

Mr. Bryan's Birthday Observations

Recently Mr. William Jennings Bryan celebrated his sixty-first birthday at his home in Miami, Florida. Asked by the press for a statement as to his feelings upon this occasion, he replied:

"The latter days of life like the autumn months, have joys of their own that make them welcome in spite of the silent warning that they bring.

"They are the harvest days and are gladdened by the results of early labors.

"No one has been more fortunate than I in family and in friends, in congenial co-workers and in the satisfaction that comes with the securing of reforms. I have lived my life in a wonderful period and have seen four great constitutional amendments adopted.

"Popular election of United States senators brought this government nearer to the people.

"The income tax equalizes the burdens of the government.

"Prohibition gives us our greatest moral victory.

"Suffrage gives an impetus to every righteous cause.

"I have seen the nation demonstrate its fighting strength and then prove its disinterested devotion to peace and progress. I have seen partisanship wane and political independence grow.

"Forty years in politics have made me an optimist. Democracy, which is stronger than any party, will solve all our problems.

"While I hope and expect to see my party play an important part, the country will go forward whether the Democrats lead or lag behind. I am sure, too, that our government will lead in the movement for disarmament and world peace.

"God is on His throne and the teachings of the Prince of Peace exert an unceasing influence on the hearts of mankind."

In everything Mr. Bryan says there is great deal worth pondering over and this is especially true of his recent birthday talk. One would not expect, unless he knew Mr. Bryan intimately, such a splendid note of optimism from one who had faced during a long political career so many personal defeats as have characterized Mr. Bryan's political activities. Yet Mr. Bryan may well be consoled, and probably is, by the fact that his defeats have really been victories, because the principles for which he has contended have in good time been generally adopted and even recognized as beneficent by those who bitterly assailed them.

We have always felt that Mr. Bryan was far more concerned with the success of the ideas and ideals for which he has stood than he was with any personal aggrandizement that might come to him in connection with their promulgation. One has only to turn back to the Democratic platform of 1896 to realize how much of the Bryan political philosophy of twenty-five years ago has since been adopted in this country. Even his position on the currency question in those days has received a far wider recognition than the average person realizes.

Fundamentally, in 1896 Mr. Bryan stood for the quantitative theory of money and exchange, and for the policy that the banking and currency business of the country should be strictly regulated by the government. As he put it, "banks should go out of the governing business and the government, to a greater extent, go into the banking business;" and this is exactly what has happened under the terms of our present splendid Federal Reserve Act. The idea also that the quantity of money of ultimate redemption has a very direct relationship upon the course of prices is also generally acknowledged and the best and most constructive effort now being made in behalf of currency reform is directed almost solely toward the idea of producing a stable standard of value. This, indeed, is the whole purpose of the plan proposed by Professor Irving Fisher and other noted economists for stabilizing the purchasing power of the dollar. The whole notion of the intrinsic value of gold as a sound money medium, the whole monometallic theory of currency, which Mr. Bryan combated in 1896, has been disproved by the whole course of events since that time.

We hardly know of any man in American political history who to a greater degree than Mr. Bryan has proposed so many reforms and suffered political defeat because he proposed them, and yet has lived to see these reforms brought into being and generally recognized by even

those who formerly bitterly opposed them. Mr. Bryan's great misfortune, so far as he is personally concerned, is that in his ideals and ideas he has always been a considerable distance in advance of the ordinary thought of his time. But he has lived to see the procession of progress catch up with him and adopt scores of his ideas which at first the people repudiated. If there is one man in America who, from his own experiences, is qualified to give expert testimony that the world does move and that humanity is making progress, that man is William Jennings Bryan. That is probably why Mr. Bryan is such a confirmed optimist. Certainly it is one of the great reasons why such a host of people admire and respect Mr. Bryan; and while through all the years of personal setbacks of one kind or another, he has been able, not only to maintain the confidence of great masses of people, but what is equally important to maintain a splendid faith in himself and the work that he has been privileged to do.—New Haven, Conn., Union.

DRYEST AND QUIETEST INAUGURATION

Newspapers continue to discuss the recent inauguration of President Harding and the fact that it was the first time in history that the head of a great civilized people was inducted into office under a dry regime. Former inaugurations were attended by much drunkenness, many thinking it an appropriate way to show their pleasure or disgust or sorrow, depending on party affiliations.

Every former inauguration meant the arrest of scores of persons on the charge of intoxication, while on the day of the ceremony last month only 12 persons were arrested on that charge. The desire of Mr. Harding for a quiet inauguration, according to the Washington Herald, "must have included the order to jam the cork into the bottle and throw the corkscrew into the Potomac."

All the correspondents agree it was the driest and quietest inauguration in the history of the country. The Washington Star remarks in regard to the event:

"Perhaps the most impressive feature of the crowds which lined Pennsylvania avenue was the almost total absence of any evidence of intoxicants. There were very few inebriated men along the line of the presidential ride. This contrasted with the situation four years ago, when local prohibition had not yet made itself felt materially in Washington and the police made many arrests on charges of drunkenness.

"It is much to the country's credit that the change in administration took place under such conditions. A sober inauguration augurs well for the people. It is much more appropriate than to make such an event a drunken debauch."—American Issue.

GOOD WORD FOR BRYAN

Booneville, Ark.

To The Commercial Appeal:

In reference to Mr. Bryan in your editorials of Sunday and Monday you condemn him for resigning from the president's cabinet at a critical time.

Why did he resign? Because he saw that his ideas were not in harmony with the president and he saw that it was best for the nation that President Wilson have some one whose views were not diametrical to his.

Was this not an act of greatness on his part?

We were entering into one of the greatest conflicts of the age, a part in which the secretary of state was to play a conspicuous part. Few men filled with ambition could have resisted the temptation of staying in regardless of consequences, but Mr. Bryan saw that it was best (not for him that he resign), but best for the president's administration during the war the he make his cabinet more harmonious. Bryan made a great personal sacrifice for others.

Then during the 1916 campaign, while newspapers all over the country were deriding him for deserting the administration, did he sulk in his tent as 99 out of 100 would have done?

He spent eight weeks campaigning in the west for the president at his own expense, when he could have been making \$500 per day lecturing, because he knew it was best for the country and the Democratic party that Wilson be re-elected. When he rounded up his trip he went east, where they asked him how the west would go. He said, "Democratic," and the political critics laughed at him. You know what really happened.

You ask why he sat idly by during the last campaign while the Democratic party was slaughtered?

I thought he did wrong in this the same as

you. But can we expect any human being to be perfect all the time? Can we consistently love a man for what he did in two campaigns and then hate him because he does not keep it up? In other words if a man helps us a number of times shall we suddenly fall out with him if he at some times refuses, and then forget his past benefactions?

The Democratic conventions of 1904 and 1920 ignored all suggestions of Mr. Bryan, then in the campaigns that followed he elected to play hands off and let those who differed with him have their own way and they made a signal failure. He did not interfere, he just said go ahead, may be you are right. You may know best, your policy may be best to win. Was that not fair enough?

I thought he was wrong in the convention at San Francisco. The convention did just as I personally thought it should do on the liquor question, but now after we are ingloriously licked, shall we fall out with Mr. Bryan on account of it?

Since 1892 Democracy has lost three times under his leadership, but did not lose nearly so badly as we have lost two times when he did not lead, and we have won two times under his leadership.

Do we not have to admit that the results are in his favor?

He has done all of this with many in his own party fighting him all the time.

What might he do in 1924 if the party gets solidly behind him? Why throw brickbats at him because he has done a few things that we think were wrong when he has done so much that brought great results?

LEON WESTMORELAND.

DEMOCRACY MUST BE A PARTY OF THE PEOPLE

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to separate the Democratic democracy from the plutocratic democracy. Oil and water will not mix. The Democratic party cannot longer survive half plutocratic and half Democratic.

It is a propitious time for a reorganization of the party, anyhow. There are Democrats who ought to be in the Republican party and Republicans who ought to be in the Democratic party. Let these men find their political level. Let them seek the camps to which they belong. Don't be afraid. Go where your convictions lead you. If you are not a Democrat, don't be false to your political conscience, but go right on to the Republican camp. If you are not a Republican, and your interests lie in the Democratic party, come right out into the fellowship of your real faith and what you conceive your evident welfare. The curse of all parties is the compulsory loyalty that comes from environment or heredity. The democracy and the plutocracy have a great battle which must be fought out. Let us fight it honestly and have no half-hearted or lukewarm followers in either camp.

Upon these new lines and progressive democracy which will really represent the people can live and prosper and win.

But there must be a new and progressive democracy or there will soon be no Democratic party.

It is up to the people. What say they?

Back east a movement has been undertaken to stop the increase in the habit of drinking tea on the ground that its immediate effect is to stimulate the mental and muscular energy of the drinker. There is reason to suspect that this is a sort of backfire by the tobacco manufacturers to ward off the nicotine crusade the Women's Christian Temperance Union is contemplating.

Owing to the kindly-disposed attitude of the authorities towards booze selling, it is now possible, if we are to believe the press reports, any person who wants intoxicants can buy them in New York, Chicago and other large cities. Which would seem to indicate that it is the sousing and not the housing problem that is up for solution there.

After being in session for seventy-two days the Nebraska legislature has manufactured but sixty-six laws, or about 40 per cent of the normal output. Some legislatures achieve fame through the character of the progressive legislation they enact while others get mentioned in the papers because of the progressive legislation that is sidetracked.