

MR. WILSON'S WAR

John Dos Passos



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Mainstream of America Series ★

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MR. WILSON'S WAR

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by John Dos Passos

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PART ONE

The Search for Peace

Behold a republic, increasing in population, in wealth, in strength, and in influence, solving the problems of civilization and hastening the coming of a universal brotherhood—a republic which makes thrones and dissolves aristocracies by its silent example and gives light to those who sit in darkness. Behold a republic gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor in disputes.

—William Jennings Bryan
at Canton, Ohio, October 16, 1900

Chapter 1

T.R. AND THE YOUTH OF THE CENTURY

ONE hot dusty afternoon in the first week of September 1901 President William McKinley, accompanied by Mrs. McKinley and his two nieces, arrived for his official visit to the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. Amid the screeching of whistles and the jangling of chimes and the booming of a twentyone gun salute, the President and Mrs. McKinley were driven slowly around the grounds in a carriage drawn by four well-matched bays.

The next day had been designated President's Day. Mr. McKinley delivered an address from a platform decorated with the massed flags of all the American republics to a crowd which the newspapers described as "packed to suffocation" on the esplanade.

Mr. McKinley was a fine figure of a man, with a high broad brow and a roman nose flanked by searching gray eyes. Under the black neckcloth an ample piqué vest gleamed white between the folds of the long Prince Albert coat. As he stood looking down into the enthusiastic faces, with the cheers and handclapping resounding in his ears, he couldn't help a feeling of confidence in his country's destiny and his own which amounted perhaps to complacency.

With the help of his friend Mark Hanna and "the full dinner pail" he had won re-election over William Jennings Bryan, nominee of Populists and Free Silver Democrats, by a plurality of over a million votes.

A new century was opening. The Spanish-American War was won. Expanding westward to include Hawaii and the Philippines, and southward to dominate Cuba and Puerto Rico, the United States had taken her place among the great powers in the world. After four years and a half of his administration, the nation rejoiced in unexampled prosperity.

"... This portion of the earth" said Mr. McKinley, and struck a responsive chord in the listening crowd, "has no cause for humiliation for the part it has played in the march of civilization. It has not accomplished everything, far from it. It has simply done its best, and without vanity or boastfulness, and recognizing the valid achievements of others, it invites the friendly rivalry of all the powers in the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce and will cooperate with all in advancing the highest and best interests of humanity ..."

He spoke of the effect of railroads and swift steamships and of the Atlantic cables in knitting the world together: "Isolation is no longer possible or desirable. The same important news is read, though in different languages, in all Christendom."

He called for an increase in the merchant marine to spread the fruits of American prosperity—which he found so great as to be "almost appalling"—

to less favored lands, and for increased intercourse with the Latin-American peoples to whom this exposition was dedicated. He demanded the immediate construction of an isthmian canal to join the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the laying of a cable out into the far Pacific. He spoke with enthusiasm of the development of arbitration treaties between nation and nation which hopeful men were looking for to eliminate forever the causes of war: "God and man have linked the nations together. No nation can longer be indifferent to any other. And as we are brought more and more in touch with each other, the less occasion there is for misunderstandings, and the stronger the disposition, when we have differences, to adjust them in the court of arbitration, which is the noblest forum for international disputes."

After the speech the cheering crowd broke through the ropes and mobbed the stand. Smiling and dignified Mr. McKinley stepped forward and shook more than a hundred hands.

McKinley was a popular President. His enthusiastic reception wherever he met plain Americans man to man gave the lie to Bryan's oratorical denunciations of the Republican Party as the party of the trusts and of the oppressors of the working man and the farmer; and to the Labor Day rabblers who had been reviving the issues of the campaign.

Labor Day parades, animated perhaps by the news of the strike in Pittsburgh of seventy thousand steel workers who didn't seem to appreciate the fullness of their dinner pails, had drawn recordbreaking crowds.

In Kansas City, preaching to the text: "Muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn" William Jennings Bryan had castigated the interests that "would crucify mankind on a cross of gold" and deny a living wage to the working man.

McKinley's own Vice President, young Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, speaking at the opening of the Minnesota State Fair, with the glamor of his citations for bravery on San Juan Hill still about him, had, amid the whoops and yelps of his Rough Riders, called for "supervision and control" of the great corporations in the public interest.

Friday, September 6 was the last day of the President's visit. In the morning Mr. McKinley, accompanied by the ambassadors of the friendly nations south of the Rio Grande, journeyed to Niagara Falls in a private car. Everyone was captivated by the view of the falls from the International Bridge. After an excellent lunch the party returned to the exposition grounds for a presidential reception, in the old tradition of handshaking democracy, scheduled for four in the afternoon in the Temple of Music.

Still wearing his long Prince Albert coat, with what the reporters described as "a smile of dignity and benevolence" on his face, Mr. McKinley stood under a bower of greenery and palms at the end of a corridor hung with purple bunting so arranged as to reduce the incoming throng to a single file. Detectives, secretservice men, reporters and members of the diplomatic corps stood in a group behind him. The President was seen to rub his hands in pleased anticipation. Instead of an ordeal it was a pleasure for him to meet

the common man.

When the doors were opened and the people poured in, the enormous organ installed in the building was still blaring forth a Bach sonata which was part of the afternoon concert.

The secretservice agents carefully scrutinized the men who filed in with outstretched hands. The reporter for the Baltimore Sun thought that one foreignlooking man whom he described as having a bushy black mustache, bloodless lips and a glassy eye, attracted their suspicion. They were so busy watching him that they hardly noticed a tall, boyishlooking smoothfaced fellow who wore his arm in a sling. The organ music had reached a crescendo when Czolgosz, offering his left hand to the President, shoved a pistol at him out of the bandage that swathed his right and shot him in the belly.

Mr. McKinley was assisted to a bench behind the purple bunting. The guards threw themselves on Czolgosz, who was with difficulty saved from lynching. He was quoted as saying that he was an anarchist and had done his duty. He came of a poor but respectable Polish family in Detroit. His head was said to have been turned by the theories of a young Russian Jewess named Emma Goldman who was inciting working people in Chicago to bring about the triumph of right and justice through anarchy.

The President was taken to a hospital and then to the home of friends where he was reported to be resting easily.

The Chicago police arrested Emma Goldman but the judge turned her loose for lack of evidence. Editorials demanded the deportation of foreign anarchists.

Senator Mark Hanna, who had first heard the news with stunned unbelief at the Union Club in Cleveland, hurried to the President's bedside, as did members of the Cabinet and Vice President Roosevelt. The early bulletins of the medical men were so reassuring that Colonel Roosevelt decided to take a few days off with his wife and children in the Adirondacks before returning to politics and to Oyster Bay.

He joined Mrs. Roosevelt and the children at the Tahawus Club up above Keene Valley in the headwaters of the Ausable River. When a messenger arrived announcing that President McKinley's condition had taken a sudden turn for the worse the Vice President was climbing in the mountains. A guide, set off in search of him, found him towards dusk on the trail down from Mt. Tahawus. He rode all night in a wagon and reached the railroad station at North Creek where his secretary was waiting with a special train to rush him to Buffalo.

When he reached Buffalo towards midday he found that Mr. McKinley was dead and was immediately sworn in as President of the United States.

T.R.

Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest man ever to be President. When he moved into the Executive Mansion, which he preferred to call the White

House, he brought with him the romping uninhibited family life of Sagamore Hill, where politics and amateur boxing and a passion for wild creatures and wild country mingled with jingo enthusiasms and a real taste for history and for certain kinds of literature. Since Jefferson, whom T.R. acutely disliked, no American president had exhibited such varied interests, or shown himself so completely to the manor born.

He was the descendant of six generations of eminent New Yorkers. From his mother, a southern gentlewoman from one of the great plantation homes in Georgia, he absorbed the conviction so general among the daughters of the defeated Confederacy, that if the human race had an aristocracy they belonged to it. This established preconception made for social selfconfidence, and enabled him to deal with King Edward or the Kaiser or Manhattan wardheelers or the cowhands on his ranch or his sparring partners from the Tenderloin, on a basis of courteous give and take between equals. The foundation of his personal magnetism was an ardent fellow feeling for all sorts and varieties of men. A man who could be friends with Sir Cecil Spring Rice and John L. Sullivan at the same time could really boast that nothing human was strange to him.

In his autobiography he described himself as having been “a rather sickly rather timid little boy very fond of desultory reading and natural history, and not excelling in any form of sport.” As a child he suffered terribly from asthma. Very early he was fascinated by the animal kingdom. He used to say that it was the feeling of romance and adventure he got from the sight of a dead seal laid out on a slab of wood outside of a Broadway market that started him on his career as amateur taxidermist and zoologist.

His parents worried about his nervousness and timidity, but when he found other kids beating him up he took to developing his muscles with dumbbells and exercises. His father arranged for lessons in boxing and wrestling.

As he grew older he developed a ferocious energy. Overcompensation with a vengeance. In spite of extreme nearsightedness he became a fair shot. He took to long walks and mountainclimbing. He acquired a good seat on a horse.

Though he loved life outdoors he had a bookish streak. He wrote fluent and expressive English. While still at Harvard College he started, probably under the influence of his mother’s brothers who had both been officers on the blockaderunner *Alabama*, a highly technical history of American seamanship in the War of 1812.

The fall after graduating from college he married a Chestnut Hill girl named Alice Lee whom he had fallen desperately in love with during a country walk. The couple settled down at his mother’s house in New York so that T.R. could study law at Columbia, but he was more interested in the assorted characters he met at the local Republican Club. He took up ward politics as he took up boxing, just to prove that he could do it.

At twentythree as a representative of the “better element” he found himself elected to the state legislature from the Twentyfirst Assembly District, known

as the Diamond Back District, one of the few safely Republican districts in New York. In spite of the embarrassment of a Harvard drawl, dundreary whiskers and pincenez anchored by a black ribbon, he made such an impression on the assemblymen that he was soon being talked of as a possible minority leader. He was beginning to make a name for himself by exposing a stockjobbing scandal in connection with the financing of one of the new elevated railways when he suffered a crushing blow.

Hurrying joyfully home from Albany one winter weekend to greet his firstborn child he found his Alice dying and his mother desperately ill with typhoid fever. "There is a curse on this house" his brother Elliott cried. Their mother died during the night and Alice the next afternoon. "... as a flower she grew and as a fair young flower she died ... when she had just become a mother, when her life seemed to be just begun, and when the years seemed so bright before her," Theodore wrote in a memorial which he circulated among the family, "the light went from my life for ever."

T.R. was no man to let grief get him down. Spring Rice once described his friend Theodore as "pure act." After finishing up his duties with the legislature as best he could, he headed for the wild west. His father had left him a moderate income. As he put it, he had the bread and butter but he must earn the jam. His first effort to make himself some money was to invest in a Dakota ranch. In his bereavement he decided to give cowpunching his personal attention.

He stopped off in Chicago to attend the Republican convention. The nomination of James G. Blaine, whom he considered somewhat less than honest, to run against Grover Cleveland, thoroughly disgusted him. When he was asked whether he was going to make ranching his business he said no but it was the best way to avoid campaigning for Blaine.

The last thing T.R. wanted was to lose himself in the western wilderness. Immediately an item appeared in *The Bad Lands Cowboy*, a recently established newspaper in the recently established tanktown of Medora: "Theodore Roosevelt the young New York reformer made us a very pleasant call Monday in full cowboy regalia."

T.R. took to the cowhands and the cowhands took to him. He was affectionately known as Four Eyes. He didn't drink or smoke. He couldn't shake off his Harvard drawl. His profoundest cussword was By Godfrey, but his energy and nerve and knack for leadership won him the amazed admiration of the whole countryside.

He was made a deputy sheriff and helped round up some horsethieves and was asked to run for Congress. He lost every cent of the sixty thousand dollars he invested in cattle but he wrote a successful book on his experiences called *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*. The frontispiece was a photograph of Theodore Roosevelt in sombrero hat, beaded buckskin shirt, chaps and boots with silver spurs: the greatest showoff of his generation.

Not many months later he was in England marrying Edith Carow at St.

George's, Hanover Square. Cecil Spring Rice, then a sprightly young fellow just out of Oxford whom T.R. had taken a shine to on the boat, was best man. Theodore and Edith had been playmates in Gramercy Park when she was a little girl and he was a small boy. Probably she had been a motherly little girl. All their lives it was to be Mrs. Roosevelt who would watch over Theodore along with the other children, seeing that he got the proper meals and didn't spend his money foolishly and changed his clothes when he came home drenched from a hike in the snow.

After one of those European honeymoons popular with wealthy Americans in the nineteenth century the couple settled at Sagamore Hill, in the house Theodore had been building on some family property at Oyster Bay and was wondering how he would pay for. Private life was repugnant to him. He missed the admiring throng. He was an industrious writer but writing wasn't enough. Right away he was back in Republican politics.

With the election of Benjamin Harrison came an appointment in Washington to the new Civil Service Commission. "I rose like a rocket," wrote T.R. President Harrison's comment on T.R.'s activities was: "He wanted to put an end to all the evil in the world between sunrise and sunset."

When, twelve years later, he took over the presidency T.R. carried with him to Washington all the enthusiasms of the grubby little blueeyed sandyhaired boy who had filled the house with the smell of formaldehyde and with the pelts of dead animals; and all his adolescent joys in hunting and warfare and naval tactics and history and literature; to which, with burgeoning virility, had been added the naturalborn leader's passion to make other people do what he wanted them to do, and a type of bull-headed moralizing which was entirely his own. His friends complained that Theodore never would grow up.

No man ever enjoyed being President more.

The New Nationalism

When T.R. took the oath of office at the age of fortytwo on September 14, 1901, at his friend Wilcox's house in Buffalo, he was thought of as a jingo with a knack for personal publicity, a political embodiment of Kipling's theory of Anglo-Saxon supremacy. It was characteristic of his complex personality that the first scandal he caused was by inviting Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House. It was typical too, of the less attractive side of him, that he tried to explain the story away by giving out that the Negro president of Tuskegee had merely been invited to lunch on the spur of the moment.

However the incident was twisted around in the war of words that followed, the fact remained that social or racial snobbery had no place in T.R.'s gentleman's code. He didn't need to put himself out to make Jews feel at home. It never occurred to him that he couldn't ask a man he admired to dinner because he happened to have a dark skin. In his correspondence with

his dear friend and passionate admirer, Owen Wister, whose head was a roost for all the snobberies acquired in undergraduate days at Harvard, T.R. showed more understanding of what men of diverse races and traditions had to face before finding acceptance by the then dominant Anglo-Saxon elite than any other public man of the day. For T.R. 'a man was a man for a' of that.'

Conservation of national resources and of the beauties of nature were among his many passions. He instigated enforcement of the antitrust laws. He cudgelled the mine operators into arbitrating their differences with John Mitchell's United Mine Workers. For the miners it was the first step out of serfdom to the coal companies.

Coming into conflict with financial barons whom he dubbed "malefactors of great wealth" he found himself adopting, as time went on, planks from the platform of "Messrs. Bryan, Altgeld, Debs, Coxey and the rest," whom he'd lumped together when he was fighting free silver during McKinley's first presidential campaign, as "strikingly like the leaders of the Terror in France in mental and moral attitude."

By the time T.R. was ready to go on the stump for a second term he had managed to appropriate a large part of these gentlemen's following. This was a generation that read Henry George and Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and listened to young Debs, the impassioned spokesman for the railroad workers. The more distant reaches of the cornbelt abounded in enthusiasts eager to make the nation over in accordance with their aspirations for a perfect democracy. Populists, freesilver men, greenbackers, pacifists, nonresisters, utopian socialists vied with each other for the speakers' platforms in the raw middlewestern towns.

The century was new. When the frontier reached the Pacific some of its backwash rolled back to invigorate the entire nation. Americans were ready to discover the globe. Beyond the oceans lay lands benighted, open to adventure. The heathen must be taught the ways of Christian self-government. If only the grip of corrupt politicians and greedy businessmen could be loosened at home the great example of American democracy was ready to set all mankind on the path of progress.

In spite of the New York Republicanism of his background T.R. managed, with his cowboy gear and his whooping escorts of Rough Riders, to appear as a Lochinvar off the western plains. He channelled the hopes and plans of the westerners for reform into his thoroughly personal program for justice and fair play. He spoke out with so much zest that soberer and older men found themselves following in his trail.

The Peerless Leader

The Democrats made Roosevelt's task easy. For eight years the ardent and active wing of the party had been swayed by William Jennings Bryan's silver tongue. At their convention in St. Louis in 1904 the gold-standard men took over and nominated as their candidate, amid the indignant groans of the

westerners, an estimable but politically colorless New York judge named Alton B. Parker instead of the peerless leader.

It was Bryan's ironical fate, in spite of his gift of eloquence, twice to clear the path that was to lead another man into the presidency. Bryan's oratory helped arouse the enthusiasms that Theodore Roosevelt took advantage of in 1904, and in 1912 it was Bryan's prestige as leader of the forces of righteousness in the Democratic party that assured Woodrow Wilson's nomination.

Bryan was nurtured on righteousness from the cradle. His father, a Democratic politician in southern Illinois, who served a number of terms in the state legislature and prospered in later years as a judge of the circuit court, was a "praying Baptist."

His mother, though the most dutiful of wives, clung to the Methodist faith she'd been brought up in. Bryan in later life explained in his memoirs how much he had been the gainer: as a boy he had doubled his "Sunday school opportunities" by attending both churches.

His parents were stern in their upbringing. Their boys shirked no chores. The young Bryans got their education between McGuffey's Reader and the Holy Bible continually elucidated at prayer meeting and Sunday school. William Jennings studied law in Jacksonville, Illinois, married and moved his family out to Nebraska in search of opportunity.

Opportunity was not far to seek. He was an agreeably handsome young man with an extraordinarily resonant voice. One day when the speaker didn't turn up for a Democratic rally Bryan volunteered to pinch hit. His speech was so successful that when he reached home he woke up his wife and told her, "I found I had power over the audience. I found I could move them as I chose ... God grant I may use it wisely." He knelt down by the bed and prayed.

He was soon recognized as the best speaker in the state and a few years later, although a teetotaler, he was backed by the Lincoln liquor interests who trusted him to oppose prohibition when he ran for Congress. The Republicans teased him with the nickname of "Boy Orator of the Platte." Proudly bearing that title he arrived in Washington to represent his district in the Fiftysecond Congress.

He immediately let himself be heard from with a successful speech against the protective tariff. Adopting the "free and unlimited coinage of silver" as his personal plank, he was renominated in Nebraska and returned to Congress with the frenetic support of the populists. Operators of silver mines were glad to furnish his campaign funds.

Another successful oration in the House almost took the Democratic leadership away from Grover Cleveland, representing gold and the economic creeds of the Wall Street bankers, who as President was the party's titular head. Bryan earned obloquy in financial circles and near deification from the western insurgents by following it up with a demand for a tax on the incomes of the rich. He was only thirtysix when in 1896 he joined the Nebraska

delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

A few days before, as correspondent for the Omaha *World-Herald* in St. Louis, where the Republicans were convening, he had seen the freesilver men go storming out of the hall amid cries of "Take the Chicago train." He had already tried out in the halls of Congress his peroration that was soon to be so famous: "I shall not help crucify mankind upon a cross of gold ... I shall not aid in pressing down upon the bleeding brow of labor this crown of thorns."

He had been experimenting for months with other booming passages of the great speech he was planning, at meetings in his home state and in private to his wife. Bryan was an orator who left nothing to chance.

His name had for some time been bruited about as presidential timber. His opportunity came when, in a conclave even more sharply torn than the Republican convention, but this time by antiplutocratic factions, he was called upon to speak. That speech was the climax of his career.

Edgar Lee Masters wrote down his recollections of the scene in the Colosseum: "Suddenly I saw a man spring up from his seat among the delegates, and with the agility and swiftness of an eager boxer hurry to the speaker's rostrum. He was slim, tall, pale, raven-haired, beaked of nose ... as this young man opened his great mouth all the twenty thousand persons present heard its thunder ... He was smiling. A sweet reasonableness shone in his handsome face ..."

Men and women present in the hall that day never tired of telling all who would listen of the magical effectiveness of the Cross of Gold speech. Bryan's nomination for President followed. To the tune of Sousa's "El Capitan" march, his oratory swept the country. Mark Hanna and the Wall Street "interests" had to strain every dollar to carry McKinley's election.

Finding himself even in defeat one of the country's great men and with the dignity of a presidential candidate to support, young Bryan had to find some suitable way of making a living. He had no taste for the drudgery of the law. He and his wife produced a book: *The First Battle*, which did well enough to clear up the debts of the campaign. As a permanent source of income he took up lecturing on the Chautauqua circuit.

When they moved to Nebraska the Bryans joined the Presbyterian Church. He soon became an elder. His speeches were lay sermons. A favorite was on reading the Bible. He tried to live the Christian life.

Although as a practicing Christian he deplored war, as a proselyting democrat he couldn't help being stirred by the struggle for selfgovernment in Cuba that gave the American expansionists an opportunity to flex their youthful muscles by declaring war against the decrepit empire of the Spanish Bourbons.

"Universal peace cannot come until Justice is enthroned throughout the world," Bryan declared to a shouting crowd at the Trans-Mississippi World's Fair in Omaha. "As long as the oppressor is deaf to the voice of reason, so long must the citizen accustom his shoulder to the musket and his hand to the

saber.”

The “young man eloquent” modestly enlisted as a private in the militia. Thereupon the governor of Nebraska commissioned him to raise a regiment and, after a summer spent with his troops fighting fever and mosquitoes in a Florida swamp, he emerged from the six weeks war as Colonel Bryan.

In uniform he had suffered acutely from what he called military lockjaw. His experience confirmed his inherent suspicion of the military way of doing things, and made him more than ever an opponent of the imperialism which was luring the youth of both parties away from the set-our-own-house-in-order-first creed of the reformers.

In the congressional debate over the disposition of Spain’s overseas empire, Bryan’s anti-imperialism took a turn which both his friends and his enemies found hard to explain. Ratification of the treaty by which the United States would assume sovereignty over the Philippines was bitterly contested in the Senate. In spite of remonstrances from such hearty pacifists as Andrew Carnegie and David Starr Jordan, Bryan used his influence among Democratic senators to “enthroned justice” in those distant islands by placing them under American rule. His supporters failed by a single vote to put through the justifying amendment he lobbied for desperately which would assure the Filipinos eventual independence.

The peerless leader was left impaled on the dilemma. The explanation, that the treaty, if ratified, would give the Democratic opposition to overseas expansion a better talking point in the coming campaign, never quite held water. His loss of a large part of the anti-imperialist vote had something to do with his defeat by McKinley in 1900.

After his defeat and his mistyeyed retirement from presidential politics Bryan made up for past inconsistencies by the increased ardor of his advocacy of the cause of peace. During the campaign he had been painting a picture of America as arbiter of the world’s disputes.

“Behold a republic,” he declaimed in President McKinley’s home town of Canton, “increasing in population, in wealth, in strength, and in influence ... Behold a republic gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor in disputes.”

The Laird of Skibo

Bryan was not alone in these hopes. Peace by arbitration had been one of the themes of McKinley’s last speech. The world over, thoughtful men looked forward into the new century with the hope that at last they would see an end to the curse of war.

Andrew Carnegie, whom many good Bryan supporters had been excoriating as the plutocratic villain of the industrial warfare round Pittsburgh, was dedicating his vast fortune and his very considerable ability as a publicist to the cause of peace between nations.

Carnegie had early promulgated the theory that a businessman should

spend half his life making money and the other half distributing his wealth “for the improvement of mankind.” He was as good as his word. After selling out his interests in steel and iron and coke to U. S. Steel for what was reputed to be the sum of two hundred and fifty million dollars in five percent gold bonds, the laird of Skibo Castle kept himself busy writing exhortatory letters to those in authority, accompanied by the relevant checks, in furtherance of the great cause.

Carnegie was the personal embodiment of the mythology of nineteenth-century capitalism. Coming from a family of learned Scottish artisans, he was brought up in desperate poverty, since his father who was a weaver had lost his livelihood to the factories. America was the escape. The undersized towheaded boy, already a mighty reader, reached New York with his family on the old whaling ship *Wiscasset* in 1848.

Starting as bobbinboy at thirteen in an Allegheny textile mill, he worked as messenger for the telegraph office, then as telegraphist and private secretary to a railroad man who became Assistant Secretary of War in charge of transportation during the Civil War. When Scott retired from the railroad, Carnegie took over his job. Innovations were the air he breathed. As superintendent of the Pittsburgh division of the Pennsylvania Railroad he introduced the first Pullman cars. Still a young man he went into steel and imported the Bessemer process. He promoted some of the first oilwells and became dizzyingly wealthy.

His first benefaction was a public bath for the stony ancient capital of Scotland, Dunfermline, where he was born and had his schooling. He gave away libraries, bought a string of newspapers to promote republicanism among the English and engaged a large staff of wellpaid smoothies to talk peace at all seasons.

Prince of Peace

Arbitration had been in the air for a decade. The British and American governments had successfully arbitrated a dispute over the boundary between Colombia and Venezuela which had once seemed a *casus belli*. There had followed a long negotiation between the two governments for a permanent arbitration treaty. This treaty, in spite of urgent appeals from outgoing President Cleveland and incoming President McKinley, failed in ratification in the Senate in the spring of 1897. The short war with Spain, an unnecessary war if there ever was one, proved the need for renewed activity by the advocates of peace.

In 1899 they were much heartened by an appeal from Czar Nicholas of all the Russias to the principal powers to meet at The Hague to discuss the limitation of armaments, and to impose a humane code on nations that did have recourse to war. Out of this conference came a few rules of war more honored in the breach than the observance, and the Hague Tribunal. Carnegie furnished an endowment that housed the Tribunal in a handsome palace in

the Dutch capital.

Bryan, having retired from the political battlefield like the sulking Achilles, kept his name and admonitions before the public by publishing a weekly magazine from his home in Lincoln “with the purpose to aid the common people in the protection of their rights, the advancement of their interests and the realization of their aspirations.” He named it *The Commoner*. The magazine found immediate circulation.

Through *The Commoner* and constant lecturing on the Chautauqua platform he remained in touch with the aspirations of the mass of the American people. From the response of his audiences he gathered that next to fair play in the economy their most ardent desire was for international peace.

The peerless leader was now assured of an income. The Bryans built themselves a new home named Fairview on a hill overlooking the state capitol. Mrs. Bryan desired the broadening influence of travel. After a couple of short peeks into Mexico and Havana, Bryan made an article writing arrangement with Hearst that paid for a nine weeks European tour.

The Bryans, as uninformed about foreign lands as any of Mark Twain’s *Innocents Abroad*, visited the British Isles, France, Germany and Italy and even Russia. Everywhere he was received as a great American. The Pope gave him an audience, and he was allowed to compliment Czar Nicholas to his face on the establishment of the international court at The Hague.

The high point of the trip was his visit to Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana. The venerable old Russian noble-in-peasant’s-clothing held forth on non-resistance and the power of love. Though Bryan followed Christ’s teachings literally indeed, he seems to have taken the doctrine of “turn the other cheek” with a grain of salt.

“Not long ago,” wrote Tolstoy soon after, “I read ... that my recognition of the principle of nonresistance is a sad and partly comical error, which, taking into consideration my old age, and some of my deserts, one may pass with condescending silence. Just such an attitude ... I met in my conversation with the remarkably clever and progressive American, Bryan.” Tolstoy had found more cleverness than Christianity in his visitor. “Bryan certainly does talk a lot,” he added.

Bryan regarded the interview with Tolstoy as one of the great moments of his life. His enthusiasm for nonresistance grew with the telling. “I am satisfied,” he wrote in *The Commoner* of the author of *War and Peace*, “that, notwithstanding his great intellect, his colossal strength lies in his heart more than in his mind ... Love is the dominant note in Count Tolstoy’s philosophy ... It is his shield and sword. He is a deeply religious man.”

Later in a lecture on peace by arbitration, trying to put the thing in practical terms for his audience, he used Tolstoy as an example: “There he stands proclaiming to the world that he believes that love is a better protection than force; that he thinks a man will suffer less by refusing to use violence than if he used it. And what is the result? He is the only man in Russia that the czar with all his army dare not lay his hand on ... I believe