

Joe Folk, The Boodle Fighter.

A Chat With Missouri's Gubernatorial Candidate on Corruption in Public Life.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—I came to St. Louis to see Joseph W. Folk, the young Tennessee herculean who is trying to clean the Augean stables of this boodling municipality and boodling state. A young man, a poor man and a stranger—for he came to St. Louis but a few years ago—he has been fighting the millionaires of the city, many of whom belong to the old families; he has routed the boodlers who are ready to spend millions to down him and has already a score of them in the penitentiary and others awaiting trial. Mr. Folk has made boodling a crime in the eyes of Missourians. He stands before the



JOSEPH W. FOLK, THE BOODLE-FIGHTER.
From a Photograph Specially Secured for the Deseret News.

people as the representative fighter against it and has become candidate for governor upon that issue alone. He promises, if elected, to purify the state legislature and state politics and his friends think him the coming man for president of the United States on a similar issue in 1908.

JOS. FOLK, THE BOODLE FIGHTER

Before I give you my talk with Mr. Folk let me show you the man. I have had a good chance to study him, for I spent last Sunday evening with him at his house on Delmar avenue. He lives in a rented two-story cottage, worth perhaps \$5,000, which stands out in strong contrast to the great mansions of the boodlers farther up town. He received me in his library on the second floor, a little room with a store of good books. There was laughing and chattering in the parlor as I entered the house, and its surroundings were those of peace and good fellowship rather than of a man hated by and fighting against one of the strongest parties of both city and state.

Mr. Folk impresses me as a man who keeps himself well in hand. He is not nervous. He looks healthy, and I doubt whether he knows he has a stomach. He is all force, and his whole capital, physical and mental, is ever at his command. He has the iron jaw of a fighter, reminding me of Times of Napoleon, McKinley and Samuel J. Randall. Indeed, he looks much like Sam Randall. He has a dark face, a big head, broad and full over the eyes, a big nose and big, outstanding ears. His eyes are large and full, smiling at ordinary times, but flashing fire when he discusses the outrages which the boodlers have perpetrated upon Missouri and his determination to down them. He is clean-cut, dresses well and looks well.

Mr. Folk is a young man. He was born in Tennessee 34 years ago, and graduated in 1890 from the Vanderbilt university at Nashville. He came to St. Louis to practice law, and was doing well when he got into politics.

FOLK THE POLITICIAN.

I don't think Folk aimed at a political career. He wanted to be a lawyer, and used politics as a side issue. He was a southerner, however, and the southerner sucks in politics with his

mother's milk. The boys discuss politics in the schools, and Folk took to the stump before he was out of college. As soon as he settled in St. Louis he became interested in its politics, and threw himself into the fight for the love of it.

Then there was a street car fight, and the strikers asked him to act for them. He did so, and a little later he was made the candidate for circuit or district attorney. He was elected, and it then became his duty to look into the administration of the city and its legislative enactments. He had been chosen to prosecute thieves and criminals. Others had been chosen before, but they had discriminated in such prosecutions. Folk came into office with a new pair of eyeglasses. He could not see the difference between a millionaire and a pauper, between a politician or a boodler and the ordinary citizen,

has been paid out in blackmail on such accounts.

"The business has been done by a continuous gang of nineteen and their subordinates," continued Mr. Folk. "It took nineteen votes to control the city council, and these nineteen men passed upon what legislation should be enacted and how much they should be paid for each act or franchise. At one time the combine received \$47,500 for an ordinance to light the city. The bargain was made on the floor of the house of delegates and the money was handed over to one of the combine. After voting the nineteen met at the house of one of their number, and the host sat at the piano and played 'Home, Sweet Home,' while the money was distributed in \$2,500 lots."

A MILLION DOLLARS PROFIT.

I asked Mr. Folk about the Central Traction deal of 1898, out of which a New York promoter made almost \$1,000,000. He replied:

"That was for a franchise which covered nearly all the street railways of the city. The promoter, a man named Snyder, gave \$250,000 in bribes to the municipal assembly to get it. He paid twenty-five out of the twenty-eight members of the house of delegates \$2,500 each and the seven members of the council from \$10,000 to \$17,000 each. One councilman took \$25,000 from other parties to vote against the franchise, but returned it when he found he could get \$50,000 from the promoter to vote in its favor. He gave back the first amount, saying he did not think he could honestly earn it. That franchise was sold by the promoter for \$1,250,000 so that he made a clear million out of the transaction. The city did not receive one cent for all the streets given away."

"That was the case in which Uthoff figured, was it not?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Uthoff was the man who got \$50,000 for his vote and gave back the \$25,000 which the opposing parties had given him to vote for them. The promoter, however, had promised Uthoff \$100,000 upon his saying that \$50,000 was not enough, and with this understanding Uthoff gave him back the \$50,000, expecting to get \$100,000 the next morning."

"That night the promoter left for New York, taking all the money with him. Uthoff had voted for the bill and had nothing. He took a pistol and followed the promoter to New York. They met at the Waldorf hotel, and there, under the influence of a bottle of champagne, Uthoff was made to compromise his claim of \$100,000 for \$50,000 cash. At the same time he signed a statement that he knew the promoter was not corrupt, and that he believed he would be as far from offering a bribe as he could be. But it is the people who would be from accepting one if offered."

HOW A BOY MADE \$50,000.

One of the queer cases described by Mr. Folk during our conversation was the attempted bribery of a man named Meier in the central traction bill. The promoters thought they could carry the franchise without Meier, but they wanted his vote in case one of the other boodlers failed them. They went to his son and handed him \$50,000, saying: "My boy, we are not sure of our majority, and if we need your father's vote we are willing to pay for it. Give this money to him and tell him that he is to vote for the bill, if his vote is required to pass it. In that case he is to keep the money, but if it is not needed he can vote against the bill and you can return the money to us. The boy took the money. The vote was taken and his father's vote was not required. Thereupon the promoter asked Meier for the \$50,000, but was refused in language somewhat like the following:

"I don't intend to give that money back. I did not give it to father, for that would be trying to bribe him, and I don't think you ought to have it for you have tried to use it to corrupt us. I think I will keep it for myself." He did keep it, using it for a start in business.

FOLK TALKS OF THE GOVERNOR-SHIP.

The conversation here turned to the gubernatorial campaign, and I asked Mr. Folk what he would do if he were elected. He replied:

MILLIONS FOR VOTES.

In these investigations Mr. Folk found that millions had been spent for votes. In our talk Sunday night he told numerous stories, describing how the city had been robbed, citing instance after instance of enormous boodling. Said he:

"For twenty years past St. Louis has been in the hands of a ring just large enough to control the city legislature and override the mayor's veto, and this ring has looted Missouri upon every license, privilege and franchise granted by the city. Laws have been unblushingly sold to the highest bidder. The ring has tried to sell the water-works, the court house and the Union market for its own enrichment. Nothing has been safe from its avarice, not even the sewer pipes in the ground. It has had its regular schedules of bribe prices, based upon what each business would stand, ranging from a few hundred dollars for a switch bill to thousands of dollars for a franchise. Indeed, I believe as much as \$100,000

"If I become governor I shall see to it that bribery is exterminated in our state legislature. The first time a legislator takes a bribe I will send a message to the general assembly asking for his impeachment. I will not allow a corrupt lobby to exist at the legislature, and the day of the sand-bagging legislator will be at an end. I shall use all my power to put corrupt men out of the party organization, and will do what I can to purify party politics. I shall recommend laws forbidding franchises obtained by bribery and protecting witnesses who testify in bribery cases. In short, I intend to do all I can to wipe out bribery and corruption in the state of Missouri."

BOODLE ISSUES AS A NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

"Do you expect to see the anti-boodle issue extend to other states?"

"I think it is already doing so. Public sentiment in regard to such matters is changing, not only in this state, but throughout the Union. Bribery is becoming a crime in the eyes of the people, and nearly every state is now waging war against such corruption. Until our exposure here a bribery case was practically unheard of. Indeed, there is hardly a score of cases in the court reports of the United States. We have had more prosecutions for bribery within the last 10 years than within the century back of them. The movement is spreading to other countries and we are now negotiating with the governments of Europe to close their territories against bribe-givers and bribe-takers. Our treaty with Mexico has already been so amended that that country will no longer be a haven of boodlers."

"Will boodling ever become a national issue?"

"I do not know," replied Mr. Folk. "It certainly ought to be a national issue. Its suppression means good government, and unless we can have that the country will go to ruin."

THE PEOPLE AND BRIBERY.

"Give me, Mr. Folk," said I, "your idea as to how bribery could be driven from the United States."

"It is only by the creation of a healthy, honest public opinion," said Mr. Folk. "You may put the boodlers in prison, but as long as the people are not down upon them and their acts the business will continue to thrive. The boodlers must be taught that boodling is bad for them, and that it is bad for the voters are the only ones who can teach them this thing. In my work I expect everything of the people of Missouri. If they will help me I feel that I can do much to wipe out corruption. But it is the people who will have to do it."

AS A PARTY ISSUE.

"Will you get the support of the Democratic party in your fight?"

"We shall have the support of the better element of it and we don't want that of the corrupt element. We hope to drive the boodlers from the Democratic party and to make that party an example which will give aid and strength to Democracy in every state of the Union. I don't believe in closing our eyes to corruption for fear it will hurt the party. No party can be hurt by getting rid of bad men, nor by cutting off its rotten limbs. I am naturally a Democrat; my ancestors were Democrats and I have never voted for a Republican, except where one has been put upon the Democratic ticket in St. Louis by party bosses. I believe in the teachings of my party, and I believe above everything in the enforcement of the laws. I know there are Democratic rascals as well as Republican rascals, and in the enforcement of the law I shall know no party."

DON'T WANT THE MACHINE.

"Then you will not expect to have the support of the machine ringleaders?"

"We don't want the support of the St. Louis machine. I should hate to think I could carry certain wards here which are controlled by that machine. It is in the party for revenue only, and we do not want that kind of a support. If I cannot become governor without promises to any one I prefer not to be governor. If I cannot be free to do my duty as I see it to my party and to

the people I would much prefer to retire to private life. I have no favors to ask of the corruptionists and no quarter to give. I defy them. I have been fighting them for two years and will fight them to the end, and I believe that the Democratic party and the people will help me."

THE PUBLIC AND THE BOODLERS.

"How can the public protect themselves from the boodlers?"

"They can do so by taking an interest in politics, denouncing bribery and in voting to wipe it out. Every good citizen should be to the primaries. He should attend the precinct, ward and township meetings and see that honest men are nominated. Ninety-nine per cent of our people are honest, but the other one per cent of dishonesty is perniciously acting and working while the other 99 sleep. Wake up the 99, and there is no fear of results."

"And then the citizen should urge the enforcement of the laws," continued Mr. Folk. "He should denounce bribery and assist in its detection. There should be a constant search for corruption, and this should be prosecuted without regard to the feelings of individuals. No honest man can be hurt by investigation, and no dishonest one has any right to object because his misdeeds are made public. Publicity and enforcement of the law are the chief antidotes for corruption. Boodlers can be punished by ballot as well as by prisons. The first duty of every citizen is to put an end to bribery in our public life. He should vote against it, talk against it and work against it. When the people look upon boodling as they do upon ordinary stealing, and when the boodler is punished like the ordinary thief, we shall be much further along on the road to purify its politics and to an honest city, state and national government."

ONE WOMAN AMONG THE THOUSANDS.

We received a letter from Waycross, Ga., from a woman who had been troubled with female nervousness for a long time, until she was reduced to almost a shadow. It affected her mind, she could not remember anything, she would get confused and so nervous and irritable she could hardly sleep. She described her case as one similar to thousands of other women, and then ends the letter by saying she had gained 15 lbs. last month and never felt better in her life, having no trace of her former troubles, sleep well, and ate her meals with a relish. She commenced the use of Dr. Gunn's Blood and Nerve Tonic just six weeks before she wrote the letter from which we copy the above.

This tonic is in tablet form, and should be taken right after meals. It turns the food you eat into strong, rich, blood, feeding the nerves and curing disease by making better blood. Sold by all druggists for 75c per box, or 3 boxes for \$2. Pale, weak, thin people should use this Tonic. For sale by Z. C. M. I. Drug Department.

RATHER A SLUR.

"Sir Philip Burne-Jones," said a Philadelphia millionaire, "dined with me during his American tour. We talked of the concert that a little success is apt to engender in young artists, and Sir Philip said:

"My father used to tell of a young nobleman who took to painting. He did passable work, got numerous commissions from millionaire tradesmen, and became, in a very small way, a lion."

"He insisted on driving my father to the studio, one day, to see his work."

"Here are my two latest things," he said, on their arrival. "They are entirely different in subject and in treatment, but I'm sure you'll like them both. One is a portrait of my uncle, copied from an old-fashioned photograph. The other is a painting of my grandmother, doing some needlework."

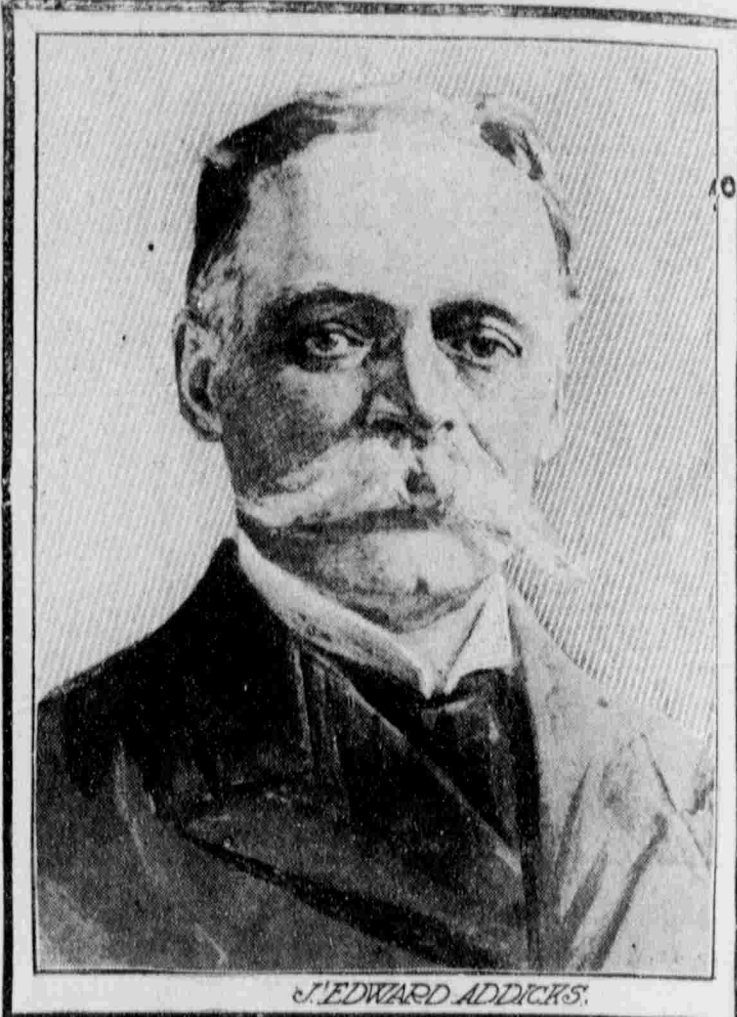
"My father looked carefully at both paintings for a moment. Then he said:

"Which one did you say was your uncle?"

SAVED BY INK.

Clerk Dillinger, at the Fifth Avenue hotel last night, told a story which is

DEATH OR THE SENATE, SAYS ADDICKS.



This very energetic citizen of Delaware has announced that he will never give up his ambition to be a United States senator and that he will die before he abandons his efforts to be elected to that body.

probably the limit as a case of "clear proof of personal identity."

"It was while I was clerking in a Cincinnati store," said Dillinger, "that a man named Alfred Jones came into the office with a check for \$40, which he wanted cashed."

"When he presented the check the following conversation took place between Dillinger and Jones:

Dillinger: We cannot cash this check unless you bring us some proof that you are the person in whose favor it is made out.

Countryman: Well, mister, how kin I prove it now?

Dillinger: Very easily, sir. You need only bring here some person who knows you and have him certify as to your identity.

Countryman: Well, mister, I can't do that. I don't know nobody in this city. But I tell you I'm the right man. Ain't my word enough?

Dillinger: I am very sorry, sir. I don't doubt but that you are the right man, but this is one of our rules and I cannot break the rules of the house.

The stranger then took up his check and walked out of the hotel with a very disconsolate air. In less than a minute he came running back, however, and in great glee cried out to Dillinger:

"I say! I kin do it! I kin do it now! Look a-here, mister, ain't this proof enough for you?"

So saying he pulled open his vest and shirt bosom and displayed to the eyes of the astonished clerk the name "A. Jones" in large capitals pricked in with India ink on his breast.

"Look at that, mister. I guess that will suit you to a 'T.' There's no mistake about that. It's genuine, that is!" exclaimed the countryman.

"Of course I could not dispute such

When a Pharmacist

In our employ begins to fill a prescription

to fill a prescription his mind is on nothing else.

He has nothing else to do until the prescription is compounded; he is not obliged to rush from the case to wait upon a customer—there are others for that matter. And another thing—nothing but high class registered pharmacists are employed at our establishment. Worth while thinking this over if you are particular about the medicine you consume.

SCHRAMM'S

Where The Cars Stop.

IS HE COMING BACK?



RICHARD CROKER AS HE NOW LOOKS, WITHOUT ASSISTANCE OF BEARD DRESSER BY AN ARTIST.

Again the rumor is afloat that Richard Croker is to return to New York and settle the fights in Tammany Hall. Judge Parker's friends feel that Croker's return would injure the judge's chances of election.

Washer Bargain!



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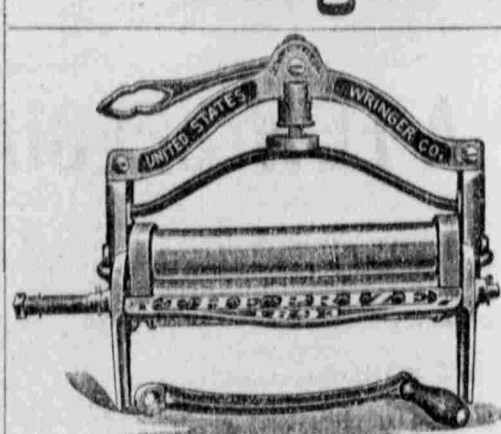
We give the young people the benefit of our experience. We advise them if they ask for advice—and very often our suggestions save them money.

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\$5.50