

## Missouri's Great Wit

Champ Clark, Minority Leader of the House, Is One of the Most Popular Men in Congress—Renowned Story Teller and Forceful Debater Who Works His Brains as Well as His Arms.

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.

OFFICIALLY Champ Clark's title is the minority leader of the house. Popularly it is the "big Piker" from Missouri. The term is not used in an offensive sense. Clark is big, and he is from Pike county, the identical Pike county known to song and story. The prolonged applause on both sides of the chamber when the new Democratic spokesman took up the reins at the beginning of the short session showed him to be one of the most popular men in congress. This popularity is quite as pronounced among the Republicans as in his own party. The fact is no slight tribute in view of the merciless poundings he has given his opponents, both individually and collectively, whenever the spirit moved him. Clark does not make the mistake of speaking often, but when he does get into action everybody is aware of the fact. He belongs to the type of man who believes intensely whatever he believes at all. The two chief articles of his creed are Democracy and Missouri. He is not much given to rhetoric, the chief arrows in his oratorical quiver being humor, fact and Scriptural quotation. Owing to his fine presence, his southern drawl and his personal allusions, Mr. Clark's speeches sound better than they read. He belongs to the rough and tumble, ever ready school that the house of representatives brings forth. In his day he has met all comers in debate, even brushing Tom Reed out of his way and taking an especial delight in hammering General Grosvenor, who was one of the toughest warriors on the Republican side.

**Gifted With a Wonderful Memory.**

In appearance Champ Clark is tall and heavy, with a large head covered by thin hair almost white, a smooth

about the most prodigious memory as well as the most exuberant vocabulary in Washington.

Outside of congress Champ Clark is a Chautauqua lecturer, a newspaper writer, a lawyer, a farmer and a good fellow. He has many avocations, but his vocation is that of being a Missourian. He works at that 365 days in the year, and 366 whenever the almanac will let him. He does not defend his state exactly as Daniel Webster did Massachusetts, but in a more pugnacious and spectacular manner. Clark's eulogium of his adopted state is effective, too, even if it is not so ponderous and eloquent as that in which the godlike Daniel withered Hayne. Champ has not Lexington and Bunker Hill to point to, but he has the Missouri mule, Mark Twain and the classic motto "You'll have to show me," all of which or whom have done for Missouri what a certain celebrated beverage did for Milwaukee.

Speaking of Webster, Clark was born on the very day that the New England Demosthenes delivered another famous oration, that on the Missouri compromise, which caused Whittier to call him "Ichabod" and other abolitionists to use less polite names. This was in March, 1850, and took place in Kentucky—the birth, not the oration. The elder Clark was an itinerant dentist who carried his kit of tools in one end of his saddlebags and Democratic speeches in the other. This made him a second Torquemada, who first tortured his victims with the forceps and then with Stephen A. Douglas. Young Champ thus inherited his politics, but acquired his state pride.

**Exciting School Experience.**

For a time in his youth Clark was apprenticed to a farmer, but got enough of an education to teach school

ran a country paper for another year and then started the practice of law. He tried for the legislature, but was defeated. He was made city attorney of Louisiana and afterward of Bowling Green, his present home. He was deputy prosecuting attorney and prosecuting attorney of his county. When about to leave the last named office the grand jury nominated him for the legislature. He regarded it as a joke, but the people of the county heard of the indictment and sentenced him to one term. There he was the wit of the house and floor leader. Grand juries often start men on the road to the penitentiary, but this is the only case on record, so far as I know, where that useful and salutary body bound a man over to that kindred institution, the state legislature.

Champ was such a big man during his one term at Jefferson City that he concluded he ought to run for congress. There were not enough others of his way of thinking, however, so he was defeated for the nomination. Two years later he tried it again. That was the most spectacular campaign ever known in the district, which was used to hard scrapping, as may be judged from its name, "the bloody Ninth." It was also called "the toss-up Ninth," for the reason that Dick Norton, Champ's predecessor and antagonist, had tied with another man for the nomination and the two flipped a dollar to see which was it, Norton winning. Dollars have decided many elections in America, but not exactly in that way.

### Gained a National Reputation.

In Clark's case there was no heads-I-win-tails-you-lose proposition, however, but two good, hard fights. In the first convention there was a contest, with two sets of delegates from one county, the rest of the counties breaking even. The case was appealed to the state central committee, which ordered a new primary in the contested county. Both candidates, therefore, went into that unfortunate county and canvassed every man, woman, child, mule and jack rabbit in it, making as many speeches a day as people would stand for. Champ won and was elected. This was in 1892. In the ensuing congress he made his maiden speech and gained a national reputation, of course. He also spoke before Tammany and gave its members a new kind of oratory which made them wake up and cheer like real live men. In 1894 the Democratic party, after its great victory of two years previous, went back to sackcloth, ashes and crow. Champ went along. He was beaten 132 votes by a music teacher. The music teacher was the fifth man the Republicans had offered the nomination and accepted it only because he thought it would give him the control of the district patronage. When he was elected he was surprised, and Clark was surprised more. He said eight years in the presidency would not reconcile him to that reverse. He was doubtless thinking of it when he answered a query as to how it felt to be defeated: "The first sensation is that produced by an ice water bath, then one of anger, then a determination to pick your flint and try it again."

Clark did try it again in 1896, won out and has been elected to every congress since. In the house he has steadily gained in influence, being Leader Bailey's right hand man, then contesting for the leadership with John Sharp Williams, but being defeated, serving on the ways and means and other important committees and finally going to the head of the minority when Williams relinquished the reins. Mr. Clark was the permanent chairman of the Democratic national convention of 1904, notifying Judge Parker of his nomination. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for the senate. This year he was widely urged as a candidate for governor, but declined to run on the ground that he wanted to stay in congress. Had he been nominated the result in Missouri probably would have been different.

As minority leader it is thought that Clark will give more responsibility to his lieutenants than did Williams, who was accused of wanting to be the whole thing and doing all the talking.

Mr. Clark's real name is Beauchamp, from his mother's people. He beheaded it with his own hand. It was a fortunate thing. Think of the irrepressible Champ Clark masquerading under the name of Beauchamp or the diminutive Beau! The man who asked "What's in a name?" has his answer right here.

### Aided to Fame by His Wife.

Mrs. Clark is also a Kentuckian, being related to ex-Senator McCreary. She is a superior woman, excelling especially as an elocutionist. Clark himself admits that she has pushed him up the hill of fame.

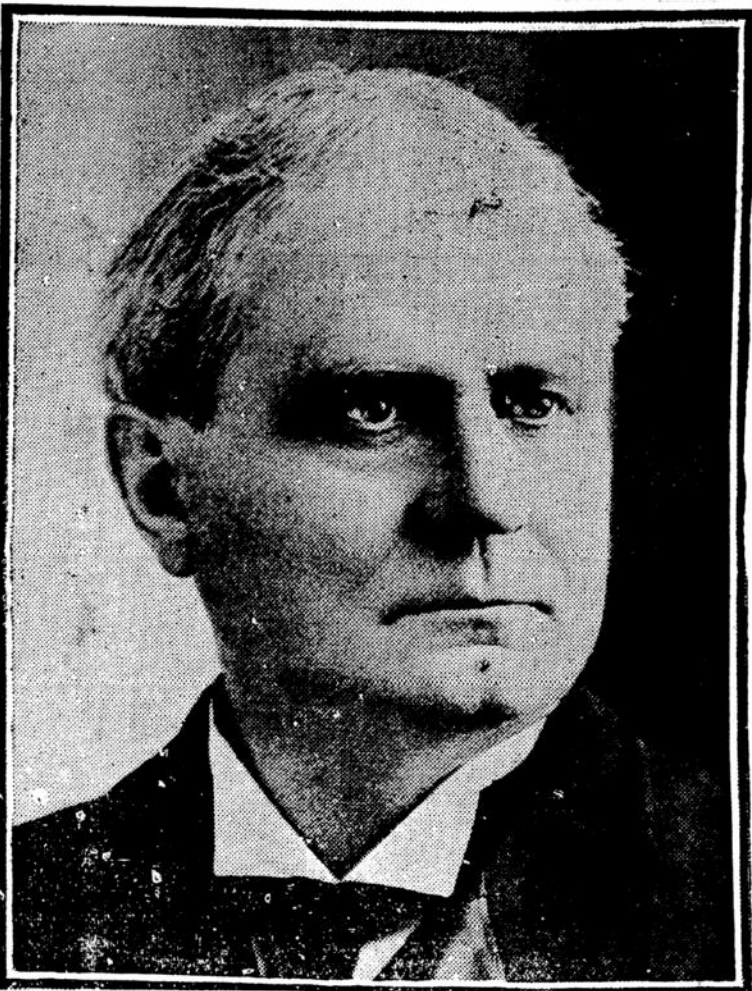
As a story teller the new minority leader is without a peer in either body. In fact, his "cloakroom stories," which were published throughout the American press, did not a little toward establishing his fame. One of the best of these is old, but characteristic. It is on himself. During one of his Missouri campaigns he struck an especially hostile neighborhood and was frequently interrupted. Finally one big chap strode down to the front of the platform and blurted out:

"Say, you're a — fool, and everybody here knows it."

Clark's face grew radiant. Leaning over, he grasped the hand of the belligerent one before that bewildered individual could stop him and wrung it warmly. Then, turning to the audience, Champ cried:

"The remark of my friend here has given me renewed encouragement. If I poll the full — fool vote of this precinct I will be elected by a rousing majority."

Evidently he did poll it, for he carried the precinct.



CHAMP CLARK.

shaven, square, thin lipped face, a keen blue eye and the inevitable southern frock coat and soft hat, in his case 7 3/4 in size. He moves all over and talks the same way. When Clark came loping into the house one day Speaker Cannon remarked that if he had fore legs and a hump he would be a camel. The big Missourian works at making a speech like a man mauling rails. He paces the aisle, gets down into the well of the house, goes over menacingly toward the Republicans, hurling rhetorical bricks at them all the way, drifts back to his desk, leans over it and shakes his head as a terrier shakes a rat, makes his voice rip up the echoes that have been ripped up so many times before and will be so many times again, and when through with his speech is blowing and red in the face, wiping off the sweat with a big bandanna, like a Kansas harvest hand in July. But all the time he has been saying things, has swept the house with alternate gales of merriment and applause, in which even his victims have joined, and altogether has made an effort that will be talked of for days afterward. Champ Clark is more than a gymnastic orator. He works his brains as well as his arms. He has been reading omnivorously all his life, can remember everything he ever read and can tell everything he remembers. If Champ were elected president he would not have to read up in an encyclopedia, as it is said Cleveland did, when "swinging around the circle." Since the "big Piker" has been in nearly every town in the United States and has written for papers in the rest he could recall from memory more about that particular place than the oldest inhabitant ever heard of. Clark has

when he was fifteen. It was in one of those Kentucky backwoods schools where the teacher had to lick all the big boys or be run out. Clark attended to the whipping process so thoroughly that the father of one of the boys took a shot at him. Thereafter the young teacher had a brace of pistols in conspicuous view behind his desk. He made enough money as a pedagogue to take him to college, but after three years was expelled for "winging" a fellow student from Ohio. Champ afterward said he was driven into a corner and had to shoot. He next went to Bethany college, presided over by the illustrious Alexander Campbell. At graduation young Clark had the highest grade ever given a student in the school. The next year, at twenty-three, he was a college president, the youngest, I believe, in the United States. It was Marshall college, West Virginia, and the manner in which he landed the job was characteristic. He did not apply for this place, but a more humble one in a state normal. The following is a portion of his application:

### Wit and Legislative Leader.

After a year as college president Clark went to the Cincinnati Law school, then drifted to Wichita, Kan., to start practice, but said he was driven out by the grasshoppers. He next turned up in Missouri, where he taught school at Louisiana for a year,

## Only 6 Days Left

To Do That

## Xmas Shopping

YOU had better get busy. Come now, for every moment you delay some one is buying articles you want. Our stores are crowded with satisfied customers all day. Why not be one of them? Our lines are the biggest. Our prices are the lowest. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in your Xmas selections taken from our mammoth holiday stock:

### For Wife or Mother

Beautiful Lamps, Finest Japanese China, Toilet Articles, Pictures, Gold Plated Mirrors, China Berry Sets, Press Cut Glass Berry Sets, Decorated Glass Water Sets, Decorated China Salad Dishes, Fancy Decorated Plates, Hand-Painted Plates, Handkerchiefs and hundreds of other useful articles.

### For Father, Brother or Lover

Collar and Cuff Boxes, Glove Boxes, Necktie Boxes, Silver Shaving Sets, Comb and Brush Sets, Tobacco Jars, Cigar and Ash Trays, Shaving Mugs, Silk Mufflers, Neckties and hundreds of other useful items you will find on display.

### For Daughter or Sweetheart

Manicuring Sets, Comb and Brush Sets, Handkerchief Boxes, Fancy Toilet Sets, Gold Plated Jewel Boxes, Rings, Brooches, Neckchains, Handkerchiefs, Purses, Ribbons and hundreds of other articles. Just what you want.

### Just a Few Extra Specials

German china cups and saucers in pretty decorations, regular price 20c a pair, now per pair..... **10c**

Men's all silk mufflers, the very newest shapes and designs, hemstitched edges, regular price \$1.10, special..... **73c**

Fancy wood novelties, such as smoking sets, ink wells, needle and thread stands, etc., regular price 25c, special each..... **10c**

Men's light weight all silk mufflers, the very newest shapes and designs, hemstitched edges, regular 75c, now..... **49c**

All silk neckties in four-in-hand styles, very latest patterns, regular price 50c, special each..... **19c**

Toys that usually sell for 25c you will find on display here at each..... **10c**

Please remember you will find all this at our Holiday Store.

### Last But Not Least

We wish to state that we have some extra bargains at our regular store, next door to the post office, and it will pay you to give us a call. Here are a few of our unselected bargains now on sale:

Men's heavy wool sox, regular price 25c, now per pair..... **18c**

Outing flannels in light and dark colors, note the price, per yard..... **5c**

Men's heavy wool sox, regular price 50c, now per pair..... **33c**

Ladies' fasciators in fancy designs, regular price 50c each, now only..... **29c**

Men's heavy wool underwear, regular price \$1.00 each, now each..... **73c**

White cups and saucers, regular price 10c, now per pair..... **5c**

Men's suspenders, note the price, per pair..... **9c**

Grey enameled pie tins, usually sold at 10c, now each..... **5c**

Boys' suspenders, note the price, per pair..... **5c**

Iron drip pans, very strong and never rust, regular 10c size, now each..... **5c**

Heavy linen crash toweling, never sold for less than 12c, now on sale at per yd..... **9c**

Kirk's laundry soap, 10 bars for..... **25c**

Extra heavy dark grey wool blankets, regular \$4.00 kind, now per pair..... **\$2.48**

We are still selling 36 boxes of matches for..... **25c**

If you want to give some Xmas presents that can be used come and see us here. We have all kinds of Clothing, Shoes for all the family, Underwear, Shirts, Dress Goods, Ladies' Very Latest Style Skirts, Wrappers, Waists, etc. Hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you soon in both of our stores, we thank you in advance for your patronage.

## Princeton Dry Goods Co.

TWO STORES

Xmas Store in Townsend Block. Regular Store Next to Postoffice.