

CONCERNING THE BIG STATE CONVENTIONS

Ever hear about the results of the conjunction of a fool, a match and a powder magazine? Well, there was a plenty of gunpowder at Fremont; and there was no particular lack of fools or of matches. But, fortunately, at no time were the three permitted to get together. As a result, what promised at one time to be a suicidal fight in democratic ranks proved to be about as mild as a Quaker experience meeting. The men who went to Fremont breathing threatenings and slaughter against Bryan were quite easily convinced that they could get a fight in a minute if fight there must be. There was no fight. But the Bryan supporters outgeneralled the opposition, for while Bryan's name is not mentioned in the platform, neither is any other modern democratic leader, and the things boasted of in the platform are clearly so much due to Bryan's leadership and advocacy that the platform as a whole is an endorsement of Bryan.

From the democratic standpoint, however, the Fremont convention is remarkable for one thing; the one thing that stands out prominently in democratic history. For the first time since the memory of Nebraskans runneth not to the contrary, the party refused to make a condemned ass of itself by getting into a snarl over non-essentials. This is all the more remarkable for the reason that the Fremont convention offered more than the usual number of opportunities for doing that sort of thing. But instead of flying at one another's throats—as is usual—the democrats acted with unusual wisdom and actually got together. So far as surface indications point everything looked smooth and fine. What matters it that there was a smoldering fire beneath the surface? Let 'er smolder!

Mayor Dahlman was there with a snickersnee ground to a razor edge, and he had a delegation from Douglas behind, each with an equally sharp snickersnee. But before they could wield them they were seized, bound and gagged. It was really humorous to watch convention proceedings and see how lamb-like the docile those Douglas delegates were.

So intent upon "harmony" were the men in charge that not even mention was allowed of the Shallenberger administration. For why? Because any bouquets for Shallenberger might give his senatorial candidacy a boost, and thus militate against Thompson, Reed and other senatorial aspirants. Wooster, the irrepressible sage—and other condiments—of Silver Creek, tried to get an "individual expression" from the delegates as to their presidential choice. Wooster was sat upon so hard that the vertebrae in his spine made a series of dents in the opera house floor.

"Billy" Thompson spoke for half an hour, and the hardest job he ever tackled, oratorically speaking, was to talk that

long to a convention of democrats without saying a word about Bryan. But he managed it, although it was really funny to watch him skating away from the tabooed name. It wasn't because he was averse to mentioning Bryan; it was because of the "harmony program." Every now and then, as Thompson was speaking, some one would yell, "Hurrah for Bryan!" and there would be a big demonstration. Then some one would shout "Hurrah for Harmon!" and there would be another demonstration. But the impartial spectator had to decide that the Bryan shouters either had a majority or else were the possessors of the greatest lung capacity.

We are not particularly interested in the subject of presidential candidates, but desiring to be equally fair to all aspirants, declared or perspective, we have no hesitancy in warning Governor Harmon that he ought to remonstrate with some of his friends in Nebraska. The flooding of Fremont with Harmon pictures was not a good political move. Quite the contrary, it was calculated to arouse bitter opposition. It was meant not so much as a boost for Harmon as a slap at Bryan, and Nebraska democrats are not in a position now, nor were they ever, to take any slaps at Bryan.

Ordinarily under the primary law a state convention is a mighty tame affair. That is what the Fremont convention of the Nebraska democracy was—speaking solely of the convention from the time it was called to order until it adjourned. The fireworks all took place in the preliminaries. Speaking in prize ring parlance, the "fight was fixed" before the arena was thrown open. But the attendance and the enthusiasm clearly point to the fact that the democrats of Nebraska are clothed in their fighting habiliments and really expect to win.

The republican convention at Lincoln was really more exciting than the democratic convention at Fremont, even if the La Follette insurgents did show a streak of yellow. They were touted as being prepared to make a fight against even mention of Taft or his administration, but they failed signally to come up to the scratch. The Taft supporters, finding themselves with an overwhelming majority, obligingly made some concessions to the "progressives," but they did it with an air of condescension that must have made the "progressives" writhe in impotent wrath. While Taft was not endorsed for re-election, his administration was endorsed as "wise and statesmanlike." The question of reciprocity was sidetracked altogether, which was an exhibition of good sense on the part of the managers, for that reciprocity question threatens to make a lot of trouble, not only for Taft but for lesser lights in the g. o. p. ranks.

The populist convention was something of a surprise, for most people

imagined that it would consist of three or four delegates. The fact is, the "pop" convention evidenced the fact that the once powerful party is about to accomplish a political resurrection. Also, that the ligament that once tied the "pops" to the democrats, or vice versa, has been ruthlessly severed. About the most interesting feature of this convention was the practical shelving of Chairman Manuel. Efforts have been made to have it appear that he retired of his own accord, but the evidences point that something like a shove was administered.

But, after all, isn't it unusual enough to be worthy of note that the "pops" and democrats met in different cities, and without the old-time farce of "conference committee" and such?

O, this fall's campaign is just momentous enough to make it decidedly interesting. Not because there is anything of particular moment at stake so far as the present is concerned, but because of the bearing it will have on the big fight due to be staged in 1912.

As a non-partisan and wholly unprejudiced observer of things political, Will Maupin's Weekly purposes viewing the fray from the outside and keeping its readers posted, not overlooking the necessity of pointing out the humorous features of a campaign that the active participants therein are very apt to take with wonderful seriousness. Really, we of Nebraska have been taking our politics altogether too seriously of late years. It is a good time right now to cease perspiring blood and get some relaxation.

MITCHELL AND THE MINERS.

Given his choice between holding his working card in the United Mine Workers of America and his job as a secretary of the National Civic Federation, John Mitchell decided to keep his working card. His choice reflects credit upon his heart and his brain, but compelling Mitchell to make the choice reflects no credit upon the great organization he founded and led to splendid success. John Mitchell, like many another good man prominent in the labor movement, was made a sacrifice by the jealous-minded, the "knockers" and the hold-backs. The union he managed with such consummate skill has, since he quit the job, been torn by strife and bickering. Will Maupin's Weekly is not wholly in sympathy with the National Civic Federation, but only the foolish will deny that the more Mitchells it has in its ranks the nearer it will come to carrying out in fact the principles which so far have been mere theories. Mitchell has retired from the National Civic Federation, but he is once more an active member of the United Mine Workers of America. This means, if we know anything about the labor movement, that some men now high in authority in that organization will in due time have to take up the pick and shovel.