

William Jennings Bryan at Home

THE BRYAN FAMILY'S RETURN FROM EUROPE. (Mrs. Leavitt at Extreme Left.)



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN'S NEW HOME



W. J. BRYAN



MRS. BRYAN



W. J. BRYAN JR.



GRACE BRYAN

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A. R. PARKHURST, JR.

When the National Democratic Convention assembled at Denver the name of William Jennings Bryan will again go before that body as a Presidential nominee. The Commoner not only emphatically asserts he will be chosen to bear the standard of Democracy aloft throughout the approaching campaign, but goes this one step further by unequivocally declaring that, with Roosevelt out of the running, he will be elected to succeed the only man he feared in a battle of ballots. Mr. Bryan has ever been an optimist, but at the present writing his optimism surpasses all bounds, as a recent editorial treating of the late National Republican Convention, and entitled "In Full Retreat," amply attests. This editorial appeared in a recent issue of Mr. Bryan's newspaper, The Commoner, but, not wishing to keep all the good things to himself, Mr. Bryan magnanimously gave out the text of his editorial in advance of its appearance in The Commoner, and this was given widespread publicity by the daily press, irrespective of politics.

It is not my purpose, however, to treat of William Jennings Bryan, Presidential Aspirant, but rather of Bryan, the husband, the father, the farmer and the most beloved citizen of Normal, Neb., the little colony that surrounds his beautiful estate, "Fairview." Until a very few years ago Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, with their two daughters and one son, occupied an extremely modest little frame dwelling in an unpretentious street in Lincoln. It was just such a house as the average struggling attorney, with a large family to rear and educate, would reside in. There was no attempt at display, as the Bryans apparently had no social axes to grind. They were content to live their lives in their own way, surrounded by a little coterie of friends who were ever glad to partake

of the proverbial crust that this most hospitable little family was wont to share with their friends. After years of ceaseless toil Mr. Bryan has reached that point in life where he can rest easy, well knowing that the future of those dependent upon his endeavors has been provided for. Dame Fortune has smiled her broadest upon Mr. Bryan, and to-day his fortune is variously estimated at a figure anywhere from one to five hundred thousand dollars. On this subject, however, Mr. Bryan is mum, always evading it when possible.

"How did I get it?" he replied to a recent question. "Why, by dint of hard, nerve-racking work—that is how." And those who know him best declare that this is true.

Mr. Bryan's sudden leap into affluence has not spoiled him one whit. His bitterest enemy must acknowledge this. The most humble little farmer living in the vicinity of the Bryan home will tell you that "Neighbor Bryan" is a neighbor in every sense of the word; that Mrs. Bryan is idolized by every woman for miles around; that the girls are splendid women, educated to live lives of usefulness; and that William Jennings Bryan, Jr., is "a chip off the old block, and that's saying a whole lot."

There can be little or no question as to how Mr. Bryan acquired his fortune. His various lecture tours, while arduous in the extreme, have paid him handsomely for his trouble. His newspaper, The Commoner, has turned out to be a veritable gold mine, and, if nominated, his income from this source will be quadrupled, for then he expects to be able to boast of a "million circulation."

Mr. Bryan's foreign tour was another stepping stone to wealth, for, while on tour, he published a series of syndicated letters that made his trip a most profitable one. Thus it can be seen that whatever Mr. Bryan has accumulated has been done since he reached middle age, and all has been done by his own efforts.

When the Bryans were residents of Lincoln and the future was less rosy than it is to-day, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan often made excursions out into the country. These little excursions were inexpensive, and, then, too, dreams of the future all centered about some little spot in the country where a home could be builded, and Mr. Bryan could engage in the pursuit closest to his heart. To be a successful farmer had ever been his ambition, and this, unlike one other ambition, has been realized.

One spot always appealed strongly to Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, and that was in the vicinity of Antelope Creek, which skirted a little settlement known as Normal, about twelve miles from Lincoln.

"Here's where we will build our home, mother, when we have the money," was the comment Mr. Bryan invariably made after reaching this pretty spot. That was many years ago, and upon each return to the modest little home in the muddy little Lincoln street the Bryan family would gather about the open fireplace and there build their castle. That this castle was not founded on air time has proved, for seven years ago Mr. Bryan purchased five acres of land abutting Antelope Creek, and in the centre of

the first parcel was the site selected for the new Bryan home. Shortly thereafter ten additional acres were purchased, and a little later fifteen acres were added, and so on, bit by bit, until the present estate consists of 200 acres, valued at from two hundred to three hundred and fifty dollars an acre.

Here William Jennings Bryan lives the life of a farmer. He would resent it were I to say that he lives the life of a country gentleman. He is idolized by the hundred or more tillers of the soil who live about him, and to them he is "W. J." This they dubbed him when he first came to live among them, and this he will continue to be to them whether he lives the life of an Antelope Creek farmer or becomes the President of the United States. Men and women alike invariably address him as "W. J.," and it is extremely doubtful if he would care to be addressed by any other name. Certainly not so long as he continues to make Normal his home.

The handsome house that adorns Fairview is a most pretentious establishment. From an architectural viewpoint it is rather nondescript in style, since it is patterned after the most modern of city residences, as well as along the lines of a large, roomy, comfortable country home, embodying the best features of each. Residents of Normal will tell you that it is the "finest house in Nebraska, b'gosh," and my advice to a visitor to these parts is to accept their word for it and not attempt to argue the point.

Prior to Mr. Bryan's world-encircling tour Fairview's furnishings, decorations, pictures and bric-a-brac, as well as the books that lined the library's

shelves, were "Nebraskaesque" in every sense. All is different now, and this shows that both Mr. and Mrs. Bryan have become wonderfully broadened as a result of their trip, a statement so often heard within the past few months.

Few homes in the larger cities of the more effete East can boast of so many beautiful examples of art. Gems from all over the world have found their way to Fairview, and many of these were presented to the Commoner by his foreign admirers, among whom are crowned heads, potentates and men of affairs in all corners of the globe. His bric-a-brac is priceless; his pictures are by artists whose names adorn canvases in the most exclusive galleries in the Old and New Worlds, while the books represent a fortune in themselves. In consequence Fairview has been so completely transformed that it is a source of never-ceasing wonder to those living thereabouts. In fact, the Bryan neighbors manifest such a proprietary interest and pride in all that concerns "W. J. and his'n" that they leave no room for doubt in the minds of those who discuss the Commoner with them that "peerless leader" is a title his by right alone. Hero worship one would be prone to call this adulation that is so lavishly bestowed on the Bryans by the simple folk living about them. Maybe it is, but spend a week or a month there and you will hear so many little incidents in which the Bryans have figured that you will come to know the silver-tongued orator in a new light, and then you will wonder why he should be willing to burden himself with affairs of state when he

can round out his life in ease and comfort in this most modern Arcadia.

The Bryans worship in the little Methodist Church on the edge of one of Fairview's cornfields. There Mr. Bryan frequently addresses the congregation, and in this church Mrs. Bryan, her daughters, Mrs. Leavitt and Miss Grace Bryan, take a leading part in those organizations made up of women. When the sewing circle meets Mrs. Bryan is always in attendance, and whether it is a pair of Mr. Bryan's stockings or one of young Will's overalls that she is repairing, all Normal manifests the most intense interest, adding: "What we most admire in Mrs. Bryan is that she is one of us and never gives herself airs, even though 'W. J.' is making money hand over fist."

Mrs. Bryan has educated her daughters to lives of usefulness, and each has put into practise that which their mother has taught them. Young Bryan is a splendid, manly fellow, who is one of the most popular men at the University of Nebraska. He and his father are close chums, although Will cannot quite understand why his father seeks to reside in the White House when he has such a home as Fairview. To Will, Fairview is Paradise, and while he acknowledges that his father is a born farmer, he is looking forward to the day when the reins of government at Fairview shall be turned over to him, that he may put into practise the many theories on farming he has so assiduously studied while at college.

Poverty, or rather want, is an almost unknown affliction around Normal, but nevertheless many homes thereabouts have been materially

brightened on innumerable occasions by the bounty from Fairview. Strangely, the chief pleasure in possessing with the Bryans comes from their ability to share with their neighbors. If ever a latchstring hangs on the outside it is that at Fairview, for here the neighbors come and go at will. Fairview's big kitchen, to those folks, is seemingly, far more attractive than any art-filled drawing room, for here they love to congregate and discuss such subjects as the dairy or pantry mysteries.

"W. J." rather enjoys these little gatherings, too, and, while the women folk assemble in the kitchen, he always takes the men off to the big barn, where they talk over crops to their hearts' content.

Mr. Bryan's devotion to his wife is proverbial, and justly so, too, for she has ever been who has made smooth for the struggling young lawyer the many stormy and rough places in his road to success. That is why Mrs. Bryan studied law. Many knotty legal problems have been solved by these two in days when briefs were few and far between, and as a result of this aid thus received those briefs prepared by Mr. Bryan in the early days of his struggles never failed to call forth some word of praise from the jurist presiding.

Side by side they have struggled for many years, and were you to ask Mr. Bryan to-day to what he most attributes his success he will unhesitatingly reply, "To the wise counsel and tender love of the best woman God ever made."

Men to Figure in Democratic National Convention



GOVERNOR JOHN A. JOHNSON.

Governor Johnson has many friends among the delegates to the National Democratic Convention, and his name will be placed in nomination for the Presidency unless, at the last moment, he gives orders to the contrary.



JOHN E. OSBORNE.

John E. Osborne, chairman of the subcommittee on entertainment of the Democratic National Convention, is ex-Governor of Wyoming. He is by birth a New Yorker, having been born at Westport, N. Y., 1864. He has been a member of Congress and served as vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee in 1898.



THOMAS TAGGART.

As chairman of the National Democratic Committee Mr. Taggart will play an important part in the business to come before the National Democratic Convention. Mr. Taggart is a resident of Indianapolis and served his city as Mayor from 1886 to 1901. He has been a member of the National Committee since 1909 and was made chairman in 1904.



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN.

Mr. Bryan will once more come before the Democrats as a candidate for Presidential honors, and already he claims that he has more than enough votes pledged to him to insure his nomination.



UREY WOODSON.

Mr. Woodson is secretary of the National Democratic Committee and has held many important offices in Kentucky, his home State. He is a journalist by profession and the publisher of two flourishing daily newspapers.



JOHN MITCHELL AND SAMUEL GOMPERS.

The name of John Mitchell will go before the National Democratic Convention as a candidate for the Vice Presidency. Mr. Mitchell for many years headed the United Mine Workers of America and is regarded as the Moses of the miner.



RICHARD FRANKLIN PETTIGREW.

A Vermontier by birth, Mr. Pettigrew removed to South Dakota, there to carve out his future, and from 1891 until 1901 served in the United States Senate. He has held many exalted positions of trust, and now seeks the chairmanship of the National Democratic Committee, to succeed Thomas Taggart.



W. G. CONRAD.

The latest aspirant for Vice-Presidential honors at the hands of the Democracy is W. G. Conrad, to whom both Virginia and Montana lay claim. Born in the Old Dominion, Mr. Conrad, when quite a young man, migrated to Montana, where he made a fortune as a miner, cattle raiser and merchant.