

conventions compelled a show-down on men—men as representative of politics.

That resolution was "loaded." It was part of a plan. It blotted from the list of presidential possibilities one or two promising candidates. It, too, was a stroke of political genius. It prepared the path for the triumph of progressive principles.

When the result of the roll call is announced there are a few derisive laughs.

"Only some meaningless words," they mutter. But as he leaves the platform Bryan, too, smiles—and some men tremble when Bryan smiles.

In a room in the convention hall are gathered the brains of the party at work on the platform of principle. There are more than forty men there—nay there is one man there. There are forty men paying tribute to the genius and the democracy of one man. That man is Bryan. He practically dictates the platform. At Denver when he was a candidate he had to fight, through his representatives, for the platform he desired. At Baltimore his word is law.

And why?

Because he had the political genius to lose the first battle, to arouse the country, to gather behind his personal power the impetus of millions of democrats back home. Had he won his first battle he would have lost more vital battles. By losing himself, he found himself. By defeating him, they smoothed the way for his triumph.

It is Friday afternoon and the monotonous roll call of states follow in dreary succession. Then arises a fat, sleek, smug man with little eyes peeping out from the rolls of fat that encircle them—his face blood red—and in a rasping voice announces—"Ninety votes for Clark."

It is Murphy, the grand high mogul of Tammany. One of the ninety votes is that of August Belmont.

It was Murphy who primarily challenged the progressives by insisting on Parker for temporary chairman. It was Clark's men lining up with Murphy that accomplished the progressive defeat. The Clark managers were probably unjust to Clark but the action of Murphy hinted of a coalition.

Then it was that the smile of Bryan that made men shiver, disclosed its meaning. He had forced the convention to declare against the nomination of a man who might be subject to the domination of the interests, and now, if he did not know who the interests favored, he knew who they opposed.

When Murphy and Belmont went one way, Bryan switched to Wilson. And that was the beginning to the end. He had forced the Democratic party to issue an open declaration of war against Wall street. He had written into the platform the plan of campaign against Wall street. And now he named the general who was to lead the people against the enemy.

It was a complete victory. Never in the political history of the world—and I write it deliberately—had any political leader ever won a more sweeping victory.

IV.

A word now as to the methods of Roosevelt and Bryan.

In the days when Roosevelt sat about the council table with such astute leaders as Root, Taft, Bonaparte and others, and with their aid, planned his campaign, he seemed invincible. The world refused to admit that his apparent wisdom was the composite wisdom of his cabinet. It declined to credit the prestige of his exalted station with any of the glory of the triumph. It was Roosevelt. But the moment he found himself without his advisors and stripped of the prestige of power he began to blunder, and the climax of his blundering was reached at Chicago.

He faced at Chicago some of the same forces that Bryan faced at Baltimore, and he attempted to concentrate against his foes the same public sentiment outside the convention halls and failed. He failed because he fought with epithets. Every reverse threw him into a spasm of fury. He lost his head. He had no definite plan. But worst of all he could not subordinate his personal ambition for principle. He might have forced a progressive platform and could have named a progressive candidate, but he did not apparently care for the platform, and he did not want a progressive nominee unless it should be Roosevelt.

His speeches at mass meetings were part sermons, part denunciations, full of sound and fury, leading nowhere. His abuse appalled, his selfishness finally repelled.

How different with Bryan. Doubtless he would have

liked the nomination, but he subordinated that ambition, and therein lies his superiority. Roosevelt had but one thought—the nomination. Checked in that ambition, he had neither the patience, the desire, the generalship to fight the more vital battles. Here Bryan proved himself the greater leader—the biggest man. He fought every inch of the ground. He had the clear brain to plan ahead. His speeches were not sermons—nor mere abuse. They were inspiring, fighting speeches, having a definite purpose. Each speech had a motive, an immediate purpose. Every purpose dove-tailed. Thus did he win by degrees.

"He built the ladder with which to rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies."

It has often been said that eloquence no longer counts.

This is absurd. In any popular assembly, in any great popular movement eloquence is a part of the equipment of war.

The speeches of Bryan and Roosevelt at Baltimore and Chicago are interesting from this point of view. The speech delivered at the mass-meeting at Chicago on the Monday night before the convention, was not suited to its purpose. The first part was a dissertation on pure politics, and resembled a sermon on toleration delivered to a blood-thirsty army sacking a city; the second section was mere abuse calculated to cement the forces of opposition.

The speeches of Bryan were passionate, intense, concise, forcible, compelling, aimed at some definite weak spot in the breastworks of the enemy. Had they been theoretic sermons, no one would have cared. Had they been mere abuse they would have lost their potency in the country. In the midst of turmoil, in the face of hissing, hating men, he couched his appeals in language calculated to make a profound impression on the minds of the millions who are to vote at the polls. It was a realization of this fact on the part of his enemies that forced them to support him as they hissed.

Someone has said that after hearing Cicero, the audience said, "How fine," and after listening to Demosthenes, "Let's march against Philipp." That is the difference between the speeches of Roosevelt and Bryan at Chicago and Baltimore. The country heard the former and said, "How true." They heard the latter and exclaimed, "Let's fight."

V.

Out of the turmoil, the seething, sweltering, maddening mass at the two conventions the voice of reason spoke, and said: "In national conventions called for the performance of the noblest function of free people, the empty meaningless, bought-and-paid-for demonstrations of noise and fury must yield henceforth to dignified deliberation."

The disgraceful features of both conventions were the puerile attempts at stampedes.

Cattle stampede. Men should not.

At Chicago—the fusillade of vile epithets bandied back and forth between the platform and floor and gallery mantled the national cheek with the blush of shame. The Bill Flinns playing the village rowdy were a melancholy spectacle and a sad commentary on our national life. At Baltimore the booing and hissing of men like Bryan and Bell were ineffably disgusting. In both conventions there were moments when the mob reigned.

The most amusing—and at the same time the most nauseating—sight at Baltimore were the mechanical efforts of the friends of the candidates to shout the others. As one of the nominating speeches was being made my attention was attracted to a wild-eyed individual on the floor feverishly distributing flags and tin horns preparatory to an "impulsive demonstration" at the conclusion of the speech. It represented as great a fraud as when some four-flushing orator with an elaborately prepared discourse in his hip pocket rises "to make a few extemporaneous remarks."

It fooled no one. It amused some. It disgusted others.

Either one of two things will inevitably result from the disgraceful features of the two conventions—the mob spirit will be eliminated or presidential primaries will come.

The forthcoming campaign may be prolific of surprises, but as I write to-day it appears quite probably that the two picturesque figures of the two conventions accomplished far-reaching results.

Theodore Roosevelt by fighting a losing battle wrought ruin for the party that long followed him with the zeal of a crusader.

William Jennings Bryan by fighting a winning battle has given his party a new birth.