

By all the rules of politics, Robert A. Taft should always come in second best. Nevertheless, he is one of the best vote-wranglers in the country. And his eyes are focused on the Philadelphia convention

IT WAS while the loving understanding that had bound Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft was dissolving that the former galumphed into the White House one day thirsting for jabberwock blood. Mr. Taft, who was ceasing rapidly to be Theodore's beamish boy, had slowed down his presidential progress to a cautious trudge and Theodore, his political creator, was not happy.

"Will," barked Theodore, "what are you afraid of? Why this everlasting middle-of-the-roading? By George, Will, if I didn't know you I'd think—"

Whereat the vast Mr. Taft, whom the crown of Roosevelt the First fitted like a five-and-ten toupee and to whom crusading held something less than irresistible appeal, smiled indulgently upon his ever-lathered predecessor.

"Theodore," said he, "with demons on the right and angels on the left where else shall a man seek sanity? Besides, I'm not built for stomping through thickets."

Today, with well-bred eagerness, Mr. Taft's elder son, Robert Alphonso, is to be seen and heard plodding up the middle of the White House turnpike, resolutely prepared to give battle to two major jabberwocks ahead. To win the Republican nomination he must convince the furious conservatives that he'd slay the New Deal and present them with the creature's head. Should he be nominated he must convince the voting masses, if he hopes to be President, that he won't. And Senator Taft is no hand at two-timing. He's just about as subtle as a load of buckshot.

If he gets as far as November's voting and emerges second best—well, nobody's face is going to be redder than his. His best friends (he has an almost irreducible minimum of close ones) hasten to admit it. Should he be defeated in November, they see him returning to his leathery law offices in Cincinnati to look back upon a campaign wherein he lent himself to publicity stunts as foreign to his true nature as the role of leading man at Minsky's. And he'll probably be violently ill.

Well-equipped but Has No Glamour

However, before casting Robert Alphonso Taft's November horoscope it might be wise to see what happens to him in June. In spite of polls, if you'll accept the majority opinion of Republican national committeemen, his chances of nomination are encouraging. There are those who could wish that he had more color, more political chic, more shine. These, saying that the party is reeking with brains but lacks a showman, incline toward Mr. Dewey, although admitting that Senator Taft is far better equipped. Senator Taft has all the glamour of a pint of branch water and he's rather proud of it.

"The trouble with glamour," he told us, "is what's so frequently underneath it."

"What?"

"Too little," sighed he.

So he's a middle-roader like his father, seeking the presidency because he thinks he has what the country needs even if it turns out that he hasn't what it takes. As there are those anti-New-Dealers who lament his lack of oomph, zowie and smacko, there are others who fear that he has too much tolerance for the dreadful things that have been going on in Washington during the past seven years, six months. Among them are mourners of the dear old dead days who, throwing caution to the winds, accuse him of being a liberal. Senator Taft thinks so too.

For years in private (and publicly as long ago as 1936 when there was some Ohio small talk of his being Mr. Landon's teammate), he announced himself for virtually everything advocated today by Dr. Glenn Frank's Republican Program Committee and much more succinctly and clearly. In ten almost crisp answers to ten comprehensive questions he said everything that Doctor Frank used 33,000 words to write. Two years later those ten (Continued on page 32)

BASHFUL BUCKEYE

By Walter Davenport





They gave Miss Dover a chair behind the screen, and a lot of men came in

Deadly Visitor

By William MacHarg

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY L. TIMMINS

A girl's memory of a voice gives Detective O'Malley the solution to a vicious murder

THIS is one of them mystery murders," O'Malley said. "A girl got found killed on East River Drive. They got who she was because another girl that she lived with had reported her missing. The roommate's name is Miss Dover. The dead kid was named Miss Mallin. She belonged in Connecticut but was in Manhattan studying music. Her parents is dead, and left her some money, and her aunt and uncle brought her up. She was engaged to marry a guy in Connecticut but went with other men too. She had a date to go out with some guy and she went with him and she never come back."

"With whom?" I asked.

"That's it. The roommate can't tell us."

"Is it the idea that the man she went out with murdered her?"

"No doubt of it, but we got no idea who."

The girl's aunt and uncle had come to Manhattan and were at a hotel. We saw them. They were a Mr. and Mrs. Chalers, her only relatives, a small, gray-haired couple. They appeared overwhelmed by grief and I was sorry for them. The dead girl's fiancé was with them. His name was Hopel. He was a big young man, good-looking, with not much expression, and he was plainly nervous.

"You got no idea who might have killed your niece?" O'Malley asked them.

"We haven't."

"Well, don't you know who she went around with?"

"Oh, yes," the aunt replied. "She told us about them, but there isn't any of them who would have killed her."

"Well, how about you?" O'Malley inquired of Hopel. "You know your girl had dates with other fellows?"

"Yes, certainly. It would have been foolish of her not to go out places. She'd nearly completed her music course, and we were to be married as soon as it was finished. Until then, I thought she ought to have her liberty."

We saw the girl's roommate. Miss Dover was a music student also. The girls had a nice apartment.

"How was this?" O'Malley asked her.

"I wish I could tell you. It's terrible! Laura had a date with someone but she didn't tell me with whom."

"Didn't she usually tell you who she had a date with?"

"Yes. She didn't this time. He rang the bell while she was dressing and I started to go to the door, but she stopped me and went herself. I had a feeling she didn't want me to know who the man was. She opened the door only a little and spoke to him and he spoke to her, but I couldn't see him."

"Yeah? What did he say?"

"He said he'd wait in the car. So then he went and did that."

"You see the car?"

"No; we can't (Continued on page 79)