

FIRST BRYAN CONVENTION

How a Boom Just the Size of the Bryan Family Expanded in a Minute to National Proportions — Cross of Gold in Reminiscence.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

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 Washington, July 7. Twelve years ago today the Democratic national convention met in Chicago. A brilliant young actor from Nebraska was there at the head of a contesting delegation from his state. Before that convention had adjourned he had become its hero and its candidate for president. An other Democratic national convention is meeting in Denver today, and William Jennings Bryan probably will be its nominee. In the convention of 1896, eight years ago, he was nominated by acclamation. In the convention of 1904, four years ago, he was the greatest man in the assembly, albeit he was defeated again. Again. Twelve years is a long time, and it is interesting to refresh one's memory by recounting the incidents of that stormy week which thrust Mr. Bryan into the forefront of national political affairs.

The silver coinage question had been a live and dangerous one for many years, and both Democrats and Republicans had carefully straddled it in every national convention. The west and south leaned toward the silver cause; the east was in opposition. Mr. Cleveland reentered the White House in March, 1893, with a ready-made plan to deal with. He called an extra session of congress for the specific purpose of repealing the silver purchasing clause of the Sherman act. His action precipitated a war within his party which was waged without ceasing and which resulted in an overwhelming Republican victory in 1894.

Smallest Boom on Record.
 The Republican national convention at St. Louis adopted a near gold standard plank, with international bimetalism attached. The western silver Republicans booted Mr. Bryan's report that convention for an Omaha paper and a few weeks afterward went to Chicago, nursing a presidential boom in which only he and Mrs. Bryan had any faith. Few others even knew that such a boom existed.

The fight for delegates had been the most exciting in the party history of the country. The Cleveland gold men came to Chicago following they were in the minority, but resolved to save something from the wreck if possible. They controlled the national committee, and that body recommended David B. Hill of New York for temporary chairman by a vote of 27 to 23. The silver men on the committee brought in a minority report recommending Senator John W. Daniel of Virginia for temporary chairman. The silver report was presented by Henry D. Clayton of Alabama who will be permanent chairman at Denver. There was no great show of fight, but Daniel was elected over Hill by a vote of 559 to 349. Still the gold men continued to fight.

When the national committee, on the day before the convention assembled, took up the formation of the temporary roll, it found two delegations from Nebraska. One was headed by Tobias Lester and had been elected by the J. Sterling Morton administration wing of the party, while the other was headed by William Jennings Bryan and came from the silver wing of the party. The national committee, as usual in such cases, voted for its own fellows, and the Castor delegation was seated. N. S. Harwood was named as the Nebraska member of the committee on resolutions. As soon as the credentials committee met, the Castor crowd was thrown out, the Bryan men seated, and Mr. Bryan went on the committee on resolutions. It was there that he gained his first triumph, for he had somewhat to do with writing the platform.

How That Little Boom Grew.
 But as yet nobody thought of Bryan for president; that is, nobody except Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, who were both confident from the first. When the convention hosts began to gather in Chicago everybody thought the race was between "Silver Dick" Bland of Missouri and Governor Horace Boies of Iowa. The senatorial contingent—a feature of national politics which has well nigh disappeared from both parties under the combined influence of Roosevelt and Bryan—was trying to get the convention to nominate Senator Teller, who had led the silver bolt from the McKinley convention. The wise ones among the newspaper men were tipping John R. McLean of the Cincinnati Enquirer and the District of Columbia as the winner of the dark horse.

After 12 years and the chances they have brought, the McLean candidacy is one of the most interesting of the half forgotten things about the Chicago convention. The Ohio editor went to Chicago declaring his belief that the platform should consist of the free

GREAT FIRE AT PORT AU PRINCE

Four Hundred Buildings Consumed—Frightful Panic Occurs.

(Herald News by Longest Leased Wire.)
 Port au Prince, Haiti, July 6.—The courthouse and prison were consumed to a fire which burned 400 buildings. For a time the panic was frightful, especially when the arsenal and the ammunition began to explode. It was thought the fire was under control when the arsenal exploded. The embers thus scattered set the conflagration raging again.

Chicken Pie; Ptomaines.
 (Herald News by Longest Leased Wire.)
 Camden, N. J., July 7.—One person is dead and 70 are ill from poisoning, an outcome of a picnic held by the Methodist churches at Atsion Saturday. Chicken pot pie is blamed for the poisoning.

July Excursions

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July 23d. Will you?

And Then the Cross of Gold.

Then came Bryan. That silver platform was the heart's desire of the great majority of the delegates and spectators in the convention hall. Tillman's defense of it had enraged them because of its futility. Hill and Russell had poured hot shot into it. Then came this young man. A few delegates remembered that he had made a famous tariff speech in congress. The westerners whispered about that it was "the boy orator of the Platte." He began his speech. When he reached the first period he was interrupted by a perfect gale of applause. At last the silver men had found a speaker who could reflect their sentiments and defend their position. Before he was well into his speech the convention was laughing at every word that fell from his lips. With those words there was the earnest of passion and conviction. At last came the famous peroration—"You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

The convention went wild. Men seized the state standards which marked the delegations and rushed, yelling and shouting, to group about the Nebraska standard. The silver delegates were wild with joy and the names of old leaders like Bland and Hoies and the gold men sat in a silence which portook of the quality of awe. Everybody seemed to realize that the day of the power of oratory had not yet passed; everybody at once began to look upon Bryan as the probable nominee of the convention.

Stampede on Fifth Ballot.
 That night his name was placed in nomination by a delegate from Georgia. The balloting began the next day, and on the fifth ballot Bland and Hoies and all the rest went down before the stampede to Bryan. Illinois intended to lead that stampede, but its delegation was out of the hall for consultation when Ollie James, head of the Kentucky delegation, announced the withdrawal of Joe Blackburn's name and the casting of 24 votes for Bryan. That started the ball, and Bryan received practically all the votes, except those of 32 easterners, who voted for Governor Pattison of Pennsylvania, and the 162 gold delegates, who declined to vote.

National conventions frequently develop dramatic situations, but it is to be doubted if there has ever been anything to equal the scene which followed Mr. Bryan's speech in the Chicago convention. It brought him into national prominence at a bound, and gave him a position of party pre-eminence which he has maintained for 12 years, despite defeat and disaster. No other losing candidate in American politics has been so honored, save Henry Clay. And Clay was always in office, while Mr. Bryan has been only a private citizen.

In the Dark Horse's Stall.
 While it is true that Mr. Bryan's great oratorical effort won the nomination for him, it was not all accident. Mr. Bryan went to Chicago believing he would be nominated. He was thoroughly familiar with the situation; he saw the weakness of the Bland and Hoies candidates; he believed a dark horse would win the prize, and he intended to be that dark horse. His Nebraska fellows were hard at work for him in an underground fashion, and there were leaders of national prominence who believed Bryan would be the nominee, before a single newspaper had ever mentioned him as a probability. These plans were laid. The speech made them effective. Today Mr. Bryan is in his home at Fairview. The convention meets in Denver. He believes he will be able to control it in every particular. We shall see what we shall see.

DROWNED MAN'S BODY IS NOT RECOVERED

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Grand Congress of Texas Farmers

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)
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Among the organizations that are holding their sessions in connection with the meeting of the congress are the state associations of nut-growers, nurserymen, vine-breeders, cotton-growers, beekeepers, truck-growers, corn-growers, pig-growers and dairy-men and the Women's Educational and Industrial association.

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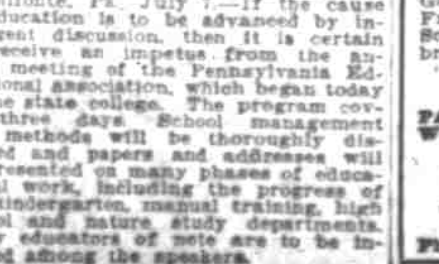
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