

WSM APRIL 15, 1945

Good Morning, Friends:

All <sup>other</sup> news of the past week pales before the tragic loss of President Roosevelt, ~~who died last evening at the White House~~. So much has already been said over the radio, and so much written in the newspapers that it will be hard for me to add anything new.

~~Except for those few who were so intense in their hate for this great~~  
~~they are so insensible to the magnitude of this tragedy~~  
~~man, all Americans feel a sense of personal loss.~~ It was the saddest day I have ever seen in the Nation's Capital. <sup>For instance,</sup> There was the <sup>char</sup>woman who was scrubbing the floors in the building where I have my office -- while she scrubbed, she cried. I saw Members of Congress, strong men, shedding tears unashamed. Just up the street from the Capitol, an inoffensive, humble little man of Greek nationality runs a news' stand. He has been there day in and day out ever since I have been in Washington. quietly going about the business of his vending stand. I walked up to the stand early on the morning after the President's death and to my utter surprise, found the humble little Greek in a perfect rage, threatening to thrash the living out of a man almost twice <sup>his size</sup> ~~as tall as he was~~ because the man had made some disparaging remark about the President now dead.

On street cars, in the cafes, in government buildings, there was a hushed silence which bespoke more eloquently than words not only the deep <sup>and</sup> tender regard in which the President was held by the common people, but it told also of the void in their hearts as well as in their country left by the silence of this eloquent voice of the people, this brilliant intellect with <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ passion for human welfare, this leader with vision and courage.



~~My own personal experiences with the President have been varied.~~

The first time I had the privilege of meeting <sup>President R.</sup> ~~him~~ personally was just after I had been nominated to Congress in 1938. He had come to Tennessee to make two speeches -- one, at the TVA Chickamauga Dam near Chattanooga, and the other in the great Smokey Mountain National Park on the line between Tennessee and North Carolina. Having just been nominated to Congress, I was invited to join the official party and was introduced to the President. In that warm, congenial manner characteristic of the man, he extended his hand and welcomed me into the officialdom of the Nation's government.

During the years since then, I have had numerous meetings with this matchless leader, Some times in disagreement over domestic policies, but for the most part in accord and unison. One time while I was fighting one of his favorite programs, he sent for me to come to the White House. Though, I did not change my position, he was so persuasive and impelling that I found disagreement <sup>quite</sup> difficult, <sup>as</sup> <sup>has</sup> many another congressman

I had the good fortune to be invited down to the White House with a little group of friends on the evening of June 6, 1944. That evening the President seemed ~~if anything~~ a little more jovial than ever. He quipped and laughed and when he talked seriously, he talked about the war in Italy-- what the Germans had done to Rome. Then he talked about the Pacific, but not one time did he mention D-Day. That night when I got home ~~there~~ and turned on the radio I learned that American soldiers had crossed the Channel and were landing on the beaches of France. The secret had been well kept and I wondered why the President had appeared so light hearted at the <sup>very</sup> time when he knew that



American soldiers were on the water of the Channel heading for the shores of the Continent. As I remembered the things that he said, I came to the conclusion that his jolliness was an effort at relaxation and <sup>that,</sup> though it seemed quite sincere, it was built upon the kind of tension and strain typical of of the Presidency during this ~~entire~~ critical period during which this great man has been our leader.

Placed in the seat of the mighty, many men become imperious, intolerent and brook no opposition. Franklin Roosevelt was a fighter and resented unreasoning, <sup>unfair</sup> and consistent opposition, but he was not intolerent nor did he fall out with a friend for conscientious disagreement with him.

He brought to America ~~a~~ a program of reform with which many people disagreed. This made Franklin Roosevelt one of the most controversial, <sup>and at the</sup> ~~characters.~~ <sup>same time</sup> ~~perhaps the~~ <sup>out of the</sup> most beloved and, at the same time, the most hated Presidents ~~most~~ certainly since Andrew Jackson and perhaps in all American history. The controversy over domestic policy will continue even after his death; but in his leadership of war and in foreign policy, Franklin Roosevelt reached his largest stature. It was through his leadership that aid was given to Great Britain, to France, to Russia and to China. It was through his leadership that a great Navy was built, that we undertook to build <sup>fifty</sup> ~~five~~ million planes a year. Once in the war, he became an active Commander-in-Chief. Though still imbued with ~~the~~ ideas of reform, those of us here in Washington knew that the war program was his first concern and that domestic affairs received less and less of his attention.

From him came the four freedoms; from him in collaboration with Prime Minister Churchill came the Atlantic Charter. Under his acknowledged



leadership came the accord reached at Yalta between Russia, Great Britain and the United States.

Under his leadership our war effort has gained such momentum that German ~~resistance~~ resistance is disintegrating before its irresistible power; and the Japanese are cringing in their homeland fully realizing their inevitable doom. The momentum of our military effort is so great that nothing can stop it now until a certain military victory is ours. But in the troublesome problems of the peace structure, it is upon a new leadership that we must rely.

To us lowly mortals, it seems such a pity that this man of such unusual vision, courage and capacity could not have been spared to lead us through to lasting peace. But who are we to question? *divine providence?* How are we to know what is best?

Who can say that the divine power which undoubtedly gave to Franklin Roosevelt inspiration and guidance does not know best? Who is there who can say that in death Franklin Roosevelt will not ~~renew~~ *insure* the unity among nations which he strove to achieve in his life time? Who is there to say that his immortal spirit will not hover about the San Francisco conference and inspire even more profoundly than his mortal being? I entertain ~~the~~ *a* profound belief in divine guidance. *The future is not without hope.*

Franklin Roosevelt is dead. Not only the United States but the world ~~stood still~~ *has* momentarily stood still ~~with~~ *upon* his passing. When the history of this day is written I believe his acclaim will be glorious in the annals of mankind. That will take care of itself. The question for American now is what do we do and where *do* we go from here.

Under the illuminating glare of Franklin Roosevelt's brilliant and



versatile leadership, secondary leadership could not thrive. It is not that <sup>there are not</sup> other

<sup>capable</sup> men in the government. ~~are not capable~~, but it is that they <sup>have been</sup> ~~are~~ dim in the glare of Roosevelt's illuminating brilliance. <sup>We do have a</sup> ~~We~~ have a new President. The country

knows him but little. Those of us who know him well know him to be a good,

honest, sound American. He comes from humble parentage. He comes from a life

and a strata that is as typical of America as Andrew Johnson was when he ~~became~~

became President after Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Raised as a ~~farmer~~ farm boy,

he <sup>worked at various</sup> ~~did~~ odd jobs, operated a little business of his own, advanced from one job

to another, perhaps each being a little better than the other, but none <sup>very important</sup> ~~too good~~

until he reached the United States Senate, where he did a truly great job.

I shall never forget <sup>that</sup> ~~about~~ in 1940 Senator Truman, now President Truman, was up for reelections to the United States Senate in Missouri, and political

observers here in Washington thought he was in trouble. I was sent out from

Washington to make a speech for him ~~in~~ at a young democrat's meeting in Kansas

City. Senator Truman met me in Kansas City. We sat down together and had a

sandwich <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ coca-cola and talked over the political situation and

what I might say which would be most helpful. ~~That was the first time I ever~~

~~met him and~~ It certainly never occurred to me that ~~now was~~ I was eating the

sandwich and drinking the coca-cola with the next President of the United States.

Having had that little part in the campaign, I watched ~~it~~ it with interest as Senator Truman went about the state among the people <sup>establishing himself</sup> in their

confidence. He was reelected and four years later he was elected Vice-President,

only to succeed to the exalted position ~~to~~ which he now holds as a result of the

death of ~~the~~ President Roosevelt.



This elevation of a man to the ~~President~~ of the people <sup>to the presidency in some respects</sup> is characteristic of democracy. <sup>The workings of our system has</sup> ~~As~~ <sup>him</sup> plucked, so to speak, out of the mass and through our democratic process we have ~~not~~ said to him, "you are our new leader." And remember this, he is now the only leader we have. Upon his leadership we must rely. The success which he has may well depend upon the degree of confidence which the people bestow ~~on~~ <sup>in</sup> him. He is, I believe, a ~~position~~ <sup>worthy</sup> repository of confidence. He may never measure up to the ~~President's~~ brilliance and vision of Franklin Roosevelt, but I believe he is a rock of honesty, that he possesses discerning intellect and a discriminating judgment as well as ideals and aspirations for his country <sup>and a confidence in America</sup> which a man of his experiences could not but have.

May God temper our great loss by giving inspiration and guidance to this new voice of the people, to this new instrument of our will.