

"Bryan and the Nebraska Democracy"

Hon. W. H. Thompson, of Grand Island, Neb., was on the program for the Bryan birthday dinner to respond to the toast, "Bryan and Nebraska Democracy." Mr. Thompson was unable to attend the dinner on account of a lawsuit in which he was engaged. He gave to the press, however, in advance, a copy of the remarks he intended to make. This abstract follows:

"Bryan and Nebraska democracy" is a theme to me most pleasing and inspiring. In it I behold the sweeping years of the last two decades, with their memories unrolling like a scroll. I again behold them laden with their joys and their sorrows, their triumphs and defeats, their victories won and victories denied. Through the eye of faith we behold those of our early members who have passed away and they waive us back 'forget-me-not.'

"We see in this passing through those who are fighting under another banner; those who have been crowned with laurels; those who have been disappointed, those who are not here, and those present, and we bid them all be of good cheer. As true democrats, we must give and grant unto each the same rights and the same liberties, the same freedom of thought and action; the same individual independence we claim for ourselves.

"It was upon this independent individuality combined with union of desire in the upbuilding of the community, state and nation, that our government was founded. It is upon these its perpetuity depends. It must not be forgotten that this nation is one gigantic partnership. That each citizen, man or woman, has an equal interest therein, and an equal responsibility, be he rich or poor, educated or uneducated. This should make every man and every woman interested in the welfare and well-being of every other man and every other woman, not only locally but nationally. In times of war, famine, or disaster, this fact is a living reality, but in times of general prosperity and contentment it is quiescent. Thus during the many years of prosperity you hear of it little, but as reverse approaches, the idea of the rights of man arises in its might, and the battle is on.

"Garfield truthfully said: 'Ideas are the great warriors of the world.' At times as party men, as to policies and as to principles, there has been, and there will continue to be, conscientious differences. I offer no apology for the course I have pursued when led by my conscience and best judgment, and I ask none of others. If we, as democrats, believe that the individual is the rock upon which our government rests, and that in the final analysis he is supreme, yielding only to our constitution and laws, we should not only be tolerant of this conscientious independence, but should we not go farther and welcome it? If it is our duty to think ourselves into a position, is it not equally our right to think ourselves out of it?"

"It was this untrammelled and unselfish thought that re-awakened the democratic spirit, as taught by the fathers, in the hearts of Nebraska democracy about twenty years ago. Under its guidance, and through the eloquence and direction of our honored guest of the evening, and others of our party, supported by an unbought press, democratic and populist, with the most loyal legions of supporters, the Nebraska democracy has become nation-wide as to its influence, and world-known. It has been a leader in thought. It has awakened the souls of men to a realization of their duty to their fellow-men, to their state and nation, unequalled in our history. Heretofore men have been able to so arouse their own party as to persuade it into the enactment of just and needed laws, but never before have their efforts been so potent as to drive the opposition to a continued endorsement of their measures. After such endorsement by our republican brethren they pleadingly stand with outstretched hands awaiting, and confidently expecting the plaudits of the public in proportion as their efforts have been successful in bringing to legislative fruition the seeds of democratic thought.

"To write the history of Bryan since '92 is to write the history of Nebraska democracy; to write the history of Nebraska for the same period is to write the history of Bryan. In writing the history of these achievements, due credit must be given to our populist allies, who have worked with us most of the time, and should have all the time.

"As proof of the growing popularity of these Bryan principles we need but recount their recent victories. Senator Kern of Indiana, Senator Parmelee of Ohio, Senator Martine of New

Jersey, Senator Myers of Montana, Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska, Senator Reed of Missouri, Senator Johnson of Maine, Governor Harmon of Ohio, Governor Marshall of Indiana, Governor Gary of Wyoming, Governor Dix of New York, Governor Wilson of New Jersey, and last, but not least, a democratic legislature in Nebraska. As I was delighted by his courageous and just fight for Arizona, I must say Senator Owen of Oklahoma.

"As the Missouri democracy is a part and parcel of Nebraska democracy, we doff our hats to Speaker Champ Clark and hail his selection as a Nebraska triumph.

"We have felt a just pride as Bryan circled the globe and thrilled the hearts of citizenship with his plea for the up-lift of all mankind, the eternal principles of a universal democracy, and the supremacy and independence of the individual. In him we beheld the triumph of American independent thought and action; in him we beheld the greatest achievement of Nebraska democracy. When we recall the glories he has brought to us and the aid that we have been to him, and that together we have built up a democracy of which none need be ashamed, as party men we should be doubly proud of our associations as well as of the fruits of our labors. Yet we must ever remember that to achieve victories we must merit them. That if we would win new victories through the years we must be true to our tenets. A retreat must not be sounded, neither as to platform nor as to candidates. Those who think alike must organize and work alike, without bitterness and without strife.

"Let me, as a most fitting tribute to our guest, offer the words of Thomas Marshall, as touching the moral force and worth of Henry Clay:

"He needs no statue—he desired none. It was the image of his soul he wished to perpetuate, and he has stamped it himself in lines of flame upon the souls of his countrymen. Not all the marbles of Carrara, fashioned by the sculptor's chisel into the mimicry of breathing life, could convey to the senses a likeness so perfect of himself as that which he has left upon the minds of men. He carved his own statue; he built his own monument."

TOM JOHNSON STILL LIVES

"Thomas Jefferson still lives," were the last words of John Adams, who died on the same day that Jefferson did, and just before him. They were prophetic: Thomas Jefferson does live—he not only lives, but grows in influence. And it may be truly said of Tom Johnson, also, that he still lives. His friends followed his body to its final resting place, and listened to appropriate words spoken by Rev. Herbert Biglow and Rev. Harris R. Cooley, the two ministers who had been closest to him during his fight for justice, but the real Johnson was not buried. The earthly form will dissolve into the dust but the soul of Tom Johnson will still move among us. His sunny smile will no more greet his multitude of friends, but his heart touched so many hearts that the impulse which he gave to the cause of humanity is a lasting contribution to the world.

He was the friend of man, and the defender of human rights. He showed a moral courage that proved that he bore the image of the Creator—a courage that could flow from but one source, namely, obedience to the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

He is not dead, for "death is swallowed up in victory."

Mourning depresses those who knew him intimately—his death leaves a place that can not be filled, but let us rejoice that so rare a spirit blessed us with his companionship—that we were a part of the world brightened by his presence and blessed by his labors. His friends remember with deepest sympathy his household and appreciate the trials through which they were called to pass when vested wrong hurled its cruel shafts at him and at all whom he held dear. God be praised for Johnson's life—may his example inspire an increasing number to listen to the still small voice that calls to service, and win, as Johnson did, the rewards that crown a well spent life, the love of fellow man.

MR. TAFT ON TEMPERANCE

In a letter written to the Sunday school children of America, President Taft advises total abstinence. It is gratifying to have the highest official in the land cast his influence against the use of intoxicating liquors.

"CLEAR THE WAY"

Linden Lea Place, Cassopolis, Mich., April 10, 1911—Editor Commoner: Replying to the inquiry of Mr. W. A. Spangler, of Bonham, Tex., in The Commoner of seventh inst., will say that the poem he wishes to find is entitled, "Action for the Future." It was written by Lowell Mason shortly before the civil war and has ever been interpreted as prophetic of that great event. It would also seem to be quite as applicable to our present era.

The words of this poem were set to music by William B. Bradbury and published in the New York Glee and Chorus Book by Mason Brothers of New York in 1865.

The writer used this selection for drilling his vocal music classes in 1859-60, and no doubt this song furnished the inspiration that took many a brave boy "to the front" in the sixties.

The poem follows and can furnish the music on request. H. S. CHAPMAN.

ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

Men of thought! be up and stirring,  
Night and day;  
Sow the seed, withdraw the curtain,  
Clear the way!  
Men of action aid and cheer them  
As ye may  
There's a fount about to stream,  
There's a light about to beam,  
There's a warmth about to glow,  
There's a flower about to blow,  
There's a midnight blackness changing  
Into day  
Men of thought and men of action  
Clear the way.

Once the welcome light has broken,  
Who shall say  
What the unimagined glories  
Of the day  
What the evil that shall perish  
In its way  
Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;  
Aid it, hopes of honest men;  
Aid it paper, aid it type,  
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,  
And our earnest must not slacken  
Into play  
Men of thought and men of action  
Clear the way.

Lo! a cloud's about to vanish  
From the day  
And a brazen wrong to crumble  
Into clay  
Lo! the right's about to conquer,  
Clear the way!  
With the right shall many more  
Enter, smiling at the door  
With the giant wrong shall fall  
Many others great and small  
That for ages long have held us  
For their prey  
Men of thought and men of action  
Clear the way.

W. A. Spangler of Bonham, Tex., now writes The Commoner to say: I am under lasting obligations to many unknown friends, who, on reading my wish in The Commoner, have come to my rescue.

I cannot thank them each and all too much for the kindness they have shown me.

Thinking you might desire a copy I am sending you one for the kindness you have shown me, as well as to show that I appreciate a favor and desire to push it along.

TOM JOHNSON

Special telegram from Washington to Omaha News by William Jennings Bryan: Tom L. Johnson was one of the noblest spirits with whom it had been my privilege to associate in politics. I regard his death as a great loss to the cause of real democracy. His unselfish interest in public questions and his untiring zeal in the effort to secure remedial legislation put him in the very front rank as a public man. His death will bring sorrow into a multitude of homes, but his life will continue as an inspiration for generations to come.