

## The Man in the White House

President Wilson's administration has proceeded far enough to enable the public to determine the point of view from which he examines public questions and, to his credit, it may be said that it is exactly the point of view from which he promised to examine public questions. First, as to the matter of appointments. He has looked at applications for office with a view to securing efficiency. He has not been lacking in appreciation of political services rendered during the campaign; but, true to his theory that the welfare of all the people should be placed above favors to a few, he has insisted that no one should aspire to a position who is not able to fill it to the satisfaction of the public.

It is not always easy to turn down the application of a loyal and zealous supporter, but this is often necessary for obligations of support are not necessarily reciprocal; that is, a man does not necessarily earn an office by supporting one who exercises appointing power. It is only fair to assume that a citizen in casting his vote and in exerting himself on behalf of a candidate is actuated by a desire to advance the public welfare and to secure the enactment and enforcement of laws that will promote the general good. If that is true, he is fully repaid when the person he supports uses his influence to advance the principles and policies to which he was pledged. A man who would, before election, demand the promise of an office before doing campaign work, would be regarded as unfit for the office. Why, then, should he, after the election, make his commendation of the official dependent upon his receiving individual reward?

It is not meant to convey the idea that political services should not count; they ought to count. Appointees should, as far as possible, have fitness plus political merit. But this does not justify appointments where one has political merit without fitness. It is not to be expected that the president will be able to avoid mistakes in his attempts to combine political reward with a scrupulous regard for the needs of the public service. It must be remembered that the president can not know personally any large percentage of the great number of persons appointed. He must rely upon information furnished him, and even those who are most trustworthy may advise unwisely, first, because they can not be personally acquainted with all applicants, and second, because they may yield to the temptation to reward personal friends or personal supporters to the exclusion of more deserving men. As to appointments generally, it will be conceded that the president has succeeded as well as any well-informed person would have hoped.

The first economic question which the president took up was the tariff question. It is fortunate for the public that the man in the White House is the champion of the taxpayers rather than of the taxeaters. He has steadfastly insisted upon the writing of a bill in the interest of the consumers rather than in the interest of those who have been the beneficiaries of protection.

It is not an easy matter to resist the importunities of those who clamor for legislative aid. They are men of standing in the business community and are able to present their arguments forcibly, and they have the advantage, too, of presenting them in what is largely an ex parte suit. The man upon whom the tariff burden falls is not in Washington; he is at home trying to make enough money to pay his share of the taxes.

The beneficiary, however, is always present. He is a master of mathematics, especially in addition and multiplication. The chief business of the protected manufacturer has been to manufacture statistics showing that he should have an increase in the tariff when the republicans are in power and that he can not stand any decrease when the democrats are in power. It is not strange that the public should be overreached in the making of a tariff law, even when the legislator is conscientiously trying to be fair and impartial as between the two classes affected by the law, namely, the collector of tribute and the tribute bearer. It is much more difficult to secure a just law when the legislator is swayed from the path of duty either by promises made to the beneficiaries of protection, or obligated to these beneficiaries by financial aid given, or awed by the threats which these beneficiaries employ. The president has shown much more than ordinary knowledge of the subject, and much more than ordinary firmness in the advice

which he has given to those who prepared the tariff bill now before congress. The "wool men" and the "sugar men" made the greatest fight for the retention of the advantages given by protection, but a large number of protected interests contended less conspicuously but scarcely less earnestly for the retention of tariff rates desired by them.

The tariff law promises to be more than a reasonable fulfillment of the hopes excited by democratic promises, and the president will be entitled to a large share of the credit, both for the rapid progress made and for the measure of perfection attained.

But if the president has shown himself on the side of the people in dealing with appointments and with the tariff question, he has proven it even more conclusively by the manner in which he has dealt with the currency question. He has been patient, persistent and courageous. He has dared to advise changes in the currency law which will be very advantageous to the banks, and yet he has resolutely refused to countenance any surrender of the people's right to control the issue of money. The line between government paper and bank paper is clearly defined, and the opinions on either side are firmly held. The president has not hesitated to take his position on the side of the people and to insist upon the sovereign right of the government to issue and control paper intended to circulate as money.

The demand for immediate action on the currency question was largely supported by those who took the banks' view on the subject of issue, and they were quite positive that no bill could pass that did not enlarge the note-issuing privileges enjoyed by the banks. With that firm reliance upon the triumph of the right which has been his safety on so many occasions, he risked the fight along the lines which he has laid down and is already assured of the success of the measure.

The great English poet has assured us that "he is thrice armed who hath his quarrel just." The strength which comes from the espousing of the righteous side of any cause is not always sufficiently considered. The president has confidence in the people and confidence in the people's side of the question. He therefore attempts things which would not be thought possible by those who have not learned to have faith in the wisdom of doing right. Six months have passed—months great with achievement because they have laid the foundation for large reforms, and the secret of the president's triumph thus far is to be found in the fact that his viewpoint is the viewpoint of the people, and his sole concern, their welfare.

W. J. BRYAN.

## The New School Year

The schools have opened for a new year. No one can doubt it who sees the troupes of children on their way to the school room, all bearing evidence of a mother's patient care. A sight of the merry, bright-faced children who are equipping themselves for life's serious work ought to be a cure for pessimism. A school census showing the number of the boys and girls at study is a guaranty as to the nation's future. The course of instruction, beginning with the kindergarten and ending with the university, is intended to cover about sixteen years of the life of each generation—it seems a long time when one looks forward to it, but it passes quickly and happily. There is no way in which these years can be better employed; no amount of money that can be made during the years covered by the school course can be as valuable to the individual as the information collected and the training secured. The interest paid by a bank, the dividends earned on stocks and the profits accruing from other investments are small compared with the returns which an education yields. Money is only valuable because it will buy other things, and there are some things which money can not buy. Dollars will not bring to the untutored mind a solace for wasted opportunities.

One of the advantages of age is that it can assume the right to give advice; let me use this presumption and offer a word of counsel. To the younger students, the most valuable thought that can be presented is that each lesson is important. We can find an illustration in the brick. A single brick is about as useless a thing as can be imagined, but a large number of

bricks, properly laid together make a wall, and the walls, joined, make a house. If a brick is missing from the wall there is a hole, and if many are missing the holes are so numerous that the wall becomes insecure. A lesson may be compared to a brick. A single lesson seems unimportant, and yet the lessons properly joined together form an education, and an education is of the highest value. If we could look upon an education as we can upon a wall, we would see the hole caused by a lesson missed. We can not do this; but we do know that when many lessons are missed the education is defected. "Never miss a lesson" should be the motto during the earlier years until study has become a pleasure, and then admonition is unnecessary.

The greatest danger that the intermediate student has to encounter is that of leaving school before the course is completed. Society ought to be able to rely upon the parent to keep the child in school, and yet there are parents who seem to be ignorant of the value of education. Would any parent think of cutting off a boy's arm and sending him out with one arm to compete with boys who have two arms? Such a thing could not be thought of—it would be too cruel to be described by words. And yet in this age the father who deliberately deprives his son of the opportunity to secure an education and sends him out half educated to compete with the boys who are well educated is more cruel than the father who would cut off his boy's arm.

But let us suppose that the student has passed through the first and second stages, has been careful to attend every recitation and has completed the entire course, what then? Is that all? By no means.

An education is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Whether the education will contribute towards the happiness of the individual and towards his usefulness to the community depends entirely upon his life's purpose. Just as the railway engine or the automobile can be of great use when properly guided but can do tremendous harm when not controlled, so the education may be helpful or harmful according to the use made of it. Here again resort may be had to an illustration. The buzzard and the bee may be taken as representing two views of life. The buzzard soars high but never gets so high but that it is looking for something to eat; when it dies it leaves nothing to make its existence remembered. The bee, on the other hand, has an instinct for sweetness; it knows where the honey is. It feeds upon the best while it lives and when it dies it leaves a monument of honey to make the world glad that it has lived. The buzzard must be a buzzard, and we can not blame it for it; the bee must be a bee and deserves no credit for it; but man is free to choose which he will imitate, the buzzard or the bee. Some imitate one and some the other. There are those who, however high they go, are always looking for something to eat, something to wear, something for themselves; when such a one dies, the world is not grieved. There are others who produce more than they consume, and when they die leave the world richer than when they found it.

To those who make the right use of education it is a blessing without alloy. It makes one a fit companion for himself and enlarges his capacity for service. As one can not rightfully draw from society a larger sum than that which fairly measures the service which he renders, an education is valuable to its possessor because, by increasing the contribution which he can make to society it increases the reward that he can legitimately draw from society. In a larger sense, an education rightly used is of priceless value; it enables its possessor to better meet the responsibilities of life, better discharge the duties imposed by society and better fulfill the destiny that his Creator has set before him.

May the children of those to whom The Commoner makes its monthly visits enjoy to the full the benefit bestowed by our educational system and then, feeling their indebtedness to society for the advantages enjoyed, make full return in service for that which they have received.

W. J. BRYAN.

The arguments employed by the republican party have been refuted; its plans have been frustrated; its councils are divided. The tower of Babel presented scarcely less confusion of tongues than a republican gathering.

The American newspapers which have, for partisan purposes, been libeling the chautauqua will soon feel the deserved contempt of the foreign editors who have been misled into repeating their falsehoods.