

Getting a Line On the President of the United States; Remarkable Character Sketch of Mr. Woodrow Wilson

After performing the most dazzling and mystifying tricks of sleight-of-hand, which have kept all poised on the edge of their chairs and have succeeded in baffling even that tow-headed boy in the front row (who has a box of "The Parlor Wizard" tricks at home and is somewhat of a conjuror himself); after an hour or two of wizardry, the artist steps forward to the footlights ingratiatingly and announces that he will now give a lesson in legerdemain, such as will allow any member of the audience to understand his methods perfectly. Very slowly and with the most explicit explanation he goes through with a card-trick or two. It seems as though he should hardly tell any more about that trick or show you any more plainly how it is done. How easy it is! But suppose, when you have returned home, that you try to do it yourself. Immediately you discover that you actually know no more than you did at first, and that all these explanations, while they have seemingly given you a deep insight into the worthy professor's science, have really made you no wiser after all. This, claims Mr. Peter Clark Macfarlane, in Collier's, is the discovery now being made in regard to the "frank" talk given to the Press Club by President Wilson a few weeks ago. In a remarkably interesting article, called "The President in Practice," Mr. Macfarlane endeavors to give a fair and balanced view of the President, showing with equal care what he, at least, regards as the President's faults and virtues. Many, perhaps will not agree with all of it, but his findings are well worth reading.

"Washington has the nearest look at the President," he remarks, and continues: "Now and then Washington thinks it knows him, and now and then concludes that it does not. To quote my former article: 'It is highly important that the American people should not deceive themselves regarding Woodrow Wilson. The man is less transparent than he seems.'"

Sane, Sober, Sensible.

This seeming transparency is the beginning of the difficulty. The President in his first impression is a cordial, unaffected, high-bred gentleman, true to the traditions of the very first American type. We observe that he bears himself simply, and that his family does the same, setting Washington and the nation an example in sensible and sober living that it is exceeding well for both to learn. We observe with satisfaction that he has taught the idle rich of the capital city the lesson of their unimportance so succinctly that all succeeding Administrations must be grateful. But to assume that the man's personality is as simple as his manner, is to deceive ourselves. He is not so easily computed.

One Washington correspondent, who has had many years in the national capital and a long perspective of acquaintance with the President, and who believes in him devotedly, confessed to me the other day: "I am completely baffled. I do not fathom him at all." The intimate friends of President Wilson laugh at the idea that he is baffling, but they may spare their calculations.

This mystery of his personality grows—grows until it has greatly embarrassed the President himself. Only recently he was trying to help out with an attempt at self-disclosure. The result was interesting but unimportant. He either did not try very hard or did not succeed very well.

He told the Press Club that he had veins, and with blood in them; a breast and with fire in it; and that in other respects he was quite human—all of which would have been quite unnecessary had it not been necessary. Because it was necessary you may set it down



PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON

that there is some foundation for the popular impression which no confession to a press club can undo.

Wilson's Characteristics. The simple fact is that the President is not only a many-sided man but a man of contradictory qualities. The Democratic party has had its Hills and Gormans, its Jacksons, Jeffersons, Tildens, and Clevelandes; its machine-builders, its spoilsmen, its dictators, and its lofty patriots; but never before has it seen all these characteristics combined to such superlative degree in a single man. When these talents are rolled into one individual we may look out for differences not easy to be reconciled, and we shall find them plenty.

Contradictoriness sometimes resembles something less pleasant, and many—especially the little sticklers for consistency—have been greatly troubled by Woodrow Wilson's treatment of the party platform. This trait, and that other significant one of absolute self-assurance, Mr. Macfarlane interprets strikingly. Of the President's attitude toward the Baltimore platform he says:

He has proved himself the greatest absolutist in our history. He has trampled upon precedents. He has broken with tradition. He has revived dead practices. He has instituted a new order. He has wiped out Pennsylvania avenue. He has made the Capitol a wing of the White House. In him are the seats of power—in him the resolutions of party difference—in him are policies framed and in him legislation enacted. Congressional committees do a little winnowing, and Congress holds a ratification meeting once in a while—that is their function. Meanwhile the country applauds. Even Congress up till the terrible hour has leaped through the hoops with precision if not with grace. In the earlier article I wrote: "He has the most undaunted faith in the results of his own mental processes. His personal resources have apparently not even been taxed—no man knows whether the bottom of these lies just under his present keel or fathoms deeper"; and in this connection spoke of "the spell of the cohesiveness of Woodrow Wilson."

His Foreign Policy. For a year the spell of this cohesiveness has been upon the nation, and yet, when he was reading his tolls message, it appeared to depart. At first he seemed to have all his old accomplished ease of bearing. He stepped lightly to the reading-desk, affable smiles wrinkling his features as he reached up and shook hands with the Speaker and the Vice-President, then turned to face the front and paused. His hair had grayed perceptibly since the first time he had stood there, and deeper shadows were chiseled in his cheeks; but his voice as he began to read, one would have said, was entirely unchanged; there was not a break nor a hesitant word, yet toward the end a strange note entered—a note of pleading that was almost pathetic, noticeable particularly as he said: "I ask this of you in support of the foreign policy of the Administration."

OLD CHILD WAKE UP CROSS OR FEVERISH?

Look, Mother! If Tongue Is Coated Give "California Syrup of Figs."

Mother: Your child isn't naturally cross and peevish. See if the tongue is coated; this is a sure sign the stomach, liver and bowels need a cleansing at once.

When listless, pale, feverish, full of cold, breath bad, throat sore, child can't eat, sleep or act naturally, has stomachache, diarrhea, remember, a gentle liver and bowel cleansing should always be the first treatment given.

Nothing equals "California Syrup of Figs" for children's ills; give a teaspoonful, and in a few hours all the foul waste, sour bile and fermenting food which is clogged in the bowels passes out of the system, and you have a well and playful child again. All children love this harmless, delicious "fruit laxative," and it never fails to effect a good "inside" cleansing. Directions for babies, children of all ages and grown-ups are plainly on the bottle.

Keep it handy in your home. A little given today saves a sick child tomorrow, but get the genuine. Ask your druggist for a 50-cent bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," then look and see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company." Counterfeits are being sold here. Don't be fooled!

until very recently he has held loyally to the heritage of political ideas that came down to him from his Jeffersonian fathers. The first frame in which he sets an idea for inspection is inevitably a conservative one, and the first remedy for a defect which occurs to him will be an old-time remedy. His progressivism consists in that, when the old-time remedy fails, he will sometimes dare the new.

A Practical Man.

This will explain why for years he rejected the initiative and referendum, why he slapped the minimum wage and assailed the federal administrative commission idea, both as embodied in the Progressive platform. To him they were either non-Jeffersonian or non-Republican; therefore they must fight hard to gain a place in his political scheme.

But at last they won that place, because the President is a practical man, able under stress to put aside his preconceptions and sit down as a little child before his facts. He saw the initiative and the referendum do things he could not get done otherwise, and he took them in.

He turned about and proved them Jeffersonian or perhaps pre-Jeffersonian, basing them on the Virginia bill of rights with as beautiful an argument for their right to a place in the governmental system as anyone has made.

That was why he adopted the trade-commission idea which he had scorned so bitterly. He saw it at work in the interstate commerce commission. And he had before him the glaring failures of court-administered law to deal with the trust question as in the Standard Oil and tobacco cases. Therefore again the hesitating but ultimate adoption of the idea, and therefore, once more, the proof that the President is first a Jeffersonian, and secondly, and only grudgingly, a progressive.

This is further illustrated by the unique fact that the President has never yet taken the recall into his program. To the logical progressive the initiative and referendum are a child of the same mother. But Woodrow Wilson has never seen the need for the recall. It has not yet battled its way into his system. Let some day a powerful group of senators set themselves to block the Wilson will because their six-year term will outlast his own four-year service, and you can look for the President to be suddenly converted to the idea of still another "gun behind the door," and the name of that gun will be the recall.

We are told that the President is not only a strong party man; he is a thorough organization man as well. And yet his position in this regard is not to be misunderstood, either, for he holds firmly to the statement made in his prenomination speech: "I believe that party success is impossible without organization; but make this distinction between organization and the machine—organization is a systematic co-operation of men for a common purpose, while the machine is a systematic co-operation of men for a private purpose." His position on this point is rigid.

The mind of the people on the tolls repeal is in part favorable, in part confused, and in part a respectful withholding of judgment. Did the President know it, and was his self-confidence therefore gone? He cannot pretend to know, but it seemed that the humility of his language was the humility of his heart, a correspondence, by the way, not always to be observed in his utterances.

His sudden and bewildering changes of policy then come in for treatment in these paragraphs:

In his campaign he was for free tolls for our coastwise ships; in office he has their repeal. He tells certain ladies that he can not further even slightly the cause of equal suffrage because the platform is silent upon it. Yet within a few weeks he has changed his mind, and he has ingeniously uttered he recommends presidential primaries, upon which the platform is silent; an Alaskan railroad, upon which the document is also silent; and an extraordinary trade commission, upon which the platform is not only silent, but against which as an article of the Progressive program he inveigled as a candidate, and which seem the most bitter and unfair sentences he has ever uttered.

Has Reversed Himself.

But the President has reversed himself in matters of personal policy as well. He said that the door of the executive office should be closed, and he has now opened it, and the hardest to get open of any president's door in the memory of Washington. He said that pitiless publicity should be the rule. There never was a president who so shrouded his plans in mystery, never an administration which so carefully guarded its workings from the public view. How much he tells his cabinet members is not of record. How little he tells the senators of, for instance, the committee on foreign relations, is sometimes conspicuously evident.

His policy of secretiveness is really extraordinary, and carried out to an extraordinary degree. Not long ago, says the writer, Senator Shively, of Indiana, chairman of the senate committee on foreign relations, rose to defend the Mexican policy of the administration against the attack of Senator Fall. The latter had brought facts in great numbers to bear upon the question; but the senator from Indiana brought few, and those weak backwardly. It was rumored that he had received no information from headquarters! Not less significant is the fact that none of the President's closest supporters in Washington appear to have been informed definitely upon the present Japanese situation nor what it is that Japan really wants. In brief:

Why the Secretiveness? Such furtive secrecy from an administration which continually proclaims that it has nothing to conceal is in itself a ground for wonder and confusion.

Of course, most of these reversals, big and little, are perfectly explainable on natural grounds. Not long ago, but so many changes of front are nevertheless a bit disillusioning. They seem to indicate that, as a campaigner, our President had a certain capacity to wobble, to talk back, to tell the truth, but that he had not little nor thought that little long.

The list of "offenses" grows. His partisan spirit, for example, has brought him to the point of absolutely failing to recognize politically the Progressive idea that he has had, and has made his recognition of Republican support seem cool and conventional. As the writer says, "the attitude of the President and his Administration toward the Republican party seems to be tolerant, a sort of sympathy for the sick," the sole function which the Progressive party is permitted to serve in the present Congress is that of a spur to prick the side of Democratic intent." The explanation of this is that he has always admired the English system of cabinet government and the rigid party responsibility on which it is based. In this he is, as he has always been, a strong Jeffersonian in the truest sense of the term. We read on:

His whole practice demonstrates that

identity itself. He believes with the strength of a fanatic that this organization is to be used constantly and always to serve the people's will. More than that, he believes that he himself, in office, is to be used in the same way. The writer explains:

A Man of Resources.

Once he sees himself as a party leader and a President, he is no longer a man. He is a means. Everything resolves itself into that. His resources are multifarious and carefully card-indexed. He is what he wishes to be at the moment. He may be warm or cold, pliant or stubborn. He is an excellent judge of values in personal intercourse, and of what the prize-ring calls "distance." It is useless to say he is warm to one who has never seen anything but the incandescent beam of his mind in action, or the stubborn thrust of a chin when his pugnacity is aroused; and it is equally useless to talk of his coldness to one his soul has ever warmed upon for a single minute. True that one sunning may go a long way, because of the fact that the President is not a man, yet the experience will remain unforgettable.

Just now the President occupies a peculiar place in the nation's regard. He has stirred their imagination. The question is, then—will this be transitory or permanent? The answer is, we are told, that Woodrow Wilson's ascendancy over the imagination of the nation has already begun to pass. The President is causing his own shadow to recede. The conclusion is as follows:

Fallible But Human.

Each fresh reversal of himself, each over-or-under emphasis of language or tone, each indication that his utterances have been less well considered than they seemed, his thought less ripened than the aptness of the phrasing suggested, will go a little way to undermine the popular faith in his judgment, and lead inevitably to a discounting of values. His voice will sound less and less like the oracles of God. But by the same token it will sound all the more like the oracles of man. In this loss of prestige of one sort there may be gains of another. As the President demonstrates his fallibility he will demonstrate his humanity. As people surrender a little of their awe they may give him more of their affection.

Faith in the honesty of his intent will not pass. The people will give this man a chance. His theories have not worked out quite as expected. He believed the tariff was a drag upon prosperity; he appeared to think that if he cut the guynopes the balloon would soar. The thing was done; but prosperity did not soar. Suspicion, therefore, that the knife that cut the ropes may have punctured the balloon. Business waits. Armies of the unemployed, forgotten since the last Democratic Administration, get again into the dispatches. But the country does not become impatient. The people wait with much patience and some faith. Wait! Wait! Give this well-meaning man

a chance, the attitude of the nation as a whole. Such an attitude is highly complimentary to the spirit of the country. It is also highly complimentary to the President. No doubt he takes it as such. But will the President's mastery of his party pass?—no, unhesitatingly, no. As a party leader he will not fail. He has shown too much "stuff." He is strong enough for his job—too strong for it, almost. The Democratic party is loyal to its idols. He has saved it from the pit. His leadership will hold. He has won it by the divine right of superior endowment. And the man himself!

It is true that his health might break down, and his life go out of him, and by that calamity would fall upon the country, as it is forcibly reminded in the most sententious line Woodrow Wilson ever penned—and that thirty years ago—that the importance of the Vice-President "consists in the fact that he might cease to be Vice-President."

But barring this—and I think we may bar it safely—Woodrow Wilson himself will not fail—his genius is too practical, his patriotism too lofty, his mastery of his party too complete, and his passionate devotion to the popular cause too obvious.

It is his ideas, principles, policies, and party which may fail.

MAN WHO ORIGINATED "FLETCHERIZE FOOD" IS HEALTHY AT 65



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MISS I. INNES

This helped me but I am writing this letter to say that nothing I used could for a moment be compared to Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. This treatment restored my exhausted nerves, gave me new vigor and energy, and banished the many distressing and disheartening symptoms which only nervous people will understand.

I know there are authors, journalists and business men with whom I come in contact daily who should know about this great nerve restorative. I know there are women in the home straining the last nerve to make the best use of the income in these times of high prices and whose nerve cells have been sapped by worry and anxiety until they live in misery and do not understand the reason. It is because I know this that I want to tell these nervous, worn out people about Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. From my own experience I know just how they feel and just as certainly know that Dr. Chase's Nerve Food will prove a wonderful blessing to them."

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