

comparison. In what he undertakes to do he does not spare himself. More than once he has had to retire from the fight because he had impaired his health and his physical resources by overwork. A man who gives himself to a cause in that fashion can always get followers; and some of Mr. La Follette's followers have certainly been devoted and enduring. More than that, Mr. La Follette has gone to the people himself with his theories and plans. He has not been content with the vague generalizations that have too often served as material for political appeals. His actions imply at least belief in the capacity of the people he has addressed to understand the problems which he has discussed with them. He has paid his hearers the compliment of appealing to their intelligence. He has been fiery in debate, as his sobriquet "Battle Bob" indicates, but he has never substituted mere rhetoric for argument. Mr. La Follette's following has therefore been not so much a body of friends who like him for his own sake as a body of disciples who have become persuaded of his doctrines.

His power of securing a convinced following is due in part at least to the faculty that Mr. La Follette has of mastering a subject to which he devotes study. In the early days in Wisconsin he was not merely a remonstrant against evils, but was a student of conditions. He probably knew as much as any one of the essential facts in the management and operation of public utilities so far as they concerned the public. To-day there is no one in this country who knows more about the railway problem than he does. He does not speak out of mere passion or feeling. He speaks out of knowledge. And, what is more, he has his facts at command. Those who oppose his theories concerning the railways have learned that they make no headway against him by mere condemnation of his conclusions. They have had to get at the facts themselves in order to fight facts with facts. Republicans and Democrats alike who are concerned with Mr. La Follette's position in the present campaign will have to fortify themselves with a knowledge of the subjects on which he speaks if they are going to meet him on his own ground.

Mr. La Follette's weakness is not the weakness of the ordinary politician. It is not the weakness of ignorance or pretense. It is the weakness of his temperament, his habits of thought, and his type of mind. He has never been, and it

does not seem likely that he ever will be, a leader that appeals to the whole Nation. Roosevelt thought as the people in the West, the South, the North, and the East thought, and the language that he used was natural to the expression of those ideals. Wilson had feelings concerning great questions that appealed to the common emotion of the country, and his language was appropriate to those common feelings. Mr. La Follette, on the other hand, does not think Nationally. He thinks in terms of classes, of groups, of sections. The causes that he espouses are grievances of a part of the population against the rest. He does not understand the art of appealing to the whole Nation, because the concerns of the whole Nation seem never to be in his mind. He seemed to be able to compass the concerns of the State when he was in Wisconsin, but he has never been able to understand the interests of the whole Nation. At least, if he understands them, he has never made them vocal. This fact leads him to overemphasize minor issues. It leads him to confuse conveniences in the machinery of govern-

ment with principles of right and justice. It has led him at times to put in first place things that ought to be subordinated and to forget things that ought to be supreme. It probably accounts in part at least for his deplorable course during the war. It made him unable or unwilling to understand the nature of the conflict into which Germany and Austria had plunged the world. It has prevented him from seeing life in perspective and it has debarred him forever from the company of those, distinguished and obscure alike, who served their country greatly in the time of her greatest emergency.

La Follette's weakness renders him incapable of being the National leader that the Nation is looking for. There are certain great areas of National concern to which the mind of a man like Senator La Follette is alien. He may hold together groups of interests by a common bond of allegiance to himself because he has voiced their grievances, but he cannot arouse the whole country to a common ideal or bind it together by a common purpose.

Struggling for the Presidency

By LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

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A SPECIAL correspondent of the New York "Tribune," describing the Democratic Convention for that journal, makes the following comment:

If John W. Davis receives the nomination from this Convention, it will be because he did not try to get it; and if Alfred E. Smith and William Gibbs McAdoo lose it, it will be because they wished it so ardently that they wished themselves clean out of the race.

This, of course, is contrary to reason, good sense, and logic, and is crass foolishness. Most of politics seems to us to be just like that.

I take an exception. This is not contrary to reason because it is not contrary to history, and the course of history in the main follows the laws of reason. The reason why men of overweening ambition who actually do yield or, at any rate, who appear to yield everything to the achievement of that ambition are finally repudiated is because it seems to be an instinct of the human race to require sincerity, service, and self-sacrifice in its leaders. The man in political life who is actuated by self-interest may tem-

porarily succeed, but he almost inevitably ultimately fails. William the Silent sought to evade power, but he became the creator of the Dutch Republic, and democracy has accepted him as one of its heroes. Napoleon sought power and glory, and for a while obtained them, and the world has repudiated him as an exemplar of human leadership.

The same law seems to operate in the choice of American Presidents. Few politicians have had a more brilliant intellect than Aaron Burr. His unscrupulous struggle for the Presidency led to his downfall and alienated his supporters, and he died in obscurity and disgrace.

Henry Clay had a personality almost as magnetic as Roosevelt, and was passionately admired by his followers. He was a master politician, and, although he was the author of the saying that he would rather be right than President, the failure to reach the Presidency embittered him, and there is too much ground for the belief that his course on some political issues was dictated with his eye on the great prize. He may fairly be placed in the group of those who have

lost the Presidency because they so eagerly sought it. One of the most amusing of Thomas B. Reed's witticisms, by the way, was occasioned by a quotation of Clay's famous dictum about the Presidency on the floor of Congress. One day when Reed was Speaker an obscure and insignificant member of the House, who was arguing for a bill which Reed did not approve of, said, grandiloquently: "Mr. Speaker, I would rather be right than President." Reed, in his driest tones, replied: "The gentleman from So-and-So need have no anxiety, he will never be either."

Daniel Webster had one of the greatest intellects of modern times. As a Constitutional lawyer, as a Senator, as a Secretary of State, he is a figure which dwarfs almost out of sight some of the badly educated persons who play a prominent part in American politics today. Webster was quite justified in his desire to be President of the United States. He knew his own capacity. But he pursued the wrong method. It is the general verdict, although some of his ad-

mirers still deny it, that he compromised with his convictions in order to obtain the Presidency. Webster may fairly be placed among those who sought and failed.

James G. Blaine was also a man of intellectual attainments and power, but he eagerly sought the Presidency—and failed.

W. J. Bryan was perhaps as surprised as any one when he was nominated in 1896 by the Democratic Party. He was chosen because of an eloquent speech in the Convention, and perhaps because of a single phrase in that speech, but, having tasted the joys of Presidential prominence, he has devoted himself ever since to seeking the Presidency, and, although nominated, has never reached the goal.

Stephen A. Douglas, with a much better trained and abler mind than Bryan, pursued the Presidency with every maneuver at his command, and saw his contemporary and opponent, Abraham Lincoln, who made no effort and thought himself incompetent for the high office, win the prize.

Since Lincoln's day those men who have reached the White House have done it because they were supported by their friends and their country, and not because they made an organized pre-nomination campaign. Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Cleveland, Harrison, Cleveland again, McKinley, Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge never swung around the circle making speeches and appealing for delegates in their own behalf previous to the Conventions which chose them. Indeed, if Roosevelt and Coolidge had been seeking the Presidency in the spirit in which it has been sought by more shrewd, but less wise, politicians, they never would have accepted a Vice-Presidential nomination.

It might be well to paraphrase one of the Scriptural parables and hang it up as a model for political conventions, to this effect: Whatsoever politician hath sincerity, to him shall be given the votes and he shall have delegates in abundance; but whosoever hath not sincerity, from him shall be taken away even the delegates that he hath.

Fear and Prejudice in Deadlock

Special Correspondence from the Democratic National Convention

By STANLEY FROST

THE Democratic delegates who came to New York to nominate a man who might lead them to victory over Coolidge and the Republicans have stayed through the second sweltering week for the sole purpose of destroying each other! The hope of party victory is forgotten and indeed it is almost dead; a victory of faction has become the only objective, and there is now little enough chance even of that. The Convention has become a nightmare struggle in which any victory must be hollow, where none can win much and all must lose greatly.

Nothing but passion can explain the spectacle of the second week of the Democratic National Convention, and it can be interpreted by no other key; passion inflamed till reason is dead and consequences are of no importance, till all intelligence is fixed on a stubborn and ruthless battle to exhaustion. Fears, resentments, distrusts, prejudices or convictions and raw hatreds, with a few faint hopes—almost all only faintly justified—these are the things that actually make up the deadlock. America has not seen such emotions unleashed since the fury

of 1860 which brought the Civil War; nothing that we felt during the World War compares more than weakly with this.

The Rebirth of an Ancient Conflict

IT is the religious issue that has caused it all, the one issue that can never be compromised, that has caused so vast a record of strife and misery, and that we in America believed we had learned to let sleep. Though it has carefully been kept off the floor of the Convention, it is behind every move made, every speech delivered, in the assembly. The lines are not absolute, to be sure. There are both Protestants and Catholics in both factions, some from conviction against the Klan or a desire, now frustrated, to prevent the issue from arising, and others because of compelling local circumstances. Nor is it true that every delegate has been affected. Many have kept their heads and made a strong if futile fight for peace and sanity. But, on the whole and with the bulk of the delegates, the religious issue has become so over-

whelming that there can be no doubt that it dominates the entire struggle. As was told last week, the wets were the first leaders in the fight against the Klan, and the wet and dry struggle is involved in the present alignment, but it is religion that comes first with most.

It must be remembered, too, that various tactical situations have prevented a really accurate division of the Convention. In many delegations the unit rule has held men against their will for Smith or McAdoo, chiefly for the latter. In many cases the situation at home is such as to control a delegate's vote, unless his convictions are such that he is willing to risk political suicide. Tammany, of course, could be nothing but pro-Catholic if it wished; and no man from any part of the State who has the least political ambition can afford to break with it. Brennan from Illinois is quite possibly controlled not so much by religious convictions as by his wet views, the alien and Catholic character of so much of his constituency, and certain hopes of a big block of Negro votes which have been held out to him.

The same thing is true on the other