

The Cincinnati Reception

At the reception given to Mr. Bryan at Cincinnati, Mayor Dempsey spoke as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Citizens of Cincinnati, of the State of Ohio and our Neighboring Commonwealths: We are gathered here tonight to do honor to a most distinguished individual, in fact, to him who is today the most distinguished private citizen in all of this great republic. This great concourse of citizens is but one of a series which has from day to day greeted him since he once again set foot on his native shores. It needs from me no extended explanation of the meaning of these vast outpourings of the people. The standard bearer of a great principle, the advocate of living truths, has once more come unto his own, and his own are rejecting him not. It was not always thus, in the history of this republic, with those who appeared in the vanguard of policies looking to the liberty and welfare of the people.

"A half century ago the vital question in this country was the abolition or the perpetuation of slavery, and every school child today knows how the pioneers of African freedom were hooted at and stoned and rotten-egged, and their newspapers and printing presses destroyed and thrown into the rivers and creeks. Nevertheless William H. Seward, then governor of New York, declared that the conflict between slavery and freedom was an irrepressible one, and that, however much there might be of compromising, of procrastinating, of temporizing—a decisive battle would inevitably be fought between the two ideas, in which the one would survive and the other perish. Abraham Lincoln later emphasized Seward's thought by his own declaration that this country could not

be half slave and half free; it must be wholly one or the other. And you all know the outcome of that conflict.

"A similar situation confronts us now, and it is bound to result in a similar conflict. The living question before the people of this great republic today is whether the doctrine of special privilege, with all of its baleful effects and attendant evils, is to prevail against the fundamental American principle of equal rights to all of the people. There may be temporizing, there may be procrastination, there may be compromising, but the conflict between these two ideas is as irrepressible as the old conflict between the ideas of slavery and freedom. Involved in that conflict will also be the principle of civic righteousness in city, state and nation—a doctrine that calls for absolute honesty and fidelity on the part of public officials in the administration of public affairs, no matter how high or how low the official may be.

"The public magazines and a portion of the independent daily press have during the last five years revealed to us the shocking extent to which corruption, either in direct or indirect form, has permeated our whole body politic, from the councilman or selectman of an ordinary municipality up unto the very ranks of that august body, the United States senate. And the most alarming and regretful phase of the whole situation was the seeming apathy of the public and of a great portion of the public press after the disclosures had been made.

"Right here in our own county and city we had, and to some extent still have, as glaring an instance of this seeming indifference to official perfidy and official delinquency as can be found anywhere throughout the country. For nearly twenty years this city and county have been cursed by the domination of as precious a set of political rascals and freebooters as ever disgraced God's footstool. Through the hard work of an investigating commission authorized by the last general assembly the transactions of this gang were uncovered, two of the most important discoveries being that an attempt had been made to tamper with the judiciary in the decision of an important case, and that for years this gang had been appropriating to itself the interest on public moneys loaned by them to the banks.

"Notwithstanding these revelations, and notwithstanding the recipients of the stolen money, under compulsion, paid it back with contemptuous indifference, no great shock seems to have been experienced by the community at large, and of a daily press, consisting of four English and four German papers, but two, one English and one German, made any editorial comment thereon. It is a startling statement to make, but it seems to be true, that the sin of these political conspirators consisted, not in the crimes committed by them, not in attempting unduly to influence judges, but in being found

out in their nefarious dealings. Thank God that this sentiment is changing in this community, although we still have one sheet that goes into hysterical jublations over the merits of the old gang, and sees no guile, but naught save wisdom and honesty in them. Thank God, also, that the sentiment is changing, and has changed throughout the country, and that the public conscience has at last been aroused.

"What has been needed is a leader who will guide that public conscience right and direct the public mind into channels conducive to sound, honest and sincere thinking. When the American people set themselves to thinking seriously about any given problem, situation or condition of affairs, they never fail to hit the right solution. Why, I know not; it may be Providence, or it may be because of the sound, hard common sense which bottoms most of them. President Roosevelt is a man of whom any democrat can speak kindly, affectionately, and often enthusiastically, and this without any treason to democratic allegiance. Most of the policies announced and carried out by him are of democratic origin, and many of them have had their inception in the brain of him who is your honored guest this evening.

"But President Roosevelt is not the man for the present crisis, not because of any lack of the qualifications that I deem necessary in such a leader, but because he is hampered by the traditions of his own party and is fettered by the political environment surrounding him. No republican platform would ever declare against special privilege, and if a republican of the Roosevelt type should be found morally courageous enough to attempt it, not one of the senatorial coterie or the public and quasi-public corporations clique that dominate the policies and declarations of that party would ever permit it.

"Consequently the American people must turn somewhere else; and to some one who is as honest as President Roosevelt, as courageous, as frank and as persevering, but who, also, in addition to these qualities, has the interest and the welfare of the plain, common people of this country so close to his heart that no seduction or blandishments of any kind can win him away from them.

"It is in the democratic party alone that, at this juncture, relief can be found against the evils that are facing us. That party is and always has been, the party of the people, and from its foundation has stood unalterably for the right of the people against the aggressions of corporations, organized wealth and those who seek special favors and privileges.

"The man whom common consent seems to designate as the one meet for this crisis in our affairs it will be my pleasure in a few moments to present to you. Some of us may not be quite ready to agree with all of the propositions and principles that he may advance, or that he may stand for, but, however that may be, there is not one of us in this great audience who will not take home tonight with us something of benefit and of profit from what he may have to say. For Mr. Bryan is honest with himself in his thinking, and he will be honest and candid and straightforward with us in the expression of his thoughts, with the attendant result that each one of us must leave here to do some thinking for himself, and to make some research because of that thinking. That is just what Mr. Bryan desires—he wants to set us all thinking, and when the great American public gets to thinking—remember what I said before.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the Great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan."

On the same occasion Mr. Bryan, after paying a high tribute to Mayor Dempsey, said:

"I have been around the world, and everywhere I find that the seeds of de-

mocracy have been sown, and that they are bearing fruit. In all nations and in every clime the people are turning toward democracy and recognize the external truth of the principles which it stands for. Everywhere you will find the reformer and that reforms are being accomplished, and you will find that everywhere people are beginning to realize the necessity of bringing the government closer to the people.

"I believe that there is a new era coming in this country, and there are evidences given of late which bear me out. I believe that the time has come when the convictions of men are more powerful than the party lash. Take the case of Philadelphia. Only a short time ago it was said to be the most corrupt city politically in the United States. I remember hearing that the ministers of the city had got together and offered up prayers for the mayor. I have faith in prayer, but I believe that they ought to have prayed that the citizens would be guided to elect a mayor who would be the right man for the place. However, the mayor afterward allied himself with the honest people of Philadelphia.

"Now, next to Philadelphia, Cincinnati was known as the most corrupt city politically in the United States. Every form of corruption known to corrupt politicians was to be found here. Corrupt corporations conducted by respected men seemed to control the situation. Men who wanted people arrested for buying votes at \$5 per vote immediately turned around and gave \$5,000 with which to buy 5,000 votes. These same men who controlled the corporations and were known as respectable men had no consciences. The politicians grew fat by robbing the people. The good people were almost in despair of ever getting rid of that gang of politicians, but, yet look what happened. They rose in their might and elected a good man and an honest man as mayor (at this there were cheers for Mayor Dempsey), and you must remember that he needs your moral support. Do not expect him to accomplish everything in a few months. An organization entrenched as the Cincinnati organization was cannot be wiped out in a few months. You must stand by your mayor in his fight to eradicate them entirely.

"You had your papers who sold their columns to things that editors knew to be wrong. You had your city councilmen who obtained thousands of dollars and who embezzled public authority for their own advantage. You had politicians of high and low degree

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