Mrs. McKinley sat in her large chair; in her firm white hand she held a great-hearted crimson rose; on her shoulder was lightly laid the hand of the man of the hour; back of her stood several powers in the affairs of the nation.

And I knew that whatever the political creed of those men, they believe in woman's rights—the right of their chivalry and tenderness and loyalty and devotion and homage to such a wide-minded, great-hearted, fine-souled lady.

Of such is the kingdom of woman.

CHAPTER XVII.

McKINLEY ON THE DAY OF HIS NOMINATION.

His good nerve and thoughtful courtesies—He was quiet through the storm and gave the good news with kisses to his wife and mother.

JUNE 18th, 1896, was an ideal June day at Canton; the air full of golden sunshine. The expectation and strain of excitement of the people, who have a passionate admiration and affection for Major McKinley, were unmistakable, but they waited with the supreme dignity of confidence.

Major McKinley was awakened rather early from a sound sleep by the clicking of the telegraph instruments in his office making an unusual clamor that penetrated the walls, but his eye glowed with energy, there was a fiery spark under his dark, shaggy brows, and the fine, strong lines of his mouth were accentuated. The day was not far advanced when a group of newspaper men gathered on the shady porch of the Major's residence, which seems to be in the midst of a vast park, adorned with pleasant homes, standing in glossy lawns and amidst lovely trees.

There was keen competition between the Western Union and Postal Telegraph Companies and the Long Distance Telephone, transmitting the Convention news to the Major, and he was quietly seated in a rocking-chair, slowly swinging and chatting, and as the telegrams were handed him, he coolly scanned them, repeated their substance—often the exact words—in unconcerned tones explained them upon inquiry, and, after elucidation, passed them on to others. It was noticeable that he frequently received confidential messages—and, of course, did not share them with his visitors.

The intervals were filled with conversation, in which the Major related anecdotes of the National Conventions, and of Mr. Blaine and the great Republicans of other days, and the newspaper veterans drew from him old recollections.

He followed intently the story of the silver secession, recognizing the parliamentary situation point by point, and concisely explaining the entanglement.

His face was very serious and stern when listening to the account of the retirement of some of the silver States, and broke into a smile, winning as the glance of a boy, as the announcement was made of the alternates taking the places of the fugitives; and there was an expression of pleasure from him when the Montana man stood up and stuck to the Convention, and spoke for his State in terse and ringing terms.

There were many callers, and the Major was attentive to all, remembering the names of acquaintances,

asking apt and incisive questions, and commending every sign of patience and the presence of a spirit of conciliation in the Convention. He forgot nothing that was courteous and appropriate, and was as hearty and thoughtful as if holding a reception of inconsiderable import.

The enthusiasts of the early business hours of the eventful day were flitting about in the forms of delightful young ladies, wearing breezy and bright spring suits, and they had joyous faces and walked as if to dancing music. They were the people who had no doubts of the fortunes of the day.

As the Major rocked on his porch, enjoying the freshness of the air that was balmy, though touched with fire, the carriages that clattered down the broad street filled with people, all contained persons who recognized the hero of the day, and he returned their salutes with his accustomed urbanity and manner, at once graceful and stately.

Ladies of the family came up the walk from the street to the house, with serious faces, and as the Major rose to greet them he asked, "Is mother coming up to-day?" And the answer was, "Yes, she will be here."

An old friend near the Major appeared to be disturbed at the protracted discussions, as it seemed, of the silver and gold question, and the Major said, "Why, Judge, you seem to be impatient. If you show so much anxiety I shall have to console you." The Major did not allow any word that was tinged

with fault-finding relating to proceedings at St. Louis to pass without dissent, and remarked the Conventions were all, in many ways, alike; and he acted up constantly to the spirit of his last words to Mark Hanna as that successful man was setting forth, conquering and to conquer, for St. Louis—the Major's final word was: "Your duty now is one of conciliation." This has been the policy of McKinley throughout.

About one o'clock a carriage drove up and three ladies descended, the Major hastening forward to greet them. The venerable woman, with Roman features, was the Major's mother, and with her were his sisters.

About two o'clock there was lunch, Mrs. McKinley at the head of the table. She has, happily, improved in health, and her conversation sparkled with a sweet and pensive but pronounced personality. She has not been in favor of the Presidential business. Of course, she wants her husband to win now, but she would rather he had not been drawn into the stream of events that is bearing him on to higher destinies, for the tendency of the great office will be to absorb the Major's attention, so that she can hardly, however great his devotion, have all the time in his society she would fondly claim as her own.

During lunch the telegrams continued to come, and one from an old friend was full of congratulations by anticipation, and called attention to two texts of Scripture.

There was at once curiosity to read the passages, and Mrs. McKinley's Bible was brought. A gentleman at the table said that, of course, Mr. McKinley's Bible could be known to him only by the cover, as he was too busy a man to get acquainted with the inside. Mrs. McKinley said, in a spirited way, "He does, indeed, know the inside of his Bible—no man better, I assure you; and I speak that which I do know."

The texts that had been solemnly called to the Major's attention were the following:

Jeremiah xx, 11: "But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten."

Psalms xlvii, 6: "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."

These remarkable passages were read by a lady and their fitness to the occasion commented upon by the guests. The Major was silent, but he no doubt thought his persecutors were stumbling and would not prevail and should be greatly ashamed.

It had been the prevalent presumption up to this time that there would be a recess after the platform was adopted, and that the nominating speeches spun out so as to throw the nomination into the night.

But lunch had hardly been concluded when the St. Louis news, through the long distance telephone and both wires simultaneously told that the fight was

on to a finish—that the rush of events had been hastened, and the crisis was close at hand.

McKinley's office, to which he now repaired, is adorned with portraits of Lincoln and Grant and Mrs. McKinley, a fine scene of a battery in a hot engagement, and some personal friends.

When it was announced that the nominating speeches were about to be made, the Major took his seat in a heavy arm-chair, beside his working desk, with a pad of paper in his left hand and a pencil in his right. Behind him was the telephone apparatus with an expert, connected direct with the Convention Hall. Thus there were three avenues of lightning line service between the Major's office and the Convention Hall—the Postal and Western Union, and the Long Distance Telephone.

The Major's face was grave. There were deep fires in his eyes, and his intellectual pallor, always noticeable, now gave his features the stern grace of carved marble. It is a fancy founded on fact that Major McKinley looks like Napoleon, but to-day he looked marvelously like Daniel Webster.

The warm reception of Senator Lodge by the Convention elicited an expression of sympathy from the Major, who expressed his sense of the wonderful fact that, though so far from the Convention, we were yet so near, and knew absolutely as much of the proceedings, precisely as they occurred, as if we were bodily present. I mentioned to the Major that my experience warranted the observation that I knew

more of the Convention in the seat by his side than when in a reporter's seat in Convention Hall.

Suddenly there came word almost at the same moment through the three wires, that Ohio had been called and that Foraker making his way to the platform and was received with tremendous cheering, also that the hall was flooded with sunshine, welcoming the soldier-boy son of Ohio, about to nominate another soldier-boy and son of the modern mother of Presidents. The two boy-soldiers were famous ex-Governors of their State.

The word came in a moment that Foraker was about to speak. McKinley was asked whether Foraker's speech was probably prepared, and the Major said it was not, he supposed, written, but Foraker knew very well the main things he was about to say, and was a keen, brilliant man, who knew how to make the best of the opportunities on the spot. The occasion for the inquiry as to the preparation Foraker had made was that one of the correspondents present had seen several of the nominating speeches in type and gave interesting information as to their length and character.

The young ladies in the parlor across the hall from the office had a look in which glee and distress were comically mingled, and the Major walked up to them, saying with gayety, "Are you young ladies getting anxious about this affair?"

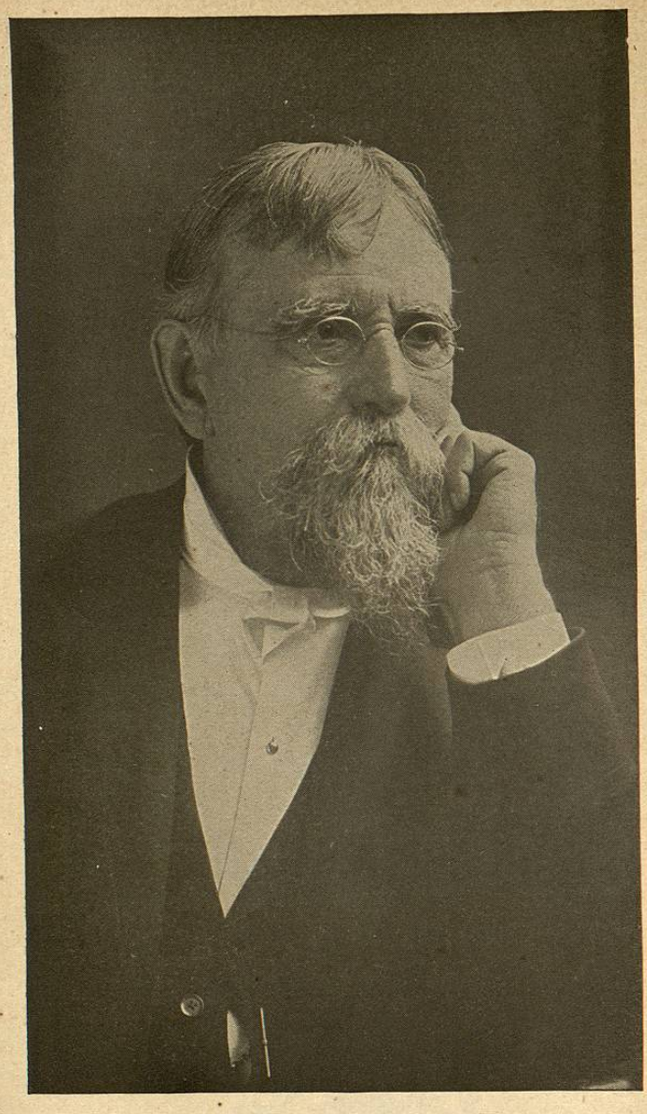
They admitted that they were really nervous. The Major reassured them, and took his big chair,

placing his silk hat on an adjacent table, and relapsing into meditation. For a minute his pale, fixed features showed he was thinking, perhaps as much of the far-off past as of the near and rising future, and no one disturbed his day dream. This was just as Foraker was waiting for the storm of applause that greeted him to subside, so as to be allowed to go on with his speech.

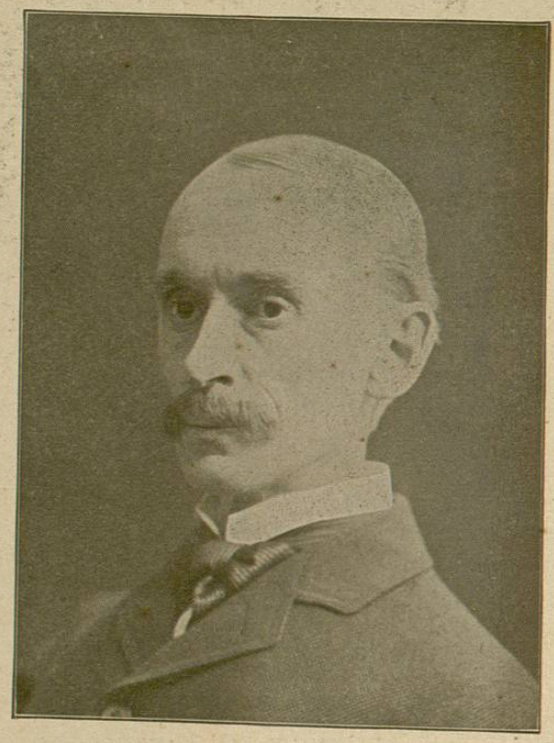
It was at 3.21 o'clock, according to all the watches in the Major's room, when word came that at that moment Foraker pronounced the name of McKinley, and then came the tornado of applause, which lasted for nearly half an hour. There was a pause at our end of the wire, and the Major joined in exchange of recollections with the veterans about the contests in cheering that distinguished the Convention of 1880 at Chicago, between the supporters of Grant and those of Blaine—the most celebrated of all the contests in cheering.

The Major stepped to the telephone and listened to the roar of the Convention at St. Louis. He heard it distinctly, and, following his example, we could make out a vast tumult, struck through with shrill notes. It was like a storm at sea, with wild, fitful shrieks of wind.

As time passed, and Foraker could not still the tempest he had raised, some one said he might not be able to regain the thread of his speech, and the Major remarked it was hard on a speaker to be held up in that way—it was like stopping a race horse in



GENERAL LEW WALLACE.



EX-SECRETARY OF STATE DAY.

full career. But the Major said Foraker would come out of such a scene in triumph, and referred with warm admiration to his "gem of a speech" at the late Republican State Convention.

The monotony of waiting was broken by a telegram from an unknown source, giving McKinley assurance that he "would be nominated on the first ballot." This raised a laugh, but the Major only smiled, and made a suggestion as to the happening of the unexpected and the marvels of disappointment. "You may all, after all, find yourselves much mistaken at last," said the Major, gravely, as if in warning not to tempt Providence by being too sure.

Telegrams poured in, and the Major read them and directed they should be given to those outside the house—where were a dozen very old friends and twice that number of members of the press. The Major at this supreme hour directed the placing of chairs for new arrivals, and had greater self-command than anybody else. He showed his training in war and peace—and as he held up telegrams in one hand to read, there was not a flutter of the thin sheets to tell a tale of nervousness.

The message came, "Foraker is trying to resume his speech," and at this there was a smile. In another minute the telephone expert repeated Foraker's words about McKinley when he resumed, "You seem to have heard of him before."

"Ah," said the Major, "that is like him. He

knows what he is doing, and is all right. The interruption will not shake his speech."

The Ohio men with the Governor laughed immensely at the stories by the triple wires of Mark Hanna and Bushnell and Grosvenor and Foraker hugging and fanning each other and yelling like maniacs. Surely mercy and peace have kissed each other, and the year of jubilee has come!

There was a laugh over Depew's humorous illustration of the famous saying, touching the silver secessionists, of the celebrated phrase, "erring sisters, depart in peace."

There was some levity about the effort of Pennsylvania to make a noise over Quay's presentation equal to that which welcomed McKinley's name, but the face of the Major—which was growing earnest as the moment approached for the call of the roll of States for the ballot—gave no encouragement to personal reflections. When it was mentioned that Governor Hastings had spoken, some one said to the telephone expert: "Ask how long the Quay applause lasted."

"No, no!" said the Major. "Do not ask that question," and it was not asked.

There were a few minutes in which it was known that the call of the roll for balloting was the imminent order of exercises, and the air in McKinley's office grew sultry and still. There was heat and silence. McKinley picked up his pad and pencil, and proposed to keep an account of the vote. He

evidently then in fancy floated far away, and was in solitude, and hummed for a few moments the air of an old song. It was so soft and low that few heard it, and then it was no more and was like a dream within a dream—something quaint, almost mystical, an echo of music, perhaps, of the long ago. It did not occur to me at the moment what it was, but it is interesting that it was the Scotch war song that Burns ennobled and immortalized in his Bannockburn, "Scots whom Bruce has often led."

Moments passed, and then the Major whistled two or three bars two or three times, quietly, unconsciously. Suddenly the silence was abruptly broken by the announcement: Alabama, 18 for McKinley."

Then figures came thick and fast, and challenges followed of the votes of several States.

Two or three present did not know what that meant, and the Major, clearly and carefully, with perfect command of every point raised, stated the situation.

"But why," the question was asked, "do they challenge the votes of States whose votes are not contested?"

"It is necessary," the Major explained, "that gentlemen should go upon the record if they care to do so," and he added, "there are disputes between the delegates and the chairmen of delegations who announce the figures, and it can only be settled by polling the vote of the State."