination of Woodrow Wilson. To do this caused other sacrifices cheerfully made.

He made a trip abroad after one campaign and was everywhere received with all the honors that would have been given the highest official of the land, and yet he had gone as a private citizen; claimed to be nothing more. His oratory electrified London. There was no stinting of the praise he received from the press and from members of the government. A speech made by him was the direct cause of one of the most beneficent provisions endorsed at The Hague. It was about this time that the "Interests" began to notice Bryan as other than a target for abuse. The eastern newspapers—especially those of the so-called "independent" class—opined, after consulting the magnates that perhaps Bryan had become "safe and sane," meaning that he might be docile and take suggestions from them were they to get behind him. His reception at New York upon his return was the most magnificent that ever had been tendered a private citizen. The "Interests" were ready to be notified that Bryan would be "good." He had expressed no indignation; had, in fact given no sign that he knew of the scheme. And then he made a speech that took the breath from them, advocating as it did ultimate government ownership of railroads unless certain conditions were changed. This settled overtures. It meant a renewal of war on Bryan, just as he knew it would, and war by the most unscrupulous and powerful aggregation that ever made and unmade administrations. Simply another demonstration that Bryan was beyond the reach of a tainting influence. Here was a chance, the acceptance of which would have involved no open disgrace, and would have been followed by triumphant election, for Bryan could have held his own following, and the "Interests" have done the rest. But he had a conscience and his standards of self-respect. He hurled the bribe back to those who tendered it. Ever since, they have hated him, and in the knowledge that they do hate him, he has grown more beloved by the people.

If this country is to escape war, it will be due to the work of Bryan. If it is to lead in a peace compact comprehending civilization, this, too, will be due to Bryan. His name ap-

pears now in thirty treaties with nations representing three-fourths of the population of the world. He has done much for currency reform. The bill that, even the opposition now concedes to be wise went through in large measure by his efforts. He has done much to correct the wrong and inequalities of the tariff. His advocacy of an income tax and of popular election of United States senators contributed immeasurably to the accomplishment of those reforms. He has stood for the good and ever against the evil. His example has been a veritable blessing, setting a pattern, even as he pointed the way. He does not boast, though he must realize how much he has accomplished. He pleads, not as one superior, but as a brother. Yet he would not be human did he not glory in the work he is doing for peace, and feel a pride that the name signed to the thirty treaties is his name and the treaties, themselves, his inspiration.

This is something about the man William J. Bryan. Hastily compiled, it is only a sketchy series of suggestions of his familiar and honorable record, but it makes clear to any who may not have understood, why Americans are delighted to receive him as the greatest among them, and why the people of this community will next week throng to hear him when he comes to the city of Tacoma.

MR. KELLEY A RECRUIT

Lincoln, Neb., July 6.—To the Editor of the Omaha World-Herald: Being at my home in Lincoln for a few days, my attention has been directed to an editorial in your paper of June 17, in which you take occasion, in an attack upon Mr. Bryan, therein, to make certain statements concerning myself.

Permit me to say in reference to the statements made, as to my political views and acts, that what you have said is untrue and wholly false. If you are really desirous to know the truth and the facts, let me herewith inform you.

For many years here in my city I have been a believer in the political principles advocated by Mr. Bryan, but have taken small part in partisan politics as such. It is true many years ago I was a republican and was known as such, but this has not been true for a dozen or fifteen years past. I voted for and supported Mr. Bryan for the presidency in 1908. I voted for and supported Senator Hitchcock in his canvas for the senatorship in our state in 1910. In relation to this Mr. Editor, I refer you to the senator himself, who will no doubt recall several conferences had with myself here in Lincoln, and he knows that I was a warm advocate of his for the senatorship. If you are so inclined, and wish to know the truth, you might also inquire of Hon. J. A. Maguire, three times a member of congress from this district, as to whether or not I supported and voted for him each time he was a candidate for this office. If you wish to know a little more of the truth, it will not be difficult for you to discover that I voted for and supported Woodrow Wilson in 1912. Space forbids any mention of local and state politics in recent years, but the above statements which I make are well known to practically every man who knows me in my home city of Lincoln, and yet in spite of this, you have the effrontery to state in the article referred to that I am "a blown-in-the-bottle republican (whatever that is), who has fought Mr. Bryan and the democratic party in adroit and singular attacks," etc.

W. F. KELLEY.