

## MRS. BRYAN'S RESPONSE

Below will be found Mrs. Bryan's response to the toast, "Dolly Madison," at the harmony breakfast, given by the democratic women at Washington, D. C., May 20, 1912. After a brief introduction, Mrs. Bryan spoke as follows:

"I wish, in the beginning, to tell you how glad I am to be with you today. I feel that we owe a large debt to the bright mind which first thought of promoting good feeling among democratic women by having them know each other.

"Men have a great advantage over us in this particular, for a broad acquaintance and a consequent tolerance come to a man naturally—as a part of his daily work. With women the reverse is true, and I am sure we appreciate thoroughly this opportunity to meet and to know each other. The toasts, as assigned, give me the pleasant task of speaking of the character of Dolly Madison rather than of her social methods. We may ask, why Mrs. Madison? Why do we not speak today of Martha Washington, of Abigail Adams, or of our own Mrs. Cleveland, who was so universally beloved when she was our first lady? Here we bow to the wisdom of our committee, for the reasons for their choice are quite sufficient.

"Washington's work was to get the government upon its feet; a work to which Adams contributed. With Jefferson began the reign of real democracy, and Mrs. Madison was the first democratic woman to hold authority. Jefferson had no wife. James Madison was then secretary of state and his wife, by virtue of her position and of the close friendship which existed between the two families, was, to all intents and purposes, the mistress of the White house during the two terms of Jefferson's administration, save for the short periods during which Jefferson's daughters came to visit him.

"Then followed eight years as the wife of a president, giving her, in fact, sixteen years of experience. Even if she had been dull—which she was not—she must have learned much worthy of our consideration in that length of time.

"Her work was the more conspicuous because of social and political conditions. The revolution had brought the colonies much closer together in spite of difficulties of travel and slowness of mail. The people felt for the first time the binding force of the word "American," and attention was centered upon Washington.

"All these favorable conditions would have gone for naught, however, had not the woman fitted the times. Her ancestry made her a power for unification, as in her veins flowed the composite blood of Great Britain. Her paternal grandfather was English, her paternal grandmother Scotch, and her mother Irish. Her father was a member of the Society of Friends, and in this restraining atmosphere she lived for twenty-one years—a school of repression and self control which was doubtless valuable in later life.

"In personal appearance she was most attractive. A fine complexion, blue eyes, and black hair which curled, were her strong points. Whether she was really beautiful I had not been able to decide, but while sitting here with this charming portrait before me, I am convinced that she was.

"Dolly Madison had her limitations. She had not the advantages of travel; did not even know the life of her own narrow little country, as she was unfamiliar with the New England colonies. Her education was gauged by the meagre standards of a century ago. She did not care for reading. Her letters show a kindly interest in people, rather than a vital interest in conditions. It has been said that her mind was slightly out of focus—meaning, doubtless, that she lacked a sense of proportion. She sometimes saw small things large, and large things small. The lack which will appeal most to us is that we have no proof that she entered at all into the intellectual life of her husband; a privilege which we hold most dear. These defects do not suggest any mental inferiority, but are rather a natural outgrowth of her education and surroundings.

"One trait which caused her to develop into the charming, easy social leader, which she was, was her adaptability. As a Quakeress, she was sober and demure; in official life, tactful and courteous, dignified or gay as occasion de-

manded; in later life, faithful; in old age serene.

"She had excellent judgment, as is instanced when, in her early widowhood, two notable suitors joined the train of her admirers. Within the slight body of Madison she saw a manly soul, and preferred him to the handsome Aaron Burr.

"Another large factor in her success was her genuineness. What she was, fully as much as what she did, makes her worthy of our imitation. Her suavity and affability were not the polished veneer which one too often finds in society, an attempt to conceal a selfish nature but which deceives no one; it was rather a rare bit of real growth springing from the soil of kindly interest and nurtured by the gentle dews of loving good will. The phrase, 'a wish to please and, what is more important, 'a willingness to be pleased,' has been applied to Dolly Madison with entire appropriateness. She was willing to inconvenience herself in order to give others happiness, and received the courtesies of friends with gracious appreciation.

"In an ascending scale, it seems to me, her strong sense of propriety ranks next—a most important qualification, so important that it has been called the sixth sense. It is not necessary to enlarge upon this. We have occasion to note almost daily the pitfalls that beset those who fail to see the eternal fitness of things, and we realize how valuable an asset Mrs. Madison here possessed. Few women, too, have been able to so successfully tread the narrow path which lies between tactfulness and insincerity. While on the way to Washington my thought has been busy with this patron saint of ours. What, after all, is her dominant characteristic? My judgment may be faulty, but with me the scale is turned when loyalty lies in the balance. She was loyal first of all to her friends; she did not forget the friends of early days, even though they were in humble circumstances. I have no doubt we shall hear more of this later when the Dolly Madison snuff box is opened for our inspection by Mrs. Ralston. Second, she was loyal to her country. When the British marched upon our capitol, she it was who bravely stayed alone, save for the servants, in the White house, and with her own hands packed the official papers into trunks and sent them to a place of safety. And when the troops had almost reached the city, she it was who superintended in cutting from its frame the portrait of General Washington. After the troops had gone, among the very first to return to the blackened ruins of the White house was the faithful Dolly.

"But last of all, she was loyal to her husband. During the years of official life, his work was her first thought. Through all the bitterness and criticism, often unjust, such as comes to every man in public life, she used her tactful skill to conciliate the opponent and to disarm the critic. But to me the most admirable part of this admirable life is not found in these years of stress and struggle, but in the later years at Montpelier. Giving up the social life which she so much enjoyed, we see her there caring for her husband's mother, who lived to be ninety-eight, and who for years was an invalid. There, when the frail little body of Madison grew weaker and weaker, though his mind was still bright; when with eyesight almost gone and with hands hopelessly crippled with rheumatism he sat, a mere shadow of his younger self, there we see the supreme loyalty of Dolly Madison. For seven years she was ever at his side; she read to him; she wrote for him; she made smooth the path of his decline. What a privilege was hers! Truly a gentle presence is this which we have called from the haze of a hundred years ago!

"I know of no better sentiment with which to close this toast than that which was once applied to her by one more clever than I; a sentiment which is a paraphrase of Decatur's celebrated motto, and which I am sure will find an echo in every wifely heart before me: 'My husband, may he ever be right; but right or wrong, my husband.'

## MRS. BRYAN'S TOAST

Referring to the "Dolly Madison Breakfast," given at Washington, the Cincinnati Enquirer's correspondent said:

"The first and the prize toast of the day was a eulogy of the famous White house wit and beauty, 'Dolly Madison, popular, brave, tolerant,' by Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, who demonstrated that not all the oratorical ability of the Bryan family is confined to the male members. The women agreed that Mrs. Bryan's effort was a classic."

## GOOD FOR VIRGINIA

Virginia's last legislature refused to ratify the income tax amendment to the federal constitution; some of her legislators allowing technical objections to outweigh the substantial merits of the amendment. But the democrats of Virginia, speaking through the state convention, have put the "Old Dominion" on the side of the amendment and the next legislature will add the state to the list of states ratifying it. The Virginia platform says:

"Believing that the principle of a graduated tax on incomes is sound, equitable and thoroughly democratic, and that the proposed amendment to the federal constitution, which has been submitted to the several states of the union for ratification, designed to make clear the power of the federal government to lay such a tax without apportionment among the several states according to population, should receive the ratification of Virginia and of such other states as have not already ratified it, we declare it as the sense of this convention that said proposed amendment should be ratified by the next general assembly of Virginia, and we express the hope that a democratic congress and president will carry this method of taxation into effect at the earliest opportunity, to the end that wealth may bear its just proportion of the burdens of the government."

## MR. UNDERWOOD'S VOTE

The Jacksonville, Florida Times-Union complains that The Commoner is not giving Mr. Oscar Underwood credit for having given his vote and influential support to the proposition to elect senators by popular vote. The Commoner hastens to make amends and to say that Mr. Underwood is entitled to respect for the vote he cast in favor of that great reform. It is all the more to his credit that he did this in the face of the fact that there was strong opposition to it among his southern colleagues. The Commoner has never intended to withhold from Mr. Underwood or any other man the credit belonging to him. On the contrary it would have been glad to have had the opportunity of complimenting Mr. Underwood with respect to his conduct generally on public questions.

## A MIGHTY MESSAGE

On another page will be found the address delivered by Hon. J. A. MacDonald of Toronto, at New York, April 19, 1912. Mr. MacDonald is the Gladstone of Canada; he is a Christian statesman who submits public measures to ethical tests. His message was delivered under the auspices of the men's religion and forward movement at the conservation congress and it made a deep impression. It not only calls attention to matters of transcendent interest, but it shows the dynamic force of a moral issue in the hands of one whose character enables him to stand for morality in politics. The poetic lines with which he concluded ought to be committed to memory—few lines contain so much inspiration.

## OUT OF THE RACE

The New York World, a newspaper that has been somewhat partial to Mr. Harmon, says: "Governor Harmon needed a more decisive vindication than Mr. Taft, in view of the aggressive campaign that Mr. Bryan had made against him. He failed to gain this vindication. That thousands of Ohio democrats, in a comparatively small vote, should have expressed their preference for the governor of New Jersey as against the governor of their own state is a decision without precedent in the history of democratic politics in that state. The Wilson vote is doubly significant, in view of the fact that Governor Harmon was re-elected less than two years ago by a plurality of more than 100,000. Governor Harmon's one chance at Baltimore, in view of Mr. Bryan's bitter opposition to his nomination, was to demonstrate that he had the complete confidence of the Ohio democrats and could sweep his state. This chance is now blighted. It looks as if the one unmistakable verdict of the Ohio primaries is that no Ohio candidate, democrat or republican, shall be president. Ohio repudiates Ohio."

## DEGRADATION

From the Washington Star: "There's a good deal more refinement in athletics than there used to be."

"Yes," replied the sporting man; "but every now and then some pugilist breaks loose and talks about 'slugging over the ropes' like a political candidate."