

MRS. MABEL BAER, NIECE OF PRESIDENT M'KINLEY, IS OUT TO SMASH BOSS RULE IN NEW YORK COUNTY

Adopting the Famous Expression of Her Beloved Uncle, "If We Win We Must Be Humble and If We Lose We Must Be Courageous," She Is Running on Independent Ticket for Assembly From Westchester Against William L. Ward

FAIR PLAY AND SQUARE DEAL TO ALL IS THE PRINCIPLE FOR WHICH SHE IS FIGHTING

Although Crippled Since Three Years Old, Mrs. Baer Has Appeared on Stage in Operatic Roles and Has Become Composer of Note—She Often Sang at White House During Uncle's Presidential Rule

"IF WE win we must be humble and if we lose we must be courageous." There is only one person in the world today who treasures those words of a President of the United States, spoken on the eve of his election.

She is one of the two who heard him. It was his mother who went to William McKinley that night so full of uncertainty and suspense and, putting her hands on his shoulders, said, "William, William, do you think we will win?"

And to her it was he made his answer. But the words took root in the heart of the little girl who stood unnoticed, listening so eagerly, with worshipful eyes upon her beloved uncle.

Today that little girl is Mrs. Mabel McKinley Baer, famous soprano; talented composer of many popular songs and ballads; a politician backed by the Independent Republicans of Westchester County, New York, as a candidate for the Assembly. Opposing her is William L. Ward, of Port Chester, for twenty-seven years undisputed ruler of the Republican organization and now in the throes of the hardest political battle of his life.

And into the political fight which she is making for the same party for which her uncle fought and died, Mrs. Baer, who lives in Mount Vernon, brings a spirit tempered and in a way fashioned by the words she heard on that memorable night: "If we win we must be humble and if we lose we must be courageous."

It was long ago that she sat quietly with her uncle in a big room in that famous old hestery in Washington—the Ebbitt House. The Congressman, for that was his rank then, sat at a table, absorbed in drafting the famous McKinley Tariff Bill. His little niece, properly curled, ruffled and starched, with a big pink bow perched on top of her brown hair, was frowning over her own problems—probably over the problem of legislation for a better grade of mulligan so that Isabelle Josephine Luu Maris—who was her favorite doll—hair would remain more firmly attached to her head.

Even then the determined expression on the face of the man was reflected on the chubby face of the child, and from the blue eyes of both shone the same expression of steadfast loyalty.

Learned Two Operas, Later Became Famous Singer

And it was this determination and firmness of purpose which enabled the fifteen-year-old girl to learn two operas in both French and Italian, and later to become a famous singer. It was this spirit which brought her renown as a composer and nationwide praise for her patriotic composition, "March On, Americans." Added to this characteristic was a sincerity and charm which endeared her to audiences all over America.

And whenever opportunity permitted, she sang at the White House, where she so endeared herself to her President uncle that when he lay dying from an assassin's bullet she was the only person other than his mother and brother Almer for whom he called.

It was early association with her uncle which inspired in Mrs. Baer the sense of party loyalty; just as more recent developments in the political world have caused her to become not an onlooker but a participant to uphold her theory that women should assume their responsibility in the task of governing the Nation.

"Fair play and a square deal to all," is the principle for which she is fighting. "I am out for office, not for any personal reason, but for the sake of all women," she said.

"Here in Westchester County we have the only real boss in the United States. The political ruler has been abandoned in almost all other communities, but here the boss system still prevails. Mr. Ward occupies the same position with the politicians and officeholders of the county as I do with my servants," she said.

"In the county committee, for instance on vacancies, whoever Mr. Ward wants to be put in, is named. He virtually decides on the candidates who are to run—and to be elected. If they do anything contrary to his wishes, out they go—just as I would discharge my servants if they did something I did not like."

And here she casts a smiling glance on the ever-faithful and adoring Myrtle, who was hovering in the background and whose shining black face wrinkled into a broad grin as she caught her mistress's eye.

Myrtle in Family 10 Years; Couldn't Do Without Her

"Myrtle and her family have been with us ten years," said Mrs. Baer, glancing from the political to the domestic question, "and I simply couldn't get along without her."

"No, I guess that's right," modestly acquiesced Myrtle.

Three years ago Mrs. Baer was appointed leader of the Fifth Ward of the Third District and in 1918 she was a delegate to the convention at Saratoga. Now that she is a candidate for the Assembly she is taking a more active interest in public affairs than ever.

arguate a new city form of government for the county last spring, but due to public antagonism the plan was abandoned.

And a third issue raised by the Independents is a demand for an "undisposed judiciary."

Mrs. Baer herself objects to the term "insurgent." She said in a speech before the Westchester Women's Club:

"I wish to have it clearly understood that I am not an insurgent. I am a Republican exercising my rights and privileges under the election law."

Bends Her Efforts Toward Better Party Management

"I will always lend my efforts to being about a better management of our party affairs in the interest of all the voters and not for the benefit of a few. If it is proper to call me an insurgent because I prefer to be classed as a free-thinking Republican woman rather than as one who is subservient to boss domination, then I suppose I will have to stand for such a characterization, but I believe that those of us who will be so classed will be definitely in the majority on September 19."

Born in Canton, O., at the old McKinley homestead, which was built in 1800, Mabel McKinley was brought to New York when she was two years old. There she lived until a few years after her marriage in 1909 to Dr. Hermann

ality—the one which she revealed when she spoke of the old homestead and the happy days she spent there. There was an air of quiet and peace.

"My music has been my life," Mrs. Baer said. "From the time when I sang my first solo at church on Children's Day in Somerset, Pa., I was hardly interested in anything else. And it is one of my sweetest memories to think that whenever I go back there they always ask me to sing in the churches, just as I did when I was eleven years old and when my mother played the organ."

"My mother was a splendid pianist and it was she who encouraged me to study and practice. My father did not approve of it and he bitterly opposed my going on the stage."

"You Just Ought to Hear Aunt Mabel Sing"

"You just ought to hear Aunt Mabel sing," interrupted Charles, enthusiastically, his brown eyes dancing as he smiled happily at Mrs. Baer and rubbed "Draw's" ferocious-looking jaw.

Charles is the thirteen-year-old boy whom Mrs. Baer has adopted. For three years she and Charles have sung together in the choir at the Episcopal church. It was there she first became interested in the boy, and when his mother died and his father was taken to the hospital with a serious illness she took him into her own home.

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Mrs. Baer as she looked when she sang at White House

1. Baer, when she went to Mount Vernon.

The little yellow house is set back among the trees at 159 Park avenue, and the absolute quiet which surrounds the place is broken suddenly by a low rumble or a growl, a sharp rattle, or an exquisite shower of notes, high and sweet, or perhaps all three.

If the first, it is "Draw," the English building which Mrs. Baer's son, Charles, insists will some day be a "regular champion." If the second, it is "Tan," the black Pomeranian, who wags his tail superciliously as he wanders about the porch. And if the last, it is probably the canary trying to outdo Mrs. Baer as she sings her favorite "Faust."

The porch, gay with cretonne, wicker chairs and yellow flowers in deep-blue bowls, leads into the large living room. And there Mrs. Baer sits at her desk.

And "Mother Was Such a Perfect Housekeeper"

Filed with papers, pamphlets, pens, pencils, notebooks, a glass paperweight and a few books, it caused a regretful glance, and a half apologetic "Mother was such a perfect housekeeper."

In spite of the size of the room and its bloom, it was dominated by the little mahogany desk which was placed in an alcove at the left—probably because of the personality of the woman who sat behind it giving rapid directions to her secretary.

In front of her on the wall hung a picture of her father, Abner McKinley; two group pictures of her husband's family; a gay little sketch; on her desk by the side of the battered typewriter was a picture of a sweet-faced girl looking out from under a huge swirl of dark hair—Mabel McKinley Baer's mother, the musician who started her daughter on her career.

Large Portrait of Mrs. Baer Painted by Chas. Whipple

The large portrait of Mrs. Baer in a black velvet gown with a white ripple of lace at her throat was painted by Charles Whipple at the request of her father. This and one other large picture of Mrs. La Brun and her daughter hold the attention for a moment before it passes to the magnificent Chinese lacquer screen, delicately decorated with pale yellow and white water lilies, and to the tall, rich blue vase around which dragons writhe and twist.

"Those were father's," said Mrs. Baer. "I treasure them so because they were his."

The grand piano, on which were some of Mrs. Baer's own compositions, stood in the corner in the half shadow from which gleamed the silver vases over whose tops nodded crimson roses.

"I seldom play down here, though," said Mrs. Baer. "My music room is upstairs where I give all my music lessons." And upstairs the room reflected another phase of her person-



This is Mrs. Baer when she was three years old

Clearly, "Aunt Mabel" is a mighty fine person to Charles, and the enthusiasm which he and Dr. Baer exhibit about Mrs. Baer's candidacy are merely the reflection of what "everybody in town thinks, too," Charles declares.

"My first vocal lessons began when I was ten years old, and I studied with Lilly Bergs in New York. When I was fifteen I began studying with Isador Luckstone, and I have been studying with him ever since. Last winter was the first year that I did not take three lessons a week from him."

"I knew 'Faust,' which has always been my favorite in both French and Italian, and 'Romeo and Juliet' in French, and a number of oratorios."

"It was in 1903 that the wishes of my husband and my father. But it seemed the psychological moment to me, so I did it. I went to San Francisco and made my first appearance on the Orpheum stage there. Then I toured the country singing many of my own songs, grand opera arias and ballads."

She glanced at her crutches. "I could not sing in grand opera because of these," she said simply. Mrs. Baer has been a cripple since she was two years ago, a result of infantile paralysis.

Some of the songs Mrs. Baer has written are: "Anona," "My Little Sweet Sunbeam," "I Can But Think of Thee," "Pearls," "Karama," "Golden Rod," "My Rancho Maid," "Dear Heart of Mine," "Remembrance of Love."

"Remembrance of Love" Dedicated to Uncle

"Remembrance of Love" was dedicated to her uncle, President McKinley, and "My Little Sweet Sunbeam" was dedicated to his wife.

"I remember how pleased Aunt Ida was with it," said Mrs. Baer. "Sunday evenings at the White House," she continued, "when my aunt and uncle would receive in the Blue Room, they would bring some of their friends into the Blue Room, and uncle would ask me to sing."

"But, uncle, I would protest, 'I have sung everything I know.'"

"Doesn't make any difference," he would reply. "Begin at the beginning and sing them all over again."

"And I would sing his favorite hymn, which was 'Come, Ye Disciples,' and everything else I knew from 'Good-bye' to 'Comin' Through the Rye.'"

"I shall never forget those Sunday evenings," Mrs. Baer said as she recalled the loving kindness and simplicity of her uncle.

"Many times I have gone back to the old home in Canton, which is sold now, and no longer in the family. Once uncle



Mrs. Baer as she looks today Mrs. Baer's home in Mount Vernon



Mrs. Mabel McKinley Baer

came back to his mother's birthday, and I had a surprise for him. The house always seemed like a gloomy old place to me, though I loved it devotedly, so I decided to brighten things up, and I remember sticking little bunches of pink carnations and flowers all around the family portraits."

Mrs. Baer laughed merrily at the picture of the little girl standing on tiptoes to reach the heavy old gold frames and fasten there her little bunches of flowers.

Mrs. Baer, with her husband, mother and father was in Colorado when the news the President had been shot reached them. Their private coach was put on a special train and rushed East. They arrived a week before he died, and for a time Mrs. Baer said, they had every hope for his recovery.

"The beautiful memory I have of him is one of my greatest treasures," said Mrs. Baer, and it is in her attempt to "carry on" that Mrs. Baer has entered politics in an effort to banish the boss and bring political fairness into Westchester County.

Little Benny's Note Book
By Lee Pope

I was down town with ma yesterday and some lady stopped in front of us saying, Well, well Pawleen, Fotta, I haven't seen you for ages, this is a sight for sore eyes.

Being a long lady with things on her hat, and ma sed, Emily Sparks, well this is a pleasant surprise, I'd hardly know you, not that you've changed so much, of course.

I don't see how I ever reconciled you, either, though I must say you look about the same, only I mean you've gotten so tremendously stout, sed the lady. Who, me, not at all, I'm just exactly the size I prefer to be so that's why I remain in this way, but don't you find it very embarrassing to be so thin? ma sed.

Who, me, we went an' there, if I wasn't slender I'd be perfectly miserable, there's a certain wonderful freedom of motion in being slender that I suppose you fat people don't know anything about, the lady sed.

O, I don't know, better than people always seem to have so many more friends than thin people, nothing personal of course, and I'd hate to have the feeling you I want to call on somebody that I wasn't enjoying their hospitality because I took up so little room on the furniture when I sat down, ma sed.

O well, it's all in the way you look at it, perhaps that's better than taking advantage of their hospitality by weakening the legs of the chairs that were only intended to support normal people, if you know what I mean, well I'm glad to of seen you, Pawleen, we don't you call me up some time? the lady sed, and ma sed, I will, thanks, I will.

And me and ma kept on walking, ma saying, If she waits for me to catch her up she'll be even skinnier, if such a thing is possible, how I detest thin women, and I sed, Maybe she don't like you either, ma.