

## HUMOR AND PATHOS OF PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTIONS.



One can examine the records of Presidential Conventions, with their personal successes and failures, and easily escape the conviction that there is far more of tragedy than comedy in our national politics. There are touches of humor here and there, but the dominant note is that of pathos. Behind every great success there is to be seen the somber shadow of bitter disappointment, of wrecked ambition, of lifelong hopes in ruins. As one pursues through biography, autobiography, and memoir, the personal history of the chief figures in the conventions that have been held during the sixty years which have passed since that method of nominating Presidential candidates came into use, he finds it almost invariably ending in sadness and gloom. Not one of those seeking the Presidency with most persistence has succeeded in getting possession of that great office, and few of them, when final failure has come, have shown themselves able to bear the blow with fortitude.

The practice of nominating Presidential candidates in National Convention began in 1831. The Anti-Masonic party, one of those ephemeral political movements whose birth and death occur in a single campaign, first set the example. The National Republican party, which closed its career in the same campaign, was the first real party to use the new method, nominating Henry Clay unanimously in a convention at Baltimore in December, 1831, and recommending the convening of a national assembly of young men at Washington in May of the following year. When this body, afterward known as "Clay's Infant-school," came together, it also nominated him unanimously. General Jackson, who was then a virtually unopposed candidate for a Democratic renomination, with that quick instinct for "getting close to the people" which seldom failed him, saw in the new method great elements of popularity, and hastened to attract them to himself. He directed that a convention be called to nominate a candidate for the Vice-Presidency on a ticket with himself, and this was done, the nominee being Van Buren, who was Jackson's choice. It is a curious fact that this first convention of the Democratic party adopted the

two-thirds rule, requiring that proportion of votes to effect a nomination, which has since prevailed in that party's conventions in spite of many attempts to repeal it. In the next following campaign the Democrats nominated their candidates in convention, under Jackson's advice and direction; but General Harrison, the chief candidate of the divided opposition, was put forward in the old way; that is, by State meetings of various kinds, including legislatures. By 1840 the convention system had come into full use, and the result was one convention of exceptional interest—that of the Whigs in December, 1839.

### CLAY'S DISAPPOINTMENT AND WRATH.

THIS convention was held in a new Lutheran church in Harrisburg, Pa., and it is a safe assertion that never before or since has a house of God been made the scene of so much and so adroit political manœuvring as went on there for the purpose of preventing the nomination of Henry Clay for the Presidency. The chief manipulator was Thurlow Weed, who appeared there as the friend of Governor Seward, and the future member of the powerful firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley. This firm was, indeed, the outcome of the ensuing campaign. Greeley was at the convention,— "a deeply interested observer," he styles himself,—little dreaming that the campaign which was to follow would give him the opportunity for developing the qualities which were to make him the first editor of his time, and lead to the foundation of a great newspaper to be forever linked indissolubly with his name. Weed went to the convention with the determination of defeating Clay. He says in his "Autobiography" that he had had the New York delegation instructed for Scott to keep it from Clay, his real candidate being Harrison. He entered into an agreement with friends of Webster, on the way to Harrisburg from New York city, to act together for Clay's defeat. Webster was in Europe at the time, and had sent word to his friends declining to be a candidate, primarily because of Weed's refusal to support him. After detailing these facts, Mr. Weed goes on to say that, on reaching Harrisburg, "we found a decided plurality in favor of Mr. Clay," but that, "in the opin-

ion of the delegates from Pennsylvania and New York, Mr. Clay could not carry either of those States, and without them he could not be elected.» Mr. Weed makes no mention of the plan which was arranged for preventing Clay's success, but he has always been suspected of having intimate knowledge of it, if he was not its author. It was proposed to the convention by a member of the Massachusetts delegation, in the form of a rule directing each delegation to take informal ballots as to candidates until a majority should be recorded for some one candidate, upon which a report of the result should be made to the convention, and the vote of the majority of each delegation should be reported as the vote of that State. This was the origin of the «unit rule,» which has since been used in Democratic conventions in conjunction with the «two-thirds rule.» The effect of this rule was the defeat of Clay and the nomination of Harrison. Weed admits a bargain in favor of Harrison with the friends both of Webster and of Scott, and says the «final vote was intentionally delayed by the friends of the stronger candidate [Harrison] for twenty-four hours» in order to placate the angry friends of Clay, «whose disappointment and vexation found excited expression.» Greeley makes frank admission, in his «Recollections of a Busy Life,» as to the plot, by saying that the parties to it, chiefly Weed, «judged that he [Clay] could not be chosen, if nominated, while another could be, and acted accordingly,» adding, «If politics do not meditate the achievement of beneficent ends, through the choice and use of the safest and most effective means, I wholly misapprehend them.» This somewhat Jesuitical view did not strike Clay and his friends as an adequate justification of the methods by which an admitted majority of the convention had been prevented from expressing its will. John Tyler of Virginia, one of Clay's most ardent friends in the convention, was so overcome with grief at Harrison's nomination that he shed tears; and after several unavailing efforts to get some one else to take the nomination for Vice-President, Tyler was named for it, his tears having convinced the convention that the placing of so devoted a friend of Clay on the ticket would go far to heal the wounds that the methods of the convention had caused.

Clay's rage at the outcome was unbounded. He had been assuming in the Senate a lofty indifference to the Presidency, his famous saying, «I would rather be right than be President,» having been made public only a short time before the convention met. There was

nobody in the Senate at that time of sufficiently nimble wit to think of the biting retort which Speaker Reed, many years later, made to a congressman who, for the thousandth time, was strutting about in Clay's cast-off garments, «Don't give yourself the slightest uneasiness; you'll never be either.» But Clay had given himself great uneasiness, for he was most desirous of the nomination. He had been a candidate eight years earlier, when he had no chance of election, and he believed firmly now that if nominated he could be elected. When the news from Harrisburg reached him in Washington he lost all control of himself. «He had been drinking heavily in the excitement of expectation,» says Henry A. Wise, who was with him. «He rose from his chair, and, walking backward and forward rapidly, lifting his feet like a horse stringhalted in both legs, stamped his steps upon the floor, exclaiming, (My friends are not worth the powder and shot it would take to kill them. It is a diabolical intrigue, I know now, which has betrayed me. I am the most unfortunate man in the history of parties—always run by my friends when sure to be defeated, and now betrayed for a nomination when I, or any one, would be sure of an election.))»

This view of his own fate was confirmed strangely by subsequent events. He was nominated unanimously by the Whigs in 1844, and defeated at the polls, and was again a candidate for the nomination in 1848, failing to secure it, though his party was successful in the election which followed. He took both defeats very much to heart, saying of the first, in a letter to a friend: «The late blow that has fallen upon our country is very heavy. I hope that she may recover from it, but I confess that the prospect is dark and discouraging.» In regard to the second, he refused to support General Taylor, who had been nominated in preference to himself, saying: «Magnanimity is a noble virtue, and I have always endeavored to practise it; but it has its limits, and the line of demarcation between it and meanness is not always discernible. . . . I think my friends ought to leave me quiet and undisturbed in my retirement. My race is run. During the short time that remains to me in this world I desire to preserve untarnished that character which so many have done me the honor to respect and esteem.»

#### THE FIRST «DARK HORSE.»

THE Democratic convention of 1844 is memorable for several reasons. It was the first con-

vention to develop a «dark horse,» the first to bring about a nomination by means of a «stampede,» and the first to have its proceedings reported by telegraph. Van Buren, who had been President, and had been defeated in 1840 by Harrison, was the leading candidate, and had a majority of twenty-six in the convention. An attempt to defeat the two-thirds rule failed, and from that moment Van Buren's prospects became hopeless. Eight ballots were taken without result, and a great deal of bad feeling was springing up between the supporters of Van Buren and his chief competitor, General Cass. On the eighth ballot forty-four votes were cast for James K. Polk, who had been mentioned modestly up to that time as a possible nominee for Vice-President. His name came before the convention at the moment when the warfare between the rival factions was at its hottest point. A New York delegate had just charged that somebody, name not mentioned, had «thrown a firebrand into the party,» and was, in fact a «Nero who has come among us, and is now probably fiddling while Rome is falling.» Several voices shouted, «John Tyler,» and another cried, «We have three Neros.» Great uproar followed, and when the man who had made the original charge left the hall he was accused of «throwing a firebrand, and then meanly skulking from the room.» A storm of hisses and groans followed, with earnest demands from time to time for the name of the fiddling Nero. In the midst of the din a delegate from New Hampshire arose, and begged to appear before the convention as the «apostle of harmony.» His State had presented to the convention the name of its «favorite son,» but in the interest of harmony she withdrew it and presented that of James K. Polk. A delegate from Maryland, in a voice trembling with emotion, said that «one million people are looking with anxiety to this convention, and if their voices could be concentrated they would demand a nomination irrespective of party faction.» Therefore, Maryland would cast her vote for James K. Polk. The «stampede» now began to move. An editor from Ohio, who was a delegate, said that he was ready to make any sacrifice for union and harmony; that he was a friend of Texas [the annexation of Texas was the «firebrand» alluded to], and that, «should the convention give Ohio a candidate in favor of this object, he would pledge that the Lone Star should be blazoned on the Democratic standard in Ohio, and they would lead on to certain victory.» (Tremendous cheering.)

The ninth ballot was begun while the con-

vention was at this pitch of harmony and enthusiasm. State after State gave its solid vote to Polk. The New York delegation retired for consultation. While they were out the ballot proceeded till Virginia was reached. The chairman said that Virginia resigned her first choice, Mr. Van Buren, «with a bleeding heart,» but that her chief desire was to «defeat that apostate, Henry Clay, with a tail twenty years long, and a pack of hungry expectants of twenty years' standing dragging after it; to defeat that man Virginia yields, and places her heart upon the altar of her country and her principles.» This remarkable specimen of convention oratory—which finds an echo in much of the latter-day contribution to that portion of our political literature—hit the New York delegation square in the face as it returned to the hall with one Benjamin F. Butler in its front. Mr. Butler at once «responded with all his heart» to the noble words of the gentleman from Virginia, and, acting in accordance with a private letter from Mr. Van Buren, took the «responsibility of withdrawing that honored name in the best interests of the Democratic party.» He begged leave to add that it had been his privilege recently to spend «some happy days under the same roof with the venerable patriot, Jackson, at the Hermitage,» where he had found him «with one eye intent on his final home, to which he was doubtless rapidly gliding, and with the other fixed on his country and her hopes of prosperity.» While occupying this trying position, the venerable Jackson had conveyed to Mr. Butler the fact that Van Buren was his «first choice,» and that he viewed the possible failure to nominate him with «despondency»; still, Mr. Butler had received a letter from him since the convention had been in session, containing a postscript with this pious message to the delegates: «May God bless you, my dear friends, and may He guide all the deliberations of the convention, leading them in union and harmony to act for the best interests of my beloved country.» That completed the work. The «stampede» went on till every vote was recorded for Polk, and the first «dark horse» crossed the line a winner, amid «indescribable enthusiasm.» That there was a carefully laid plot behind this «spontaneous» movement was quite generally suspected. In commenting upon the outcome, the New York «Evening Post,» which supported Polk's candidacy later, said: «We believe that if the secret history of the convention, from the adoption of the two-thirds rule through its various proceedings, could be written, a large

number of the delegates would stand disgraced in the eyes of their constituents.)

WEBSTER'S HOPELESS QUEST AND TRAGIC FALL.

WEBSTER was an avowed candidate for the Presidency for twelve years or more, but though he sought the nomination from four successive Whig conventions, he was balloted for in only two, and the highest number of votes that he ever received was only one ninth of the total cast. He fell a victim each time to what, in the bitterness of his defeat in 1848, he called «the sagacious, far-seeing doctrine of availability.» Thurlow Weed had from the beginning told him, with great frankness, that this was his most serious enemy. Mr. Weed says that he called on Webster at Washington in the spring of 1839, and that Webster said to him, «I think I shall be the Whig candidate.» Weed expressed doubt, and when Webster asked who would be the candidate, replied, «It looks to me like Harrison.» Whereupon Webster exclaimed: «You are misinformed. The party will choose a man with larger civic experience, who is better adapted to the place.» To this Weed replied that the real question was, «Who will poll the most votes?» He then asked Webster if he would consent to be the nominee for Vice-President on the ticket with Harrison, but «Webster would not listen to this.» Eight years later Weed records that he again visited Webster, this time at Marshfield, when the latter greeted him with the inquiry: «Well, how do things look now? I suppose the question still is, «Who will poll the most votes?»» «Yes,» replied Weed, «and that man is General Taylor, who will be the next President.» Webster broke out in contemptuous surprise: «Why, Taylor is an illiterate frontier colonel, who has n't voted for forty years!» Weed insisted that Taylor was the man, and again asked Webster to take second place, but Webster again refused, saying: «I shall remain in the field as a candidate for President. I am not a candidate for any other place.»

Both Harrison and Taylor were elected, the result giving very strong evidence that Mr. Weed's faith in the popular strength of availability was «well grounded.» Mr. Webster's contempt for both men was openly displayed, but he consented to accept the position of Secretary of State under the former, and composed for him an inaugural address, which Harrison declined to use, saying that the people would know it was not his, but

Webster's, and he thought it best to give them the one which he had prepared himself. He submitted this to Webster for revision. It had a great deal in it about the Roman republic and proconsuls, and Webster spent nearly an entire day over it. His friend Peter Harvey says in his «Reminiscences» that when Webster returned to his home, late for dinner, his wife, struck with his worried and tired look, said she hoped nothing had happened, and that Webster replied: «You would think something had happened if you knew what I have done. I have killed seventeen proconsuls as dead as smelts, every one of them!» His opinion of Taylor was no more complimentary, for he spoke of his nomination in a public speech soon after it was announced as one «not fit to be made.» Yet, as Mr. Weed points out, if Webster had humbled his pride and had accepted second place with either of these two men, he would have realized his cherished desire of being President, for each died before the expiration of his term.

Webster's final appearance as a candidate was in 1852. His spokesman in the convention was Rufus Choate, who made a most eloquent speech in support of his candidacy, and did all that could be done to secure his nomination. Yet his highest vote was only 32 in a total of 293. The faithful Peter Harvey, who was at the convention, which sat in Baltimore, went directly to Webster's house in Washington after Scott had been nominated. Webster met him at the door «with an expression of grief,» but said not a word as to the result, merely asking for Mr. Choate. The latter arrived later, and the family sat down to tea. Still not a word was uttered by any one about the convention. Webster and Choate were closeted for an hour or so afterward, and then Choate departed for Boston. Harvey met him there a few days later, when Choate spoke of the interview as one of the most affecting he had ever had, saying that the appearance of the family and everything about the house seemed to remind him of scenes he had witnessed in families which had lost a beloved member, and adding, «and that sad meal which we partook with Mr. and Mrs. Webster reminded me of the first meal after the return from the grave, when the full force of the bereavement seems to be realized.» Upon this funereal household, in the very depths of its gloom, there came strains of jubilant music, and the shouting of an enthusiastic crowd of Washington Whigs, who, in celebrating Scott's nomination, conceived the notion of including Mr.

Webster in their round of visits. They gathered under his windows, and demanded a speech, and would take no refusal, though told repeatedly that he was not well, and had retired for the night. He appeared finally with great reluctance, and in a brief speech, which contained no mention of Scott, said: «Of one thing, gentlemen, I can assure you: that no one amongst you will enjoy a sounder night's sleep than I shall. I shall rise in the morning, God willing, to the performance of my duty with the lark, and though I cannot equal him in sweetness of song, he will not greet the purpling east more joyous and jocund than I.»

He left Washington soon afterward for Marshfield, where a few weeks later he died. Harvey records that he was unable to reconcile himself to Scott's nomination, saying only a few days before his death that Scott, if elected, «would be a mere tool in the hands of the New York Whig regency, headed by William H. Seward»; and adding, «if I had a vote, I should cast it for General Pierce.» His fall was due to himself. He had sought to meet Weed's test of «availability» by abandoning his championship of human freedom, and becoming, not merely the apologist for, but the defender of, slavery. «His character,» says Goldwin Smith, in his «Political History of the United States,» «to which the friends of freedom in the North had long looked up, fell with a crash like that of a mighty tree, of a lofty pillar, of a rock that for ages had breasted the waves. Some minds, willing to be misled, he still drew after him, but the best of his friends turned from him, and his life ended in gloom.»

#### LAST CONVENTIONS BEFORE THE WAR.

THE conventions of 1860 brought keen personal disappointment to men in both parties. Douglas, after many years of eager pursuit of the Democratic nomination, succeeded in getting it from only one wing of his party, and under circumstances which made it virtually worthless. Seward, supported by as able and powerful a body of followers as ever candidate had before or has had since, failed to get the Republican nomination when it seemed safe within his grasp. Thurlow Weed found himself, in the Republican convention, in the same condition to which his adroit leadership had brought Clay's friend Tyler in the Whig convention just twenty years earlier; for he says, in his «Autobiography,» that when Seward's defeat came he «was completely unnerved,» and «even shed tears.»

George William Curtis, whose eloquent plea against striking from the platform the opening words of the Declaration of Independence had taken the convention by storm, carrying away all opposition like chaff, was scarcely less dejected than Weed, his sad appearance prompting his distinguished colleague and fellow-worker, William M. Evarts, to say, as he slipped his hand through his arm while leaving the convention hall, «Well, Curtis, at least we saved the Declaration of Independence.» Seward was more philosophical than his friends. He sat calmly in his library in Auburn, awaiting the news from the convention. His neighbors were assembled in the village telegraph office, confidently expecting his nomination. When the news of Lincoln's came instead, not one of them had the heart to take it to him. His son, in his «Memoir» of his father, says he knew by their failure to bring good news, that «there was no news that friends would love to bring.» Later, when some one mustered courage to visit him, he was told that no Republican could be found in Auburn who felt like writing the customary paragraph in the evening paper announcing and opposing the nomination. He smiled, and, taking up a pen, wrote a few lines commending the platform, and saying that «no truer or firmer defenders of the Republican faith could have been found in the Union than the distinguished and esteemed citizens upon whom the honors of the nomination have fallen.» In a letter to Weed, written on the same day, he said: «I wish that I was sure that your sense of the disappointment is as light as my own.»

There were several manifestations of grim humor about the Democratic convention which had so much difficulty in getting a ticket into the field. When it first met in Charleston, S. C., the Northern delegates received a disagreeable intimation of the way in which their party had come under the domination of the slave power. It is recorded, in Garrison's «Life,» written by his sons, that when they tried to march through the streets at night with a military band at their head, which they had brought from New York, they were told that they came under the municipal law of slavery, which forbade band-playing after ten o'clock at night in the streets, since the drums might be mistaken for the dread alarm-signal of a slave uprising. Later, when the adjourned convention reassembled in Baltimore, the temporary flooring above the parquet of the theater in which the sessions were held gave way in the center, and the delegates found themselves sliding down the shelving

sides of a pit into a human maelstrom, from which they were extricated with much difficulty. This the opposition press of the time commented upon as an ominous sign of the forthcoming dropping out of the bottom of the party. In the same sessions at Baltimore Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts made a charge that forged tickets of admission had been issued, two of which he exhibited, and declared: «We are overwhelmed with outsiders. I do not propose to sit here under this fraud.» The redoubtable Isaiah Rynders asked Mr. Butler, with much eagerness, where he got the tickets, saying he was anxious to get some of his friends into the convention. Before this question was disposed of it caused a violent altercation between a Mr. Randall and another Pennsylvania delegate, in which the «lie was exchanged» with great force and freedom, and after adjournment Randall's son struck his father's opponent a «staggering blow between the eyes,» and the latter responded by «getting one in on young Randall's ear, leveling him to the ground.»

#### LINCOLN'S CONFIDENCE OF RENOMINATION.

THERE was little of special interest in the conventions of 1864 and 1868. The Democrats were without hope, and the Republican candidates, Lincoln and Grant, were virtually unopposed in the conventions which nominated them. Lincoln was so thoroughly assured of his renomination that he went about his duties as usual, not giving the slightest indication to his associates that he was aware that a convention was in session. He was engaged at the War Department in telegraphic communication with General Grant, who was then in front of Richmond, and the first news which he received from the convention was the announcement that Andrew Johnson had been nominated for Vice-President. «This is strange,» he said reflectively, as recorded by Lamon in his «Recollections.» «I thought it was usual to nominate the candidate for President first.» His informant was astonished. «Mr. President,» said he, «have you not heard of your own nomination? It was telegraphed to you at the White House two hours ago.»

#### THE GREELEY EPISODE.

PROBABLY no more grievously disappointed men ever left a convention than the Adams contingent of the Liberal movement of 1872. They had gone to the Cincinnati convention, which was really nothing but a national mass-meeting, confident of their ability to nominate

Charles Francis Adams for the Presidency. Their chances of doing this had been injured seriously by the publication, a few days before the convention met, of a private letter from Mr. Adams, in which he expressed his indifference to the nomination, and said that if he was expected to give any pledges or assurances of his own honesty «you will please to draw me out of that crowd.» The phrase «that crowd» was regarded as somewhat contemptuous, and was used with great effect by the Republican party press to injure the movement. It undoubtedly brought about the defeat of Mr. Adams, though I am assured by Mr. Schurz, who presided over the convention, that the supporters of Mr. Adams felt so confident of his nomination on the sixth, or final, ballot that they refrained from making special effort to secure it. They were dumfounded when, instead of going for Adams, the convention was «stampeded» for Greeley. There have been many accounts given of their feelings when they realized what had happened, but I do not remember ever having seen in print the explanation of their situation which was given by Mr. Isaac H. Bromley, who was an Adams delegate from Connecticut. Mr. Bromley was sitting with the other dejected ones, and was asked what he was going to do next. Heaving a sigh, he said, «I think I will go over and see the *other* Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.»

#### BLAINE AND SHERMAN IN DEFEAT.

NEXT to Clay, Blaine was a Presidential candidate for a longer period than any other man in our history. His name was before the conventions of 1876, 1880, 1884, 1888, and 1892, a period of nearly twenty years. He failed of a nomination in four conventions, and was nominated in one, only to be defeated at the polls. Until the last trial he maintained his courage, and if he felt bitterness toward his successful rivals he kept it from the public observation. When, in 1876, he came within a few votes of a nomination only to see the prize captured by Hayes, he did not sulk for a moment, but at once sent a telegraphic message to the nominee, offering his «sincerest congratulations,» and saying it «will be alike my highest pleasure, as well as my first political duty, to do the utmost in my power to promote your election.» He was equally prompt and cordial when Garfield was nominated in 1880, and when Harrison was made the candidate in 1888 he telegraphed from Scotland his «heartly congratulations,» predicting for his campaign the «triumphant en-

thusiasm," and "victorious conclusion" which followed his grandfather's nomination in 1840. Only in 1892 did his buoyant spirit, which had rallied under so many disappointments, fail him; but then the shadow of death was upon him, and disease had undoubtedly affected his mind. He resigned from President Harrison's cabinet a short time before the convention met, in order that his appearance as a candidate against his chief might be less unseemly; and when Harrison was renominated he was unable to send him a word of congratulation, contenting himself with congratulating the nominee for Vice-President.

John Sherman's conduct in defeat betrays less fortitude and self-restraint than that of any other candidate we have ever had. He is the first to charge his rivals, not only with a "corrupt bargain," but with the direct purchase of votes. Mr. Sherman was first a candidate in 1880; and when Garfield, who had acted as his champion and spokesman in the convention of that year, was nominated, he did not wait an hour, but telegraphed him instantly congratulating him "with all my heart." He was not before the convention of 1884, but in 1888 he was the leading candidate, receiving the highest number of votes on six ballots, coming once within sixty-seven votes of a nomination. He says, in his "Recollections," published only a few months ago, that he expected the nomination, and that he believed then and believes now that he was defeated by one of the delegates from New York, who practically controlled the whole delegation, and who made a "corrupt bargain, which transferred the great body of the vote of New York to General Harrison." He absolves Harrison of all knowledge of this bargain, and says he refused to carry it into execution. Mr. Sherman goes even further than this, saying that he had "conclusive proof" that the friends of another candidate "substantially purchased the votes of many of the delegates from the Southern States, who had been instructed by their conventions to vote for me." These extraordinary charges, it should be borne in mind, are not made in the first heat of anger and disappointment, but are set down deliberately in a book and published fully seven years later.

#### CONVENTION SAYINGS—FAMOUS AND OTHER.

PERHAPS the most famous and enduring of all convention sayings was that of Mr. Flanagan of Texas, who exclaimed, in "amazement and surprise," when a resolution pledging the party to civil-service reform was offered in the Republican convention of 1880, "What

are we here for except to get office?" Four years later General Bragg, in the Democratic convention, made his scarcely less famous declaration of the chief reason why the young men of the country were in favor of Grover Cleveland: "They love him most for the enemies he has made." These have been adopted into our political language and literature, and are likely to remain there permanently. Colonel Ingersoll's "plumed knight" passage, which so stirred the Republican convention of 1876, and gave Mr. Blaine his most popular political title, is not likely to be so enduring; but it is worth recording, as one of the most perfect specimens of that type of political oratory: "Like an armed warrior, like a plumed knight, James G. Blaine marched down the halls of the American congress, and threw his shining lance full and fair against the brazen forehead of every defamer of his country and maligner of its honor." Another speech, not so famous, but far more powerful at the time of its delivery, was that of Garfield, in the Republican convention of 1880, in which he opposed and defeated Senator Conkling's effort to have the unit rule adopted. Mr. Conkling was seeking to carry his point with an amount of arrogance which has never been equaled in any convention. He had gone so far as to stalk half the length of the huge convention hall, and force a delegate, who was objecting to his proposal, down into his seat by placing his hands upon his shoulders, and roaring at him, "Sit down, sir! sit down!" Garfield, who had not been thought of as a candidate, took the floor against Conkling, closing a brief and ringing speech with the words, "Adopt the unit rule if you will, and I will be bound by it; adopt the individual rule, and I will be bound by that, for two great reasons: first, because you make it the rule; second, because I believe it to be everlastingly right." This phrase, "everlastingly right," stirred the convention like the sound of a trumpet, and when the delegates began later to look for a candidate upon whom they could unite, it was still ringing in their ears, and led them to turn to him as the man nearest their hearts. When General Grant received word that Garfield had been nominated in preference to himself, he said, with characteristic brevity and composure: "It's all right. I am satisfied."

#### MODERN "STAMPEDE" TACTICS.

THE great modern convention assemblages: which are at once the most impressive and most tumultuous in the world, date from the

convention which nominated Lincoln in 1860. That was the first to have a special building erected for its use, and the first to bring the telegraph wires and instruments into the building itself. Since then enormous structures, capable of holding from 10,000 to 15,000 persons, have been considered essential, and their use has added greatly to the mass-meeting character of the conventions, while, at the same time detracting seriously from their deliberative character. Indeed, the popular attendance outnumbers many times the size of the real convention, for the delegates and their alternates together do not aggregate 2000. The other 10,000 or 12,000, who nearly or quite surround the convention, and overlook it from the galleries, are said to represent the people, and bring the convention more closely in touch with the popular will. As a matter of fact, a large proportion of them are there in the interest of various candidates, and are prepared to assist, whenever occasion offers, in making a «demonstration» or in starting a «stampede.» Perhaps the most tumultuous convention ever held was that of the Republicans at Chicago in 1880. Fully 15,000 persons were in attendance upon its regular sessions, and «demonstrations» were of frequent occurrence, sometimes as often as twice or three times in a single session. At one of the early evening sessions the mention of General Grant's name started a wild uproar, which lasted for thirty minutes. The whole vast assemblage appeared to take part in it. In the center of the hall, where the New York delegation sat, appeared the majestic figure of Roscoe Conkling, standing upon a chair, and slowly waving to and fro the delegation's banner, which was floating from a tall staff, while from all parts of the hall there came a roar as steady and solid and deep as that of Niagara. In one part of the hall a great body of people could now and then be heard singing «Glory, glory, hallelujah,» and in another part others singing «Marching through Georgia.» Thirty minutes by the watch this pandemonium reigned, and then it died out from sheer exhaustion. Scarcely had calm been restored when the mention of Blaine's name started a fresh outbreak, a great roar rising from all parts of the house at once. Flags, parasols, umbrellas, shawls, and handkerchiefs were waving frantically in all directions, and in the height of the din a well-dressed woman, who was standing on the platform, leaped upon the pedestal of a small statue of Liberty in front of her, and, leaning forward over its

head, waved a parasol wildly to and fro, at every swing of which the huge crowd cheered. Then she caught up a flag, and, winding it about her figure, called anew for cheers for Blaine, arousing an indescribable tumult. In the Maine delegation was to be seen the figure of Senator Hale, standing on the shoulders of his colleagues, and holding high in air upon its staff the shield of the State of Maine. All the time the steady roar of thousands of throats continued without a perceptible break, till, having been kept up for thirty-five minutes, five minutes longer than the Grant roar, it died out as suddenly as it had begun. Thus for more than an hour the convention had transformed itself into a howling mob, for no other purpose than to show that one candidate had as many friends present as the other. Previous to these outbreaks there had been a similar one, a day earlier, when Blaine's name was mentioned, and there were still others when the nominating speeches were made; but nothing was accomplished by any or all of them, for neither Grant nor Blaine was nominated. There were similar demonstrations for Blaine and others in the conventions of 1884, 1888, and 1892, lasting from twenty minutes to a half-hour each.

It is a fact that none of the most systematic efforts to «stampede» a convention by these methods has succeeded. Usually the mine has been exploded too soon. The demonstration has been made so far in advance of the balloting that its force has been wasted. Then, too, systematic preparations for «stampeding» have been met by equally systematic efforts to counteract them. Nobody is taken by surprise, and consequently nobody is carried off his feet. The balloting goes on precisely as if the demonstrations had not been made. As a matter of fact, the controlling power in nearly all conventions does not lie either in the delegates, or in the political bosses who direct so many of them, or in the ten or twelve thousand people who get into the convention building. It rests in the people who are outside, but whose influence is exerted during every moment that the convention is in session. The final, deciding question is not, Which candidate do we most desire to nominate? but, Which candidate can we be most certain to elect? To answer that intelligently the most sagacious minds in every convention look beyond the shouting galleries, with their few thousands of personally interested spectators, to the twelve millions of voters scattered over the land, and seek to read in advance their answer at the polls.

*Joseph B. Bishop.*