

Reform in the First

By BRAND WHITLOCK

AUTHOR OF "THE THIRTEENTH DISTRICT," "HER INFINITE VARIETY," "THE HAPPY AVERAGE," "THE TURN OF THE BALANCE," ETC., ETC.

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HE senatorial convention in the First district was to convene at 10 o'clock, in a dingy little hall in lower Clark street, lighted by windows so long uncleaned that they looked like ground glass. From the chandeliers, black and sticky with dead flies, shreds of tissue paper fluttered, relics of some boisterous fete an Italian society had given there long ago. The floor was damp in arabesque wrought by a sprinkling-can, for the janitor had sprayed water there to lay the dust he was too indifferent to remove. Perhaps a hundred chairs were set in amphitheatrical order, and before them stood a kitchen table, on which was a white water pitcher, flanked by a glass, thickened by various sedimentary deposits within.

In the saloon below, at 9 o'clock, scores of delegates were already shuffling in the sawdust that covered the floor, holding huge schooners of beer in their hairy fists, gorging grossly at the free lunch table, with bologna, rank onions and rye bread. The foam of the beer clung to their mustaches, which, after each sip, they sucked between their lips. Most of them managed, at the same time they were eating and drinking, by a dexterous sleight-of-hand, to smoke cheap domestic cigars, and a cloud of white smoke rolled along the low ceiling. Each new arrival was greeted with some obscene but endearing epithet, and the room rang with laughter and profanity. A keg of beer had been provided by one of Conway's managers, and the bartender, wiping his hands on a dirty towel, was rid, so long as the keg lasted, of the responsibility of keeping account of drinks, and of ringing up the change on the cash register. At 11 o'clock the keg was empty, the free lunch table abandoned to the flies, and the delegates scuffled up the dingy stairs to the hall. Half an hour later the chairman of the senatorial district committee pounded the kitchen table with a leg of a broken chair, and shouted:

"The convention will be in order." This declaration made no impression upon the babel of voices, the laughter, the profanity, the noise of shuffling feet and scraping chairs.

Finally the chairman of the committee, growing impatient, split the table with his club and yelled:

"Damn it all, boys, come to order!" And then, eager to resign such a difficult command, he hastened to announce:

"The committee has named Honorable John P. Muldoon to act as temporary chairman."

He handed the chair leg to John P. Muldoon, who, stroking back his curly hair from his brow, began to beat the table impartially.

All this while Underwood stood against the wall, looking on. The question that had been agitating him for weeks was about to be decided, but now that the ordeal was actually upon him, the consciousness beat sully against his brain, so that the whole scene lacked reality, almost interest. He was dazed. He was about to take his baptism of political fire, and he trembled like a white novice.

Underwood belonged to one of the oldest families of Chicago—the name had been known there before the fire. His father, who had lately taken him into his law firm, continued to cling in his conservatism to an old stone house in Michigan avenue long after his neighbors had abandoned their mansions to uncertain boarders, and either retreated farther south or advanced to the North Side. John Underwood had come out of Harvard with a young lawyer's ambition in politics, an ambition that had the United States senate merely as a beginning of its home stretch, and when the year rolled around in which state senators were to be elected in the odd numbered districts he decided that it was time to begin.

The newspapers had scented the sensation that lurked in the candidature of a young man like Underwood in the district like the First, and because he went into what is called society, promptly dubbed him a reformer, and thus weighted him had set out upon his race for the nomination. He liked to see his name in the newspapers, liked to think of himself as a reformer, though he was embarrassed in this attitude by the fascinating figure of the political boss he had hoped to become—a well-dressed, gentlemanly boss, of course, who, while at home in those saloons where he permitted the convivial familiarity of the boys, nevertheless took his luncheons at his club. He fell into a way of speaking of the First as "my district," spoke of it, in fact, as if he, instead of Malachi Nolan and "Cinch" Conway, owned it, and when certain ward politicians in the first days of the campaign called upon him, Underwood was pleased to lend them money, just as he was pleased to comply with the requests of certain others who organized the John W. Underwood First Ward Campaign club, and sent a committee to inform him that they were assembled in the club rooms ready to transact business, and bear only four dollars a keg. He winked confidentially at himself in the mirror that night as he gave a final touch to his white cravat and surveyed his fine young form arrayed in evening clothes for the reform banquet at the Palmer house. His speech was the Tendencities of Modern Politics. The newspapers said it was a very brilliant speech, breathing lofty political sentiments that were bound to make John W. Underwood votes. Also, the Reform club endorsed his candidature.

As Underwood leaned against the wreny wall of the little hall on lower Clark street this morning, the

mer suit of blue, and snapping the lid of his watch shut, he once more heard him say in a final and reproachful tone:

"Well, all right; sorry, my boy."

Underwood wondered that morning in the noisy convention hall, whether, if he had the decision to make over again, he would decline such influence. It had been the cause of much doubt and some regret at the time. The boss within him had protested—surely it was a political mistake—and the boss was louder than the reformer, and more plausible. He came forward with a brilliant scheme. He recalled Baldwin's reference to the rivalry between Nolan and Conway. Underwood remembered that when he suggested the possibility of Nolan's running for the nomination himself, Baldwin had shaken his head—there wasn't enough in it, he said. Nolan could do very much better in the council, where he was. Besides, Mr. Weed and Mr. Peabody disliked him.

Underwood thought out his scheme that afternoon, while hunting in the digest for cases in point to be cited in a case his father was preparing for the appellate court. The work of looking up cases in point, while its results are impressive and seem to smell of the lamp, had in reality grown quite automatic to Underwood, and as he loafed over digests and reports and jotted down his notes, he elaborated the scheme, just what he would say and do, how he would appear, and so forth. And so, when he entered Malachi Nolan's place in Dearborn street, early that evening, he was fully prepared. The details of this incident came back just as the details of Baldwin's visit had done—the empty saloon, the alderman himself leaning over his bar, his white apron rolled into a big girth about his middle, the cigar in the round hole at the corner of his mouth gone out, denoting that it was time for him to go down the alley to Billy Boyle's and get his porthouse and baked potato.

Underwood watched Malachi Nolan mix his Martini cocktail, splash it picturesquely into a sparkling glass and

ning along the Archway Road. Underwood had three weeks of this, and as he stood in the convention hall that morning, unwashed, unshaven, his linen soiled, his shoes muddy, his own friends would not have known him, though he cared little enough for this now—they had all forgotten to go to the primaries the day before, and those for whom he had sent carriages had been too busy, or too respectable, to respond. The taste of bad beer and the scorch of cheap cigars still smacked in his mouth—indeed, he did not get them entirely out until he came back from Mt. Clemens two weeks after the nomination.

But they were balloting for permanent chairman now. It would be a test vote; it would disclose his own strength and the strength of Conway. He looked over the red faces before him. He saw Conway himself moving among the delegates, snarling, cursing, quarrelling with the friends of years; he saw Conway's candidate for the house, McGlone, over in the Second ward delegation, his coat off, a handkerchief about his fat neck, a fuming cigar between his chubby fingers, turning on his heavy haunches to revile some man who was numbered with Nolan's crowd; he saw in the First ward delegation, Malachi Nolan, clean-shaven, in black coat and cravat, his iron gray hair cropped short, calm alone of all the others. He would have looked the priest more than the saloon-keeper, had he smoked his cigar differently. Now and then he solemnly raised his hand, with almost the benediction of a father, to still the clamor of his delegation, which, with its twenty-one votes, was safe at all events for Underwood.

Muldoon was Conway's man—they would try to make the temporary organization permanent. D'Omand was Underwood's candidate. And Muldoon won. Underwood had lost the first round.

The candidates for senator were to be placed in nomination first. Underwood stood in the crowded doorway and heard Conway's name presented. Then, in the cheering, with his heart

ers. The damp arabesques wrought by the janitor's superficial sprinkling can had long since been superseded by arabesques of tobacco juice. The floor was littered with scraps of paper, the spent ballots with which the stubborn contest had been waged. The First ward delegation was in a solid ring, and in the center of it sat Malachi Nolan, his elbows on his knees, tearing old ballots into tiny specks of paper and strewn them on the floor, but keeping all the while a surveying eye on the Fifth ward delegation, now divided into two groups, one of which surrounded Howe, the other huddling about Grogan, the lawyer, who, with disheveled hair, a handkerchief about his neck, stood glaring angrily at Nolan, his eyes shadowed by heavy circles telling of weariness and the strain.

Now and then the leaders made desperate attempts to trade, harrising Simmons, offering him everything for his seven votes. Simmons himself, in his turn, tried to induce each faction to swing its strength to him.

But the situation remained unchanged. Once Nolan sent for Underwood and whispered to him. He thought he knew one or two Conway men who could be got very cheaply, but the boy shook his head—the reformer within him demurred—and yet he smiled sardonically at the reformer thinking of the primaries and the convention itself.

Then Malachi Nolan caught the chairman's shifty eye and moved an adjournment until morning. But even as he spoke, Grogan scowled at Muldoon, shook his head at his followers, and the room rang with their hoarse shouts:

"No! no! no!"

Heartened by this confession of weakness on Nolan's part, they kept on yelling lustily:

"No! no! no!"

They even laughed, and Muldoon smote the table, to declare the motion lost.

On the forty-seventh ballot, one of the Simmons votes went over to Conway, and there was a faint cheer. On the forty-eighth, one of the Simmons votes went to Underwood, and partly was restored. On the forty-ninth, Underwood gained another of Simmons' votes—Nolan, it seemed, had promised to get him on the janitor's pay-roll in the state house—and the vote was tied. This ballot stood:

	First Ward	Second Ward	Fifth Ward	Total
Conway	19	22	32	73
Underwood	21	4	7	32
Simmons	5	5	5	15

The Simmons men were holding out, waiting to throw their strength to the winner. When the sixty-seventh ballot had been taken, Muldoon, squinting in the miserable light at the secretary's figures, hit the table with the chair leg and said:

"On this ballot Conway receives 32, Underwood 32, Simmons 5. There being no choice, you will prepare your ballots for another vote."

Just then one of the Conway men from the Second ward left his place, and touched one of Nolan's fellows in the First ward delegation—Donahue—on the shoulder. Donahue started. The man whispered in his ear, and returned to his delegation, keeping his eye on Donahue. Underwood looked on breathlessly. Nolan, revolving slowly, held his hat for every vote—last of all for Donahue's. The man dropped his folded ballot into the hat and hung his head. Nolan calmly picked the ballot out of the hat and gave it back to Donahue, who looked up in affected surprise.

"What's the trouble, Malachi?" he said as innocently as he could. He was not much of an actor.

"This won't do," Nolan said, giving the ballot back to the man.

"It's all right, Malachi, honest to God it is!" protested Donahue.

"Thin I'll just put this wan in for ye, heh?" said Nolan, drawing another ballot from the pocket of his huge waistcoat and poising it above the hat.

The crowd had pressed around the First ward delegation. The convention had risen to its feet, craning necks, and out of the mass Grogan cried:

"Aw, here, Malachi Nolan, none of that now!"

Nolan turned his rugged face toward him and said simply:

"Who's runnin' this dillygation, you or me?"

"Well—none o' your bulldozing—we won't stand it!" replied Grogan angrily, his blue eyes blazing.

"You get to hell out o' this." And so saying, Nolan dropped the ballot into the hat and turned to face the chair.

"Have you all voted?" inquired Muldoon.

"First ward!" the secretary called.

Nolan squared his shoulders, not having looked in his hat or counted the ballots there, and said slowly and impressively:

"On behalf of the solid dillygation of the First ward, I cast twenty-wan votes for John W. Underwood."

"Misther Chairman! Misther Chairman!" cried Grogan, waving his hand in the air, "I challenge that vote! I challenge that vote!"

"The gentleman from the Fifth ward challenges the vote—"

"Misther Chairman," said Nolan, standing with one heavy foot on his chair and leveling a forefinger at Muldoon, "a point of order! The gentleman from the Fifth ward has no right to challenge the vote as the First ward—he's not a member of the dillygation!"

"Let the First ward be polled," calmly ruled Muldoon. Nolan took his foot from his chair and stepped to Donahue's side. Every man in the First ward delegation, as his name was called from the credentials, cried "Underwood!" As the secretary neared the name of Donahue, Nolan laid his hand heavily on the fellow's shoulder.

"Donahue!" called the secretary.

The fellow squirmed under Nolan's hand.

"Donahue!"

"Don't let him bluff you!" cried some one from the Fifth ward.

"Vote as you damn please, Jimmie!"

"Trow the boots into 'im, Donnie!"

"Soak him one!"



Illustration by J. A. O'NEILL

bejewel it with a Maraschino cherry, then gravely take a cigar for himself and stow it away in his ample waistcoat. Then, as Nolan mopped the bar with professional sweep of his white-sleeved, muscular arm, Underwood unfolded his brilliant scheme, skirting carefully the acute suspicions of an old politician. But Nolan mopped, blinking inscrutably, at last putting the damp cloth away in some mysterious place under the counter. The fat Maltese cat, waiting until the moisture on the bar had evaporated, stretched herself again beside the silver urn that held the crackers and the little cubes of cheese. Still Nolan blinked in silence, like a hostile jury with its mind made up, until at last, in desperation, Underwood blurted out his proposition. Nolan blinked some more, then, half opening his blue Irish eyes, grunted:

"Well, I like your gall."

Underwood's spirits fell, yet he was not disappointed. It was, after all, just what he had expected. It served him right for his presumption, if nothing more—though the subdued reformer within had hinted at other reasons. He hung his head, twirling his empty glass disconsolately. He did not see the light that twinkled in the blue eyes, he had not then known how very ready Nolan was to form any combination that would beat Conway and Baldwin, especially with a reformer like himself who had money to spend on his ambitions. He had not discerned how badly the man whom the newspapers always cartooned with the First ward sticking out of his vest pocket needed a reformer in his business, as the saying is. Hence his glad surprise when Nolan wiped his big hand on his apron like a washerwoman and held it out, saying:

"But I'm wit' ye."

Then the campaign, under Nolan's management, in the most wonderful legislative district—a cosmopolitan district, bristling with sociological problems, a district that has fewer homes and more saloons, more commerce and more sloth, more millionaires and more paupers, and while it confines within its boundaries the skyscrapers, clubs, theaters and hundred churches of a metropolis, still boasts a police station with more arrests on its blotter than any other in the world. Night after night, with Nolan's two candidates for the house, he spent in saloons where a candidate must treat and distribute his cards that the boys may size him up; lodging houses and barrel houses in lower Clark street, where sweating negroes and frowsy whites drank five-cent whisky with him; blazing saloons along the levee, where even the poor, painted girls at the tables lifted their glasses when he ordered the drinks for the house; crap games and policy shops in lower Clark street, the Syrian, Arabic, Chinese and Italian quarters down by the squalid Bad Lands, and at last a happier eve-

ing along the Archway Road. Underwood had three weeks of this, and as he stood in the convention hall that morning, unwashed, unshaven, his linen soiled, his shoes muddy, his own friends would not have known him, though he cared little enough for this now—they had all forgotten to go to the primaries the day before, and those for whom he had sent carriages had been too busy, or too respectable, to respond. The taste of bad beer and the scorch of cheap cigars still smacked in his mouth—indeed, he did not get them entirely out until he came back from Mt. Clemens two weeks after the nomination.

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SAVE OLD ST. JOHN'S

Historic Church Edifice in N. Y. to Be Conserved.

Old Chapel of Trinity Parish Is One of the Two Structures of Their Kind Standing on Manhattan Island a Century Ago.

New York—Blocking the road of progress—even where it is the road of temporary progress only—is an offense of which growing cities are ruderly impatient. They are apt ruthlessly to destroy for some immediate commercial end landmarks which cannot be restored when, after a few years, the road of progress must be shifted again. New York naturally is particularly apt to be hasty in such matters. Perhaps, in view of the comparative scarcity of historical architecture worthy of preservation, it has more excuse than some older cities for an unsentimental attitude. All the more



Portico and Spire of St. John's.

reason therefore exists for protecting whatever exists that is worthy. And the case of St. John's chapel of Trinity parish is a notable case in point.

The beautiful old building in Varick street has had many narrow escapes already, and Trinity Corporation can hardly claim the credit for its survival into its one hundred and fourth year. Rather the vigilance of the newspapers has saved it. It is the newspapers again which have widely advertised those recent plans for street improvements to meet new conditions in the region of west side warehouses which contemplated once more the sacrifice of St. John's rather than, for instance, any part of the ugly pile of brick across the way—the freight station which was the usurper of the park which once faced the chapel, and though the fashion that frequented it has moved far uptown, should still face it. Publicity is doing its part. For the rest the present status of affairs is indicated in the following statement from George McAneny, who, as borough president of Manhattan, has the streets in charge:

"It is recognized," says Mr. McAneny, "by all who want to preserve the old landmarks of New York, that nothing should be left undone to prevent the demolition of St. John's chapel. The matter is in abeyance now, pending the acquisition by the city of the land which is to be taken in connection with the widening of Varick street. When the map has been fixed, however, the board of estimate and apportionment will have the power to change the line of either the roadway or the sidewalk. I propose to ask the board to take action upon this not later than the first meeting in September. It is impracticable to obtain action before that time, because any change in the plans at present would involve the reopening of the entire proceeding for widening Varick street, and that would mean a long delay."

St. John's chapel is one of the two church edifices that were standing on Manhattan Island a century ago, the other being St. Paul's chapel, between Fulton and Vesey streets on Broadway. The Trinity church, which then stood in Broadway opposite Wall street, was not the present Trinity church, which is the third on the same site, the first, consecrated in 1698, having been destroyed in the great fire of 1776, and a subsequent structure, erected after the Revolution, pulled down to make way for the present one. St. George's, on what was known as Chapel hill at Cliff (then Van Cliff) and Beekman streets, was the first of the Trinity chapels to come into existence. It was consecrated in 1752, but became a separate charge in 1811. The edifice was burned in 1814 and rebuilt the following year, and after 1846 rebuilt once again on the ground on which it now stands, in Rutherford place.

Adopts Municipal Flag.

Kansas City.—The city council has adopted a pennant for Kansas City, to be used on all occasions where a flag is appropriate. The pennant will be of light navy blue. The shield of the city is to be in the left-hand corner, with the words "Kansas City, a good place to live," in white letters.

Promptness Is Rewarded.

South Orange, N. J.—An amethyst necklace was presented to Miss Elizabeth Arcularius, a graduate of the high school here this year, by the board of education for her perfect record of attendance. She was neither late nor absent for the past 12 years.

Woman Appointed Market Clerk.

Philadelphia.—Miss Achsah Lippincott was appointed chief market clerk here at a salary of \$3,000 a year. She headed the civil service eligibility list with a higher average than three men competitors. She will study market conditions in other cities.