

The Five Passions of Ollie James

It is hard to conceive that a man with the name of Ollie should have any passions worth mentioning. But it is also hard to realize that any one of that name can be six feet six inches in height and weigh 275 pounds. One could understand it if the name were turned round. James (or Jim) Ollie could well be big and bouncing and go into politics; but Ollie James! Well, it simply shows how lavish Kentucky is in raising big men when even an Ollie is made on such a generous scale. Even Kentuckians, however, couldn't quite reconcile themselves to that name as the youngster who bore it began to expand in all directions. So down in his home town of Marion they long ago began to call him "Whitey" James and they keep it up to this day. "Ollie," says a writer in the Saturday Evening Post, "a tender diminutive rhyming with Cholly and Molly, and you expect to see a slender and handboxy person, perfumed and pompadoured. You expect to see that, but do you? You do not; take it from me, you do not. What you do see is a large and robust Kentucky citizen, half a foot over six feet, with shoulders a yard across, weighing two hundred and seventy-five pounds, with a big head on a big neck, with arms that look as if they could out-squeeze a cotton compress and with legs that weigh, apiece more than any Cholly ever chollid, concluding in pedestals amply constructed to bear their burden. 'Tis he—Ollie; the pride and joy of the Blue Grass, the mighty mountain of Marion, the peerless peak of the Pennyriple."

He is not only big but he seems even bigger than he is. Another writer insists that he is seven feet high and six feet wide. "To say that he is as big as the side of a house does not describe him at all," we are told; "he is as big as the side of a sky-scraper."

"He is not fat, he is just broad and big. He has the face of a prize-fighter and a voice that, when he lets it out to the last notch, sounds like the battle of Bunker Hill. He is probably the best stump-speaker in the democratic party. As an orator he is a cross between Bryan as he was when he delivered the Cross of Gold speech, and Robert G. Ingersoll as he was when he delivered the Plumed Knight speech. That is, he has Ingersoll's way of bringing out a felicitous phrase coupled with Bryan's tricks of manner of voice—not the Bryan of today, but the Bryan of 1896."

A big man like that has to have big passions of some kind to keep him going. Otherwise he just lolls around in the house and makes a nuisance of himself. Ollie James is credited with five passions by his numerous biographers. One is for baseball. He no longer runs bases, and he never did run them very well. All he did was to take three steps and then slide, and there he was. But even that he has long since cut out. Now he roots, and he does it with his arms and legs as well as his megaphone voice. He is said on good authority to be the noisiest rooter in Marion, if not in Washington.

His second passion developed about the same time as the first. It is a passion for sorghum molasses and smoked hams. He once carried a tin-pail of the molasses all the way from his home in Kentucky to Washington to present it to Mrs. Champ Clark, and we don't know how many Kentucky hams he has sent to friends in Washington. His father—who is still living—attends personally to the smoking of these hams and uses, it is said, sassafras wood instead of hickory, thus giving the meat a peculiar aromatic flavor.

The third of "Ollie's" passions is for a horse-race. As he is a Kentuckian, you would, of course, have guessed that. He not only loves a horse-race, but he loves to bet on it. "Loves to," we say; whether he does actually bet, dependent saith not.

Passion number four is an affection for the Methodist church. A Kentucky correspondent for the Nashville American even places this passion of the senator's ahead of all others. He says of James: "It's at a prayer-meeting in the Methodist church on Wednesday night that he is supremely happy. In truth, I think he would rather participate in a lively protracted meeting than engage in a rough and tumble stumping political campaign, though it must be admitted that 'Whitey' loves politics next to his God. But he believes in the religion of the old-school

Methodism and lines up for it on every occasion." He married a Methodist preacher's daughter, Miss Ruth Thomas, and took her as his bride to Washington when he first went there as congressman.

Passion number five is, of course, a love for politics—or rather love for the democratic party. He is a partisan or he is nothing. He is as "regular" as Champ Clark, and it was because of the latter's regularity that James was such a stout advocate of his nomination for president. He is also a Bryan man, and when the latter made his violent assault upon the Clark forces at Baltimore, Ollie James, presiding over the convention, presented a pitiful, perspiring spectacle of divided affection.

He began his political career as a school-boy by perusing the pages of the Congressional Record, learning some of the speeches by heart and thundering them forth at audiences in the schoolroom when his turn came to declaim. He continued his political education, when sweet sixteen, by acting as a page in the state legislature, studying law in between times. When he was thirty-two, having developed into a good lawyer and a good stump-speaker, he announced his candidacy for congress. He won by an enormous vote, and kept on going to congress until, last year, he expressed a desire to become a senator. Considered from the house gallery, says Alfred Henry Lewis, writing in the *Cosmopolitan*, Mr. James is an imposing spectacle:

"Well built, shoulders squared, good eyes, good nose, good mouth, a jaw that tells of iron resolution, the impression he creates is altogether in his favor. Smooth of face, thoughtfully full forehead, there is that in the atmosphere of Mr. James which never fails to enlist one's notice. You may not know who he is, but you know he is somebody. Even his profound baldness might be said to assist. For as to that matter of hair, Mr. James must be listed among the utterly bald. His scalp has been, indeed, most grimly weeded. There is a thin-sown fringe even with the ears which still holds the field like some forlorn hope of the capillary. But that is the hirsute most and best that can be said for Mr. James."—*Current Literature*.

PASS IT ALONG

In one of his admirable speeches in the house of representatives, Representative Sulzer said: "The next president of the United States must be a democrat!"

"The next congress must be democratic in both branches!"

"The campaigns of 1910 and 1911 are history. The national campaign of 1912 is now under way."

"In the last two campaigns the democratic forces were organized and united. Everywhere democratic clubs were organized by the young men of the country, and these clubs, acting through the various state leagues or federations of democratic clubs, and with the regular party organizations, conducted active, aggressive and systematic campaigns; did very effective work, with gratifying results. In some states there was a change of fully 50 per cent in the vote, due to the influence of these organizations; while in other states the result of the election in some instances was attributed largely to their efforts. These organizations are potent factors and powerful influences for democratic success. This is the age of the young man, and the results of these two campaigns prove conclusively what can be accomplished through organization and unity of effort."

"It should be constantly borne in mind that while the distribution of literature and enthusiastic democratic meetings, addressed by able and earnest speakers, are valuable contributions to a successful campaign, by far the most important work is the reaching of the individual voter who will not attend public meetings and is not likely to read our campaign literature. Other things being equal, the party which makes the most thorough canvass of voters by capable workers will certainly win, and the contribution which the clubs of the league can make to the efficiency of this work, while it may be weak in ostentation, is of the greatest value."

"The campaign committee, therefore, urgently recommends that the committee of each individual club, having each a canvass of voters, should be composed of experienced, energetic workers, who are willing and able to give time to the canvass, and we further urge that what-

ever work may be undertaken by each club, direct effort shall be made to reach voters in their homes.

"The recommendations of the committee are therefore as follows:

"First—Organization of appropriate campaign committees.

"Second—Special attention to new voters and to the poll or registration of voters.

"Third—The reaching of as many independent voters as possible, and the placing in their hands of carefully selected campaign literature as a supplement of earnest personal appeal."

These are good suggestions. Pass them along.

GOOD WORK

F. A. Coyle—Enclosed find draft to pay for the enclosed club of 14 subscribers to *The Commoner*, each for three months.

B. M. Hoffer, Springville, Iowa—I enclose herewith list of 111 subscribers to whom please send *The Commoner* during the campaign. Find enclosed my check to pay for same.

Judson E. Richardson, Evart, Mich.—Enclosed I hand you check in payment for the enclosed 162 campaign subscriptions to *The Commoner*. Unfortunately my unavoidable absence has delayed me in securing these subscriptions for *The Commoner*; but I will get others without delay.

J. D. Burdick, M. D., Ft. Gibson, Okla.—Replying to your favor of recent date I would state that I have been making up a club of subscribers to *The Commoner* and enclose you herewith a draft to pay for the accompanying 100 subscribers. I have been invited by the chairman of our county committee to take the matter up with the democrats in Muskogee. I shall try to show them that this plan of campaigning is the easiest, logical and most feasible; that it appeals direct to the intelligence of the people—the only rational way—and renders the old stereotyped regime of flamboyant parades and hounding the brush to get the people out to hear the "speakin'," obsolete.

J. H. Cushenberry, Secretary and Treasurer, Democratic Headquarters, Girard, Kan.—I enclose check for \$100 to apply on campaign subscriptions. We are going to secure one thousand and *Commoner* subscribers in this county and are sending you under separate cover about 700—the list will follow in a few days.

J. T. McGraw, W. Va.—Enclosed find check for \$15.00 for which send 100 copies of *The Commoner* each week to Jos. Wehrle, Jr., president McGraw Marching Club, Charleston, W. Va. I want to send *The Commoner* to clubs closely identified with Mr. Bryan in the great fight he has made for the past sixteen years.

J. McClellan, Chairman County Committee, Lansing, Mich.—I enclose herewith list of 169 campaign subscribers for *The Commoner*, subscriptions to run until after election.

Wm. Van Steenberger, Ia.—Herewith find money order to pay for the enclosed club of 37 campaign subscribers to *The Commoner*.

J. P. Cain, Dickinson, N. D.—The following is a list of 100 campaign subscribers to *The Commoner* with check to cover the same enclosed.

Col. A. E. Brackett, Bremen, O.—Starting from my home Friday while waiting to take the train I secured one subscriber for *The Commoner* and then on different trains and while waiting for trains, I have secured the enclosed list of 35 campaign subscribers to *The Commoner*.

W. M. Englehart, Encampment, Wyo.—I enclose herewith draft for the enclosed club of 40 subscribers, names and addresses herewith. The political situation in this locality seems to be growing toward Roosevelt—he is drawing his support practically all from the Taft ranks.

E. R. Week, Spokane, Wash.—Herewith find draft to pay for the enclosed club of 200 campaign subscribers to *The Commoner*.

If elected again will Mr. Roosevelt resume prosecution for libel of that Indianapolis newspaper that was rash enough to tell a few truths about that Panama deal?

We gather from the evidence that Mr. Roosevelt didn't care a hoot who contributed just so he wasn't informed as to the identity of the contributor.

Considering the fact that Mr. Roosevelt never held an elective office except those received at the hands of the Wall street "bosses" it would seem proper for him to turn state's evidence and become the star witness against them but he is not the man to select for prosecuting attorney.