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JAMES W. McEWEN

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GARFIELD.

The Public Career of a Machine Partisan.

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Some Highly Interesting Reading.

The New York *Sun*, of May 8, 1880—exactly one month before Garfield's nomination—contained the following article:

CREDIT MOBILIER AND DE GOLYER.

James A. Garfield is now serving his ninth consecutive term as a member of the House of Representatives. At the end of his term he will succeed Mr. Thurman in the Senate, as night succeeds day. Gifted with fine natural parts, possessed of some literary ability, given to study, popular in manners, and with a pleasing style of speech, few men have begun public life with such advantages. No public man has sacrificed his opportunities more unworthily.

Mr. Garfield entered the army in 1861 as a Colonel of volunteers, and left it a Major General in 1863, with a record which, though not shining, was quite creditable. The Republicans of the Western Reserve, who had sent Joshua R. Giddings to Congress until he became recognized as the father of the House, took up Garfield on his return from the war, at 32 years of age, and have clung to him since then, despite the most damning proofs of his venality and jobbery in legislation. Fidelity to party in its fierce and intolerant spirit seems, like the mantle of charity, to have covered a multitude of sins in his case.

Thrown into the midst of the reckless legislation for which the calamity of civil war furnished an opportunity, he soon developed the traits of character which have more recently made his name notorious throughout the country. He became the advocate and apologist of the huge land grants and subsidies by which millions of acres of the public domain and tens of millions of money were voted to great corporations and rings. That may be called the beginning of the organized corruption which flourished during Grant's two terms. Garfield voted for almost every job, and for almost every iniquitous scheme of the lobby that then controlled the leading committees.

The construction of the Union Pacific railroad furnished the opportunity for a gigantic fraud. Congress voted money and land enough to build it without any considerable issue of bonds or stock by the company. The Directors were forbidden by law from engaging in contracts or holding other interests of profit. Therefore they could not become beneficiaries by the abuse of their trust until that obstacle was overcome. They soon found a way to do it. A company known as the Credit Mobilier, organized upon the French plan, had procured a charter from Pennsylvania, which proved to be a failure in its hands. This charter was purchased. A ring of officers and Directors of the Union Pacific road obtained absolute control of its affairs. They contracted with themselves under another name for the construction at exorbitant prices. They swindled the United States, the bondholders and the stockholders for the benefit of their own close corporation.

In 1867, Oakes Ames, James B. Alley and others, known as the "Boston party," got possession of the Union Pacific and the Credit Mobilier. At that time Ames was a member of Congress, and a manufacturer of reputed wealth. The great contracts passed into his hands, and the dividends of the Credit Mobilier had already attracted attention. Elihu B. Washburne introduced a resolution in the House which alarmed the jobbers for their immense profits. Colfax, then Speaker, and one of the creatures of the ring, silenced this movement for a time by parliamentary tricks.

Still, the Credit Mobilier monopolists were uneasy, and proposed to buy off opposition. In January, 1868, Ames wrote to McComb, who afterward started the investigation from motives of revenge, "I have assigned as far as I have gone" (certain shares to different States); "the 50 per cent. increase I want for distribution here, and soon." A few days after, he was still more urgent. He wrote again: "In view of Washburne's move here, I go in for making our bond dividend in full. I want that $14,000 increase of the Credit Mobilier to sell here. We want more friends in this Congress." As he himself said, the object was to put the stock "where it would do the most good." The stock was then selling at $350 a share on a par value of $100. It was issued in blocks of thirty, twenty and ten shares to members of Congress at par, and the so-called purchase was more than extinguished by the accrued dividends. It was a nice stock to hold.

The first disclosure of the corruption was made in the *Sun* during the summer of 1872, implicating many of the Republican leaders. A Presidential election was then pending, and they all vehemently denied any connection with the fraud. Garfield's statement was more explicit and bolder than that of any of his confederates in the crime. An investigation was ordered by the House soon after the meeting of Congress; the examination of witnesses began on Dec. 12, 1872. At first Oakes Ames was disinclined to make any exposure; but when the incriminated members combined to swear him down and to free themselves by rank perjury, his blood warmed quickly, and he determined to let the truth be known, though in the end there was much concealed.

Garfield submitted to the committee a prepared statement on Jan. 14, 1873:

I never owned, received, or agreed to receive any stock of the Credit Mobilier or of the Union Pacific railroad, nor any dividends or profits arising from either of them.

Ames was recalled Jan. 23, 1872, and testified to the stock he had issued to Garfield, the dividends allowed him, and the balance of money paid into his hand, which Garfield pretended was a "loan." He submitted a memorandum of the account in detail. It came to the knowledge of the committee that Garfield had visited Ames with the object of inducing him to retract or modify his testimony, and he was reexamined on the 29th of January, as follows:

Q. You may state whether, in conversation with *you*, Mr. Garfield claims, as he claimed before *us*, that the only transaction between you was borrowing $300? A. No, sir, he did not claim that with *me*.

Q. State all you know in reference to it. A. I told him he knew very well that that was a dividend. I made out a statement and showed it to him at the time. In our conversation he admitted it, and said there was $2,400 due him in stocks and bonds. He made a little memorandum of $1,000 and $1,400, and said there was $1,000 of Union Pacific railroad stock, $1,000 of Credit Mobilier stock, and $400 of stock or bonds.

Q. When was that memorandum made? A. It was made in my room. I cannot remember the date. It was since this investigation commenced.

Q. Have you the memorandum that Mr. Garfield made? A. I have the figures that he made. [Paper shown in Garfield's handwriting.]

Q. You say these figures were made by Mr. Garfield? A. Yes, sir.

Q. That was his idea of what was coming to him? A. Yes, sir.

Garfield sought to tamper with and suborn Ames, and the attempt ended in his claiming a larger share in Credit Mobilier than had been allowed to him, after having solemnly sworn a fortnight previously that he "never owned, received or agreed to receive any stock of the Credit Mobilier nor any dividend or profit arising" therefrom. The climax was capped when Ames produced his diary with the original entry against Garfield, dated Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1868, setting forth his account for ten shares of Credit Mobilier.

These terrible revelations were allowed to pass unnoticed. Garfield did not dare to go before the committee and confront Ames, because he knew there were still other plots in reserve. He waited until Ames was in his grave, and then, with Schuyler Colfax and others who had been bribed, he attempted to whitewash the infamy.

But, passing from that period to more recent times, let us examine his record after he became Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and, as one of his colleagues, "held the purse strings of the nation." The forty-second Congress, in which the Republicans had large majorities in both houses, has gone into history as memorable for scandalous legislation. Among many disgraceful acts was that authorizing the infamous Sanborn contracts, by which informers and spies were enabled to seize the books of merchants, and, by connivance, to blackmail them, and at the same time to plunder the treasury of immense sums. That law was the result of a corrupt combination between certain members of Congress, certain treasury officials, and one Sanborn, with one Jayne as the master workman. Some idea of the magnitude of their operations may be formed from the fact that Sanborn drew from Judicial bill, authorizing the contracts to be made. It was a "rider" and not in any way germane to the bill. But the Republicans then had the chronic habit of mounting their very worst legislation as riders on the regular supply bills. The bill, thus amended, was reported to the House April 8, 1872, and the job was badly beaten.

Then came the fine hand of trickery to play its part. Mr Garfield, instead of allowing the bill to go back to the Senate, where the action of the House might be concurred in, moved directly for a committee of conference, so as to smother the amendment in the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation bill. This manœuvre succeeded, and Sanborn's ring, introduced in the House by Garfield, and fostered by the Chairman of Ways and Means, was enabled to plunder the treasury nearly $175,000 for three months' service.

But for Garfield's direct complicity that infamous job was done in this way: Sanborn would never have obtained the statute book. The job was done in this way: Sanborn then carpet-bag Senator from the South, introduced an amendment to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation bill, authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and a nonsectarian of Sanborn's ring, introduced an amendment to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation bill, authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and a nonsectarian of Sanborn's ring, introduced an amendment to the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Appropriation bill, authorizing the contracts to be made. It was a "rider" and not in any way germane to the bill. But the Republicans then had the chronic habit of mounting their very worst legislation as riders on the regular supply bills. The bill, thus amended, was reported to the House April 8, 1872, and the job was badly beaten.

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