

MR. BRYAN'S ELOQUENCE

Mr. Bryan's first campaign speech, delivered from an improvised platform at Champaign, Ill., Monday evening, was pretty poor stuff. At the beginning he apologized for the quality of it by saying: "I have just been talking some in Chicago, and am sort of between speeches." When the gentlemen is "sort of between speeches," his oratorical output is flat enough, because it is not his custom to speak extemporaneously. The few addresses which have made his reputation were manufactured with the greatest care, "polished and repolished" during nights and days of searching after effective phrases and tones, and delivered under the guidance of an assistant, whose duty it was to control by signals the volume of his voice and otherwise to promote by warnings or encouragement the success of the carefully considered appeal to the audience's emotions.

How the machinery creaks when go behind the scenes! We take the following from a friendly description of the Boy Orator's methods, as exemplified in preparation for a speech in congress on the tariff.

"For weeks the Bryans had been preparing that speech. 'The Bryans,' I say, because husband and wife worked over that speech day and night together. Every preparation for it was made with determined coolness.

"Mrs. Bryan afterward told me how they had worked over it, how sentence after sentence had been polished and repolished and cut until each was a gem of its kind. They had already discovered Arlington, the famous cemetery of the soldiers. There they went twice, and among the graves of the great worked over paragraphs that proved especially effective when delivered. Mrs. Bryan knew almost every word by heart."

"A week before the big speech was made Bryan had delivered a eulogy on a dead colleague. Mrs. Bryan then unknown even to her husband's associates, sat in the gallery, and carefully noted the volume of tone required by Mr. Bryan to fill the hall. Anything more deliberate could hardly be conceived. By means of signals the husband on the floor and the wife in the gallery communicated, and he lifted or lowered his voice at her suggestion until she satisfied herself that he had struck the most effective tone.

"When the critical moment arrived (for the tariff speech) Mrs. Bryan was in the gallery. At first Mr. Bryan held a low voice. Mrs. Bryan nodded for fuller tones. Her eyes never left his face except to study the effect some sentence might have on the house.

It may be that Mr. Bryan was assisted by such guidance in the Chicago convention, although he really did not need it there, for he had experimented with substantially the same speech elsewhere during a joint debate which took place in a Nebraska town about a week before the convention assembled.

It is out natural that such an orator should be fond of phrases "polished and repolished" and tested in cemeteries and other lonely places as well as in assemblages of sympathetic men. Therefore we are not surprised to find that the closing sentences of his peroration at Chicago had grown old in his service. As uttered at Chicago they were:

"We shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns—you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

This appears to be the form which was used a week earlier in Nebraska, but if we go back a year and a half

—to Dec 22, 1894—we find that this polished and somewhat blasphemous gem of oratory was used in a speech delivered by Mr. Bryan in the house on that date:

"The money centres present this insolent demand for further legislation in favor of an universal gold standard. I for one will not yield to the demand. I will not help to crucify mankind upon a cross of gold. I will not aid them to press down upon the bleeding brow of labor the crown of thorns."

We submit that these overworked sentences are now entitled to a rest and should be laid aside. And it seems to us that the authorities of the First Presbyterian church in Lincoln, Neb., of which Mr. Bryan is a prominent member—being also a Sunday school teacher—may reasonably express the same opinion.

It is not difficult to understand why Mr. Bryan uttered nothing but cheap platitudes at Champaign, Ill. As he said, he was "sort of between speeches" and had not been able to cut, polish and repolish in cemeteries and elsewhere a new set of remarks. And so we find him saying: "This is an important campaign. This is the greatest nation on earth. Our form of government is the best on earth. Our government is the most perfect form of government," &c. The oration factory has not been in operation since the adjournment of the convention. The machinery behind the scenes had not been set in motion. But there are cemeteries and groves and pastures in the neighborhood of Salem, Ill., and the work of polishing and repolishing will now be resumed.—New York Times.

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L. J. BYER, Water Commissioner.

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