THE VAGARIES OF POLITICS.

How the Events of a Day or a Combination of Circumstances May Thrust an Unknown Man Into the List of Presidential Possibilities.

Carter H. Harrison, Whose Re-election as Mayor of Chicago Has Attracted National Attention.

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Accident, circumstance or opportunity, according to the term one may prefer to apply, makes the man. The old saw is as true now as when it was first enunciated. In no phase of life, however, does it apply with so much force as in politics, and because of our republican institutions in no country is its correctness so frequently exemplified as in the United States. The political history of the country affords thousands of examples, and it is safe to say that at every general election held in recent years there have been a score or more of men whose cases might be cited in support of this proposition.

Many men who have attained the position of chief executive of the United States have been practically unknown outside their own congressional districts at the election preceding the one which resulted in their elevation to the presidency. Accidents have converted unknown individuals into rivals for gubernatorial honors, and the events of a day have transformed men with nothing more than municipal reputations into presidential possibilities first, presidential candidates afterward and presidents still later. And these cases are not isolated ones. Numbers of instances might be cited to illustrate this, and these accidents of politics, or whatever else they may be called, are relatively more numerous in the upper strata than in the middle ground, where the strife is more personal and the element of individuality is not lost sight of for a moment.

A retrospective glance of half a century will make this fact clear. In 1844, at the opening of the Mexican war, it was alleged that owing to the fear of the administration of President Polk that the laurels which it was expected that General Winfield Scott would win in the campaign would make him an irresistible presidential candidate General Zachary Taylor was assigned to an important command in the hope of distracting attention from Scott. But in that case there was reckoning without the host, for, as far from the plan serving to kill off one presidential candidate, it had the effect of making another. The unknown Taylor of 1846 was elected president of the United States two years later.

In the case of Abraham Lincoln the facts were even more illuminative of the political possibilities under our form of government. In 1858, when Fremont was running as the first candidate of the Republican party against James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln was unknown outside of Illinois. Two years later he stumped the state as a candidate for the United States senatorship against the "Little Giant," Stephen A. Douglas. That canvass gave him a reputation as a debater, and in 1860 the uncouth Illinois lawyer was the candidate of the new party for the presidency and was elected. Had he been successful in his fight for the senatorship he probably never would have been thought of in connection with the presidency, and if the Democratic party had not been split into several factions he certainly would not have been elected. In other words, Lincoln was the hero of the debate with Douglas and the favorite of circumstances.

Rutherford B. Hayes was the hero of his party at the time of the assembling of the national convention because of the fight he had made and won with "greenbacks versus resumption" as the issue against "Tilden Up" William Allen. Hayes became governor of Ohio, and his victory attracted the attention of the magnates of the party in different sections of the country. They took him up as the man upon whom public attention had been most recently focused, and he became president of the United States.

Cleveland was another unknown who became president. He was mayor of Buffalo when the New York state convention met. He was nominated for governor, with David B. Hill in the second place on the ticket. Charles J. Folger, Arthur's secretary of the treasury, was put up by the Republicans. It was alleged in some quarters that Folger's nomination had been brought about by the interference of President Arthur. Whether true or not, the impression gained wide belief, with the result that Cleveland was elected governor of New York by a plurality of nearly 200,000. He had never even been a political candidate. This made it practically certain that he would be the choice of the national convention. Such he was and defeated James G. Blaine, whom a shift of less than 60 votes would have elected and who certainly would have won had it not been for the quarrel between the "Stalwarts" and the "Half-breeds" had been intensified by the murder of Garfield. If Arthur had not been president, Folger never would have been a gubernatorial candidate in New York. Cleveland would never have got the opportunity to win by an unprecedented plurality, Garfield would probably have been chosen for a second term, and, in the opinion of many political students, that would have made Blaine an impossibility as a presidential factor.

Coming down to Bryan in 1896, we have another striking illustration of the lightningline and apparently erratic changes in politics. Bryan had attracted some attention as a speaker in congress, but on had Bailey, who was his political ally and who strikingly resembled him in manner, appearance and political thought. But at the convention in Chicago, when delay in the routine work made it necessary to kill time and the various members of the committee were invited to address the body, Bryan's opportunity came. He made the speech which caused the phrase "a crown of thorns, a cross of gold," to become a common phrase, and he was nominated with a rush over Bland, who had been thought by most persons to be certain of winning the coveted honor.

About 32 years ago there was born in the city of Chicago a child whose father party managers expected, and yet Harrison had a plurality of about 40,000. The result of this young man's election that has been to start a discussion, which is being participated in by many of the prominent newspapers in various sections of the country, as to his availability as a Democratic presidential candidate next year. That he is possibly stronger than others admit, but the question of his being a probability is, of course, treated as an absurdity on the one hand or an accepted fact on the other, according to the policy of the particular newspaper. At any rate, the throwing of a new figure into the political arena by the events of a single day is a matter of interest, and the study of this young man is interesting indeed.

As the beginning it may be said that Carter H. Harrison is as far from resembling his father in appearance as it is possible for one man to be like another. This applies to the essential phases of character, the points of difference being in manifestation of the same traits developed by the widely different lines of training accorded to each. The Harrisons come of good stock, and if they were not American to the core it would indeed be surprising. The mayor's great-great-grandfather was a resident of the state of Virginia, and this prominent member of the family whose name appears on the Declaration of Independence. This latter gentleman was the father of President William Henry Harrison and the great-grandfather of ex-President Benjamin Harrison. The latter is, therefore, a cousin in the fourth degree of Carter H. Harrison, the two branches of the family, as will be seen, run back to a common source one generation before that in which the signing of the Declaration of Independence belonged.

The family history of the Harrisons does not end there, however. They trace back directly to the reign of Charles I, at which time flourished their ancestor, Lieutenant General Harrison, the bitter enemy of the king and the trusted aid of Oliver Cromwell, whose confidence he enjoyed to an unusual measure. It was this same General Harrison who afterward enjoyed the questionable pleasure of leading the ill fated Charles I forth to his execution.

Again, Mr. Harrison's great-grandfather was a cousin of Thomas Jefferson, and his father bore the same relationship to John C. Breckinridge. Another great-grandfather was Colonel William Russell of the United States army, who served in Indian affairs and participated in the raising of the state of Illinois of the persistent Indian pillage, the which had prevailed for so many years that it had come to be regarded as a matter of course.

The present mayor of Chicago may have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but his father wasn't to any means. The latter got his first glimpse of this mundane sphere through an iron grate, if some critics of a humorous cast of mind are to be credited, and it is said that his first cradle was a board box sugar trough. His mother, being the daughter of a military man and having for the first time to face the sordid trials of grinding poverty, gave her boy a training which was reflected in after life in his rugged personality and sturdy determination. It also influenced his training of his son, the present mayor of Chicago, current that the latter had not the advantage or disadvantage, as one may regard it, of having to fight desperately for the necessaries of life. Young Harrison never knew what it was to want a dollar and not be able to get it, but for all that he was encouraged to develop himself constantly to some commendable end. Chicago and Harrison streets, Chicago. After a preliminary education in the public schools of his native city, he was sent to Europe, where he remained for four years as a student at the gymnasium at Ansbach, Germany. Then he returned home and was sent to the College of St. Ignatius, Chicago. He graduated with the class of 1871 and went to Yale, where he took the law and literary courses, receiving his degree in 1875.

His father thought that a little travel would do the young man good, and it did. He finally went home and took up the practice of law, which he continued for five years, after which he went into real estate business with his brother, William Preston Harrison, in 1881 the elder Carter Harrison bought the Chicago Times, of which Carter Junior was the managing editor, and William Preston the business manager. The young men conducted the paper until after the big strike of 1884, when they sold it. Shortly after it was merged with The Herald into what is now known as The Times-Herald. Since that time, with the exception of one year when he was abroad, which he spent in travel, he has been in the real estate business, in which he has been eminently successful. Two years ago he was elected treasurer, and a few weeks ago he was re-elected. His admirers declare that his municipal victories are but the precursors of greater things to come, while his enemies assert that Carter H. Harrison as a figure in politics will cease to exist as the expiration of his present term of office.

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CARTER H. HARRISON, A NEW FIGURE IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL POLITICS.

A COMMON COLOR IN FLAGS.

Of the 25 principal countries of the world 13 have flags with red in them, the list including the United States, England, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Mexico, Chile, Portugal, Venezuela and Cuba.

THE RIVER OF DEATH.

The Hoang-Ho or Yellow river is at once the scourge and the glory of China. Recently it raged in one of its periodical rises and brought death and disaster to the millions of Chinese who live in the extensive and fertile region which it waters.

For centuries its inundations, more or less severe, but invariably disastrous, have been a periodical recurrence, and every effort to prevent them has been ineffectual. The river brings down with it from the mountains where it has its rise an enormous quantity of rich soil, from whose appearance it derives its name. This soil is held in suspension in the upper reaches of the stream, where an extraordinarily swift current impedes sedimentation, but when the river reaches the lower level of the valley and the rapidity of its descent is checked the soil sinks to the bottom.

This is an ordinary process, but in the case of the Hoang-Ho or Yellow river it is made extraordinary by the enormous volume of the stream. Indeed, it goes on so rapidly and the current is so slow that the bed of the river is constantly filling up, and to prevent the water from spreading over the valley in a shallow sike it has been necessary to construct and is essential to maintain an immense system of artificial embankments. As the river rises the height of these embankments is increased, and at many places along its course the surface of the river is high above the level of the surrounding country. Under such conditions the occurrence of destructive inundations is inevitable.

The embankments are supposed to be under constant surveillance, and any breakness that may develope is immediately repaired. But Chinese science and Chinese numbers are no match for the mighty pressure of the swollen river in times of flood. A break takes place in the embankment, through which the river pours, sections of the embankment are soon swept away, and pretty soon the adjacent country has been converted into a lake.

These recurrent visitations are endured by the Chinese with characteristic resignation. As a result of a flood of this character which took place lately nearly 2,000,000 human beings are said to be on the verge of starvation. A few years ago, in 1887, the flood from which it was estimated 4,000,000 people had their lives. Yet the Chinese no more think of deserting the scene of these recurrent visitations than the Egyptians think of leaving the valley of the Nile. They know the danger that they run, but the fertility of the soil then immediately succeeds to the fear, and the locality with its irresistible attraction. If modern energy and skill could control the Yellow river, the blessing to the Chinese people would be immeasurable.

AN IMPRISONED EMPEROR.

The emperor of China is still in close confinement on an island, made a peninsula by day by the letting down of a drawbridge to the southeast corner of the palace. His chief amusement is the training of seals and monkeys. The former he has, by dint of much patience, taught to do tricks of every kind. One is to jump through the paper windows which are found everywhere in China, from the palace to the cottage. It was said that the empress dowager complained of the expense of having daily to replace the breakages.

QUEER THINGS IN PORTO RICO.

Children in Porto Rico wear no clothes until they are 10 or 11 years of age, and even grown up persons of both sexes bathe together in parts naturalists where the water is no higher than the knee. The people of the island are a composite race—Spaniard, Indian and negro. As regards religion, the bulk of the people are Roman Catholics. The upper classes, who are mainly Spaniards, dress in houses, the middle classes live in shanties, and the lower classes, in the poorest, dirtiest shanties.

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TOPICS OF INTEREST.

The latest novelty in the line of funeral equipments has just been introduced into Portland. It is in the nature of a casket lowering device, which does away with the pallbearers lowering the body into the grave. By this new invention the casket is brought from the hearse and placed on the device, which is mounted in its operation, and at the proper time the mechanism touches a spring, and the casket is by invisible means lowered quietly into the grave. This does away with the necessity of pallbearers entering the cemetery, and it is claimed that it is more in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

The navy department has received an account of a commemorative service in Smyrna, Asia Minor, in honor of John Yerverve, a Greek who was a member of the crew of the torpedo boat Winslow, killed in action in the battle of Cardenas, May 11 last. Imposing funeral services took place in the Church of St. John the Baptist in the presence of the friends and kinsmen of the dead sailor and many spectators.

Almost Schmidt of Weigsat, in Pomerania, has 105 years of age, is believed to be the last survivor of the Prussian war of liberation of 1813-15. Kaiser Wilhelm sent him a photograph of the old emperor and a telegram of congratulation on his birthday.

Owing to the cheap quality of paper used for Chinese newspapers and to the low price of labor, both literary and mechanical, the paper papers are received at an extremely small figure. The price of the ordinary Shanghai journal is 1 cash, or about one-tenth of a penny.

The citizens of Alva, in Oklahoma, have petitioned the town council to change the name of the place to Capron, in honor of Captain Capron of the French Hollow, who was killed at Santiago. The petition was granted by a unanimous vote.

THE FILIPINOS' ANTING-ANTING.

Superstition enters very largely into the make up of the native of the Philippines. Many of the more unsophisticated of the islanders have a childish faith in the efficacy of what they term anting-anting. The Filipino's faith in this mysterious charm is pathetically childlike. A person who has anting-anting is held to be invulnerable from injury and will cheerfully face impending death or fling himself upon an enemy's guns. It is usually the leader of a tribe who has anting-anting, and if the tribe leader chances to be one of the belligerent Tulisanes he will attack well armed planters with audacious recklessness. One noted Filipino bandit, for instance, acquired the reputation of having anting-anting because he had escaped the fire of six native Spanish officers. But he knew the game, and there must be several thousand Yankee boys who are also unconsciously carrying about with them an anting-anting. The Tulisanes are said to be able to avoid anting to resist in certain little charms, sometimes a bobble worn about the neck, sometimes a button or a piece of bone. It is the same mark that Yankee look on the Philippine Islands, bits of a remarkable exhibition of faith in anting-anting which he came across in the possession of a native. A native with an anting-anting confronted him and stated that he had come to the village to have the white professor shot dead. The Yankee was astonished and surprised in putting it very mildly. The native stoutly proclaimed that he could not be shot and that he would catch the bullets in his hands and hold them up and make it fall to the ground. The man insisted on being shot at, and Worcester was in a dilemma until he thought of a plan which would shift the anting-anting itself instead of the owner of the charm. Then the native produced a little leather bound book in which was inscribed "and and his wonderful and long treasured charm 3 paces from the marksman." When Worcester took aim, the crowd of natives who had collected took to their heels, but after the shot ran forward with great eagerness to see the effect of the white man's gun. The impact of the bullet caused the Bible book to fly high in the air, whereupon its owner proudly affirmed that it had itself jumped aside so as to escape injury. When he was shot into the book through it, however, he was considerably prostrated. He accused the failure of the charm by pleading that it "was old and worn out," and at once said that Worcester had a stronger anting-anting than his own.