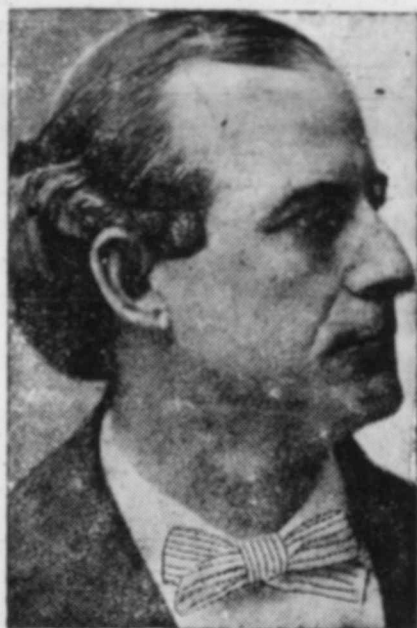


WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

(An Appreciation.)



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

By the Consul General for the United States and one of Winnipeg's leading business men, Mr. Bryan was introduced to a large gathering of citizens the other evening as the greatest orator of his country, probably the most gifted speaker in the world at the present moment.

Mr. Bryan may be all that but to the ordinary human insight he occupies a pinnacle far above the ornate brass work either of pulpit or platform. He has not spoken two complete sentences when all within sight and hearing will reach the conviction that here indeed is A MAN—that is, as one has said of Francis Horner, "a being who makes his flesh obey his spirit and his spirit obey God."

It was said of that same good man: "The ten commandments were written on his forehead," and with equal fitness may this be said of Bryan. It is his incorruptible manhood that rings out in the pure Anglo-Saxon with which he is content to cloth his thoughts, and in thus delivering them, not a single member of his audience is left in doubt as to the meaning he seeks to convey. There is no "trick" on the ambiguity of mystified utterance. One watches in vain for that studied eloquence that proclaims the throat-organ of the professor of elocution. There is nothing of the artificial tinkling of the footlights; no fancied superiority in a single argument or affirmation, but the natural out-pouring of a cultivated mind and of a heart that has made its peace with God and the whole family of mankind.

As for his theology, it may be said that if Bryan had burnt his bible, he had at least been able to rescue from the flames the first eleven verses of the fifth of Matthew. On those matchless principles he has laid every stone in that character, and by them directed every act of that life which has made him an honor not only to the American people but to the human race.

Bryan's speeches, lectures and sermons are already a matter of household property and it is not needful in this connection to quote from their wealth of epigram and the invariable current of common sense that distinguishes the entire effort, giving to it a value and dignity that nothing else could supply.

As is well known, there is nothing of the "intermit-

tently heroic" to be noted in Bryan's career. Briefly it is this: he has founded his life on the impregnable rock of Holy Writ. His God is a reality in which he has unbounded faith; and in constant communion with a Risen Redeemer, his fearlessness under all conditions becomes a matter of course—as it has become a matter of history.

Justice,—eternal and uncompromising justice as between man and man, between every "interest" and every creature related to it was probably the key note of his wonderful appeal to the citizens of Winnipeg. "On that foundation," said he, "may be built a tower that is not to be assailed by men or devils, but in any departure from it, there comes forth a fabric that the pulse of a woman may shatter into a wreck from which, except by the grace of God, it can never recover."

Bryan's influence is not circumscribed by the limitations of the American Republic. His sturdy manhood is what all the world delights in and seeks to emulate, and for this reason Canada welcomes her guest and is grateful for his coming.

He has "set the pace" for every aspirant to public life and for the conduct of the peoples' interests. What a chance for young Canada is there not today! Proved by every conceivable test open to men, Bryan's living principles have not suffered by the tornado tempests that have swept the course of his public life.

"Nature's forces carry their atmosphere. Man also has his atmosphere. He is a force-bearer and a force-producer." In measuring Kossuth's influence over the multitudes that thronged and pressed upon him, the historian says: "We must first reckon with the orator's physical bulk and then carry the measuring-tape around his atmosphere."

And Carlyle tells us that in 1848, during the riot in Paris, the mob swept down a street blazing with cannon, killed the soldiers, spiked the guns, only to be stopped a few blocks beyond by an old, white-haired man who uncovered and signalled for silence. Here the leader of the mob said: "Citizens, it is De la Bure. Sixty years of pure life is about to address you!"

So of Bryan, and the influence of that trumpet note need never occasion one anxious thought, for—

"Man is his own Star, and the Soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

OUR RIGHTS

There are sharp limitations to every man's freedom; for one who is unwilling to recognise this, this world is not a good place to live in. The limitations to our freedom are largely determined by our neighbours' rights. When our rights and his rights interfere, our rights must go. My right to swing my arms ends where my neighbour's nose begins. And this is true even though arm-swinging may be an innocent and healthful exercise. We live in a world that is filled with other people, and our chief business in the world is to help those other people in every possible way. When we once fairly recognise this, we shall not even be willing, like some folks, to come as close to a neighbour's nose, without hitting, as we can; rather we shall forget all about the word "limitations" as bearing on self, and reach out eagerly after the limitless opportunity of living wholly for others.