

view. He is, as your foreman knows, exceedingly interested in the mines on Eureka ledge. He will be glad if you would call." She led him to a little door in the wall, which she unbolted. "And now, 'Jill' must say good-by to 'Jack,' for she must make herself ready to receive a Mr. Bray who is expected."

And when Bray, a moment later, called at the front door, he was respectfully announced. He called another day, and many days after. He came frequently to San Francisco, and one day did not return to his old partners. He had entered into a new partnership with one who, he declared, "had made the first strike on Eureka Mountain."

BRYAN.

BY WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE,

Author of "The Real Issue" and "The Court of Boyville."

EDITOR'S NOTE.—In the following article, William Allen White begins in *McCLURE'S MAGAZINE* a series of studies of the most conspicuous of our present-day political figures. The characters to be presented in this series have been chosen irrespective of the political sympathies of either Mr. White or of the editors of *McCLURE'S*, and solely because of the position they occupy in the mind of the public. Mr. Bryan leads the series because, excepting a few men in official life, he is to-day the most prominent figure in the United States. The next article will deal with a leading Republican.

As is evident from the present study, Mr. White purposes to give a frank portrait of a man as he sees him. He argues neither for nor against his views or deeds. He aims solely to show the reader what manner of man this is that is playing so large a part in our public life. It is the sincere and unreserved expression of his own impressions, after having studied the man without bias or preconceit, that makes the value of the papers.



THE political party is the grandson of the clan. From the clan the party inherits much bigotry. Therefore, partisans generally put one cloak, either of odium or sanctity, on both the principles and the men who lead in their advocacy. It was ever thus. Probably a child of Israel would have laid off his garments as cheerfully to fight at an aspersion cast at the probity of Moses as to uphold the wisdom of the platform which Moses proclaimed. So human nature has made it necessary—and perhaps best—that all over this land two opinions exist about the leader of the minority party in this government. One opinion—that held by his partisans—is this, that William Jennings Bryan has god-like courage and indomitable energy directed by divine wisdom; that he is saintly in self-effacement and heroic in achievement for the poor and the oppressed. Another opinion—that held by those who differ with Mr. Bryan about the coinage of silver—is this, that he is an arrant demagogue, vacillating by nature, consciously dishonest, the malicious soul of error, and the fountainhead of trea-

sonable doctrines which invite anarchy by the attempt to establish socialism.

Of course both estimates of Mr. Bryan's character are incorrect—the estimate of his friends as surely as that of his enemies. Nature never made a human being entirely good or entirely bad. Yet, ordinarily, in presidential years intelligent Americans forget that the habitat of heroes and of villains is in books and plays. Maybe citizens take this unreasonable view of candidates for office because to the popular mind an election is an act in a drama and all the men and women merely players. So it is easy to cry with Richard: "Off with his head! So much for Buckingham;" or off with his reputation, or off with his peace of mind, or off with his ambition. We forget that the hated Buckingham leading the despised opposition may be, after all, an excellent gentleman, with two legs, real blood dancing through a merry heart, delightfully human in his preference for wearing his head above his collar-button rather than in the headsman's basket, eminently sane in his pride in his good name, pardonable in his desire for peace of mind, and with a conscience behind his ambition.

Now the object of this sketch is simply

to consider one of the foremost characters in contemporary history, not as a hero or as a villain, but as "a prosperous gentleman," without cherubic wings chafed by his suspenders, and without cloven hoofs under his respectable shoes. Perhaps the direct way to this object is to introduce as "Exhibit A" a few lines descriptive of Mr. Bryan as he appears to the naked eye.

The first impression one receives of the man, and the last impression to fade, is that of youth: not the youth of immaturity; not the youth of mad vanity and folly; but the youth of the bridegroom coming forth from his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man; the youth of hope, of enthusiasm, of bright eyes that indicate a good liver and reflect a brave soul. All the lines of the tall figure that enclose over 200 pounds of wholesome flesh and blood are lines of young manhood. The crescent of his slowly growing vest is the crescent of a young moon, and although Bryan's hair is receding from his brow, no wrinkles mark it, and beneath it is a Wellsbach smile, clear and steadfast and cheerful as the sunrise. At home, in his office, or in the street, that smile is winning. It is its owner's talisman. But in public life—and Bryan is more natural there than in private life (indeed he has little private life)—in public life that smile is the pyrotechnic obligato for a saxophone voice. Back of the broad chin is a strong jaw; under the jaw a neck, obstinate as a Turk's, slopes into a pair of as diplomatic shoulders as ever saved an Irishman's head from a blackthorn stick. Bryan's figure is all Irish. His loose hanging arms are Irish. His sturdy well-pegged legs are Irish. And there's an Irish grand-sire—who used to smoke a clay pipe probably—and he likes to come back and rest his bones, that have been under the "ould sod" these hundreds of years, by sitting on the small of his grandson's back to view the world from across his grandson's elevated knees. Doubtless if the scion would take a little something at such times, the ancestor would come out of the past and give the young man a philosophy that would smile with the world at its weaknesses and shortcomings. But Bryan is a sober and a virtuous man who neither smokes, drinks, chews, nor swears. So the old one keeps his place and listens while his offspring sighs at the misery and wickedness and woe of this melancholy world.

Clothe a handsome figure in a black tailcoat, and under the awning of a black slouch hat put a low-cut vest, with two studs fast-

ened through the front of a white shirt; tie a black string-tie, the inevitable neckgear of the young lawyer ten years ago, under a lay-down collar; modify the chill atmosphere of the bar by the breezy amiability of a St. Louis shoe-drummer, repressed while he sells a Methodist deacon a bill of goods, and the gentle reader may have a fair idea of how Bryan looks, acts, moves, and has his being, when he is not before an audience. There—but that must come later. Of course he was not modeled as he stands to-day from red clay. He did not spring full-panoplied from the helmet of the statue of Chicago at the Convention of '96. He grew. And the story of his growth is of passing interest.

This story may be told in "the short and simple annals" of the comfortably well-to-do. Bryan was born in 1860, at Salem, Illinois. His father was judge of a district court for twelve years, until 1872, when he ran for Congress, and was defeated, although on a Democratic ticket with a Greenback endorsement. Bryan's mother was a Jennings, and one of his grandmothers a Lillard, of Virginia. In Bryan's book, "The First Battle," his wife has written a short biography of her husband. In this she tells of his boy life; how he did the chores on his father's town farm, how he hunted rabbits, how he "joined church" and decided, as many boys do at some stage of their lives, to become a preacher, and compromised on the bar; how he went to school, and how—this is the first key to his character—"he developed an interest in the work of literary and debating societies." This debating society business was the youth's stronghold. His wife puts it happily thus: "A prize always fired William's ambition. During his first year in the academy (the preparatory department of Illinois College), he declaimed Patrick Henry's masterpiece, and ranked well down the list. Nothing daunted, the next year found him with the 'Palmetto and the Pine' as his subject. The next year, a freshman in college, he tried for a prize in Latin prose, and won half the second prize. Later in the year he declaimed 'Bernardo del Carpio,' and gained second prize. In his sophomore year he entered another contest, with an essay on 'Labor.' This time the first prize rewarded his work. An oration on 'Individual Powers' gave him a place in the intercollegiate contest held at Galesburg, where he ranked second."

Now, if the Republicans fancy that they can talk Mr. Bryan down, they may see their mis-

take in this record. He is only up to "The Palmetto and the Pine" contest this year, with three more contests yet before him. After graduation, Bryan went into law, and glided from law to politics with "that mild and healing sympathy" that stole away his practice e'er he was aware. He moved from Jacksonville, Illinois, to Lincoln, Nebraska, and in 1888 he stumped the First Congressional District for J. Sterling Morton. Two years later he canvassed the district for himself, and won. After two terms in Congress, one of which was served on the Ways and Means Committee, Bryan came home to find moth and rust corrupting his law books, so he closed them and turned to his true love, "the people." He ran for the United States Senate in '94. When he failed of election, he packed his grip and went forth preaching the silver gospel. He lectured for pay when he could get it, for nothing when he could do no better; but he never stopped talking, and he paid his own way. In the two years preceding '96, Bryan went into nearly every State in the Mississippi Valley, and he spoke but one message—the free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16 to 1. He set more acres of prairie afire for free silver than any other man. He made friends everywhere, for he has that grace of manner and gentleness of personality that bind friends in sheaves in his path. He has all the charm and winsomeness that Dickens gave to Steerforth. Thus it happened that, when delegates to the National Democratic Convention began to rise in the various States a hundred of them knew Bryan, and scores of them had written to him urging him to run for the presidential nomination. No man was preëminent in the silver movement. It was a struggle for principle among the Western Democrats, not a clamor for a man. The silver leaders conspiring to overthrow the federal appointees' wing of Democracy, were not sure enough of a victory to give much time to the distribution of the spoil.

In the Chicago Convention the theorists prevailed. It was clearly the sense of the meeting that man is a creature of the State, rather than that the State is a creation of man's. It was preëminently an emotional occasion. The orator who could arouse some one, challenge some one, defy some one else, and plead for something—that orator could best voice the sentiments of his auditors. That orator was Bryan. He stepped naturally into supremacy at the talk-feast, because he had been training for

that famous speech, and for nothing else, from the hour when he recited "Patrick Henry's Address." All the days of his youth had been spent in practising elocution; the days of maturity in debating. Ambition had led him through green pastures. Physical toil had not twisted his youthful frame; no complaining at fate had put the rasp of despair in his musical voice. He rose in his place in the throng of men who had fought their way to approximate success by hard, disfiguring knocks, and he seemed as one apart from practical life—one exalted. He could not know it, but this distinction gave him his courage. No industrial concern had ever bothered him to act as its director or as its superintendent, or as its foreman or as a laborer; no financial institution had asked him to be its treasurer or its promoter or a member of its advisory board. No social experiment had been put into his hands for development. His knowledge of the actual strength and weakness, quirks and foibles of human nature was a blank page. Upon it he might write a theory of human conduct and argue therefrom with deep, unsimulated feeling. No fluttering wings of doubt, that would have brushed by another man's eyes and made him stammer and hesitate in his climaxes, disturbed Bryan. His magnificent earnestness was hypnotic. Because he lost no force of his eloquence convincing himself, the weight of all his rhetoric, of his splendid magnetic presence, of his resonant voice, fell upon the delegates and filled them with the frenzy that has made every reckless mob of history. Bryan's supremacy in the Chicago Convention was as inevitable as Robespierre's in the Assembly. And he did even more than hypnotize the delegates. Through the nerves of the telegraph that speech thrilled a continent, and for a day a nation was in a state of mental and moral catalepsy.

If the election had been held that July day, Bryan would have been chosen President. Indeed, all his opponents did in the three months following his speech was to arouse the people from their trance. It took much shaking up to break the spell, much marching of the patient up and down the land under torches and to martial music to revive him and restore him to his natural faculties. It is not fair, therefore, to say that the man who put the moral and mental faculties of the nation to sleep is not a strong man. He may not be particularly wise, for wisdom and oratorical strength are not inseparably allied.

Bryan is deadly serious. From the caverns of his inexperience comes no cackle of mirth at his own presumption, such as invariably comes to a man of ripe philosophy. Bryan sees in his creed the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. With him an expeditious compromise would be a dishonorable surrender. The easy circumstances of his early life, his present environment in the primrose path, his felicitous career following the beckonings of a mastering ambition—these things conspire to persuade him that he is a statesman of destiny. Men who fight their way up from the bottom to the top of fortune's hill are apt to take personal credit for their victories and believe little in the influence of the State. But Bryan's easy rise has so confused him that it is natural for him to hold that the State can make or break men. His career makes it proper that he should teach that the State by proclamation and enactment can coax the coy millennium out of the roseate dawn and put salt on her tail. For him to hold another view would argue in him a vanity that is foreign to him.

In Bryan's home, the living-room is the library. Around the library walls are pictures of statesmen—Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln prominently displayed; Benton, Webster, Calhoun, and the others, in steel engravings, tucked away in odd places. An eagle poised for flight totters in front of Bryan's chair. Just behind it is a picture which more than any other tells its owner's point of view. The picture represents Henry Clay towering almost ten feet high in the foreground, badly out of perspective, pleading with the lilliputian senators—all in stocks and tail coats, like Clay, and all dignified and serious, wrapped in improving meditation. Of course no human beings ever disported themselves in such unwrinkled pomp. But Bryan doubtless draws from this picture many of his fine Fourth-Reader views of the relations of life. The books in the library also make an excellent photograph of their owner's mental equipment. Of fiction there is little. "Caxton editions" of a number of the classic novelists are found in sets. Standard histories and great orations common in schools twenty years ago fill much space. Lord's "Beacon Lights of History," "lives" of statesmen old and new, collections of poetical "gems," published by houses that sell through agents, have shelf room beyond their deserts. On the side of sociology and economics the books are of the sort that may be called propagandist. They were written by par-

tisans of a theory, rather than by well-known scientists seeking the truth. Most of these books might have been issued by the "committee" or by the "league" or by the "association," and with a few exceptions they bear the same relation to sane research in the lines they traverse that "Mother, Home, and Heaven" and "The Royal Path of Life" bear to the work of Matthew Arnold and the inquiries of Huxley, Darwin, and Spencer. Contemporaneous literature of the first order—new books and magazines—and those refinements artistic and literary which two decades of invention and industrial organization have brought to American homes, are conspicuously absent from the Bryan library. "Trilby" is the latest piece of fiction there, and excepting a few economic tracts, the shelves might have been filled by a Virginia country judge before the war. And this is but natural, for Bryan is distinctly of the old school. His broad, studded, antebellum shirt-bosom shows this as clearly as does his child-like faith in the integrity and omniscience of the people. With him *vox populi* is always *vox Dei*. And this, too, in the face of the fact that in modern politics men who affect solicitude for the people are called demagogues. The people—that solidarity of citizens of mutual interest, common aspirations, and similar circumstances that once formed the masses of the early Republic—seem to have resolved themselves into a number of individuals, associated by self-interest in groups, cliques, coteries, classes, companies, corporations, and municipalities. These units ask of government only an honest policeman and an incorruptible umpire to see that the fight is fair. Therefore a large number of Mr. Bryan's fellow-citizens—a majority, in fact—sniffed at his strenuous clamor for "the people" four years ago as the recitations of a demagogue. And like the priest and the Levite, these fellow-citizens passed by on the other side.

Now the truth of the matter is that Mr. Bryan is not a demagogue. He is absolutely honest, which a demagogue is not. He is absolutely brave, which a demagogue is not. He is passionately sincere, which a demagogue is not. When Bryan came to Nebraska, a dozen years ago, his town, his congressional district, and his State were overwhelmingly Republican. A demagogue would have joined the majority party. Bryan took up the cause of tariff reform, and fought a losing fight. When he became convinced that free silver was right, he preached it in

his congressional district with his party organization and the odds of battle against him. He ran for the United States Senate in '94 with his party's State convention endorsement. If he had trimmed a little on free silver, the Cleveland gold Democrats might have turned the scales in his favor. But he didn't trim; he lost. When Bryan left the volunteer army of the United States in '98, his party had been opposing the ratification of the peace treaty with Spain. Bryan opposed his party, and favored the ratification of the treaty. A dishonest man would have gloried in fighting the treaty. To-day silver sentiment is dying in the West. Bryan would not lose an electoral vote by abandoning silver. He would gain thousands of franchises in the East by such a course. But because he believes that the free coinage of silver is right, wild horses cannot drag him from his stand.

Above everything else, Bryan personally is what may be called a clean man. He is a member of the Presbyterian Church, though he does not add to his other fault the "vice of piety." His home life is that of the average well-bred American—simple, affectionate, stimulating. He takes his wife into partnership in all his interests. She is his only confidant and his final adviser. In the town of Lincoln, which does not agree with him politically and will not vote for him, Bryan bears the reputation of a straightforward, honorable man, whose word is good, and whose debts are paid when they fall due. In the intrigues of local politics Bryan is not a dominant force. He has never dominated there. He talked himself into his honors in local politics, instead of winning them in the caucus. Most men in Western politics begin at the bottom—run for county attorney, or the legislature, are graduated into a judicial nomination, and ascend to Congress at the close of their political lives. Bryan, having framed his life after the models in the old school, began at the top.

Bryan shows his greatest personal strength in the fact that he is to-day, as he has ever been, utterly without a political machine. Other men in American politics stand or fall for reasons outside of their personality. Mr. David Hill, for instance, is a geographical location. Mr. McKinley is a kind of syndicate. Roosevelt stands for an ideal of civic righteousness. Mr. Croker is an impudent appetite. Quay is a system of wire-
less telegraphy. But Bryan is Bryan, and Bryan is his prophet. More power for good or evil rests under Bryan's black slouch hat

than under any other single head-piece in America. Bryan is machineless, not because he abhors the machine, but because he ignores it. He would not know what to do with captains and lieutenants. If his party should begin to turn from him, Bryan could not call, "What ho, warder, let the portcullis fall," in a score of States and check the stampede. If oratory would not stop the panic, the multitude would have to leave him as it came to him. After which he would go on lecturing till that gave out, and running for the Senate till that gave out, and for Congress till that gave out, when he would return to his law office, and continue as he was in the beginning, an honest, hard-working, ordinary country lawyer, with an extraordinary voice and a forceful, direct, plausible way of putting short Anglo-Saxon words that often moves juries, but is not so thrilling in briefs.

But if, on the other hand, Bryan's presidential ambition should be gratified, the country would have a startling spectacle. It would be like that of a Southern gentleman in swallow-tails and a choker, but one generation removed from his periwig, suddenly shunted half a century ahead and jammed into the oak-bottomed chair of a railroad president. The gentleman of the old school would try honestly to do his duty. But he would have such difficult things to learn, and such an incapacity for learning them, that he would cut many a fantastic caper and in the end make a mess of it as bad as a thorough-going rascal would. Mr. Bryan, trying to run the presidential office as Jackson ran it, might make many important and expensive personal discoveries. He might discover that the world has moved since Jackson's day; that the present phase of industrial evolution is not a conspiracy against God and man; and that an intelligent conscience is a surer guide than an ear trained to catch the voice of the people.

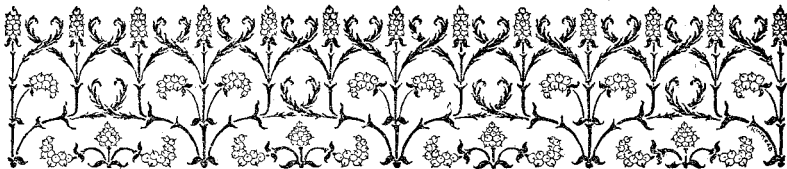
The danger of men of Bryan's mold to the country is not what they hold true, so much as it is how they hold it; not so much the limit of their intelligence as their attitude toward truth. For Bryan's mental endowment is that of a debater. When he faces an alleged fact, his habit is not to search it for truth, but to answer it. He is not seeking the truth; he has it, and is seeking to make converts. While his marvelous mental acuteness as a debater is a shield that will always ward certain truths from his heart, yet he has one simple oratorical trick, and only one: he begs

the question. For instance, a reporter recently asked Bryan if the practice of electing senators in Montana by the corrupt use of money is not deplorable. His reply was: "Don't you think the spectacle of Senator Hanna voting to unseat Clark for buying an election is incongruous?" Now the alleged incongruity of Senator Hanna's position in the Clark investigation has nothing to do with the case against the corrupt use of money in elections. But that answer before a crowd would turn the debate into another channel. In his Chicago speech Bryan said: "If they tell us that the gold standard is a good thing, we shall point to their platform and tell them that their platform pledges the party to get rid of the gold standard and substitute bi-metallism. If the gold standard is a good thing, why try to get rid of it?" With the crowd that passes for argument against the gold standard; but the fact is, the merits or demerits of the gold standard are not touched upon at all. In no place in that speech was there a single logical argument offered against the gold standard. Yet the speech was a perfect piece of rhetoric of its kind, and it convinced thousands of the iniquity of the gold standard. Conviction came through bald, unsupported assertion, repeated a score of times in different figures of speech and uttered with a manifest sincerity of belief that was the orator's armament against contradiction. This method of political discussion is not original with Bryan. It is common to all debaters, to all politicians and to many statesmen. But they cannot maintain the unflinching sincerity that Bryan wears, for if they are men of much intelligence, they see their own sham, and having seen it, cannot entirely conceal it. But Bryan, like the lady in the poem, "never can know and never can understand."

And yet it is not the kind of argument Bryan uses which gives him strength, it is not the principles he advocates that draw men to him. At the bottom of the magnetism which pulls men toward Bryan is the growth in the popular mind of a faith in socialism, and a hope to see the State lay hold of the industrial system and untangle its many snarls. During this century of mechanical progress the economic world has literally jumped a cog in the process of its evolution. Many people believe that society is not properly adjusted, that the machinery of industry is not in gear, and too many people are being ground by it. There is a widespread belief that repairs are needed, and because Bryan gets out with his oratorical hammer and knocks upon the industrial system and the existing order, unthinking people have hailed him as the master mechanic. But Bryan is not a builder. Oratory is rarely constructive. It is an illusion, a legerdmain, and the world is learning to disassociate oratory from statesmanship. There is really no more reason for electing an orator to office than for electing a fiddler. Both talents rouse the emotions. Bryan is a voice.

When the master mechanic shall arrive and straighten out the kinks in the great machine of production and distribution, he may be—probably will be—a prosaic, bald-headed old man, whose mind has been trained in the shops, factories, counting-houses, and offices of the world. This man will take a legislative jack-screw, and work an important miracle. When he shall have come and gone—this true master mechanic—men will smile at the remembrance of the passing day when an earnest, honest, gallant, loquacious young man charmed them with the melody of his hypnotic voice.

And yet in every cause there must be a voice crying in the wilderness.



RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA.

BY WM. BARCLAY PARSONS,

Chief Engineer of the American-China Development Company.

READINESS OF THE COUNTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT.—LINES ALREADY BUILT AND THOSE IN PROSPECT.—RIVALRY OF THE GREAT POWERS.



CHINA is a country that presents the curious anomaly of possessing an extensive and varied commerce, both foreign and domestic, and yet being without artificial means of communication, even the ordinary highways. Other nations, such as India or Japan, when they began to reorganize in line with modern conditions, already had wagon-roads, and needed only to supplement these with railways as development proceeded. Japan, although it is only about as large as one of China's provinces, and although it did not begin the construction of railways until 1871, now has a well-built system ramifying all over the main island, aggregating 3,500 miles in length, and almost exclusively under the management of native officials. China, however, has clung tenaciously to the methods and customs of other years, so that, with an area for the empire proper equal to half that of the United States, she has to-day only 516 miles of railway all told. Her sea-coast and her waterways have been her supports. In both of these particulars nature has been most liberal with her. Her coast line is as long as both the Atlantic and Pacific coast lines of the United States—that is, as long as the distance from Florida to Maine added to the distance from Southern California to Washington. In addition, there are noble rivers penetrating to the very western confines of the empire.

THE JUNK AND THE COOLIE THE CHIEF MEANS OF TRANSPORT.

It is extraordinary to what extent the waterways are employed, in spite of the entire failure to improve their navigation or remove natural obstacles and impediments.

Along the coast and for short distances up the chief estuaries, the government has established lighthouses and located beacons and buoys; but up the rivers themselves nothing of the kind has been done. For coast and sea-going work the Chinaman uses a junk of large and strong proportions, and on the rivers one more adapted to the particular needs. No matter where the traveler goes in the interior, he will find along the river front of the cities he visits a veritable forest of masts and a solid raft of hulls. Except for use on the lower reaches of the Yang-tze, where deeper water permits some latitude in construction, the up-river boats are of one general type. The hull is flat-bottomed and constructed of heavy planks, with a stout half-round timber at the deck line, to serve as a guard when the boats are banging together at landing-places. The bow and stern are square, and the latter is curved upward to form a poop. A deck load can be housed under curved covers of bamboo matting resting on permanent frames. Under these covers the crew of five men or more also find quarters, while the owner and his family reside in the stern. There are one or two masts, according to the size of the boat, standing without stays and carrying large sails of cotton canvas or light bamboo mats. Of boats of this description there are tens of thousands, and they pass and repass in endless processions. Usually the boat itself is kept in fair condition, but the same cannot be said of the sails. A new sail is scarcely ever seen, and many of them are so dilapidated as to cause wonder at their being set at all. But a Chinaman never considers time as of value; he feels no incentive to keep his source of motive power in repair, but goes on using it as it is until it can be no longer hoisted. Boats rigged like these, and without keels and of shallow draft, cannot make headway