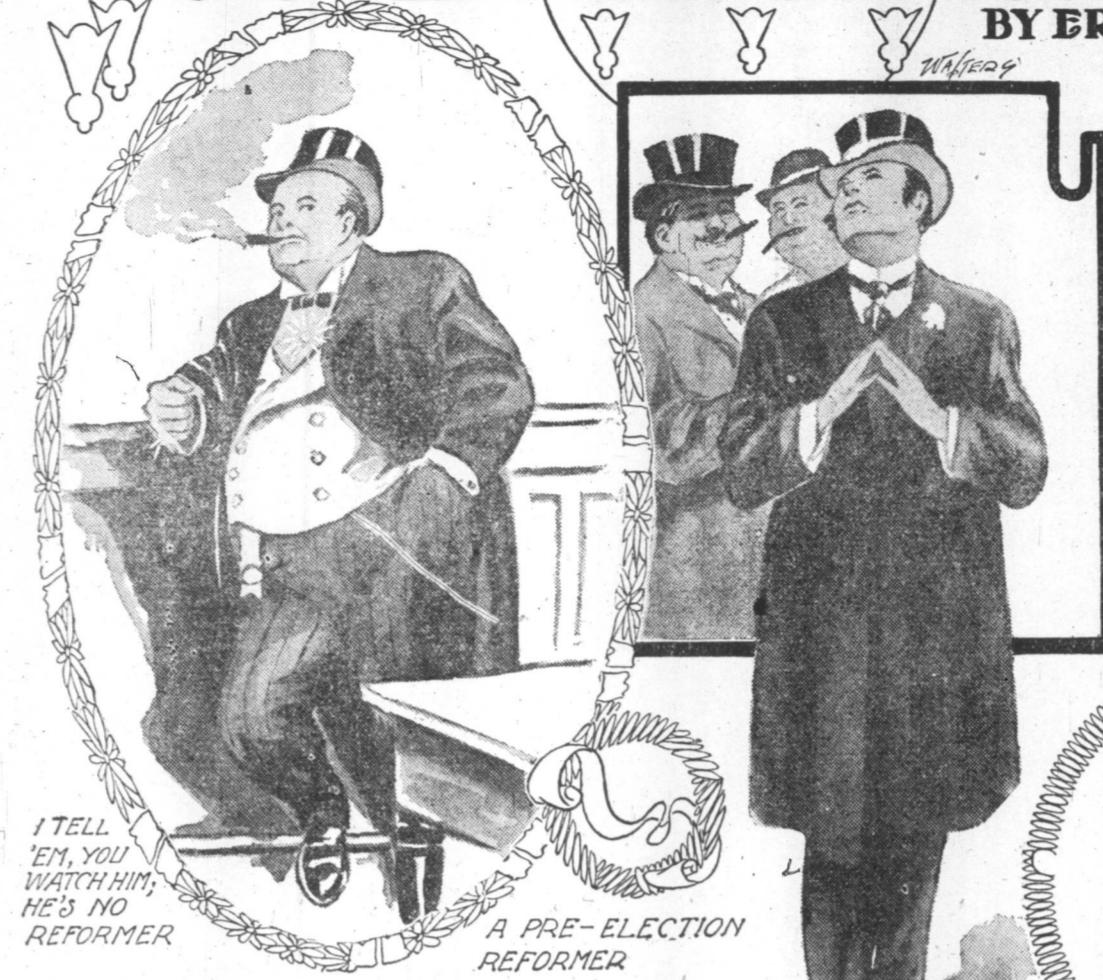


# POLITICAL REFORMER SOMETIMES DYSPEPTIC

BY ERNEST MCGAFFEY



**A** REFORMER in politics is sometimes a dyspeptic, but not always. He is also sometimes actuated by motives entirely impersonal and unselfish. But not always. And reform politics may be classed as of two kinds the counterfeit variety and the genuine.

Independent or reform movements in political campaigns, are intended to be the breaking away of members of the old parties and a consolidation of these "bolters" for the purpose of electing a ticket which is supposed to be better than either of the old-line party tickets. Sometimes an independent movement means this. Sometimes it means that a Democrat or a Republican who has failed of the regular party nomination has been persuaded to make the race on the ground that he has been deprived of the nomination by unfair means. But the basic element of independent movements is always a claim toward a bettering of conditions, and therefore arguing a reform, politically.

Then there is usually the Prohibition movement to be reckoned with, and this is strictly founded on reform principles. Or there may be an educational feature in the campaign which will prove to carry the balance of power as to votes, and which may be adopted in the platform of either of the parties, with a view to secure votes for the whole ticket. Politics is largely a game of expediency, and as the only things that count, in the last analysis, are the votes, it follows, therefore, as the night the day, that votes are the prime necessities, and any expedient to catch votes is considered justifiable.

Other phases of reform politics may enter particularly into national campaigns, and may influence local conditions enough to swing victory to a side which may be weaker on paper than its antagonist.

In every large city and noticeably in my own city, I found two well-defined types of the political reformers, with a smattering also of what were known as "cranks," "dreamers" and "visionaries." One of the two types referred to was the hard-headed citizen who, regardless of ridicule and discouragement, steadily set himself to work to better the class of official selection. Without caring anything for party affiliations, he associated with organizations which "went after" weak or unfit candidates, and supported and encouraged good candidates for all offices, whether state, county or municipal.

This class of men accomplished, with the aid of decent politicians, a great deal of good. In the beginning, like all men actuated by really high motives, they were derided and lampooned, and their lot, like the policeman's, was not a happy one. But as time went on they became a force which had to be reckoned with, even by the most hardened of the "bosses," excepting in what may be classed as strictly "saloon wards."

In the saloon wards, where the aldermen, for instance, were saloonkeepers, or where the saloon influence predominated overwhelmingly, the "bosses" did not mind reform politics any more than a rhinoceros would mind the bite of a mosquito. I never could understand, knowing the absolute hopelessness of it, why the reformers would sometimes try to "break into" such a ward in an aldermanic campaign. I remember very well the occasion of a gentleman calling on me and endeavoring to enlist my services as a speaker in a campaign of this sort.

"You know the disgraceful condi-

tions obtaining in that ward?" he asked inquisitorily.

"Oh, yes," was my answer.

"Well, we want to put up a candidate for alderman there and see if we can't arouse the better element there. We want to go in and fight the saloons to a finish," was his next remark.

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## GIRL DEFIED A WHOLE ARMY.

Feminine Toll-Gate Keeper Paid by Government.

It is related that the army, headed by Sheridan and his staff, left Winchester by the valley pike early in the morning, the column moving toward Stephens City. Just as day was breaking the staff reached the toll-gate and was much disconcerted to find the toll-gate down and guarded by a young

and beautiful girl, Charlotte Hillman, famed locally for her girlish charms. Even the war-hardened Sheridan seems not to have been proof against the persuasion of a pair of black eyes and a pretty face, and when toll was demanded, straightway produced the tithe, setting an example that was followed by his staff.

"But," said Sheridan, as he passed through the gate, "I cannot vouch for my army."

When the common soldiery came the girl again lowered the toll-bar and demanded toll. This was met by jeers from the soldiers, whereupon she wisely raised the guard. All day the dusty troopers passed through and all day Charlotte Hillman stood at her post. For every ten soldiers who passed the gate she cut a notch in the toll-pole. Early fled beyond the Blue Ridge with the remnants of his disorganized army; in the Valley of Virginia, Lee, beaten back by Grant's overwhelming numbers, gave up the

fight; in the southeast Joe Johnston fired the last burlesque shots, and peace came again over the north and south. Then, when relations with Washington had been re-established and the administration's policy was one of magnanimity, Charlotte Hillman counted the notches in the toll-pole and sent her bill to Washington. And the bill was paid.—Metropolitan Magazine.

Dangerous to Author.

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