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On the difficulties of a Democrat in Washington.

"I am delighted, my dear to read of your husband's appointment--it means that someone who knows something about the art of entertaining--will counteract the impressions that unfortunately are being made on the foreigners by the crude crew of people now in power--I know you will not take this amiss from an old friend. I hear that the Cabinet all live in hotels or boarding houses and do not know breakfast from dinner".

Thus wrote a delightful older woman to me in the fall of 1913 at the time my husband's appointment was announced in the papers to his old position of Asst. Secy. of the Treasury--held from 1893 to 1897 under Pres. Cleveland.

Many people echoed these sentiments in various guises--some veiled and some "crudely" outspoken. I wondered just what they meant. The Democrats had been out of power for sixteen years--what had happened to them to deserve these remarks? Had they deteriorated since the last Cleveland administration for I remembered well the many charming people and entertainments of that era. I also remembered how my feelings had been outraged and deeply hurt when I was about twelve and had gone home to luncheon with a school-mate in Washington. Besides her father & mother there had been two guests from New-York. One of them said to the hostess--"Elizabeth do you ever see anyone of the White House lot nowadays"? "O' never" said the hostess--"one never does see the Democrats anywhere--they are best left in oblivion". I was overwhelmed--I left as soon after luncheon as possible and ran home to tell my mother. She said "I am sorry you heard this but unfortunately since the Civil War this has been the Republican attitude--yet many Republicans helped elect Mr Cleveland both times--we are a minority party now. But I cannot understand myself how anyone would not be glad to meet so charming a woman as Mrs Cleveland. It is strange--added my mother with a smile--but I happen to know that your hostess of today asked for an invitation for her husband, daughter and herself to the Diplomatic reception two weeks ago--so she must have been willing to meet the Clevelands". I pondered long on this sidelight.



I have always found the Republicans very "frank". They say it is for our good. "' So now I pondered again. Did Democrats appear different from Republicans? Had they some horrible mark nowadays? Did they eat, dress or entertain in eccentric ways--what did it all mean anyway--and why were these insinuations made openly and veiled hints given of supper parties with bibs and milk at 6 P.M. and food balanced nicely on knives. However I was getting ready to move and too busy to bother with the nonsense--in those pre-war days the word propaganda in all its varied meanings--had not arrived. I remembered the old Washington of simple life and that the cave-dwellers had welcomed the Democrats as warmly or perhaps more warmly than the Republicans on account of the many southerners living there.

But vast changes had crept in--palaces had sprung up built by money amassed generally by tariff beneficiaries--fortunes made in the over-protected industries. Slowly but surely social centers had developed around these large houses and it followed that the owners were strong believers in the divine rights of the G.O.P. "Where your money is--there lies your heart also". I gradually put two and two together during my first weeks there. The Republicans remaining in Congress were most polite--very hospitable but there was always an air of-- "We must make the best of these interlopers on our preserves for four long years and after that we will make sure they never find us a divided party again at election time".

In talking to an old friend of my mother's one day--the wife of a former member of a Republican Cabinet--I said we all thought that the new Secy. of Blanks wife was unusually attractive. She agreed politely that she had heard so but probably would never meet her "for" said she--"I never can approve of Democrats and their radical ideas--of course my dear--I have always known you and so that is different and your husband reminds me of our solid Republicans--it is too bad he is not one of us for he is simply wasted and will be unappreciated by your leaders". With a sigh she added--"If this new tariff goes through, it will compel me to curtail many of my charities--it seems so appalling that the poor and



deserving should have to suffer from the experimenting manias of in-experienced visionaries".

In the society of our Democratic colleagues--all was peace and good cheer. Most of them had rented nice houses--Secretary of State Bryan had a very large one up on Calumet Place--only one of the Cabinet lived in an apartment--none in hotels or boarding houses--they entertained in the usual way--their dinners were well served and the conversations interesting side-lights on many past events. Many peculiarities, irregularities and inconsistencies were revealed but without malice and with great tolerance and never in the presence of a member of the opposite party. I well remember one of the dinners at the house of a Cabinet member--a dinner of ten people--a delightful number for real conversation. Our host was a particularly interesting and well informed man and he was unusually so that evening as he mixed the salad in a large bowl--describing how and why he sprinkled in the various ingredients. I can see now the eager face of his left hand neighbour--a well known woman who had travelled extensively and tried to live in four houses during each year and sandwich in a trip to Europe to replenish her wardrobe. To one of our host's remarks, she nodded her head wisely --"Yes" --"I agree with you Mr Secretary--though I am a Republican but it was time for the real good of our country that a change of party should come--of course "--she added--"I am sure our party will return in four years but your experiments will have proved many points for us and so far you do not seem to have suggested any of the mad reforms that our campaign orators predicted". "To tell the truth I was afraid I might not be able to carry out my usual plans or even to go to Europe which means so much for my poor nerves--but so far so good --I am contented". The break up of the little party was most harmonious and as we drove home my husband sleepily remarked--"I like a small--well chosen dinner like that--everybody enjoys them".

Two days later my faith in humanity was rudely shaken. I went to a luncheon and again there were ten people--all women. The gathering was in honour of a well known New Yorker who had arrived the night before and during the second



course I heard her say to our friend of the small dinner party--"Tell me 4.  
Sophie--what are all these new people like down here--one hears such extraordi-  
nary tales--of course we all know about Bryan and his grape juice dinners but  
the rest--are any of them any way half decent"? I was glad she had asked this  
question of Secretary Blank's appreciative and apparently fair-minded guest and  
so I sat back to listen to her defence of these much scorned new people. A  
feeling of nausea came over me as I heard her reply. "O' the Cabinet does not  
count nowadays--I suppose they go out with one another and with the Congressional  
crowd--one sees their names in the papers of course but it means nothing for no-  
body knows them--its so different from the old days dear,--do you remember when  
Teddy was President how much entertaining was done--why I remember when all the  
Handeaters and Feetlickers came down in private cars just to go to one of the  
Cabinet parties. But thats all gone for the present--you would never know the  
place now--too bad". Just then "Sophie" caught my eye--she had the grace to  
redden slightly but without a tremor of apology she said to me before the whole  
table--"Now Mrs Democrat--I can see what you are thinking--but do not look so  
shocked--"yes" she said almost defiantly--"I may as well confess that I was caught  
in a position where I could not refuse to dine out with Secy. & Mrs Blank two  
nights ago--I once met them out west and they were very kind in getting me a  
special permit to see a govt. park--so of course I could not very well refuse  
their invitation to dinner--he seems like a nice, well meaning man but how he did  
mess and wallow with that nasty salad--that kind of thing is never done except  
perhaps at supper parties in prairie towns"--then turning to her N.Y. friend again  
she said--"This Cabinet are all very poor--most of them are in small houses on  
obscure streets and the Vice-Pres. has a suite at a hotel and they gave him spec-  
ial rates if he would promise to dine in the restaurant whenever he was not din-  
ing out--so you see my dear--it is something like a second class zoonow--I am off  
for Europe just as soon as my lawyer persuades the assessors not to add to my tax  
rates this year--money must come from somewhere to run the Govt. & so we people  
who help so much by spending freely for clothes and parties are being mulcted by  
this new crowd with strange ideas so that they can boast a lower tariff. I told



that little Congressman from my district that I have to invite once a year with his hopeless wife to afternoon tea, that his party were just killing the goose that laid the golden eggs". I wondered to myself just who the goose was. Then in a rash moment I said--"Perhaps the Pres. appoints his Cabinet for their brains instead of their purses"--I laughed innocently at my poor sally--there was an instant silence--a deep and deadly calm--three lognons were raised at me--the N.Y. guest leaned past her neighbour to get a closer look at a guest who had not previously attracted her notice--I felt her summing me up--"Yes--a funny combination her hat evidently one of Suzannes--her dress certainly a new Lanvin model--God only knows what shoes she is wearing--she must have been brought up all right --perhaps for peace at home--having married a Democrat--she feels obliged to adopt his party--something back of this somewhere--I must ask some one."

The luncheon broke up in an extra burst of volubility--but--I walked out alone. I laughed to myself to think how seriously they took themselves and what poor sports they were. Our party were so used to being beaten that we took it more easily. I was a black sheep now. It was very funny but I had to enjoy my joke alone. The dinner guest who criticized her host--made fun of his food, was acceptable --she was patted on the back--I was a pariah. Someone touched me on the arm and a meaning-to-be-kind voice said--"Do let me show you the famous modern Madonna in the music room--I cannot remember the name of the artist but everyone knows about the picture and as someone might ask you if you had seen it--it will be nice for you to be able to say you have". As we walked off together I had the feeling from her tone of voice--that it was strongly intimated to me that I would probably never have another chance. We stood silently before a large canvas--I was about to ask if it was not hung upside down--when this thoughtful guest said--"Let us sit down here a moment--I want to tell you something --as you are a stranger here and you will find stump speeches are not quite in order at parties--it does not pay to be bitter--you must not mind amusing criticism--it is always done here as it is everywhere else--nobody pays any attention to it." "But" I protested feebly--"I was not the bitter one--she was giving a totally wrong im-



pression of the Cabinet and at the dinner party--she seemed to be having the time of her life she flattered him up to the nines"--I then repeated what she had said to the Secy. But my would-be-mentor merely smiled and said again-- "It does not pay to be bitter--you will never be popular--so come along back and be a good sport in future and all will be forgiven".

I left the house in a bewildered frame of mind. I told the chauffeur to take me a turn in the open air--somewhere--anywhere--so that I could try to think things out. The real offender is praised for her wit--she abuses her host's hospitality --lives on the legalized robbery of the tariff and apparently her only worry in life is that some of her possessions may be taken from her. I was relegated to the limbo--made to feel an outsider. Well it was all queer. I was still in a bewildered condition when we went out to dinner that night. As we entered the room--I felt rather than saw the N.Y. guest of the luncheon party --she peered at us both as we turned from our hosts and bowed with a tolerant smile at me--she perhaps thought my husband was a Republican gone wrong --not quite wild enough looking --in fact an unknown species to her.

My dinner partner informed me at once that he had just been hearing such a deliciously amusing story about me--"Why" said he--" I had no idea you were a regular fire-eater--we must all beware"--he announced this to the table and then looked benevolently at me as if I was a naughty child of ten and must be humoured. On my other side I was flanked by a "disappointee"--that is he had hoped to be an appointee but so far had failed--therefore his campaign enthusiasms had fizzed out and he was decidedly disgruntled. He confided in me that Democrats were never appreciative--no matter how much you did for them--"I was an original Wilson man" he wailed--"in fact but for me I think he could hardly have secured the nomination and now look at me--left high & dry". "But" said I "the administration has hardly gotten off to a start--have patience--do not supply the opposition with ammunition after the splendid work you have done--things will work out for you later, no doubt". He then darkly hinted that my husband was darned lucky--must have been more successful at wire pulling than he



had been and could now afford to smile from inside the fence. He gave a further dig by adding that he heard I had been a Republican but was a temporary convert--but it must be a hard role to play--he thought pretty well of the old Republicans anyway. "I would have had a soft job if they had come in--they never could have left me out this way". Just then the voice of the N.Y. guest rose above the babel. "Yes" she was saying--"I hardly knew the dear, old place--I used to visit the Headhunters weeks on end when he was in the Cabinet--Mr Headhunter made a wonderful record here--I was in the florists today and the head man said he never could forget the Headhunters parties--that just for one evening, he paid \$3,000 for flowers--and I remember the Cotillon favours that night--we each had a silver elephant hung on a silver chain--the men had elephant scarf pins--Johnny Bughouse was so clever--he got four and sold them at once to pay his Club dues--he got more than their weight too because they were given at the Headhunters party--there is nobody nowadays like that." She sighed profoundly.

A moment later I heard her announcing to her audience that the Tongueways had told her that the two large caterer's firms were to close down as times were so hard with Democrats--they always brought bad times--they were all poor and anyway they had no idea of entertaining. My right hand partner also heard this remark and turning to me, he said solemnly--"you see what real disaster your party brings on innocent people". I said "I suppose there is no use in denying this silly story--nobody would listen or believe but the Tongueways know perfectly well that report is not true--Mrs Spooks heard it and she took the trouble to interview the heads of these two firms--they told her they had rarely been so prosperous--that Democrats paid their bills though they did not give elaborate entertainments--that some of the richest Republicans still owed large sums for their brilliant sprees." He gave a sigh of resignation and never spoke to me again--he escorted me to the drawing room in silence, bowed and made his way to his N.Y. friend. He evidently reported me to her again as she gave me another tolerant glance through her lognon.

The three years before we too went into the War were years of seething exci-



tement in Washington. The central European representatives became necessarily more and more segregated and the State Dept. officials who felt obliged to invite them to their houses as we were still neutral --had difficulties in gathering in other guests to meet them. "These charming little dinners--so intimate and friendly" said the German Ambassador rubbing his hands and smiling knowingly as he realized acutely the situation. The Ambassador having returned to his post at the outbreak of the war--informed the Kaiser that he would proceed at once to Newport to feel the sentiment of America. This seemed an unbelievably stupid plan of a man we usually called clever. It was however generally felt that he was trying his best to persuade Germany not to provoke us too far--that he knew the U.S. far too well ---but all to no purpose. He walked drearily about the City with his eyes cast down --so that he would not be cut by former friends. These were the days of the "Rhine-maidens"--a name given the pro-von Bernstorff friends and others who favoured Germany. The Russian Ambassador--Bakhmeteff--was credited with this bon-mot. Some of them were--Mrs Rollins Morse--Mrs Richard Townsend--Mrs Woodbury Blair--Mme. Hauge, widow of a former Norwegian Minister and several others. The Pattens called the street between their house and Mrs Townsend's house--"No Man's land" and their former intimacy ended. Frau von Blair and Frau Morse were also branded while Mme. Hauge, who was supposed to be engaged to a German--<sup>erly</sup>formally at the Embassy but then in the army--was lost to sight. Mrs Morse was generally credited with having toasted the Kaiser at a luncheon to bid farewell to one of the German secretaries but a friend who was there, told me this was untrue--that the toast was only to his safe voyage. The propaganda was unbelievable on both sides. Two days before the Germans left--and after they had been given their pass-ports--we were invited to dine with a friend and his wife but owing to a previous engagement--we declined. It was a fortunate engagement for us as it turned out that the guests were the von Bernstorffs to say good-bye and Tarnowski--the new Austrian Ambassador--who has not been received by the President--"to be welcomed" as our would-be-host explained to us later. We lived near the German Embassy at that time and I must admit--



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it was a pleasure to see the packing and dismantling going on there. All kinds of wild tales floated about as to the supplies that had been taken aboard the Danish ship on which the German party sailed. One was that they had been loaded both in N.Y. & in Halifax with hundreds of dozens of oranges made of pure rubber and the furniture packed at the Embassy was positively stated to have been stuffed with milk powder for starving children. As our troubles culminated with the declaration of War in early April 1917--everyone was anxious to help in practical ways. The Allies needed food and the point for us was to eat here the perishable food that would not bear transportation. A committee was formed to start three course meals and people said they were more than willing to sign the pledge--but in several cases their enthusiasm was dampened by their Chefs who refused to serve such scanty meals and did not seem to care that white flour sugar and many other popular ingredients were being saved to help France. Others were willing eventually to adopt the three course meals but not until after the Allied Missions had been here--the argument was that "the poor things have been starved and they must have plenty of food". One friend who had postponed signing for this reason--had given a dinner for the British mission--she telephoned me early the next morning and said she could hardly wait to sign the pledge--"For" said she "I nearly died of mortification last night--I told Mr Balfour I had not signed because we wanted to give the Missions usual meals and he looked at me so gravely and said--"I hope you will not lose any time in signing that pledge for we need your help in the most serious crisis our country has ever had to face". "I would have given all I possessed" she rattled on "if I could have gone to the kitchen and stopped the rest of the dinner". "I felt as if I would choke as the cook had laid herself out and the table was covered with candies and sugar cakes".