

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.

IT WAS a bold stroke for the Democrats to decide that not only should their great national convention be held farther west than ever before, but that it should also open on the Fourth of July.

The nation will begin to stir on the night of the 3d. It will possibly boil over on the Fourth and inundate the whole region roundabout before the machinery of the convention is in running order, which will probably be on the 5th. Even then there will be further delay, if the generous people among whom the delegates will temporarily pitch their tents can have their way, for it is the intention of the residents of Kansas City to make this the greatest celebration of the kind and to make this combination of patriotism and politics the greatest celebration the great west has ever seen, and the coming Fourth, they all agree, will hereafter be known as the day we celebrated, with a heavy accent on the "the."

Political preferences and predilections aside, it must be admitted that no means have been spared to carry out the original programme so that this will absolutely be "the limit" and will be referred to by future historians as the fin de siècle event of a century, noted for startling innovations and wonderful achievements. This is the opinion I have formed after having been here nearly a week conversing with men of every class of business and shade of belief. The whole city is imbued with an all pervading desire to make of convention week a noteworthy event, without regard to personal feelings or affiliations.

As brother Americans, those who reside outside this enterprising city will have to admire the grit and perseverance of the committee having this convention in charge. It was less than three months ago, or on April 4 last, that the magnificent convention hall, then nearly constructed, was burned to the ground, and all the plans had to be revised.

"The people of the Kaw valley," said a man to me today, "haven't got any dictionary with the word 'failure' in it."

more. He points with pride to the fact that an even 22,000 is 2,000 more than one-tenth the city's total population, and a pretty good showing for a town that was started only 70 years ago. It was laid out in 1830, and only two years later, in 1832, the first Democratic national convention was held at Baltimore, which nominated Andrew Jackson by acclamation, so that there is a sort of a coincidence about the date of that first convention and the birth of this city.

And how these conventions have "made history" for our country! Upon their fate has depended the fate of many a man who otherwise might have continued comparatively unknown to the present day. The have upbilled some reputations, and others they have torn down—all in a breath, as it were. The prospective nominee is always "in the hands of his friends." But above all there is a spirit of dominance that overrules the best planned schemes that can be devised, and despite the protests of those most concerned, a national convention is liable to "take the bit in its teeth" and run away at the ad-

mon—for the sea of political oblivion seems usually to engulf them, and they disappear, except for a bit of wreckage that now and then survives, until another national convention comes around. There are noteworthy exceptions, of course, but as a rule neglect and forgetfulness are the rewards of party service in the making and boosting of candidates. However, they take their chances along with the rest. It is not everybody who can reach the plans when there are so few to be distributed and so many after them.

As about everybody knows, the national convention preceding this one, or that of 1896, was held in Chicago, the total vote on the first ballot being 753, with 502 necessary to a choice. On the first ballot Bland led, with 235, but on the fifth, with a total of 766, and 512 necessary to a choice, Bryan had 500

"Dick!" sorrowfully listened to his letter of withdrawal, which had been written in advance to be read at just this sort of a juncture. The "silver-tongued orator from Nebraska" had captured the convention with his simile, "You shall not press upon the brow of labor a crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold," and the result was, as we know, the nomination of Bryan. This year, unless all the signs are at fault, he will again be the

If one wishes proof of the fact that there will be much enthusiasm at the Kansas City convention, he has only to roam about among the new arrivals from the outside country, who are now coming in rapidly and settling down for the session. Talk about the great traits of the Boers in their various jaunts over the veldts of South Africa! Why, there are men here who would think nothing of pulling up stakes from the infertile

that are to prevail at Kansas City, and though these prices will not be above the general average in a convention town, yet where a silver dollar sometimes looks as big as a cart wheel, through stress of circumstances, they seem to the farmers something fabulous. So they concluded to give an illustration of how little man needs here below, even though he sometimes needs it strong. They have hitched up their prairie schooners, and for the last

one who has enjoyed the whole-hearted entertainment afforded by the true westerner can appreciate. The effort is, on the ground, perfecting the plans and trying to please the applicants for seats and other favors.

A careful canvass of former conventions shows that the average delegate spends about \$100 besides his railroad fares, including \$2 or \$3 a day for "seeing the sights," which will bring the total increment to the city generally up into the millions, so that as an investment alone the securing of the convention for Kansas City is looked upon very favorably by those who have so freely subscribed their dollars for the magnificent hall.

It does not require a prophetic vision to foresee the nomination, unless the figures deceive one, the nomination, sometimes do, for, while the total number of delegates to the convention is set at 500, more than the 620 necessary to nominate are already instructed for Mr. Bryan. It will, then, be Bryan again this time, and not some "dark horse" that shall leap like lightning out of comparative obscurity into sudden prominence and fame.

Mr. Bryan's sponsor will be the deputy attorney general of Nebraska, Willis D. Oldham, who is well known as a campaign orator and a devoted disciple of the late Mr. Bland.

The presidential kite will be swiftly flown before the gaze of an expectant, if not surprised, multitude, and across it will be emblazoned the name of Bryan. But as to the tail of the kite—the nominee for the vice presidency—there are various opinions. All the people out here seem to prefer "some good western man," while those in the east appear to think he should come from the Atlantic slope. As to this, the guess of an outsider is just as good as that of one on the spot. There is this satisfaction, however, to be derived from the uncertainty: It doesn't matter much anyway, unless the incumbent of the presidential chair should decide, who his "bob" is or how he gets attached to the kite.

J. JOHNSON WATROUS.
Kansas City.

THE FOURTH IN A PALACE CAR.

The idea of spending Fourth of July in a palace car seemed unique to those of us who were young, though the many experienced travelers in the party seemed to take delight in suppressing their feelings on this patriotic day. We left Chicago late at night in the midst of a severe storm, but the next morning opened fresh and fair and found us speeding over the green and fertile fields of Missouri.

At breakfast the cook played a little joke on us. He must have had a large supply of eggs in danger of spoiling, for on the menu appeared an enticing dish styled "Omelet à la Fourth of July." Everybody ordered it, of course. When served, however, we were disappointed, as "omelet à la Fourth of July" proved to be nothing unusual. When appealed to, the waiter only grinned.

As we passed through town after town we could see little groups of boys, girls and older folks lighting firecrackers and exploding torpedoes. Soon Kansas City appeared in view, and when the station was reached we started out to inspect the sights. A wealth of flags and bunting was visible, and we made purchases and later decorated our car.

"All aboard!" was shouted, and the long journey across the continent was continued.

Most of the day was spent in the smoker swapping stories. "I remember," said one of the younger men, "that I was returning to my home in California some years ago. We were on this very railroad, at Holbrook, A. T., when a freight train broke down ahead of us. A delay of at least 12 hours was announced, and as it was 9 o'clock in the morning we had to make the best of it. The town of Holbrook has a station, a store, a saloon and a few houses. All about appears to be desert.

"In order to kill time we hunted for some amusement, and, observing a crowd of moving figures about a mile away, we started out to see what they were doing. As we approached we found about a hundred cowboys, all on horseback, having a grand Fourth of July celebration. A boy selling some popcorn and a yellow liquid which he called lemonade, two Chinese cooks and a saloon keeper were looking on.

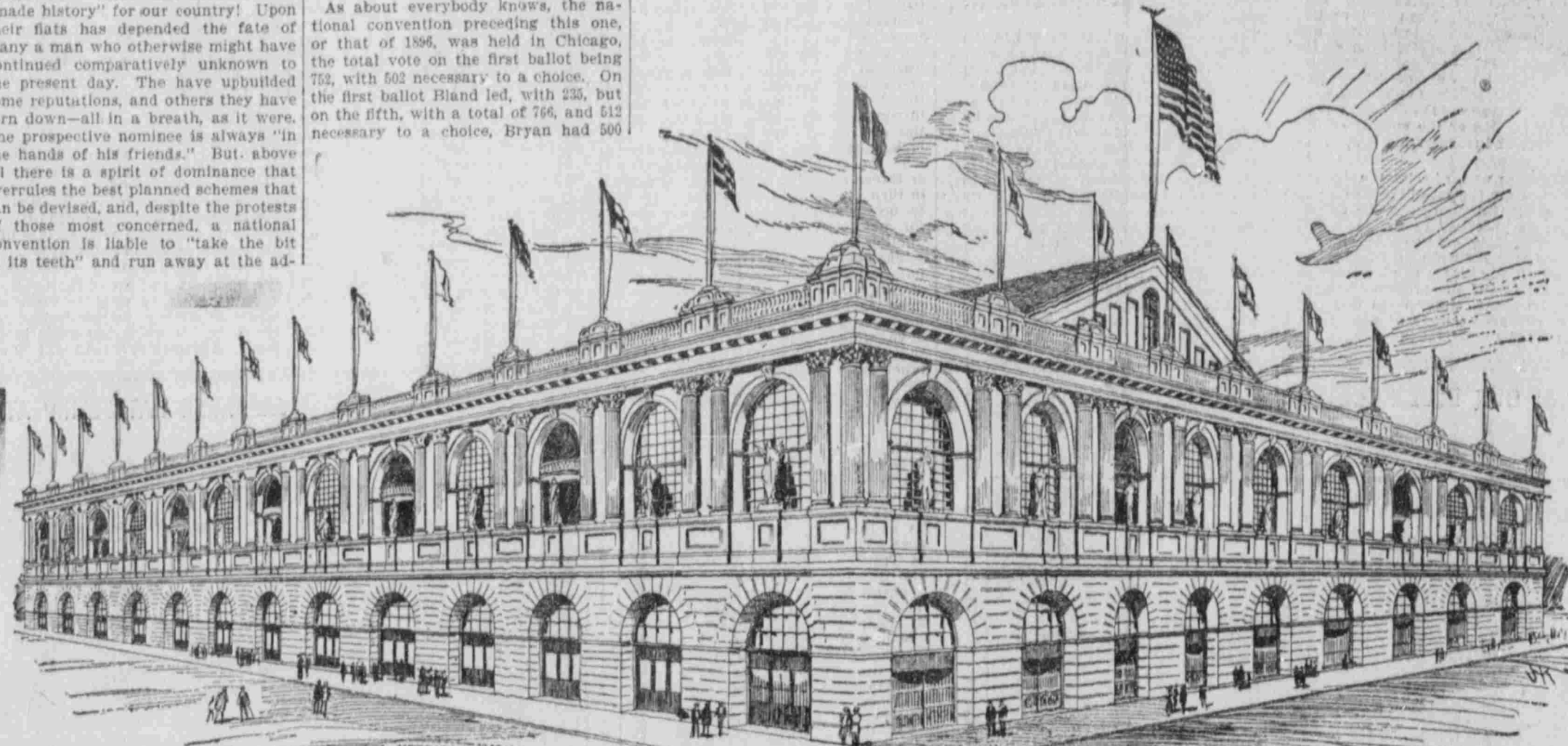
"The first thing was a race on a level stretch of country about a mile long. Six or seven men rode in each heat. Sometimes, where two prominent rivals were in the same event, they were allowed to race together, and this would elicit great applause from their companions. In the first race saddles and bridles were used; then saddles were dispensed with, and finally the men rode without anything on the horses at all.

"Next the roping contests were started. The object was to lasso a steer in the quickest time. One man threw his rope and caught the animal in exactly 30 seconds, and the next best time was one minute and a half. The legs of the animals had to be tied, and the whole performance was quite difficult. In the evening there was a ball, where the dancers moved to the music of an accordion, and prizes of hats, money and clothes were awarded to the lucky victors at the day's sports.

"Speaking of the unique celebrations," said another man, "I remember one which stands out quite prominently and which occurred when I was in Mexico. I happened to be there when the news arrived of the surrender of Santiago, and we boys concocted a would honor the occasion in some unusual way. So we ordered dynamite to take a hundred sticks into four pieces, and break each stick into four pieces, making a total of 400. Then we got a making of caps and went to the top of a mountain near at hand and set them off, making a terrible racket and confounding the Mexicans that the Fourth of July was about the biggest thing they had ever heard of.

"But we had already surpassed this occasion, I think, when we heard of Dewey's entrance into Manila harbor, for then we set off four tons of dynamite in a similar manner. It went off just the same, with such a terrific noise that we were as frightened as the Mexicans, when our ears were nearly split by the concussion, and great bowlders, many of which would weigh several tons, came rolling down from the summit of the mountain."

W. R. BRITTON.



THE NEW CONVENTION HALL,
KANSAS CITY.

few weeks have been steering a course for the hustling metropolis on the Missouri. They have in many instances brought along their families, have loaded down the old wagons with sides of bacon, cornmeal and sweetening, and the cost of the trip will be comparatively nil. Assuming that they and their families have to live even at home on something or other and their animals have to be fed, traveling or standing still, it is about the same to them whether they stay on the farm or jog along over the plains. Against the \$5 a head charged by the Kansas City hotels they will probably be able to make a showing of less than 20 cents per diem for each member of the caravan party. The trip will be something in the nature of what the boy on the towpath gets when he essays a voyage on the canal—on foot all the way—but these tough productions of a sterile soil and hard work don't mind that "a little bit."

Yes, they are coming in already and are camped down in the outskirts of the city along the bottoms, where fodder is cheap and the necessities of life come in every day on the cars. They don't have to crowd themselves all out of shape in stuffy old hotels and boarding houses, where no man knows in the morning what he will get to eat or how many he will have to share his pillow with at night. No, sir, they are free and independent, and the chances are at least 10 to 1 that they would put out more as a body than the whole outfit of delegates from all over the Union if it came to "a show down."

If you visit Kansas City, don't miss seeing the captains and cargoes of these prairie schooners. And they are going to be in evidence in the monster parade that is to take place, forming a unique feature at the barbecues and coming out strong in the attractions offered by the breezy west to its neighbors of the effete east. It cannot be otherwise that they should entertain great contempt for the kid gloves and soft skinned delegates who smoke cigarettes, travel by palace car and lounge around the barrooms of the great hotels.

It is the first time in its history that Kansas City has been chosen as a national convention town, but its citizens do not intend it shall be the last by any means, for they expect to make it as comfortable and homelike for the delegates and visitors generally that they will want not only to come again, but to stay here all the time. Although the hotels cannot furnish accommodations for more than one-third the expected arrivals, or, say, 10,000, there will be boarding house accommodations for all the rest, estimated at 20,000 more. Mighty efforts have been put forth by the local committees and bureau of public comfort, in charge of Mr. A. D. L. Hamilton, to provide for the visitors, the advance guards of whom have already begun to flow in like a tidal wave. Though many of the delegates will be obliged to "board around," the big hotels, some of them among the finest in the country, will contain the bulk of the distinguished guests.

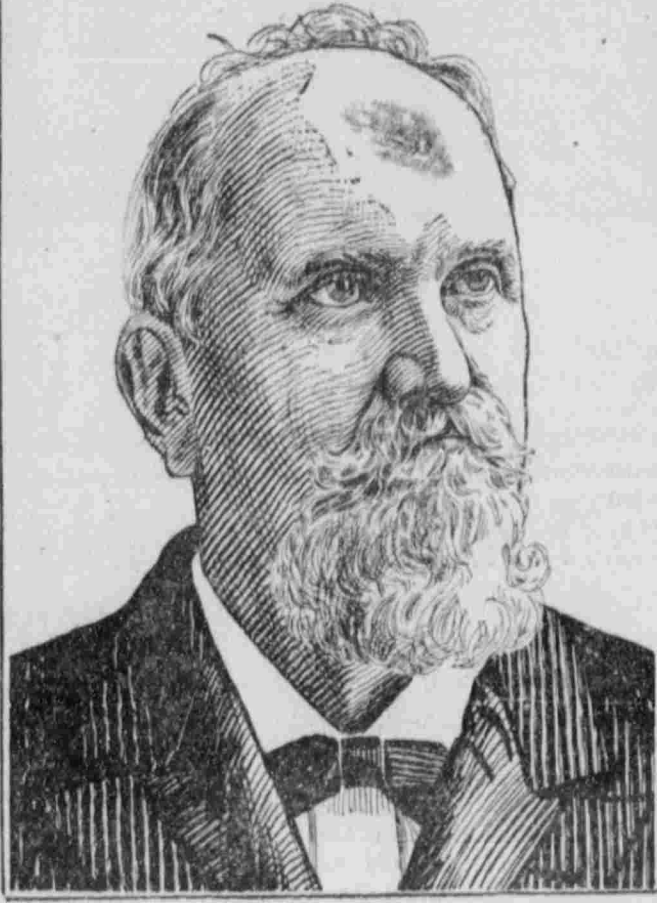
The national committee, at the head of which is Senator Jones, will occupy the palatial quarters of the Kansas City club, which, with its reading, reception and sleeping rooms, has been turned over for their unrestricted use. It is quite near and in close communication with the vast Convention hall, which is on the northeast corner of Thirteenth and Central streets. The three largest hotels are from three to nine blocks away. It is estimated they can "room" 2,600 people and provide for 4,000 more as "mealers." But, while the attendance at the time will be vast, the visitors will come from adjacent states and be in a measure independent of the public hostilities, finding this a good occasion for claiming the hospitality of friends. What this means only

marry the richest heiress of the year, win the Derby and become prime minister, all three of which ambitions he has achieved.

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genuity in devising targets of a novel character. He is likewise initiating and taking part in gunroom debates on all matters likely to quicken the intelligence of the officers and men under his orders.

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SENATOR JAMES K. JONES, CHAIRMAN DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The more they 'get it in the neck' the less liable they are to give in. You can't down them."

If my brief acquaintance with them and the history of this vast enterprise may be taken as indications, you certainly cannot "down them," or, if you get them down you can't hold them there. As soon as the committee saw the ruins of their pet creation, upon which they and all their fellow citizens had counted as the future home of many a convention, and upon which they had lavished their energy and dollars, they lost no time in getting up its successor. Contracts were made by phone and wire, premiums were promised for extra work and material, and three days after the fire the iron was being wrought in the mills for use in the new structure. Eighteen days after the fire a special train brought the first great trusses from Minneapolis to Kansas City, and ever since, by day and by night, the work has been going on without intermission. And it is still going on, with threats and promises held over the contractors, who are bending every energy to complete their gigantic task in time. If the contractors had not succeeded in having the last great truss in place by the 15th of June, they would have had the pleasure of putting up a temporary roof at their own expense. The laborers demanded and got "time and a half" for all day work over eight hours and double pay for night work; but it went on just the same, hundreds of electric lights and barrels of money furnishing the needful illumination and inducements.

So here it is at last, yawning for the crowds that are to fill it, coming from every part of the Union. Its exterior dimensions are 198 by 314 feet, its floor space is 153,100 square feet, and its total seating capacity is estimated at 22,500. The arena balcony is to seat 5,500, the stage 500, seat of stage 500, second gallery 2,300, the roof garden gallery 2,000, arena floor, where the delegates and their alternates will be seated, 2,500; press quarters 600, roof garden proper 3,200 and temporary gallery 3,300. These are outside figures, but they are those. The loyal native of Kansas City will allow you to "raise" them to the extent of the odd 250, but not a unit

vent of some "dark horse" who may or may not have been carefully groomed for the occasion.

Nearly a generation elapsed before the Democrats departed from their traditional custom and held a convention in the west. Baltimore was their favorite, until it came to be known as the Convention City, but in 1856 they met in Cincinnati, where Buchanan was nominated on the seventeenth ballot. The national convention of 1860 was held in Charleston, S. C., but the result after 67 ballots being "no choice," it was adjourned to meet at Baltimore, Douglas being nominated on the second ballot. At last, in 1864, the rising west was recognized by the selection of Chicago, in which city the Republicans had met four years previously, and here, on the first and only ballot, General McClellan was nominated as the candidate. In 1868 the pendulum swung east again, and New York was the chosen city, with Seymour, a son of New York state, nominated on the twenty-second ballot. In 1872, when Greeley was nominated on the first ballot, the convention was held at Baltimore again, this being the fifth time that city had been so honored. The convention of 1876 met in St. Louis and nominated Tilden on the second ballot. That of 1880 was held in Cincinnati, when, after the second ballot, Hancock was nominated by acclamation.

Chicago was revisited after an absence of 29 years in 1884, and on the second ballot Cleveland was nominated. In 1888 the convention assembled in St. Louis, and Cleveland was renominated by acclamation and without a ballot. In 1892 the scene was again shifted to Chicago, with the same candidate as at the two preceding conventions. This time Cleveland was nominated on the first ballot.

It would seem hardly necessary to mention such a recent occurrence as the national convention of 1896, were it not for the fact that few people seem to recollect even the salient features of such an event four years after it has happened. Similarly, also, few remember even the names of those who preside at such affairs with almost automatic power for the time being—the temporary and the permanent chair-

and soon received enough more to insure his nomination.

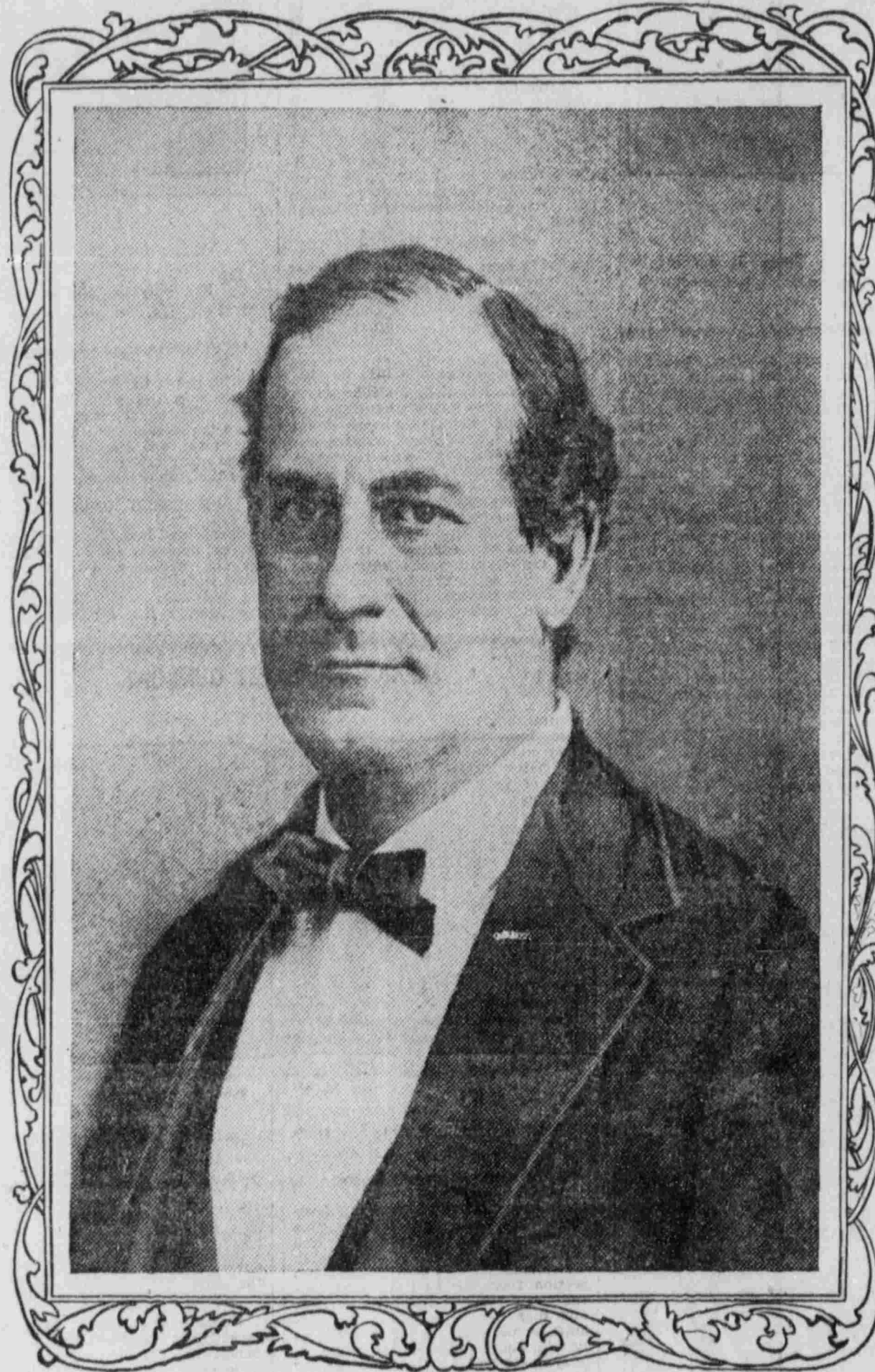
I was talking today with a delegate who was present at that convention. He declared it was the most dramatic he had ever attended, and he was an "old stager," too. Everything was sailing along very prettily, he said, until the "Boy Orator" tipped the scale with his glittering peroration and caught the convention with his rhetoric. The "three busy B's"—Boies, Bryan and Bland—were working against each other personally, but with perfect unanimity of purpose so far as their own beliefs were concerned, until it was disclosed that Bryan was leading, when, according to this eyewitness, "bedlam broke loose." Then the advocate of "Uncle Horace" gracefully withdrew his nominee, and the friends of Bland, who had been shouting themselves hoarse with "Tick, tick, tick, Silver

candidate, as no other possibility looms above the throng in opposition to the man who stamped the convention at Chicago in 1896.

A more dramatic convention than that of 1896, all are agreed, even here, it would be difficult to evoke, and, while a more vociferous one may be possible, it is considered improbable. Still we have hopes that the great combination will outdo all other attempts, as has been said. The nearest the Democrats have come to holding a convention on the Fourth of July before was at that same session in Chicago, which opened July 6 and nominated Bryan July 10. The next nearest was that of 1884, which opened July 8 and nominated Cleveland three days later. One of these candidates was defeated and one carried the Democratic banner to victory, both starting out in the month of July.

"short grass country" and striking out on a thousand mile trip across the plains in their prairie schooners, as the California colonists did half a century ago. The spirit still survives and only awaits an opportunity for its development. I speak of these men because they are by all odds the most picturesque, if not the most interesting, of any I have met. You have already heard, of course, of the "protests to plutocrats" which the farmers of Oklahoma, Arkansas and other states have prepared in order to give the "big bugs" an object lesson in economy and administration a rebuke to the flaunting extravagance of delegates who are coming here in private cars loaded with every luxury. They are honest, and it goes without saying that they are hard working, for if ever there was a country where the best man wins it is in their section. They have read or heard of the prices

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, WHO WILL BE NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT.



MEN OF ALL NATIONS.

Six presidents—Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Van Buren and Buchanan—served as secretaries of state. General Grant was secretary of war ad interim and performed the duties of that office for five months. Lord Roberts owed his command of the expedition into Afghanistan to Ayoub Khan to the late Lord Lytton,

then viceroy of India, with whom he was a great favorite. There was great opposition to his appointment, but Lord Lytton made a personal appeal to Lord Baconfield.

Captain Percy Scott, in command of H. M. S. Terrible, which is in Chinese waters, is best known for his invention of the naval gun mounting by means

of which he saved Ladysmith, but he did much more than this, for he devised an electric signaling apparatus by which communication could be kept up with Kimberley long before the siege was raised.

Lord Morris, who has just retired from the lords of appeal court, was nothing if not candid. Once, when some affair affecting the Anglican church came on the Irish lord of appeal, look-

ing around on his colleagues, English and Scottish, said, "One of us is a Jew, another a Presbyterian, and I, as a Roman Catholic, yield to none of your lordships in ignorance of the matter in hand."

Professor D. A. Kent of Jewell, Ia., has been appointed by the sultan of Turkey instructor of farming for the entire Turkish empire. Professor Kent was recommended for the position a

year ago, but on account of the usual oriental dilatoriness did not receive the appointment until the other day. He is now a member of the faculty of the Iowa State Agricultural college.

Lord Rosebery, who was for so long a time regarded as the "boy" of the political world, has now outgrown that distinction, for he completed his fifty-third year recently. When a boy at Eton, it is said, he declared he would

marry the richest heiress of the year, win the Derby and become prime minister, all three of which ambitions he has achieved.

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