

# THE HOTEL CLERK ON CAMPAIGN ISSUES.

BY IRVIN S. COBB

"WUZ talkin' to Schmaltz today," said the House Detective of the St. Nickles. "He ain't goin' to vote for Bryan this time."

"That's all right," said the Hotel Clerk. "he can vote for Bryan any time. But what's the matter with Kern, of Kokomo, already endeared to the hearts of his countrymen under the name of Who-The-T's Kern? Kern ought to command the suffrage of every true American that wants to see Indiana turning out something besides historical novelists and Senator Beveridge. He ought to have the undivided and enthusiastic support of every man who believes that the lower end of the human face divine was intended by nature for a hay nose. In short and in three Larry-though, it's not so short, but is something like fine-cut chewing tobacco, hence the phrase—Kern has a countenance which should win him the vote of the agriculturist, the naturalist, the explorer, the poet, the worker in textile factories, the producer of red timothy and the lover of the money fountain bank where the honey-suckle grows and the love-vine twines in the moisty drip. I repeat, therefore, what's the matter with Kern? He'll-right-whosoalrightkern!"

"But what's ailing your friend Schmaltz?—he's got whiskers of his own, or had 'em the last time I saw him."

"Schmaltz says he can't stand for the platform," said the House Detective. "He says he don't like it."

"Schmaltz is a liar," said the Hotel Clerk. "He don't know whether he likes it or not and neither does anybody else except those members of the committee on resolutions that didn't succeed in getting their favorite plank across a campaign platform. Larry, is something that the party spends from one to two years thinking up, from two to three days writing out, and from three to four minutes forgetting. It is designed for the purpose of helping out the allied hotel and boarding-house interests in the town where the convention's being held and also to give the special correspondents on the job a chance to say that a great party which has always been able to run as good as second now trembles on the very verge of disruption and will continue so to tremble until about this time tomorrow afternoon when work is expected from Fairview Farm, located between Lincoln, Neb., and Washington, D. C., but somewhat closer to Lincoln, that the anti-injunction clause is going to be adopted by unanimous vote or else is not going to be adopted, also by unanimous vote, depending on how the present owner of said Fairview Farm prescribes fees about that after eating his usual hearty dinner."

"I never knew but one man that read a platform all the way through. I think maybe he thought it was something else at the time; or it may have run in the family. He was a fall brother to Larry, but he ain't no more of a fall brother on the back of a 5-cent postage stamp and it was his own uncle that spent two years proving the average number of seeds in a hunk of corn is 275. Well, anyway, he read this platform through and it gave him some very, very strong convictions. But unfortunately he didn't love vote. He picked up a most absorbing scientific article on the "Life and Customs of Potato Bugs," and before he



could put it down it was dark and the polls had closed. So then he wound up the cat and put the clock out, and spent the night in the anthracite bin, after carefully dressing a coal scuttle in an outing flannel nightshirt and putting it to sleep in his own bed. But towards morning he was more or less restless. Did I mention to you that he was inclined to verge on absent-mindedness? Well, he was.

"I'll tell you how it is with a platform, Larry. For weeks and months every sage in the party has been spending his time—if I was a humorist, Larry, I'd spell it thyme and couple it with sage and have the stuffings of a long joke—he's been, as I say, putting in good hours thinking up great issues that will strike straight to the heart of the masses. Only if he's a Republican sage, he don't. A Republican sage gets his laurels nice and hot a dozen in a mess, all put up in a

box ready to take home, the same as fried oysters, which thought naturally brings in Oyster Bay. But he that as it may, a Democratic sage has to think up his own issues. He worries himself almost into a state of vocal prostration. His voice weakens on him until he can hardly speak above a shout. His appetite falls; he can't even muster up energy to go to a 'brushing in his own neighborhood. Shall he take up this doctrine, or shall he put it on a diet of prepared food and lay it by? Here's one that don't look like it could last through anything, and the second Sumner has been so fatal to so many of our brightest and most promising Democratic doctrinaires. There's Bryan, he's had the worst luck of any parrot in the party. I can't think of any of his that's been able to live from one election to another, except one, and that one was a stupid child and his adopted father never seemed

to think so much of it anyhow. I refer, Larry, to the tariff.

"After awhile the sage from Jackson's Purchase or Jackson's Hole or Jackson County, as the case may be, goes to the convention carrying his little three-week-old issue in a portable incubator and feeding it on oxygen and the white of an egg; and when he gets there what does he find? He finds upwards of 5000 other sages that have moved in from the sage brush with similar issues, only radically different. Every prominent leader that hasn't been mentioned for Vice-President by himself or a close friend is on the ground, holding the nursing bottle to the pale blue lips of a small, young, new, pallid, soft, eternal, imperishable, everlasting-as-the-Rocks-of-360-rattler issue, called Rortie for short. They have a terrible time; there's the devil and all to pay. For 48 hours the committee on resolutions goes sleepless, hungry and at times almost thirsty. And then, as the saying is, Order comes out of Chaos, the names part of Order being capably played by Charles F. Murphy, a leading sage of the place, in fact I may say the most leading sage of this place, who hands the New York delega-

tion a green transfer showing them where they get off, and then Sage Guffey, of Pennsylvania, starts for home sobbing out his sorrow on the sympathetic shoulder of Sage Patrick McCarren, of Brooklyn, who also happens to be coming this way by rail, and shortly thereafter the news is flashed to the waiting world that on motion of Sage Ollie James, of Kentucky, the party in convention assembled has just ratified by acclamation, amid unparalleled enthusiasm, one of those platforms that you can climb aboard anywhere, ride as far as you please, enjoy a pleasant nap and drop off at a point that looks almost exactly like the place where you got on."

"Who 'dis here Mister Ollie James that cut so much ice out to Denver?" asked the House Detective.

"He's a grand new device that is now used in putting all motions in a National Democratic convention," said the Hotel Clerk. "As a puttist he stands without a peer. You use a jimmy to break a safe, Larry; but a James to break a silence, which is a joke that came to me like a flash, right out of my own head, and a mighty clever conceit that when you come to think it over, Ollie James is all right. He comes from that section of Kentucky that has produced the largest Hovestock, Hippopotamus speaking, he's the noblest Roman of them all. He's what you'd call statesmanship in bulk. He measures six feet

from tip to tip or from dome to dome, or whichever way is proper to space off a sage that weighs 300 pounds net with his shoes off, and never has a dry thread on him during June, July, August and the first part of September if the hot weather should happen to hang on. In action his voice could be distinctly heard from here to Staten Island and half way back, and he has a power of oratorical endurance that would make Old Faithful geyser, out yonder in the Yellowstone Park, look like a hot water fountain. He can put the 16-pound motion 175 feet 6 inches at one put and not half try, and when it comes to moving the previous question he's got Matt McGrath and all these other professional hammer-throwers hiding in the bleachers. Bryan thinks the world and all of him and if he's elected he's going to appoint him to fill the chair of Secretary of State, Secretary of Commerce and Labor and First, Second and Third Assistant Postmaster-Generals. The other jobs will go to Oklahoma."

"I tell you what's the matter with your friend Schmaltz, Larry. He's one of these Independent Democrats. You never hear of an Independent Republican. If he was Independent he wouldn't be a Republican. But Independent Democrats are scattered around everywhere. Automobiles run over them at night; nervous old ladies find them under the bed upon retracing Harper's weekly prints letters from them in the humor column; the chambermaids sweep them out of Republican National headquarters of a morning. Do you happen to know what an Independent Demo-

crat is, Larry? Well, then, I'll tell you. He's a Democrat who's been trying to vote the ticket ever since Hancock ran and the closest he's been able to get to it was attending a Palmer and Buckner ratification meeting. If it's not the platform it's the candidate, and if it's not the candidate it's his wife's folks by marriage."

"Well, I always vote her straight," said the House Detective, stoutly. "It ain't the man with me, it's the principle."

"Spoken like a true patriot," said the Hotel Clerk. "No more do I. If we lung back on the candidates often we wouldn't vote at all. I remember the kind of Congressman we used to send to Washington when I lived at home. I don't know so much about it since I came on to New York and the regular organization relieved me of all responsibility in the matter. The only time I hear of my Congressman being in Congress is when I hear of him being put out of the country you get a chance to look 'em over, close up."

"For years and years in my district we used to send one of those kind-faced old money cows that had a War record and a bald spot running back as far as the glacial period and the top of his spine. He had a brain like a brain mash and as a public speaker he belonged in the family of mullocks, sub-order, fresh-water mussel; but had a knack amounting to a perfect genius for sniffing out good money. The way he could smell around a waistcoat and locate a custom-house appropriation would have been worth a great deal of money to him in his business if he'd only been a rat terrier. But after several seasons a lot of young fellows grew up that didn't seem to take the proper interest. In the third day's fighting at Gettysburg and one day they jumped the Hon. White-Faced Herford, gentle and true but a trifle old-fashioned, back into the county judge division and put a young Silver Tongue who carried all his goods in his front show case but had a way of spreading out and hiding the empty shelves in the back of the store. He could have traded what was in his head for what's in a two grain pill and nobody would have been any the worse off except the pill; but he was there with the eloquence. He could utter almost any six syllable word in a way that would cause the audience to burst into tears and when he turned the juice on full and reached for a good one like 'Incomprehensibility' it was time to remove the women and children to a place of safety. Take any large public occasion from any of the coronations, the cutting the first home-grown watermelon of the season and you'd find him soaring aloft into the blue ether in a manner calculated to make the Wright Brothers look like the stationary engineers of a brick smoke-house with stone trimmings. He's in Congress yet from our district. He probably feels more at home in the office of an Independent Republican. If he was Independent he wouldn't be a Republican. But Independent Democrats are scattered around everywhere. Automobiles run over them at night; nervous old ladies find them under the bed upon retracing Harper's weekly prints letters from them in the humor column; the chambermaids sweep them out of Republican National headquarters of a morning. Do you happen to know what an Independent Demo-

# Baseball with an Old Sport.

IN WHICH HE GIVES REASONS WHY HE CAN'T BE AN UMPIRE AND SUGGESTS PREPARATION FOR THIS IMPORTANT OFFICE.

BY JIM NARIUM.

"Yes," said the Old Sport, in answer to a question from a group of fans in the hotel corridor, "it's true that Ban Johnson has asked me to join his staff of umpires, and while I have expressed my grateful acknowledgment for the faith and child-like confidence reposed in me by Mr. Johnson, I have gently and firmly declined the proffered distinction."

"Why the dickens didn't you take it?" asked one of the group. "It's a ducky job and I'll bet you could blow some of these saw-dust brained guys how to run a ball game, too. It'd be worth a lot of good money to see a game umpired right for a change."

"Well," replied the Old Sport, "in the first place, my time is pretty much occupied at present in mixing up dops for the sporting world, and if at any time there should be a falling off in my chaste and cheerful conversation, the great throbbing world of sport would be sorely grieved."

"And again, I cannot refrain from banding out advice and little wads of dope when I see some guy running on the back track, and when I would be telling some manager how to run his team, if he would playfully get up off the bench and break a baseball bat over my skull, I'm afraid I would interfere with the smooth cadences of my think tank and break the thread of thought."

"Again, I'm not fitted by nature for the job. I have not been gifted with that serious cast of features that seems to be necessary for the baseball ump and if I should happen to forget and let a smile chase itself across my mug while on the field I'd sure lose my job. I want to tell you that baseball umpires are born and not made. Take it from me, I can pick out the future baseball umpire before he kicks off the swaddling clothes. The symptoms of future greatness as an indicator handier first begin to break through the crust and butt into the public eye when a kid reverts to hand out the customary merry giggle at the antics of his nurse, and it's a cinch that the disease has taken when he bites the neck of his milk bottle and follows it up by sinking his first little tooth through the lobe of nurse's ear."

"When you trim your lamps on a kid who appears to have hogged the family supply of under jaw, but who has compensated the rest of the family for this crime before he has his share of sense by letting them have his share of sense by forgetting what he's taken when he made for and the old man is hypnotized when he escorts him to the barn in order to get more sea room in which to beat out the inborn coarseness with a hitching strap, and who plugs through his village school days for the sole purpose of helping the schoolmaster and the local Board of Education to keep the know-

edge factory from busting up and going to the dogs for lack of expert advice, there is the kid who is destined by nature for the umpire's job.

"I was never that kind of a kid. In the golden days of my youth, when the seeds of future greatness were being sown, I was afflicted with a happy and cheerful nature that prevents me forever from becoming a baseball umpire. If I should ever essay to tackle the job, when one of the players would walk up to me and hand me one of his chaste little jokes I might laugh and put the scene on the bum, and the sight of a baseball player ready to take home, the same as fried oysters, which thought naturally brings in Oyster Bay. But he that as it may, a Democratic sage has to think up his own issues. He worries himself almost into a state of vocal prostration. His voice weakens on him until he can hardly speak above a shout. His appetite falls; he can't even muster up energy to go to a 'brushing in his own neighborhood. Shall he take up this doctrine, or shall he put it on a diet of prepared food and lay it by? Here's one that don't look like it could last through anything, and the second Sumner has been so fatal to so many of our brightest and most promising Democratic doctrinaires. There's Bryan, he's had the worst luck of any parrot in the party. I can't think of any of his that's been able to live from one election to another, except one, and that one was a stupid child and his adopted father never seemed

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the aspiring youth to amass much under the age of 25 or 30 years.

"Think it over, fellows, and see if you don't think it is a good scheme."

The World to Come.

A distinguished German scholar who had devoted his faculties to what he claimed to be the demonstration of atheism came consistently to his death bed. He was prepared, he said, to prove out of the expiring spark of his own life that it must become a quenched and blackened flame. He observed the process of dissolution calmly, with the long habit of the scientific method. Friends, themselves unbelieving and unhoping stood about him, waiting to catch the last flicker of defiance from a soul to its God. For some hours he had lain unexpectedly silent and with eyes closed. He had very dark, large eyes, gleaming and powerful. Suddenly they opened them, and from their caverns shot out a fire before which the coldest scoffer in the room shrank back. With a loud voice the old scholar cried out:

"There is another world!" and fell upon his pillow dead.—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in Harper's Bazar.

Centralization of Jews.

Within 20 miles of New York's City Hall there is a population of 1,900 Jews. There are Jews in all America besides. It is the greatest aggregation of Jews in any one spot on earth, one-eleventh of the entire Jewish population of the globe. Here are one-fifth as many Jews as in Russia, one-half as many as in Austria-Hungary, four times as many as in the British Isles, ten times as many as in the Holy Land, and 20 times as many as dwell in Jerusalem.

Longing.

Chicago News.

I am quite fond of olives. I dote on dill pickles.

I love Charlotte russe. I adore magnolia.

A foetus marshmallow my appetite tickles. I'll lurch upon all of them one day.

Such a feast I've imagined! Some day I'll be wealthy.

And realize then what is now but a dream!

I mean to wind up, just to show that I'm healthy.

With a lovely big dish of delicious ice cream.

I have just read a novel—it's simply delightful.

In summertime, all America besides. I wish I could be in the heroine's place. Though the way she suffers was perfectly frightful.

To suffer poor father from shame and disgrace.

I should like a nice hero myself—an Apollo. He'd take me to luncheon—and how sweet it would seem!

I would have stuffed tomatoes; not esau'd to polka.

And then he could buy me some lovely ice cream.

That I don't get enough is the worst of distresses.

In summertime, too, it is harder to bear; But you only wait till they let down my dresses.

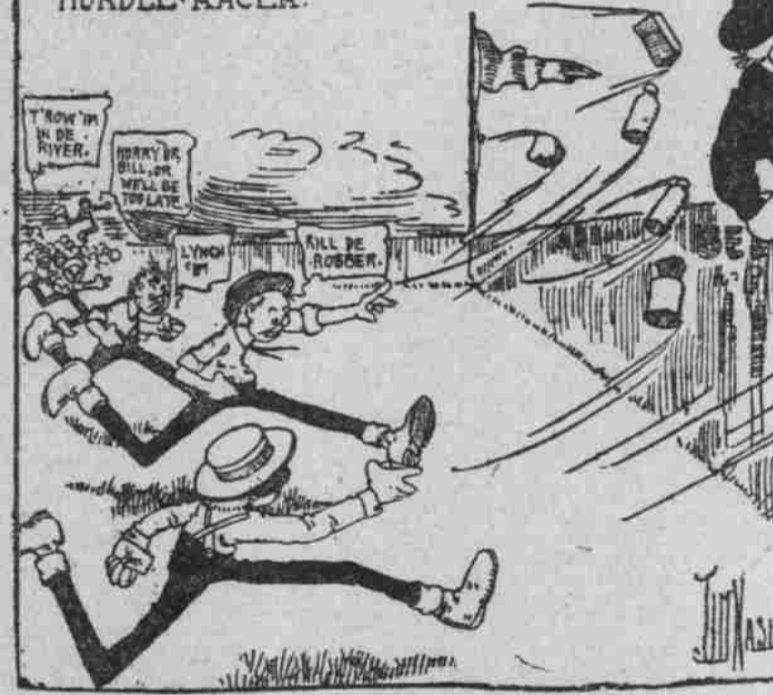
A tuck or two more, and I put up my hair.

I shall have my adorer as soon as I am able.

And on one and all I'll impartially beam if they'll ask me to sit at a marble-topped table and implore me to have some ice cream.



## THE ASPIRANT FOR UMPIRE HONORS SHOULD LEARN TO BE A CHAMPION HURDLE RACER.



your personal feelings in the matter."

"Well," replied the Old Sport, "perhaps you're right. But when it comes to doing my country a service I think I have a better scheme than becoming a baseball umpire. If you guys will capitalize if I will start a school for umpires, and take it from me, you'll be founding an institution that will go down in history as the greatest charitable work of the age."

"Now we all know that there isn't a solitary baseball umpire in the business who is fit for the job. We know it because everybody says so. I have never been to a ball game that I haven't heard a large majority of those present saying that the umpire officiating was blind of one eye and his head was filled with mush instead of brains, and he didn't know anything about the game anyway. This is a terrible state of affairs."

"What we ought to have is men who will please everybody with their decisions and meet with the individual and collective approval of the great throbbing world of sport. This requires a man, of wide information, unquestionable tact and other useful and ornamental attributes."

"It will at once be seen how tough a contract it is for the president of a league to spend the first two years of his preparation in meditation and prayer. This will give him the spirit of Christian martyrdom and resignation to his fate that is necessary to prevent him from giving all close decisions to the

home team, and will prepare him for the surprise and injury to his feelings that he may experience when the whole county calls him a mutt-head because he doesn't call a strike every time the home pitcher stares at him.

"The ensuing five years should be spent in learning to restrain his laughter at mirth-provoking incidents, as it is an unpropitious omen for an umpire under any consideration; then should follow a course of massaging the face with a baseball bat or an old wood rasp or some other mangling instrument in order to acquire the cast of feature necessary to look the part of a master of the situation, and about ten years practice with heavy dumb-bells and steel billets."

After this about two years more should be spent in familiarizing himself with the profane language so he will know what the players are talking about when they converse with him in their native tongue, and about ten years more of hard manual training is necessary to remove every trace of sensibility from his system, so he will not get home and cry himself to sleep over the things people say about him. My suggestion would be to bust the head of his ear-drum while it is young and tender, so he can plug along and fulfill his duties without being compelled to listen to what the occupants of the stands think of his family affairs."

Then, after spending about five years more in committing to memory the rules of the game, he should put in a few years in becoming a champion hurdle racer and expert dodger through a broken field, and a year or so more in learning to dodge pop bottles and getting accustomed to traveling over

back fences and in unrequited alleys.

"The closing 20 years of the course should be spent in acquiring a practical knowledge of surgery, the art of prospecting for bullets in the human system, how to run a hundred yards in ten seconds flat with a broken leg and a fractured cranium, how to see accurately in four different ways at the same time, learning mind reading and second sight, studying hypnotism, slight-of-hand, the rules of the prize rings, the art of repartee, the study of law, election, ancient and modern history of baseball, civil engineering, diplomacy, weights and measures, physics, velocity of projectiles, geometry, mathematics, acceleration of speed, how to quell riots, personal magnetism, self-control, the signs of the zodiac, weather prognostication, a study of the life and methods of the Czar of Russia, and any other bits of general knowledge that may occur to him being useful in his chosen profession."

At the age of 95 the student will have lost that reckless and impulsive style of judgment so common among the umpires of today, and he will emerge from the school with his knowledge-box loaded up with the information that is demanded of him by the public, and we will then have umpires who can judge plays fully as accurately as the occupants of the stands who can see things plainly at a distance of a hundred yards from the scene of action.

"The heyday and springtime of his life will be past, it is true, but if his eyesight remains good he will then possess the mental accomplishments that the public demands in the baseball umpire, and which it is impossible for