"HOT CORN PETE,"

HALF-TRUE TALE OF WARD POLITICS.

HOW THE PRESIDENT ONCE ARBITRATED A QUARREL AMONG "LEADERS"

BY JOHN L. FORD, AUTHOR OF "THE LITERARY SHOP."

ONE Sunday morning in early September not many years ago, a cab drew up at the door of a certain New York club, which has long prided itself upon its exclusiveness and the air of quiet decorum which prevails within its walls. From this cab stepped a gentleman of dignified, almost distinguished mien, who was saluted with much deference by one of the youngger members who paused to greet him on the steps.

"I shall go back tonight," said the newcomer. "I only came over for the day to straighten out a little matter in one of the down-town districts." Then the gentleman of distinguished mien made his way to the smoking-room, seated himself at a small round table and called for a cigar and the morning newspaper.

Now the membership of this club is made up largely of wealthy, distinguished and conservative citizens of advanced years, and three or four of the oldest and most clannish of these were grouped about the open fireplace as the newcomer entered. They eyed him suspiciously and wondered who he was. No one could recognize him, and the belief grew that some stranger had strayed in at the easily swinging doors under the impression that he was entering a cafe. The attendant was questioned, but he did not know the mysterious visitor's name. Thereupon he was directed to bring the signed check to the group at the fireside, in order that they might read the name and see if it was upon the club membership list. The servant did as he was told, and just as the visitor passed down the steps to his cab, the leader of the inquisition deciphered the autograph on the bit of colored paper and startled the others by reading it aloud. It was the name of the then President of the United States.

And while the old gentlemen were looking at one another in blank surprise and wondering how it could have been that they had failed to recognize a visitor of such distinction the cab was bearing him swiftly to a quarter of the town which is situated about one mile to the south of the aristocratic club in which he had passed unnoticed.

Not far from Grand street the cab turned down a narrow street, passing the kettle of a hot corn vendor, which was beginning to send forth its appetising odors, and plunged into the very heart of this district where history is reckoned from the reigns of the different police captains and politics is the chief industry of the inhabitants. Lying to the east of the Bowery and taking in both sides of the thoroughfare on the blocks where the cheap lodging-houses are the most plentiful, this assembly district has long been regarded as one of the most important political battle-grounds in the country and one whose vote in a close contest might easily determine the result of a Presidential election.

Half a dozen men were standing in a group at the corner of a narrow, evil-smelling street that runs parallel to the Bowery.

"There he comes now," said one of them as the cab drew up in front of a small, dingy-looking saloon, ostentatiously closed, barred and padlocked in deference to the law. The President alighted and walked quickly through the side door, which flew open the moment he touched the pavement and closed sharply upon him as he passed inside. The half-dozen men strolled away and the next morning the whole district gloried in the knowledge of something that never found its way into print and is even now known to but very few of the citizens of Manhattan.

Once inside the door the President walked swiftly through a narrow lane formed by rows of dusty liquor casks and into the dark and grimy back room in which sat the taciturn, hard-headed little Irishman who was at once the owner of the saloon, the leader of his district and the wielder of a political power so great and far-reaching as to compel the presence in his grdggery that morning of the Chief Executive of the Nation.

And while these two men—the one a self-appointed Irish-American Warwick, the other a ruler chosen by the franchises of a free and enlightened people—are facing each other across the liquor-stained table, deep in their discussion of the entanglements which have arisen over the distribution of patronage—regarded here as the legitimate loot of political battle—let us take a glance at the extraordinary system that has grown up from the ballot-box and rendered possible just such a meeting as I have described.

The assembly district in which this meeting took place is situated in the most densely populated corner of the town and contains about 9000 votes, for here population is not estimated by human souls, but by votes. Women and children, being unable to exercise the franchise, are not considered in the count. The district contains a comparatively small native and Irish element and a very large number of Russian and Polish Jews, together with a goodly sprinkling of German, Hungarian and Bohemian immigrants who have lost no time in becoming citizens of the Republic. Like other assembly districts, this one is divided into voting districts, each one of which consists of a solid block or square and contains from 200 to 500 votes. Each of these voting districts has its own captain, who reports to and works under the district leader.

In nearly every case this captain is a saloon-keeper, a circumstance which has given rise to the expression "saloon politician," and to which is due the belief prevalent in the more polite grades of society that political power is maintained by the simple process of supplying the voters with free drinks. As a matter of fact, the district captain is generally a saloon-keeper because the business of liquor selling is one which can profitably be run in connection with politics. A saloon is a convenient place of meeting at all times of the day and night, and ranks with the barber shop as a collecting and disseminating point for all news and gossip of the neighborhood. Living, as he generally does, in rooms above his barroom, and spending most of his time behind his own bar, or in his little private office in the rear, it is an easy matter for the saloon politician to keep in touch with every one that dwells within the four streets that mark the limits of his kingdom.

He must know the name and face of every voter in his territory and to a certain extent those) of their wives and children. He must keep the run of all births, marriages and deaths, and attend every christening and wedding. Above all he must do reverence to the dead, for in the moment of bereavement it is easy to get close to the hearts of the poor, the dependent or the exiled. If there is a wake in the district, the captain steps softly in among the mourners, presses the hand of the sorrowing mother or widow, gazes pityingly at the corpse and praises in low, sympathetic tones the virtues of the dead. He accepts an invitation to drink and on taking his departure leaves behind him a bottle or two of whisky and a box of cigars. At the funeral, if the deceased has been a person of any local consequence, the captain is usually to be found with mourning emblems on his person in a carriage very near the hearse.

But the saloon politician must be able to serve his fellows in many practical ways, or his power will soon disappear. If a Jew peddler is arrested for selling without a license, he must use his influence with the Judge to have him discharged, or if that is impossible and the culprit is fined, he will often find it expedient to pay the fine himself in the hope of making the poor emigrant believe that he—the rich and powerful saloon-keeper—is the only friend the poor foreigner has in the country. He must, moreover, obtain bail for any of his clients who are held for bailable offenses, and he is not infrequently called upon to provide counsel for those who are put on trial.

All these friendly offices help along his political aspirations and in due time build up for him a personal following, but I doubt if all his efforts would have much avail were it not for the extraordinary power placed in his hands by the distribution of what are called "labor tickets," and this labor ticket is the backbone of the whole system of municipal politics as practiced in the City of New York.

The labor ticket is simply a card entitling its holder to a job on some specified municipal work. Whenever men are needed for work on the big pipes, or in Central Park, or for street paving or street cleaning, or for anything else that may be undertaken by the city government, or by the corporations that desire the good will of that government, these tickets are issued according to the number of men required. When there is a distribution to be made the fact speedily becomes known in all the wards that are populated by the poorer classes, though there is very little excitement in the "brownstone" district, inhabited by bankers, merchants and lawyers. The taciturn little Irishman whom we left just now in intimate consultation with the President is certain to be on hand in order to secure for his own district as large a proportion of the tickets as possible. And he in his turn is beset on his arrival at his own saloon by all his captains, each one of whom wishes to bet the lion's share for his own followers.

The saloon of one of these district captains is the scene of unusual bustle and activity on the day of one of these distributions. Every man on the block, who is out of work—and that frequently means a large percentage of the adult male population—is to be seen leaning against the bar or bussing in and out of the ever-open door. Those who have money spend it ostentatiously, for they know that willingness to buy liquor is a personal trait that, in the eyes of a district leader, enjoys an even higher rank than the cardinal virtue of political zeal. It is usually late in the day before the captain returns, and as he passes round behind his bar to his private office, pausing only to glance at the figures on the cash register, the poor devils who are looking for a chance to make their bread and butter flourish their coins in the air in the hope of catching his eye.

It is scarcely necessary to say that in distributing the tickets the captain has a keen eye for the main chance, which in this case is his own saloon. And if it comes to a question of choice between Pat, who can be counted on to pour at least one of his two dollars a day into the publican's till, and Tim, who has contracted the bad habit of bringing the bulk of his wages home to his wife, it will be safe to assume that Pat will have the ticket if for nothing better than as an encouragement to the rest.

Now at the time of which I write no Assembly district in the town was kept so thoroughly in control as was this one of 9000 enfranchised souls by the silent, ugly-faced and resolute little Irishman, who sat in intimate conversation with his distinguished visitor on this Sunday morning in early September. (It is a curious thing, by the way, that the Jews of the lower East Side are more easily led by an Irishman than by one of their own race). And among all his 20 lieutenants there was none more loyally zealous to the party the year round nor more efficient at the polls on election day than ex-Assemblyman Jimmy Martin, the captain of the voting district that can boast of more cheap lodging-houses than any other block in the city, and the proprietor of the very prosperous Bowery saloon that marks the center of his domain. Jimmy Martin was always deemed fortunate in the number and loyalty of his followers, but there was one among them who was beyond all compare in those characteristics which are the cardinal virtues of New York politics, and that paragon was "Hot Corn Pete," whose caldron, set up this morning directly across the street from the Martin saloon, is already beginning to hiss and bubble and send forth an appetizing advertisement of the delicacies cooking beneath its tin lid.

For more years than can be counted Pete's kettle had been set up every August in front of the saloon which was his home or "hang-out," as he would have phrased it, for he slept on the roof of its extension just outside the bedroom of the ex-Assemblyman, and came down early in order to sweep the place out for his morning cocktail. But now he was sleeping at the Progress Hotel, and "hanging out" at the saloon of Florence McManus, who was known to covet the captaincy of the district and whose fealty to the organization had been seriously questioned.

In fact, for the first time in all the 20 years that he had lived and voted in the district and at the very beginning of what promised to be one of the fiercest political struggles in the history of the country, Hot Corn Pete had kicked over the traces. Jimmy Martin's tin extension roof knew him no more, and the early morning bartender swept out the saloon himself to an accompaniment of blasphemous mutterings. The whole district knew of his dejection, and many there were who declared his cause a just one. Meanwhile the McManus saloon prospered through a rush of sympathetic custom.

The Irish leader of the district, ever on the alert to scent possible disruption in the party ranks, sent for the ex-Assemblyman and told him that the trouble must be squared without delay; but Pete, whom he found cheerfully crying his wares further up the block, refused point blank to return to the fold, affirming that the party had "done him dirt" and threatening to look to some other leader for the reward that 20 years of patriotism fairly entitled him to. The captain conveyed this ultimatum to his chief, the latter looked grave and angry, and Pete's sympathetic following began to assume alarming proportions. Discussion of the matter soon overstepped the limits of the district and was heard in Fourteenth street, in the City Hall, at the Albany Capitol and finally at the seat of the National Government. Like port wine that is sent round the Cape, it lost nothing in importance through its journeyings.

That the moving of a hot corn pot from its Bowery corner half way up the block should become a subject for serious consideration at Washington may seem laughable to those who regard the man who sweeps out the saloon for his cocktail as one of the least of the many unconsidered human trifles that make up the flotsam and jetsam of the East Side population.

It is much easier to realize the importance of the matter when we consider that Hot Corn Pete was the master of two trades—not only hot corn but politics as well—and that all these things happened on the eve of an election that promised to be as closely contested as that memorable one in which 550 votes taken from one side and given to the other in this very state would have made Blaine President of the United States.

Moreover, Pete's dislike for hard work was so great that he never asked for or desired one of the labor tickets that were so eagerly coveted by the toilers of the neighborhood, and now Jimmy Martin himself was forced to admit that no henchman of his had ever done more effective work or been content with smaller rewards than this one who had suddenly bolted for no reason on earth save that his demand for a place in which he should have good pay and nothing to do had not only been ignored but treated as a huge joke. Worst of all, the ex-Assemblyman had had the audacity to offer him a ticket entitling him to the privilege of doing hard manual work on the big pipes.

It was then that the worm turned at last, and the very next day Pete was crying his succulent specialty a hundred yards away, and the Captain was beginning to wonder how he was to get through the enormous amount of work incidental to the canvass and election without his assistance.

Now, Pete is a gentleman of leisure from the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November until the opening of the hot-corn season in mid-summer. No sooner are the market stalls heaped high with the green tasselled ears than he sets up his kettle and devotes himself to the delightful practice of a branch of the culinary art in which he has not a single peer.

Politics begins with the waning of the hot-corn season in the East Side calendar, and Pete's duties, which begin with the canvass, are of a kind that can be performed only by one who, like himself, is thoroughly in touch with his neighbors. Working under the direction of his Captain, he must see to it that all of the drunken, careless and uncertain voters on the block are duly registered. He must attend all political meetings in company with his gang, or "push," as it is called in modern slang, and be personally responsible for the heartiness of their applause. Through his offices the same band of political patriots are induced to march in the political parades, bearing torches and transparencies and cheering frantically as they pass the residences of those candidates who have had the forethought to "see" Pete in due season. And at the conclusion of these meetings and parades it is Peter who is entrusted with the $10 note that is to be spent in treating the boys, and careful he is, too, to do the treating in the saloon of his own Captain.

As election day approaches he contrives to see the various voters in the interest of his Captain and "get their promise" as the phrase is. This part of his labor culminates in a burst of unusual activity on the Saturday night before election, when the voters are coming home from work with their wages in their pockets. And it is astonishing to learn how faithfully the promises made under these circumstances are kept.

But it is on the day of election that Hot Corn Pete finds himself with work of a really delicate and confidential nature on his hands. At the opening of the polls he seats himself just outside the booth with a list of the voters in the district in his hands and carefully checks off each man as he enters.

At 1 o'clock the district captain, who has been busy getting his followers to the polls since sunrise, takes a look at the list. "Has Denny Dineen voted yet?" he says.

"No," says Pete. "He's working over at the Erie Basin, and I told him we'd vote his ballot for him."

"Here you, Pat," says the leader, turning to one of the loungers, "go in there and vote for Denny Dineen's name for him. You, Tom, go in and vote for Patty Moran. He registered the day before he was killed."

In this way a score of votes are cast for men who are working at some distant job, or too drunk to appear themselves, or who have died between the days of registration and election.

It is Hot Corn Pete's duty to see that all these illegal votes are cast in the interest of his own party, and so long as no attempt is made to poll those that belong to the other side no objection is raised, the watchers taking the ground that no fraud is committed as the votes are cast with the full consent and in accordance with the political belief of the men who registered.

It was on the strength of these and other services rendered to the party that Hot Corn Pete based his claim for recognition at the hands of the United States Government, and it is because of its refusal to meet his demands that he started a mutiny which might have spread through the whole city had not the gentleman of the distinguished mien come from Washington for the express purpose of squaring the matter.

That the matter was squared, together with sundry others in the course of the interview between the two men in the district leader's saloon, is a fact well known to every one at all conversant with New York politics. At any rate, before the week was out, Hot Corn Pete once more swore fealty to his party leader and returned to his old lodging place on the tin roof of the extension. In his inside pocket was an official notification from Washington signed by the Secretary of the Treasury, and setting forth the fact that on the recommendation of the Collector of the port, Hot Corn Pete was duly appointed inspector at the rate of $5 a day. And to his credit, be it said, that those faithful ones among his "push" who went out with him had their reward, too. For not one inch would Peter move his corn pot until every man jack of them had received his appointment as laborer at $2 a day.

And neither the inspector, Pete nor the laborers who were appointed at his instance, have anything whatever to do except to sign their names to the payrolls every morning and draw their wages at the end of the month.

And often on Summer evenings when the voice of Hot Corn Pete is heard on the Bowery lifted up in praise of the contents of his iron pot, men familiar with the history of the district will point him out to the stranger from afar, saying:

"That Hot Corn Pete, the man that kicked up such a fuss that they couldn't settle it till the President of the United States came on from Washington to square it himself."

REIGN OF RED IN MILLINERY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29)

WASHABLE EVENING TOILETTES.

wear. Such gloves can be had in lengths from eight to twenty-four button; they are woven to fit the hand as perfectly as a costly spun silk stocking fits the foot, and many of them are beautifully lace worked from the knuckles clear to the shoulder.

Wash silk madras is one of the season's materials that have been enthusiastically adopted by the makers of little girls' gowns, and, with plentiful tucking and application of embroidered bands, the most elaborate plans of decoration are triumphantly carried. A typical little girl gown on this order is copied from a model of clear salad green wash madras. The whole of the frock, with the exception of a front panel, is surplaited. Heavy ecru linen embroidery, finished in arrowhead points, garnishes the fancy collar, sleevs and skirt front, and all the fullness of the surplaiting is caught in at the waist line of a sash of soft moss-green taffeta.

MARY DEAN.

FOR THE FRUGAL HOUSEKEEPER

SWEETBREADS have taken such a strong hold on popular favor that there are few elaborate menus now arranged without this ubiquitous entree.

The sweetbread of the calf is considered the choicest eating and they can be used in so many little side dishes and for ornamental purposes they are much in demand.

How to Prepare Them.

As soon as they come from the market throw them in cold water and soak an hour or two, changing the water several times, until the blood is all extracted and sweetbreads are white. Then cover them with boiling water, adding a teaspoonful of lemon juice or vinegar. Do not allow them to boil, or they will be tough and hard. Add a little salt when nearly done. Simmer them for thirty minutes, then throw into cold water to blanch them. Carefully remove the pipes and fat before cooking them, and when they are done and ready for use, remove the strings and fibers without breaking them up, if the object is to use them whole. Let them get cold, then tie each one in a piece of cheesecloth, pressing it in oval or round form, and place a weight on top. They will be in good shape for larding or cutting in nice slices as desired. Use a silver knife for cutting sweetbreads and do not allow them at any time to come in contact with tin or iron dishes, saucepans, spoons, etc., or the flavor will be ruined.

Sweetbreads a l' Italienne.

Select large heart sweetbreads, soak them in cold water for three hours, changing the water two or three times. Then put them in a saucepan, cover with fresh cold water and bring them nearly to boiling point. Then take out and drain on a cloth until dry. Cut each one in half horizontally, put them into a stewpan with the cut side down, season with salt and pepper and add butter enough to fry slowly until the meat is stiffened; then press and cool in the muffin rings. When nearly cool dip them in cold bechamel sauce and cool again; then roll them in fine cracker or bread crumbs, patting them lightly into good shape; dip into beaten egg and then again into fine white crumbs and fry in deep hot fat or saute in a little butter. Dish them in a circle with a border of bread croutons and pour Italian sauce in the center and serve.

Italian Sauce.

Put two ounces of butter of salad oil in a saucepan with two tablespoonfuls of chopped shallots; stir and fry them a few minutes; add a dash of pepper; a pinch of grated nutmeg and a cup of chopped mushrooms and cook a few minutes longer; five minutes will be sufficient if the mushrooms are canned, longer if they are fresh. Then add three half pints of good rich brown sauce, a gill of thick stewed tomatoes and a little chopped parsley. Boil for ten minutes; add the juice of half a lemon and serve.

A CHAPTER ON RHUBARB.

Rhubarb or "pieplant," the stems of the leaves of which are cooked and eaten as sauce, is an excellent vegetable. The flavor is very tart and the fiber stringy; but when thoroughly cooked it is rendered soft and digestible. It is a mild laxative, and is therefore useful in cases of chronic constipation. It should not be indulged in to excess by persons suffering from gout and rheumatism, owing to the fact that it produces calcium oxalate in the urine. This wholesome vegetable has not received the attention it justly deserves. For instance, in Germany it is still cultivated as merely an ornamental garden plant on account of its large, showy leaves. The first rhubarb arrives just in time to combine with the sour, juicy oranges, which are highly valued in the preparation of marmalades. Below are given three choice recipes for using both oranges and rhubarb separate or in combination.

Orange Marmalade.

Select smooth-skinned oranges, heavy in weight (this means a juicy orange); weigh the fruit, allowing three-fourths pound of crushed loaf sugar for each pound of fruit; peel in quarters, scoring the skin in four directions from stem to blossom end; put peel into granite saucepan, cover with boiling water, cook gently until it is tender when pierced with a small wooden skewer; drain and remove all the white pith, leaving but the thin yellow rind; cut rind into narrow strips with shears; by putting the pieces together this may be accomplished more quickly. Remove all the white part from the orange, divide the orange in sections, remove the pithy center and all seeds. Put pulp into preserving kettle, bring to a boiling point, add sugar and simmer gently for one hour. Do not boil hard; moisture evaporates too rapidly; add rind; also thin grating of lemon rind, allowing one lemon to every five oranges; continue simmering for one hour longer; pour into jelly glasses; cover with a thin layer of paraffin; cover and put away.

Orange and Rhubarb Marmalade.

Prepare 16 sour skinned oranges as for orange marmalade. Divide the oranges into eighths, remove the seeds and pith, put into preserving kettle, add 10 pounds of rhubarb cut into one-half inch pieces (do not skin it). Bring to a boiling point and cook gently 30 minutes; add eight pounds of crushed loaf sugar and shredded rind. Green ginger root may be added to taste if you desire it. Simmer gently two hours, covered. Put into jelly glasses, cover with a thin layer of paraffin, place covers on and put away.

Rhubarb Sauce.

Cut one pound of rhubarb into three-fourths inch pieces without peeling. Wash, drain and put into baking dish with one cup of granulated sugar, one and one-half inch piece Canton ginger and three shavings of lemon peel three-fourths inch long. Cover and place in oven, bake until rhubarb is tender, remove from oven, cool and serve. This is the correct way to cook rhubarb. Both ginger and lemon may be omitted.

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Passenger Depot, foot of Jefferson street. Leave Portland daily for Oswego at 7:20 A. M., 12:30, 1:35, 3:25, 4:40, 6:25, 8:30 P. M. Daily except Sunday, 5:20, 9:40 A. M., 5:05, 11:20 P. M. Sunday only, 9 A. M.

Arrive at Portland daily at 8:30 A. M., 1:35, 3:20, 4:20, 6:15, 7:40, 10 P. M. Daily except Sunday, 6:35, 10:5? A. M.; except Monday, 12:40 A. M.; Sunday only, 10:05 A. M.

Leave for Dallas daily except Sunday, 5:05 P. M. Arrive Portland 9:30 A. M. Passenger train leaves Dallas for Airlie Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday at 3:50 P. M. Returns Tuesdays and Saturdays.

*Except Sunday.

R. R. MILLER, Gen. Frt. & Pass. Agt.

V. A. SCHILLING, City Ticket Agent.

NORTHERN PACIFIC

TIME CARD OF TRAINS

PORTLAND

	Leaves.	Arrives.
Overland Express	2:00 P. M.	7:00 A. M.
Twin City, St. Louis & Kan. City Special...	11:30 P. M.	7:45 P. M.
Puget Sound Limited for South Bend, Gray's Harbor, Olympia, Tacoma and Seattle.....	8:35 A. M.	5:20 P. M.

Two trains daily to Spokane, Butte, Helena, Minneapolis, St. Paul and the East.

A. D. CHARLTON, Asst. General Pass. Agt., 255 Morrison street. Portland, Or.

Pacific Coast Steamship Co.

For South-Eastern Alaska

Leave Seattle at 9 P. M.

Steamships COTTAGE CITY, CITY OF SEATTLE or CITY OF TOPEKA, April 5, 15, 17, 20, 29, 30; May 5, 11, 15.

For San Francisco

Leave SEATTLE at 9 A. M. every fifth day. Steamers connect at San Francisco with company's steamers for ports in Southern California, Mexico and Humboldt Bay.

For further information, obtain folder. Right is reserved to change steamers or sailing dates.

AGENTS—N. PUSTON, 249 Washington st., Portland; F. W. CARLETON, N. P. R. R. Dock, Tacoma; Ticket Office, 113 James st., Seattle, M. TALBOT, Comm'l Agt.; C. W. MILLER, Asst. Gen'l Agt., Ocean Dock, Seattle; GOODALL, PERKINS & CO., Gen'l Agts., San Francisco.

THE GREAT NORTHERN

Ticket Office 122 Third St. Phone 680

LEAVE	The Flyer, daily to and from St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, Chicago and all points East.	ARRIVE
No. 4 6:15 P. M.		No. 3 7:00 A. M.

Through Palace and Tourist Sleepers, Dining and Buffet Smoking-Library Cars.

JAPAN - AMERICAN LINE

STEAMSHIP RIOJUN MARU

For Japan, China and all Asiatic points will leave Seattle

About April 24th.