

8. I believe in the eternal verities.

9. In conclusion I ask your votes by reason of my past labors in bringing to you good seasons for your crops and health and happiness, with which should be contrasted the sickness, floods, fires, and many other misfortunes you have suffered on account of the iniquitous policy of my opponents.

His election was almost without opposition.

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MR. BRYAN—A CHARACTER STUDY

From The London Daily News of June 13, 1908.

It was a wonderful apparition of vitality that burst in on me one morning at the Hotel Cecil, where I had called to breakfast with William Jennings Bryan. "Now, sir," he said with that air of plunging straight into business so characteristic of the American, "I find my resolution at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference is down for 9:30 and to save time I've had breakfast early so that while you are breakfasting I can talk right along." And seizing a chair he sat down and "talked right along."

There is about him the primal energy and directness of nature. He is a Niagara of a man, a resistless torrent of inexhaustible force, thundering along in a sort of ebullient joy, mind and body in perfect equipoise. It is not the hurry and frenzy of the city that possesses him; but the free, untrammelled spirit of the West with its spacious skies and primeval forest and illimitable prairies. He has the simplicity of a son of the plains. His mind moves in large curves and sweeps along in royal unconsciousness of academic restraints and niceties. You do not remember the proprieties in his presence any more than you would remember them in the presence of a hurricane. For he comes right down to the bed-rock of things and his hammer rings out blows that seem to have the universe for a sounding board. As he talks you understand that thrilling scene when the young unknown Nebraskan stamped the Democratic Convention in 1896 and swept all rivals out of the field with his "cross of gold" speech.

Before he has spoken his presence arrests you. Johnson said of Burke that you could not meet him casually sheltering from a shower of rain without discovering that you were in the presence of a man of genius. You cannot look at Mr. Bryan without a certain shock of expectation. He leaps out at you as it were from the drab canvas of humanity. The big, loose frame, the massive head, the bold sculpture of the face, the black, lustrous eyes so direct and intense, the large governing nose, the wide, straight mouth with lips tight pressed, and the firm broad chin, together convey an impression of decision and power which is irresistible. It is difficult to believe that a man can be so strong as Mr. Bryan looks. Together

with this appearance of elemental power there is the sense of an elemental gentleness, a natural chivalry, a frank and human kindness. He has the unaffected courtesy not of one who stoops to conquer, but of one who is unconscious of social or intellectual fences. He lives, as it were, on the broad free plain of a common humanity.

His face is typically American. It is often said that the American type has not yet emerged from the welter of races out of which the ultimate American people are to be fashioned. But there is a dominant profile visible. It is the profile of McKinley and Bryan. It is the profile which suggests quite startlingly the characteristics of the aboriginal race of North America, and raises in perhaps the most piquant form the problem of the influence of climate on physique and character. Mr. Bernard Shaw gives so large a place to that influence that he seems to suggest that if only our dull English Broadbents could arrange to be born and to live in Ireland they would become as imaginative and bright witted as himself. Certainly the tendency of the Americans to revert to the physical contours of the Red Man—a tendency which has been commented on by many observers, including Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, whom I found after his visit to America deeply impressed with the phenomenon—is too well marked to be controverted.

Mr. Bryan is typical, too, of the American in temperament and intellectual outlook. It is the temperament of youth, incident to a people in the making and to a light and stimulating air. The wine is new in the bottle. It lacks the mellowness of the

. . . vintage that has been
Cooled a long age in the deep delved earth.

It is exhilarating and expresses itself in a sanguine and dazzling optimism that goes out to meet great adventure with a challenging heart. His intellect is bold rather than subtle, masculine rather than meticulous. His eye ranges over great horizons and sees the landscape in the large. His weapon is not the rapier, but the hammer of Thor. He is elemental and not "precious." If you talk to him of poetry you will find him indifferent to the heavy laden incense of Keats, but quickly responsive to the austere note of Milton. For his mind is charged with the spirit of New England Puritanism, and if ever a monument is erected to him it should be on Plymouth Rock.

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If Mr. Bryan had not been a politician, he would have been the greatest revivalist of our time. His qualities as a statesman have yet to be proved. His qualities as a preacher are indisputable. He is, before all else, the hot gospeler of national righteousness. Even in appearance, with his white cravat or his black tie, he suggests the Methodist divine. His appeal is always to the

moral conscience. The name of the Almighty is as familiar on his lips as it was on the lips of Gladstone. And it is the highest tribute to his sincerity that in employing it he never gives you the sense of canting. The truth is that he lives in an atmosphere out of which our politics have passed. No one to-day in the House of Commons ever dares to touch the spiritual note. When we say that oratory is dead we mean that faith, which is the soul of oratory, is dead. Oratory fell to earth when Gladstone and Bright ceased to wing it with spiritual passion. Our wagon is no longer hitched to a star.

Now the supreme fact about Mr. Bryan is that he mingles religion and politics in the same breath. They are not distinguishable from each other. They are fused into one theme. His talk is like the talk of Cromwell, so full is it of Biblical imagery and phraseology. Thus, speaking of the political awakening in America, he passes naturally to the moral and spiritual awakening as its basis. "Are you aware that the country has been going through a great revival of religion? Certainly it is true. Don't you know about the evangelistic movement, that most impressive movement towards a more personal realization of the Gospel? It has taken possession of the churches everywhere. It has quickened religion. It has brought in the men and organized them. And there is a new note in popular religion. While it is quickened on its personal side, it has come to a new understanding of the social significance of Christianity. Christ said—no, it was one of the Disciples, but the authority is pretty good still: 'He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now.'"

"The time has come," he says, "when it is perceived that religion is a concern that has to do with the family, the city and the nation, with business and with politics, as well as with what is called the individual life. No man can individually be a religious man who commercially acts irreligiously or politically consents to irreligious measures. What we are witnessing is a revival of religion largely concerned with men and women as members of society."

All his political thinking springs out of this soil of moral ideas. "The wages of sin is death," he says, "to the nation as much as to the individual. In the case of a nation a century may elapse between the sowing of the wind and the reaping of the whirlwind, but the one follows the other." He stands by the historic view of America as the land of the ploughshare and not of the sword. Not that he is afraid of unsheathing the sword in a just cause. He himself raised a Nebraskan regiment in the Spanish-American war, and was himself its colonel. But aggression he hates. "What is this growth of militarism for? If it is

due to a fear of labor troubles, why not deal with them through the Department of Justice rather than through the Department of War? If it is due to Imperialism, then Imperialism attacks the most vital Christian principle—namely, the propagation of good by example. What has Imperialism done in the Philippines? It has sought to propagate good by force. It has been a policy of philanthropy and five per cent. Sir, it can't be done. Philanthropy goes to the wall. The five per cent blinds us to the real welfare of the Filipinos. The Bible plan of propagating good is by example. 'So live that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father.'"

So with the Tariff issue. It is the moral aspect of Free Trade on which he dwells. The open door is the gospel of Brotherhood. Build up tariff walls and you build up national enmities and armies and navies to support them. Break down tariff walls and you establish a common basis of peace between the nations. "Yes, I am a Tariff Reformer," he said to me—I had mentioned his visit to Glasgow, where he had heard Mr. Chamberlain open his fiscal campaign—"but a Tariff Reformer with us you know is a Free Trader. Protection is a stumbling block to progress and peace. It is a cruel injustice to the poor, for taxes upon consumption always bear heaviest upon the poor and lightest upon the rich. Under taxes on consumption men contribute, not in proportion to property and income, but in proportion to what they eat, drink, wear and use. Taxes on consumption are taxes upon our needs, and men's needs, being created by the Almighty, are much more nearly equal than their possessions. No, sir, to me the fact that Protection taxes our needs and Free Trade taxes our possessions, that the taxation of Protection is cunning and concealed and the taxation of Free Trade is open and direct, is final."

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It is of Bright—Bright with a slight American accent—that you think as the broad stream of his talk flows on. "I sail from headland to headland," said Bright, "while Gladstone navigates every creek and inlet." And so it is with Bryan. His canvas bellies with the great wind. He does not tack and trim, but keeps to the well-charted highway and the open sea. It is this breadth of appeal, this large sculpture of his thought—the result of that moral purpose which gives its simple unity and coherence—that has made him the most powerful popular orator in the English-speaking world. It is true that he has twice failed to win the Presidency; but his failures were more dazzling than the triumphs of other men. There has been nothing in political annals to compare with these two great Presidential campaigns. He went through the country like a whirlwind. Merely as a physical performance they stand

alone. In the four months' electioneering in 1896 he traveled 18,000 miles and delivered 2,100 speeches to an estimated total of 8,000,000 people. During the last few weeks he often spoke thirty-five times a day, and once forty-one times. His force never faltered and his passion never lost its hold. "I saw women in hysterics and men with tears in their eyes at his entrance," says an American journalist, describing the scene at a meeting at Indianapolis, where the great audience had sat in a temperature of 110 degrees waiting hour by hour for the candidate held up by the train. "I timed the length of excitement. It was twenty minutes before Bryan could sit down." His power owes nothing to rhetorical trickery. His voice is rich, deep, and musical; but he does not use it with conscious display. He talks quite simply and naturally, and uses few gestures.

The physical resources which this Titanic campaigning indicates are a tribute to the stock from which he springs. "So far as I have been able to discover," he told me with a smile, "I embody the British Isles, for my ancestry is English, Irish and Scotch."

The intensity of the feeling against him among the Republican and propertied classes can only be indicated by recalling the attitude of English society towards the late Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman at the time of the war. I had a sudden revelation of it at dinner one night when seated beside an American lady. At the mention of his name her serenity vanished, and she burst into a torrent of invective that left him a moral ruin. But, hateful as his democratic doctrines are to his opponents, no one ever challenges their sincerity or doubts his honesty. He has carried that honesty into business. He left the law for journalism, and owns a newspaper, "The Commoner," at Lincoln, Nebraska, and in that paper he never allows any trust-made article to be advertised. That, nevertheless, he draws an income of £6,000 a year from it is a pleasant evidence that it is possible to be honest and prosperous even in America.

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And indeed, whether he becomes President or not, the fact that a man of this type is the most popular figure in America is a reassuring feature in the dark sky of its future. All the elements of a hideous ruin and combustion are visible. A Constitution, rigid and inelastic and founded on unqualified individualism, has allowed the growth of a Trust system which holds the State in the hollow of its hand. The land of the free has become a land of economic serfs, its franchises exploited by financial highwaymen, its municipalities sinks of corruption, its necessities shut out by a tyrannous Protective tariff built up by the Republican party at the dictation of the pluto-

cratic power that dominates it. Underneath is the volcanic fire of an insurgent people. If the disaster that threatens is to be escaped it can only be by a new war of emancipation that will strike the fetters of private monopoly off the limbs of the democracy. It is the liberation of a people for which Mr. Bryan stands. And as you look at the clear, resolute eye and the large, masterful face you feel that here, if anywhere, is the man who can shoot Niagara.

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TRADITIONS.

For The Public.

I have talked with a man who had talked with a
man
Who had battled at Bunker Hill.
My grandfather told of his grandfather's deeds
Untempered by History's quill.

When I was a child he was feeble and grey,
My grandfather, manly and kind;
When he was a child the veteran old,
His grandsire, had told it and smiled.

So the old stories go from grandsire to boy
From the days of the Gunpowder Plot,
Encouraging youth and deriding bold power—
Traditions one never forgot.

These stories we heard on our grandfather's knee,
Unboastful, sincere, and well-told,
Found home in our hearts and a lodge in our
thoughts
In such ways that they never grew old.

To talk with a man who had talked with a man
Who had suffered at Valley Forge,
Is to know the hard brunt which our forefathers
bore
In combating tyrant King George.

The lesson we learned from a patriot's tale
Should inspire us still to be brave
In guarding always the liberties old
Our ancestors suffered to save.

The boast of our wealth, the pride of our power,
The vaunting display of our might—
Is this the vain homage we pay to our sires?
For this did our forefathers fight?

Let not our traditions be lost to our hearts,
Nor sever the links of the past.
"Rights equal to all, special privilege to none,"
Should cling to our creed to the last.

For I who have loved a grandsire who loved
A grandsire who fought to be free—
When I have grown old what tales may I tell
To the listening child on my knee?

GEORGE THOMAS EDSON.

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The Alderman: "Yez ain't goin' t' vote, is ut, Coogan! An' phwy not?"
Coogan: "'Tis the worry av it. Lasht year, begorry, I got so mixed up, markin' me ballot, that I