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MATTY'S MEMOIRS

By FRANK MATTY
As Told to JAMES GORDON FRASER

CHAPTER XXVIII.
The night I was nominated for mayor, J. K. McGuire got into town an hour or so before the caucus, which was held in the city hall. Bill Rafferty and Bill Kirk met him at the Yates hotel, and they called in all of their men and counted up. Their count showed them they had me beat by at least 25 delegates; my count was a little different.



FRANK MATTY.

When we got the caucus under way, I had the nomination in my vest pocket, but I don't believe either McGuire or Rafferty thought I had a chance.

Bill Kirk, whom they had induced to run against me, didn't want the nomination, and didn't believe he could be elected if he got it. He only consented to stand as a candidate because McGuire and Rafferty insisted on it. They got George Driscoll to nominate him, and Driscoll did a good job. He pictured Kirk as the man who gave Syracuse its splendid drinking water, its beautiful parks, its pretty streets, and about everything else that was worth having. There was a lot of applause, in which I helped.

But when we got down something else. All the way through the roll call, which was by wards, we ran about even. First, I would be one or two votes ahead, and then Kirk. We were still neck and neck when we got to the Nineteenth ward, where Will Kelley, one of five brothers who were in the coal business out there and who had been getting active in politics for a year or two, was head of the delegation.

As I remember it, when the roll call got to the Nineteenth ward, I had 57 votes and Kirk had 56. The Nineteenth had five delegates, and you could have heard a pin drop when the chairman asked: "Nineteenth ward—how do you vote?"

The answer was: "Four votes for Frank Matty; one vote for William B. Kirk!" Of course, that settled it. It left me with 61 votes and Kirk with 57. My friends let out a yell that could be heard up in Solvay, and McGuire and Rafferty were dumbfounded. They hadn't suspected that I had Kelley and Tom Anderson, who was a great friend of old Anse Alvord. I think they expected all five votes from the Nineteenth.

McGuire was game. He took a few minutes to pull himself together and then got up and made one of his typical speeches. He could talk anybody into admiring and liking him—for a while. He told the delegates they had picked

a good Democrat to make the race for them, and that he thought I could win. And when he got through, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a roll of bills, saying: "To show what I think of your candidate, I am going to start his campaign fund, right here and now, with \$500 out of my own pocket."

I didn't lose any time starting through the crowd to get up there, but before I could get to the platform, George Freeman, the old alderman from the Fifteenth, had grabbed it. I had to stop and take it away from Freeman before I could get up on the platform and thank the delegates. I made a speech in which I promised them to "give Hendricks the fight of his life."

I believe I made good the promise, too, for I certainly gave them a lively campaign. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in Syracuse. I took off my coat and went to work the minute I left the city hall, and I kept at it until the polls closed. And there was fur a-flying before the campaign had gone very far.

Fobes made just about the same kind of campaign he made against Thomson and Murphy. He was fair, and he was honest. He used against me everything he had a right to use, but I didn't blame him for that. And, so far as he was concerned, I tried to do the same thing. I always thought he was a pretty decent fellow, and in politics, I never believed in trying to make people think that men of that kind are anything else.

Fobes had some men around him, though, that didn't recognize any rules of decency. Walter Mauge, who was his corporation counsel; Mike Driscoll, who had been congressman and who was a brother of George Driscoll; Bill Rubin, who was in the corporation counsel's office; and several more, threw more mud at me than has ever been thrown at a candidate in Syracuse, before or since. They called me a low-down bully who fought with billings-gate, but they used dirtier weapons than I did. Some of their speeches would be interesting reading for the voters of today, accustomed to polite language and a reasonable regard for the limits of abuse.

I had some good men on the ticket with me, headed by Tom Gafney, a labor leader and a popular Irishman with friends in both parties. I picked him, myself, to run for president of the Common Council against John Sadler, who is now surrogate of the county.

There were a lot of issues. One was a boulevard which Hendricks had promised certain people to build if Fobes stayed in office. It was to cost \$7,000,000, and the colored gentleman in the wood-pile was that the land which would have to be bought and which would be increased in value by the boulevard was owned by friends of Hendricks. One of them, incidentally, was connected with a newspaper that abused me all through the campaign.

Another issue was the graft which we had found in the water department, where people were being made to pay several times what meters cost. Another was the padded budget, which I charged that the Fobes administration was mixing up to keep a lot of Hendricks men on the payroll. I guaranteed to cut the tax rate at least \$1 per \$1,000, and even made up a budget to show the taxpayers in advance, cutting out some \$50,000 in salaries.

I have always thought that two

things combined to beat me by 2,000 votes in that campaign. One of them was a cartoon which a local paper ran a few days before election, picturing me as a bloated individual in a silk hat and checked suit, standing by a bar with a roulette wheel and a deck of cards on one side and a pair of dice and a blackjack on the other. Under it, the caption was: "This is you candidate for mayor." It was totally unfair, of course, and without the slightest foundation in fact, but it hurt me with people who didn't know me but intended to vote for me because they liked my program.

Another thing that licked me was the money that Hendricks

pouring into that campaign. I had had some little experience with the use of money in politics, but I never saw anything like that. In some wards, the Republicans paid \$5 apiece for votes for the first time in the history of the city—up to then \$1 and \$2 had been a good price. It cost Hendricks more money to beat me than it had cost him in any two campaigns up to that time, but, of course, he had it to spend. And I didn't

I could tell some interesting things about that, but I don't think I will. Nobody is interested in personal affairs, anyway.

That was the first campaign that Will Kelley ran. He acted as

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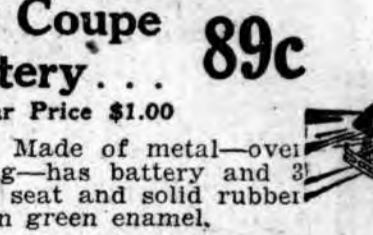
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