

FAMOUS GRID CLUB HOLDS 35TH ANNUAL DINNER FETE

Washington Newspaper Correspondents Celebrate Anniversary With Banquet In Form of Convention.

Washington, April 10.—Having arrived at the presidential age of 35 years, the Gridiron club, celebrated the event tonight by turning its dinner into a national nonpartisan political convention, at which 1920 candidates heard their claims presented in a fashion new to party politics.

Many were nominated and more were discussed in such a way as to suggest to all the candidates who were present the notion that perhaps they take themselves too seriously.

The Gridiron convention was called to order by the clanging of a dinner bell, and when the delegates, who also included guests, filed into the hall and took their seats at the dinner tables they discovered that both great political games were being heavily played by some of their most distinguished members.

Among those present were Secretaries Colby, Meredith, Houston, Payne and Daniels, Attorney General Palmer, Speaker Gillett, General Pershing, the Japanese ambassador, the Polish minister, former Secretaries Lansing and Lane, Homer S. Cummings, chairman of the democratic national committee; Will H. Hays, chairman of the republican national committee; Senators Watson of Indiana, Owen of Oklahoma, Harding of Ohio and Foindester of Washington; Governor Sproul of Pennsylvania and Morrow of Kentucky, and Col. George Harvey.

Bar Taft and Bryan.
The convention was opened by the selection of a temporary chairman, following which it proceeded to elect a permanent chairman, who proved to be W. W. Jermaine, the new president of the club. The proceedings were mixed and fast and, while touching upon many phases of the 1920 campaign, really settled none of them.

A press section was filled with working newspaper correspondents, and a large number of editors and publishers tried to crowd in. Dr. Albert Shaw could not get a seat among the correspondents, who also rejected applications from William H. Taft and William J. Bryan. A pair of "sob sisters" who applied for seats met the same fate.

The working correspondents, however, were not without their troubles.

"I was told to describe Herbert Hoover," said one. "To what party does he belong?"

"I don't know," was the answer. "I haven't asked him since yesterday."

Platform planks on prohibition, labor, the tariff and the war made their appearance.

"My papers want to know," one correspondent asked, "whether McAdoo is for or against government ownership of railroads?"

"Answer 'Yes,'" he was advised.

Oujia Board Appears.
A session given over to the ministrations of three mediums, who summoned spirits and made them talk by means of an ouija board, operated mysteriously without the use of hands and in full view of the delegates.

The spirit of Charles E. Hughes remarked: "I would have been all right if Will Crocker had not fed me those California rice olives." Said the spirit of Josephus Daniels: "I am being punished for my sins."

The spirit of Vice President Marshall observed: "What the democratic party needs is a fool killer. Then the few of us left can form a new party."

Frank Hitchcock's spirit told the delegates: "It pays to advertise. I put an ad in the paper, reaching as follows: 'Situation wanted as political manager for some candidate. Terms: Florida delegates on delivery. Fast color guaranteed.' No look at the job I got."

The spirit of Robert Lansing solemnly said: "May I not suggest to you, my dear Colby, that it would be the part of wisdom and discretion to move your office to the ground floor. It is much safer. Cordially and sincerely yours."

The spirit of Secretary Baker sent this message: "It's all very well to insist on your love, but why didn't you kick me upstairs into Lansing's job?"

Musical Interlude.
From the spirit of Henry White came this: "Ah. The peace conference. I loved it. It was there I was cured of insomnia."

There was a musical interlude, also political, in which Senator Harding, Attorney General Palmer, Herbert Hoover, General Leonard Wood, Governor Lowden and William J. Bryan all found themselves caricatured. Mr. Palmer was sked:

"Were you a candidate for senator against Penrose and Pinchot in 1914?"

"I decline to answer," he said, "and plead the statute of limitations." Governor Lowden, who admitted that he had been honored with the Virginia delegates, sang "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia."

Nearly all of the candidates sang their claims and sat at the White house after which President Jermaine announced:

"After looking this bunch over the chair announces the convention is not yet ready to vote. There are some dark horses down in the pasture which we wish to inspect before taking decisive action."

The political status of the peace

Blinded Belgian War Heroes From Varied Social Categories Equally Taught Manual Trades---Play Poker With Veteran Sureness Which Startles Most Yankee Experts

Masters of Pet American Game With But One Draw-back, Inability to Keep "The Poker Face"—During Tense Moments of a Game They Hide From Each Other in Voice and Movement to Keep From Exposing Their Hands—Beautiful Blind American Girl Gives Them New Lease on Life.

By STERLING HEILIG.

Brussels, March 25.—(By Mail.)—(Special.)—"If it were not for their faces," said the new American, "I would back these men against any full-eight poker players."

"What's the matter with their faces?"

"I don't say there is anything, but I suppose they're out of practice in guarding their faces. Playing among themselves, facial expression does not count. A man with his eyes should be at an advantage among them. If they would consent to play a little game in highwayman's masks, I know a lad who really needs a trimming!"

The Brussels American laughed. "They have beaten sight players every time they have met," he said. "Cards and music are their strong pleasures. They do not forget their blindness; but, for once, it adds a new zest to the game. Once a full-sighted player being cleaned out, almost suspected that the dealer's fingers, unconsciously, as it were by habit, were reading the cards as they dealt them!"

"To suspect a blind man of second-dealing you is the limit; and it is not possible, because—"

"But, say, I notice they deal always from the middle of the top card," said the new American.

"Surely," replied the other, "but they are ferocious about their honor; and a mere idea, idly mentioned was enough. Thenceforth they refused to admit into the game any player who has his eyesight and seldom indeed permit spectators. You were privileged. They must have taken a fancy to you!" he concluded, grinning.

The blinded heroes grinned sympathetically. It is wrong to call them blind men, but blinded—they were swift, ardent, athletic young fellows, clear-eyed, joying in the beauty of the world one minute, rushing up to the defense of women, children and manly independence; and then, as suddenly, their light was put out by a bloody-handed trespasser for gain. And yet they smiled when we smiled.

"None of them has been blind over five years," he continued in a low tone. "That one dealing got treaty also was considered. Three chiefs in full regalia appeared in the center of the hall and proceeded to concoct a peace pudding, which they promised would be the last word in artistic perfection."

Peace Pudding.
The pudding, it appeared, was planned to have 14 points of perfection, but at the last minute it was found necessary to eliminate a number of the points. The trio of chefs labored diligently explaining the ingredients as they mixed. The pudding finally was covered with an icing approved by 49 members of the senate, but no sooner had the icing settled into place when the pudding exploded with a loud report, scattering the contents all over the chefs.

"Now we can't even pocket it," observed one of them sadly.

At one point the convention was interrupted by the invasion of a gorgeously dressed woman, who demanded in loud tones to be shown to a seat. The "woman" declared that she had been elected a member and that, if necessary, she would throw a man out in order to get a place at the tables.

"If the women don't get self-determination," she said, "there'll be male extermination."

When finally informed that it was impossible to admit a woman to a gridiron dinner she promptly removed her skirts, to the threatened scandal of the convention and it was discovered that the "woman" was a newly elected member of the club.

There were speeches by Secretary Colby, Speaker Gillett, Prince Casimir Lubowski, the Polish minister; Colonel George Harvey, General Pershing and Governor Morrow. Reporters, however, are never present at Gridiron club dinners so the speeches were not reported.

his at Charleroi. Yet each would notice the changed rhythm in a dealer's movements should his fingers or eyes for that matter be occupied in reading the cards and his mind be charged with remembering them."

Blind Heroes Club.
A very unusual crowd. It is the poker game at the Blinded Heroes Club of Belgium. The printed name is different. Go through the lodge gate at Boisfort, through the ancient private park, past the perfume of flower beds and early flowering shrubs, the dreamy heat of sunny lawns and cool peace of woods. It is their place, where they come for week-ends; where they live at will; where they return on vacation from proudly earning their way in Brussels. Anyone can earn his keep here. The king stands by them. The queen stands by them. The aristocracy—why, some of these same blinded boys are of great name and some rich merchants' sons; and every one of them is intimate with wealth and aristocracy thereby. They are buddies together.

Many folks will be surprised to know there is a poker game at Boisfort—which is different from playing poker. It is their game.

A special mentality, nerves, souls, senses, intuitions. The majority were blinded in the early years of the war. Young, vigorous, swift, ardent, fired to frenzy by invasion, they came to this blackness in an hour, without any loss but eyesight, and strange gain. Being keyed up to the highest pitch, behold! fast hand strings, resonant, responsive, super-sensitive to waves of mystery in adventurous twilight.

Discard the Joker.
"There are too many cards in the deck!" observed the young count of 12 chateaux to a lad who quit with 84 notches on his gun. As a fact, the joker was still in it—they never use the joker. This he told by "feel and weight."

They are ordinary American poker cards, but with embossed points added in the upper lefthand and lower righthand corners. But when these two consummate blinded men play ecarte (the 32-card deck, from sevens to aces inclusive) they make it a fad to play with unprinted cards—super-sensitive, intelligent fingers of the blind.

Any of the club, it seems, can distinguish the feel of a picture card; and many can call off the denominations of piccards, ace, deuce, trey, four, five and so on. Feeling the suits is more delicate; and calling off the value of a picture card is said to be the acme of this "sight-unseen" stunt.

Regularly, using the embossed points, they read the corners before you or I could see the value of our hand—because they read by touch as they pick the card up.

It is queer. Eight players, millionaires—older men, not blinded in the war and wise from old-time patience—taught them the fascination of this poker in the abyss. They call themselves the Elder Brothers, dress with meticulous coquetry and put up an astonishing front of appearing to see two eyes shot out and neatly healed, glance around as if taking interest, and pat their paid guides gaily over the shoulder—not to have the look of being led! All but one—the most powerful in name and fortune, who goes morose in neglected clothes.

His only real companion—the new blinded ones of 1914-1916—cannot see him.

Hides Blind Men.
Six blind players handled their cards with smiles of satisfaction or frowns of impatience. All had learned the game of poker since their blindness. They have felt no need to train their faces.

They use their voices for deception, or keep silence, or keep everything. They wear the uniform of a Jewish family of international finance—received ace high on the deal. The man knew each card before I, at his elbow, saw it. His deft fingers read their corner prickings with a nonchalance that might have baffled the late Mr. Shady.

His face lit up with humorous purpose, as the others drew four, one



and three cards, and two dropped out. In monotone he raised "three hundred"—and asked for two cards. Silently, the three men sat intense, alert to sense impressions beyond ordinary human delicacy, waiting—waiting for a clew.

The florid blonde lad would not pay "three hundred" to draw four cards; but, very gently, the two others pushed their chips in. The athletic younger brother of the second duke—never mind, they call him "Louvain"—grinned when he filled his flush; but the white-faced (pale) (gassed for good) never relaxed the raffish spot to his part. The original bluffer, holding his ace-high and two useless kickers, picked up his draw—two more aces.

Humor and hesitation struggled on his face; he was no bluffer now. He had three aces. He spoke no word. He seemed careful not to move a bone of muscle of his body. He was hiding from the other blind men!

Display Deep Reverence.
The player with the flush bet the smallest chip. The pale invalid came with him—without a word. What would the statue Joshua do with his three aces? Hoist the one-card and three-card draws as they deserved?

He must have waited half a minute, as they hid from him the Black Void; and even we, ourselves, could seem to feel the immaterial soul hook which he poked with. Did he rub against some indication? Finally, he pushed into the pot the single little chip that called, no more!

Did he "feel" there a flush against him? No—, they answer; all the same, it was a standoff for those demi-blind-readers. And in the others' hands we saw played, there was the same mingling of sureness with nerve and reserve that gives an outsider the impression that these supermen of the Void have triumphed that we of gross sight sensations do not know.

They play the game wonderfully. They seem passionately attached, also, to dominoes, checkers and chess. It is queer. Sight players have nothing of this—what shall I say—this reverence. Until I learned.....

"Games saved their lives, some think their souls," said the Brussels American sport.

Bring out Your Champion.
A blinded Belgian lieutenant—his two eyes shot out and neatly healed—sat aimlessly in the hospital, without family, property or means to earn a living, rocking back and forth, and muttering: "My God! my God! my God!"

(It was in 1915, before they had steel helmets.)

A beautiful woman slipped into his hand a domino. He felt it with the pathetic politeness, the perfidious curiosity of the newly blinded; then came to his face a smile of mild astonishment, to reward the



angel of goodness who might waste her time on him.

"Tiens," he said, "a five!"

It was no common domino, but a new kind, from America, unknown to Europe at that moment—dominoes for the blind, articulated as well as raised, so that they can be joined together in a row, while blind men's hands feel over them without muzzing up the game. They can even be played in bed without falling apart.

"A five!" he mused, smiling vaguely, sadly, but honestly.

"If you want a game," she said, "there is a man here who thinks he is a great player."

He shook his head.

"He is not blind," he answered.

"You are right," she said, "the man has lost his eyes but he is not blind—to dominoes or cards!"

"Pardis, then I'm not, either!" snapped the sad one. "Bring him on, your champion. I used to be something of a player myself!"

The beautiful woman was the queen. The stool-pigeon was an ex-courier, the millionaire Jew, blind 15 years back, from a gun explosion, shooting grouse, and a wonderful game expert. (But he did not tell this). The victim of their plot of love had made three creditable attempts at suicide, and carried in his vestpocket a newly-found safety razor blade from which he hoped much!

Shivers With Gratitude.
The queen, they say, possesses a domino that saved eight lives from suicide in three months. (The war proved amply, I think, that blindness, at first, is to want to die). These women! The youthful

countess was a girl just out of convent school. Surely, she would not have been seen without a chaperon, before the war!

That staff of sweet women made me think of the fair saints of the early church. They carry, today, such single dominoes as holy relics. Originally, they came from Miss Winifred Holt of New York. When, in those days, the little countess led the blind boy to his cab, he shivered with gratitude, divining the young beauty which he could not see; and rude men in the street reverently doffed their hats....

To such an one the surgeons came.

"Will you do a miracle?" they said. "Now, teach this man!"

He had lost his two eyes, his left arm from the elbow, and two fingers of the right hand. He was all doubled up. And silent! His poor fingers were—like that. She prayed to know what she could do with that man! She just slipped the domino into his three good fingers.

"Tiens," he said, "a four!"

On her second visit, they played checkers. At the third, nurse said that he had dropped his awful silence

and had chatted (chatted about checkers, cards and dominoes) and had taken the checkerboard to bed with him at night! He beat the little countess badly, then apologized for beating a woman! Tears came to her eyes, as he teased happily: "Although blinded, I have not forgotten my strategy!"

Beautiful Blind American.
So long ago was all this, that the poker game has almost forgotten it—with natural ingratitude of strong men.

What! these resolute, hard-muscled and hard-purposed fellows, able each to earn his living at some hand trade, but most of them now in business, or professions, were they possibly "maudlin" once, for self destruction?

One of the most potent tonics, in their "finishing off" days, after armistice, was the visit of the most wonderful blind girl in the world—an American blind girl of whom the public has never heard a word, young, beautiful, an orphan and an heiress.

She pretends that she is not blind!

Adorable courage!

Just before the war, when she was 18 years old, she had five servants, a lady companion and a reader-secretary, in the palatial Paris flat which was fixed up for her by her dying father. She had horses, automobile, opera box, and doubtless has them again.

She wears porcelain eyes of deep and liquid blue, to match her blonde beauty and deceive the world. With the lady companion, she makes and receives calls, enjoys matinees, runs the shops, takes tea at the big dress-makers and does her morning constitutional in the park.

At the hotel in Brussels where she stayed, she would enter the parlors after dinner, confidentially, gaily, the lace or tulle at her wrist or elbow scarcely brushing against the lady companion for contact—wireless direction.

A New England shoe company made 101 per cent more profit last year than the year before, the increase in sales being only 21 per cent.

AMERICANS DO NOT FLOCK TO EUROPE AS ANTICIPATED

People Who Are Wont to Live Off Yankee Tourists and Who Expected Big Influx Are Disappointed.

By L. R. MURDOCH
Universal Service Staff Correspondent.

London, April 10.—While London and Paris hotels are yawning for the hundreds of thousands of American visitors upon whom the English and French are relying to pay the interest on the war debts the English landlords, real estate agents and others are rubbing their hands and licking their chops in greedy anticipation of the American "influx" the "influx" which was advertised to begin before this time, has not yet "influxed" and the more pessimistic are beginning to show evidence of dismay.

This is supposed to be "the greatest year in history" for recipients of income from the American tourist trade, owing to its being the first year when it was supposed Americans would resume the old custom of coming to Europe for their vacations, with the added incentive of seeing the battle-torn continent for the first time without undue hardship.

Europe Not Prepared.
But Europe is still ill-prepared to receive great numbers of American visitors inclined on recreation, and cannot even guarantee the shipping necessary to bring them.

Only one of the super-liners, the Mauretania, is in commission, the others either being at the bottom of the sea or in dock for much-needed repairs. At this writing, the Holland-American line was tied up by a strike and other passenger ships are in more or less distressed condition owing to overuse. The ships in service are inadequate to carry promptly even the passenger traffic from this side to America, immensely smaller than the potential traffic from America here.

Europe Still Seething.
In Europe, the continent is still in a state of social seething, things generally being more uncertain than during wartime, when one at least knew where he couldn't safely go—and if he didn't know there were plenty of soldiers and other guardians to keep him from going.

Moreover, food and fuel are still short, or at least uncertain of proper distribution, and assured comfort is uncertain or likely to be at a premium even if obtainable.

These things must have trickled into the American understanding—and, if not, they ought to—and this doubtless accounts for the delay of the American "influx."

Americans who come to Europe this spring and summer will come on a gamble. If they reach England, they are likely to find plenty to eat—at a price—and, very likely, to find the same in France, Belgium and Holland—at a greater price.

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