

DRIFTING.

He who imagines that this country has gone through all its dangers and surmounted all its difficulties, is mistaken. It is not yet anchored fast, and never will be as long as it is in its present condition—subject to the now prevalent storms of, we had almost said, national thievery and knavery. Corruption, bribery, the disposal of official honesty and honor at private sale and public vendue, are all as familiar and as common as household words in the ears of the people. These things are looked upon quite as a matter of course. The numerous instances where they have been made public have made them common; and yet these instances are mere specimens, mere bubbles on the surface, mere feathers showing which way the wind blows, mere escapes of gas from the rotten, bloated and offensive form lying partially hid from the public gaze—and it will take a strong current to carry off this mass of putridity far enough to place it beyond the power of harm and the possibility of lending its poisonous and contagious qualities to the whole republic. No country known to history has been able to withstand this sort of thing. Its destruction or reformation—generally a bloody one—is purely a question of time. Therefore, in view of the accounts of corruption developments which are getting to be our daily food, we say that these United States are drifting—and to the question, Where and to what? perhaps the people can reply as well as we, and only the future can tell with absolute certainty and fullness of detail.

We, however, venture the guess that there will be a time when the common people will get tired of paying burdensome taxes—of doing all the labor and bearing all the expense of supporting a costly government, of paying salaries to Congressmen, to Senators, to Cabinet officers—and for what? For the purpose of having them attend to their constitutional and statutory duties? for the purpose of enabling them to fulfill the trusts which they have accepted from the people, to the end that they may reflect credit upon the Republic and honor upon the characters of their constituents? Not at all. In the terse language of the period, "not much;" but in order that they may have a pleasant and commodious position, where they can exhibit to the moneyed powers the placard "For sale" tied conspicuously on too many of their backs. It is not necessary here to multiply proofs. We have been reading nothing but proofs of these things in almost all the dispatches that have flashed over the wires. No scheme, big or little, has much chance of success unless its advocates can boast of a convenient and well managed "corruption fund" as part of its paraphernalia.

Descending from great things to small—from the high places of the nation to the State Legislature—these latter seem to be getting past all redemption. In days long gone by—in the time of such small fry as Webster, Clay et al to be a member of the Legislature was esteemed in itself quite an honor. It added dignity to the old and was a brilliant feather in the cap of youth. Fancy now the ridiculousness of a young man's aspiring to become a State Representative simply for the honor of the thing, or contemplate the still greater absurdity of his being sent there simply because he was honest and had the requisite capacity to fill the place. If he has been fortunate—if he has understood well the pecuniary value of his vote at some critical moment—he will indeed be congratulated by his friends when his labors are over; but after all the handshaking is finished the grand question will be asked him—the interrogatory upon which the whole ovation turns will be put—"How much did you make?" And if he has been at his post while the Legislature have been manufacturing a United States Senator, the reply must be both satisfactory to himself and to his friends, or people will think him a fool in good earnest. Shall we say the people are to blame for these things? Possibly not the people so much as that pitiful, pretentious and fraudulent sham called "society."

In France when "society" is discussing a new character, the first question put is, "What is he?" In England it is "Who is he?" and in the United States, and we may say, especially in California, it is, "What is he worth?" What won-

der, then, if the rising generation, not being angels nor saints, nor given to self-sacrifice, nor delighting in being ostracized from this model "society," should show an increasing tendency to worship at the shrine of the Golden Cal? What wonder if the embryo statesman should consider it a "smart" and a "neat" thing to do, with one hand to assist his oratory with appropriate gesticulation and keep the other open behind his back to receive the golden fee—the price of his eloquence and his vote. There all the honor lies. He is considered not only an orator and a very eloquent young man, but what is far better, he is a young man of "fine business capacity;" has lots of money, and society is not only satisfied, but is in rhapsodies over him.

Until the people—the masses—wake up to the enormity of some of the political offenses now common in the country, we shall drift into still more dangerous whirlpools than we are now in—and after that the deluge.—*Sacramento Union.*

The Bayonet in Vicksburg.

The sincerity of the President's Louisiana message of explanation and apology is made dubious by his action yesterday in Vicksburg. At the special election for sheriff in that city December 31, one Flanagan claimed a majority over Crosby, the colored candidate. Governor Ames applied for troops to prevent a possible disturbance at the opening of the court, and yesterday, by the authority of the President, acting through General Emory, Captain Head, of the Third United States infantry, went to the Court House and expelled Flanagan by military force. A guard of soldiers was then placed over the sheriff's office, which was afterwards removed, when the office was turned over to the president of the board of supervisors. In all of these proceedings Judge Hill declined to interfere.

So we see that the army of the United States is expected not only to determine who shall be governors and who are entitled to seats as legislators, but who shall be city and county officers. The President claims a right to seat a sheriff. Napoleon marked the places of armies by sticking pins in the map of Europe, but General Grant pierces the map of the peaceful south with bayonets. In such a case as this his interference has no excuse, especially after his message to Congress, and it looks like a quiet defiance of the protest so emphatically made by the people. Only in the case of the militia of Mississippi failing to carry out the law of the State should the federal authority be exerted; but Governor Ames did nothing and the courts did nothing. The interference is practically but the continuation of the Louisiana business, and will surely be condemned by the country. It tends rather to destroy than uphold the sovereignty of the State, and will throw new discredit upon the national administration. In his message the President said, in reference to Louisiana affairs, "I can conceive of no case not involving rebellion or insurrection where such interference by authority of the general government ought to be permitted or can be justified." Was there rebellion or insurrection in Vicksburg yesterday? We know of none, unless it was rebellion against the constitution by the President of the United States himself.—*New York Herald, Jan. 19.*

Clarkson N. Potter.

We invite the attention of the men of this part of the west to the name of a man with which they are already somewhat familiar. That gentleman well deserves it. We refer to Clarkson N. Potter, one of New York's ablest and soundest representatives in Congress. Concerning his action as a member of the Louisiana committee when Grant's soldiers invaded the legislature of that State and ejected its members from their seats at the point of the bayonet, the *World* says:

"The manly and high spirited refusal of Mr. Potter, of New York, to recognize the insolent usurpation in Louisiana of the rights of the legislature of that state by a body of federal soldiers, under direct orders of President Grant, even by consenting to thus appear in the halls thus violated, was

worthy alike of the man himself and of the great state which he so worthily represents at Washington."

This is just praise of an able and true man. Mr. Potter is virtually a stranger to us, but in listening to a short speech from him on a recent occasion, we formed a high estimate of his character and abilities. New York may well be proud of its Clarkson N. Potters. Mr. Potter is a man of power and rising influence. He has much to do, no doubt, in moulding the opinions of his colleagues on the Louisiana sub-committee to whom the country owes so much for daring to tell the truth.—*Omaha Herald, Jan. 21.*

Circumstances alter cases. For instance, when a Virginian arose in church and said, "Here's a hundred dollar bid for the old boss behind the pulpit!" no one thought of putting him out.

Washington Irving once alluded to a man of superior pomposity, "a great man, and in his own estimation, a man of great weight. When he goes to the West he thinks the East tips up."

"I can't say as he went to heaven," remarked a Fort Scott citizen of a deceased townsman, "but he paid a bill of eleven years standing only the day before he died, and you can judge for yourself."

A little girl four years old created a ripple by remarking to the teacher of the Sunday School class: "Our dog's dead. I bet the angels was scared when they saw him coming up the walk. He's cross to the strangers."

A Georgia paper knows a man who went all the way from Cassville to Atlanta. On his return he looked solemn with the weight of garnered wisdom, and said: "If the world is as big t'other way as it is that, it's a whopper!"

The *Pall Mall Gazette* comments as follows on the sentence passed on an English workman for killing his wife: "This is very disagreeable for irritable husbands, who, when thrashing their wives, will run frightful risks of injury, unless protected by the law."

In a recent breach of promise case in England it was in evidence that the defendant told the girl that she might use his tooth-brush until his return. The jury very properly found for the plaintiff, and gave her damages enough to keep her in tooth-brushes during the remainder of her life.

A correspondent of the *New York Times* records it as his conviction that "the men of the South, as a class, are quite as loyal to the United States Government as are those of New England or New York," but some of the women "find a melancholy pleasure in declaring that they are 'unreconstructed rebels,' and they 'hate Yankees awful'—awful enough to marry them."

Irving, in his history of the reign of Governor Wouter Van Twiller, says he settled his policy by placing a few wooden guns on the old Dutch fort, "which frowned defiance on absent foes." Our classic president, in the document he signed and sent to Congress, says: "The American Navy, comparatively small as it is, will be found at any time powerful for the purposes of a peaceful nation."

IF MRS. JULIA BOWEN, of North Ogden, Utah, will call at Walker Brothers, Salt Lake City, she can get the lost letter. w 52

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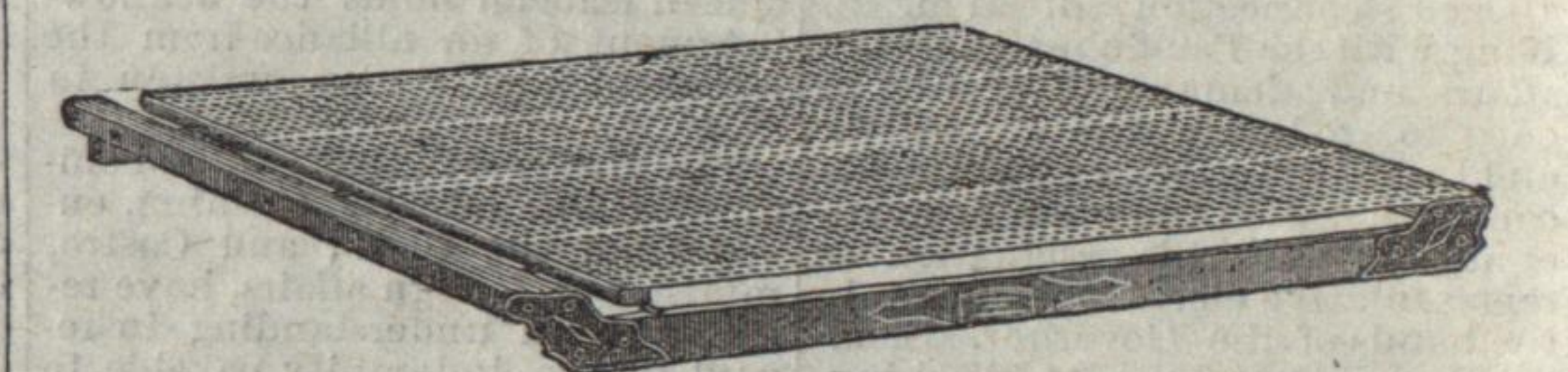
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