

## The Rise of "FINGY" CONNERS

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The Democratic State Boss of New York, who "looks like a prize-fighter and talks like a tough" -Dock scrapper, freight contractor, millionaire. The record of how he split the scalp of a Pole laborer, and jumped from cowhide boots through brogans to spats -Bruised but victorious

By WILL IRWIN

WILLIAM J. CONNERS measures up as one of the most powerful figures in the convention at Denver which is nominating a candidate for President of the United States. He is chairman of the Democratic State Committee of New York, and, with Charles F. Murphy, controls completely the party in the largest of the States. The New York delegation, which he dominates, composes 78 out of the 1,002 delegates to the Denver Convention.



THE Buffalo docks, thirty years ago, were as Hibernian as a potato. Those were the days when the peasant Irishmen, new to liberty, a great, stalwart, energetic people, disorderly from the very excess of spirit in them, were still living in colonies by themselves. The A. P. A. spirit still raged in the land, a protest against the religion and customs of the uncomprehended newcomers. Although the Irish colonies of Manhattan Island were breaking up, although the new generation was already making its inextricable mixture with the native people, the region of small cottages, tenements, little stores, overshadowed by the great Buffalo grain elevators, held a colony that was Irish of the Irish holds it even now for that matter. The Buffalo dock region is a survival of earlier days, as though an ichthyosaurs should come hopping down the street. It formed a



*The barn at the extreme right of the elevator held once the first saloon that "Fingy" Conners bought after he inherited his original property from his father. It was a centre, in his time, of all the gang politics in his ward. From this establishment he made his first ventures in freight contracting—the foundation of his larger fortunes*

busy, wild city ward. At the head of the lake region, it included the human flotsam and jetsam of the waters which banks up always on a sea terminal, as well as that permanent population of splendid virtues and splendid possibilities in disorder. Turbulent labor troubles, turbulent social upheavals, turbulent politics, were its brand and mark.

On the Ohio Basin, center of all this region, stood a little

saloon cocked up on trestles over a culvert --a bar downstairs, a few rooms, used for a sailors' boardinghouse, upstairs; and the sign over the door --but lately changed --read: "William J. Conners."

The proprietor, "Fingy" Conners, had a reputation as the stoutest man in a free fight, the merriest roisterer on a spree, the toughest keeper of a tough saloon, of all the dock region. In these late twenties of his, he was a thickset, strong young tough, with an accent that shook his cheeks, a coarse face, good-humored enough as his early photographs show--but the kind of face withal that would cause one to shrink in a dark street. When he was not needed behind the bar, he used to "mix" with the loungers about the front of his place, exchanging the jokes of the street, shaking dice, scheming over time cheap politics of his ward. At the first sign of trouble from drunken longshoremen or scoopers, he used to plunge into the thick of war with that



*The saloon in the centre of this view is the last saloon property in which "Fingy" Conners had any active interest. It has been successively "William J. Conners's," "Nugent's Hotel," and "Hurley's Hotel." Nugent is husband of Conners's niece, and Hurley is Conners's half-brother. From the little building to the right, Conners runs his great contracting business, which employs from 4,000 to 6,000 men*

joy and delight in a scrap which had made him the terror of the wharfs before he acquired property and became a saloon man. If they were too many for him, he reached for the bung starter; if that failed, he took to the methods of Chinese highlanders. There were no rules in his scrapping. When life in his own saloon became too peaceful and wearisome, he sallied forth at the head of his toughs, among whom he was king by right of might, to clean out the saloon of some dirty Democrat --for he was a

Republican at the time.

In his little saloon over the culvert, the Republican heelers of his ward planned and executed their colonizing, their stuffing, their pasting --all their devices for increasing returns. From his place, on the morning of primaries, issued his gang, to beat and riot and repeat. He was already deep in politics. you see - -not as an aspirant for office, but as a small boss.

The fortune which raised Conners to this dizzy eminence among his kind had come to him through a series of disasters. His parents were Canadian Irish his father had been successively a lake sailor, a stonecutter, and finally, when he had saved enough money, owner of that same little saloon over the culvert. William J. Conners, only son of that marriage, was born in western New York in 1857. He had one sister, afterward a Mrs. Hayes, and two half-brothers named Hurley. He had gone to the public and parochial schools; at the age of eleven, or twelve he had plunged into life as steward's assistant on one of the old lake passenger steamers. It is on record from his own lips how he earned and saved, his first dollar above his salary. "I was luggin' a supper from the galley to the first cabin," he said, "an' I spilled a bowl of soup on me pants. I stood ready to bawl, W'en a deck passenger said he'd give me a quarter for the remains. I took me quarter an' me bastin' from the steward. After that I used to spill a little soup on meself every day to prove it was an accident, and do business with the deck passengers." He served on the lake steamers until he grew into the dawn of his great physical strength. Then he took a job piling cordwood for the railroad; and, at the age of seventeen or so, He graduated to be a dock laborer and a longshoreman. He drank with the boys; he established a kind of rude chieftainship in his own gang; and he fought --from the tradition which lingers his life in this period must have been a long shindy. One of his defeats came near costing the Democracy of New York a State chairman. Working on

Blake's coal trestle, far above the water, he fell out with Jack Fletcher, another dock scrapper. Fletcher punched him fair and full in the jaw, at once knocking him out and toppling him into the lake. When the bridge gang pulled Cannors out, he was senseless and half-drowned.

By that time he had lost his thumb and won his nickname. Several stories are afloat on the docks, but this is the accepted version: He and a playmate were boasting back and forth, of their nerve. "Aw, I bet you," said the playmate. "you ain't got the noive to let me chop you finky." "I'll bet you you ain't got the noive to chop it," said the child Cannors. They got a cleaver; Cannors laid his hand down on the block --and they both won. Down the street ran Jimmy Cannors, waving the bloody stump and yelling: "He chopped me finky! He chopped me finky!" For the rest of his career, Finky Cannors fought with a crippled left hand.

The Cannors family lived in their own small cottage clown by the docks, Mrs. Hayes, whose marriage had turned out badly, was at home with her parents. The house took fire in the night. The inmates got out alive, but Mrs. Hayes ran back to rescue her sewing-machine and the roof fell on her. The shock of this disaster killed Mrs. Cannors. Only a year later, the eider Cannors died. Finky, sole survivor of the family except his baby niece, inherited the saloon, the insurance on the cottage, the life insurance of his parents and his sister. So he became a saloonkeeper, with extra money in the bank.

His first investment was another saloon, cross the Ohio Basin stood a haunted house, avoided by the neighbors after dark, on the market for a song. Finky Cannors bought it, turned the old parlor into a barroom, the upper apartments into lodgings for lake sailors. "They'll lay that ghost for me," said Finky. No sooner had he set the place going, and proved that no ghosts wanted to stay in a Cannors saloon, than one of the periodical, violent strikes ran along the Buffalo docks.

### **Handling Freight at the hocks**

OUT of this strike came his golden opportunity. Not only did he win the spendings of idle men --as the saloonkeeper always does in a strike --but he conceived the idea which made him rich and great. No one had thought yet of contracting to handle freight at the docks. The lake steamer companies hired their own longshoremen as they needed them, and stood the burden of the strikes. Cannors, with his experience, his influence in a certain kind of polities, and his general leadership among dock laborers, approached the companies and offered to unload their freight at a fixed rate. He got the contract from the Union Steamboat Company, and managed to handle the men so well that He had 110 strikes. By methods all his own --there float many unconfirmed tales of these methods --he brought in company after company. Now, only one dock in Buffalo employs any other contractor. Unloading freight and getting it upon inland carriers includes three separate shifts --from the vessel to the docks, from the docks to the warehouse. and from the warehouse to the cars. At first merely a dock handler, he absorbed the other two processes. More, through twenty years of steady commercial progress, he absorbed the freight-handling business in most of the other lake ports. His string of establishments stretches from Buffalo to Milwaukee. He says that he is the largest individual employer of labor in the country; and, in fact, He (hoses have from 4.000 to 6,000 men on his weekly payroll. This, in brief, is the story of the Cannors fortune as he started it and nursed it along.

His methods --well, there are stories. "Brains is as cheap as tenpenny nails," he said once; "I can buy brains." The standing charge against Cannors in business is that he buys certain brains which are not for sale in open market. He has met fierce competition in business as he has in politics; He has usually conic out beaten and bruised, but a winner. His enemies charge that He alu'ays bought the local freight agents of the carrying lines. He denies this; but once he gave the lie to his denials. A transcontinental railroad had sent up a new agent, and the shippers of Buffalo were giving this man a banquet. Cannors was there --enthusiastic. Whenever, for any reason, he grows enthusiastic, the accent of civilization sloughs off and He becomes again the dock tough. Within a minute after he had risen to speak He was directing his remarks to the new agent.

"You t'inks youse is Hell," he said; "but I'll get youse. Youse don't know it, but I will. I always gits 'em. Wot you'll learn is that I am It and youse is Nit." This gem on bribery shines out from his waterfront wisdom: "If they finds it out on you, youse is done. If they finds it out on me, I done right."

## Scrapper and "Mixer," Too

HE WAS a king among the dock men before he became an employer; he understood them. After a fashion, too, they liked him. Not only was he an admirable scrapper, but he was --and is a good "mixer." He liked to loaf away an evening in a saloon, to play the crude practical jokes which appeal to his primitive sense of humor, and to exchange the gossip of the parish. So He was little bothered by strikes; and when strikes (lid threaten, He had a method of his own for heading them off. A power in the cheap politics of his own ward, a lesser power in the politics of Buffalo, his pull ran straight into the Labor Council. Whenever whisperings against him circulated about the docks, he would get his saloon henchmen to gather and send them among his longshoremen to form a union his own union officered by his own secret agents. That union would apply to the council for recognition as the only simon-pure and sanctioned organization among the dock laborers; and the power of Connors would pull it through. So He held the men in line while he climbed up and up -- until the day when he turned the eye of his ambition upon the grain-handling, business.

Until this time he had been a freight handler only; he had never tried to get the grain business, largely because it was run on a peculiar system. Whenever a grain ship arrived at an elevator, the steamboat company would go to a "bosss shoveler" and hire from his gang of "scoopers." This boss shoveler was usually a graduate Scooper, promoted to own a small saloon. He did none of the won: himself; it was his part to furnish the brains and clerical force. When the job was done, he collected from the company and divided the sum pro rata among the men, reserving for himself a share a little larger than that of any other individual. The system was sometimes a little awkward in practice; and this leadership of a saloonkeeper in industry was not always a good thing for the laborers. But it worked very well on the whole; and to the docks it was as though it had always been and always would be.

When, in the middle nineties, Fingy Connors went after the grain-handling business, he doubtless wanted something besides mere profits. In both business and politics He kept an organized force of toughs, who beat up his enemies, worked his (heals, formed his unions. He needed to provide for them; and these boss scooper saloons were good berths. He convinced the grain-carrying companies, who saw how He had straightened out the system of freight handling. Out went the old boss scoopers who had grown gray in the service, and in went his own henchmen, his scappers, his toughs. At first they worked along in the old way.

Trouble broke out at once. The men found that they were making less out of a week's work than they used to. The boss shovelers attributed it to the uncertainty of readjustment; but the pay envelopes continued to shrink. Political enemies went among the men, persuading them to put spies on the business. They found that, in certain elevators, the boss scoopers were stuffing the rolls with dummy names. Of forty scoopers enrolled on one job, say, ten would be dummies. When, on Saturday night, the boss scooper handed the pay envelopes over the bar, He would hold out the envelopes of the fictitious ten, remarking that those fellows would call later for their money. Other causes of complaint arose; this was the main one.

The men clamored, threatened to strike, made so much trouble that neither the heelers nor the boss shovelers could hold them down. So Fingy Connors installed the wage system --a thing which had been in his mind, probably, from the very first.

Then an evil --which had already become a cause of complaint, grew until it dwarfed all other issues. Time boss shovelers were creatures of Connors, owing their positions to him. Their wholesale trade in liquor, cigars, and beer made a big piece of business. It was charged, and never disproved, that the boss shovelers bought these supplies just where Connors ordered them to buy, and that Connors got an agent's commission on every box of cigars, every keg, every bottle. It is certain that the shovelers bought their beer of one brewery exclusively --that brewery in which Connors was a director. Always this saloon feature had been a fault in the grain handling at Buffalo; it remained for Connors and his men to render it intolerable.

So, if you were a scooper on the Buffalo docks, the way to the heart of the shoveler, your immediate boss, and the heart of Connors, his boss, ran across the bar of a saloon. Your pay came over that bar, minus the brass checks issued for the drinks you had consumed during the week. The boss shoveler knew exactly how

much you were doing for his business. These boss shovelers, and the big boss of all the shovelers, became so greedy that the man who took all his wages home on Saturday night stood no chance for work. And this pressed hard upon the women and children --whoever won, they lost. In most dock families the father and provider that came home without a "load" came home also without his job.

In the winter of 1898-99, the grumbings against this system grew into open protest; in the spring, when the grain-handling season was at hand, the scoopers formed a union --one of their own this time and struck against Conners and his boss shovelers. The very origin of this strike was told to, the kind of politics which Conners has always played. Rowland B. Mahany, a brilliant Irish lawyer, had represented Buffalo for two terms in Congress. On his third nomination, Conners threw in against Mahany the power of his two newspapers and pounded him out of politics. "An' Mahany," runs the dock tradition, "He swore that for every dhirty [sic] dollar it cost Conners to hate him, he wud make Conners spend a hundred." Some one quoted this to Conners. "Rats!" he said; "Wen I want Mahany, he'll come in a hack."

Naturally an agitator, naturally a drifter with currents, Mahany took hold of the rebellion on the docks, crystallized it into a violent revolution against Conners, and interested the public outside of the ward. Like a good politician, he perceived that the moral side of the case --the condition of the women and children was his best card with the public. He interested all the clergymen of Buffalo, and especially the Catholics. It was a Catholic matter after all, since most of the scoopers were Irishmen --rough and violent, but faithful sons of their Church. Father Cronin, editor of the "Catholic Union and Times," swung in with Mahany to make that fight for Irish hdnies. Then began a curious strike. The bruisers and toughs of Conners gathered from all the lake ports to harass the union men, to "persuade" their leaders, and to defend the strikebreakers, mainly Poles, Italians, and negroes, whom Conners --all his fighting blood up by this time rushed in from New York and Chicago. Both sides did violence, but the nonunion men most of all. Three times the Conners heelers cleaned out and demolished saloons in which the union men gathered every night some striker or other was beaten up or thrown into the canal. That Connors sanctioned all these acts, so harmful to his cause, is improbable. He had too much practical sense for that. He was working through toughs, and they had to have their sport now and then. The union men fought back. They killed a nephew of James Kennedy, the ally of Conners in the dock work. Mahany has always declared that this was a little mistake on the part of his own crowd. He had warned James Kennedy, on penalty of death, not to cross the line into the First Ward. The union men, taking young Kennedy for his uncle, killed him for the name.

Conners made representations and promises to the parish priests who supported the strikers. He did not fulfill them; it became plain that he was only playing for time. The Protestant clergymen backed with enthusiasm the Catholics; it seemed that all the moral force of Buffalo was fighting with the strikers. And at last, when it became certain that Fingy Conners had no intention of reforming his system, Father Cronin sprang his grand coup. The union leaders called a meeting of the strikers and their fellow dock workmen in St. Bridget's Hall. The meeting was as turbulent as one might expect. They are big, rude, fighting men, these dock laborers; it is hard to get a hundred of them together without some kind of a fight; and Father Cronin had nearly a thousand. Father Cronin spoke first, telling them plainly what the Church must think of that system. "The diamonds he wears," he said, "are crystallized tears of your women."

When he had finished, a commotion of cheering started at the back of the hall, and another man in clericals pushed his way to the platform. The strikers rose in a body when they saw who it was --Bishop Quigley, then head of the diocese, now Archbishop of Chicago. The men remained standing as he faced them and, in a clear, dispassionate address, set the situation before them. He finished by advising them --and such advice from him was equivalent to a demand --never to work for Conners again until he had utterly given over the grain business.

That episode, unique, I think, in time history of American labor troubles, beat Fingy Conners. Every one in Buffalo knew that, and the grain-carrying companies best of all. They had supported him in a halfhearted fashion. Now they withdrew their support and took the business out of his hands. A committee of citizens, headed by the Bishop, met with the carrying companies and arranged a new system --a return to the conditions which prevailed before the advent of Conners, but minus the boss scooper and his saloon.

## **Free with the Revolvers**

THE bulldog Conners did not acknowledge defeat at once. No more did his henchmen. For weeks they ranged the docks, making trouble. A month after the strike a gang of them exchanged insults and bricks with some union ore-handlers, who were unloading the steamer Mather. The Conners thugs, beaten off with chunks of ore, went to a scooper saloon, gathered their comrades, and returned to the vessel. The union gang was working far down in the hold of the Mather. The Conners men made a rush; Dave Nugent, Conners's nephew-in-law, put a pistol at the head of the captain and threatened to blow out his brains if he gave an alarm; the heelers drew their revolvers and fired at will into the hold. It was dark down there; that and a miracle saved the lives of the ore-handlers. But three were wounded --one crippled for life. For this little prank several Conners followers suffered the fearful penalty of a \$250 fine.

Conners, nursing the sullen resentment of an animal which has been beaten in a fight, visited the First Ward to put a period to the strike. He had his gang at his back. Down the street came a Pole, a union leader among his countrymen. Conners called to him; the Pole, thinking that this was the invitation for a parley, approached. Conners was carrying a heavy, crooked cane. He hooked the crook about the Pole's neck, jerked him over close, and split his scalp with two blows of the staff.

These ruthless, primitive fighters lose hard; it was a year before Conners acknowledged himself beaten; and the next stage of his fight showed his audacity --it took a Conners to conceive it. He went to Montreal, at the head of the canal system, and tried to arrange with the city authorities to build grain elevators there, so diverting the oceanic grain traffic from Buffalo --his own city, his own country. Through a year of bickerings and plots, he fought for this project, and lost in the end. Those who know the inside of this deal say that he lost more through a series of accidents than through the honesty of the Canadian officials. But lose he did; and Mahany had made good his boast.

So much for the business career of Conners. Of course, this is only the main thread. He had whirled at many things ice manufacture, brewing, street railways, stocks --but his freight business is the backbone of his fortunes; and his tactics in advancing that business are typical of all his methods.

Early in his active life Fingy Conners crossed lines with another man who had business with the lake carrying trade, and whose career in politics was a replica in silk of what, Conners's career had been in fustian. One likes to think, for the picturesqueness of the idea, that Fingy Conners received the first impulse of his political ambition from Mark Hanna. Certainly Hanna has been the model of his later career, the man whom he quotes openly and whom he must admire secretly; and certainly, at about the time when he met Hanna, one finds in him the dawn of a political ambition too large for the confines of the First Ward. He had been always in politics of a sort; ward politics had been inextricably mixed with his business ventures. For value received, he used to send his henchmen from his saloons to fight the battles of the Republican machine --he has been twice a Republican and twice a Democrat. In 1882 he ran for Alderman on the Republican ticket, was quite handily beaten, and settled back to be a boss instead of a candidate. In the early nineties he switched his allegiance and lent his forces to the Democrat. Their first job was to punch Jack White, the perpetual Republican candidate in the ward, out of politics.

## **Losing His Ward**

WHEN his larger ambition dawned, he took less and less interest in his own ward, He hung about the uptown haunts of the politicians; he became a figure in the barroom of the Iroquois Hotel, where his talents as a mixer and his naive toughness got him friends and attention of a sort. The ward was slipping away from him; after the episode of the grain strike he lost it entirely. Now, when he ventures down there to look after his clock business, they throw bricks at him and turn washwater over his automobile.

Alderman John P. Sullivan, recognized Democratic boss of the ward, rules largely through his sworn hatred for Conners. Perhaps Conners permits this situation to be, simply because he will not expend the energy needed to change it. "Put Sullivan and Conners in a closed room," says an observer of life in Buffalo, "and

Sullivan would jockey rings around him. But when he had done it, Conners would rise up and throw him out of the window."

And Conners saw, likely enough, that the saloonkeeper, king in small-ward politics, is less than a serf in national affairs. He pulled gradually out of the saloon business. The old establishment changed its sign from "William J. Conners" to "Nugent's Hotel," and then to "Hurley's Hotel." Learning slowly, but always learning, he took on certain appurtenances of respectability. The ward saw him travel from cowhide boots to brogans, from brogans to kid shoes, from kid shoes to spats. He tried, with some success, to shake off that tough accent into which he lapses, nowadays, only when he is joking or when he is stirred. From the first time that the newspapers noticed and denounced him, he conceived a strong idea of the press as a power. So, in the middle nineties, he looked about for a newspaper. "It's to leave to me lads," he said to one friend. "Everybody roasts me; now I wants to heat a pan," he said to another. In 1895 he bought the Buffalo "Enquirer," an evening paper. Two years later he added the "Morning Courier."

### **The Floating Boss**

HE WAS still a floating boss, Democratic or Republican, as it suited him and his interests. In the early years of his social rise he backed a Democratic candidate with one of his papers and his Republican opponent with the other. "I plays hot' ends, an' I'm time middle and I can't lose. See!" he said. In the first McKinley campaign, he was a Republican in national politics. Shortly after that he shifted to the Democratic Party, where he rested; where, it is to be presumed, he will rest. He went out after larger game at once; he fought for position and power as he used to fight on the docks ruthlessly, powerfully, with his eye solely on the object and with no consideration of the means. When, in the home councils of his party, Fingy Conners took the plat form and swept his lordly eye over the cowed and beaten Democrats under him, he was only a logical evolution from the old Fingy Conners in his Ohio Basin saloon --ready, at the first sign of opposition, to vault over the bar and restore discipline with fist or bottle or bung-starter. He bullied his way to the front in his own county until Tammany saw him and perceived his uses to Charlie Murphy. By processes which run with the complexities of New York politics, he came to be State chairman; came at last to that night when he sat in his hotel room, having disrupted the Democratic Party in his own State, and smiled stoically on the enraged McCarren men shaking their fists under his nose, and asked them what they were going to do about it, anyhow.

The social rise of Fingy Conners will live in Buffalo tradition. When he moved out of the ward he bought the Goodyear house in the suburbs, and improved it after his own fashion. The center of composition in his landscape garden was the word "Conners" spelled out in white rocks on the lawn. A general of Buffalo society, passing in her carriage, inspected it through her lorgnettes. "Is this a railway station?" she asked. He moved, later, into Delaware Avenue, the Fifth Avenue of Buffalo. It was a social sensation, this remove of Conners. At about that period a streetcar company made a raid on Delaware Avenue. Just at midnight the racket of two hundred picks, forty sledgehammers, and a traction engine burst upon the sleep of wealth and respectability. The mistress of one house woke her husband: "What (do you suppose it can be?" The husband turned over: "Either one of Jack's poker parties breaking up or Fingy Conners moving in." Two months later some one saw Fingy Conners at Johnny Wood's saloon, taking a morning drink and confiding in the bartender. "Gee, Pete, dose Delaware Avenue folks is clannish!" he said. Once He presented his newspaper pass to the conductor of an Erie train. This person did not look to the conductor like "William T. Conners, proprietor Buffalo 'Courier' and he said so. Conners, heated, roared at him. At the next station the conductor wired to the proper authorities: "Man representing himself as William J. Conners presents Conners's pass. Think he is a fake. Looks like a prizefighter and talks like a tough." Back came the answer: "That's him." The following is the classic story of Conners: He "made" the Buffalo Club. At the next evening entertainment he appeared in a proper dress-suit and shirt, festooned down the front with a set of large diamond studs and a diamond watch-fob. His friends in the club, trying tact, lured him into a haberdasher's, where one bought a simple set of pearl studs, remarking that no gentleman wore jewels in his shirt bosom. "Glims?" said Fingy, catching the point instantly, "I notice that them as has 'em wears 'em." One day, talking over things in general, he fell to boasting, and dropped two bits of Conners wisdom. Speaking of his relations with the Democracy of New York City, He said: "I fixes it up for 'em so it looks like the little w'ite mice wot runs out of your sleeve an', Wen they grabs for 'em, runs in again, an' I gits 'em wen they grabs." Also: "So help me Gawd, there ain't nuttin' can come between me an' Charlie Murphy. They don't make nuttin' as thin as that."

## His Face or Power

THESE may all be mere tradition and embroidery, like the stories about Lincoln; but each one serves to show some aspect of the man. He is now fifty-one years old. No man whom I have ever met looks more what he is. His full head of bristling, wiry hair, black in his youth, is quite gray. The face underneath is solid and hard and tough beyond description --broad, overloaded with muscle rather than fat or puffy, reddish brown from the descending circulation of that full blood which fed his mighty young thews. His short, hooked nose, fine at the point, broad at the wings, sticks out from the plane of his face at a most aggressive angle. His chin is round, solid, and deeply dented. His heavy eyebrows are set high up above the eyes; and in the intervening space occurs a pad of fat which rolls over the eyeball, covering completely the upper lid. But for this pad, his Irish, violet-blue eyes would seem large; as it is, they appear small and shrewd. His mouth, in repose, is wide, thin-lipped, tight shut, and turned down at the corners a snapping-turtle mouth. When he is roused, when he opens it to roar, it gapes as round and menacing as the muzzle of a cannon, to show the short, scrubby teeth of the fighting man. He dresses rather well in these days; he has passed from the era of diamonds to the era of London fabrics. When He tries to 'throw a front,' his accent is passable, although his grammar stumbles, and he betrays himself by ignorant handling of long words. In his correct and proper moments, for example, he is likely to say "carefulness" when He means "care." But get him excited especially, rouse the fight in him --and the old, tough dock-scrapper conies bobbing to the surface. I had talked with him an hour about his business, and he had done passably well. Suddenly I suggested that my published opinion of Conners might not agree with his own. His mouth flew open, his short neck craned forward, and this came out:

"Say anyt'in' about Conners but nuttin'! W'en you say Conners it means somet'in' or you wouldn't say it! See!"

He has risen from a cabin boy, son of a small saloonkeeper, to his million dollars and his dominance in State politics. Where lies his secret? It could not have been luck; the rise has been too steady. It could hardly have been exceptional shrewdness. In some of his business deals, notably, the ice combination with Charlie Murphy, lately exposed by Jerome, and the Hamburg Boulevard deal, he has figured as a high-class, unscrupulous "come-on." Basically, I think, it is that heroic faculty, that king-quality, so indefinable and so powerful over men. Beyond that, it is his ruthless fighting force. There are no rules in his fighting, any more than there used to be in his slugging days on the Buffalo docks, unless it be the bull-rule --rush and gore and never go back.

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