

# THE BOOKMAN

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## FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES

### THE POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO REPUBLICS

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#### I

THE Statue of Liberty, which, as someone has said, "welcomes and enlightens" those who land in America, was given thirty years ago, by France, to the government and the people of the United States. Her illumination furnished to President Wilson the opportunity of uttering memorable words. The address of this great scholar, one of the most able of leaders, is full of ingenious and profound ideas. Concerning the actual occasion, the President has exactly expressed the motives, not artificial or temporary, but in a way, vital, which form the "long and delightful friendship" binding France and America, "which comes of a community of ideals and an identity of aim." He added, "One republic must love another republic," and he observed that "there is a common pulse in us all; there is a common contact with life; there is a common body of hope; there is a common stock of resolutions." His prophetic conclusion, that "The peace of the world is not going to be assured by the compact of nations, but by the sympathies of men," deserves to be pondered. It points out to us our conduct, for it counts upon all that is durable in the instinctive and re-

flective attractions of the two nations; attractions which it is our duty to all to explain and enlarge.

The points of contact between France and America are too many to enumerate and dwell upon here; we will only touch upon some of the most vivid glimpses. Essential truths bind our spirits each to each, truths as necessary to the vitality of a people as is oxygen to the lungs of a man. These truths form the consciousness of, and the reason for action. Love of Liberty is their mother; from them springs love of justice, and that love of humanity which is the mark of peoples of real strength. From them results the organisation of democracy and its attitude, within and without. Liberty creates Peace. Despotism is a fatal preparation, sooner or later, for war. "With all the respect due to those who represent forms of government other than our own," to quote Mr. Wilson again, "I may permit myself to say that a definite peace cannot come so long as the destinies of humanity shall be in the hands of little groups who let themselves be influenced by their own selfish ends."

Liberty! Evidently Americans and French alike, we must weep over the

crimes committed in her name; but no one, under any pretext whatsoever, may condemn her. Liberty! Who will deny that her apprenticeship is delicate and difficult? Free peoples have their crises, as do all organisms which attain superior health only through physiological shocks. Liberty implies argument, contention, a certain internal strife which testifies to its vitality and growth. Silence is death, silence is suffocation; obedience without preliminary deliberation is servitude. But, divided in times of peace, when war comes, the nations which govern themselves know how to furnish an example of the most substantial unity, more effective, because conscious and voluntary.

In the midst of the fearful cataclysm which has allowed, for a time, the despotic powers to acquire momentary advantages, let us have no doubt of liberty and democracy and of their future. If, before a sudden attack, liberty and democracy predispose to a certain remissness of preparation, they have the enormous advantage that *all* will become *good* will. And this good will is coalescent, because men know that it has not been able to invoke, but only to endure, war. Assured of their rights, not by illusion or suggestion, but by exact knowledge of affairs, republicans may have been surprised, just because they had not foreseen guilty intent, but they will never allow themselves to be cast down. Through patience and through the spirit of sacrifice, they will rise superior to all difficulties.

Our republic now puts to the proof of acts, the principles upon which yours also is founded. It is plain that this drama inflames you, and that you must find comfort in the example which we furnish. Having no selfish ambition, conspiring against no one, the true democracy is never abandoned by God or man. I grant you, autocracies are better constituted, speaking from a military standpoint. Let our trials during the first months of the war be to you a warning! Do not fear to be strong! You must be strong, or else become vic-

tims. Prepare yourselves better than we did. Do not, however, hypnotise yourselves by your armament. Enervated by militarism, our enemies believed that "Might makes Right," to quote the well-known words of Hegel. While to-day, thanks to the national and the international conscience, it is "Right which ends in making Might."

So, profiting by experience, and growing more prudent, or at least less ingenuous, we may, we must, persevere in an ideal of liberty, of generosity, of good faith, of firmness, of watchful benevolence. For this is not merely the right solution of the actual problem, it is, besides, progress, future, it is true patriotism, at the same time it is the highest conception of humanity.

## II

Need we say that personal liberty implies respect for the liberty of others? Your democracy has never desired oppression of the individual, nor has ours. We have replaced the policy of menace and discontent with that of benevolence and "entente." This has been the glory of Republican France. This has been the policy of the French parliament and of French ministers. It is the policy, not of the clenched fist, but of the open hand. The words and the deeds of eminent men who have had the responsibility of our Foreign Office upon their shoulders are faithful witnesses to this.

Between the two republics, separated by the ocean but united by their ideals, and by their way of conforming to such ideals, there is another point of contact which I must do more than mention—I must clearly establish. During the forty and more years of our republic we have never resorted to violence, even in the gravest conflicts. Because the Fashoda question resulted in the Entente Cordiale, see how it now rings not only with praise of England and of France, but even more with the principles of reason, of justice, of good faith,—the attributes of these two nations. We have concluded "entente" terms with

Spain and Italy; we have gone with Austria and especially with Germany to the extreme limit in the matter of concessions. Bulgaria and Turkey have betrayed us; manifesting in those races a spirit of ingratitude and deceit which, there is no need to inform you, dates not from the era of democracies but from prehistoric times.

On your side, you have spoken and acted with equal loyalty. And it is not the programme of this party or of that, but the unanimous sentiments of Americans which on July 31, 1906, at the congress at Rio de Janeiro, prompted by this profession of faith to Senator Elihu Root, then Secretary of State, a profession of faith which is yours, and none the less, I assure you, ours.

We wish for no victories but those of peace; for no territory except our own; for no sovereignty except the sovereignty over ourselves. We deem the independence and equal rights of the smallest and weakest member of the family of nations entitled to as much respect as those of the greatest empire, and we deem the observance of that respect the chief guaranty of the weak against the oppression of the strong. We neither claim nor desire any rights, or privilege, or powers that we do not freely concede to every American republic. We wish to increase our prosperity, to expand our trade, to grow in wealth, in wisdom, and in spirit, but our conception of the true way to accomplish this is not to pull down others and profit by their ruin, but to help all friends to a common prosperity and a common growth that we may all become greater and stronger together.

### III

It would be strange if states so alike in their political foundations should not also meet on the heights of thought and of feeling. Philosophy and poetry, for example, are as personal and national in America as in France. They reveal, the one no less than the other, typical and unexpected affinities. This likeness has not been dwelt upon sufficiently, and I cannot dwell upon it in

all its aspects. I shall content myself with an outline, which may, I trust, spur you on to make further investigations.

Poetry, the spontaneous song of the soul, its cry, its aspiration—in a way unconscious—witnesses invariably to the characteristic tendencies of a people. Now, on two occasions, America has given to France the signal for a new poetry in Edgar Allan Poe and in Walt Whitman. Let us say at once that there has been no imitation from any quarter. There has been, rather, sympathy and, if I may say so, “telepathy.” Your Edgar Poe is of great value not only because of his strange stories which have been so happily translated in French by Baudelaire—one of our poets most expressive of the end of the nineteenth century; he has created a poetry resembling nothing that has gone before. His short poems have peered into the feminine heart as into the depths of life and death, and discovered there a perception of things mysterious which has been adopted by a whole school of our lyricists, having at their head Baudelaire, Rollinat and Mallarmé. The symbolic school owes much to Edgar Poe. Like him, many among us have sung the Beyond, the Unknown, the tremor inspired by rare love, or the contemplation of the infinite in the passing moment.

Like America, France has always loved what is new. Like you, we are investigators in the psychological and ethical realms as well as in the physical. For there are two sources of investigation,—the Supernatural and the Natural. They are not, moreover, separated, one from the other, by insurmountable barriers. They exist, one through the other, one in the other. Poe sang, above all, the Supernatural; Walt Whitman is the prophet and the chosen poet of Nature. So, lest our spirit weary of the traditional forms of versification and of this inspiration of the bookshelf which leads only to the indefinite reproduction of ancient dreams, already hoary with time, let us look about

us. "Bibliopolis" and museums have left an ashy grey deposit on inspiration. Let us open the window. Let us see the fields and rivers, the mountains, the cities too, with their palpitating life, and these new "cathedrals" of man's activities,—harbours and railway terminals—a whisper of æsthetic liberty has passed through their hearts and brains. Let us sing the simple idyll, the splendour of the landscape; let us force ourselves to discover new beauty in the manifestations of modern life.

Has Walt Whitman been our guide? I cannot say that. But at the very time that this genial American was disjoining and stretching out traditional prosody from its narrow limits, we were doing the same thing; the four winds of heaven discarded it—blew it away. We sang of intimate things, of nature, of unanimity. We were the young schools—"intimism," "naturism," "unaninism"—which have not always furnished the absolute master, but which have cleared bright paths through the confused underbrush of the future. After the twilight of the symbolists the clear and liberating sunlight has burst upon us and we have walked the earth among men. After the war, this impulsion of truth and humanity will certainly grow more and more urgent and potent in all literature. There again America and France will be in accord.

As to Philosophy, which also makes her appeal to the most secret hopes of the race, as well as to the highest visions of the spirit, she has revealed a very surprising concord between the two republics in the last fifty years, in the contemplation of the universe, the soul, and action. The transcendentalism of Emerson as well as the pragmatism of William James has found response in our thought and in our feelings. The two republics have freed themselves at the same time from Germanic metaphysics—and this, strange to say, as in politics, by the cult of individualism and love of liberty. Montaigne—Emerson's journal is my authority—exerted a strong influence over the mind of the great

Bostonian. William James was always in harmony with our discoveries, our aspirations. At Columbia University, as well as in Emerson Hall at Harvard, where I explained some ideas on French culture, I had an opportunity to say that if we have proclaimed the "human" rights of man, Emerson himself had recognised the "divine" rights of humanity, and this for the humble, the simple, for those who are the stirring sap of the nation. In these latter, particularly for democracies, the spirit of conscious sacrifice, the idea of duty enlivened by the taste of liberty, have manifested themselves in very fact during this great war. Theirs has been the rôle of heroes, equalling in deed the greatest thinkers of all time who have only formulated the higher truths, whereas these, unknown, have realised them by suffering and immolation. Thus the "poilu," without knowing it, is Emersonian; he is also a pragmatist, direct disciple of William James; for demonstrating on the battlefield by his action, or at the rear, by his patience and civic courage, the primordial virtues and doctrines, he has proved that nothing is useful or beautiful except the ideas which may be put into practice, even at the expense of happiness or of life itself.

France to-day is transcendental and pragmatic in the *French manner*. Our modern philosophers—to cite only Ravesson, Renouvier, Boutroux and Bergson—have restored their prestige to Idealism, which controls deeds, to Sentiment, to Faith, to Inborn Instinct transformed into Clearseeing Intuition. They have been, like Henri Poincaré in science, liberators. They have prepared the heroic explosion of national will for service, not with the idea of a selfish leadership, but with the most noble of human aspirations, such as formed the inspiration of their great predecessors—Victor Hugo, prophetic poet, and Jules Michelet, moralist and historian.

Literature has followed Philosophy along this path; sometimes, perhaps, has even taken the lead. Did not Paul Bourget, in his preface to *Le Disciple*,

before the end of the nineteenth century recommend to the young man of France "those two great virtues, those two forces without which there is nothing but present decay and final agony—Love

and Will"? America, the land of character, of lofty, generous soaring, understood from long ago—long before this war—that we were both marching toward like goals.

## A POLITICAL COMING-OF-AGE

### THE WEST AND WILSON

BY FLORENCE FINCH KELLY

It was a wonderful experience, that of watching—and helping—the alchemy at work that transformed Republican into Democratic majorities and gave the country a new political alignment of its States. During the presidential campaign it was my privilege to work among the women voters of Kansas, although my audiences, aids and co-workers often included as many men as women. And as I was thus in closest touch for six weeks with the intellectual and spiritual influences that gave to President Wilson 170,000 more supporters than he had in Kansas four years ago, the same influences that gave him his majorities in other Western States, I think I can say with more surety what they were than can those theorists who have done much surveying of the results of the election from the vantage ground of tables of figures. From what I saw of the Western voters I am inclined to believe that this new political alignment of the country is very likely to continue, at least during the near future, although that will depend largely upon issues and candidates and the forces behind candidates. But of this I feel sure: That party domination *per se* has suffered its Waterloo in that part of the country west of the Mississippi River.

During my six weeks of campaigning in Kansas for the re-election of Woodrow Wilson I visited each of the eight congressional districts and worked in twenty-two counties, nearly all of them

in the closely populated eastern half of the State. By the time the campaign was half over I felt sure, and my confidence grew with every subsequent day, that rock-ribbed Republican Kansas, for the first time in its history in a straight contest between national Republican and Democratic parties, would give a majority for the Democratic candidate. All of us in the State who were working for the success of the Democratic national ticket felt equally confident as to that popular majority, although we were all surprised, finally, by its size, 36,000. For the silent vote had proved to be a bigger factor than we had estimated. But the ideas, feelings, convictions, that were stirring among the voters were so general and so evidently potent that we never doubted they would overcome the usual Republican majority.

So far as Kansas is concerned it is a mistake to say "the women did it," and I think the same is true of most of the other Western States that have woman suffrage, except, perhaps, where the Wilson majority was very small. In Kansas it is my conviction that Wilson would have won, but by a narrow majority, if the women had not voted at all. I found that the men who were disregarding their former party allegiance to vote for President Wilson were being influenced by the same considerations that were proving powerful in the case of the women. But there were more converts among the women than