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A Real American President

"I am very glad, indeed, to have this opportunity to address the two houses directly and to verify for myself the impression that the president of the United States is a person, not a mere department of government hailing congress from some isolated island of jealous power and sending a message, not speaking naturally and with his own voice; that he is a human being trying to co-operate with other human beings in a common service. After this pleasant experience I shall feel quite normal in all our dealings with one another."—President Wilson's introductory remarks before the joint session.

Welcome, China!

The people of the United States will, without exception, rejoice at China's entrance upon her new career. It is a momentous hour when the citizens of a great nation, becoming conscious of both their rights and their capacities, secure their participation in the government under which they live. China, whose people, through so many centuries have endured the restraints and constraints of monarchical government, has thrown off the yoke of an emperor and established a republic. The methods employed were almost as unusual as the event was unexpected. Peculiar in many ways, they were never more peculiar than when, almost without bloodshed, they overthrew a dynasty and inaugurated a government popular in character. It was an epoch-making act and the world has hardly yet recovered from its surprise.

On the eighth of April the new assembly met. The lower branch of the legislature has a membership of between six and seven hundred; it opened with five hundred of its elected members present. The upper body has a membership of two hundred and seventy-three, one hundred and seventy-five of whom answered to the roll call at the opening. This is a very satisfactory attendance when it is remembered that the elections were only recently held and that many of the members had to travel very long distances by antiquated modes of travel. The sessions were opened with dignity and decorum and the following address was issued to the world:

"On this eighth day of the fourth month in the second year of the Republic of China, the date fixed for the first opening of our permanent national assembly, the members of the senate and the house of representatives, having met in these halls to celebrate the event, now make this declaration of their sentiments.

"The will of Heaven is manifested through the will of the people. That the hundreds of millions of the people possess the authority of the state is not proclaimed now for the first time. The monarchy so long corrupt proved unworthy of the grave responsibilities entrusted to it by the will of the people, but with the introduction of popular government the representatives of the people must share the likes and dislikes of the people. They are to give expression to the desires and voice the will of the people; they hold the reins in behalf of the

nation to govern with severity or leniency, with parsimony or extravagance; they become the pivot upon which the prosperity of the state is made to turn. For the success or failure, safety or danger, adversity or good fortune, theirs is the merit or the blame.

"Can we be otherwise than anxious? Yet through great tribulation the spring comes to prosperity, and our very bad management and anxieties are a means to happiness. Now, therefore, we unite to form this assembly and presume to publish our aspirations: May ours be a just government! May our five races lay aside their prejudices! May rain and sunshine bring bounteous harvest and cause the husbandman to rejoice! May the scholar be happy in his home and the merchant conduct his trade in peace. May no duty of government be unfulfilled and no hidden wound go unredressed. Thus may the glory be spread abroad and these our words be echoed far and wide, that those in distant lands who hear may rejoice, our neighbors on every side give us praise and may the new life of the old nation be lasting and unending. Who of us can dare to be neglectful of his duties?"

Splendid beginning! Welcome, China, to the sisterhood of republics! The government of the United States was the first nation to intimate its desire to extend recognition, and in no other nation will China find a larger or more sincere sympathy with her hopes and aspirations.

RELIEF AT LAST

The democratic members of the ways and means committee have presented a tariff bill prepared in consultation with the president. It goes a long way toward bringing the relief which the democratic party has promised the people. If it is not exactly what each one desires it will be remembered that a tariff bill is a composite opinion of many persons, not the opinion of one alone. The bill, however, in the total reduction made as well as in detail will commend itself to a large majority of those who desire tariff reform.

It seems probable that the senate will pass the bill substantially in the form in which it passes the house; thus a united party will speak immediately and emphatically for the relief of an overburdened people. Surely the day of jubilee is near at hand.

HARD TO PLEASE

Mr. Henry Watterson of the Louisville Courier-Journal, criticises Mr. Bryan because of the reproduction in The Commoner of a St. Louis Republic editorial complimentary to Champ Clark. Marse Henry is hard to please. He seems determined to be displeased with Mr. Bryan in any event. Can it be possible that Marse Henry does not really enjoy life as much as he says he does? Can it be possible that the beloved editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal has come to be a "grouch?"

DIGNITY

Mr. Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville Courier Journal, is very much afraid that in adopting the plan of delivering the presidential message in person, the president "is likely to lose in dignity." But in spite of all the loss in "dignity" the people seem to like it. Any way, Marse Henry has enough dignity for the entire party. The people will be satisfied if Woodrow Wilson stands for efficiency.

President Before Congress

The president has set a new precedent and it is likely to become an important one. While in appearing before congress he revived an old custom rather than originated a new one, still it is so long since the president delivered a message to congress in person that it is as startling as an innovation.

The president has shown himself ready to risk criticism in doing that which seems to him right, and he did not misjudge the human heart when he decided that the people would approve of his act if he brought himself into closer communication with those public servants who are entrusted with matters of legislation. When our constitution separated the three departments of government and so balanced one against the other as to compel co-operation among the people's representatives, it did not contemplate the creation of such a barrier as has gradually been established between the White House and congress. Our institutions are not endangered by the introduction of more frank and cordial relations between the executive and the legislative departments, and it is a little amusing that any one should have regarded the visit made by the president to the halls of congress in the light of a menace. Senators and members of the house are in daily conference with the president at the White House; they call to see him about appointments and to present matters within the domain of legislation. Why should the calling be one-sided? Why should it be regarded as proper for legislators to go to the president but objectionable for the president to go to the capitol? It is not objectionable, it was simply unusual.

Now that the new plan has been inaugurated, it is found to be popular. Those who wanted to find fault, stayed to praise, and the country already enjoys the benefit of this better understanding. The president, with that modesty which has characterized his every act and yet with that self-reliance which is equally characteristic, had a heart to heart talk with the national legislators. His introduction touched the hearts of all; it was a protest against the lonesomeness that custom has enforced upon the executive—a plea for fellowship and comradeship. The response was immediate and unanimous. The president told his auditors why he had called congress together, and in strong but simple language outlined the policy which in his opinion would carry out the pledges made and realize the hopes excited during the last campaign. By making friends of his co-laborers, he has made easy the work to which they were all called. He has added another laurel leaf to his crown.

MR. WILSON'S PROGRESS

No other president has, within so short a period of time, won such general favorable comment as has been given to Woodrow Wilson by the people and the press during the past few weeks.

Plainly the people have grown weary of shams and pretense. Plainly they are searching longingly for the genuine in public life. That is the reason that a prolonged cheer goes up from the people every time our democratic president punctures an official pretense or sweeps aside a long honored tradition.

The reason that so many of the words of Jefferson and of Lincoln live is that there was

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