

Why They Love Borah

SENATOR WILLIAM E. BORAH, of Idaho, is one of the foremost men of public life, as very many of those in intimate touch with our public life believe, not because he is eloquent, there being many other eloquent men; not because he has a fine mind, there being many other fine minds; not because he is a patient, untiring student, there being many other patient, untiring students; not because he is courageous, there being many other courageous men, our frequent hasty judgments to the contrary notwithstanding. Senator Borah is a leading figure, in the opinions of many competent judges, because, beyond any other man in public life, he labors unwearied and undiscouraged, to produce a supply of statecraft that will meet the demand of this nation and of the world.

Politically, the American people "keep coming on," discovering evils and seeking cures with few lapses into indifference (on that sceptics and scoffers, and the children of faith and light will agree!) and none is so quick to discover an evil and none so quick to seek a cure as Borah. Never does he lapse into the indifference that sometimes damns the mass. The maximum of the fervor of the mass is his minimum. Nearly two decades in the disillusioning, disheartening, deadening atmosphere of Washington have aged only his body. His spirit goes marching on, increasingly agile it seems, in the twin quest for evils and for cures; increasingly ardent in the conviction that it is worth while—that mankind can and will effect a net gain of cures over evils, however it may stumble and falter. He cannot be convinced that the demand for the good must forever exceed the supply.

Born in '65 in the yet new Illinois, whence he moved on to Kansas and on to the wilds of the Idaho of a generation ago, Senator Borah is of the breed that expects to tame the world and all therein—a surcharged specimen of the breed. Had nature fashioned him for a materialist, he would have disembowelled the earth and harnessed its energies, or gone broke in the effort. But that was not her mood and intent in the hour of his fashioning. She sent him forth a preacher, and he must dig out the sins of organized society, and he must nourish, organize and direct the aspirations of men for the good. He is apart in the Senate, not alone because he has a craving for solitude and meditation that makes itself known to his associates, but because of this essential quality.

Looking down on him from the gallery, noting that queerly emphatic apartness, the question bobs up: Where would he be, if he were not there? To find a wholly satisfactory answer a century must be turned back. Put Borah on a lean horse, pull

his hat down over his eyes as he likes to have it, give him saddlebags containing a Bible and another shirt, start him over the hills of a new country as circuit-riding minister of the gospel.

Thrust upon the stage of a world far different, mankind still is his prize to be sought with every energy. View him in the company of the whole group that defeated the League of Nations Covenant in the Senate. He is the one man of that group who felt an affirmative responsibility. Lodge, Reed, Johnson, Brandegee, Moses? Their work was done when the Covenant was rejected. They were through. It was enough that the country had been kept from making what they held to be a mistake. No obligation was upon them to be more than negative. But Borah, having denied the efficacy of the instrument made by Wilson, no sooner had made sure that the denial was consummated than he affirmed the necessity of an instrument for the same purpose, and proceeded indefatigably to search for it. As I recall, he was the first member of the Senate openly to denounce Wilson's proposal; and for three years he has occupied Wilson's old place as the apostle of peace.

He cannot think in impersonal terms of persons; he cannot think of France, or Germany, or Russia, or England without seeing millions of human beings, happy or unhappy, comfortable or distressed. When a nation is hungry, he sees women and children, hands outstretched for food. When a nation is without fuel, he sees shivering babies.

He will go on, preaching peace and seeking the instrument to effectuate what he believes to be the will for peace. He can do no other. He will change his arguments and he will change his mind, probably, about instruments, but some argument and the search for some instrument will go on until his eyes are closed for the last time. That will be his unflagging contribution of supply to meet the world demand. Interspersed will be his contributions to meet the national demand. The railroad problem of today, and that of the year after next; the agrarian problem of today and that of the year after next; the problem of corrupt practices in politics, of topheavy government at Washington, of what not: these problems will keep him sweating and striving as earnestly as though the solution of last year's problems had not immediately caused new ones.

Stop gathering a supply to meet the demand? Adjust the demand to the supply on hand? Ask what is the use of trying to make things better? Not so long as Borah is Borah. And so long as Borah is Borah, when he rings the bell, a large section of the American people will answer. For he and they are one.

JOHN W. OWENS.

The Job and the Middle-Aged Woman

THERE is today a group of women who, after years of effective and essential service, are finding themselves with nothing to do. The job of home-making which has taken their thought and energy for, generally speaking, about half their normal working period, has come rather abruptly to an end. In this group are numbers of the more alert and intelligent women of the day; they have been, perhaps, our most valuable social asset. It is their desire to continue as assets. Yet many of them are saying frankly that they can see no place of real usefulness anywhere that they can fill, or more, that they can be trained to fill.

These women are in the middle years—in rough estimate between the early forties and the mid-sixties. They have leisure—often hard-earned, education, health, and enough margin of money for travel, clothes, pleasures, reasonable charities. Their children have left home—married, or otherwise away, leading independent lives. And with husbands immersed in business, the homes to which they gave at least twenty good years, no longer absorb them; at most, with modern equipment and changed ways of living, require a minimum of time and thought and energy. It has not come about through excessive domesticity—the keeping of noses over-close to pans and kettles, or in the mending basket—that these individuals now find their hands idle. They have had outside interests, many and varying, often. But the household has been the real job. Through its administration these persons have built up certain definite habit trends, modes of thought and mental reaction which function readily and adequately in the flexible routine of the home, and meet with effectiveness the more or less personal problems of the family. But, tragically for the erstwhile homemaker, these are not the habit patterns, the psychological qualities, required—particularly in this day of precise specialization—for successful battle with the larger world outside.

With, then, the occupation that has, primarily engrossed half her working life taken out of her hands, and without equipment for any other, what is the woman of this group to do with the last part of her productive years? My neighbor, Marian, is just now trying one way of meeting her idle fifties. She knows that it is not an adequate or happy way. Marian is forty-nine. Her three children are comfortably married, carrying on the life of their own generation. When she came back from Europe last October, she dismissed her two servants. Yesterday morning, I found her down on her knees scrubbing the kitchen linoleum. She

looked hot and tired, and her hands were red from the soapsuds. This is not Marian's work; it is years since she has done the drudgery of her house, the mere manual labor in it. She has taken on the job, she says, to keep from going out of her mind—the only job, she further declares, that she can hold against the expert competition of the day.

Marian's life is typical of that of the abler women of her group. After leaving her small college, she taught in a public school where she reached an administrative position which she filled with success. Then came marriage and crowded years with insufficient money. Marian did the work, the sewing, took care of the children, was their teacher, even, through the early school years. She did secretarial work for John (her husband) evenings—anything, everything, to stretch the scarce dollars. Gradually leisure came: the children in good schools, a larger house, travel; by and by, interests outside the home, an orgy of clubs, president of two or three; when the time came, war service. Then a letting down;—half-hearted work for the Voters' League, bridge, a reading club—and the kitchen linoleum!

Marian laid down her scrubbing brush, pulled the cushion from under her knees, and sat back on it. "I hate this work," she said. "But I've got to do something. I just won't get senile and lazy and fat. I dismissed the girls so that I would have something to do, something every day, that had to be done. People have to eat; houses must be kept sanitary. . . . My dear, I've got something to tell you: There isn't any place in the world for us—well-placed, middle-aged women like myself—today. Our neuron patterns are set for functioning in a social order that is gone. The making of homes was our business, homes that were centres for friendships and the social activities of our young people; flowers and candles on the dinner table, gracious manners, leisure, talk—we thought it was talk—formalities, guests. That household, I want you to know, was no lazy man's job; big unneeded rooms—a library, a den, a music room, a huge front porch. Outside interests pushed in—our church societies, committee meetings, with the curtains up clean, and the good cups out for tea. That all seems to belong to the dark ages in the rushing, externalized, country-club life of the present, where "home" is a place to sleep, and sometimes to eat. Who keeps up a guest room now? Nobody wants to be 'entertained.' There's no place in the life of today for the kind of home I made."

Marian is right. There isn't any reason for the continuance of that older type of household. In