

CORRUPTION RAMPANT ON "THE HILL."

All Officialdom in Harrisburg is Putrid in Vice and Crime.

RASCALITY SANCTIONED

Big and Little Abuses Go On Under the Eyes of High Officials.—Promises of Reform Without Performance Admonish People, Only Remedy is Election of John G. Harman.

(Special Correspondence.)

Harrisburg, Pa., Oct. 9. There are plenty of opportunities for reform on "The Hill," without waiting for the court proceedings in the graft cases. In fact Mr. Berry has just inaugurated a new line of improvement in the public service. It isn't a matter of vast importance but it is a "straw" which indicates the course and measures the velocity of the reform wind in official life.

In fact you can sometimes get more information from small things than can be obtained from larger affairs. The smaller a crime the meaner it is at least some times. Public patronage is the currency used by professional politicians to bribe men to perform political crimes. It was "the mysterious influence which changed a minority into a majority over night" in the convention which nominated Pennypacker for Governor in 1902. It was on account of the potentiality of this force in that way that offices have been multiplied so rapidly in recent years.

The corrupt State Highway Department is the spawn of that evil. The Bureau of Vital Statistics was created on that account and how and needless clerkships were authorized in all of the Departments in order to supply places for dependent politicians. This "thirst for place" developed the evil which Mr. Berry has just attacked. It is an expedient to make one office satisfy two men. The plan is as simple as the practice is contemptible. For example there is an office which pays \$5 a day. A man in Pittsburgh or Philadelphia or elsewhere is appointed to the place. He remains at home attending to his own affairs and employs a resident of Harrisburg to perform the work for \$2 a day. The appointee has a "pudding." The substitute enjoys a "snap."

How Official Grifters Help the Party.

Both these agents of the "system" work their relatives and friends for the party. The \$2 a day man in Harrisburg who does the work has a large family, as a rule, and not so easy a time making ends meet. His relatives hustle to "hold his job," and the grocer and butcher and baker who serve him are interested. The \$3 a day man elsewhere "tolls not, neither does he spin," but he chews the string of the pudding and enjoys the luxury of "easy money." Of course he works every possible means to continue the source of graft.

The law forbids this "farming" of public patronage and Mr. Berry has given notice that he will pay no employees who perform no work. He is entirely willing to pay the substitutes the full salary of the office because the law provides for it. But he is not willing to furnish the shirts with money coined from the sweat of the faces of others. The decision has created consternation among the beneficiaries of the "system." Every last man of them is ready to denounce Mr. Berry as a meddler. They are a unit against John G. Harman who would pursue the same wholesome policy.

The office holders are having other troubles at present, moreover. The collector of "voluntary contributions" is working the employees just now with a rigor never before witnessed. Within the last ten days every official on "The Hill" has been notified to pay a percentage of his salary into the campaign corruption fund. This is a good deal of a burden every year but this year it is worse than usual. Living is expensive and in addition to the contribution the clerk has to pay the expenses of a trip home to register and another to vote.

The Public Printing Conspiracy.

I have referred on two or three occasions to the State Printing job but thus far have been able to discover no signs that the reform impulses of the Governor have turned his energies toward the correction of this abuse. The present State Printer was the highest bidder for that jelly party plum instead of the lowest, as the law requires. The way it happened was this: Four or five men or firms bid for the contract and each deposited a bond for the performance of the work in the event the award was to him. The lowest bidder got the contract and the bonds of the others were returned to them.

Thus far the law had been scrupulously complied with. But the scheme set in at once. The lowest bidder made some absurd excuse for refusing to accept the award and it was offered to the next lowest bidder who also declined and the process was continued until the highest bidder was reached who got the contract at an exorbitant figure. One would have thought that the forfeited bond would in some measure recompense the State for the difference in the rate between the highest and lowest bid. But no such result followed. The "system" never contemplates recompense to the State for anything.

Here is what actually occurred. The forfeited bond was promptly returned to the delinquent bidder, notwithstanding the legal obligation to hold it, and the highest bidder was declared State Printer. He simply let one of the lower bidders take up

the work and, it is alleged and I believe, not only he but two of the other bidders got a rake off while the State "pays the freight." It is clearly a conspiracy to rob the State. There could hardly be a clearer case of collusion and yet the Governor takes no steps to stop the crime.

The Legislative Record Job.

Reference has also been made in a previous letter to the corrupt collusion in awarding the contract to print the Legislative Record for the session of 1907. On the day fixed for letting that contract the printer who received it was in the inner office of the officer of the Senate who made the award and another printer sat in the anteroom. About a minute before the time for opening bids the official approached the man in the anteroom and asked if he had a bid to submit. He replied in the negative, the official returned to his office, and soon afterward announced that the contract had been awarded to the only bidder.

The contract price under the award thus made was nearly three times what the work had been done for the previous session. Of course that is not in itself an evidence of either conspiracy or collusion. But it is alleged that during the period between which the official had spoken to the man in the anteroom and the announcement of the letting the bid had been changed and the price nearly doubled. In other words the bidder having been informed that he was the only bidder and that the award would be to him however exorbitant his price, changed the figures to a price which was little short of grand larceny.

The corridor gossip concerning this conspiracy got so insistent, during the session, that an investigation was ordered by the House of Representatives. Representative Halgood of McKean county was made Chairman of the Investigating committee. He was informed of all the facts and even had a conversation with the man in the anteroom at the time of the letting. But he reported that while the price was high there was no evidence of collusion and besides the publisher had promised to make a better "Record" than any of its predecessors. It may have been only a coincidence that Mr. Halgood was elected President of the State League of Republican Clubs a few days ago.

All the Departments Are Putrid.

The fact is that every Department of the State government is rotten with corruption. There are not only an excessive number of employes in every office but there is grafting everywhere. The Highway Department makes no contracts for road building or improvement that does not yield a bonus to somebody on the inside. The Health Department has become a veritable asylum for political pensioners. Not long ago the son of an influential citizen of this town came home from school to spend his seven weeks' vacation. He was immediately given employment in the Health Department. After standing around the office for two weeks he was given a "vacation" of three weeks on full pay. Then he returned, worked two weeks and went back to school. He enjoyed a lucrative rest at the expense of the State. But it looks as if that is what the Health Department is for. Meantime we hear much about prosecuting the capitol grafters and nothing concerning these other looters who are working like rats in a cheese cellar. They tell us that Governor Stuart is a model of official integrity and that he will purge not only the State but the party, of crooks and corruptionists. But what merit is there in promises in the absence of performances. The talk of the prosecution of the capitol grafters is declamation to the galleries. A year ago the boast was that the Insurance grafters would be fitly punished. They made us almost imagine Durham in prison stripes. But there has been no prosecution of the Insurance grafters. Durham is still the Party leader of Philadelphia and the Republican committee of Chester county, the other day, set Auditor General Snyder up as an exemplar of political morals and civic virtue.

The Machine Can't Reform.

You might as well try to bleach linen by plunging it into a pitch bath, as to reform the official life of Pennsylvania while the Republican machine is in control. The managers of that organization are compelled to continue their iniquities. With them it is graft or gravel. If they can't remain in office they must go to prison and they have debauched the electorate to such an extent that most of their voters have to be bought. Vast sums of money are necessary to buy their majorities. Ballot box stuffing is a hazardous enterprise now and bidders demand compensation according to the hazard. The remedy is in the election of John G. Harman to the office of State Treasurer. Berry began the work of political regeneration and Harman will complete it. G. D. H.

John O. Sheatz was never a reformer either in the Legislature or out. In the Legislature he voted for some of the most iniquitous measures and out of it he has supported some of the most notoriously bad men. Two years ago, for example, when all reformers were aligned against J. Lee Plummer, Sheatz stood with the machine. To rank him as a reformer is not only absurd but it is actually dishonest.

We rise to remark that nearly a month has elapsed since John G. Harman challenged John O. Sheatz to discuss the question of minority representation on the Board of Public Grounds and Buildings and there has been no reply to the challenge. The delay indicates that Mr. Sheatz's mental machinery works entirely too slow to be effective in the office of State Treasurer.

What could Lieutenant Governor Murphy have meant when he said in his Jamestown speech the other day, "as Pennsylvania and Virginia were alert one hundred and thirty years ago to-day, each to strike down that which threatened to harm the other, so must Pennsylvania and Virginia be alert now when different foes must be conquered? We haven't heard that there is anything the matter with Virginia and we can't see how Virginia can help us in our troubles. The remedy which we must apply is an aroused public conscience to guide us at the polls and Virginia can't participate in our elections. It is true that the people of that State can sympathize with us in our lack of civic virtue and self-respect. But we must cure our own ills with our own votes and the time to begin is at the approaching election and the way the election of Mr. John G. Harman to the office of State Treasurer.

The Philadelphia machine shows the same indifference to the interests and will of the people as it did before the outbreak of two years ago. The people of that city restored the machine to power last winter by the election of Mayor Reuburn and it is indulging in a riot of bossism and a deluge of political immorality. If Sheatz in elected the State machine will be quite as daring as that of the city and the looting and grafting will be resumed and continued indefinitely. Happily, however, there is no danger of such a result. Sheatz will be defeated as badly as Plummer was two years ago if not worse. The highlink of the Philadelphia machine just came in time to admonish the people of the danger of restoration in the State.

Manifestly President Roosevelt has gone mad on the subject of Federal authority over the affairs of the States. He wants to completely revolutionize our form of government in order to gratify his inordinate lust for power. But the people are not likely to sympathize with such absurd notions. The history and traditions of the government of the fathers are as dear to the hearts of the people to-day as they ever were and though Roosevelt has been a popular idol he will lose out if he advocates such nonsense as was expressed in his St. Louis speech last week.

If every Democrat in Pennsylvania votes for the splendid candidate of the party for State Treasurer next month his majority will be equal to the largest that has ever been received by a candidate with the single exception of that cast for Roosevelt three years ago. And there is no reason why every Democrat should not vote for him. He will be an ideal public official. Capable, courageous and honest he will do whatever is possible to restore the public life of the Commonwealth to the high plane which was once an honor to the people.

If Governor Stuart wants to do some effective reform work through the medium of the criminal courts he has a splendid opportunity to manifest it by beginning on the Insurance grafters who were investigated last year. Insurance Commissioner Martin was among those who were condemned in the report of the Committee but so far from that having any adverse effect on Martin's standing at the Governor's office the indications are that he is still in the highest favor. At any rate he continues to hold his office and draw the salary.

Dave Lane is again instructing the voters of Philadelphia to stuff the ballot boxes at the coming election. If the voters of Philadelphia are wise, however, they will pay no attention to Dave Lane's advice. Ballot box stuffing will go to jail this year. The style of treating that sort of calendar has vastly changed within a couple of years. Even crooked Dave Lane won't be immune from punishment this year if there is anything doing in his line of political work this year.

A citizen has not performed his full duty in the election of this year when he casts his own vote any more than a man discharges his full duty when he notified the police that a crime is being committed. He ought to assist the police in preventing crime just as he ought to urge his neighbors to vote to rescue the State from the desperadoes who are despoiling it. Let us all do our full duty this year.

The corrupt and contented City Party men of Philadelphia may have, like the dog, returned to their vomit, but the vast hosts of Independent Republican voters in the interior of the State who voted for Mr. Berry two years ago will vote for Harman this year. They have not been purchased, dragooned nor deceived into supporting Sheatz.

MOST FAMOUS OF ALL PALMS.

The Coco de Mer Which Bears the Biggest Nut in the World.

In the magnificent palm palace of the New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park, a specimen of the most famous of all palms, and one of the rarest in cultivation, has been placed for public admiration after three years in the propagating house, where it arrived as a seedling. This is the double coconut, the coco de mer, the coco de Salomon, the coco des Maldives of the French.

It attains a height of 80 or 90 feet, and is surrounded by a beautiful crown of winged and palmated leaves. The diameter of the trunk varies from 12 to 15 inches, and the whole is so flexible that it sways in a strong breeze. The leaves attain a length of 20 feet, and even 30 feet, with a breadth of 10 or 12 feet, and open like a fan. The fruit is the largest which any tree produces. It frequently is 18 inches in length, with a circumference of 3 feet, and sometimes weighs 40 or 50 pounds. A remarkable circumstance connected with the tree is the length of time necessary to mature its fruit and the long duration of the bloom. It bears only one spadix in each year, and yet has often as many as a dozen in bloom at once. It has flowers and fruit of all ages at one time.

Until the year 1743, when they were seen on the trees in the only spot where they grow, the nuts were known solely from having been found floating in the Indian Ocean off the Maldives Islands. They were found in no other place in the world. The reason was that the trees grow on the shores of the Seychelles, and large quantities of the great fruit, falling into the water, were borne to the Maldives by currents, the direction of which in those parts is east-northeast.

The nuts were always found minus the husk and mostly with the internal part decayed. They were called "Calappa Nut" by the Dutch, and under that appellation Rumphius has given a historical account of them. The double coconut, he says, is not a terrestrial production, which may have fallen by accident into the sea and there become petrified, but a fruit probably growing itself in the sea, whose fruit hitherto has been concealed from the eye of man.

The Malay and Chinese sailors used to affirm that it was borne upon a tree deep under water, which was similar to a coconut tree, and was visible in placid bays upon the coast of Sumatra, etc., but that if they sought to dive after it the tree instantly disappeared.

The negro priests declared it grew near the island of Java, where its leaves and branches rose above the water, and formed the habitation of a monstrous bird or griffin. This griffin was accustomed to sally forth nightly and tear to pieces with its beak such insignificant game as elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers, and carry off the flesh to its nest to feed on at leisure. Moreover, ships were attracted by the waves which surrounded the tree and were unable to sail out of the fatal zone, so that the hapless sailors fell an easy prey to the voracious bird. Needless to say that the inhabitants of the Indian Archipelago in their travels about the ocean were careful to give the spot the widest possible berth.

Nowadays the crown of the trunk—that is, the heart of the leaves—is eaten like that of the American cabbage palm, and often preserved in vinegar; but it is less delicate and slightly bitter. The trunk itself, after being split and cleared of its soft and fibrous internal parts, serves to make water troughs as well as palisades for surrounding houses and gardens. The foliage is employed to thatch the roofs of houses and sheds, and even for walls. With a hundred leaves a commodious dwelling may be constructed, including the partitions of the apartments, the doors and windows. The down attached to the young leaves serves for filling mattresses and pillows. The ribs of the leaves and fibers of the petiole are used for making gaskets and brooms, while the young foliage furnishes an excellent material for hats.

Of the nut, vessels, of different forms and for various uses are made. When preserved whole and perforated in one or two places the shells serve to carry water. Some of them hold from six to eight pints, and generally are carried suspended to sticks, one on each end. If divided in two between the lobes, each portion serves, according to its size and shape, for plates or dishes or drinking cups. In European countries the shell has been utilized for making shaving dishes and similar articles. It is black and polishes beautifully, and generally is carved and set in silver.

For many years attempts to introduce the coco de mer in the conservatories of the European botanical gardens failed invariably. Such was the eagerness to make experiments in rearing it that germinating nuts were disposed of at public sale in London for £10 apiece. There are some fine examples now both at Kew and Hanover.

English Riflemen.

Great plans are being laid in England to make the young men of that island good rifle shots. Many shooting clubs are being organized. In this connection the mayor of Westminster employs one of the best-equipped miniature rifle ranges in London. The range is in the vaults under St. Martin's Church.

Grammatical errors are overlooked in a millionaire.



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Yeast: "It is asserted that in these days, with the aid of machinery, 50,000 people can do the work performed by 16,000,000 persons 70 years ago." Crimsonbeak: "I guess that's right. I notice there are a good many more people doing nothing now than there used to be."

The Most Audible Dialogue. The theatre is not so entertaining as it might be," said one critical person. "No," answered the other, "it would be much better if box parties would arrange to have playwrights prepare their conversation instead of trying to make it up as they go along."—Washington Star.

One of the Early Unsettlers. Aaron Burr was hunting for Blennerhassett's Island. "It's somewhere along here I know," he muttered, consulting his map again. Tying his skiff to a tree near the top of neighboring bluff, he waited for the Ohio River to subside.—Chicago Tribune.

Points of View. "Beautiful memorial window," remarked her husband as they left the church. "I didn't notice particularly," said his wife, "but the light from it fell on the Jones pew and it made her complexion a fright."—Philadelphia Ledger.

In Small Doses. Little bit o' sighin'! All the way along. Yet Life to Life replyin': "A sigh is half a song!"—Atlanta Constitution.

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Blobs—"I don't believe in taking things for granted." Slobs—"No, not unless they belong to you."

The Royal Month and the Royal Disease.

Sudden changes of weather are especially trying, and probably to none more so than to the scrofulous and consumptive. The progress of scrofula during a normal October is commonly great. We never think of scrofula—its bunches, cutaneous eruptions, and wasting of the bodily substance—without thinking of the good many sufferers from it who have derived from Hood's Sarsaparilla, whose radical and permanent cures of this one disease are enough to make it the most famous medicine in the world. There is probably not a city or town where Hood's Sarsaparilla has not proved its merit in more homes than one, in arresting and completely eradicating scrofula, which is almost as serious and as much to be feared as its near relative,—consumption.

Nell—"Do you think jewelry should be regarded as vulgar?" Belle—"Yes, if you don't happen to have any."

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