

“White man bery unsartin.” “Nigger haint got no friends, no how.” The blackest chapter in the history of the Republican party. The men who robbed and combined to rob the freedmen of their hard earnings.

THE WASHERS AND SCRUBBERS.

THE MEN WHO ROBBED THEM.

BY F. C. ADAMS, Author of the Siege of Washington, Story of a Trooper, and other books.

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“NIGGER HAIN'T GOT NO FRIENDS, NO HOW.”

THE BLACKEST CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

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WASHINGTON: Jos. Shillington, Publisher, 363 Pa. Avenue.

THE WASHERS AND THE SCRUBBERS — THE MEN WHO ROBBED THEM.

The last report of the three Commissioners for winding up (this is a misnomer) the affairs of the bankrupt Freedmen's Bank, brought out in response to a resolution of Congress, introduced by the Honorable Nicholas Muller, of New York, is one of the most remarkable documents ever given to the American people. It is remarkable as illustrating the heartlessness of man; remarkable as illustrating the amount of scoundrelism there is in our social and political organizations; and remarkable for its exemplification of those trite sayings so common among the slaves of the South before the war, and which I have placed at the head of this article. “White man very unsartin.” “Nigger haint got no friends, no how.”

I again approach this black chapter in the history of the great—perhaps I should say once great—Republican party with feelings of sadness. Here, in this remarkable report, we have man's inhumanity to man portrayed in all its darkest colors.

Just here let me pause for a moment to thank kind, generous-hearted Mr. Muller for introducing the resolution which brought out the strange chapter of scoundrelism contained in this remarkable report. And I do this the more cheerfully because he is a Democrat and I am an old time Republican, perhaps I should say Abolitionist, and I had failed in three attempts to get a Republican to introduce it.

Before proceeding to dissect this remarkable report, however, I propose to say, as a matter of history, something in regard to the formation of the plot concocted by, to use a vulgar phrase, Boss Shepherd and his Ring to rob this bank for the earnings of the poor.

Even high-toned robbery has its vein of romance, and there was something romantic in the early stages of the history of this gigantic robbery. One cold, stormy November night, in the year 1871, my rooms were invaded, and my reveries broken by a man I regarded as an intruder. He threw off his wet coat, put his umbrella in the coal box, and I invited him to take a seat. "I am here," he said, "on a very important mission." He was considerably excited, and for some minutes spoke with a tremulous voice and somewhat incoherently. At first I thought he was under the influence of liquor, but I remembered that he was not given to the cup. I begged him to concentrate his thoughts, and tell me in the fewest words possible what he had to say.

"Mr. Adams," he said, after pausing a moment, "I know you are a true friend of the colored man."

"Well, never mind that, said I, proceed with what you have to say."

He did proceed, and disclosed to me the most monstrous plot for getting possession of the money deposited in the Freedmen's Bank, and that by men who had been prominent Republicans and professing Christians. There was something so monstrous, so heartless, and so at variance with the laws which ordinarily govern human actions, as to create a doubt in my mind of the truth of what he said. The name of this gentleman was John R. Elvans, a member of the Examining Committee of the bank, who informed me that he had protested, in the name of honesty and humanity, against the contemplated robbery, and had resigned rather than have it appear that he had countenanced so monstrous a wrong. (Just here I desire to put on record this acknowledgment of Mr. Elvans' honesty.)

The substance of the plot was that the six millions of hard earnings of the slaves, constituting their life-time savings, were to be got by the conspirators on worthless securities, such as bogus paving company stock, second mortgage bonds, and stock of the Seneca Sandstone Company, shares of the Young Men's Christian Association, and other stuff even more worthless. He also insisted, with considerable emphasis, that the Seneca Sandstone Ring had got complete control of the bank's money.

In reply to a request that Mr. Elvans would give me the names of the men prominent in so dastardly a conspiracy, he gave me those of A. R. Shepherd, Hallet Kilbourn, William S. Huntington, Doctor John L. Kidwell, Lewis Clephane, O. O. Howard, and D. L. Eaton. He also asserted with some vehemence that the officers of the bank, professing Christians and pretended friends of the negroes, were "deepest in the fraud."

In order to be sure of my ground, and not to be misled, I requested Mr. Elvans to get me a transcript from the books of the bank, of the loans he had asserted had been made on those worthless securities. Two days afterwards he brought me the desired transcript, which is now before me in his own handwriting. The following is an exact copy of it:

1. "\$20,000 Seneca Sandstone Quarry Company, at 90 cents, to Dr. John L. Kidwell. Loan, \$18,000."

2. "Loan to M. G. Emery of \$25,000, on corporation coupon certificates, par value of \$50,000."

Mr. Emery was mayor of the city at the time, and it is only right to say here that the loan was a legitimate one, and ultimately paid, with interest.

3. "Loan to H. K." (which meant Hallett Kilbourn.) "on 300 shares of Metropolis Paving Company, \$14,000. The par value of stock \$30,000, only \$3,500 paid up."

The stock of this concern of which Lewis Clephane was president, and at the same time one of the Finance Committee of the Bank, was at the time it was hypothecated utterly worthless. This Lewis Clephane was what we shall call here, a high society Republican, and twenty years ago was book-keeper for Doctor Guilmeil Bailey, editor of the *National Era*, an ultra anti-slavery journal. Mr. Clephane is now a man of wealth, lives in a thirty thousand dollar house, pretentiously located on the corner of 13th and K streets. How he got the money to build such an elegant house, to ride in his carriage, and fare sumptuously every day, is not a matter for so humble an individual as myself to inquire into. Washington has its laws, socially, legally, and morally, and I have sometimes thought that the bigger the thief the greater were his immunities. The difference between the big thief, in Washington, and the little thief, was beautifully illustrated a few weeks ago in the sentence of one of

our judges who sent a black man of the name of George Washington to the Maryland penitentiary for 7 six months, at hard labor, for stealing a goat. Yes, for stealing a goat, commonly regarded as a public nuisance. With so righteous a sentence, staring us in the face, who will dare say justice is jobbed in this District?

As to the matter of Mr. Clephane's wealth, so suddenly acquired, I can safely leave that as a matter to be decided between his conscience and himself. Enough of this. Let us return to Mr. Elvans' transcript.

4. "Demand Note, of *Scharf* Paving Company, collateral, 200 shares, of \$100 each. (Worthless.) Loan, \$3,000."

This Scharf Paving Company was an offshoot of the rascally Metropolis Paving Company, of which John O. Evans, Kilbourn, and other congenial spirits, were the managers, and Lewis Clephane the president. And just here I beg the innocent reader not to forget that during all this time Lewis Clephane, the high society Republican, described above, was a member of the Finance Committee of the Freedman's Bank, made such, because of his supposed friendship for the colored man.

5. "Loan to John L. Kidwell, apothecary, and President of the Seneca Sandstone Company, 20 bonds of \$500 each. Loan, \$4,000, at 10 per cent."

These bonds were not worth the paper they were printed on.

GENERAL O. O. HOWARD, THE GREAT CHRISTIAN SOLDIER, COMES UPON THE STAGE AS A SPECULATOR.

6. "Gen'l O. O. Howard, (late Vice-President of the Bank,) on Lot 11, in Block 4, subdivision of Smith's farm; also sundry good and bad bonds as collateral. Loan, \$24,000."

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To avoid argument, let us accept General O. O. Howard as a first-class Christian and an accepted friend of the colored man and brother. But the reader must not forget that, from the days of Adam, our great forefather, down to the illustrious Babcock, temptation could be made too strong for even the purest of Christians. And, too, there were crimes by which even the angels fell. The six millions of dollars deposited in the Freedmen's Bank by the slaves just set free, after nearly two centuries of the most abject bondage, proved Brother Howard's Satan, tempting him on to commit crime. The temptation was too strong for him, and he fell a victim to his ambition for speculation, just as Satan, before him, had fallen under the too great weight of another kind of temptation. Yes, the great, the good, the Christian soldier fell a victim to his love of gain. Our Saviour scourged the money-changers

for a crime much less heinous, and he drove them out of the Temple, too. It is in proof that this walking example of Christian purity, this soldier of the Lord, resigned his position as Vice-President of the Bank for the safe keeping of the freedmen's earnings, because the law debarred him from being a borrower, and three days afterwards appeared at the counter of the bank and borrowed \$24,000 of its money—that, too, for the vulgar purpose of speculating in corner lots. General O. O. Howard still holds his position as a high society Republican, and is an idol of the church.

I now come to that great modern statesman, Christian, friend of the church, and defender of the illustrious U. S. Grant, and the still more illustrious Babcock, the personification of the late Board of Public Works, and all the crimes it was heir to. It was not to be expected that a 9 gentleman of so much goodness of heart, so wise, modest, and retiring; a gentleman whose heart yearned every hour of the day to do generous acts for the benefit of his fellowmen—who went to bed of a night contemplating the amount of good he could do for mankind in general and Washington in particular; whose disinterestedness caused him to forget himself entirely—a man, I assert here without fear of contradiction, who, by his own unaided exertions, had raised himself from the position of an humble plumber and gas-fitter—thankful for a job, no matter how small—to the high position of a governor, a modern statesman, a friend of humanity, and an adviser of the President. Here let me say, as a lover of truth and justice, that a great deal has been said about the fall of this great modern statesman, and very little about his rise. To us the rise is the most important part of it, and for the very reason that it repeats the story of Whittington and his cat, thrice Lord Mayor of London, to say nothing of honest Sancho Panza and his government of the island of Barratario. But comparisons between governors are odious, as Mrs. Malliprop said.

Just here I confess, as a lover of the truth of history, to have erred and strayed from my subject. My object was to show you that Alexander R. Shepherd (according to Mr. Elvans,) was one of the original conspirators for robbing the Freedmen's Bank! This is sad, but it is true. He appears in Mr. John R. Elvans' transcript, as follows:

7. "Loan to A. R. S." (Alexander R. Shepherd) "of \$15,000, on lots 5 and 6, square 452."

I was informed on good authority that these lots, 2 10 on which Mr. A. R. Shepherd borrowed fifteen thousand dollars, were not worth half the amount. This gentleman's future operations with the bank were conducted on a more magnificent scale, but in the names of other persons. As Mr. Beverly Douglas said during his investigation into the affairs of the bank, it was marvelous to see how many of other peoples' fingers Mr. Shepherd had used to pull the Freedmen's Bank chestnuts for him. I had hoped that the solemn and impressive death of that other great modern statesman and benefactor of mankind, William Marcy Tweed, would have had a good effect on the moral and

religious status of our late governor. But recent events convince me that the solemn and impressive warning remains unheeded.

Here again we have another Christian statesman, of high standing in the Republican church, who wants the Freedmen's money—doubtless for a pious purpose.

8. "Henry D. Cooke, (chairman of the Finance Committee,) loan of \$10,000 on 400 shares of stock of the Young Men's Christian Association."

It is due to Mr. Cooke to say that this sum was afterwards paid. Doubtless his intentions were good when he borrowed the money. Naturally a well-meaning man, he fell a victim to bad association.

9. "P. T. Langley's note, endorsed by D. L. Eaton, actuary of the bank. Loan, \$500, no security."

This completes the transcript brought me from the books of the bank, in November, 1871. I need hardly tell the reader that the gentlemen whose names appear as original conspirators to rob the bank were Republicans of high standing in the party, and professed friends of the colored man. It will also be observed that they initiated the robbery, by getting the money on worthless securities, and with two or three additions of men of the same stamp, in politics as well as religion, continued it to the very end.

Fully satisfied that what Mr. Elvans had told me was true—satisfied also of the existence of a conspiracy to steal the funds of the bank—the next question was, as to how the disaster, sure to result from it, could be averted. I laid Mr. Elvans' statement before several leading Republicans, in and outside of Congress, and appealed to them to assist me in rescuing the bank and its money from this combination of robbers. I use very plain language in treating of this very black crime—one which should sink the Republican party so far out of sight that it would never again have an existence. Must I confess here that I appealed to Republicans in vain? Some of them had for years been shedding tears over the sorrows of the slave; but, like Pomeroy, of Kansas, they had borrowed the newly emancipated slave's money, and it had sealed their lips and withered their consciences.

I appealed to a member of Grant's cabinet. He had previously professed friendship for the negro. He glanced over Mr. Elvans' black list of loans, smiled, and handed it back, saying, the names were those of highly honorable gentlemen, who would not do a dishonest act. He intimated, also, that Mr. Elvans was bent on creating a sensation. This cabinet minister, as was afterwards proven, was connected with the most prominent of these conspirators in real estate and other speculations. In plain language, this gang of Republican knaves were all powerful at court, at that time. Grant, himself, was their friend, associate, and partner in Seneca sandstone and other speculations. Indeed

it is only the truth to say of Grant that such was the force of his democratic instincts that he never had any real, honest sympathy with the negro, to say nothing of his contempt for poor men of whatever color. It was Grant's native dislike of the negro and the abolitionist alike, that led him into his unfortunate quarrel with Mr. Sumner. That quarrel initiated the independent Republicans, and it also initiated the disintegration of the Republican party.

I associate the robbery of this bank with the Republican party, because, as I said before, the robbers were all Republicans of high standing in the church; and the chosen leaders of the party looked on with indifference while the robbery was going on, and continued to look on with indifference until the bank closed its doors in bankruptcy.

Then for the first time the cry of shame went up, but not from the leaders of the Republican party. Their energies were given to protect the robbers, to stifle investigation, and to slander the men fearless enough to expose the hideous conspiracy.

Here we were brought face to face with the fact that the Republican party had abandoned its principles, had abandoned truth and justice—even humanity itself—and in the future would depend on dollars and cents for its strength. Its political morality strongly resembled the Democratic party as it was twenty years ago, when slavery was its Political Fetish—when it had a Jew banker at one end of it and a prize fighter at the other.

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Again we were brought face to face with the fact that the Republican party and its professed leaders had reached that very high standard of modern civilization, when a bank for the savings of the wages of the poor could be made part of a system of robbery, the robbers being encouraged and recognized by the administration and society. To be even more explicit, it was the first time in the history of felony that the workmen and workwomen, the scrubbers and washers, the orphans and widows of the poorest and most ignorant classes in the city of Washington, were unwittingly made to cash obligations issued by an organized gang of thieves and plunderers.

May I ask the reader to go back with me to the time Mr. John R. Elvans made his statement. Finding there was no other way of stopping the robbery or exposing the crime but through the press, I had recourse to that. My first articles, as is very well known, appeared in the *Savannah Morning News*. The *New York Sun*, on being assured of the correctness of my statements, afterwards came to the rescue and did good service in making the hideous crime public. The appearance of these articles created great excitement in Washington, as well they might. Denials came thick and fast, the robbers and their friends—and they were numerous and strong—asserted that the bank was in a perfectly sound condition, that its management was above suspicion. Of course the author of the articles was

denounced as a libeler, and threatened with vengeance. The officers of the bank, without distinction of color or previous condition of servitude, were declared to be Republicans in good standing, and very high-toned gentlemen. I had heard something very similar to this before.

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There was a weak and somewhat dyspeptic Democratic journal, called the *Patriot*, published in Washington at that time, and to the columns of which Montgomery Blair and other patriots contributed. The managing editor of this paper was a Mr. Harris, an experienced journalist, who appreciated the value of truth to a properly-conducted newspaper. This gentleman intensified the excitement then prevailing, by republishing, in a somewhat modified form, two of the articles from the *Savannah Morning News*. For this great offense he not only lost his place, but the paper made two of the most abject and cowardly apologies journalism has any account of. The chiefs of the gang forced these abject apologies from the managers of the *Patriot* by threatening castigation and libel suits.

It is hardly necessary to say here that subsequent developments have shown the black chapter of that robbery to have been ten times blacker than I had painted it. The villainy unearthed by Mr. Beverly Douglas' committee, three years ago, stands to-day the blackest crime in our criminal history. That committee, in its clear and able report, gave us the names of the prominent actors in that great crime; and yet the finger of justice has not touched one of them. Strange as it may seem to the ordinary thinker, these men, so well known at this day, and who committed the meanest theft history has any account of, stand as high in the Republican church to-day as they did when General Grant was the great high priest of the party.

Here let me say that the fact must not be overlooked, that 15 A REPUBLICAN CONGRESS was, in a great measure, responsible for the robbery of the Freedmen's Bank. And this I say more in sorrow than anger. The reader will bear in mind that the acts of Congress, under which the bank's original charter was granted, prescribed the character of the securities (Government bonds) on which its money could be loaned. The men who had combined to get possession of the bank's money, on worthless securities, such as Paving Company stock, Seneca Sandstone stock, Morris' Mining Company stock, stock of the Young Men's Christian Association, and other stock equally worthless and fraudulent, found this simple and very requisite safeguard a serious impediment to the successful carrying out of their infamous project. They went before a Republican Congress, and with the assurance of experienced cracksmen, asked it to repeal the restrictive clause, and pass an act which made the robbery that followed, possible. And, as the vote will show, a Republican Congress was only too glad to accommodate them. In truth, Congress enacted laws for their benefit, and which virtually placed the funds of the bank at the mercy of the thieves and plunderers, who at once entered its vaults and began the work of emptying them. A Republican Congress placed

in the hands of these bad, designing men, the power to make the scrubbers and the washers, the widows and orphans of the poor and the ignorant—even the maimed soldier—unwittingly cash their worthless obligations.

Here, and now let me say a few words in

DEFENSE OF THE NEGRO.

Much has been said and written on the vices, great and 16 small, of the negro. He has been accused of being ignorant, brutish, and vicious, of want of thrift, of having largely developed animal propensities, of a chronic inability to tell the truth, of a disposition to accumulate property not his own, and of a weakness to explore the chicken roosts of his neighbors. In truth he has for more than a century been charged with no end of small vices, and a propensity to do the meanest kind of stealing. Heaven knows he has small vices enough. I admit it and deplore it, as well for its bad effect on society generally, as for the damage it inflicts on his own people. But the thoughtful and candid reader will join me in saying that the negro, in his very worst and most vicious condition today, is precisely what slavery made him. Slavery was based on cruelty and tyranny, and was alike destructive—morally, mentally, and commercially—of the best interests of black and white.

Slavery, in the very magnitude of its cruelty, denied the black man education, manhood, the right to think or act for himself. Slavery denied him all right to his own offspring, all right to regard himself as a man. It caused him to be born a chattel, to be raised a chattel; it degraded him, made him brutish, and sold him in the market like a beast of burden. When the day of his deliverance came he was found to be exactly what slavery made him—nothing more, nothing less. And I appeal to the thoughtful reader, to the just and the generous, if it is not too great an exaction to expect examples of morality and high Christian virtues, of a race so long held in degrading bondage?

Criminal and vicious classes are not confined to race, 17 color, or country. They are found everywhere. A long residence in the South enabled me to observe and study the habits of both black and white. A more illiterate, vicious, and depraved—a class more reckless of human life than the poor whites of the South it would be difficult to find in any country. I refer more particularly to what are known as crackers, wire-grass, and sand-hill men. Depraved and vicious to an extent almost beyond belief, they yet, in many things, hold the better classes subject to their dictation, and too frequently make them responsible for their crimes. My experience has been that for Christian virtues, for all that was kindly and tractable in human nature, the negro, even as a slave, was by far the poor white's superior; in truth, I never saw the time, in the South, when I would not prefer trusting myself in his hands. Now that the negro is a man, a citizen, a voter, and a factor in the body politic of the South, it seems to me that it should not only be the desire but the ambition of the

“ruling classes” (I use an old and much abused expression) to treat him fairly, as if he had always been a man entitled to the value of his own labor, to educate and elevate him—in a word, to make him part and parcel of their own welfare. They must make him something more than he was when he came out of the fiery furnace of slavery, as a means to their own protection. I would suggest, also, as I did twenty-seven years ago, that the “ruling classes” of the South would find it to their benefit to try the experiment of education on that large and very dangerous class I referred to above, called poor whites. I make this suggestion, fully aware that these poor whites—lawless, vicious, and degraded as they are—have heretofore 3 18 fiercely resisted all attempts in that direction, firmly believing, as they do, that education is an evil, and civilization an infringement of their sovereign rights to roam over the sand hills, raid on the plantations of the rich, shoot negroes at sight, and burn down school houses.

The present Governor of Kentucky understood the situation I have been discussing perfectly when he said, in his message vetoing the act for the restoration of that relic of barbarism and cruelty, the whipping post: “Mankind is already too much degraded. He who can elevate and place mankind on an higher plane is a benefactor of his race.” I have had these words printed in letters of gold, framed, and hung on the walls of my humble sanctum.

NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN.

Out of all the charges of vice laid at the door of the negro race there rises the fact that almost on the heels of their emancipation the men and women composing it brought out their savings of a lifetime and deposited nearly six million of dollars in this Freedmen's Bank and its thirty-odd agencies. The candid-minded will admit that this fact is something greatly to their credit, and must not be forgotten when their virtue or want of virtue is under discussion. Indeed, it speaks volumes for their thrift, for their love of saving, and providing for future wants. Most of this money was drawn from the middle southern States, the negroes of Georgia alone contributing nearly half a million, all of which, or nearly all of which, was brought here and placed at the mercy of a ring of Republican sharpers, and with the shocking result already known. It is also something to the credit of the race that, during 19 and just after the war, very many of them, with remarkable shrewdness, purchased property and built comfortable little homes in what is now the most desirable part of the city, and where real estate is the most valuable. The imposing churches and school houses they have built in this neighborhood must also be accepted as proof of their thrift and progress. It is also something to their credit that, during the reign of Mr. Shepherd and his vile Ring, they successfully resisted the shameful attempts made to get possession of their property and drive them from their homes. Here let me say that the greatest danger to the future prospects of the race will come from those

mischievous, ambitious, and restless men, more white than black, who set themselves up as leaders, and are always shedding tears over what they call the sorrows of "their race." They have no claim to race distinction, being a bad cross between a bad white man and an unchaste negress. I cannot help thinking that their example is bad and their teachings worse.

The damaging effect, morally, physically, and otherwise, on the negro, of the robbery of the Freedmen's Bank can hardly be over estimated. It was a very serious blow to his progress—to his future hopes. It made him lose faith in the integrity of the white man. The hope of gain no longer sweetens labor with him. He no longer saves his money to deposit in a saving bank, where he was so plausibly told it would bring him large interest, and ultimately a home. No; my experience has been that a large majority of the negroes to-day spend their money as they earn it, and indeed have lost that ambition to put something aside for a rainy day which characterized them a few years ago.

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I will here relate an instance in proof of what is said in the above, and which will forcibly illustrate a thousand other cases. During the campaign on the peninsula (1862) under McClellan, we had our headquarters (Franklin's) at Toler's Farm, Cumberland Landing, on the Pamunkey. A very intelligent and respectable colored man came to me and disclosed the secret that he had more than fourteen hundred dollars, in silver, buried in the cellar. His wife, a wonderfully active woman, and one child were owned by the Tolers. He, himself, was the slave of a Mr. Myers, of Richmond, of whom he bought his time, as was common among the more intelligent and thrifty slaves. He boasted that his master would trust him anywhere, and had always been very kind to him. The Tolers, on the other hand, were very hard on their slaves, and Henry's greatest ambition was to get money enough to purchase the freedom of his wife and child, and the money he had saved from fishing and oystering on the York and Pamunkey rivers was for that purpose. For that he had toiled, and toiled, and toiled for sixteen years to get money enough to purchase the freedom of his wife and child. Even then he could have taken his money, his wife, and his child, and gone to Washington; but he refused. Indeed, he remained true to his master until the fall of Richmond. Then he came here, put what money he had left in the Freedmen's Bank, and the painful story is told in these words: he lost it. The Washington sharpers got it. I met this man a few years ago; dissipation had overtaken him; he was a changed man; uttering curses on the heads of the men who had robbed him.

Let us retrace our steps again.

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A REPUBLICAN CONGRESS was again derelict of its duty. When the gang organized to rob the bank had finished its nefarious work, and its doors were closed in bankruptcy, one would have supposed that the most important question to be decided was the quickest and most economical method of

winding up its affairs, to the end of saving as much as possible to the poor, deluded depositors. A Republican Congress did exactly the opposite of this.

Instead of authorizing the President to appoint a receiver, a man of well-known integrity and business capacity, it authorized him to appoint a board of three commissioners, each at a salary of three thousand dollars a year, to be paid out of the funds of the bank. This was virtually giving the commissioners a long lease of the funds.

Grant, in making these appointments, charmingly illustrated what is known as Grantism. Creswell, who resigned his position in Grant's cabinet to escape impeachment, and with whose official and political record the country is already familiar, was his first choice. Money is Mr. Creswell's fetish, no one has ever accused him of doing a charitable act, and as for political convictions, he has about as much use for them as a savage has for a time-piece. When a Senator, a true friend of the race, remonstrated against this appointment and predicted the result, Grant said Creswell was a lawyer, and as such could make himself useful in managing the legal affairs. We shall see what kind of legal service this lawyer has rendered.

Grant's next choice was an aged black man, with a very benevolent face, named Purvis. Of law, banking, finance, 22 poor Purvis knew just nothing. His knowledge of medicine even was slender, and he resided in Philadelphia. These qualifications, however, were satisfactory to Grant, who said the Board would not be complete without "one nigger," whose presence was necessary to inspire confidence in the plundered depositors. He doubtless meant the poor devils, the washers and scrubbers, the very poor and the very ignorant, who had been plundered by his cronies.

Grant's third choice was R. H. T. Leipold.* His qualifications were that he was a Hessian by birth, had lived in Wisconsin, was a favorite of Senator Howe of that State, and had been a clerk in that great American penal colony, the Treasury Department. I want the reader to make a note of this Senator Howe part of the business, as I shall have something to say on it hereafter, when a son-in-law of that Senator figures somewhat numerically.

* My old friend, General Spinner, can further enlighten the reader on Leipold's fitness for a commissioner to wind up the affairs of the Freedmen's Bank.

To men of Purvis' and Leipold's type, this salary of three thousand dollars a year was a god-send of no mean dimensions. But placing them in charge of the bank's money was a very dangerous power to intrust such men with. Grant, I am told, used to allude to these commissioners as representing

Europe, Africa, and America. That it was a charming blending of colors must be confessed. The sombre clouding, however, hung around America, represented by the man Creswell.

Let us turn now and see how these commissioners have discharged this

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MOST SACRED TRUST.

Let us survey the field carefully and thoroughly, and see how these commissioners have got away with the savings of the scrubbers and the washers, the widows and the orphans of the very poor and the very ignorant. And I will begin this by turning to the testimony and report of Hon. Beverly Douglass' Investigating Committee, made to Congress May 9th, 1876. That investigation developed:

First: A chapter of fraud unparalleled in the history of crime.

Second: Shameful dereliction of duty on the part of the commissioners.

Third: That J. A. J. Creswell was too much engaged in other business, to give any of his valuable time to the bank. That he paid Leipold \$500 for attending to his part of the business, and quietly pocketed \$2,500.

Fourth: That the colored man Purvis, followed the example of Creswell—paid Leipold \$500 to excuse him.

Fifth: That Leipold was the great Republican high priest, who ran the bank according to his own methods.

Sixth: That the remaining funds were fast disappearing into the pockets of the commissioners and their favorites.

Seventh: That the commissioners were appointed on the 4th of July, 1874, and that no report of their management has been made, as was required by law.

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Eighth: That more than sixty thousand dollars had disappeared in a single year, for what was called "expense account."

Ninth: That there was at least a suspicious connection between Liepold, Senator Howe's man, and lawyer Totten, a son-in-law of the same Senator.

Tenth: That G. W. Stickney succeeded D. L. Eaton, as Actuary of the bank; that some of the very worst frauds on the bank were committed during his administration, and with his knowledge. Not only this, but that he was found to be individually indebted to the bank to the amount of \$2,680.

Brother G. W. Stickney, sometimes called Colonel Stickney, is well known in Washington, alike for his praying propensities and sharp practices. He is, if I may be pardoned for using the phrase, an outwash of the war, a Christian statesman of the Schuyler Colfax type. He is one of those persons who could, at any time, get a certificate of good character from those illustrious friends of humanity, U. S. Grant and Boss Shepherd.

Let us turn to page 50 of Mr. Beverly Douglas' report and see what Brother J. W. Alvord, at one time president of the Freedmen's Bank, says of Brother G. W. Stickney:

By the Chairman (Douglas):

Q. I want you to tell the Committee, without any evasion or concealment, whether, during your administration as president, or your connection with the bank as trustee, there was, to your mind and your comprehension, a fair, faithful, and honest administration of its funds?

A. I can answer in the language of Saturday last. There was 25 I would not say dishonest, but improper loaning to men who were not responsible; loaning upon insufficient security; loaning on illegal security, such as city scrip and personal chattels; and permitting employees at the branches to loan without the knowledge of the trustees. The Actuary [Stickney] gave them such permission as that. They quoted him as authority for such loans. I do not think that the trustees ever stole any money. [Credulous Alvord!] The matter of Vandenburg is one of the marked instances that I would range under insufficient security.

Q. You seem to be very well acquainted with Vandenburg, from your boyhood up. Do you know whether there was any business connection in the street paving business between Vandenburg and Alexander R. Shepherd at the time these loans were being negotiated?

A. I do not know that there was any business connection.

Q. Tell us of any other connection that there was between them.

A. I know that they were acquaintances, and that Mr. Shepherd was at the head of affairs here, while Mr. Vandenburg was a contractor.

Q. Contractor under him?

A. Contractor of him; he contracted to do his work in the city for pay. * * *

By Mr. Bradford:

Q. Where is this Mr. Stickney, the actuary? Does he live in this city?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was his pecuniary condition when he entered the service of the Freedmen's Bank?

A. He was a man without any appearance of any considerable amount of means—not very large amount of property. He is a wide-a-wake, active, business real estate broker.

Q. How much property has he got now?

A. I cannot tell. * * * I think he has an interest in a good many pieces of property; how large that interest is, or how well secured, I cannot say. 4

26

The above will serve to show what kind of a man this G. W. Stickney was. The simple truth is that, when he took charge of the bank's affairs, about all the property he had was his pretensions to being a high church Republican, and his stock in trade in religion of an assorted kind.

Old man Alvord was an unwilling witness. He could have told the Committee much more than he did of the connection between Stickney and Shepherd, Vandenburg and Shepherd, John O. Evans, Lewis Clephane, and Hallett Kilbourne. Vandenburg is a free and easy, good natured, open-handed man, and not naturally dishonest. And yet he was, during the reign of Mr. Shepherd and his Ring, a sample sheep, of which Clephane, Evans, Kilbourne, and Shepherd constituted the flock. He was associated with them in the paving business, and the very large amounts of money he was permitted to draw from the bank from time to time, and while Stickney had almost absolute control of its funds—nearly \$200,000—convinces me that there was not only collusion, but that Vandenburg was used as an instrument by his more designing confederates. These "Vandenburg loans," as they are called, are regarded as bad as any made by the bank. That Vandenburg never could have used so large an amount of money in his own business, the Committee were satisfied. This, too, must be said, that

Mr. Beverly Douglas was very decidedly of the opinion that Vandenburgh was “used by the master spirits of the ring to pull their chestnuts out of the fire.”

Stickney was responsible for these bad loans. They were made with his consent, perhaps not criminally. I have, however, given enough proof to convince the candid 27 reader that he never should have been employed as an officer of the bank again.

THE SADDEST CHAPTER OF ALL.

I come now to the saddest and most melancholy chapter of this history of fraud. I refer to the report recently wrung from the commissioners in response to Mr. Muller's resolution, introduced in Congress February 25th, 1878. This report, (Mis. Doc. 43, House of Representatives, 45th Congress, 2d Session,) is a very remarkable document, and merits to be extensively read and carefully studied. It is a remarkable document, as well for the force in which it illustrates the blighting power of money, the want of heart, soul, and conscience, even the better class of mankind is afflicted with at the present day, and, worst of all, that there is very little difference between the men, who, in 1870, deliberately plotted to rob the bank, and the men, who, in 1878, and under the disguise of law, make themselves and their friends the beneficiaries of what there is left.

The following passage is quoted from this remarkable report, to which the names of the three commissioners are attached. It reads like a bit of exquisite satire:

“In conclusion, permit us to say that we have no knowledge of any improper use of the funds of the company to which reference is made in the preamble of the resolution of the House of Representatives, except sums required for the payment of petty expenditures and expenses incurred by agents and deducted from their collections.”

This is a very singular statement to make to Congress, and is false on its face. Can it be possible that these commissioners were so deaf to public sentiment that they did not hear the criticisms made on their conduct in managing the affairs of the bank for the last three years? Do they not know that the atmosphere of Washington has been foul with scandals in regard to the relations between one of the commissioners and a well-known Washington lawyer, who was enriching himself at the expense of the washers and scrubbers, the very poor and the very ignorant? Do they not know that these suspicious relations have been the talk of the Washington bar for at least two years? Why, gentlemen commissioners, this report of yours is, of itself, the best proof that there was just cause for these scandals, if such you choose to call them.

I have shown that Creswell and Purvis were mere figureheads, who pocketed their salaries with heartless regularity, while Leipold did all the business, and was really the Board of Commissioners. I have also shown this man Leipold's relations to Senator Howe, and his son-in-law, lawyer Enoch Totten. We have now only to turn and see what an extensive field lawyer Enoch Totten found for his legal services, and how splendidly he improved it. Here are some of his charges:

January 20, 1875, Fees, &c., \$22 00

March 1, 1875, Enoch Totten, Attorney 34 00

March 20, 1875, " " 13 00

April 7, 1875, " " 12 00

April 13, 1875, " " 11 00

May 10, 1875, " " 23 00

May 28, 1875, " " (fees) 500 00

June 25, 1875, " " (fees, &c.) 58 00

September 27, 1875, " " 29 00

October 6, 1875, " " 17 00

November 3, 1875, " " 22 00

" " " (fees) 500 00

December 23, 1875, " " (fees) 1,000 00

\$2,241 00

29

March 11, 1876, Enoch Totten, Attorney \$13 00

March 28, 1876, " " (fees) 1,500 00

April 21, 1876, " " (costs) 85 00

May 5, 1876, " " 69 00
May 16, 1876, " " 85 00
May 23, 1876, " " 85 00
June 10, 1876, " " (fees) 1,886 90
June 30, 1876, " " 22 00
July 20, 1876, " " (fees & costs) 49 00
Aug'st 15, 1876, Filing Bill in Equity 14 00
Aug'st 18, 1876, Attorney's Fees 500 00
Nov'r 22, 1876, Attorney's Fees 1,000 00
Dec'r 11, 1876, Attorney's Costs, &c., 30 00
Dec'r 22, 1876, Attorney's Fees 1,000 00
\$6,338 90
Jan'ry 10, 1877, Enoch Totten, (costs) \$16 35
Feb'ry 9, 1877, " 11 00
Feb'ry 23, 1877, " (fees and costs) 68 43
April 5, 1877, " (legal service) 500 00
April 19, 1877, " (costs) 12 00
May 5, 1877, " (fees) 500 00
May 17, 1877, " (fees) 25 00
May 31, 1877, " (fees) 150 00

June 30, 1877, " (fees) 10 00
July 5, 1877, " (attorney's fees) 500 00
July 13, 1877, " 125 00
July 19, 1877, " (attorney's fees) 60 00
Sept'r 1, 1877, " " " 1,200 00
Sept'r 15, 1877, " " " 1,409 53
Oct'br 18, 1877, " Attorney 25 00
Nov'br 22, 1877, " Attorney 30 00
Dec'br 13, 1877, " (attorney's fees) 250 00
\$4,821 21

Summary.

1875 \$2,241 00
1876 6,338 90
1877 4,821 21
Total \$13,401 11

30

The sad story of greed recorded in the above account of fees is so well told as to render comment by me unnecessary. And yet the above is by no means all lawyer Enoch Totten got of the money of the washers and the scrubbers, the very poor and the very ignorant. He can afford to ride in his coach; and I hope he can sleep at night with the self-satisfaction that he has been just and generous to the poor freedmen who had been so cruelly robbed, and had pocketed only what was right of their money.

Not very long since, Mr. Frederick Douglas said there were men in Washington, living in palaces, and riding in their coaches, who were prominent in robbing his people of their hard earnings. Mr. Douglas never told a greater truth. I envy no man destined to carry a guilty conscience through the world with him.

To turn to this lawyer Totten, he may be eminent as a lawyer, but I never heard of it. Nor have I ever heard that his reputation at the Washington Bar was such as to entitle him to excessive fees.^{*} I have heard of Attorney-at-Law Totten, in connection with the "Beaufort and Texas Prize Claim," which, in the language of District Attorney Wells, was one of the very worst frauds invented to get nearly a million dollars out of the Treasury of the United States.

* Since writing this, one S A. Peugh, a Claim and Pension Agent, was convicted by a jury of this District for taking an excessive fee. Compared with Attorney-at-Law Totten's charges, his fee was extremely moderate.

I am assured that the legal services rendered by Mr. Totten, were of a very simple and commonplace kind; and that there are at least fifty members of the Washington 31 Bar, as good and perhaps better lawyers than Mr. Totten, who would have gladly performed the service for one-sixth of the amount charged.

You have in the above a faint glimpse of the ways and means by which the money of these poor, plundered people is disappearing. And yet these well paid Commissioners, who have proven themselves so recreant to this trust, tell us with a coolness that challenges our credulity, that they have "no knowledge of any improper use of the funds of the company to which reference is made in the preamble of the resolution of the House of Representatives." How very innocent these Commissioners are. Their innocence is only equalled by Mr. Attorney-at-Law Totten's great respect for the money of his clients, the washers and the scrubbers, the very poor and the very ignorant. It was Sheridan, I believe, who said that if he wanted to find a first-class scoundrel, heartless and soulless, he would search for him in the legal profession. Had he lived in this age of Christian statesmen he certainly would have improved on that.

MORE FEES FOR LEGAL SERVICES.

Here, too, is our legal brother, John H. Cook, colored, following modestly in the footsteps of his paler-faced brother, Totten. John found the field open and went in and made a goodly harvest of fees. Ordinarily, John H. Cook's clients are of the ten, fifteen, and twenty dollar class. Here, however, he

improved on himself, like Mr. Frederick Douglass. John H. Cook, a member in good standing at the Washington Bar, never forgets that he is a friend of "his race." I would here say, however, that I am assured by 32 several members of the Washington Bar that Mr. Cook's services in behalf of the bank extended over as long a period of time and were quite as valuable as those rendered by Mr. Totten. A glance at the list of his charges, published below, will at least convince the reader that he was more modest in making up his accounts. Why the Commissioners should have discriminated against color in this remarkable manner is a question the reader can decide for himself.

There are other attorneys-at-law, plain and colored, who were employed by the Commissioners, and who got fees to a very considerable amount; but I nowhere find the name of that eminent patriot and statesman, John Andrew Jackson Creswell. Indeed he does not seem to have rendered legal or any other service, notwithstanding General Grant's assurance that as a lawyer he would be very useful in winding up the affairs of the bank.

Here is Brother Cook's account current for legal services. I have omitted dates:

John H. Cook \$2 00

" 59 00

" 155 00

" 15 00

" 325 00

" 44 00

" 7 00

" 15 00

" 132 00

" 110 00

" 115 00

" 246 00

" 45 00

" 170 00

" 106 00

" 864 00

" 340 00

33

John H. Cook (continued) \$160 00

" 154 00

" 95 00

" 21 00

" 95 00

" 10 00

" 200 00

" 29 00

" 130 00

" 73 00

" 50 00

" 25 00

\$3,792 00

One of the worst features of this bad case, one which will astonish and set the intelligent reader to thinking, will be found in the fact that these Commissioners, whose feelings seem blunted by avarice, again employed the man G. W. Stickney, and in defiance of law, and I was going to say decency itself,

paid him the salary of a Commissioner. This of itself should condemn them as unfit for their high trust.

George W. Stickney, the man who brought so much scandal and disgrace on the bank, again employed and paid the salary of a Commissioner! Shame! What service this man could render, except explaining his own irregularities, I am unable to discover.

The Hon. Beverly Douglas, in his report to Congress more than two years ago, showed us exactly what manner of man this Stickney was. He also showed us, in language not to be mistaken, how shamefully Stickney had abused his trust. He showed us that Stickney had not only allowed his friends to raid on the bank's funds, but was himself a debtor to it in a very considerable amount; also 5 34 that he was responsible for the large and very bad loans made to what was known as the Washington Ring.*

* Mr. Johnson, the Auditor, to whom the Court referred for adjustment certain accounts of the Freedmen's Bank, has just furnished me with the following statements:

In the case of Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company vs. Abbott Paving Company, No. 4465, found balance due the bank, \$63,890.80.

To meet this there is on hand, in depreciated and worthless securities, \$44,165.67.

Freedmen's Savings And Trust Co. vs. Vandenburg. No. 4463.

Found balance due the bank, \$85,372.64.

Securities on hand to meet this, depreciated and worthless, \$75,208.21.

Stickney's shameful and criminal mismanagement is forcibly told in the above. If we had a Tweed to tell us the true inwardness of the Abbott Paving Company, and the men behind its scenes, the story would be doubly interesting.

I can only account for Stickney's employment by the Commissioners on the theory that the old Washington Ring is still active in controlling the bank's officials, and that the Commissioners are more in sympathy with the men who defrauded the bank, than the men and women who were the victims of the fraud. In the face of all this the Commissioners tell us again they have "no knowledge of any improper use of the funds of the company to which reference is made in the preamble of the resolution" (Mr. Muller's) "of the House of Representatives."

Why, gentlemen Commissioners, this Stickney business has been the scandal of the town for months, and it is your fault that you have been deaf to it.

Now mark this strange admission. In a side note on 35 page 87 of the report made in response to Mr. Muller's resolution, the Commissioners say, "Balance due from him (Stickney) as late Actuary Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company, being paid by services." The reader will admit that this is a new, if not entirely novel, method of allowing a delinquent official to discharge his indebtedness to a bank for the savings of the poor.

THE COMMISSIONERS.

These gentlemen ask us to give them credit for, after more than two years, paying a dividend of 10 per cent., (making 30 per cent. in all,) and affect to regret that they could not, indeed had not the means to make it ten more. And yet they admit the fact that their "expense account," in three years, reaches the enormous sum of \$179,437.20; \$62,536.22 of this was for their own salaries and the salaries of clerks, and \$23,008.92 for fees paid to favorite lawyers. In other words, eighty-five thousand and five hundred and forty-five dollars and fourteen cents (\$85,545.14) went into their own, and the pockets of the type of lawyers I have described in another part of this work. Well might Mr. Beverly Douglas exclaim: "The Commissioners regard what there is left of this sad wreck as a legacy for the benefit of themselves and their retainers." That the money is fast disappearing into their own pockets, and that in two or three years more there will be but very little of it left for the washers and the scrubbers, the very poor and the very ignorant, who were so cruelly robbed, we here have ample proof.

A glance over the salary list referred to will show with what heartless regularity these well-paid Commissioners 36 came up to the bank's counter on the last day of each month and drew their salary. I here insert a few specimens:

January 29, 1875. Sundry persons by N. Y. drafts 391 00

J. A. J. Creswell 250 00

Robert Purvis 250 00

R. H. T. Leipold 250 00

George W. Stickney 250 00

A. M. Sperry 208 33

G. W. Clapp 116 66

H. S. Nyman 100 00

C. A. Fleetwood 166 66

G. H. Bruce 55 00

C. H. Jones 70 00

Henry Mason 60 00

John T. Green 45 00

E. A. Wheeler 125 00

W. E. Augusta 100 00

A. F. Hill 100 00

D. A. Ritter 100 00

\$2,637 65

February 27, 1875. John A. J. Creswell 250 00

Robert Purvis 250 00

R. H. T. Leipold 250 00

George W. Stickney 250 00

A. M. Sperry 208 33

G. W. Clapp 116 66

H. S. Nyman 100 00

C. A. Fleetwood 116 66

C. H. Jones 70 00

G. H. Bruce 55 00

Henry Mason 60 00

John T. Green 45 00

E. A. Wheeler 125 00

W. E. Augusta 100 00

A. F. Hill 100 00

\$2,096 65

37

March 29, 1875. John A. J. Creswell 250 00

R. H. T. Leipold 250 00

George W. Stickney 250 00

G. W. Clapp 116 66

H. S. Nyman 100 00

C. A. Fleetwood 116 66

C. H. Jones 70 00

G. H. Bruce 55 00

Henry Mason 60 00

John T. Green 45 00

E. A. Wheeler 125 00

W. E. Augusta 100 00

A. F. Hill 100 00

Horace Morris 100 00

New York drafts for agents 256 00

\$1,994 32

The wonder is that Creswell and Leipold did not ask us to credit them with generous intentions for not waiting until the first day of each month. These worthy gentlemen, so true to themselves, are Republicans, holding front seats in the church of Christian statesmen; they are loud to preach and strong to pray, and they thank God of a Sunday that they are not as other men. And yet amidst all the suffering and distress, all the poverty and want, the class of poor robbed by the officials of this bank here in Washington have been afflicted with for the past two winters, and which the good and the generous so worthily came forward to relieve, it does not seem for once to have occurred to these Commissioners, who were enriching themselves on the money of the washers and scrubbers, that even one month's salary would have purchased fuel and bread enough to feed a thousand starving and shivering families for a month. There is no charity on that side of Mr. John Andrew Jackson Creswell's ledger. He is deaf 38 and dumb when humanity speaks. His name is not down in charity's album; at least I have not seen it there. Nor have I seen Leipold's mite recorded. And I am sure Attorney-at-law Totten would regard it as a libel on his reputation to be accused of giving for charity's sake.

Let me end this sad story by saying that I want no better proof of the prudence, docility, and deference of the negro race to the white man than the fact that they did not rise up and take summary vengeance of the scoundrels who so cruelly robbed them of their hard earnings.

I have shown:

First: That the Freedmen's Bank, like the Freedmen's Bureau, was an offspring of the Republican party.

Second: That its managers were Republicans of the most radical type, from O. O. Howard down to ex-Senator Pomeroy; and from Pomeroy down to G. W. Stickney.

Third: That the men who invented the diabolical plot to rob the bank, and did rob it, were not only Republicans holding front seats in its political tabernacle, but friends and associates of ex-President Grant.

Fourth: That the Commissioners, who have so shamefully neglected their trust, were high-church Republicans, one of them an ex-member of Grant's cabinet.

Fifth: That with the single exception of Vice-President Wilson, not a Republican, high or low, in or out of Congress, has raised a hand or voice against the robbers, or come to the defense of the poor negroes who were being so cruelly robbed.

39

Sixth: That Republicans have, with the single exception I have named, invariably apologized for and defended the robbers.

Seventh: That the thoughtful reader will agree with me that there is a meaner and more despicable class of theft than that which applies to chicken-roosts.

Eighth: That the men guilty of this robbery are all well known; that the most prominent of them, to use the language of Mr. Frederick Douglass, "live in palaces and ride in coaches," and yet Justice has not laid even its most dainty finger on them.

It now remains for Congress to assert its prerogative, to rise up and wipe out this abomination, to put a stop to a scandal that has become national, and place the winding up of the affairs of the bank under the Secretary of War, with authority to appoint a competent officer to perform the duty, to the end of saving what there is left of the wreck to the poor victims of this cruel robbery, instead of having it pass into the pockets of the Commissioners and their legal retainers. We all know and appreciate the prompt, honest, and economical way in which Adjutant General Vincent brought the affairs of the Freedmen's Bureau to a close, and exposed the canting hypocrites who had grown rich by pocketing the colored man's bounties. We want just such a faithful and efficient officer to wind up the affairs of the Freedmen's Bank.