

THE COMMONWEAL

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PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

AS THIS, the first number of THE COMMONWEAL, goes to press, the election returns are far from complete but it is known that CALVIN COOLIDGE has been decisively chosen as the next President of the United States. We would say to the American people, and to the man chosen by them as their Chief Magistrate, a few words, proffered with humility, and in the spirit which is the guiding intention of this new journal—the spirit of Faith, of Hope, and of Charity.

Of Faith, because we exercise it not only in religion but also in matters that concern the nation. So, too, of Hope—and, above all, of Charity.

The man who will direct our government during the next four years, to whom the people, through lawfully ordained methods, have entrusted the supreme executive power and the headship of the army and navy of a mighty nation, finds that nation troubled and perplexed by most serious and highly perilous problems, complicated by the fact that this nation must in one way or another play a leading part among the other nations of the world at a time when all peoples are facing a crisis graver than any recorded in the annals of humanity. The extraordinary complexities his administration must face will draw from Mr. COOLIDGE the utmost capacity of his physical endurance, his mental firmness, his judgment, patience,

and tolerance. They will spare no recess of his soul.

He no longer faces divided party counsels, for this situation has been greatly bettered by the increase of Republican representation. But it remains true that our parties have become little more than nominating machines. As agencies of government, the split in their ranks between radical and conservative has paralyzed their power of united action. The President must seek support from men of like minds in all parties. This in itself is a momentous revolution. In its worst aspect, it promises long vistas of deadlocks, log rolling and shirked responsibility, delays, vexations and painful compromises. In its best aspect—and this is where the President's test will become acute—it will force the Executive to achieve in fact as well as on paper the headship of the entire nation. He must have a national rather than a local support to put through any paramount measure.

Added to this new burden and opportunity, demanding an entirely new technique of government, he must face problems of unparalleled intricacy and magnitude—moral, economic and international. The conduct of a war is simple in comparison, for war is direct, unified. But what of harrassing tasks such as these: restoration of confidence in the integrity of government officials, alleviation of religious and racial

animosities, the agitation for and against federal control of education, consolidation of railroads and equitable adjustment of rates, the probable entire revision of revenue sources, the rearrangement of government departments, progressive reduction of the national debt, decision on the participation of the United States in the League and in various world conferences, further international reduction of armament, settlement with our foreign debtors, the sane administration of the Dawes plan and its probable frequent modifications. Add to these the possibilities of labor disturbance in the key industries of coal and transportation, the possibility of organized attack upon the Federal Reserve system, and the agitation of the numerous blocs in Congress. It will demand a man of superb equipment and courage and judgment to master the span of the four years ahead.

Yet the statement of this formidable case fills us with neither alarm nor pessimism. We have an abiding faith in the power of this nation to meet and master its problems provided only it approaches them with a true humility—the clear knowledge that the best we have achieved in the past and the best we shall achieve is based on the simplest of all virtues, the inborn reliance on God.

For THE COMMONWEAL is not the organ of any political party, or of any single school of economic or social theory. And the Calvert Associates, who publish it, whether they are members of one or another of the great political parties, or whether they profess different forms of religious belief, or whether they accept various forms of economic or social theorizing, are firmly united in the belief, and in the practice of the belief, that religion is at once the foundation and the only sure guarantee of the highest forms of civilization and culture. They might take for their motto the words of Plutarch—

There never was a state of atheists. You may travel all over the world, and you may find cities without walls, without a king, without a mint, without theatre or gymnasium; but you will nowhere find a city without a god, without prayer, without oracle, without sacrifices. Sooner may a city stand without foundations, than a state without belief in the gods. This is the bond of all society, and the pillar of all legislation.

Those members of our association who are not Catholics believe equally firmly that it is unquestionably a clear social duty for Catholics to contribute to the efforts now being made by all men and women of good will, to bring peace upon earth, brotherhood among men, happiness to all peoples, and prosperity, good order, and the fruits of civilization—art, beauty, culture—to our own nation.

Men and women of good will! They, we believe, are our best, our most useful, and, in the truest sense, our most patriotic citizens. To increase their number, to bring about among them a closer union, a more practical coöperation, a truer understanding of their com-

mon purposes, and to canalize the streams of their beneficent influence, would be the greatest of all works of social utility.

For we believe that it is the will that is the main instrument of all human action. God, Himself, said an old mystical writer, is a great Will pervading all things by reason of its intentness. Man does not yield himself to the forces of darkness or of light save only through the consent or the weakness of his will. Men and women who believe in God, and know Him through faith to be the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and who in that belief strive earnestly to unite the works of their own will to the will of God, know that in promoting the humane and higher interests of their own nation through justice and charity, with the fullest possible respect and sympathy for the just aspirations of all other nations, they are in the truest and best sense working in harmony with the Father of all mankind.

Such a belief permits men to join parties, or various and different schools of social thought, honestly believing the party or the school of their choice to be the best way, the most congenial method for achieving human betterment, but they will not scorn or condemn the parties or the schools to which others give allegiance. They will place above all parties or schools the common weal. They will not be extremists, fanatics, and, above all, they will not be lawless. They will know that without law and order and authority no civilized state may exist. Changes in the laws or in the mechanism of the state may be and often are desirable, even imperatively necessary, but are to be achieved only through education, and legal political action. In essentials unity—in non-essentials liberty—in all things charity.

Our national roots cling to this simple Faith, from the nobly stern Puritans of New England, of whom Mr. COOLIDGE is a descendant, to the fervent Catholic founders of Maryland who first wrote religious liberty into a colonial charter, from the God-fearing and loyal Jew, to the childlike faith of the black. So long as we hold fast to these roots, we cannot engulf ourselves in that overweening pride of self, that colossal ego of the would-be superman and supernation which is the conspicuous moral disease of the world today and of the very essence of its unrest and turmoil.

To CALVIN COOLIDGE, as the President of the United States, whose leadership will largely determine the springs of our action, and whose secret trials of mind and soul no one of us can measure or foresee, we gladly pledge—as we should with equal sincerity have pledged to either of the other candidates had the people chosen another man—what strength we have, that through him, in fair days and foul, the spirit of this country striving for justice may still cry out as in the past and with simple faith—"Expect the Lord, do manfully and be of good heart!"

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WEEK BY WEEK

THIRTEEN persons wounded, two fatally, and worse trouble averted only by martial law—not in a Russian pogrom, not in a Mexican revolution, not in a Chinese tong war, but in Niles, Ohio, in a battle between the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the Flaming Circle! The Ku Klux Klan we know as the most outrageous, sinister and ridiculous manifestation of ignorant bigotry, and of shameless violation of American principles, ever revealed—but who are the Knights of the Flaming Circle? The creation of a profiteer in prejudice? Or the spontaneous work of ignorant and violent men enraged by the arrogant clamor of the Klan—violence clinching with violence, lawlessness opposing lawlessness, the depths upsurging against the depths of anarchy? We know not, but we do know that unless politicians, high and low, cease once and for all pandering and truckling to the Klan, or any other group of anarchic men, and as their first duty stand for and support loyally the fundamental law and authority of the government, and the right of free men to live in this republic peacefully no matter what their religious beliefs or their racial origin may be—Niles, Ohio, will be only one of many places to be stained with a disgrace that threatens the fair fame of the nation.

BUT encouraging signs indicate that the Klan wave is receding. By a vote of two to one (according to the early returns) the voters of Michigan have defeated the stupid effort of the Ku Klux Klan to outlaw private and parochial schools. The bigots tried to ef-

fect their purpose by tampering with the State Constitution—the favorite method of fanatics in both national and local affairs. Mrs. FERGUSON won against the bedsheet patrioteers in Texas. WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE lost in Kansas, but the courageous high-spirited campaign of the Emporia editor, thoroughly American, in the best tradition of true politics (which is for the common weal rather than for individual or party profits) was worth a score of merely partisan victories. All the bigots of the country would have rejoiced (burning thousands of crosses, double ones among them) had Governor SMITH been defeated—his victory is a blow to bigotry, quite apart from other considerations. All in all, the K. K. K. doesn't seem to have amounted to much, in really vital matters, in this election. The selection of a few politicians to office does not really matter, practically, though it is a sad thing to see Americans voting for the creatures of a sinister secret society.

AGREEING whole-heartedly with certain New York newspapers in their opinion that the dolorous Mr. EARL CARROLL, who chose to go to jail instead of accepting bail when a judge held him for trial on the charge of exhibiting indecent pictures at his theatre door, was only seeking free publicity instead of "martyrdom" for Art (O, poor Art!), we wonder why some of these very papers exploit pictorial and textual sexuality so persistently. So many daily newspapers pursue a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde policy—preaching righteousness in editorial columns, and exploiting salaciousness in news columns and Sunday supplements and advertising sections—that perhaps it is invidious to name the particular offenders we have in mind.

LET us turn to The NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE, on a different matter. (The curiosities of journalism are endless.) Sunday, November 2, The HERALD-TRIBUNE published a despatch (apparently a despatch) under a two-column heading, no date, place given as Quito, Ecuador, correspondent's name not given, nor any trace of the source of the article. It begins dogmatically—"Religious conditions in South America are similar to those of the Middle Ages. [Glorious news, if true, though we suspect the writer implies something entirely different.] One can find in all parts an unbelief and absolute indifference to spiritual things among both men and women that is hard to believe or realize until one has traveled through these countries and has seen the conditions." The rest of the article is more specific; but after the sweeping generalizations of the prelude, we wonder how far the reporting of the details are to be trusted, or even respected. "Religious conditions in South America"—not Chili, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, or any particular country or city, but all of that huge