Joseph Mickle Fox (1853–1918) of Philadelphia was a graduate of Haverford College and a member of the Philadelphia Bar. In 1880, he became responsible for the management and development of large tracts of land in Clarion County, land that had been purchased by his great-grandfather in the 1790’s. His interest in this region, and the example of his grandfather, whose name was also Joseph Mickle Fox and who represented the area as a state senator in 1829–1830, encouraged him to run for Congress on the Clarion County Democratic ticket in 1894.

Mr. Fox was successful in the primary, defeating George F. Kribbs, a seasoned politician and the incumbent Congressman for the District, by a vote of 1,851 to 1,474. The Congressional District, however, was composed of Centre and Elk Counties as well as Clarion, and following the primaries a convention was held at Ridgway to determine which one of the successful county candidates should be selected. According to the Clarion Jacksonian of October 18, 1894, Mr. Fox could have had the nomination had he agreed to pay the traveling expenses of the Clarion County boss. When he refused to do this, as it was anticipated he would, Aaron Williams of Centre County was chosen instead. Clippings relating to this episode were preserved by Mr. Fox in a scrapbook, now in my possession.
Underneath them he wrote: "The facts of above are that J. K. P. Hall controlled the convention. It was diplomatically hinted to me that I could have the nomination if I would pay Hall’s expenses. The amount I did not inquire. Whether Williams paid them or not I do not know." Subsequently, in 1898, Mr. Fox recorded his political experience in a narrative which he termed "An Unsuccessful Effort." The real names of people mentioned in the account are not given, including that of the author himself, who is disguised under the name of L. P. Mickle.

An Unsuccessful Effort

On the advantages or disadvantages, the merits or demerits of universal suffrage, there may be honest difference of opinion; but among those who have even a faint knowledge of what comes from it there can be no difference of opinion as to its abuse. I learned some of its evils in a very short and entirely unsuccessful effort in political life, when, and immediately after, I announced myself as a candidate for Congress. My experience was confined to narrow local limits, but it was in a District where the intelligence of the voters is probably higher than in the average Districts of these United States, and, as human nature does not vary in different localities, it may be fair to assume that much the same political methods are employed elsewhere as in my County, and that resort is had in other localities to the same arguments which are used there to influence the voter. My experience was to me, at least, interesting; it was sometimes disagreeable, but more often amusing and, as possibly others may be as ignorant as I then was of what is known as practical politics, I give it from the beginning, with the knowledge I acquired, as it gradually unfolded itself to me.

I came forward as a candidate with much diffidence, as I had never taken an active part in the struggles of my party, and I had but a small personal acquaintance in my County. Of the principles of
politics, or of political economy, or statecraft, I knew no more than one of ordinary education. I was in all ways untried, and I felt that it might be considered presumptuous in me to attempt to gain an office so high. Later, I found that my feelings in these respects, at least as far as the public was concerned, were unnecessarily sensitive, and that the fitness or unfitness of the candidate for the desired office is but little taken into consideration, the only question being, can he succeed in getting the votes? In my ignorance of these later learned facts, I began to brush up my history and to study the questions of the day with some care. This, for my purpose, was unnecessary and useless, the methods of the practical politician were to be my only lesson.

The first step is to send a card called an “announcement” to a newspaper. It simply mentions the office sought, the name of the candidate, and his place of residence. This, by a local party rule, is obligatory on all candidates who are to be balloted for at the primaries, and in this particular year two candidates “announced” for Congress—I and another. The successful candidate in this contest would only gain the right to represent his party in his County, and would not necessarily become his party’s nominee for Congress in the Congressional District which was composed of several Counties, so this first, or primary election, was simply a local and party affair and was confined to those of my political persuasion. So, with blind ignorance of what was before me, and with only a general knowledge that a personal canvass of the County would be necessary, I sent my announcement to the newspaper, and found myself in this small political arena. My first diplomatic step was to get the names and addresses of some of the more prominent and influential members of my party and, as an acknowledgment of their influence and to place my name before them, I mailed each of them a mimeographed letter which, to an uneducated eye, looked as if it were personally written; of these I sent about seventy. They simply stated that I had come forward as a candidate, that I hoped to make a personal call on them during my canvass and asked them to consider me an applicant for the nomination.

I began my personal canvass by paying a few visits in my neighborhood. I had looked forward to this necessary visiting with much apprehension, for although I had been told by many who had gone
through with it that it was most interesting and even exciting, as, in fact, I later found it to be, yet I much dreaded it because it meant a personal visit to each voter of my party in the County, or to as many as I could reach in the weeks intervening before the Primary election, and I imagined that I should be considered by those I visited as coming to ask a personal favor and looked upon and treated much as if I was a peddler trying to dispose of his wares. These doubts, however, were not justified by later experience, for, to my surprise, I soon found that almost without exception the people were pleased to meet a candidate. They might anathematize his party, blame the President or rail at Congress and Congressmen in general, but the candidate himself is treated with a singularly tender toleration. To the farmers who formed probably the majority of those I called on, the visit seemed to be particularly agreeable, as it gave them a legitimate excuse for a little rest and a chance to hear and talk about the doings and gossip of their neighborhood; but, in fact, by all it was expected and apparently desired, and many considered it as a personal insult if a candidate was reported to have been in their vicinity who failed to visit them. The feeling of many of the voters as to this visit is summed up in an expression I often heard: "If a vote is not worth coming for, it is not worth having." This system however much abused and however wearisome to the candidate has, nevertheless, its one point of merit, for by this personal communication the candidate can, better than in any other manner, become fully acquainted with the wants, needs, and feelings of the people he desires to represent. To one well known, or of recognized ability, there is not the same necessity for a close canvass, although the omission of complimentary calls would lose him votes in case of a contest.

With no little trepidation therefore, I started on my personal canvass and did my first full day's work in my new and untried undertaking, taking with me a guide thoroughly acquainted with the roads and the political proclivities of the inhabitants of the section of the County that I intended that day to visit. The procedure was very simple and consisted of driving from one house to another, presenting my card to each voter and having a few minutes conversation with him, and then on to the next; and, strange as it may sound, I found it interesting from the beginning, though for a time the fear of my
reception made me feel horribly ill at ease. This, however, wore off
as I became more accustomed to the work, while the interest, and,
indeed, excitement increased rather than diminished, and, as the day
of the election drew more near, my sensations were more like those
experienced in hunting than anything I can compare them to, the
first object being to flush the game in the person of any voter belong-
ing to my party or whose vote might be considered doubtful in, and
then to capture it, and I think the capturing or gaining the vote was
what gave to the pursuit such absorbing interest. One of my many
guides, and a delightful old Dutchman he was, seemed to consider
that each man I interviewed meant a vote for me, and when he came
across two men together he would, with great pride, tell me "we got
a couple that time," and so whenever I got two or more at one shot,
so to speak, I felt that I had been fortunate. To succeed in his object,
in this pursuit of men, one should have many sides, as he must
meet, and his object is to leave a good impression upon, all sorts and
conditions of men.

Each canvasser has his own methods, which probably he considers
to be efficacious. Mine, at first at least, were very crude and I doubt
that they ever became sufficiently genial and easy to merit com-
mandation. The visits average possibly three minutes to each voter,
and the applicant spends them in attempting to show himself in as
agreeable and strong a light as possible. It is by no means uncus-
tomary to ask and to attempt to get a promise of a vote. This I
never did for, though the promise under the pressure of personal
solicitation might be given, it might also be broken and, apart from a
dislike to ask a personal favor from several thousand men, I did not
think that to ask a pledge was good policy. I, however, often enough
came as near to it as I prudently could, one of my set phrases being
that "I was not doing this entirely for my health, but I was not
going to ask him to vote for me, because I know he was going to use
his own good judgment anyhow, but that, if he saw fit to remember
me, that I should be entirely satisfied." Vilifying an opponent is a
favorite method of canvassing—this again, I think is bad policy;
though when one knows it will please a hearer it is, and often was
to me, somewhat of a temptation. In my first few days "out" I at-
tempted to go into political questions, but this I soon found to be
worse than useless, as I met few but those of my own party and
they, as a rule, were ignorant of all but the crudities of politics, although many of them had views which were generally impracticable, but which, however, I of course agreed to, as far as I conscientiously could. I very early found that it was not well to air my own opinions which might conflict with theirs, so my efforts were directed toward making as good a personal impression as possible—and especially I attempted to get away from my interview with the voter when he was in a good humor.

The opening of an interview seemed to me to be a matter of some slight consequence and sometimes of difficulty; a quick judgment in shaping it and a knowledge of men would, I think, be of great benefit to the politician. My interviews were universally commonplace, but each had its own different style of attack. I always thought that my opening was rather happy when I found a man building a fence, which I frequently did in that season; our conversation might then run in this way. I approach him and hand him my card which reads "For Congress, L. P. Mickle, of B. Township, subject to decision of County Convention—Primaries, Saturday July third." I remarked (engagingly) "I see you are at your fence, I am building fences too, though of a somewhat different kind." He (studying the card attentively): "Hum." I: "You are having good weather for your work, looks a bit like rain, though." He (still at the card which he holds between his thumb and forefinger that it may not get dirty): "Hum." I: "Where did you get such good posts, I would like to have some like them on my farm." He: "You farm, do you?" I: "Yes, a little, but I am afraid my farm is running down while I am out looking for votes." He: "What is this, I can't make it out without my specs." I: "O, I am running for Congress and I am going around to look up all the good men that believe as I do and I was told that you were one, so I came to call on you." He: "Hum." I: "Well, good day, glad to have found you at home. I am sorry to find that Mr. M. (his nearest neighbor) has gone away, would you mind giving him one of my cards and telling him how sorry I am to have missed him?" He: "What's your hurry, sit down a bit." I sit down. He (again studying card, which he cannot read): "Let's see, your the man that's running against Leap ain't you?" I: "Yes we are in the race together." He: "He was around here the other day but I didn't get to see him at all." I (with much surprise): "What, didn't he call on you?" He: "No,
and I was at home too." I: "Well I am trying to see as many as I can and wanted to call on you but I must be going so good-bye." He: "What's your hurry." I: "I have a good many miles to go before my dinner, and I guess yours must be about ready, good-bye." He, after inviting me to have something with him, says good-bye and I leave him studying my card. And this with countless variations is the substance of a thousand such conversations and the result of a thousand such visits.

My most painful interviews were with those who knew or who thought they knew something about politics, and who questioned me as to what my views were on various subjects, and this was especially disagreeable when there were auditors present, as any point I might take would in all probability offend someone. My interviews on these occasions were exceedingly brief. I remember once being obliged to fly; it was at a dinner at a country tavern where I was attacked and routed by one who differed from me in all points possible, whose knowledge was at least equal to mine, and whose wit was more ready. I found that I was rapidly loosing favor and keeping my hottest shot and most forcible argument to the last, I delivered it as I rose from the table without waiting for his rejoinder, or the inevitable after-course of pie.

The cards, one of which I gave to my friend the fence-maker, play an important part in a campaign, they have for the ignorant voter a great and inexplicable significance and are a prime necessity to the
canvasser. I was told that I must have some, and when I first went to the printer to order them I mentally debated whether it would be better to have three or five hundred. I asked him what was the customary number, and was told that seldom fewer than two and often as many as ten thousand were ordered. I then ordered what I considered to be an extravagant quantity, five thousand; later, I needed and used five thousand more. These cards in the first place serve as an introduction, and also through them the canvasser may be remembered; they are sent by hand to anyone who cannot personally be seen. They are in fact used as advertisements, much I suppose as other advertisements are used. If a candidate goes into a country store he lays some on the counter, where he may find some of his opponents and of those running for other offices. When he spends a night at a hotel, he places some on the desk and inserts one in the edge of a looking glass or a picture frame, anywhere, in fact, where it is likely to catch the eye. There is strangely little originality about them. They are generally white and entirely plain, though I have seen in more than one instance the photograph of the candidate on his card, and one who so advertised himself told me that he never passed a school house when the children were at recess without distributing them. One candidate, who was running for a County office, whose cards I frequently came across in my journeys had them of different colors, red, white and blue; the different colors had some significance to him which he explained to me, but which I now forget, but he used them in some way to introduce himself to the people he approached with some joke on each. Anyone who will undertake to distribute cards, or who asks for some to distribute is gladly given any quantity. In one instance, where a circus was to be held in the evening in a small village that I passed through during the day, I gave a well wisher the price of admission to the circus with some of my cards, with the request that he would distribute them among any of his friends who might come to it. This, I have no doubt, he did, but whether by this piece of diplomacy I gained any votes, I will never know, but it is a fair example of the indispensable card.

At the close of my first day's canvassing, which was a full one, I had been away from my home twelve hours, had interviewed seventy-three voters of my party, and had called on nine who were away from home. I had driven thirty miles and my expenses had been one
dollar and a quarter, which paid for dinner for myself, my guide, my driver, and two horses. On the following day, I was in a more thinly populated district. I was out eleven hours, saw thirty-three voters, called on three not at home, and drove twenty-seven miles. On this day I had an unfortunate experience as I was attacked and had my trousers torn by a dog. It was unfortunate in that it gave me a disagreeable sensation in approaching a house. My sensations, however, were the only further trouble I had from this cause, though in one case I was warned against a cross dog at a house, which, as its owner was politically of importance, I was obliged to visit. I approached that house with so much judgment that when the dog appeared, which he promptly did, I was on the top of a pile of boards and calling for his master, who soon appeared. I have often wondered what would have happened if the master had been away from home, or if my cries had not been heard.

During my canvass, there were many more or less amusing incidents, and as I accosted nearly every man I met, especially in the thinly settled districts, although he might be unknown to me and my guide, it seemed to me surprising that there were so few that were disagreeable. Once I came across a man plowing. I handed him one of my cards, and at some lengths proceeded to show him my eminent fitness for the office I sought and indirectly insinuated that the county would be in a pretty bad way if I was not sent to Congress, when he bawled out “I am only twenty years old, and I vote the other way anyhow.” Once, without a guide to direct me to the proper houses, I knocked at a door, which was opened by a woman. I asked her if I could find a good voter belonging to my party in the house, and was much delighted with her answer—she told me “no,” but that I could find a good widow of the other party; she was so pleased with her little joke and in fact so jolly that I paid that good widow a somewhat longer visit than I ordinarily gave to the good voters, and I think I made such a good impression on her that she would have voted for me if my state had adopted woman suffrage. On another occasion, the man of the house was not at home when I called, but the woman who opened the door looked to be fully able to manage the average man, so I remarked “you cannot vote, but I have no doubt that you control a vote.” She answered somewhat emphatically “you bet I do,” so I interviewed her.
This feeling of having left a good impression is rather an ordinary one with the canvasser. He is very apt to think that pretty much everyone interviewed by him, will vote for him; for, as I have said, the people are very tender to the applicant, they give him what encouragement they can, and very rarely, although they may have decided to do so, do they tell him that they propose to vote for his opponent. Probably this is the reason why every candidate feels certain of success. Occasionally, in my travels, I found some scorn for my errand when, through ignorance, I called at a house where one of different political faith from mine lived, but generally they, like my friend the widow, were amused at my mistake and willingly directed me to the houses of their neighbors, and gave me information as to their political leanings. I have been told by one who made a personal canvass at the time that immediately after the war such mistakes were then often provocative of bad feeling.

Why the canvasser is tolerated and his visits desired by the voters, I cannot understand, especially as there are often many candidates for the same office. Once, in my County, there were nine men soliciting votes for the office of County Treasurer, and how anyone could with patience have been called on and interviewed by all of them passes my comprehension. The movements of others on a like errand, for others were canvassing for County offices at the same time, were of much interest to me. Occasionally I would find myself following, maybe for a couple of days, the route of a candidate. It was readily recognized, blazed, as it were, by his cards. If I was within a few hours of him, I would see them in a man’s hat, or maybe fastened to his plough. If he was a day or so ahead of me, they would be in the voter’s pocket or more often over his mantlepiece. Then I would lose all trace of him and find myself following another.

Often, I was requested more or less openly to give some information or opinion of one who had preceded me and, according to the etiquette of the business, my answers were never uncomplimentary and always noncommittal. It is not improper to disparage an opponent or to sing one’s own praises, but it is improper, maybe because it is impolitic to take a stand either for or against any candidate for another office. It was very amusing to me to notice the different tactics of the various candidates as they interviewed the voters. One would immediately come down to serious business and
announce that he considered that it was quite time that there should be more legislation in favor of the workman, that they should be more considerate, etc., etc. Another would talk on any subject than the one that brought him there. Another would wait until he thought that he might safely venture and then begin a tirade against his opponent; of course, one and all would, when possible, and I imagine sometimes when impossible, agree with any voter on any conceivable point. One candidate for the State Assembly delighted me for a whole evening. We met at the inn of a little village where we were to spend the night, and, as usual, the population turned out to see the candidates. We all sat in a little sitting room and listened to his stories, which came unceasingly, one after another, all good and all interspersed with some opinion which he thought might appeal to his auditors. He would announce, for example, that he had come along a bad bit of road that day and give some good story of what happened to him and would then state that he considered it an outrage that the Legislature would do nothing for the farmer in the way of road making; then would follow maybe a good story about some incident in building a house, in which he would incidentally tell his hearers that the laboring man was the mud sill of the whole social fabric. For my future guidance, I watched the impression he made on his audience, some he carried with him but others did not approve of his levity.

A horse and wagon, which the candidate himself drives, is the recognized and, indeed, the only method of going through the County. If he were a good pedestrian and went on foot, I think he would gain many votes. A bicycle would probably be bad policy, as it might be considered too trifling. He may, and often has, someone with him whom he picks up from place to place to show him the roads and point out the houses where dwell the voters of his party, and as they drive together this guide should give him valuable information as to the person next to be visited and should tell him of any particular prejudices he might have, whether he had influence, and whether much or little time should be given him. On such small matters do votes depend that even the choice of a guide is a matter of importance; he should not be in any way a politician, for such a man would have political enemies; he should be personally popular and the more negative his character the better. One who acted for a day for me in this capacity, and he knew his business, would occa-
sionally tell me that I had better go alone to this or that house, that he would walk past it and meet me on the other side, as he was not on good terms with its inmates, and if he were seen with me it might injure me. One day I noticed that my driver seemed to have an unaccountable thirst, and that at many houses he went to the kitchen to get a drink of water, while I interviewed the proprietor on the porch. I found that my guide had prompted him to this as he was of the same church as the household and that he went back hoping, on this account, to be able to influence the women in my favor. Such minor matters as these make or lose a vote, and must not be disregarded.

The whole canvass, from start to finish, is a game of coarse diplomacy, and it is this, I think, which gives it its great interest. In one way, at least, I was most impolitic as I had a pair of horses and a man to drive them. This departure from custom was much criticized and no doubt lost me some votes; it had its compensations, however, for I could cover more ground and do much more work than if I drove myself and I was spared the fatigue of which I had been warned as being a necessary concomitant to a canvass. The work is, however, hard on man and beast. One candidate I saw hitching his horse in the morning as he was going to pay a visit—"he needs hitching in the morning," he remarked to me, "but by evening I have no need of the halter." The personal habits of the candidate are most carefully noted. His clothes should not be new nor too neat. They should be somewhat worn though not shabby. Anything unusual must be strictly avoided. My smoking cigarettes was bitterly and possibly justly assailed. The hat I wore was an object of ridicule. Once, I committed the error of driving into a town wearing a pair of gloves. I wore them simply because my hands were cold, but for this I was criticized. In fact, any slightest deviation from the ordinary everyday life of the people is taken hold of and advanced as being a sufficient reason to vote for one's opponent. Its having anything whatever to do with any fitness or unfitness for the office sought does not at all enter into the question. One custom well-nigh universal among the candidates, and one which cannot be too much deprecated or too strongly criticized, is treating to cigars and drinks. I do not mean treating as an occasion may offer itself, but universally giving to each one interviewed a cigar or drink.
The cigars are probably more harmful only because they are more universal, and the extent to which this habit is carried, in plain language, constitutes bribery, though it is so universal that it has unfortunately by usage degenerated into a custom and a candidate must, in certain localities at least, expect to lose votes unless he conforms to it. An example will illustrate the length to which this is carried. My informant, then a candidate in a closely contested campaign for a County office, was in a mining region and got up early in the morning to interview the colliers before they went into the mines. For this purpose, supplied with a box of cigars, he took his stand on a bridge over which the miners would pass. He said “it was raining like the dickens, but by good luck I had an umbrella. I took my place at the end of the bridge, and no sooner had I got there than I saw Wilkins (his opponent) coming with his cigars and umbrella. He took the other end of the bridge. A little after here comes Burns (a candidate for another office) with his cigars.” So here were these three men “electioneering,” the process being superbly simple, consisting in each one giving each passer-by a cigar with the inevitable card.

It is a well-settled rule that a candidate should stop wherever and as often as he passes a tavern, as he may meet some there whom he otherwise would not see, and then he is expected to treat whoever may be there, and often he leaves money at the bar with instructions to treat future comers on his account. The habit in this locality where, as I have said, the intelligence of the people is not low, is well nigh universal. All of those who canvassed the County when I did, with one exception, followed it, and he stopped only at treating to drinks— as to cigars he was as others. It exists without protest and entails no disgrace on either giver or taker; why it is tolerated, I cannot understand. In my State there is a very stringently worded law against any form of bribery in one running for a State office, and before entering on the duties of his office the successful man must take an oath that by him it has not been violated. It would seem probable that in the ill feelings engendered by a political contest that the question of the legality of such methods would have been tested by an unsuccessful opponent; if it has been done, I do not know of it, but under the law of my State I believe that any unprejudiced jury could not but convict any candidate so acting of bribery and prevent
his taking the office to which he had been elected. As to the one re-
ceiving the cigars or drinks, I am not so sure; it is true that he re-
ceives a bribe but he takes it as a matter of course and as an expres-
sion of good will, but does not thereby make any pledge or promise,
but as to the intention of the giver, there can be no doubt.

Also money plays its part in a canvass. Its use is, of course, secret
and that its use is restricted is probably on account of the expense,
but from the number of times I was approached, more or less indi-
rectly, I cannot readily imagine that it might and often does have a
very direct influence on the results of an election. The ordinary
method of approach is by the request of a loan. My first experience
in this was from a man who entered into conversation with me on a
railroad car and who told me that he had two brothers and a father
who would vote as he did. He was very moderate and only desired a
dollar for a few days; I regretted that I could not spare it, then half
a dollar would suffice it and finally a quarter would help him, but
I fear I lost his vote and those of his father and two brothers. Now
this man, as I found out later, was a bricklayer, going to begin a piece
of contract and not without money and probably of ordinary hon-
esty. His demand simply illustrates the custom. This twenty-five
cents was the lowest demand made of me; the highest, if I remember
rightly, was for several thousand dollars. They are universally in the
nature of a request for a loan.

Another method for extortion, and one more difficult to meet, is
adopted by some of more or less influence in their small communities
who profess a warm interest in the success of the candidate, and state
that they have already influenced some voters for him and that they
now want to canvass for him for a few days in a district where they
had much influence, but that unfortunately they will not be able to
do so unless they can get enough money to hire a wagon and pay
their expenses. These men are often of value and some, no doubt,
sincere, but the majority simply want to make something out of the
candidate. Another class still comes after the election to the success-
ful candidate and makes a claim for work done or money expended on
his behalf. Their ways are many, but their object is always the same,
to extort money from the candidate, or, as it is technically termed,
“pull his leg.”

At the time of my effort there were appeals made to the candidates
which were unusual; the miners, whose vote was maybe a fifth of the
total County vote, were on a strike and committees were going about
the County appealing for aid to help them while they were out, and
of course the candidates were not forgotten. An amusing incident
came from my first subscription. I was approached by one who was
empowered to solicit aid for one of their chapters and gave him
something, but, my conscience being very tender as to the use of
money, I gave anonymously. My opponent, as I was told, happened
to give the same amount, and in the meeting at which his subscription
was announced the plea was made on his behalf that his contribution
showed him to be a friend of the working man, and that he ought
therefore to be supported at the election. Possibly thinking that was
unfair, the man to whom I had given my subscription, revealed my
identity, saying that I was the true friend of the working man as my
subscription was evidently from the desire to aid them and not from
political motives. This carried the meeting in my favor. If it had been
foreseen this would have been a fine stroke of policy. It was, how-
ever, a happy accident for which I can claim no credit. To one of the
chapters or associations of these miners, I was told that a subscrip-
tion was made in my name of a very small amount. If it was done, it
was by someone who wished my defeat, and who expected that the
amount from its smallness, would tend to show my lack of sympathy
with the strikers and so influence them against me.

Letters are much used to "pull the leg" of a candidate. I still have
some sent me at that time, Mr. Bringle being the most persistent and
skillful in this method of extortion. His first to me enclosed a letter
from a candidate who, years before he had taken through his dis-
trict, had expressed satisfaction with his efforts. Mr. Bringle stated
that it would be to my interest to have him accompany me through
his township, and mentioned what his "expenses" for such services
would be. A week or so later, I visited the town in which he lived, and
from force of circumstances was obliged to have him take me to the
houses of voters there. For this I paid him liberally, but I was in-
formed that he said later that it was not enough to pay for his shoe
leather. Shortly after, I received another communication from him,
enclosing a list of voters who, he told me, "have to be put in shape to
vote," and stating that whatever I sent him would be used for legiti-
mate expenses. "Kindly reply before Saturday," he wrote, "but if
you wish to arrange looking after your interest with anyone else cer-
tainly use your pleasure." After this, Mr. Bringle seems to have
written no more to me, but to have turned his attention to my agent. He wrote to him, “I want to see Mickle get a good vote by all means, and will use every endeavor to bring about that result, but should have some stuff. I shall wait until Wednesday evening for a favorable reply.” The day before the election, Mr. Bringle, apparently not having had the “favorable reply” and yet with hope, telegraphed to my agent an urgent request that he should come to see him. A few days after the election, I received a bill which is not yet receipted. It was apparently from a livery stable, and the items were: “Team and buggy used by J. Bringle distributing cards of Mr. Mickle $3.00. Miscellaneous expenses $7.25—$10.25. The handwriting on this bill was that of Mr. John Bringle.

Another wrote me, “Dear Sir: I can get ten or fifteen votes for you if you can make it worth my while to bother.” Another says: “I will try and do all I can for you in Trassen Borough, but as a rule there is almost always something sent here to work on.” Another suggests: “It will take something to get the vote out, if you want this end of the Township, you will have to send sugar.” Another advises me to come to his locality, but in case I cannot says: “Anything you will send me to get the whole vote out, I will use to the best advantage to benefit you and your cause.” Still another writes: “I would just say to you if you will send me a check or something to work on, I can make it interesting for you.” From the handwriting of another communication I think a woman took some interest in politics at that time, for I was informed that the writer, whose initials only were given, had been working earnestly for me and desired me to take some chances in some fancy article. A lady wrote to me that she was soliciting chances for a dinner set, and said “no doubt you remember meeting me in your campaign.” I am not ungallant, but I failed to recall my meeting with my fair petitioner. Here is perhaps the most amusing communication of all: “Mr. Mickle, Dear Sir: I am a candidate for a bicycle, a few boys are running, and the one that has sent the most money by the Fourth of July gets the bicycle. Dear Sir: If you could give me a lift, it would be kindly appreciated and not soon forgotten. I will haul Papa to the election and have him vote right. Yours truly, Allie, son of P. L. Smithers.” There is no doubt in my mind that “Allie, son of P. L. Smithers” has by this time turned out to be a most capable politician, and probably has a few votes at
his command, which he sells to the highest bidder at every election. These letters are simply samples, with the exception of Mr. Bringle's and that of one other, the writers were unknown or forgotten by me, but they serve to show what the moral sense of at least a part of the community is when the question of a vote is before it, and the various more or less skillful means resorted to to "pull the leg of a candidate."

Legitimate election expenses are not heavy, a main item being personal traveling expenses, and as the charges at the country stopping places are very moderate their total is inconsiderable. The cheapest, and not an unusual charge, is "A quarter a piece all round" which means twenty-five cents for each meal for man or beast, and for each bed, horses not included. So my bill, on one occasion, for supper, lodging, and breakfast for myself, two men, and two horses, was three dollars and twenty-five cents. When on leaving, I asked for my reckoning, my host said, "It ought to be three and a quarter, but as there are so many of you, I will make it three." I paid the full amount and maybe secured a vote thereby.

A necessary expense to the candidate is his "Announcement" in the newspaper, then there are his cards, or tickets as they are often called, and possibly a few more trifling items. As a matter of fact, however, a canvass is an expensive thing, although money may not be improperly used. On entering into mine, I was told as a warning that "A candidate must not be mean," and I know one who lost ground by asking the rates of a certain hotel, and for economy's sake going to a boarding house. A pressure, which in ordinary circumstances would not be placed on him, and which it is impossible to always resist, is brought to bear against him in countless ways. My not saving a quarter when I paid my reckoning of three dollars was a small item of expenditure; it was not necessary, though it may have been politically wise. Another, and indeed the greatest, expense to a candidate is "getting out the vote"; this is a very elastic term indeed, but is at least supposed to mean sending wagons to the voters who live far from the polls. These wagons are generally hired from men whose vote and influence may be doubtful, and a higher price is paid for them than would be paid for an equal service at another time. I could not and cannot yet see the advantage of paying for these wagons, as they haul without discrimination anyone who may want to vote, it making no difference for which candidate he intends to
cast his ballot. I objected to doing this because I much preferred that my opponent should hire them and my friends ride in them, but I was overruled by my advisers, and I do not doubt that my wagons carried many men to vote against me. I suppose, however, that his wagons equalized matters.

One main item of my individual expenditure was in circulars, in the form of a letter, printed in some process in a very good imitation of my handwriting. As I went through the county I made a list of the names and addresses of those I saw, and of those I called on without seeing, and a few days before the election I had letters mailed, recalling our interview or regretting that I had missed seeing the one to whom it was addressed. Still another form, which I sent to all of my party not on my list, regretted that I had been unable to call on them. These looked very much like personally written letters and were later a source of some annoyance to me, as many mentioned to me that they had received them, and I was obliged to use all my small stock of diplomacy to find which class of letter had been received. If it was the one recalling the interview, it would have been a serious mistake not to have at least seemed to remember it and him.

A great serious drawback to me at this time was my great inability to remember names and faces. My deficiency in this respect [was such] that more than once I drove miles out of my way to avoid passing through a place which I had before canvassed. When I saw a man approaching, I used to ask my driver if I had met him before, and in a little while, he got in the habit of prompting me. From a roughly kept diary*, I find that I had at the end of my canvass been in my wagon twenty-eight days, and had driven about eight hundred miles. My list shows that I saw fifteen hundred and sixty-two men of my party, and had called at two hundred and fifty-three houses where I had missed seeing the owners. I met many others in groups whose names I could not note and I probably saw more than two thousand of my political faith. The greatest number I saw in any day was one hundred and seventy-five, and the smallest number in a full day's work, thirty. My efforts in my County were successful, and at the primaries I received my County nomination for Congress. Some

*This diary, inscribed on the inside cover "Please return to J. M. Fox, Foxburg, Clarion Co., Pa.," is owned by William Logan Fox.
Fording, Ohio
June 9th, 1844.

Dear Sir,

I called at your house when I was making my canvass through the county, and found you away from home.

I regret that I was unable to have a personal interview with you, and enclose one of my cards, with the hope that I shall in the future have the pleasure of meeting you.

Very truly yours,

J. M. Fox
Forland, Blairite, Pa.
June 9th, 94,

Dear Sir,

You may have seen my name "announced" as a candidate for the Congressional nomination from this county.

I have attempted to see personally each Democratic vote of the county, but there are some districts which I have been unable to reach, and I fear some notice that I have not been able to call on in parts where I have been.

I regret that I have not had the pleasure of calling on you, but I send one of my cards with the hope that you will consider my name when you cast your vote on June sixteenth. - Very truly, yours, J.M. Fox.
weeks later, the District Convention was held, where I went with three conferees to represent me and met the candidates from the other Counties, each with his conferee. These conferees together nominated a candidate for the District who represented the party in the general election in November. Another was chosen in this Convention, and my brief political experience was ended.

This slight experience gave me an insight, and not a very agreeable one, in the field of practical politics, the morality of which is as far below that of business, as is business below personal morality. There is no possible doubt that the great majority of the people desire to cast their votes intelligently, and do cast them honestly, but there is also no doubt that a large proportion of the people cast them neither intelligently nor honestly, and it is to this class that the politician often appeals either directly or through others. And it is this class that may, and, no doubt, frequently does, effect the result of an election. The evil is greater maybe than the layman is aware of, or the politician will acknowledge, but it is apparent to all that there is an evil, and it is known to many that the evil is great.