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Untitled

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HE CAME DOWN THE THEATRE AISLE accompanied by the usual fanfares, cheers, applause, and standing ovation. He looked, as always, handsome, distinguished, and, if not diffident, slightly detached.

We backstage could hear only parts of his speech, but it seemed to be one of his better ones and, again as always, he made complete sense. But once more I felt like a rooter at a fight begging him silently to make more of what he said, to use the simple arts of persuasion—pause, emphasis, occasional rising volume, occasional heat—and to embrace his audience with his own conviction.

But he is not made that way. And the miracle is that he has needed none of these arts to go as far as he has and to forge a passionate link with the young and with a great number of older Americans.

Strangely enough, the magnetism that he seems to lack in public he has an abundance of in face-to-face encounter. The Senator came backstage to thank all of us, and again, his warmth, his vigor, and his manliness were pervasive. It does no good to a Presidential candidate, I know, to mention such things as wit and sensibility, but one can only hope that the new politics which the nation deserves and needs will honor them (along with a free mind and an incorruptible conscience) as fitting attributes for a White House resident.

Marya Mannes

