

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, THE GREATEST "COMEBACKER" IN THE COUNTRY

As Premier of President's Cabinet He Achieves His Final Victory.

Indomitable Will and Tact Carried Him Through Countless Defeats.

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.

THEY do come back—some of them. You can knock them out, jump on their prostrate forms and have them unanimously elected members of the Down and Out club, but they will be up and smiling at the tap of the gong. They are like the cat you put in a meal sack and take seventeen miles away to lose it in the wilderness, only to find on your return that the cat bent you home. You can't lose some men. Defeat only makes their friends more loyal. You may think you have them "beaten to a frazzle," but they are always ready for the next round.

With these few brief remarks, ladies and gentlemen, we will now introduce the greatest comebacker of them all, not that he needs introducing, but only to show that we know him. Sure, you guessed his identity the first time. The peerless leader is his middle name—and not only the peerless leader and peerless loser, but the peerless comebacker. You can't lose William Jennings Bryan.

There are people who hold fallacious views to the contrary. They now know better. Any one who harbored that delusion is like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner"—

A sadder and a wiser man he woke the morrow morn.

The Republicans were sure he was done for in 1896. They again gleefully announced his demise in 1900. After Parker's nomination in 1904 both the Republicans and a part of the Democrats were essentially and teetotally certain that this was the end of Bryan. They finished him once more in 1908. When he broke with Jim Dahlgren and other leaders of his party in Nebraska in 1910 everybody agreed that at last he was out of it—that is, everybody but Bryan. They left the most important man out of the equation. It is hard to keep a man licked if he won't admit he's licked. You all do know what happened at the Baltimore convention and what the peerless did to them there. And now he is premier of the cabinet, thank you, is only fifty-three, his health was never better, and he still has the smile that won't come off. You can't keep a good man down—not if his name is Bryan.

Looks Like a Victor.

Did you ever see anything like it—now, honestly, did you? That man has been whipped enough to put a whole regiment of ordinary politicians permanently out of commission. But to look at him now you would think he had been a victor all his life. The same Bryan he was twenty years ago, except that he is bald and bears down a little more heavily on the scales. His smile is as ready, his wit as quick and his eye as bright as of yore. He walks with the same athletic spring, and his voice—that wonderful voice that has been heard by perhaps more people than that of any man now living—is as resonant as ever.

The writer has known Mr. Bryan for twenty-three years—ever since away back in 1890, when he was first elected to congress. During these years I have at times been associated with him intimately—politically, socially and as a newspaper man—and have studied him from every angle. As a result of this study I say deliberately that in many ways I regard him as the most remarkable man now living. That is the secret of his power to come back. He has the goods.

Shortly after the inauguration I went down to see him. Several hundred other Americans were on the same mission—that is, all of them did not go to see Bryan, but they were in Washington. Some of them were after jobs. Others went to enjoy the show. But from the numbers at his hotel and in the secretary of state's offices it was evident that most of them did see him or tried to. And great swarms of them succeeded. From long experience the new secretary of state has acquired the knack of getting a visitor's case in a word or two and passing him on. That is the secret of being a public man. You have to pass them on and make them think at the same time that you are their sworn friend. It is a great art and perhaps one that cannot be acquired. One has to be born to it, as he does to being a king or a poet.

Keeps the Line Moving.

In the art of passing them on Secretary Bryan is a past master. With one or two dexterous questions he has their story. With another word he tells them what to do. His wit is always on tap, and his memory for faces and names is remarkable. His personal magnetism is in good working order. Likewise his handshake and friendliness. Bryan can make every man feel that he is a friend because it is a fact. His good will for everybody flows in a never ceasing stream. But through it all he passes them along. Never forget that one point, for it is vital. If he did not he would have no time left for being secretary of state or anything else. One of the New

York newspapers says that the new premier can get rid of more callers in a less time than any public official who has recently appeared in Washington.

Those who have any real business with him he singles out and waves aside for a later conference. But these are comparatively few. The others he keeps moving in a constant stream. It is the same at the hotel or at his offices. Only at the hotel there is the added grace of Mrs. Bryan's presence. Her tact and diplomacy with people are on a par with her distinguished husband's. By 9 o'clock or shortly after the secretary is ready to go to his office. For an hour earlier he has



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LATE PHOTOGRAPH OF MR. BRYAN (AT TOP) AND AT HIS DESK AS SECRETARY OF STATE.

been receiving callers at the New Willard. Any one who knows about the usual Washington hours can realize just what this means. The average high department official is seldom in his office before 10 nor, as a general thing, are his secretaries and those in immediate touch with him. Sometimes he is not there till after noon. But the new regime is not only Democratic, but early rising. Any way, you have to rise early if you get ahead of Bryan.

His Job Agrees With Him.

The secretary of state occupies the presidential suit at the Willard. Nothing significant about that! Even if you get there shortly after 8 the reception room is well filled; at least it was so on the morning I went. The first to greet us was Mrs. Bryan, with a charming smile, introducing everybody to everybody else. Here is a noted lawyer from Brooklyn, there a business man and his wife from New York. You meet a Dr. Jennings, a cousin from St. Louis, then a distinguished diplomat, next an army colonel, followed by the famous this or that, also several nobodies. In a moment Mr. Bryan breaks away from an important conference in an inner room—all conferences in inner rooms are supposed to be important—and with a handshake and a word for each greets all comers. You observe that he is looking happier than usual. His new job seems to agree with him.

He Fits the Frame.

Did you ever put an old picture into a new frame? Possibly the frame was so new that it made the picture look old and dingy or so good it made the picture look cheap, or perhaps if you

had the artistic sense in choosing both they seemed to fit exactly, making a harmonious and pleasing whole. Well, seeing Bryan as secretary of state was like that. He was in a new frame. Some had misgivings about whether the painting and frame would harmonize. From my brief observations I should say that President Wilson has the artistic sense. His new secretary of state fits the frame as though made for it.

The state, war and navy building is just across the way from the little low white building in which the president has his office. The secretary of state's rooms are in the south end, that toward the Potomac. Here the numbers in waiting were larger than at the hotel. There were senators, congressmen, candidates for diplomatic appointments and plain folks. Word was brought in that Secretary Bryan would see us soon, but that he was then at the White House. One wag remarked: "That sounds good. We've been trying to get him there a long while." This reminds me of what another man said to the candidate in 1908: "I'm going to vote for you, Mr. Bryan. It has become a habit."

He is exactly the same old Bryan in office that he was out of office. In fact, he is never different in any position in which he is placed. I recall having been with him the next day after his defeat for the presidency in 1900. He was the most cheerful man in the crowd. The rest of us had faces long enough to eat out of an old fashioned churn. Only the beaten candidate was cheerful and philosophical.

Few Defeated Three Times.

This recalls another story that a gentleman told me while on the train from Washington. He had entertained Mr. Bryan in his home and had invited a small company to meet him at dinner, among them a New York congressman. It was in 1908, when Bryan was for a third time the candidate for president. The congressman asked him point blank if he expected to be elected. Bryan replied by telling of a very aged neighbor of his whom we will call Uncle Jake and who was lying at the point of death. Dropping in to pay his respects, Mr. Bryan expressed the hope that the sufferer would pull through, and Uncle Jake responded: "Well, one thought comforts me. Very few men die when past eighty-seven (his own age)." The candidate continued that very few men had been defeated for president of the United States the third time.

There is only one change in the general secretary observed by his old friends, and that is in his headgear. Those who were with him in the great fights of the past can think of him only in connection with a soft hat. But it would be soft and worn at the Bryan angle. Now, however, they say that on state occasions he wears a high hat. This, of course, is only rumor and may be a libelous one at that. At the inauguration it was not so, as multitudinous photographs show. But the whispers are so persistent that they almost compel belief. At any rate, a Washington paper remarked that President Wilson once wanted to knock Bryan into a cocked hat, but had ended by knocking him into a high hat.

A Great Secretary of State.

One thing is observable in Washington—that there is a change of feeling toward Bryan. Many who have been most bitter against him before are modifying their views. Not a few of those who have been unfriendly to him in the past are predicting that he will make a great secretary of state. My own view is that he will make one of the greatest in the history of the nation, but I would distrust my own view since I may be personally biased in his favor. Certain it is that in his first move after taking office he won a diplomatic victory. That was in connection with the indemnity bill in Cuba. It was the vigorous protest of Secretary Bryan that caused the Cuban president to veto the bill.

He comes into the office with two delicate situations confronting him, that in Mexico and that with Great Britain over the Panama canal tolls. The recognition of the Chinese republic is also pending, and the Balkan war situation may develop a diplomatic crisis that will affect this country.

There have been great men in the office of secretary of state—Jefferson, John Marshall, Madison, Monroe, J. Q. Adams, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Van Buren, Buchanan, Seward, Blaine and Hay stand among the first rank of our statesmen, and most of the others are celebrated in history. Now is added the name of William J. Bryan, thrice candidate of his party for president and known as an orator around the world. Will his conduct of our foreign relations add new luster to his name and to the great office he fills? Predictions are idle, but all true Americans, regardless of party, hope that he will, and with some of us this feeling is backed by the reminder of the trinity of love and faith.

SUNKEN FOREST IS FOUND.

It is Said to Be a Thousand Years Old and is Petrified.

A sunken forest, entirely petrified and thirty feet below the surface, was discovered recently near Bakersville, N. J. According to an estimate made by the state geologist, the forest is at least a thousand years old.

Workmen excavating for a clay mine kept striking hard substances after they had got down about thirty feet. They reported to Warren Somers, who owns the tract, and he submitted some of the substance to the state geologist for analysis and received word that the stuff was petrified wood.

GOLD NUGGETS.

There is a Curious Resemblance Between Them and Meteorites.

How do nuggets of gold originate? Sometimes a mass of the precious metal worth a thousand dollars or more is found. By what process was so much gold compacted into a lump?

An attempt was made not long ago to answer this question. An investigator in Australia cut and sliced and polished gold nuggets with the sole purpose of finding out just what is their structure. The first thing he discovered was that there is one curious point of resemblance between gold nuggets and meteorites. Both, when polished and etched with chlorine water, exhibit a crystalline structure. In the case of meteorites the lines thus exhibited on the etched surface are called Widmannstättian figures, and their presence is said to be one of the most invariable characteristics of those metallic bodies that fall from the sky to the earth.

But it is not meant to be implied that gold nuggets have fallen from the sky because they exhibit a crystalline structure recalling that of meteorites. The resemblance is apparently only superficial, and the crystals of the nuggets differ in form from those of the meteorites.

Another curious fact is that when a nugget is heated in a Bunsen flame explosions take place on its surface. Blisters are formed which continue to swell until they burst with a sharp report and bits of gold are violently scattered about. It is evident that the nuggets contain either gases or some liquids or solids which are easily converted into the gaseous form, the expansion of which produces the explosions.—Harper's Weekly.

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