

The Things We Might Have Seen

By James David Barber

DURHAM, N. C.—Suddenly every-ly and his uncle is raising the ques- n of Mr. Nixon's fitness—as a son—to be President. For 27 years, hard Nixon has been trying to tell the answer. That what moves and cites him is not principle or policy result, but an endless struggle for atrol. First to control himself. He and has been—at least since 1946 a man who seemed to be hounded the self-imposed "temptation" to his enemies have it, to "get" them, let all his dammed-up anger find ease in some glorious outburst.

The cost of repressing those feelings pears to have been very high: the rifice of spontaneity, a perennial riness, a facade of humorless pro- ety, a pretense of happiness. Some- es the cost has been too high; then barriers have dropped away and

has mangled a Cambodia or a Con- tution.

Then, as on Oct. 20, 1973, Nixon e suffering martyr becomes, for the ment, Nixon victorious.

Then to control others. He has from e start been tuned to the wave- gths of power. Every relationship savored or despised in terms of minance. Who's on top transcends, his attention, what they are doing. ho's winning blots out what they e trying to win. The enlivening ex- ement comes in risk—how can he rprise them, confuse them, and, if ed be, punish them and still keep eir obedience? The thrill goes out of at drama when they fall for it. So ere must be another try, and an- her, escalating the stakes right up the ultimate challenge.

But above all to control doubt. Mr. on's checkered history is best un- rstood as a fluctuation between ves to protect himself against

ubts of his goodness and doubts of s manliness—a conflict which would lit him right down the middle had e not found a way to manage it: by eing "good" for a while (proper ichard, humble and sincere) and then ad" in a burst (fighting Richard, eroic and daring). Time is his ally. hen he finds "time running out," as e wrote across the top of his yellow ad on the eve of his first Cambodian dventure, he experiences with full orce the compulsion his type is so rone to. Then he no longer chooses. e does what he "must" do.

We should have known because at ast three times in the twentieth entury other Presidents, different from r. Nixon in many respects but strik- gly similar in character, have fol- lowed his path from initial flexibility o a final, rigid, self-defeating tragedy.

Who would have thought that Wood- ow Wilson, adroitly maneuvering eat progressive reforms through the

Congress in his early Presidential years, would bring on his own dis- aster by stubbornly insisting on verbal trivialities in his League of Nations treaty?

Or that Herbert Hoover, the prag- matic "miracle worker" who negoti- ated relief for war-torn Europe in the midst of World War I, would freeze in opposition to relief for jobless Americans?

Or that Lyndon Johnson, Senate master of compromise, would wind up in the grip of a grisly compulsion to beat a distant province into sub- mission, whatever the cost?

Well, we, had we been there, should have thought those things. We should have heard behind what each was say- ing what he was trying to tell us— about his person, about the way he experienced life. We should have re- membered that the Presidency is dan- gerous, not some show-biz garden party. Now that hindsights let us see these things, in the life histories of Mr. Nixon and of the Presidency in our century, we can understand what we let him do in 1968 and 1972 and where that has left us in 1973. Thank God the Constitution gives us a way out.

Will we know next time?

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Review by Bill Moyers,
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By Whitley Austin

SALINA, Kan.—The fate of President Nixon may be quickened at the filling station pump. He may tinker with public morals but he can't clobber the automobile and get away with it. In his America, the family car rates with apple pie and mother love.

The timing of his final downfall perhaps depends upon how quickly Americans perceive the connection between Mr. Nixon and the gas shortage. In the meantime, the President bumps over new detours. He is not altogether lost, however.

Out here in the prairie, we have a sympathy for the underdog. Sons of pioneers understand the loner. We remember that a Senator from Kansas, Edmund G. Ross, cast the vote that saved Andrew Johnson in the impeach- ment trial of 1868.

Despite the daily deluge from Wash- ington, a residue of sentiment for the President has remained up to now. Seventy per cent of Kansas voters marked their ballots for him in 1972.

Today, he might be lucky to get 30 per cent. Tomorrow, if he pulled a surprise play of sufficient dramatic impact, he might regain at least a plurality of support.

Some Kansans would welcome such a game-saving touchdown. Like the President, they hate to be shown up

No one likes to be a jilted lover—even a Nixon-lover.

But tomorrow, if the gas pumps dry up, industries shut down, houses grow cold and energy prices are blown higher than little Dorothy was to Oz, Mr. Nixon's friends will be limited to the old ladies who confuse him with Herbert Hoover.

My old friend Alf Landon stands by Mr. Nixon for opening up China. But the fortune cookie crumbles if Mr. Nixon closes down Europe, turns the Israelis into ingrates and continues to put the Arabs in bed with the Russians. History may record no more tragic blunder than our handing the Soviet Union the mineral wealth of North Africa and the Middle East. Rather than containing the Commu- nists, we may give them the strategic resources to buy us. And all this for the trappings of a superpower, the megalomaniac fantasy that it is our duty to shape the world's destiny.

Personally, I fear Mr. Nixon. He is the game player who loves the quar- terback sneak. In the crunch he believes in overkill. It is possible he no longer recognizes any truth other than that he fashions in his own mind. Whatever the Kansas delegation in Washington may say in public, in their private conversations some of them express similar fears.

Mr. Nixon should resign. I doubt that he will. But the impeachment process takes painfully long. If he does leave office, a Vice President must be ready to take over. The chaos that might result were the leadership of the nation to devolve upon the Speaker of the House is unthinkable.

As a Republican of Mr. Nixon's choice, but without the Watergate, taint, Gerald Ford could continue to express the intent of the majority in the last Presidential election. He could be the surrogate for that mandate.

In foreign affairs, in domestic affairs, the United States needs a leader who can be believed, one who could bring together the Government, and demand cooperation from all branches. Perhaps Mr. Ford can do this. There may be others in Wash- ington with more ability. Certainly he is not the greatest statesman to come down the pike since Abraham Lincoln. But Mr. Ford is the choice available, a reasonable choice. In this crisis, let's make it.

Such pragmatism, however, is cold comfort: new wars threaten and our patriotic dream of a white knight in the lead has become a nightmare.

I have confidence in America. But of what stern stuff must we be made to cope with all these unnecessary tragedies!

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