

COLONEL HOUSE, SHORN OF VEIL OF "MYSTERY," IS REVEALED AS DAVID HARUM'S DOUBLE

Real Estate His Specialty, Instead of Shrewd Trading in Horses

BUFFER, NOT CREATOR, OF PRESIDENT WILSON

Stands Before Head of American Delegation at Peace Conference

POPULAR WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AT TABLE

Simplicity and Frankness Fundamental Elements of Envoy's Character

TRIUMPH OF PROVINCIAL

Typical Traits in College Days Sent Him to Cornell Instead of Yale

By CLINTON W. GILBERT Staff Correspondent of the Evening Public Ledger With the Peace Delegation in Europe.

Copyright, 1919, by Public Ledger Co. Paris, June 9.—(By mail.)—Colonel House gave a little luncheon the other day at the Hotel Crillon here in Paris to the American newspaper correspondents, the men who have been seeing him every evening at 5:45 during the Peace Conference and whom he wishes to take to London with him, where, as he says, he will "go on the road" with the league of nations. In the course of the luncheon the colonel said: "I should like to have it made a law that when a nation goes to war its governors should be compelled to serve in the posts of danger."

Some one asked, "And when you say that do you mean not only the rulers, but the men behind the rulers?" The colonel laughed. "This is the unreal Colonel House No. 1. The colonel is not 'the man behind the President,' but the man before the President. Mr. Wilson is too big to be made to owe much to any other man. Colonel House is not the President's creator, but the President's buffer. He is the man who makes relations possible between Mr. Wilson and humanity. It is hardly too much to say that the Peace Conference would have ended in nothing more than gestures of withdrawal if Colonel House had not been here to sympathize with the men who found the President hard, unreasoning, impracticable, a gospel saint or an autocrat. He is the complement of Mr. Wilson, the human side of an austere intellect, the man before the President."

Colonel House, "Real" and "Unreal" A book has been written entitled "The Real Colonel House." I haven't read it, but I suspect from what I have been told that the person you will find in it is "The Unreal Colonel House." About the real Colonel House no book could be written. He is too simple. It is precisely because he is so simple that people make a mystery of him. The world refuses to believe in simple things; it demands other explanations. It gets them in the shape of long volumes.

The French thought they had another explanation and intended to give the colonel a dinner, probably as to the best friend and only friend of France in the American delegation. (If the colonel should accept these best-friend invitations he would have one from every nation at the Peace Conference and die of indigestion before the reporters give him their dinner as the best friend of the American press in Paris.) The colonel converted the French dinner into one for the American delegation and then absented himself from it. The unreal Colonel House is a mystery.

The Colonel and the King The unreal Colonel House is actuated by the common human motive of vanity. I remember a distinguished and envious Democrat saying to me in Washington apropos to one of Colonel House's visits to Washington as the representative of the President: "Oh, those British are clever! They put House to bed in Buckingham Palace. They let him stick his feet under the same table with a king. And poor House he falls for that sort of thing. Oh, those British!"

Probably the British did that very thing. But after seeing Colonel House for several months in Paris I can not imagine any one to whom it means less to stick his feet under a king's table and sleep in a king's bed than it does to Colonel House.

In this vanity of the unreal Colonel House—a man recently from Washington asked me "Has House got the big head? They say so, and that biography of his bears it out. That book ought to have killed any one about whom it was written."

"At Paris House has been the only man of second rank who has had members of the big four rushing constantly to see him. Clemenceau, Orlando, Chiada, perhaps not Lloyd George, but certainly such important men as Balfour, Cecil, Venizelos (by many rated as the ablest man at the Peace Conference), Smuts (another of the great). But if a critical press is right House has never forgotten that he was merely the buffer, the man before the President, not the man behind the President; the man who sits in the outer office of greatness."

Why He Went to Cornell In the biography of Colonel House a story is told of how he came to go to



Colonel House's personality as developed in his course at Paris showed his colleagues and other felons unsuspecting. He attributes not unlike those of a well-known figure in fiction, with real estate as the specialty to which he applied his talents for diplomacy instead of horse trading, which made that redoubtable character famous and a favorite of a myriad readers

Cornell University instead of Yale, for which he had prepared. It appears from the book it was the colonel's profound democracy that led him to the younger and comparatively fresh water institution. This story seems to raise a question in comparative democracy. The colonel told the story himself at the luncheon of how he went to Ithaca. He told it not as a correction. He seems quite unconcerned about the "real" Colonel House.

"Morton, a son of Oliver Morton, and I were chums in prep school. It was through him I got my first contact with politics in the Hayes-Tilden election fight. Morton couldn't quite pass the Yale entrance examination, but did squeeze through at Cornell. I wanted to go to the same college with him and went to Cornell too."

The colonel is, doubtless, a genuine Democrat, but not a prig about his democracy. Our well-known friend the unreal Colonel House is a prig. The unreal Colonel House is the man behind the President, a mystery, vain and a moral prig. He is also a great statesman. The man I have seen at Paris is not a great statesman. He does not believe in statesmen. He says with a rather religious accent: "I would rather have the opinion of the masses of the people on one of these big questions than that of all the statesmen in Europe. At any rate, it is not affected with any selfish interest."

That reads a bit priggy. I must admit, but I think the colonel believes it or at any rate thinks that he does, and what the colonel thinks he thinks is unusually free from coloring matter.

"A Well-Informed Man" I once asked a Democratic senator in Washington about Colonel House. At the time I had never met him. The senator responded after hesitation. "He is an exceedingly well-informed man." Certainly not the description of a great statesman. Great statesmanship consists in having opinions and little information. Wasn't it one of our greatest statesmen here who asked a newspaper correspondent, "What was it, Lower Silesia or Upper Silesia that we have just given to the Poles?"

The colonel doubtless is a, exceedingly well-informed man. He has had opportunities since Mr. Wilson became President of acquiring information such as no other man in the world has enjoyed. The colonel has had something more than opportunities. He is interested. He absorbs facts. He is curious. Some one described him as a blotting paper personality who absorbs facts and holds himself up before the mirror of Mr. Wilson's mind.

Probably the capacity to absorb facts is inconsistent with the capacity for great statesmanship. People look at our President and say so. Colonel House takes up information and re-

mains unchanged. He has stuck his feet under the table of kings and he remains a little Texas real estate trader. He has as much background as blotting paper. He reduces European statesmanship to the terms of Texas real estate trading. He interprets Fiume and Orlando and the Jugo-Slavs in the terms of the men who has a corner lot in Punkville and is fighting to get his price for it from the great railway company that is going to start a new line and convert Punkville into the capital of the league of nations. He has seen everything, been everywhere, dealt intimately with the greatest problems of the age and remains delightfully provincial. Some one is going to write some day a thesis upon the great virtues of provincialism. He will take as his illustration Colonel House.

Triumph of Provincialism Provincialism is coming into its own. That is what the league of nations means. That is what the American invasion of the world means. If Colonel House is great it is because in spite of all he has seen and done he is a simple, unspoiled provincial and can translate the world into terms of common experience; can say sympathetically of France:

"Why, it's exactly like the time when House wanted \$80,000 for his property to come into the combination in Punkville. Let us see what did we do? We elected Bill secretary of the company or something on the side and he came in for \$75,000."

You can't help feeling that the world is safe in such hands, if you were born somewhere west of the Mississippi.

Younger Brother of David Harum If I were compelled to describe this Colonel House I had seen here in Paris, I should say that he was the younger brother of David Harum born when the family had become comfortable and quit horses to go in for real estate; educated in that environment of profound democracy, the most exclusive college fraternity at Cornell; getting through college with a gentlemanly closeness to the bunking line; to follow for a time the family line of real estate in Punkville; possessing an extraordinary interest in politics, and a perfect faith in his mirror which told him every morning, "Edward you will never be President." (only a great man believes in his mirror); thrown into improving contact with a remarkable mind from Princeton, and in the profound upheaval of provincialism tossed to a high place where kings ran into see him, when not too busy, in his little office at the Crillon.

Most Typical American In other words Colonel House is the most nearly typical American among the Americans at the Peace Conference; a middle western American, one of the kind who could not see Europe in 1914; who voted in 1916 "to keep us out of the war," and one of the kind who in spite of the fact that there are now, officially, twenty-two wars in Europe, believes that a recipe has been found end all war. He has the American optimism. From time to time he moved up the date for getting ready the treaty of peace, but it was always just

about finished, next week would always see it done. Final? President Wilson could settle it in ten minutes. Kalou-Chou was a question of detail. An agreement upon it was easy. Never a doubt in the cheerful mind of Colonel House. And there is not one there now. In spite of all that men have seen of internationalism here in Paris the Colonel believes, really believes, in the league of nations.

He is young is the colonel, as every American is young. His mind is still in the age of faith. The politicians and the so-called statesmen fear the league of nations," he will say, "but they don't fear it enough. They don't half know what it will do to them."

And his voice in truly American fashion will run a bit to the reverent as he discusses his ideal, whether it be the new-born league or his belief that the voice of the masses is worth more than the wisdom of all the great men of Europe. The colonel does not love the great men; he only loves one great man. He distrusts them. He aligns himself definitely with the common men of the world, whose voice somehow—it does not appear low to any one here in Paris—he expects to make itself heard here in Paris.

No Love Lost Here The feeling between the colonel and the politicians is mutual. The politicians don't like the colonel. The colonel does not like the politicians. House got his first view of the politicians back in the days of the Hayes-Tilden controversy, when the issue whether he should go to the democratic Cornell or the not so democratic Yale was being decided for him by the absences from school of his friend Morton. He decided during his many visits to Washington that he did not like their politicians or their ways. He felt that in public life only two or three men counted and that it was very difficult to be one of those two or three and not worth while to be one of the others.

It is the politicians who have made a mystery of Colonel House. For several years he has been the greatest of them all and he succeeded in ways past their finding out. His method has not been their method. His motives have not been their motives. Therefore there must be some explanation that did not appear on the surface. The least interested persons in the world cannot explain the most disinterested except in towns of some hidden interest.

Ambition Hits Him at Last A great period of exploration is coming. The colonel is about to fall from his high ideal of never seeking public office. Ambition is at last making him her own. The colonel wants to sit in the league of nations for America. For America, mind you, not as the personal representative of Mr. Wilson. To represent America means to go before the American Senate for confirmation, to have your qualifications canvassed in the press; to be investigated, catechised, pawed over by the politicians who resent the success of the

man who has played the game in another way than their own. It is going to be a great moment for democracy. There is first of all the great democracy of the politicians, who resent what might be called the aristocracy of politics. Then there is the wider democracy of the people, who may, perhaps, wonder why this man who loves them so much should have never sought them more nearly, should never have submitted himself to their suffrages or at least gone before their representatives for the approval of his qualifications for office; why he should always be acting outside of instead of within popular institutions; why he should have always been a "personal representative" rather autocratic in his origin.

State Department Not Friendly Then, too, there is the State Department. In the confusion of our institutions the State Department has suffered. Secretary Lansing was the nominal head of the American delegation here. House was its real head. All other governments brought their State Departments here to help frame the treaty; the American Government brought a House organization, paralleling the State Department, but outside it, unofficial, personal, representing the people in some way not clear to the people themselves. The State Department does not love House. The State Department has close connections with the foreign relations committee of the Senate before which House's name must go. Lansing has an old score to settle. A man whose trousers were not so carefully pressed as Lansing's would resign from the Cabinet and throw himself into the fight to prevent the choice of House to represent the American nation in the league of nations. But the creases in those trousers suggest doubt.

The Republicans, who will control the foreign relations committee of the Senate, will want to ask Colonel House some questions. The pleasure of having Colonel House before them will only fall a little short of the pleasure that might be derived from having President Wilson before them. There is a novel lying around second-hand book shops of which Colonel House is said to have been the author. He will be asked about that. Several other distinguished works of fiction, such as early drafts of the league of nations covenant, made before General Smuts entered the lists as author, are ascribed to the pen of Colonel House. The Republican senators will ask the colonel about these, too. The House state department, paralleling the American State Department, will be a subject of inquiry. The jealous here say that the House organization made a complete failure and that British foreign office men did all the real work on the treaty.

Democracy vs. Autocracy At any rate, the aristocratic principle, as practiced by perhaps the most genuine democrat in public life, is going to come into violent conflict with the democratic principle as professed by some of our leading aristocrats in sentiment. The conflict will be interesting.

Perhaps the real Colonel House will emerge. If he does, he will appear a rather typical American, provincial in the best American sense, uncritical, playing the game for the game's sake; great only so far as simplicity makes one great; believing one thing, and, like most of us, practicing the opposite, because that is the easiest way; a mystery because to an American the most difficult thing to explain is an American; but perfectly understandable to European which reads Cooper, Lincoln, Whitman and Mark Twain.

Friends to Aid Poor New York, June 16.—A party composed of members of the Society of Friends, who have asked permission to go into Germany to distribute a \$50,000

relief fund now being raised in this country, have been authorized to do so, according to cable advices from Herbert Hoover, head of the American relief administration, received at the New York office.

Filer Accused by Company Rochester, N. Y., June 16.—Earl Beers, twenty-seven, an aviator, who came here more than a month ago and made flights from Baker Field, was arrested yesterday on a charge of grand larceny. Howard Watts, of Philadelphia, an officer of the American Airplane Company of that city, caused the warrant to be issued. He claims Beers appropriated to his own use \$430 belonging to the company. Beers says he is a stockholder in the company and has taken nothing that does not belong to him.

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