



"OUCH!" SAID BROTHER RIPLEY

The Theta Theta Chapter of the Sigma Chi elected Grover Cleveland an honorary member of the fraternity when the president visited Ann Arbor to address the student body of the University of Michigan on Washington's Birthday, but, "owing to the rush and excitement attendant upon his visit," the notification committee was unable to see him and arranged for an "informal initiation" at the White House by correspondence.

The honor of revealing the fraternal mysteries fell to Chauncey B. Ripley, lawyer, doctor of philosophy and son-in-law of the wealthy Gideon Ross, Esq., at whose manor, on Elizabeth Avenue, he resided when in town. Dr. Ripley practiced law in New York, was "chief officer" of the "City Alumni Club" and was known as "the bulwark of Free Trade and Democracy" in political circles. Large, round-faced, rosy-cheeked, with cupid-like dimples in his chin, he had a slight advantage of the president in height, reach and avoirdupois. * * * *

They faced each other at opposite ends of the Blue Room. Dr. Ripley bowed and spelled the Pass Word in whispers; the president bowed and returned the whispers. Then Dr. Ripley shook hands with himself again and again and again to demonstrate the Secret Grip. This was an intricate arrangement of the thumb and lower fingers of the right hand, under cover of the left hand. While Dr. Ripley executed each movement, at first slowly, then in gradually increasing tempo, the president retained his

presence of mind and, after the tenth tableau, signified his understanding by a short nod. Both then advanced

The president was in top form, having recently completed the most intensive hand-shaking campaign on record. "Put her there, Brother Ripley!" said he, extending his cultivated right hand. Dr. Ripley almost gasped. The President of the United States had called him "Brother!" So, he had carried the day for good old Sigma Chi! What a conquest! Dr. Ripley prided himself in his dignity and self-possession. He had shaken the hands of Bourke Cochran, James J. Hill and Chauncey M. Depew without a quiver; but now in this silent room, looking into the questioning eyes of the president, he was conscious of a profound emotional disturbance. He was eager—alas, too eager!—to welcome his distinguished host into the fold; and, while reaching for the presidential palm—O, Brother!—he misplaced his little finger.

"Ouch!" said Brother Ripley.

Brother Cleveland bowed and took Brother Ripley by the arm. They walked across the room in silence. The president was gracious; at the door he bowed again. Brother Ripley felt relieved. Then came those unforgettable words at parting. Said the president gravely:—"Try it again, Ripley, when you've practiced up a bit. I think you can qualify for Congress. They're all thumbs over there."

"Ripley" responded with a feeble "Thank you, Mr. President," and sought solace in the upholstery of the Congressional Limited.