The Colonel's Last Campaign

By Brand Whitlock

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ALL day long Colonel Talbott sat in his leather chair in the lobby of the Grand, twiddling his cane, smoking his cigar, and talking poltics. Under the broad brim of his black slouch hat his hair fell in silver wisps almost to his shoulders, and the long mustache, drooping like a Georgian's at the corners of his mouth, was as white as his hair, save at the spot where his cigar had tinged it yellow.

There was not a politician of either party between Dunleith and Cairo who was not proud to bend over the old fellow's chair, take his thin hand and say: "Hello, Colonel, what's new in politics?" The colonel had an invariable reply: "I'm out of politics, and don't know anything. What do you hear?" Sometimes, if the passing politician happened to be of the old day, the colonel would take him by the arm, and they would saunter away to the bar. If the politician came from Northern Illinois, the colonel would take rye; if from Southern Illinois the colonel would take bourbon; such was his idea of etiquette. Though never would he take a drink before breakfast, for a drink before breakfast, he told Carroll, was a back log in the fire that would burn the livelong day.

Carroll was the staff of the colonel's old age. The two would sit by the hour, while the old man talked of the Nineteenth Illinois Cavalry, of Lincoln and Douglas, of David Davis and Elijah Haines, of state and national conventions, in the days when he had made and unmade congressmen, governors and senators, ruling his party in the state, Carroll shrewdly thought, with a discipline as rigid as that with which he had welded the Nineteenth Illinois into a fighting regiment.

To those who knew the veteran's history, his love for the boy was touching. The story is too long to tell now, but its essential motif must always be the ingratitude of Si Warren. The colonel had picked Warren up in the old Fifteenth district, sent him to Congress, and finally made a United States senator of him. Warren, developing quickly as a politician, had turned around, defeated the colonel for re-election as chairman of the state executive committee, a position he had held for 16 years, had frozen him out of the Arizona deal, and somehow caused the colonel's only son to go wrong out there in Tucson. The boy's mother had died; of a broken heart, they said. Since then a decade had passed, a decade which the colonel had spent in the grim lonesomeness of a crowded hotel. He never mentioned Warren's name. If he heard it, he clenched his bony fists so tightly that the knuckles showed white. Once a year, perhaps, in the springtime, when the state central committee met, he got out his white waistcoat and was invited up to the ordinary to make a speech on the state of the party, and once a year, in the summertime, he attended a reunion of his regiment, now decimated to a squadron of tottering old men, whom the colonel called "boys."

Spring came, rolling up from the muddy Ohio, showering its apple blossoms in the orchards of Egypt, sprinkling with purple flowers the prairies of Central Illinois, and finally flooding with tardy sunshine the cold waters of Lake Michigan. It was the year the legislature that chose Warren's successor in the Senate was to be elected, and when the senator came home from Washington he found his fences in sad repair. The Silas Warren of the parlor suite in a Lake-front hotel was not the Si Warren whom Colonel Talbott had rescued from the dusty little law office down in Shelbyville 15 years before. The clothes of that time were faded by the sun in which he loafed all day on the postoffice corner, whereas the clothes of this spring morning bespoke a New York tailor and a valet.

The senator was not in a pleasant mood. There was opposition to his re-election, and while his machine ignored it, and while George R. Baldwin, the lawyer who watched the interests of certain big corporations during the sessions of the legislature, said it was but a sporadic demonstration of soreheads, back numbers and labor skates, it was spreading, as the pictruesque politicians from the corn lands of Central Illinois would say, like a prairie fire. Jacksonville, where the standard of revolt had first been raised, was in Morgan, the colonel's home county, and so it came to pass that the defection was laid to the machinations of the colonel himself. And yet, as the politicians who were always dropping into Chicago to correct their reckonings, paused an instant by the leather chair, the old white head would slowly sway from side to side, and the old man would say:

"No, I'm out of politics."

If Carroll had not conceived the idea of running for office, perhaps the colonel would have remained out of politics, but the boy, after a week of dreaming, dramatized himself as making a speech in the state senate chamber at Springfield. The colonel, as a man's duty is, advised him to keep out of politics, and yet within an hour after Carroll shyly confessed his ambition, the fever awoke in the old fellow's bones, his eyes flamed with the old fire, and he admitted that the experience might help a boy who was struggling in a pitiless city for a law practice.

Within a week the colonel had introduced Carroll to Superintendent of Street and Alley Cleaning Patrick F. Gibbons, who promised to be with him, and had taken him to the city hall for an audience with the mayor. After that the newspapers said that John D. Carroll had been slated for the senatorial nomination in the First district.

When Warren learned of the colonel's new interest in the campaign, he cunningly decided to utilize it by throwing his strength to Carroll in the First, provided the colonel would withdraw his opposition. He prided himself on being a man who harbored no resentments. So he sent Dan Ford, his private secretary, to open negotiations for peace.

The colonel had recognized the coming of the heat by donning his suit of linen, with a red tie at his throat to give the touch of color he always loved, and he had got out his broad-leaved Panama hat for its fifteenth season. Ford found him seated in the leather chair, swinging one thin leg over the other, his white hose wrinkling over his low shoes, telling Carroll how Grant came to Springfield from Galena seeking a commission in the army. Ford diplomatically broached the subject of a conference between the colonel and the senator. The colonel heard him to the end, but said nothing. His mustache simply lifted a little with the curl of his lip. Ford was evidently disappointed.

"Have you any reply?" he asked, "or any message?"

"Yes," said the colonel, and his gray eyes flashed under his shaggy brows. "Present my compliments to Senator Warren, and tell him that if he ever presumes to speak to me again in all his life, I'll slap his face, and if he resents it, I'll kill him."

Ford turned to bow, and the colonel, turning to Carroll, said:

"As I was saying, General Palmer happened to go into the adjutant general's office and saw Grant smoking a corncob pipe and working away on muster rolls at a broken table propped up in one corner of the room. The old forage cap he had worn in the Mexican war was lying on the table. It was the only hat he had in those days."

The next morning an interview with Warren appeared in all the papers.

"I would prefer," the senator was reported as saying, "to retire to private life and resume my interrupted law practice, if I were not compelled to seek vindication by the bushwhacking of this doting old ingrate, who, disappointd in his attempts to monopolize patronage that belongs to patriotic party workers, now skulks behind the sympathy his years and infirmities excite, to wage a guerrilla warfare."

The colonel read the interview at breakfast. He sat at the table with one paper propped up before him and four others beside his plate, his eyeglasses on his nose, and ate his oatmeal and his beefsteak and his boiled eggs just as he did on every morning of the year. Then he drank the half cup of coffee that he always reserved, with its cream slowly coagulating at the surface, for the end of his meal, because it was cooler then, laid his napkin down and shuffled slowly out.

Half an hour later a man stopped by his chair in the lobby and said something to the colonel that made him drop his paper, and look up over his eyeglasses with a scowl. The man was known as Birdy Quinn, and he had lost his job in the water office the week before, because Warren wished to make room for a fellow who could deliver more votes at the coming primaries than Birdy could.

"Are you sure?" the colonel asked.

"Sure! Isn't it all over the ward this morning?"

"You're sure that Pat Gibbons consented to run as Warren's candidate for state senator in the First district against Carroll—after promising me—me?" He bent his brows angrily and pointed with a long forefinger at his own breast.

"Well, hell's bells!" said Quinn. "Wasn't Baldwin working with him half the night?"

The colonel took his glasses from his nose and, swinging them by their heavy cord, blinked with his old eyes at the square of sunlight blazing in the Clark street entrance, across which, as on a vividly illuminated screen, the crowds on the sidewalk flitted like trembling figures in a kinetoscope. Presently he lifted himself heavily from his chair and gathered up his newspapers and his stick.

"Well, Birdy," he said, wearily, "I guess I've got one more fight left in me."

Most men thought it was Warren's interview that caused the colonel to consent at last to lead the opposition against him, though some said it was but the fascination of politics, which is like the fascination of the sea, so that a man who follows it once must follow it till he dies.

"I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd be glad to find the old man's chair empty," said Eph Harkness, of Macoupin, that afternoon. He had come up from Carlinville in response to a telegram from the colonel, and having registered, and given his bag and linen duster to a bellboy, was removing his big felt hat to mop his wet brow.

"I'm afraid he won't be able to stand the strain of a campaign," said Carroll.

"Stand the strain! Him?" exclaimed Harkness. "Why, he'll be alive and drawing pay when they're referring to Si Warren as ex-senator!"

"I hate to have them say such mean things about him," Carroll persisted, thinking of the interviews.

"If they think they kin say any meaner things 'bout him than he kin 'bout them, jes' let 'em lam in," chuckled Mosely of Alexander.

"Yes," mused Harkness, "it'll be the greatest fight we've had in Illinois since Logan's time. We've got a leader now."

There was an echo of the old days in his voice, which, with its gentle hint of regret, was lost on Carroll, who had not known the colonel in the old days.

They found the colonel in his room, sitting by an open window, his Panama hat on his head, his cigar in his teeth, and his walking-stick twirling in his long fingers. The room did not present that orderly and cool appearance it had on the few occasions when Carroll had been in it before. The shades were high at the window, admitting flames of heat, wads of crumpled paper bestrewed the floor, a huge table had been brought in and it was already littered with newspapers and telegraph blanks. The bureau had been moved, the tall white door it had hidden so long had been unlocked, and Carroll heard the incessant clicking of a typewriter in the adjoining room. Two or three men sat idly about, gossiping, as men will, about political battles of the past. There seemed to be none of the industry of politics apparent, though political headquarters seldom do display that, perhaps because a good part of the industry of politics consists in talking and smoking and drinking, and partly, perhaps, because of the necessity of concealment that always exists. These men were gathered to organize the defeat of a crafty and unscrupulous man who had a national, state and city machine at his command, with money to heart's desire, and yet they sat and smoked, stirring only when a telegram came from down the state, or some long-forgotten politician came in to offer himself as a recruit.

For a month the colonel did not go out of the hotel. He was up early and at work, his cigar in his mouth, dictating letters, sending telegrams, receiving callers. When he slept, no one knew. He never had his hat off. He ate his meals from a tray in his room, after the food had grown cold. His headquarters recalled pathetically the old days when his power and supremacy were unquestioned. They were crowded day and night with the back numbers and the soreheads Baldwin had talked about, who came with their grievances, their impossible schemes, their paltry ambitions. Of such stuff the colonel had to make his machine, flattering, threatening, wheedling, soothing jealousies, reconciling discordant factions, healing old animosities, inflaming new hatreds, keeping up spirit in faint hearts, leaving not a wire unpulled. He appointed a steering committee, on which were Mosely, of Alexander; Garwood, of Kankakee; Harkness, of Macoupin, and Malachi Nolan; he wrote personal letters to old friends in every school district in the state, and thus, slowly, patiently, laboriously welded his organization together. What he most needed was funds, and a candidate to provide funds; lacking them, he insisted that this was not a movment for the profit of any one man, but for the good of the party alone, and so invested it with the enthusiasm of what passes for patriotism in a nation where party is set above country. He told the landlord of the Grant that he would be responsible for the rent of the two rooms he had engaged next his own. He already owed the landlord.

The night before the primaries a crowd, foul with the reek of tobacco, alcohol and perspiration, was shuffling about in the hall and anterooms of the colonel's headquarters. The crowd was noisy, profane and confident. But inside, the steering committee was assembled, and it was very sober. Garwood, at the littered table, had been scratching his head over political equations.

Conventions had been held in all the 36 outside districts, and 69 candidates had been nominated, 55 representatives and 14 senators. Of these they could depend upon 29. It requires 52 to control a legislative caucus, when the party has a bare majority on joint ballot, so they would have to nominate at least 23 of their candidates in Cook county to get a caucus majority, assuming the ultimate election of them all. Fifty-seven candidates were to be selected in Cook county on the morrow. Of them, they should name at least 35 to be entirely safe. In other words, they must carry Cook county.

"Is that countin' holdover senators?" asked Mosely, when Garwood was done.

"Yes, counting the holdovers—Warren claims 14 out of the 17."

"Josh Badger never'll vote for him," said Mosely.

"He gives us Josh," Garwood replied. "Bates and Halliday are uncertain."

"Not so damned uncertain," said Mosely. "They're only waitin' to be seen."

"Warren'll get them easy enough," said Harkness.

"Yes, they're cheap," Mosely assented, spitting across the room at an iron cuspidor. "'Bout $8 apiece, I'd guess 'em off at," he added, with a poor man's contempt for low prices.

"Well, that only makes it worse," replied Garwood. "But leave them out entirely. With 62 votes Warren can control the caucus——"

"Providin' al'ays, however," suggested Mosely, in statutory language.

"Oh, course," assented Garwood, petulant from the heat and the situation, "they won't all be elected. That's why he'll work like hell to carry Cook. He lies when he says he doesn't give a damn how she goes tomorrow."

"He always does that," said the colonel, from his bed.

Carroll, to whom political calculations savored always of the mystery of higher mathematics, said:

"Seems to me you could figure it better than that."

"Well, you try it," said Garwood, dropping his pencil and tilting back in his chair.

There was not much hope, and the soberness deepened. After a while there was a knock on the door, and a shaven head was thrust in.

"Them lit'ry guys is out here," said the shaven head. "Any figur's to give out?"

"Figur's?" cried Mosely. "We've got th' official vote!"

And Garwood, taking his paper from the table, went out and said to the reporters:

"Conventions have been held in all the senatorial districts down the state, and 69 candidates are already nominated. Of these 69, we have beyond any question"—he consulted his paper, as if to make sure of the number—"we have 53, and that doesn't include the nine holdover senators who are with us. We can lose ten of them at the polls and still have enough to control the caucus. In Cook county, tomorrow, we'll carry the First, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, Eleventh, Seventeenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-first, Twenty-third and the country towns—the Seventh—giving us 35 more candidates, or 97 in all. This is a conservative estimate, and gives the doubtful districts to Warren. We can lose Cook tomorrow and still have a fighting chance to win out. I regard the battle as ours. Senator Warren is defeated."

"Over at the Richelieu," said Cowley, of the News-Dispatch, "Baldwin claims they have you whipped to a standstill."

"They're welcome over there to any comfort they can get out of the situation," said Garwood in a superior way.

It rained on the day of the primaries. All morning politicians, big and little, stamped into Senator Warren's hotel on Michigan avenue, or stamped in the Grand, tracking with greasy mud the muslin that had been stretched over the carpet in Colonel Talbott's headquarters. The polls were to open at 1 o'clock. The colonel had risen early, after three hours' sleep, and snatched his breakfast from a tray, talking to Carroll between bites. All morning he was buttonholed by men who scuffled for a word, complaining that Warren's fellows would have money to burn, and he fought with them, bill by bill, for the few dollars he had in his pocket. He was only liberal, to the extent that his slender campaign funds permitted liberality with those who were to work in Carroll's district. As the day wore on and he received reports and dispatched orders, like a general fighting a battle, the colonel's spirits rose, and the politicians, when he ordered them sharply about, paused at the door to look back at him, pleased by the thought that this was the Colonel Talbott of the good old days.

It was a wicked battle they fought out at the polls that day. The Warren men had control of the party organization and named the judges and clerks. Inmates of lodging-houses, and Lake Front hoboes, their rags steaming in the warm rain, were hauled from poll to poll in big moving vans, and voted wherever Warren needed votes and as often as he pleased. The city hall took a hand and furnished policemen in larger numbers than the primary election law intended, so that whenever an anti-Warren challenger challenged a vote he was hustled by officers, and if he resisted, bundled off to the Harrison street police station and locked up on a charge of disturbance. Late in the afternoon reports coming from Halsted street that the Fifth ward was in danger, the colonel escaped from his headquarters and went into the trenches himself. Carroll never forgot the old man as he splashed from poll to poll that waning summer day, or stood in the drenching rain before a voting booth, waving back policemen, ordering men up to vote, threatening judges and clerks. He had never heard the old man swear before.

At 7 oclock the polls closed. Warren carried some of the districts, the opposition others. Both claimed the victory. It was left for the convention to decide.

The colonel, for some reason, preferred not to get up the next morning, but opened his mail, read his papers, ate his breakfast, and finally held his morning levee, the last of the campaign, in bed. The politicians who had been waiting outside for an hour, grumbled at such indolence, and, when they were finally admitted to their leader's presence, suspected him of imitating the undemocratic luxuriousness of Senator Warren, who received his callers in bed every morning. But by 9 o'clock they had received their final instructions and scattered to the conventions, and when Mosely and Garwood sauntered in from the breakfast-room, they found only a few stragglers, who lingered on in the hope of beer money, at least, for their imaginary services on this decisive day. Malachi Nolan, in black garments and white cravat, came presently, his big diamond flashing his face shining and red from his dull razor, and then Carroll, at the sound of whose young step and fresh laugh the colonel succeeded in evoking a wan, tired smile.

"Just lazy, that's all," he declared, reassuringly, seeing Carroll halt in surprise. He reared himself on his elbow, and as he raised his head, its white hair all tangled, Carroll saw how haggard he was. He never had seen him look so old, so white, so worn, before.

"I was waiting for you," said the colonel, indicating Nolan with a finger that was like a claw. "I've fixed everything but the First district." He paused for breath. "The First ward's solid, isn't it! Well, all right. But watch Donahue. I'm sorry we ever let him get on the delegation. And then, let's see"—he pressed his brow in a troubled effort to steady his senses—"oh, yes. See McGlynn and have him lay down on Hardy, and tell Reinhold that if he wants that job from the South Park board he'd better get in line, and as to Wright—his brother's a conductor on the Cottage Grove line, and you can get at him through Harlow. Tell him I sent you. That'll give you 35 votes on the first ballot, and—"

Carroll, who had turned to reply to some jest of Mosely's heard a groan. Instantly he looked back at the colonel. The old politician, his face livid, was struggling as if he wished to get out of bed. He writhed a moment, then his head nodded, his chin dropped to his breast, and he collapsed in a heap, among the tumbled bedclothes. Carroll paled with a sudden sickness.

"He's fainted," said Garwood, fumbling at the throat of the colonel's shirt. Malachi Nolan brought a cup of water, Mosely hunted impatiently for a flask of whisky, and when they had straightened him out upon his pillows, Carroll ran for the hotel physician. The colonel recovered consciousness before the physician came and glanced around with an expression of embarrassment.

"Damn such a heart, anyway," he said. Then young Doctor Lambert came with his new stethoscope. When the doctor had finished his auscultation, the colonel said:

"Malachi, vote your delegation solid every time—don't give complimentary votes—it's dangerous. And remember—I don't care what happens so long as Carroll's nominated, trade anything for that, and send me word—"

But they hushed him.

At noon Doctor Foerder, the specialist, arrived.

"Ah, Lambert," he said, scowling about him as he put down his tremendous leather valise, big with the mysterious contrivances of modern surgery, pulled off his gloves, and with his quick, professional tread, stepped to the bedside. He exposed the colonel's big chest, and began a delicate percussion with his white fingers. When he had done tapping, he laid his ear over the colonel's heart, and listened silently a long time to the cardiac murmurs, he rolled under his fingers the superficial vessels of the temples, the forearms, the wrists, the knees, he counted the pulse; and he looked long at the old man's finger-nails. When he paused, the colonel said:

"Well?"

Doctor Foerder had retreated from the bedside and was writing his directions precisely, logically, as an official draws up a report, beginning each paragraph with a Roman numeral. He did not answer the colonel.

Foerder briefly consulted with Lambert; that is, repeated the directions he had already written out, and began to buckle his big valise.

"And as to a nurse?" asked Doctor Lambert.

"I'll send one of my own," said Foerder, hastily lighting a Russian cigarette. He could not remain long in one place. He had patients to see and a lecture to deliver over at Rush Medical College and his man was waiting with his high-hooded phaeton down in Jackson boulevard.

The nurse, diffusing a faint odor of antiseptics, came from Doctor Foerder's private hospital, laid aside her bonnet and veil and pausing an instant to give a woman's touch to her hair, quietly and deftly set the room in order.

All that afternoon the colonel lay in his darkened bedroom, fighting the battle of his life. He lay so still the nurse almost fancied him asleep, so regular was his breathing. Once he broke the silence by asking the time.

"Twenty minutes after three," the nurse responded, glancing at her little watch.

"Some of the conventions, then," the colonel said, "are over. I wonder why they don't send me word."

The nurse did not notice his speech, and he added:

"Pardon me, you doubtless are not interested in politics."

The talking brought on a spasm of dyspnoea, and the colonel struggled so painfully for his breath that the nurse had to prop him up with pillows in a sitting posture, as those who are afflicted with asthma pass their nights, finding it easier thus to breathe. The colonel begged the nurse's pardon, as if he had committed some indelicacy.

About this time news was brought from the Fifth district convention in Arlington Hall and from the Sixth in Jung's Hall, that the Warren men had carried both districts. The colonel, hearing the hoarse whispering between the messengers and Mosely in the room outside, demanded information, and Doctor Lambert had to tell him. The colonel wished to see Mosely, he had some new plan for the West Side to offset their loss; and he saw Mosely and the plan was put in execution. Then the colonel seemed once more to sleep. When he opened his eyes he asked if he could not have a cigar—"seegar," he pronounced it—assuring the nurse that he felt much better, but she said, as one might say to the whim of a child to whom explanations are not vouchsafed:

"Not just now."

And there was silence again, and the ticking of the nurse's little watch.

By 4 o'clock the colonel became restless once more, and asked if there were any news. When the nurse said no, he insisted that there must be some message, some letter, some telegram. He did not know that his followers, vindicating all history, were now standing afar off. He worried and grew incoherent. He seemed to confuse Carroll with the boy who was sleeping under the stars far away in Arizona.

Doctor Foerder returned at 4 o'clock. He had not been expected before evening, but he was interested in the case. He had mentioned it in his lecture that day. He had commented on the wonderful display of vitality on the patient's part, and spoken of the value in such cases of moral treatment, of encouraging words and a confident manner. He read the nurse's chart, counted the colonel's pulse for 15 seconds and calculated the rate of multiplication, drew down the old man's eyelids, noting the senile arc that was whitening the periphery of the cornea, and he examined the finger-nails; then the percussion and the auscultation. When he raised his black head, the colonel said:

"Any news"

"You're doing well."

"Aw!" said the colonel impatiently, "I don't mean that—any news from the conventions?"

Foerder hesitated, as if half reluctant to display interest in anything so human, but said:

"Yes."

"What?" said the colonel eagerly, his eyes brightening with a light that alarmed the doctor.

"They say you've carried some districts on the North Side."

"Which ones?" asked the colonel.

"Don't remember."

"Anything else?"

"Well, they say Warner has carried some North Side districts, too—and some West Side districts."

"Warner?"

"Well, whatever his name is."

Then Foerder was silent, and the colonel lay a long time thinking.

"Did you learn how it's going in the Ninth, or the Second, or the Seventeenth?"

"They say it's about an even break everywhere."

"And how's the First?" The colonel put this question in a whisper, as if he feared the answer. The doctor did not know. Then the silence again, and the colonel's labored breathing, and the ticking of the nurse's little gold watch.

"What district do you live in, Doctor?" the colonel asked later.

"I?" replied the medical man in some surprise.

"Yes."

"I—why, I don't know," he said.

The colonel faintly smiled. "Where do you live, then?"

"In Drexel Boulevard."

"That's the Fifth," the colonel said. "Warren carried that."

"Did he?" The doctor looked as if he were ashamed. "We mustn't talk any more just now."

Foerder remained until evening, pacing the anteroom, his hands behind him, his lips twitching in his involuntary smile. Now and then he took a turn in the long, dark, softly carpeted hall, to smoke a cigarette. At times some politician would come with a scared face and inquire about the colonel, and the doctor always demanded news of the battle, before he answered the questions. The reports brought by the politicians were not encouraging, and they hurried outside again. Their visits, in the afternoon waned, became fewer. Even Mosely and Garwood had been glad of the exciting excuse offered by the First district convention in Italia Hall down Clark street to escape from the shadowed headquarters. At 6 o'clock no one had been there for an hour save some sympathetic bellboys and porters from downstairs, and Carroll, of course—he came very half hour from the convention, disheveled, bathed in perspiration, his eyes burning with excitement and suspense. Foerder would not allow him to see the colonel, who lay behind the white door, his eyes half closed, too weak any longer to whisper.

At 7 o'clock the reporters came, and Doctor Foerder, as they put it, issued a bulletin.

"He's alive," the doctor said, "pulse 12 to 124, respiration 22 to 26, temperature 98. His remarkable nerve alone sustains him. He's making the most magnificent fight I ever saw in all my life—have you heard anything from the convention?"

"They're all over but the one in the First district," one of the reporters said, while they scribbled down the physician's figures. "It all depends now upon what that does. It's the worst fight ever known in Chicago. They say Warren has spent twenty-five thousand today."

"Does it look as if he could be elected there—in the First ,you know?"

The reporters smiled and winked one at another.

The colonel lay like one asleep, until far along in the evening. Once or twice he opened his eyes and looked an inquiry into the doctor's eyes, but Foerder could only shake his head. And once or twice he muttered something about Baldwin, and was troubled that they could not understand. Then he sank into a state of coma, and the news for which all were waiting would not come.

Doctor Foerder was forever glancing at his watch and asking Lambert how he thought the First district convention would turn out. Lambert had no idea.

"I hope we'll win," Foerder would say. Finally he sent Lambert down for news. Lambert hurried back. They had taken 46 ballots, he said, and the vote was tied. At 10 o'clock Doctor Foerder examined the colonel again, examined his eyes, his finger-nails, drummed on his chest, listened to his heart.

"You're magnificent!" he could not refrain from whispering, but his patient did not answer or look, or even smile this time. He was growing very weak. His breathing was faint, he inhaled the air through livid lips. He did not arouse from his stupor.

Doctor Foerder got very impatient. "We can't wait much longer," he said.

"It's all we can do, now," said Lambert.

Foerder went outside. The anteroom was deserted. The politicians came no more. He would sit down, then instantly get up, walk back and forth; his eyebrows knitting in his scowl, his lips twitching in that mirthless smile. And he smoked cigarette after cigarette. He did this for an hour.

Along toward midnight he heard a step. Flying to the door, he saw Carroll, dragging down the hall with the step of defeat and exhaustion. The boy's hair was matted under his hat, his eyes were dull, sunken, black as night.

"Licked," he said, waving his hands with a gesture of despair, as if the world had come to an end. Foerder went inside, leaving Carroll to sink into the first chair. But a moment later the physician opened the white door, and beckoned with his head. The motion was conclusive, final. He held the door ajar, and Carroll entered. The useless drugs had been pushed aside. The room was filled with the strange silence, the odor of death. Lambert stood at the window, looking out into the darkness. The nurse stood by the bed, waiting to perform her last office for the dying man.

Carroll timidly approached and looked down at the long form, scarcely outlined by the sheet, at the rigid head, at the great, waxen brow, at the little blue spheres formed by the closed eyelids, at the mouth slightly open beneath the white mustache with its tinge of yellow. Doctor Foerder was pressing his fingers to the colonel's wrist. The breathing had lost all human quality, it was but a series of automatic gasps, which, it seemed, would never end. Finally they grew shorter, at last they ceased, there was one faint inspiration, and Doctor Foerder, laying the thin old hand down upon the colonel's breast, said:

"It's all over."

There was silence for a whole minute. Then Doctor Lambert tossed up the window, and Carroll heard in the street below, a crowd shuffling over the sidewalk, a crowd coming, as he knew, from the convention in Italia Hall. And suddenly from the crowd arose a raucous, drunken yell:

"Hurrah for Warren!"

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