

VANDERSON'S VOTE.

A Boy's Experience as a Country Politician.

It had been a hot political campaign. All over the state brass bands were playing, cannon were firing, illuminations were glaring and four hundred and twenty-seven stump speakers were delivering every night four hundred and twenty-seven addresses. The harangues were at once "ringing, electrifying masterpieces of eloquence,"—to quote the reporters who agreed with their sentiment—and "issues of driving mendacity,"—to quote the reporters who did not agree. The four hundred and twenty-seven mass meetings were each "a grand outpouring of an aroused people," or "a small, spiritless gathering of disheartened demagogues"—quoting as before.

In almost every town rival companies of "Jones Guards," "Smith Rangers" and "Thompson Continentals," arrayed in uniforms that did not fit, and carrying torches that dripped with oil, scuffled through dust, splashed through mud, and bespattered themselves with kerosene.

They raised flags, serenaded candidates and escorted all sorts of distinguished statesmen from nowhere in particular to everywhere in general, and back again.

Then the newspapers! How they "nailed lies," "exposed conspiracies," "tore off masks" and "held up to public execration," proving "irrefutably" that their own side had, and would have, all the virtue and victory, and the other all the vice and vanquishment!

Our village of New Nicopolis had every requisite for a lively canvass—two halls, two newspapers, two bands and two aspirants for every office. Moreover the town was so evenly divided politically that no candidate could reasonably expect a majority of more than three or four votes.

As the struggle drew near its end, men became so excited and enthusiastic that business was almost at a standstill. No one thought or dreamed of anything but politics. The men spent more time at the taverns than in their shops, and hammered harder on grocery counters than they did on their anvils. The women were divided into two classes—those who quarreled every time they met, and those who wouldn't speak to each other at all.

Of course we boys imitated our elders. We attended every meeting, marched in every procession, and got up meetings and processions of our own in our patriotic ardor. We engaged in ceaseless discussions which were none the less hot and intolerant, because, as a general thing, neither of the disputants had the slightest idea of what he was talking about.

Going out on the streets alone was like taking a little promenade on Hounslow Heath in the old days of highwaymen; and on the evenings of opposition mass meetings my return from the post office was often in imitation of the British retreat from Concord.

Now election day was here. We were assured that victory was in the air, and about to perch upon our banner. Victory seemed to be regarded as a bird of some kind, but whether it would turn out an eagle or a crow—eagle for the winners, crow for the losers—no one could tell.

If my participation in the campaign had hitherto been merely sympathetic, I was happy in knowing that youth, like old age, had on this day its honor and its toil. Though I could not vote myself, I could bring indifferent or disabled citizens to the polls with my own pet colt and buggy.

The first ballot put into the box at Town Hall was thrown by old Jemmy Grant, the lame cobbler, whom I had dragged out of his stall at seven o'clock in the morning, that he might do his whole duty as a free American—and to keep Fred Crandall from getting at him first. Fred was active for the hostile camp, and if his slow-paced family horse could not make as many trips as my Knox three-year-old, yet he brought three times as much freight when he did come, being provided with a two-seated beach wagon, while my buggy had room for but one passenger.

Fred was a boy of the most irritating audacity and enterprise, and he possessed, moreover, the advantage of knowing nearly every voter by sight and each man's political opinions by heart. Consequently he lost no time in asking for information where to go or whom to bring, while I required a great deal of direction and advice.

All day long the contest went on, until, late in the afternoon, there was scarcely a man in the whole town of New Nicopolis who had not voted; but as ballots became fewer the anxiety increased, for the check books showed almost an equality between the parties.

Even my father began to grow nervous, and the politicians rushed about like lunatics. One of them suddenly ran up to me.

"Here, Charley!" exclaimed he. "Drive out on the north road as fast as you can go, and bring in Vanderson—at the red house next beyond the bridge."

I whirled my horse around without waiting for more. The rest of whatever the politician had to say was lost in the rattling of the wheels as I dashed down the road at twelve miles an hour; but the colt had gone too far and too fast that day to keep up such a gait, and I soon reluctantly allowed him to take an easy jog trot.

Fred Crandall suddenly dashed by with a fresh steed, which I recognized as Dr. Parker's new roadster. Things must be at a desperate pass indeed if the doctor was willing to commit his best horse to such a hard-driving Jehu as Fred!

Fretting was of no use, though, and I watched him disappear over the next hill with more or less resignation.

It was a long road to Vanderson's, and I had still half a mile to go when Fred appeared as suddenly as before around a turn just ahead. He had no one with him, and his countenance indicated the greatest disappointment. He pulled up as we met, and called out:

"Where are you going, Charley?"

I simply smiled, having no intention of betraying my plans.

"Well, don't tell if you don't want to," continued he, "but I know. You're going to Vanderson's."

"What then?" I inquired.

"Nothing, only your man isn't at home. You might as well save yourself the trouble of going any farther."

Now this struck me as suspicious. I did not precisely think Fred was telling a falsehood, but my brief experience of politics had inclined me to distrust everything an opponent might say. So I resolved to find out for myself, and told Fred as much.

"All right for you, Charley," replied he, driving on offended. "Go ahead and see what you'll make of it."

I reached Vanderson's comfortable-looking farmhouse almost certain of proving Fred right and myself wrong by finding no one there. To my extreme surprise I saw an elderly man near the stable, hard at work oiling a wagon-wheel.

"Mr. Vanderson?" I inquired.

"The same," he replied, hardly looking up.

I caught my breath. Fred had told me a lie, after all. I am glad to be able to say that I wish I had believed him.

"I want you to come to town with me, if you please," I continued, after a minute. He looked at me, quizzically.

"Want me to vote, eh?"

"Yes, that's it. How did you know?"

"Oh! there was another young man here awhile ago, who wanted the same thing."

So Master Fred had been trying to steal my man, had he? I no longer regretted anything, but solemnly resolved that Vanderson should go to the polls if I had to carry him on my back.

"He laid down on me pretty considerable hard, but I told him it warn't no use. I'm all sole alone to-day, for my son's gone away and there's slathers o' things to do."

"It won't take you an hour, Mr. Vanderson. The election's awfully close, and we need every vote we can get," I pleaded.

"Do, eh? Well, ye can't have mine, young sir," answered he, looking extremely obstinate. "Fustly, this wagon's to lie—"

"I'll help you on that!" exclaimed I, jumping from the buggy and grasping the oil can.

"Secondly, the stove's to black," he continued, giving up the oiling to me without protest.

"I'll do that, too."

"Thirdly, the ashes is to sift for mulching the apple trees."

"And that, too," I persisted, wondering how it happened that all his jobs should be either dirty or dusty. He began to show signs of yielding.

"If ye can git through in time, p'raps I'll go with ye, young sir."

My oiling of that wagon must have been a rare sight, and my blacking of that stove a rarer. By the time I began to sift the ashes my face and clothes were oil where they were not all stove polish. The ashes combined with the other substances and the perspiration arising from my exertions formed a remarkable complexion powder.

Meanwhile old Mr. Vanderson lighted a pipe, seated himself comfortably to windward of my whirling ash dust and talked on about his farm, family, friends and foes until I thought he would drive me distracted. Then he began to ask me questions about the studies at school, and, finding astronomy my to be one of them, immediately brought out his hobby—a theory that the moon is inhabited.

Upon this he argued to such an unbearable degree that I heartily wished the moon were inhabited by Vanderson, vote or no vote. But I had put my hand to the ash sifter and I would not look back.

I finished the work, did three or four more little jobs which he pointed out, and at last, oily, dusty and tired, succeeded in getting fairly on the road to town.

We drove up to the hall only just in season. The crowd seemed in more suspense than ever and our arrival caused a great commotion. Some applauded, some cheered and some laughed—not a few hissed—and a general rush was made into the building.

As I hurried my companion through the throng I caught sight of Fred, who stood staring at us with a queer mixture of conflicting expressions. With a triumphant glance at him I pressed up to the box, in which, scarcely a second before the clock struck the hour of closing, Vanderson calmly placed a straight ballot which carried the election by one vote for—the opposite party!

Such a yell as went up! Nothing saved me from being mobbed by my friends except that the other side surrounded me in a dense mass to proffer their sincere though bitterly ironical congratulations. And Fred was the loudest of them all.

"Didn't I tell you, didn't I tell you?" he kept shouting. "The son who had gone away was your man. Old Mr. Vanderson's never voted anything but our ticket for the last forty-five years!"

"Sartain true, young sir!" said the old man, grinning. "Ye never asked me about my views, an' I tuk it fur granted ye was one of us. But if ye ain't much of a canvasser ye're a master hand to work. If ye'll come out tomorrow we'll continue our argyment consairning the inhabberberbil'ty of the moon, an' I'll hav s'more ashes fer ye to sift!"

I broke away from him, escaped the crowd, and rushed home like a wild boy. Father subsequently found me buried in the haymow up to my neck, crying with rage.

"There, there, sonny, never mind, never mind," said he, soothingly. "If you aren't exactly cut out for a politician no more is your father, either; and it's a great relief to me that I haven't got to go to the legislature!"

But if I had only believed Fred, or if I had asked old Mr. Vanderson a few questions—or if, or if, or if!—Manley H. Pike, in *Youth's Companion*.

Large Nail-Making Machine.

The largest wire-nail machine ever built in the United States was finished recently by a Greenpoint (L. I.) firm and shipped to a nail concern at Everett, state of Washington. The total weight of the machine was twenty and a half tons and it is capable of making nails weighing half a pound each at the rate of one a second. Nails of any desired length can, however, be manufactured by simply adjusting the feed.—*House Furnishing Review*.

HE WAS KIND.

A Pleasing Story About the Late Secretary Windom.

Speaking of the cabinet officers who gathered around Mr. Harrison's table at the beginning of his administration brings to mind the late Secretary Windom. He was a kind and affable gentleman, and his sudden death was a shock to the country at large and a cause of grief to those who enjoyed his acquaintance, says a writer in the *Washington Evening News*.

I remember an incident which showed his kindness of heart and the unostentatious qualities inherent in the truly great.

It was an insufferably hot day in the August preceding his death, and the sun glared with blind force on the concrete of the open space between the west entrance of the treasury and the white house.

On the curb of the fountain basin a half grown sparrow was making fruitless efforts to get a drink of cool water which bubbled tantalizingly just beyond its reach. Finally it leaned a little too far, and, losing its balance, fell overboard.

Its struggles were taking it toward the center of the basin and beyond rescue. I reached out my open umbrella, and just as I was drawing him in I felt a hand on my shoulder and a hearty voice said:

"Well done! I'll see that you have a life-saving medal for that."

It was Mr. Windom. He was on his way to a cabinet meeting, but the affairs of state and the country's finance had to wait while he assisted at the rescue of the half-drowned bird.

He took the bedraggled little creature in his hand, and after smoothing its plumage laid it on the sunny terrace out of harm's way to dry. Then, inviting me to share his big green sun shade, we walked on to the white house.

GERMAN RUDENESS.

A Noted Doctor on the Unchivalric Conduct of His Countrymen.

Louise von Kobell, who is Frau von Eisenhart, has written a book of "Conversations of Dr. Dollinger," lately translated into English, from which the *Daily News* of London has taken extracts. Driven into an inn by a shower in one of their walks, he was greatly annoyed by the conduct of some young men, who swore at the weather, smoked and called impatiently for beer.

"Tobacco and alcohol are demoniacal powers," said Dollinger, half in jest and half in earnest. "Smokers are barbarians. . . . The eternal smoking of pipes and cigars by our forefathers doubtless helped to bring about the short sight which has now become hereditary in Germany. Tobacco smoking is the ruin of society and of chivalrous conduct toward women."

Talking of the German love of public houses, he said: "When I compare our young men with young Englishmen, what a difference I find! How many spectacle-wearing, weakly, uncouth, mannerless youngsters I see here, while it is a real pleasure only to look at the boys and students in England, so vigorous, healthy, well grown, clean and distinguished-looking in their attractive college dress."

At another time he said that if he were a legislator the first law he would introduce in Germany would be one for the protection of young girls. England and America were, he said, in advance of Germany in the treatment of women. "For instance," he added, "I hardly think that an educated Englishman would allow his wife to fetch him his boots, slippers, cigars and newspapers as do so many of our countrymen."

ABOUT THE STAGE.

MR. IRVING is said to have found "Henry VIII." one of the most profitable of his productions.

AUGUSTIN DALY, the world-renowned theatrical manager, is a southerner by birth, but of Irish descent.

MRS. SUNABAI WADIA, an East Indian woman, is about to seek fame as a comedienne on the London stage.

FANNIE KEMBLE was always dramatic. Once when she was in a shop buying a piece of calico she asked: "Will you wash?" in a tone so thrilling that it frightened the shopman out of his wits.