

Mr. Bryan's Welcome Home

Mr. Bryan arrived at Lincoln Friday morning, July 5th and was given a big ovation by his neighbors, regardless of politics. Referring to this reception the Lincoln Journal said:

William J. Bryan returned home from the democratic national convention yesterday and after being tendered an enthusiastic ovation by his friends and neighbors, left on an afternoon train for a trip which will keep him away from the city for some time. He was met at the Burlington station by a band and several hundred citizens. After being escorted to an automobile by Governor Aldrich, Fred Shepherd and other members of the reception committee, he was taken to the Lindell hotel. At the latter place he delivered an address of nearly an hour's length, speaking mainly of the events of the big gathering in which he led the progressive forces to a democratic convention victory.

The Lincoln Evening News said: William Jennings Bryan, democratic leader and citizen of Lincoln and of Nebraska, returned unto his own today. Met at the train by hundreds of his neighbors and friends he was conveyed to the Lindell hotel by a band and a long parade of citizens on foot and in automobiles. The crowd was not wildly demonstrative, but respectful, and while it did not fail to cheer heartily when his auto passed it preferred to look upon him as a man who had fought and who had won a great battle over forces led by men of the greatest political acumen actuated by hostility of the bitterest kind.

A large crowd congregated early on the depot platform and overflowed inside the gates. As the train drew in the crowd swarmed about the rear coach, cheering as in company with his wife, Mr. Bryan left the train, and began to shake hands with Governor Aldrich and members of the reception committee.

With the band playing national airs, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan were escorted to the waiting auto, the aides being Governor Aldrich and Fred Shepherd. With the band leading and the triumphal auto directly behind, the slow march was taken up while the great crowd, falling into double column, followed. After the crowd came the automobiles containing dignitaries.

At the Lindell hotel a larger crowd awaited and when the auto containing Mr. and Mrs. Bryan drew up in front, the demonstration began. C. M. Branson, climbing onto the fender of the car, led the cheering until he was replaced by Mr. Bryan himself who proposed cheers for Wilson and Marshall.

Although it was hoped by the committee on arrangements that Mr. Bryan could be prevailed upon to remain here long enough to deliver an address, either tonight or Saturday night at the state house grounds, this was found to be impossible in view of the fact that Mr. Bryan had to leave the city early in the afternoon. Mr. Bryan explained this to the crowd to which he spoke, declaring that he extended his remarks because he would not again soon have the opportunity of talking to his friends and neighbors. He left for Kansas on an afternoon train. His plans for the immediate future were somewhat indefinite but it was not thought that he would be in the city for some time.

Many who listened to the speech declared that it was the greatest that Bryan ever delivered. A number of republicans made this statement. Bryan seemed to feel deeply that he was among friends irrespective of political affiliation. He let himself out, so to speak, and laid bare the burden that was upon his heart. His references to Mrs. Bryan and the great help that she had been to him, and how as he grew older he depended on her more and more, was received with hearty applause.

In every tone and in every inflection of his voice the speaker gave clear-cut evidence of the fact that he felt that his audience was with him. When he intimated that he had talked too long, cries of "go on, we want to hear more," were heard.

"I thought he only talked fifteen minutes," said one enthusiast, but Bryan actually spoke about an hour.

Every point that Bryan scored was liberally applauded. When he made reference to the fact that when he was a young politician he was called a demagogue but now he was no longer considered such, several cried out, "you are right." When he stated with great feeling that

he was deeply thankful to be among his old friends and neighbors again he was given hearty cheers.

A critical survey of Bryan by some of his old admirers led to the statement that the once "boy orator of the Platte" had aged greatly in the last two years. The glowing countenance of the speaker and the gleam from his dark and sparkling eyes did not indicate that the aging process had made much headway. It was the same aggressive Bryan of years ago. Perhaps with a few more pronounced wrinkles, but the possessor of the same dynamic force as then.

A large and enthusiastic crowd, estimated from 3,000 to 3,500, heard the speech. While the voice of Bryan indicated the strain that it had undergone during the strenuous days of the convention, it still could be heard clearly even on the outskirts of the crowd.

When several of his admirers called out for him to get upon the hotel balcony, Bryan declared that he thought he could do just as well standing up in the automobile which had brought them from the railroad station. He made a witty reference to the fact that he did not like to talk over the heads of an audience.

The speech created a profound impression. One could not have told a republican from a democrat, or a standpatter from a progressive. Every person who listened appeared to be with the speaker as he described the big fight of the progressives in the national convention.

The Lincoln Daily Star said: Lincoln, just as it has done nearly every four years since 1896, went mad this morning when a man, wearing baggy trousers and alpaca coat, stepped from the train, home again from a democratic convention.

The band played, men yelled, auto horns added to the din and scores of people cheered the name of Bryan, and welcomed even louder, if possible, the mention of Mrs. Bryan's name.

Had a conquering hero been returning from a victorious battle, or had the man even been a candidate for the presidency of the United States, the ovation would probably not have been greater nor would the crowd have hung more closely on his words.

That the presence of Mrs. Taft, wife of the president of the United States, in the Baltimore convention deterred Mr. Bryan from including a criticism of the president and of the methods employed to secure his nomination was one of the interesting statements made in Mr. Bryan's speech. In preparing his famous resolution declaring that no man should be nominated who had the support of Wall street interests Mr. Bryan included a few words suggesting that the interests had controlled the Chicago convention that nominated Mr. Taft, and also a criticism as to how the president's nomination had been brought about. At this time Mr. Bryan was taken over to the box occupied by the president's wife and introduced to her. After his conversation with Mrs. Taft, Mr. Bryan decided to expunge the criticism from his resolution. In speaking of the incident, Mr. Bryan said: "After meeting Mrs. Taft I withheld that portion of the resolution, and in the resolution and in my speech no reference to the Chicago convention or to Mr. Taft was made, and I am not sorry that I spared the feelings of the president's wife." This statement was greeted with applause and cheering.

Street car traffic was blocked, hundreds of men walked uptown behind the Bryan automobile, and the business district all but closed its shops while the roar of welcome followed the party through the streets.

The same Bryan smile greeted the lined sidewalks, the same slouch hat waved a recognition, the same Bryan, a little balder perhaps, more rotund, but with the undiminished magnetism of his youth. When the party reached the Lindell hotel, the street was jammed.

The Bryans arrived on the Burlington at 10:10 o'clock. Quite a considerable assemblage had gathered at the station before the train pulled in and the band was in readiness. As the hour of arrival approached, the crowd increased in size and many a battle scarred republican shaded his eye as he looked down the track for the coming train.

When the Pullmans swept into the yard the crowd made a dash for the rear car. The band played "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue" and as Mr. Bryan jumped down to the depot platform as sprightly as a boy and as fresh as a daisy, hesitating a moment to aid Mrs.

Bryan, the band broke into the stirring notes of "Away Down South in Dixie."

Governor Aldrich, Frederick Shepherd and others surrounded Mr. Bryan, who apparently slightly bewildered grabbed his hat from his head and said smiling:

"Am I promoted?"

Aldrich and Shepherd flanked Mr. Bryan on either side as they started for the automobile. Meanwhile the crowd jammed tighter and moved toward the street.

Just as Mr. Bryan reached the exit to the station an old woman, plainly dressed, but with the light of good womanhood in her eye, planted herself firmly in front of Mr. Bryan and extended her hand.

The latter grasped it warmly and she stepped aside to let the avalanche of men flow into the street. Seventh street was jammed with automobiles. As they pushed Mr. Bryan and Mrs. Bryan into Bob Malone's car, the torrent of sound from the honking auto horns was deafening.

Colonel Bills quickly brought order out of the chaos and the whole party, with the band leading, followed by a huge flag and the Bryans and hundreds of citizens on foot, marched up town.

As the Bryan car passed the new Stacey fruit building a group of workmen several stories in the air sent down a cheer. Mr. Bryan's wave to them was as warm and appreciative as it was to the crowd of well dressed men and women in front of the Lincoln hotel.

Passing up O street, the welcoming continued undiminished. From high up in the First National bank building and the Richards block came cheers, from the sidewalks a storm of noise.

At the hotel the Bryan automobile was stopped, and while the crowd gathered around he started his address. It was punctuated by applause. When it was over a score of men and women grasped his hand. Then Mr. and Mrs. Bryan were rescued from the crowd and driven home to Fairview.

It was originally planned that Mr. and Mrs. Bryan would hold a reception inside the hotel rotunda, but when the hotel was reached the crowd was so dense that Mr. Bryan decided to address them from the auto rather than from the hotel balcony.

In the beginning of his speech Mr. Bryan said: "I want to express my gratification and I speak for my good wife as well as for myself, at this unexpected reception. I am grateful that three cheers were given also for Mrs. Bryan, as she has stood by me in this, the greatest of my fights, as well as in all my former struggles. (Applause.) And as I advance in years I feel more and more the need of her support."

The press reports have mutilated an answer which Mr. Bryan made to one question. A Chicago reporter asked him what he had to say of Watterson's prediction that Governor Wilson and he (Mr. Bryan) would fall out. Mr. Bryan replied: "Mr. Watterson's predictions do not all come true, but if this one does I hope the Lord will help us to bear the disappointment more cheerfully than Mr. Watterson bears his."

Colonel Watterson boasted a few weeks ago that Mr. Bryan had included him in the list of men available for the democratic nomination. He must not use that indorsement any more. Recommendations, like eggs, depend for their value upon their date.

Colonel Johnson of Texas made a great hit in his speech against Parker—one of the hits of the convention, and there were thirty-nine other delegates from Texas who were ready to make hits, physical, mental, moral or political, if they had had a chance.

If, as we now learn, Mr. Bryan has been under suspicion for twelve years in the Clark household, how shall we explain the fact that the Clark orators were so profuse in their declarations of loyalty to Bryan and Bryanism?

If Mr. Clark ever writes an article on "Mr. Underwood's Progressiveness," it is a safe guess that he will not quote any of the eulogies he formerly pronounced on the distinguished reactionary from Alabama.

In 1904 the democratic candidate amended the platform with a telegram; this year the telegrams came from the people and they exerted a large influence in the selection of the candidate.