

2

# Memories of the Campaign of 1880.

The Presidential campaign of 1880 was unique in a way, as the nominee of the Republican party had gone to the convention which nominated him, pledged to another "favorite son of Ohio," and also following as it did, "the steal of the Presidency," as the opposing party was wont to call the inauguration of Hayes to the office which it professed to believe belonged to Tilden. There were many Republicans who thought that if the Democrats really believed as they had talked for the four years intervening, they would put forth such an effort as to elect their candidate beyond a shadow of a doubt, this time.

Judge Bourgee had left North Carolina late in 1879 and had gone to Denver, intending to follow Greeley's advice to grow up with the West. We took a

house on a year's lease and soon had it cosily furnished, when, early in the following year, there came an imperative call to the East from his publishers, Ford, Howard & Hulbert of New York, who wished to get out a new and fuller edition of *A Fool's Errand*, which had appeared the previous November, and was making a great sensation. Though the judge had just made a very profitable engagement with Mr. Woodbury of the *Denver Times* to take the editorial management of his evening daily paper, he reluctantly gave it up, and on January 1st started east. It took him only a few weeks to arrange matters with his publishers and he returned. He found the position still open, and he took his place at once on the editorial staff of the *Evening Times*. It had been his intention on going to Denver to continue the

practice of law, which was always his choice of a profession, but he did not see then just the opening he desired, and took up the newspaper work as interim.

He had scarcely become accustomed to his new position when one morning we were startled by the appearance of Edward Ford of the publishing firm, at

our home in Denver. The success of *A Fool's Errand* had been so phenomenal that they wanted the judge should throw everything aside and write another book in the same vein. He flatly refused. He had come to Denver to practice law, and was waiting only for the favorable opening, and, further, because he had written one book out of which they were coining money, it did not follow that he could do so again. "lightning did not strike twice in the same place," and other trite expressions. Mr. Ford would take no refusal and, after a few days' controversy on the subject, the judge brought out one evening some eight or ten chapters of a novel he began before he wrote *A Fool's Errand* and handed it to Mr. Ford to read. He was delighted. It was the beginning of what was afterward entitled *Bricks Without Straw*. Mr. Ford left the next morning after an all-night seance with the judge, taking with him the judge's written promise to give up his editorial work and go on with the new novel at once.

After a few weeks' effort, writing, writing and burning up page after page of manuscript, he gave the matter up and so telegraphed the publishers. A frantic protest was flashed over the wires, and an urgent appeal made for him to come East. He refused. They would not take such an answer. A week or so passed. The result was that he again turned his back east—assuring me that he would soon return—that he was not going to write any book, anyhow, oh no, he would be back in a week

and go into the law practice, the desired opening then presenting itself.

He arrived in Chicago at the close of the Republican convention and remained during the session. He was acquainted with Garfield, who had read *A Fool's Errand*, and was never tired of talking about the Southern situation as there portrayed. They were much

together, and the judge had personal knowledge of the conflict which went on in Garfield's mind when it became evident that he himself might be nominated instead of Sherman. The result is history.

A few days after the judge arrived in New York, a telegram came to me to sell out everything and come East. The new book must be written and he could do nothing without me. I looked in dismay at all my pretty things—the new home we had builded after our discouraging experience in the South; and

though I was a bit rebellious at the idea of giving it all up, my husband's wishes were always first to me. I hastened to a newspaper office with an advertisement and the next day there appeared in answer to it an elderly man accompanied by a fine-looking young woman whom he introduced as his daughter. He said he had just made a strike in the mountains, or in the vernacular of the day "struck carbonates," had seen my advertisement in the evening paper and wishing to make a home in Denver thought the house was what he wanted, etc., etc. After looking around, taking particular note of my comely Swedish maid in her sunny kitchen whom he wanted to take with the house, asking a few questions as to the cost of house-

keeping in Denver, he made an offer to take over the lease, buy everything in the house, if possession could be given at once, bringing out from his pocket two \$500 bills, which he wished me to accept in part payment, and as a guarantee of his ability to do as he said. The hasty march of events rather staggered me, but the vision of my lonely husband in the East with the task he had on hand, looking hourly for an affirmative reply to his request, settled it. A telegram was sent and two days later with my little daughter and only our clothes in our trunks, I was en route.

I met the Judge at the Everett House in New York, having left our little girl with her grandmother and parents in Erie, Pa. It was then the middle of July. The situation was gone over and I was instructed to find a place somewhere in the city where we could be comfortable for the next two months, not too far from the publishers in Park place, as he had promised that the manuscript of the new novel should all be in hand by the middle of September, when he was wanted to go into the campaign for Garfield. My fortunate experience in Denver caused me to have great faith in newspaper advertising, and consulting a paper, I took from its columns a list of rooms to let, called a cab and started on my quest. It was rather discouraging for a time and I had almost reached the bottom of my

list when I came upon just the place I sought—a suite of rooms on the second floor of a stately mansion on Eleventh street—not far from Broadway. They had been occupied for many years by a wealthy bachelor who was spending the summer in Europe. The moment I looked into the sitting-room at the back, which overlooked a tangled old garden where roses and vines were growing riotously, my decision was made. I thought it an ideal spot for the Judge to work. The furnishings of the

suite were so luxurious I was afraid that the rent might be more than I could compass, and I made much inquiry when the landlord came to inquire as to the price. He

accepted the terms immediately, saying I would take the rooms for two months. Then the landlady began to quibble. She was not accustomed to doing things in such a hurry. Who were we anyhow? Was the gentleman who wanted to come there, and write, my husband? Did we want to do light housekeeping? This she could not allow, and she must have a month's rent in advance, etc.

I soon satisfied her as to our respectability, paid the month's rent and returned to the hotel for the Judge—who had gone to the publishers—and our trunks. While waiting in the quiet of our room I began to have all sorts of fears lest I had been hasty, that the Judge might not be pleased, and I thought if he scolded, I would call to his mind how I had broken up my pretty Western home and hurried half across the continent at his bidding, and he must not find fault at what I had done. But my fears were groundless. He was enchanted with the cosy place I had found and all those broiling summer days he sat at his desk and wrote. He had only to lift his eyes from his paper to have them refreshed by the tangled greenery of this old garden which always looked cool. After the early morning sun, it was in the shade, and showed many a bosky nook which we were always going to explore, but alas, we never did. He never had the time.

We had our breakfast at the Saint Denis, then every day I would take the bundle of manuscript prepared the day before to the publishers, return with the proof they had ready for correction—and in the afternoon go back with it. A station on the elevated was near, which made this daily task very convenient for me. At 6 o'clock the pen was laid aside, the desk cleared off—no more writing that day—and we would go to what was then uptown, for our dinner. Often after we had dined the Judge would put me on the car for home and stop in at the Republican headquarters for a chat with the politicians there gathered. Everybody had read, was reading, or going to read, A Fool's Errand. The book seemed to have open-

ed a new field to be discussed, and it was not rarely midnight when he would return, always inspired to go on with the work he had had thrust upon him.

Sometimes he would get dreadfully snarled up with his characters or situations and bid me go away and stay all day, as he could not work out the problems which were besetting him while I was around. Then I would go out and wander about the streets and into the stores for a while, knowing that in an hour or so he would be glad to see me back. One day, however, when he was especially bothered, he said, when I took the bundle of manuscript for the publishers, he did not want to see me nor the proof until night. I took him at his word and lunched downtown, then went to the matinee of a popular play, and it was 6 o'clock before I returned. I found a most-distracted man looking for me on the steps of our house. He had forgot all about his command of the morning, and when I did not return with the proof at the usual time, he began to worry, and all the afternoon had been unable to write, expecting me every moment. As the hours wore on and no wife appeared, he imagined all sorts of dreadful things as having happened to me and was on the point of calling on the police to hunt me up. I concluded after that experience not to take his words too literally—at such times.

Thus the days passed and by the middle of September he was free to leave New York for the Indiana campaign—that state having its state elections then in October. With a brief call at Erie, we sped on to Indianapolis, where the detail of his route awaited him. He spoke every day, sometimes two or three times a day, always being greet-

ed with the greatest enthusiasm. He was a new feature in the campaign, and what he had to say fresh and unhackneyed. I remember one place—I do not now recall what it was—there was a great mass meeting, at which Blaine was to be the principal speaker. The Judge's turn came first on the programme. It was an outdoor meeting

and thousands of people had gathered. The judge's address was so heartily and vociferously applauded, and was much prolonged because any attempt on his part to stop was greeted with cries to go on. Blaine, who sat on the platform, and was to follow, gave very evident signs of impatience, often pulling out his watch and shaking his head. When the judge was finally allowed to cease, the applause which followed was deafening. When it subsided, Blaine got up, spoke five minutes or so in a very grief-stricken tone of voice, and sat down, and no effort of the audience could induce him to say another word. About the same thing happened at a place where Harrison was to follow the judge, but he did not so evidently disapprove of the taste of the assemblage as Blaine had openly done.

After two weeks in Indiana, the end of September found us one Sunday at the Grand Pacific, Chicago. All day newspaper-men and politicians came and went to ask the judge what he thought would be the outcome in Indiana. Among these was Mr. Woodbury of the Denver Times. He wanted to send a dispatch to his paper. Would Indiana go Republican? The answer was always the same—Indiana would give a good Republican majority. The judge was then slated for a week in Ohio. Garfield had sent him word that he wished to see him and specified Monday, the day that Maine voted, when he would have time for the conference. When we stepped off the train at Mentor about noon that day, the Presidential candidate was waiting to board it. He had only time to express his regrets and to explain that he had been summoned to attend the funeral of an old teacher that morning, and felt that it was his duty to go. He had left with his secretary, Stanley Brown, who afterwards married Mollie Garfield, the subjects he wished to talk with the

judge about—that we must go right to his house, his team which had brought him down waiting for us. In the plain country wagon we were driven to the Garfield home. After a substantial country dinner, very unostentatiously served, which awaited us, the judge was taken by Mr. Brown to the little outside office and I saw him no more until it was time for us to take the train.

I spent the afternoon very pleasantly with Mrs. Garfield, who had a very worried, anxious appearance. The two elder boys, James and Harry, were to leave the next day for Williams College, and she was busy getting their clothes together, looking over linen and hose to see if no button was missing or stitch lacking. In the middle of the afternoon, she brought in a big basket of socks the old grandmother had been knitting for the boys. Some had been worn a little and might have a tiny hole or a stitch had been dropped which would ravel if not secured. She gave me a needle and yarn and while she hurried about looking after other matters, I went over the dozens of pairs and put them in proper order for the boys to wear when there was no mother

to look over the weekly wash. While thus engaged, old Mrs. Garfield came in from her room with a copy of Harper's Weekly, containing one of Nas's inimitable cartoons—Garfield, stripped to the waist and with perspiring brow, was in a hayfield mowing off the heads of the nest of copperheads which were hissing all around him. She laid the paper in my lap and, pointing to the picture, said proudly: "That is James—my boy James, who is killing the snakes and he'll not let one of them hurt me!" She looked at my work and praised my darning—which I considered a great compliment—then took the paper tenderly back to her room.

The campaign of 1880 ended for me on the Saturday before election at Brockport. A big snowstorm had wrapped

the hotel to any political speeches and busied myself with the large bundle of letters which had been forwarded to us there. The next morning I left the judge, taking the train for Erie, while he went on to New Jersey for a final rally on Monday night.

To learn Judge Tourgee's appreciation of his wife's efforts for him, at this time, one has but to read the dedication of *Bricks Without Straw*, of which over 50,000 copies were sold before the publisher's half-yearly report was sent us at Philadelphia, the following February.

EMMA K. TOURGEE.  
Mayville, October 14th. 1910