



## Another



### BROOMS, PARADES AND POLITICS

They were a patriotic band of military-minded young men, "eighteen years of age, at least five feet five inches in height, in good health and engaged in business in the State of New Jersey, of good character, correct habits and reputable associations"—as prescribed in the By-Laws. They met three nights a week in a small room (25x60) on the second floor of the Westfield Hotel. Their captain was Frank A. Miller, son of the affluent and popular James L. Miller, Republican candidate for State Senator, who lived in the big house on Elm Street, now the home of Dr. Leland Davis. Captain Miller had attended a military academy, knew a lot about soldiering, and drilled the recruits so that they soon mastered the manual of arms.

The boys were without equipment, but they got along with broom sticks. Third Sergeant Cy Wilcox, crack bird shot, said that most of them would qualify as sharp shooters. As their admission to the state militia seemed assured, their By-Laws were published in the name of "Company H, Third Regiment, Garfield Legion, National Guard, N. J."

Then came the name-calling, brick-throwing gubernatorial campaign of '87. Company H accepted, without a dissenting voice, an invitation to lead a home-town Republican parade, in support of fellow-townsmen Miller, and for this occasion they decided to discard the broom sticks and use the entire broom—a symbol, be it known, of a clean sweep for the GOP. The eyes of the crowds were upon them as they marched down Broad Street, between the Westfield Band and the

Young Republican Club, and a certain influential member of the opposite party was overheard whispering, "Why, that's one of Jim Miller's outfits!"

The election was disappointing. The Republicans won in town and county; the Democrats in the state. Robert S. Greene, the governor-elect, was a machine-made politician and during his term the "ballot box stuffing ring" flourished, Bob Davis and Dennis McLaughlin organized the notorious Hudson County machine and distributed state patronage among their faithful henchmen, and the "boss controlled legislature" was described as "the most rapacious which ever sat in Trenton."

The Republicans, with the aid of independent Democrats, passed the Local High License Act over the governor's veto in 1888. Senator Miller helped to frame this act, which made it hard for the "swinging door joints" to do business. The law was short-lived, however, for the Democrats resumed control in '89, and "put the state back in the grip of the Devil."

Naturally, anything Senator Miller did to help good government or a worthy cause was ridiculed by his opponents, and when they were told that a military outfit from Westfield had his backing, they passed the word along to the governor and he spoke to his adjutant general. As a result, Captain Miller was "informally notified that the application of Company H had been turned down without comment." Being good sports, the Legionnaires returned the brooms to the pantry and made haste to join "Rufe" Whitehead's Bicycle Brigade.