

Credit for Mr. Bryan's Treaty Plan

(By Charles J. Rosebault, in New York Times, Dec. 25, 1921.)

It would be far from true to say that William Jennings Bryan has missed popularity or that he has not had a large following at any time since he sprang into the limelight way back in '93. Yet there can be no doubt that he failed to get his full meed of applause on certain occasions. Anybody who will turn back to Bryan's plan to prevent wars, during his term as Secretary of State, for instance, will have to admit that, taking the country as a whole, there was nothing like the enthusiasm which the apostles of peace are able to raise today with only a fraction of original thinking and hard work contributed by the Great Commoner.

In fact, it must be allowed that a not inconsiderable portion of our population was inclined to regard his efforts for peace—the permanent peace which is the shibboleth of the leading statesmen of the world today—with levity and a large degree of contempt. Yet the fundamentals for which the Conference for the Limitation of Armament has been striving are contained in the treaties of arbitration negotiated by Mr. Bryan.

Being a real, genuine, dyed-in-the-wool Good Man always does raise up a crop of belligerent critics. That is why philanthropy is one of the most thankless avocations in the whole gamut of industries. Everybody looked up to Andrew Carnegie with respect until he was seized with that fatal desire to sow libraries around the world. The man who could draw a quarter of a billion out of a crowd headed by J. P. Morgan was voted a real "feller." Even those who had not approved of the doings in the Homestead strike were willing to let bygones be bygones. But those libraries—with the name Carnegie on the pediments! And, as if he had been obstinately set upon defying popular judgments, he goes on to Hero Funds, and Peace Foundations. Who remained after that to do him honor? Richard Henry Stoddard, the poet, went so far as to write some vicious doggerel in which there was the threat that Andrew Carnegie, if he didn't watch out, would find his head "done up in arni-kee." It must have taken bitter indignation to utter a rhyme quite so atrocious, and yet the Iron Master contributed to the support of the Authors' Club and left a fund for unfortunate writers.

At the height of his oil-stained career John D. Rockefeller has never hounded as when he organized the Rockefeller Foundation for the improvement of the world, with its subsidiary, the wonder-working Rockefeller Institute. If he had clung to his millions and posed only as a golf expert, he would by this time have only the admiration of a public which worships success. Even Nathan Straus, now universally accepted as the man who forced the adoption of pasteurization, was excoriated while he was devoting his money and his energies to saving babies. Very likely posterity will be raising monuments to these men; it is only dead philanthropists who have no enemies. Even Mr. Bryan may come into his own in the distant future.

Certainly doubt, suspicion and downright denunciation have dogged his foot steps thus far. Nothing that he did escaped the sneers and flings of his critics. Even the printing of his hymn in *The Commoner* (Nov. 6, 1908) was not allowed to pass without a taunt. The refrain—

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain or plain or sea;
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be!"

produced this public sneer: "Can it be that the good Lord wants him to go up Salt River?"

Did he devote himself to the candidacy of Wilson, up jumps a prominent New Jersey Democrat with this cry of treachery: "Bryan is playing a grandmother game, and working for Bryan. He is for no one else in particular, because he is for himself in particular."

BRYAN AND WILSON

Even in Europe the bark'ng is kept up. An eminent English writer, who is an expert on American affairs, while admitting that Bryan

has some virtues, holds him up as an uncouth product of an uncultivated farming community, a sort of Ploughboy of the Western World.

He is accused of being a vaudevillian, using his great oratorical gifts to make money for himself while posing as an unselfish devotee of the common good. He could not earn his living as a lawyer, it is alleged, and made a fortune out of campaign speeches. So vicious are the attacks that he feels compelled to defend himself publicly, and *The Lincoln News* of Nov. 7, 1899, devoted considerable space to an "authorized defense," in which he declared that he "never got a 5-cent piece" for his campaign speeches, and even paid his own hotel bills and railroad fare, except when he rode in the special trains provided by the campaign committee. There was a frank statement of his earnings as a lawyer, showing a minimum of \$70 in 1883, his first year, and a maximum of \$1,998.28 in 1889. He had refused several offers from corporations of \$25,000 a year after the campaign of '96, though he was far from rich.

Many will remember that Mr. Wilson wrote to Adrian H. Joline in 1907, "Would that we could do something, at once dignified and effective, to knock Mr. Bryan, once for all, into a cocked hat." Henry Watterson called him "Bryan the Destructionist," of "malevolent disposition" and "judgments radically infirm," and charged that he was "spoiled by adulation, yet of medium talents, confusing his resentment and his conviction in an effort to keep himself at the front of the scene and to retain the appearance of leadership at whatever cost, regardless of consequences."

THAT GRAPE JUICE BUSINESS

Yet all this time Mr. Bryan was making pronouncements on various public questions which his friends alleged were afterwards adopted by other politicians and statesmen, launched as their own original contributions, and acclaimed by the great majority of their countrymen. It was just blamed hard luck, they insisted, which had robbed their hero of his just reward. If he had not been so consistently good, he would have been appreciated.

There was one time when it looked as though Bryan had overcome even that handicap. When he returned from his trip around the world in 1906 it looked as though he might have almost anything for the asking. The critics were silent and ready to turn somersaults. Not that they loved Bryan now, but that they hated Roosevelt so intensely. They feigned to see Bryan converted to sanity, which was another word for conservatism. Had he been content to remain silent then, he might have had their support. Perhaps the historian of the future will credit him with self-denying sincerity for the speech at Madison Square Garden where he flaunted the would-be converts by declaring for government ownership and operation of the railroads.

Of course, there was always that grape juice business. There is no use denying that a lot of us were plainly disgusted when that was put over. There was a stain upon his character which neither time nor the waters of Jordan can wash out for a considerable number of unadulterated Americans. Even convincing proof that he was the original peace god won't bring them to bend the knee. For them, though he may have sought to banish war, he also did his level worst to banish joy. And many, looking at the gray skies which now hang over the land of the free and the brave, clench their fists and hiss at the effigy of William Jennings. To that grape juice do they trace the present triumph of the Eighteenth Amendment.

But let us be serious. With all the world—minus the irreconcilables—huzzaing for the work being done for the abolition of war, it is only historical justice to trace back to the first American who definitely did something decisive in that direction, and there can be no doubt that Bryan was the man.

MODEL TREATY OF ARBITRATION

As early as 1906 he made a public declaration on the subject which attracted universal attention. To be sure, militarists, statesmen, politicians and even the man in the street were then

moved to mirth and scoffing, as has already been said. But, then, such is almost always the lot of prophets and reformers. If any great number were convinced of the wisdom of what they have to offer they wouldn't be needed. In 1906 the subject of war had only an academic interest for most people anywhere. In these United States people could not have been hired to sit through a discussion of it. If one's neighbor at dinner had brought it up, he would have been set down as a bore or a crank, and avoided ever after, though he had the fire of Kossuth and the eloquence of Webster. Like the prophet of woe in Dunsany's play, he would have been simply out of the picture.

On July 24, 1906, the publicists composing the so-called Brussels Commission of the Congress of the Interparliamentary Union for the Promotion of International Arbitration, then in public session at London with the object of drawing a model treaty of arbitration, adopted unanimously an amendment proposed by Bryan, which read as follows: "If a disagreement should arise between the contracting parties, which is not one to be submitted to arbitration, they shall not resort to any act of hostility before separately or jointly inviting, as the cause may necessitate, the formation of an international commission of inquiry or mediation on the part of one or more friendly powers. This requisition will take place if necessary according to Article 8 of The Hague Convention for the peaceful settlement of international conflicts."

Here was the fundamental idea of the present treaty on the Pacific Islands. Hostilities were to be held up until friends could intervene with conciliatory counsel. That would give time for cooling off and a chance to bring the hot-heads to the round table. Bryan's argument on this occasion aroused enthusiasm in even the cynical old diplomats. Pointing his finger at a painting illustrating the death of Admiral Nelson, the orator exclaimed with dramatic fervor: "There is as much inspiration in a noble life as in a heroic death." Great sensation and delegates rushing up to clasp the hand of the proclaimer of this noble sentiment. The keynote of his speech was the refrain that only upon the foundation of the brotherhood of man could permanent peace be established.

Continuously from that day forward Bryan was fighting against the "agitators of war." Another Don Quixote fighting the windmills, it seemed to many of his countrymen, but ridicule did not affect him. As Secretary of State in 1913 he launched attacks upon the makers of arms and armaments and charged that money was being spent in one country to stir up feeling in another.

HIS ARBITRATION TREATIES

Every nerve was strained to remove the international situations which might lead to war. Through his influence the United States was not only the first country to recognize the Chinese Republic, but tried to get the concerted recognition of all nations through notifying the diplomatic representatives at Washington of America's purpose. In 1914 he came out for the repeal of the law exempting American vessels from paying Panama Canal tolls, on the ground that this violated our understanding with Great Britain, and in the same year he arranged the treaty with Colombia to heal the wound over Panama. Although defeated then, a similar treaty has been adopted since.

But it was in his arbitration treaties that Bryan reached the climax of his ambition in this direction, and it is these which now may be invoked to prove the claim of his friends that he was the first to attempt to put into practical effect the ideas which are now finding universal acceptance. On May 10, 1913, Bryan spoke at a great banquet at the Hotel Astor tendered to delegates to the international conference for formulating suitable plans for the celebration of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent and the one hundredth anniversary of peace among the English-speaking nations. Joseph H. Choate presided and many distinguished statesmen were present. Said Bryan: "Two weeks ago I summoned representatives of thirty-six nations to express our willingness to enter into an agreement that there should be no war, no declaration of war and no commencement of hostilities until the question in dispute has been investi-

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Progressive Democratic candidates should be selected for the positions of governor and state and legislative positions in states holding elections this year