

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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Boer Address and Reply

During the St. Louis convention several of the Boer generals and soldiers called upon Mr. Bryan at Nebraska headquarters and presented an address. The address and reply will be found below:

THE ADDRESS.

St. Louis, Mo., July 5, 1904.—To the Honorable William Jennings Bryan.—Greeting from the Boer Nation.—Esteemed and Honored Friend: Having been informed of your presence at St. Louis, we deem it an opportune time to tender you and the liberty-loving Americans who were inspired by your eloquent pleading for our cause during those dark days when we were struggling for liberty, defending our country, home and hearth against an unjust attempt to exterminate the Boer race, our most undying and fervent gratitude.

Often when the odds against us seemed overwhelming, our ammunition, food and clothes exhausted, our women and children and thousands of burghers captives in the hands of the enemy, a word of sympathy from America came as balm to the wound, and inspired us with new courage.

During the life and death struggle at the battles of Colenso, Spionkop, Magersfontein and Diamond Hill, and many other engagements, the banner of liberty was kept waving, through the knowledge that far away in the great republic of the west, the home of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Bryan, millions of American freemen and women were fervently praying for our success and aiding us financially.

Even though today we are exiles, and wanderers in a strange land through the fate of cruel war and overpowering numbers, the sweet memory of your sincere and honest advocacy of the burghers vibrates our heart chords with the sweetest melody.

During the campaign of 1900, when you were the candidate of a great party, your advocacy of the cause of the Boers was of immense advantage to us and a constant encouragement. Needless to say, were the Boer nation privileged to place you in the seat of Jefferson, our race would be unanimous in doing so as an expression of our gratitude.

The espousal of our cause by the leading journalists of America demonstrated that the foreign, greedy avarice which coveted and prompted the destruction of the Free State and Transvaal republics was not approved by the liberty-loving democracy of the United States, whose fire by night and cloud by day is the Declaration of Independence.

Many lion-hearted Englishmen voiced the sentiment of their great countryman, Lord Byron, who said: "Hereditary bondsmen know you not who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

Hoping that you will accept this our humble tribute, with heartfelt gratitude, we remain, sir, yours gratefully,

B. J. VILJOEN, General late Boer Forces, Transvaal.

P. A. CRONJE, General late Boer Forces, Transvaal.

J. BOSHOFF, Commandant.

G. M. VAN DAM, Commandant Transvaal Police.

P. D. MOLL, Commandant.

G. MARE, Commandant.

A. H. BLEKSLEY, Captain.
M. J. WOLMARANS, Lieut. Artillery.
J. H. SMIT, Field Cornet.
W. BOTHA, Field Cornet.
S. RAUBENHEIMER, Field Cornet.
P. J. DuPLESSIS, Field Cornet.
BEN COETZEE, Field Cornet.
L. BOSEL, Lieut. of Police, Transvaal.
E. THIEDEMAN, Field Cornet.
F. FISHER, Field Cornet.
R. D. YOUNG, Field Cornet.
B. P. MARAIS, Field Cornet.
G. MARE, Commandant.

And two hundred and forty-seven men, women and children at present in St. Louis at the Louisiana Exposition grounds.

MR. BRYAN'S REPLY.

General Viljoen, General Cronje and others: I do not know in what words to thank you for the honor you do me in presenting this address. I most sincerely appreciate the compliment. I did on many occasions express the hope that you would succeed in maintaining the independence of the Boer republics; I did do all in my power to arouse sympathy for your people in their wonderful struggle to retain self-government, but it was not because of personal acquaintance with your people or because of partiality for them as against others. It was rather because I believe that a blow struck for liberty anywhere strengthens liberty everywhere, and that the defeat of any people's aspirations for self-government is felt by liberty-loving people all over the world. Your burghers were fighting for all republics as well as for their own and they made England's war of conquest so expensive that all republics are now safer from attack from without. The bravery of your soldiers, recalled the heroism of ancient times and your war, unsuccessful though it was, has given to history and to poetry names that will for centuries inspire the patriotic to devotion and self-sacrifice. I am proud that my feeble words were heard by your people and grateful that you who have attached your distinguished names to this address have so generously expressed your commendation of my efforts in behalf of the Boers. As a slight token of my appreciation of your kindness I shall be pleased to provide you, General Viljoen, and you, General Cronje, platform seats in the democratic national convention now in session in this city, that you may see the representatives of a party, which, had it been successful in 1900, would have thrown the moral influence of the nation on your side and thus assisted in the creation of a public opinion helpful to your cause. I again thank you for this compliment—it makes this day a day that will always be a bright one in my memory.

General Cronje, speaking through an interpreter, thanked Mr. Bryan for his cordial reception of himself and his comrades and Mr. Bryan added: "The fact that you, General Cronje, express yourself in a language with which we in America are not familiar proves that liberty has no chosen tongue but emanating from the heart finds utterance in every language and in every land."

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Rudyard Kipling's latest poetic effusion rings the changes on "Once on a time there was a man." We recall that most fairy stories begin that way.

Finding Success in Failure

If those who believe as the editor of The Commoner does had been successful in nominating the ticket at St. Louis, it would have been proper to consider the responsibilities of victory and to counsel that moderation that ought always to temper success, but as these were not successful in nominating the ticket, it may be useful to point out that even defeat and failure can be turned to advantage. We are so short-sighted that even the wisest of us can not see very far ahead. We do what we think is right and labor for the accomplishment of ends which we believe to be worthy, but we often find that other plans are better than our own and that a temporary defeat brings us nearer to the sought-for end than a temporary victory would have done. At least, when we have done our best it is the part of wisdom to make the most out of conditions that we find, and begin our new fight with the advantage of past experience.

William George Jordan, in a little book entitled "The Majesty of Calmness," published by Fleming H. Revel Co., New York, has a chapter entitled "Failure as a Success," and it contains so much of consolation and encouragement that it is commended to those who enter the present campaign with less of enthusiasm than they hoped to feel. Mr. Jordan says:

"It oftentimes requires heroic courage to face fruitless effort, to take up the broken strands of a life-work, to look bravely toward the future, and proceed undaunted on our way. But what, to our eyes, may seem hopeless failure is often but the dawning of a greater success. It may contain in its debris the foundation material of a mighty purpose, or the revelation of new and higher possibilities.

"Some years ago it was proposed to send logs from Canada to New York, by a new method. The ingenious plan of Mr. Joggins was to bind great logs together by cables and iron girders and to tow the cargo as a raft. When the novel craft neared New York and success seemed assured, a terrible storm arose. In the fury of the tempest, the iron bands snapped like icicles and the angry waters scattered the logs far and wide. The chief of the hydrographic department at Washington heard of the failure of the experiment, and at once sent word to shipmasters the world over, urging them to watch carefully for these logs which he described; and to note the precise location of each in latitude and longitude and the time the observation was made. Hundreds of captains, sailing over the waters of the earth, noted the logs, in the Atlantic ocean, in the Mediterranean, in the south seas—for into all waters did these venturesome ones travel. Hundreds of reports were made, covering a period of weeks and months. These observations were then carefully collated, systematized and tabulated, and discoveries were made as to the course of ocean currents that otherwise would have been impossible. The loss of the Joggins raft was not a real failure, for it led to one of the great discoveries in modern marine geography and navigation.

"In our superior knowledge we are disposed to speak in a patronizing tone of the follies of the alchemists of old. But their failure to transmute the baser metals into gold resulted in the birth of chemistry. They did not succeed in what