

## VISIT TO MCKINLEY TO CANTON.

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CANTON, Ohio, May 23rd, 1896.



**HAVE COME** to Canton in order to tell you how the leading republican candidate for the nomination looks, acts and talks within a few days of the convention at St.

Louis. Major McKinley is today the foremost man in the thoughts of the American people. There are millions of Republicans who believe that nothing but death can prevent his being the next President of the United States. I have no doubt but that he holds the same opinion, and that he feels himself face to face with the problems and responsibilities of one of the most trying times of our history. Within the next three weeks the most momentous questions of his life are to be decided, and in the minds of many the future prosperity or the reverse of the American people depends upon him. You would imagine that a man in such a situation would have his nervous system keyed up to the highest tension. You would picture him surrounded by an army of lieutenants and wire-pullers. Your mind would suggest a great literary bureau, a corps of telegraph operators connecting his offices with all parts of the Union, and the other political machinery which is supposed to be connected with every great ante-presidential campaign.

I expect to find something of this kind myself, but if Major McKinley has it, he does not keep it at Canton. The working part of the machinery may be in operation at Cleveland, where Mark Hanna is in charge, at Mansfield or Columbus, where Colonel William Hahn pulls the wires, or—but I trust not—at Washington, where the genial General Grosvenor blows predictions, covered with figures, like soap bubbles into the air—each bubble iridescent with the glowing future of McKinley.

Major McKinley to all outward appearances has more leisure than any other of the presidential candidates. I have spent a day with him, and he is as cool as the center seed of a cucumber. He has time for plenty of long walks, and he takes a drive every afternoon with Mrs. McKinley. In the evening he goes out to call upon his friends, and he spends a part of each day with his mother, who lives here within about a mile of his house. He rises at about 7:30 every morning, breakfasts at 8, lunches at 1, and has his dinner at 6:30. He goes to bed every evening at about 11 o'clock and sleeps like a baby. He has no trouble whatever with his digestion, eats what he pleases, and smokes ad libitum without fear of affecting his nerves. The chief part of his time is taken up in the receiving of callers, and he spends hours in chatting with his friends on the veranda which runs around the front of his house. His life today seems to be more that of rest than of work. For the past dozen odd years he has been in the thick of political life, and he seems today to be taking a vacation. The excitement in regard to his nomination has not phased him,

and I have never seen him in better physical and intellectual condition than he is now. He has, you know, a wonderful power of endurance, and as a public speaker he can talk for hours without tiring. I have heard striking stories of his oratorical feats and if he should become president and take a "swing about the circle," he will break the record. In his trip through Kansas last year he spoke to 150,000 people in two days. He spoke twelve times in one day, and during another part of the journey he made twenty-one speeches in sixteen hours and looked as fresh as a daisy at the close. During another tour he made 370 speeches, and at another time for eight weeks he averaged more than seven speeches a day, speaking to more than 2,000,000 people within two months. He takes no stimulants during his campaign. He is not a drinking man in any sense of the word, though he is not a prohibitionist. He speaks easily, but has no special methods of training, nor any rules of diet, in order to keep himself in trim.

He once told me that he did not like to speak, and that he trembled whenever he had to appear before a new audience. He said that his heart went down into his boots whenever he rose to speak, and that this was the case notwithstanding the fact that he had been making speeches for more than a score of years.

The man who knows McKinley only upon the stump, however, has not the proper conception of the man. He is far different in private conversation. His speeches are serious matters with him. He prepares for them and never jokes nor tells stories during them. It is different when chatting with his friends. He is then perfectly at home, and he illustrates many of his points by anecdotes. He tells a story well, but never relates anything that could not be told in the presence of ladies. During my stay here such conversation as I have had with him has been with the understanding that it is not for publication. The situation is such that anything he might say today would probably be misconstrued by his opponents, and he has so far refused all attempts to draw him out. There are not a half dozen newspaper men here representing journals in all parts of the country, from Boston to San Francisco. The governor is polite and friendly with all, but he will talk politics with none.

But let me tell you how Governor McKinley lives at Canton. His home is a house with a history. Every room in it is associated with the life of the governor, and his possession of it today is to a large extent a matter of sentiment. He does not own the house, I think, but rents it. When I met him at Columbus during the last days of his governorship, he told me that he had arranged to lease it, and said that he and Mrs. McKinley were anxious to get back to it. It is the house in which they first lived after their marriage. This occurred when McKinley was a young lawyer and his wife, Miss Ida Saxton, was one of the belles of Stark county. She was the daughter of one of its richest and most influential citizens, John Saxton, the editor and founder of the Canton Repository, a paper which begun its publication away back in 1815, and which today is one of the leading newspapers of Ohio. It was in this house that they spent their honeymoon. Here on

Christmas day, in 1871, their first daughter, a sweet little girl, was born, and here three years later she died. Here Mrs. McKinley's second daughter and only other child died when yet a little baby, and here today the ex-governor and his wife lead as loving a domestic life as they did a score and more years ago. The house is a yellow frame cottage-like structure of two stories. It is about three blocks, I judge, from the public square, and is situated on North Market street, in the heart of the fashionable quarter of the city. The street in front of it is paved with Canton brick, for which the city is noted, and of which it makes about 100,000,000 every year. Governor McKinley's home is on the corner. The lot is about fifty feet front, and a beautiful lawn surrounds the house. The cottage has a porch in its front, upon which there are half a dozen comfortable rocking chairs. Here the governor receives his callers during these hot summer days, and here he chats in the evening with his Canton friends. Entering the front door you come into a wide hall with parlors at the right and left. It was in the one at the right that I chatted during a part of my stay with Major McKinley. It was plainly furnished and the only large pictures upon its walls were a portrait of Mrs. McKinley and an engraving of Abraham Lincoln. At the back of the hall there is a stairway leading to the second floor.

Here I found Major McKinley's office, and here are the only evidences that you can see in Canton of the McKinley literary bureau. It is merely a bed room, carpeted with matting and furnished with a wall of shelves, a typewriter table and a flat top desk. The bed, which is used when the house is crowded with visitors, still stands in the room, but all day long the governor's pretty stenographer clicks away on the typewriter answering the mail of a presidential candidate. The correspondence is necessarily enormous, and as the convention approaches it increases every day. Nearly everything requires an answer, and there are from fifty to sixty letters every mail, ranging from two hundred to three hundred a day. On the day of the Illinois convention, which instructed the delegates to vote for McKinley, more than two hundred telegrams of congratulations were received and every mail brings letters of this nature. The major's gubernatorial secretary has the correspondence in charge and dictates the answers to most of it after direction given by McKinley. The mail when it first comes to the house is opened by Mrs. McKinley, she and the governor looking over it together, and the governor then giving his directions as to how it is to be answered. From long experience in public life Mr. McKinley has learned how to use the work of other men and he answers himself only such letters as are necessary. Much of the mail is made up of begging letters. People from all parts of the country write for money, though it is not known that McKinley is a comparatively poor man. Many letters came from politicians who claim that they have done or can do a great deal for McKinley, and every day or so a letter appears from a man who insists that he is the "Original McKinley Man" and that he was the first to present his name to the country as a candidate for the presidency.

During a drive this afternoon I saw the church in which Major McKinley