

BEAUTIES OF RING RULE.

Peculative Pictures from Nordhoff's Letters to the New York Herald.

Demagoguery at a Discount—How Arkansas was wronged and Robbed—Six years of Public Plunder—How Public Debts are Heaped up—Cords of Scrip—Ten Cents on the Dollar—Six Cents on the Dollar—Swindling Despotism—Some New Tricks—Trickery and Trickery—Advanced Politics—How to Serve the Public—Unbounded Corruption—Big Steals and Little Steals—Republican Government Turned into Broad Farce—How to Sink a Country.

LITTLE ROCK, March 29, 1875.

The reconstruction constitution of 1868, under which Arkansas was supposed to enjoy a republican government, is an able and ingenious instrument, said to have been framed at Washington. It established an extremely centralized and despotic administration. The Governor appointed nearly all the local officers in counties and townships, and he had the power to fill vacancies even in the few offices he did not originally name. He appointed judges, collectors and assessors of taxes, justices of the peace, prosecuting attorneys, registrars of elections, and these appointed the judges of elections. Where new counties were created, which was a favorite device of the robbers, the Governor appointed all the officers. Moreover, where any subordinate proved refractory—which means honest and public spirited—he was removed on a writ of *quo warranto*, and brought before the Supreme Court, at the head of which sat Poker Jack, by a convenient Attorney General. Then the Governor filled his place. Under this monstrous system of centralization, as extreme as that of the later French Empire, the Ring had their adherents scattered all over the State. They absolutely controlled the elections; they ruled the people despotically. The Governor was even careful to appoint, in many instances, local officers who did not live in the counties they were to rule and who, of course, had no interest whatever in good government or in the decent administration of justice.

One instance, out of many, will show how brazenly these creatures of the ring carried out their schemes. A new county was formed in the north-western part of the State. A sheriff was sent who lived in Little Rock. This person chanced to own a farm in the county. The people chose for county seat a village near the centre of the county; but the sheriff determined to establish it on his own farm, five miles away. He and his fellow office-holders manipulated the registry lists, but failed to eliminate a sufficient number of voters' names, and when an election was held for a choice of three commissioners to determine on the county seat his candidates were beaten. He went at once to Little Rock, where the election was, at his instance, set aside; new commissioners were appointed, and the Court House, which cost over \$30,000, was actually placed on his farm, in spite of the demand of nine-tenths of the people to put it in the village where it would be convenient for the public.

All these local appointees of the central government had unlimited power to steal, and knew it. Indeed they were expected to divide their plunder with the Ring at headquarters. They issued county and town bonds for railroads, they erected or pretended to erect new and unneeded public buildings, for which bonds and scrip were issued; they put out scrip on every possible excuse, and kept no books or records, to show the amounts issued, or stole the records, or in several notorious instances burned down the court houses and destroyed the records. They pocketed the greenbacks paid in by taxpayers, and turned into the Treasury depreciated scrip. They protected thieves and swindlers for pay, and they sold justice at a high price. When the county scrip became too much depreciated for their uses the Supreme Court, Poker Jack Chief Justice, rendered a decision making that only receivable for county taxes; and when this speculation had served their turn, the Supreme

Court—Poker Jack still Chief Justice—reversed this decision and made only State scrip receivable for taxes. So monstrous was the robbery that even now, when the plunderers are beaten off and confidence is restored, the average value of county scrip is less than thirty-four cents, and it is doubtful if one-quarter of the counties know certainly the amount of their debt. Meantime champagne was the commonest beverage of several hundred people at Little Rock, and it was at the time said that nowhere in the United States was so much of this wine consumed as in the dilapidated little capital of Arkansas. Champagne and poker were the chief enjoyments of the thieves in office, and they indulged themselves without stint and openly without shame.

REGISTRATION FRAUDS.

The Governor appointed the registrars of election, and they were naturally tools of the Ring. Registration was an imperative prerequisite to voting. The law was so framed that the decision of the Registrar as to the right of a citizen to vote was final, the only appeal lying to the Supreme Court, which refused to hear such cases. On election day, even if a citizen showed a certificate proving that he had been registered, this did not entitle him to vote if his name was not actually found on the Register. Moreover the registrars appointed the judges of elections at the polling places, and of course chose partisans.

What happened was this:—As registration went on the partisan registrars kept a sharp eye on the lists. When they were completed they had some days to revise them. On this time they counted, and judiciously marked out democratic names enough to secure the required majority. "If red ink don't blot them out take red paint and a paint brush," was the order said to have been sent to our Registrar.

Meantime the colored vote was manipulated to such an extent that the colored people were enticed away from their avocations for weeks before election day and gathered in crowds at barbecues and other camps. At first the ring had a large majority, for they controlled the negroes and about 20,000 of the old citizens were disfranchised for participation in the rebellion. In November, 1872, a constitutional amendment was adopted by the people which enfranchised these voters and enabled them to begin to help themselves. As the people became more and more dissatisfied, the ring began to quarrel among themselves and thus disorganization began among this band of pirates. Meantime it is confessed here that occasionally some public thief who had outraged the people of a county beyond endurance, was shot, and public sentiment quietly justified the deed. But at every such murder a howl was raised that Union men were persecuted and in danger of their lives, and the North, anxious to protect the oppressed, suffered the federal power to protect the oppressors.

A METROPOLITAN POLICE.

These did not shrink from measures for their own protection. The Legislature adopted in March, 1869, a Ku Klux bill of the most stringent character, which was so well executed that all opposition of this kind disappeared. In 1873 it adopted a Civil Rights bill, which is as peremptory as that which was advocated by General Butler. In the same year they brought forward a bill to establish a "Metropolitan Police." Six thousand men were to be appointed by the Governors to act as a police over the whole State. It was in effect to be a standing army, with power to interfere in all civil affairs at all times; to make summary arrests and to bring those they arrested from the most distant parts of the State to Little Rock for trial. After prolonged efforts this atrocious scheme was defeated in the Legislature.

At the same session was brought forward a scheme to release all the railroads from liability for their old bonds by a law compelling the State to assume these and redeem them by a new issue. It was the avowed intention of the plotters to cause the issue first of all the remaining railroad bonds, between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000, and to declare the levee bonds unconstitutional and worthless, which, it was believed, would appreciate the value of the railroad bonds.

This proposal also was beaten. It

was advocated by McClure, "Poker Jack," and his pal Yonley, in their newspaper; and it was said Governor Baxter was offered a federal judgeship of \$60,000 to cease his opposition.

And now came the change. The new constitution was adopted, Garland became Governor, and the men who had so long robbed and misgoverned the State were at last threatened with loss of power. Then they appealed to the federal government.

WHAT THE INSTALMENT OF BROOKS MEANT?

It has been the misfortune of President Grant that many of his favorite enterprises have had upon them the taint of corruption. The St. Domingo scheme was a huge speculation; the moiety business was a robbery of the Treasury; the improvement of Washington by his friend Mr. Shepherd has been denounced everywhere as a job; and now, unluckily, the President fell into the trap of these Arkansas jobbers, and became their ally. He had forced Brooks out of the State House in 1874, and in 1875 he demanded that Brooks should be forced in again. Now, to install Brooks as Governor was to continue the robbers in power, and these, alarmed for the future with a Democratic Congress at hand, and exposure threatened, meant, it is said, first of all, to issue all the remaining railroad bonds, and divide this huge piece of plunder, amounting to at least \$5,000,000 or probably \$7,000,000. Their swag secured they were ready to retire if they must. The first effect of the President's Arkansas policy would have been to saddle the State with all these millions of additional debt. I do not suppose General Grant to be dishonest; but he was certainly in this as in other cases the friend and ally of very unscrupulous men.

I have called the men who ruled Arkansas from 1868 to 1874 robbers, plunderers and pirates. The figures given in this and a preceding letter abundantly justify this language. Let me repeat here briefly what they did. I find, by the State Auditor's account for the years 1859 and 1860, that at that time the cost of administering the State government was \$307,596 for two years, or, roughly, \$150,000 per annum. Making every fair allowance, it should not have cost, from 1868 to 1874, more than twice this sum, or \$300,000 per annum; or \$1,800,000 in all for the six years. But in that period there were collected from the people in taxes, the prodigious sum of \$6,674,000; the bonded debt was increased \$8,753,000; a floating debt of scrip, demoralizing to the community, was added, of \$1,865,000; and thus these men cost the State alone, in six years, over \$17,000,000, instead of \$1,804,000, which would have been a fair charge; and, for this vast expenditure, there was no return, except in despotic government, broken credit, ruined industry and a deplorable corruption of public morals, growing out of a depraved currency, and unbridled and open theft in high places. But this still leaves out the county and other local taxes, of which I have no record; and the county, city and township debts, an unascertainable total, thought by the best experts to amount to not less than \$2,500,000 more.

CHARLES NORDHOFF.

—New York Herald.

By Telegraph.

AMERICAN.

NEW YORK, 3.—The captain and pilot of the *City of Hartford*, which was in collision on East river this afternoon, have both been arrested and locked up in default of \$5,000 bail, to await the inquest.

The *Tribune*, to-morrow, publishes the following: "One of the most dramatic scenes of the trial, and the only one which has relieved the monotony of its latter days, occurred at the opening of yesterday's session, and was evidently a surprise to all but one or two of Beecher's lawyers. Mrs. Tilton came into court at the usual hour, accompanied by Mrs. Field and Mrs. Ovington, and had seated herself in her usual place, to the right of, and a little apart from, the Plymouth delegation, which was out again in force; indeed the court room was unusually crowded, particularly with ladies, some of whom stood peeping through the doorway leading to the chambers, and one

of whom brought an opera glass, which she levelled at the principal characters of the trial drama. The court had no sooner been organized than Mrs. Tilton, rising like an apparition in her place, and facing his honor, cried out in her low voice, a little tremulous from embarrassment, "Judge Neilson." The Judge heard without distinguishing her, and looked around as if to discover whence the call had proceeded, when his attention was called to Mrs. Tilton by a spectator, who sat near and who repeated her call, at the same time pointing towards her. Mrs. Tilton, seeing that she had the judge's attention, again spoke up, saying, "Your honor, I have a communication which I hope your honor will read aloud." The judge asked Evarts to attend to the matter, and the envelope held by Mrs. Tilton was given him, and he, remarking that it was addressed to the judge, passed it to him who, after reading the communication said—"Mrs. Tilton, this matter will be considered deliberately." As soon as Mrs. Tilton's voice had been heard, a hush had fallen upon the audience, and every eye had become fixed upon her slight figure, the only one standing in the centre of the room. Her face flushed a little when she perceived the general attention which she had attracted. Her husband sitting ten feet in front of her half turned in his seat when he heard his wife's voice, but he did not look at her. His counsel naturally turned and looked full upon her, as did also Beecher's, and the necks on the bench behind the judge were stretched forward. The full contents of the communication were not made public, and all parties to the suit decline to give a copy for publication. Judge Neilson said the matter was one to which he felt he ought to give deliberation notwithstanding Mrs. Tilton's desire that it be read aloud. He felt compelled, at least for the present, to consider it as a confidential one, and even should Mrs. Tilton consent to its immediate publication he should decline to give a copy for publication at once. He said the matter would be considered to-day, then if both the counsel for Tilton and Beecher consented, and Mrs. Tilton insisted, it might be made public. Evarts, who asked about it, said it was a matter between the Judge and Mrs. Tilton, and he did not feel at liberty to say anything relative to it. The letter will probably be made known to-day. It is understood that it embraces, first an appeal, on Mrs. Tilton's part, to the court to be heard in defense of her own character; second, a protest against the injustice of the failure of either side to call her; and third, a solemn and pathetic assertion of her innocence of adultery."

ST. LOUIS, 3.—Mrs. Divan, wife of John Divan, a railroad man of Kansas city, or Jefferson city, and her two little girls, aged seven and eight years, were lost on the steamer *St. Luke*, and six or seven deck passengers are supposed to be lost, but their names cannot be ascertained.

WASHINGTON, D. C., 3.—Curtis S. Burnham, of Richmond, Ky, has been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Jno. L. Hartley, resigned.

The Supreme Court decided case No. 203, the Mutual Life Insurance Company of N. Y. vs. Young Admer of Young in error to the Circuit Court for the district of California. In this case numerous points of interest were raised on argument, but the decision turned on the question as to how far a contract of insurance, or to insure, had been actually concluded. The deceased applied for a policy of insurance to the general agent of the company at San Francisco, giving his note for the first payment of the premium, and taking from the agent a receipt, which treated the note as cash, and stipulated for the delivery of the policy, on certain terms set out in the receipt if application should be accepted by the company. The application was accepted and the policy was sent to the general agent, but the policy differed in amount from the premium, and the terms of payment from the terms in the receipt, and the deceased died without having assented to the policy as sent to the agency. The Court ruled that there was no binding contract between the parties, and that the receipt was only qualifiedly accepted by the company by sending a policy, and that it not having been accepted by the deceased there was no meeting in the minds of the parties, and hence no contract.

Reversed, with directions to enter judgment for the company.

Lieut. Col. Hatch, of the fourth U. S. cavalry, commanding Fort Sill, telegraphs the war department as follows, under date of April 10:

"Frequent complaints having been made by the Indians camped near this post that they are suffering from hunger, I have made an investigation and find the complaints well founded. The following is the ration allowed by the Indian war department: Beef 3 pounds gross on the hoof; one day in fifteen, 1 of a pound of bacon is issued in lieu of the beef; flour or bread half a pound; to a hundred rations four pounds of coffee, eight pounds sugar, one lb. salt, one lb. soap, half lb. tobacco. This ration was established when the Indian could partly support himself by hunting, but with no other help it is barely enough to prevent hunger. It is not, however, all issued, there is at the agency no flour, and not over one-third the authorized amount has been issued during the present fiscal year. There is no sugar, and not even two-thirds of the regular issue has been made during the same time. The beef lately issued has been shamefully bad, so poor that the gross is altogether out of proportion to the net weight. Acting Indian Agent Howard acknowledges that the beef lately issued was unfit for food, but states that it was all he had for issue. The condition of affairs at the Wichita agency is worse than here. There has been no flour there for a long time; the agent is absent and the Indians are killing and eating their horses. Endorsement by General Pope. Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant General of the army, through the office of the Assistant Adjutant General of the military division of the Missouri. The attention of the proper authority is specially invited to the evident mal-administration of Indian affairs, which exists at the Ft. Sill and Wichita agencies. It is idle to expect that these Indians will remain peaceably upon their reservations with the prospect of starvation in doing so, and so long as this mal-administration exists the military authorities cannot be, and will not consent to be, held accountable for any outbreak which may occur on their part."

CHARLESTON, S. C., 3.—The centennial of the German Fusiliers, the only surviving military company of those who were organized in Charleston, May 3rd, 1775, upon receipt of the news of the battle of Lexington, was celebrated to-day by an imposing demonstration. The day was observed as a general holiday. A battery of the first artillery of the U. S. fired a salute of 100 guns at sunrise, and the church bells chimed at intervals during the day. There was a grand military parade of all the white companies in the city, escorting the Fusiliers. The streets wore a gala appearance, being crowded with spectators and profusely decorated with banners, mottoes and flags. As the procession approached the City Hall a battery of the first artillery fired a salute of thirteen guns; they then limbered up the pieces and presented arms while the column passed. An oration at the Academy of Music and a grand banquet at night concluded the celebration.

RALEIGH, 3.—In the municipal election to-day the democrats carried eleven out of seventeen aldermen, and elected the mayor; this is the first time since the war that the city has gone democratic.

BOSTON, 3.—The programme for the entertainment of the Catholic prelates who participated in the consecration ceremonies was most strictly carried out to-day, as prearranged, closing with a reception by the Catholic Union of the Boston college this evening; the papal embassy leaves at once for Milwaukee, to attend the consecration ceremonies there.

NEW YORK, 1.—The following is a copy of the letter which Mrs. Tilton, yesterday, handed to Judge Neilson in the court room, as published in the *Star*:

The Brooklyn *Eagle* furnishes the following copy of Mrs. Tilton's letter:

"BROOKLYN, May 3d, 1875.
"Judge Neilson—

"I ask the privilege from you, for a few words in my own behalf. I feel very deeply the injustice of my position in the law and before the Court now sitting, and while I have understood and expected from the beginning from Mr. Evarts, the principal in the matter, to be called as a witness, yet since