Captain Brabazon

BY B. M. CROKER

A Military Romance of South Africa

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"Stop, stop, Miles!" she cried, starting forward, with dilated eyes and quivering lips. "Do you mean," catching her breath, "that you suppose that that lancer was——"

"Your lover,' he interrupted fiercely. "I don't suppose it, I know it." A violent banging of doors, a small, shrill whistle, an "I beg your pardon, sir, time's up," from a running guard, and the train was already gliding out of the station, with Miles' last passionate sentence vibrating in Esme's ears. "I don't suppose it, I know it." His angry eyes, his pallid face, were still before her vision, instead of the sheds and trucks and grimy red-brick walls, that they were passing with ever-increasing speed. For a moment or two she did not move, she seemed stunned; then, regardless of Flack, she flung herself on her knees and buried her face in the dusty blue carriage cushion opposite, saying, "Oh, this is too much, too much!" Fate was too hard! Was she to lose both Teddy and Miles within the very same hour? It was impossible! and she wept unrestrainedly and violently.

"Oh, I'm too miserable to live!" she moaned, as Flack came and bent over her; insisted on her reseating herself, and not "taking on" in this wicked way.

"He'll come back, Miss Esme, safe and sound. Don't you be fretting for Master Teddy, you know, as he said you wasn't to—and you promised. Come now," reprovingly.

"It is not him, Flack! it's—it's Captain Brabazon," trying to stifle her ungovernable sobs.

"Laws, yes; I saw him a minute at the carriage door, and he seemed a bit put out."

Flack was somewhat deaf, and, being at the other end of the carriage, the hurried interview between the cousins had been nearly all dumb show to her; what with the noise on the platform and the hissing of the engine, the sound of their voices had been entirely drowned.

"I never told him about Teddy," said Esme, in a choked voice. "Teddy would not let me, and now he thinks all kinds of dreadful things. What shall I do? What shall I do?" wringing her hands in a frenzy of despair. Then taking off her hat, and pressing her hands to her throbbing temples, she gazed hopelessly at her companion, who sat before her open-mouthed and stared back in a condition of mutual stupefaction. But a bright idea suddenly beamed upon her mind, and, nodding her head two or three times with great satisfaction, she shouted: "I have it, miss! You can telegraph—telegraph!" raising her voice still higher.

"Telegraph—but where?"

"Well, to be sure, I don't know, miss; wherever he is. But you may know."

"His club, of course; that will find him. Oh, you clever, clever Flack! The instant we get to Waterloo I'll telegraph that Teddy is my brother. Under the circumstances Teddy would not mind!"

"No, indeed; why should he?" indignantly. "Deary, deary me! I would not have believed it of a quiet-looking young gentleman. I would not have believed it!"

"Believed what?"

"Why, that Captain Brabazon could have worked himself up into such a terrific passion about nothing; that he had such an audacious temper. Miss Esme, his eyes was blazing like two candles in his head."

To this remark Esme made no reply. She could not talk; she dried her eyes, tried to master her long-drawn sobs and quivering lips, and sat with her hat in her lap, gazing vacantly out of the window while the express thundered and roared through station after station, but went all too slowly for her.

CHAPTER XII.

The telegram was dispatched the instant they arrived in London, and Esme breathed more freely. Then she and Flack made their way across town, had tea at another station, and after another railway journey and a jolting drive Esme, tired, stiff and dazed, descended at the side door at home. She was admitted by Gussie, with a rather frightened face, a candle in her hand, and her finger on her lips.

"So you are home safe and sound," she whispered. "Well, my dear, I would not go through this evening again for a trifle. And how pinched and pale and frozen you look. We must wrap you up in cotton-wool to-morrow, or you won't be at all the pretty bride we intend to show!"

"I don't think I shall ever be a bride," said her sister, in an exhausted tone, sinking into her most popular school-room chair. "Miles came up to me at the station, literally stammering with rage. He looked as if he could have—have killed me, with pleasure; and in about three sentences cast me off, and said good-by forever. I was too much astonished to speak—to tell him the truth; and in one second more we were gone."

"Great heavens!" was all Gussie could articulate, as she knelt on the hearthrug.

"I have sent him a telegram to his club, and if he goes back to London he will get it, telling him who Teddy is."

"I'm surprised you had that much sense," said Gussie, drawing a breath of relief. "And to what club?"

"The Mars and Jupiter."

"Oh, you stupid, stupid owl! He never goes there, not once in a blue moon. You should have sent it to the Junior Red and Blue," nodding her head impressively. "Well, well, well, I can't have you dying on my hands, all the same; drink some of this nice, hot soup at once. I saved it for you. Come, now, there's a good girl; starving won't mend matters."

"What's the use? It's very good of you, but the very idea of swallowing makes me feel sick; indeed it does."

"That's hunger," retorted Gussie, promptly, "the pangs of gnawing hunger. Come, now, you really must, after my keeping it warm in a dear little saucepan for the last two hours. And think what a spectacle you will be when Miles comes here to-morrow! arrives up the avenue—a penitent, on his bended knees, and probably with peas in his shoes."

And thus Esme was persuaded to be a good girl.

"And poor Ted—what about him?" inquired Gussie, sitting on the rug and nursing her knees. "You saw him off, and see how dearly you have paid for it, you courageous but mistaken young person; you would have your own way."

Esme looked down thoughtfully at her vivacious sister.

"Don't you know," now expostulating with one hand, "that you, poor dear, are one of the people who may never look over the wall, while others may steal a dozen horses without the smallest suspicion? Now I," patting herself complacently, "might run down to Portsmouth three days a week, and see off half the army, and I'll venture to bet no one would ever burst like a shell upon me, as Miles did on you to-day. Poor Esme—gone only one little day. It's all a matter of luck; and you have none."

In spite of her brain being in a perfect ferment, Esme fell asleep almost before her head was on the pillow. The mind has to give way to the body sometimes, and her long railway journey up to London and down to Portsmouth and back, had completely worn her out, and she slept; but her sleep was disturbed by dreams; better far had she remained awake. Now it was Teddy's face, pale and death-like, that came before her and whispered, with a sobbing sigh, "good-by forever." Now it was Miles' features, dark and threatening, that bent close to her and hissed into her ear, "good-by."

Then she dreamed of Mrs. Brabazon, whose presence alone was enough to turn any dream into a nightmare—Mrs. Brabazon and an earthquake. This latter vision was fulfilled on the spot; someone was violently shaking the foot of the little brass bed, someone standing there in a slate-colored flannel dressing gown. Esme opened a pair of startled eyes, and beheld no less a person than Mrs. Brabazon herself. Such a visitation was unparalleled; what awful catastrophe had brought her there at such an early hour, in slippers and dressing gown, and without her front teeth? Her face was lemon color, her eyes lurid, her voice harsh. She held a letter clutched in her hand.

"Wake up, wake up, Esme," she exclaimed, once more jolting the bed violently; and Esme, now thoroughly aroused, began to take in the recollection of yesterday, a recollection which stole over her mind like a wave of half-frozen water. She had had a kind of vague hope, as she first looked at Mrs. Brabazon, that it was all—all a dream; but now she was roused by the agony of a sharp mental awakening.

"Sit up at once, and listen to me, miss, and tell me what this means—this letter from Miles Brabazon," unfolding as she spoke, the epistle, which literally cracked in her hand. "He says:

"'Dear Mrs. Brabazon—I think it right to tell you at once that there will be no marriage between my cousin Esme and myself. I refer you to her for the reason, and am, yours truly,

"'MILES BRABAZON.'

"Now, please to give me the reason this moment," she proceeded, grasping the bar at the foot of the bed in both hands, and glaring at her step-daughter. "Is he in his right mind? No address, no date. Postmark, Portsmouth."

Still Esme could not speak; vainly she tried to articulate. No words would come. She would have fared better if she had been up, standing on her feet; but with her furious step-mother towering over her from the bottom of the bed she was at her mercy in every way, and speechless.

Gussie, who, already dressed, stood trembling and quaking in the background, making unintelligible signals to her sister behind her step-mother's back, now found courage to say:

"Tell her, Esme; it's nothing so very dreadful, after all!"

And Esme, thus adjured, told what had happened."

"It is not quite as bad as I expected," was Mrs. Brabazon's comment when she had heard the story. "You had better stay in your room to-day. I shall write and telegraph to Miles and Annie and tell them the truth. There, you can keep that," tossing Miles' note contemptuously on the counterpane. "The trouble and anxiety I've had about this whole business has nearly worn me into my grave. What with your scruples and Miles' scruples, and the fatigue about your trousseau, and now this."

So saying she trailed majestically out of the apartment, closing the door with a bang that made the jugs and basins rattle for two minutes.

All that long day Esme remained upstairs, while Gussie brought her constant bulletins from the lower regions, and Nokes appeared periodically with a large cup of tea on a small tray.

But no letter, no telegram, no Miles put in an appearance. The day waned, night came. And so ended Esme's wedding day!

CHAPTER XIII.

Let us now return to Miles, whom we left on the platform at Portsmouth, nearly beside himself with rage, and almost blind with passion.

He was a young man of prompt action, and once he was roused he did nothing by halves. He hurried off to a hotel and penned the blotted note we have already seen between Mrs. Brabazon's twitching fingers. He then took the night train for Aldershot, where the second battalion of his regiment was now undergoing the agonies of inspection previous to its departure for the Cape.

"One thing was certain," he said to himself emphatically; "they should not sail without him." The mere idea of remaining in England, to be harried by his friends about his broken engagement, was nothing less than madness. He interviewed the astounded commanding officer at 8 o'clock in the morning. He begged and prayed to be taken as a supernumerary, or, vaguely, "anything." But, luckily for him, one of the captains was on the sick list, one who would probably retire, and with him he effected a prompt exchange. He telegraphed to Burmah, he telegraphed here and there—to the war office, to outfitters, to any and every where but Baronsford. He lived in a kind of rain of orange envelopes. He made a flying trip to the Horse Guards and to his tailor's. He called at Annie's; she was out. But he shunned the clubs as if the plague were raging in their vicinity. Did not all his chums know that he was to have been a married man ere this? Now the Second Battalion Royal Marchers knew nothing of his affairs, and he was comparatively at ease among them. Down at Aldershot all was confusion. Chaos reigned in the officers' quarters and in the mess.

At last the regiment was fairly off to the station, and played away in two troop trains, by the band of another corps, while a crowd of sympathizing spectators cheered and waved handkerchiefs. Twenty-four hours later they were aboard the Portugal, hired transport, steaming out of Portsmouth harbor to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

"The girl I left behind me." What a bitter irony that well-known air implied to Captain Brabazon, as he leaned his arms on the bulwark, with his forage cap pulled over his brow, and his eyes fixed upon the fast-receding shores of merry England; and he laughed to himself a grim, contemptuous, not very pleasant laugh, as he glanced at a boy close to him, whose eyes looked misty, whose whole idea and expression conveyed the idea that he had left some fair ladylove in the land whose shores were becoming dimmer every moment.

At St. Vincent's they put in for coal, after nine days' steady steaming; that land-locked harbor presented a busy scene—colliers and small vessels and transports. The Portugal happened, by good luck, to be the first of a batch of troopers all bound for the Cape. But first come, first served, and after twenty-four hours' hard coaling she steamed out through the fleet, the band playing "Rule, Britannia," amid loud cheers from all the other ships.

The Portugal put in for more coal at Cape Town, and all the marchers were delighted to land and have a run on shore, after a month at sea. Miles, and half a dozen others, made their way to the Civil Service Club, in hansoms, and who should be standing on the steps, all smiles and freckles, and blinking lashes, but Captain Gee, promoted to the second battalion, dressed in spotless white, and having landed that very morning from British Burmah. Very heartily did he greet the first arrivals, but to say that he was astonished to see his bosom friend, Miles Brabazon, among the crowd, but feebly expresses his feelings. However, he had the sense and prudence to restrain himself till opportunity suited.

No sooner had the door banged after the last merry subaltern than Captain Gee, who had been lying back in a very deep, very low chair, suddenly clutched each protruding arm, drew himself up to the very edge of it, and, confronting his companion, eagerly asked these three questions in one breath: "Well, where is she? What have you done with her? Are you married?"

"No more than you are, thank goodness," returned the other, knowing well that it was useless to attempt to evade or postpone a searching cross-examination. "It was a near thing. I can hardly bear to—to talk of it. We were within a day and a half of the wedding and there was an end of everything."

"Was the money a sell?" demanded Captain Gee.

"No, that was all right."

"Then," said Dicky, decisively, "it must have been the girl. No doubt you neglected her, snubbed her and shut her up on all occasions. Oh! if I had only had your opportunities."

"There is another view of the subject that has not struck you as yet," said Miles, gravely. "I suppose," with a visible effort, "you must know it sooner or later. Let us get it over now, and never speak of it again. Come out on the balcony, it's stifling in here."

Dicky responded to the invitation with alacrity, looking up with sharp expectancy into his brother officer's face.

"It was not my cousin who broke off the match; it was I," he said, with slow, distinct utterance.

"I wouldn't doubt ye," interposed his companion, in an angry undertone.

"And whatever I tell you is sacred, Dicky; these other fellows know nothing of it," nodding toward the distant masts smiling grimly.

"Go on, go on, man alive!"

"It's easily told in a few words. We were within less than two days of the wedding, when I accidentally discovered that she was madly in love with another man. I saw her kissing him with my own eyes."

"There was no getting over that, I suppose," said Gee.

"And so," not deigning to notice the suggestion, "I just made my bow there and then, got an exchange, and here I am!"

"You're sure there was no mistake; it was no other person?" inquired the wily Dicky, anxiously.

"No, no mistake! I saw her with my own eyes, and seeing is believing, is it not?" sarcastically.

"Poor old chap, I'm sorry for you, for your sake, but I'm precious glad to get you back for my own," slapping him vigorously on the back. "Cheer up, man, and don't look so down in the mouth; it's nothing, when you're used to it; and remember this—that there's as good fish in the sea as ever were caught; girls are plentiful; as to the young woman——"

"Yes, and as to the young woman?" with a look of veiled contempt.

"All I wish to remark is," scrutinizing his companion gravely, "that the loss is hers."

(To be continued.)

Samarkand has a cab service, but the Samarkanders are obliged to go on foot on Saturdays, as all the drivers are strictly orthodox Hebrews. The town authorities tried to force them to work on their Sabbath, but the appeal court has upheld the religious rights of the drivers.

There are 36,234 locomotives on the rails, in the roundhouses, or in the shops of the railroads of the United States; 9,956 are hauling passenger when in use and 20,627 are freight locomotives.

SAID BY RICHARDSON.

THE PERMANENT CHAIRMAN REVIEWS ISSUES.

Finance the Leader—Trusts and Imperialism Are Warmly Denounced—Administration's Attitude in Cuba, Porto Rico and Philippines Criticised.

The speech of J. D. Richardson of Tennessee, permanent chairman of the national Democratic convention, was as follows:

I am deeply sensible of the great honor you have bestowed upon me in calling me to preside over this great Democratic convention. We have been clothed with the authority to name formally the candidates who at the next election are to be chosen President and Vice President of the United States, and to lay down a platform of principles upon which the battle is to be fought and the victory won. With your permission I will address myself to some of the issues of the impending campaign.

The last great national contest for supremacy was fought mainly upon one issue; that is to say, one issue was paramount in the struggle. That issue was familiarly called "16 to 1." It involved the question of the free coinage of gold and silver at a ratio of sixteen parts of silver to one part of gold, with which all of us are familiar.

The momentous issue this year is again 16 to 1, but the sixteen parts to the one part of this campaign, which I will briefly discuss, are wholly different from those of 1896. I will refer to the sixteen parts and then to the one part. These sixteen parts are:

1. We have the issue fraught with indescribable importance to our people native born, and those who have for patriotic reasons cast their fortunes with us—namely, that of the republic against the empire. On this part alone of the sixteen, if there were no other, we confidently expect to win a sweeping victory in November. The Republican party stands for empire. The Democratic party stands for the republic, for the declaration of independence, and the Constitution of our country.

Trusts a Leading Issue.

2. The paternal and fostering care given by those with whom we contend to the combinations of corporations and companies into powerful organizations familiarly known as trusts. Under three years of Republican rule, while they controlled the Presidency, the Senate, and the House of Representatives—that is, the law-making power of the government—trusts have been propagated and fostered by legislation until they not only dominate all markets, both the buying and selling, but defy the very power of the government itself. The farcical efforts put forth by the Republican party in an alleged attempt to restrain them in the dying hours of the late session of Congress only excited ridicule and contempt and served to emphasize their inability and disinclination to grapple with the monsters and regulate their conduct and actions. No matter what their excuses may be, the fact is their policies have created them, and, though clothed with all power, they refuse to enact legislation to control them.

3. Called to power March 4, 1897, under a pledge to reform the currency, they seized the first opportunity to fasten upon the land the highest protective tariff law ever put upon the statute books of any country. This law was enacted, not to raise revenue, but to give protection to favored manufacturers. It failed to raise sufficient revenue for the government, but answered the purpose of enriching the favored few, while it robbed the many, and at the same time brought forth trusts to plague us as numerous as the lice and locusts of Egypt. Their high protective tariff is the mother of trusts.

4. This administration came into power with a solemn declaration in favor of bimetallism and a pledge to promote it. It has failed to keep that pledge. It has erected in its stead the single standard of gold, and has endeavored to destroy all hope of bimetallism. In doing this it has built up a powerful national bank trust and has given us a currency based upon the debts and liabilities of the government. We stand for bimetallism and not for a monometallic standard of either one or the other metal.

Attitude Toward Monroe Doctrine.

5. The dominant party has recently made the fraudulent declaration that it favored the Monroe doctrine, and yet their President and Secretary of State have done all in their power to nullify and abrogate that famous and much-revered Democratic doctrine. In the name of its Democratic author, James Monroe, I denounce their vaunted advocacy of this truly American doctrine as false and hypocritical. We stand for this doctrine in its essence and form, and demand its rigid enforcement.

6. In order to obtain place and power they pledged themselves, in the interest of an expanding commerce, to construct a waterway to connect the two great oceans. They have repudiated this promise. They have negotiated the Hay-Pauncefote treaty which, while it virtually abrogates the Monroe doctrine, renders it impossible to build an American canal. Under the terms and provisions of this treaty, which is English and not American, the canal can never be constructed. We stand for an American canal, owned, constructed, operated and fortified by America.

7. They declared in their platform that their party was responsible for the merit system, that it was their creature and that the civil service law should be protected and its operations extended. Their protection of this law has been such as the wolf gives the lamb. They did not dare openly repeal the law or to modify it by an act of Congress, but they have insidiously, by an order from the President, extorted from him to aid them to obtain and hold political power, greatly impaired the efficiency of the law. By the President's order many thousand lucrative offices regularly covered by the civil service law were taken from under its protection, and these places turned over to his partisan followers in a vain effort to satisfy their political greed.

8. They declared in their platform in favor of the admission of the territories of Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma as States of the Union, yet, after nearly four years of full power, they are still Territories. Under the wicked rule of law as now applied by the Republican party to some of our Territories they may at an early date find erected between themselves and the balance of the Union a tariff wall which will serve to pauperize them while it enriches others.

"Plain Duty" in Porto Rico.

9. When Congress last assembled the President, in his first utterance addressed to the representatives fresh from the people, solemnly urged upon them that it was their plain duty to give free trade to Porto Rico. His party leaders, quick to obey his injunction, made ready to comply with his recommendations. But in a night—almost in the twinkling of an eye—the mighty magnates of the trusts swept down upon Washington and interposed their strong arm, and plain duty vanished like mist before the rising sun. The President wheeled into line, the Republican party reversed its policy, and set up a tariff wall between the island of Porto Rico and the remainder of the United States. It is not at all surprising that in the recent somewhat lengthy declarations of principles enunciated by the party in convention assembled, while they enlarge upon almost every political question, they could not find the space to point with pride to the achievements of their party in its dealings with that unhappy island. The Democratic party stands for equal taxation, equal rights and opportunities to all who come under the folds of the flag.

10. They wholly failed by their legislation and by the cheaper method of platform declaration to tell the country what their policy is in respect to the Philippine Islands. For two years, by their equivocating policy, and no policy at all, they have continued in that archipelago a war, expensive in human blood, as well as in money. Incompetent to deal with this question, and too cowardly to avow their real purpose of imperialism and militarism in dealing with these and kindred colonial questions, they should be retired from power, and the control should be given to a party honest, bold and patriotic enough to apply American theories and precepts to existing conditions, and thereby solve them in harmony with the underlying principles of the declaration of independence and the Constitution of our country.

11. Another part of the issue of the campaign this year is the scandalous dealings of a high cabinet officer with private banks of the country. These scandals are notorious, and are based upon the earnest and repeated written demands of the officers of some of these banks that they should be favored by this administration because of money contributed by them with which to buy the Presidency of 1896. Correspondence submitted to Congress shows that, in one case at least, an appeal from an institution in New York City to the Secretary of the Treasury for financial assistance, because, as it was claimed, the officers of the bank had contributed liberally to the election of the present chief executive, was not made in vain, and the asked-for assistance in this case from the government was freely, if not corruptly, given.

"Embalmed Beef" for Soldiers.

12. The scandals which surrounded the War Department in feeding embalmed beef to the soldiers, in its purchase of old yachts, tugs, ocean liners, ocean tramps, barges, scows, etc., for use as army transports constitute an important chapter.

13. So also the scandals in connection with the postoffice matters in Cuba, and the scandals in connection with the expenditure of the funds of the Paris exposition. Time will not permit an amplification of all these scandals.

14. They loudly proclaim that theirs is the party of liberty, and in their vainglory boast of their very name, Republican, yet they are caught coquetting and forming secret entangling alliances of the most detestable character with the old mother monarchy. They stand supinely by and refuse even an expression of sympathy with the Boer republics in their heroic and unequal struggle for existence as against the gross oppressions and brutal efforts at enslavement of the same old tyrant who went down in defeat when he sought to prevent the establishment of our own liberty-loving republic. They thus permit a brave people in love with their free republican institutions to perish from the earth, lest by one word of sympathy and comfort they might offend the delicate sensibilities of their new found ally, Great Britain.

15. An important chapter is the oft-repeated promise, made to be broken, that when the war ceased the oppressive, burdensome and vexatious war taxes on many articles of prime necessity should be repealed or reduced. Though the war closed two years ago, and notwithstanding there is a large and growing surplus in the treasury, not one dollar of reduction in these taxes has been made. It is known that delegation after delegation of citizens, suffering from these burdens, crowded the committee rooms at Washington, and literally begged for some relief. It is true that those of us who constitute the minority of Congress joined in that appeal and declared our readiness to support any and all measures that might in some degree remove these burdens of taxation. But a deaf ear was turned by the Republicans to all such efforts for relief, and none came. It is well known, also, that no relief will be given by the party in power, and it is vain for overburdened people to look to them while present policies are attempted to be enforced. The only hope for relief lies in hurling from power the Republican party and the restoration of the party which believes in simple and economical government.

Cost of "Imperialism."

Sixteenth and Last—The cost of Republicanism and its twin monster imperialism. This is neither the time nor the occasion to discuss in detail the increased appropriation made necessary by the Republican policy of imperialism. Briefly, however, I will mention that the average of appropriations per year for all purposes of government for the two years immediately preceding the Spanish-American war were about $475,000,000. The average expenditures per annum for each of the three years since that war, including the fiscal year upon which we have just entered, show an increase of nearly $300,000,000. The total increase for the three years will be nearly $900,000,000. And in like proportion it will go on. This shows the difference in cost of the empire as against the republic. These figures refer alone to the money cost of the change, and do not include the expense of the blood of the American boys, the price of which is far beyond computation. In the Republican Congress just closed not one dollar could be had for much-needed public buildings throughout the country at home, but many millions were promptly voted to prosecute a war in the far-away Philippine Islands. Not a dollar for necessary improvements of our rivers and harbors at home, but millions to be stolen and squandered in Cuba and our new insular possessions. Nothing for the Isthmian canal, and many other enterprises and objects, but more than $200,000,000 was freely given for the army and navy, for imperialism and military, for gold and glory.

I said at the outset that the issue this year was again 16 to 1. The foregoing are briefly the sixteen parts of the issue. What is the one part?

We have seen that platform pledges are made and broken; that good intentions of men are many times set at naught; that plain duty clearly set forth and understood is disregarded; that some men are weak and vacillating and may change their solemn opinions in a day. It is apparent, therefore, to all that in this supreme exigency of the republic a demand goes forth, not for a faint-hearted declaration of platform platitudes, but for a man. Yes, a man who stands like a mighty rock in the desert; a man who, knowing the right, will dare do the right; a man who, "rather than follow a multitude to do evil," will stand, like Pompey's pillar, conspicuously by himself, and single in integrity.

Such a man, as the one part, this convention will tender to the nation as their candidate for President—a man who is unsurpassed as a citizen, unequaled as an orator, courageous as a soldier, conspicuous in every element that constitutes the typical and the true American, William J. Bryan, of Nebraska.

WAS HIS GREATEST TREASURE.

Modest Choice Which an American Made of a Sword.

Somebody was telling just the other day, of a wonderful eastern relic, which is in the possession of an ex-minister to Siam, says the Washington Post. It was when the ex-minister was a full-fledged representative of the majesty of a free people that he was invited out of his legation to visit a prince, or a subking, or some other provincial ruler under the dominion of the king of Siam. He was right royally entertained, and when the time for his departure drew near his host desired to load him down with costly presents.

The American minister refused, again and again, to take the valuable gifts pressed upon him, but at last, seeing that to go away empty handed would be mortally to insult his princely host, he decided to take the smallest and least valuable of all the things shown him. He looked about the treasure room and saw hanging on one wall a perfectly plain old sword. Its scabbard was not jewelled, and its hilt was quite plain. Surely he might take so small a gift as that. He signified his desire to possess the weapon, and it was given him.

When he went back to the capital his majesty expressed a royal curiosity to know what the prince had given him. The sword was shown him. His majesty fairly bubbled with excitement. That sword! Why, he had been trying for years and years to get possession of it. He had offered the prince its weight and double its weight in gold and precious stones, but the prince had always refused to part with it. It was a historic sword, a sacred sword, and scarcely less precious to the prince than his crown itself. It was hundreds of years old ,and the king would have given his eye teeth for it.

The American had asked for something vastly more precious than any of the gorgeous jewels he had refused to accept, and Oriental politeness had granted his request. He had brought away with him something that all the power of the mighty monarch himself had not been able to obtain.

Houses were first numbered in Philadelphia in 1811.

LABOR NOTES

Treasury returns for twelve months show that the United States has sold to various countries $5,000,000 of American-made locomotives.

Over 1,000 men were thrown out of employment on account of the closing of the various departments of Jones & Laughlin's steel mills at Pittsburg.

The Carpenters' Union of Boston has won higher wages and eight hours per day for its members, who number close onto 6,000. The strike was a short one, only a few firms refusing to sign the agreement.

Official labor statistics from New Jersey show that union men work 53 hours per week and non-union men 66. The average daily wages of union men is $3, that of non-union men $2.19. Union men are idle 58 days in each year, non-union men 66 1-10 days. Wages for the year are 37 per cent. higher for the union men than for non-union men.

In New York State 910 persons were killed and nearly 40,000 crippled in shops, factories and industrial pursuits in the year 1899. In the war with Spain 280 Americans were killed and 1,557 wounded. Based on the figures the total of killed and injured annually in industrial pursuits in the United States would be nearly 20,000 killed and 900,000 injured.

School authorities of the State of Washington have employed Seattle and Tacoma Typographical Unions to publish text books for the public schools. The new system will furnish the first example of school books bearing the union label, as well as being a home product throughout. Chicago school authorities have been figuring on the same question for some time.

Scarcity of coal in Europe enables the United States to build up a trade in the commodity that will be of great importance in the near future. A writer declares the extraordinary demand for fuel is attributable to the usual activity of the iron and steel trade of Europe. Coal in England brings $10 a ton, with 58 cents per 100 charged for a poor grade in many localities. The scarcity extends to France, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Italy.

Working as a test and under pressure in an Eastern shoe factory, it required a little more than sixteen minutes to finish complete, from the time the leather was placed in the hands of the workman, a pair of high-grade women's shoes. In a number of Chicago factories this time has been reduced to fifteen minutes or less. Recently a pair of the finest shoes was turned out in a fraction over fourteen minutes after the material was given to the worker, and in addition the same was packed in its proper receptacle.

Shorter hours and higher wages are declared to be the substantial fruits of labor organization in England. W. C. Steadman, a labor member of Parliament, said recently: "In twenty years we have reduced by ten hours a week the hours of labor in England, while at the same time increasing wages 20 per cent. Nine hours a day is probably very near the average at this time. Men employed in the building trades receive between 10d and 11d an hour, engineers £2 a week, shipwrights £2 2s a week, plumbers 1s an hour, printing trades 38s a week, coal miners 35s a week, bootmakers 35s a week, tailors in London between £3 and £4 a week, tailors in the provinces 36s a week, bakers from 28s to 35s a week. All these men work between eight and nine hours a day."

Laurel Crowns.

The laurel crown used to decorate the brow of the victor in the old Olympian games, or the head of some triumphant general, was composed of bay leaves. The bay is laurus nobilis, and thus the wreath or crown has been called laurel or bay, according to the whim of the writer. The bay was considered by the ancients to be an antidote against poison and a security against lightning; its leaves were used to provide a pleasing incense, and a spray of bay was carried in the garments of all superstitious persons as a guard against all dangers. It is interesting to note how the laurel or bay has passed down to these more prosaic times; the heads on medals, coins, etc., are almost always crowned with laurel. Then we have a poet laureate, or the poet crowned with laurel—that is to say, the chief poet of the times. Again, the title of bachelor, won by exceptional skill in connection with art or science, takes us back to the middle ages, when young doctors were crowned with laurel, and received the title of bacca laurel.—London Gardener's Magazine.

Polish of a Beauty.

The Queen of Italy is said to be not only the most beautiful but one of the best educated of all European queens. She speaks English, French, German and Spanish, reads Latin and Greek, knows the great poets thoroughly, reads Darwin, Ruskin and much theological literature; is a botanist and geologist and devotes much time to charitable projects.

Killed and Wounded in Battle.

In the battles of the Franco-German war the proportion of killed to wounded was generally 1 to 4½.

If you don't know how you stand with certain people, make your mark low. It is disappointment that kills.

If a man is nagged to death, can his wife be tried for murder?