

CHAPTER I

BONDAGE OF THE PRESS

IMAGINE two of our Princes of Privilege laying out a campaign for the acquisition of a fresh franchise grant. If they had to deal with a political boss, the course would be simple: merely to name the consideration and receive the grant. In the absence of a boss, the process must be different.

"Who would have charge of the matter?" asks one.

"Mr. M, the superintendent of our system," is the reply.

"How many votes could he count in the Board of Aldermen?"

"With no talk or fuss, two thirds; with friction, a few less."

"Could he be sure that the majority would see how the public would benefit by the grant?"

"He says he could."

"Of course there should be no bribery or scandal, but would he have ample funds for 'attorney fees,' 'clerk hire,' and the like?"

"Ample."

"And suppose the newspapers should cry out?"

"We must take care of that. I own an influence in *The Dart*. I think the management would be unprejudiced enough to print what we should be pleased to have said. Mr. Y's bank has lent considerable money to *The Bow*, as I happen to know. We could take him in with us and have him observe to *The Bow's* management that our enterprise

will mean more money to be spent in wages and more railroad facilities for the general public; that it therefore should be supported; that, at any rate, it should not be antagonized. And then there is *The Quiver*: you know it is mainly owned by the Z estate. The executor is a conservative man. We can give enough time to be civil and friendly with him and let him understand how all the conservative interests ought to support us in this matter; that if any of us abandons the others and gives the least countenance to such a thing as public ownership and operation of railroads, there is no saying where the public might let itself be led by unprincipled, self-seeking agitators. If he would not listen to reason, then we could influence some of his larger advertisers to object to a paper expressing the sentiments of socialists and anarchists and to say that to continue to advertise in it would hurt their trade. This would hit the purse and get the paper. But such a plan would have to be well executed to be altogether successful, and the possibility of a misfire makes it an extremity measure."

"But *The Fly* and *The Sparrow* — what of them? They would bother us."

"Granted, but they always were against us. Are they important enough to hurt? Besides, it would look better not to have the press unanimous. The charge of 'owning' and 'subsidizing' would not appear as apt. With the three largest papers presenting our argument in our way, and ignoring or belittling that opposed to us, we could put the deal through.

"But the job is a big one — bigger than any before."

"Bigger, because we're bigger."

"Such a privilege in the streets capitalized means fifty millions, at least."

"Which makes the weightier motive for capturing politics, the politicians and the press."

This may serve to illustrate the broader conditions. Acquiring through the exercise of their privileges vast wealth,

and striving to conserve and extend those privileges through the corruption of politics and by control of the legal and military arms of the government, our princes try at the same time to shape public thought on such matters through the press, the university and the pulpit. And of the three means of guiding the minds of the multitude, the first and most obvious is the press. A privilege is in violation of equal rights. No sooner does it appear under a popular government than popular attack upon it begins. The natural mouthpiece for this attack is the press. It expresses the consensus of opinion. Privilege at once stealthily moves to get control of that mouthpiece. Getting control, it achieves a double purpose if, without general realization, it offers Esau's hands, but Jacob's voice — that is, if it makes the popular mouthpiece appear to speak for equal rights, but in reality speak for privilege.

At first it might seem the cheaper and easier course to control the press by putting restrictions upon it. This would appear not to be a difficult matter for the power that manipulates our politics. But such a course would stir the American people to a quick resentment. "The liberty of the press is essential to the security of freedom of a state," says the Massachusetts Bill of Rights of 1780. "It ought not, therefore, to be restrained in this Commonwealth." This has been the sentiment of the whole country. From colonial days the press has had a liberty of utterance which to Europeans has appeared to be no less than a wild license, especially as it presents and discusses personal matters. It might be called the public gossip. All manner of questions, public and private, important and trivial, are offered to public view in this forum. If our best judgment does not approve of the excesses committed under this freedom, it prizes the free utterance. The body of the people have accepted the words of Thomas Jefferson, that such things must be set down as "a part of the price we pay for our liberty, which cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that be limited without danger of



losing it."¹ Politicians learned a stern lesson from the attempt of President John Adams to use shackles. He procured the passage of the "Sedition Act," empowering him to punish political criticism in the newspapers. It became one of the main causes of the overwhelming defeat of Adams for reelection in the "civil revolution of 1800." The century since passed has seen no change in the popular attitude.

The great Federation of Labor, with its one and three quarter million trade unionists, signalized this in its twenty-fourth annual convention, held in San Francisco in the fall of 1904. The labor council of New Orleans had boycotted a newspaper, not on the ground that it was non-union, but because it had criticised some of the actions of the council. The National Convention of the Federation condemned the boycott in these positive terms: "The untrammelled freedom of the press is so important to the well-being, not only of organized labor, but to human civilized life, that no conceivable circumstance can arise that can warrant trade unionists in their organized capacity to place a publication upon a boycott list for the expression of opinion."

And so, aside from Adams's "Sedition Act," we might say, as De Tocqueville wrote fifty years ago: "Not a single individual of the millions who inhabit the United States has, as yet, dared to propose any restrictions on the liberty of

¹ To John Jay, he wrote (Paris, Jan. 25, 1786, Jefferson's Writings, Ford Edition, Vol. IV, p. 186): "It is really to be lamented that after a public servant has passed a life in important and faithful services, after having given the most plenary satisfaction in every station, it should be in the power of every individual to disturb his quiet by arraigning him in a gazette, and by obliging him to act as if he needed a defense, an obligation imposed on him by unthinking minds, which never give themselves the trouble of seeking a reflection unless it be presented to them. However, it is a part of the price we pay for our liberty, which cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that be limited without danger of losing it. To the loss of time, of labor, of money, then must be added that of quiet, to which those must suffer themselves who are capable of serving the public, and all this is better than European bondage."

the press." Of course there have been repressive acts under military rule, as during the Civil War; and under hostile acts of mob, as with the mob of mine owners and militia in Colorado during the strike struggle in 1903-1904. But these were only isolated cases. We are considering the attitude of the people at large toward the press in general. That attitude has been one of jealous preservation of freedom of expression even to frequent wanton abuse. Privilege, in consequence, has been constrained to guide what it could not muzzle.

For purposes here being considered the press may be divided into two general classes: the monthly and weekly publications belonging to one, the dailies to the other. Putting apart those publications that rarely or never trench upon political or economic subjects, and aside from trade union and propagandist organs, most of the monthlies and weeklies until recently have been in general respects on the monopoly side. Their owners or readers were there. Their sentiments have been boldly or qualifiedly exclusive. They have appealed to the comparatively small privileged class and to those of easy circumstances who uphold that class through a mistaken idea of the nature of monopoly and confusion of it with what is properly wealth. These periodicals have been high of price and small of circulation.

It must be admitted that periodicals of less exclusive and more general sentiments touching monopolies would not before the present time have flourished. The monopoly issue was not ripe. Except in singular instances, the general public took no particular interest in it. A magazine devoted to it and aiming to be popular would have died. But the rapacious march of monopoly within the past decade has awakened lively popular interest, and latterly a number of low-priced, well-printed, well-illustrated magazines, containing, besides, generally attractive features, have offered exposures of the more flagrant superficial aspects of Privilege, and, in consequence, have sprung into phenomenal vogue.

Yet so long and so many are the arms of Privilege, and so slow are the masses of men to overcome the inertia of habit, especially the habit of thinking, that, save in particular and superficial aspects, Privilege is for the present, at least, safe against general periodical discussion. However searching the examination and cogent the argument of any of these monthlies and weeklies as to this or that phase of Privilege, not one of the flourishing ones will dare arraign the larger and wider aspects for fear of hurting its business credit, which Privilege gives; or of losing advertising, which Privilege closely or remotely controls; or of offending a considerable body of readers, some of whom, belonging to the privileged class, might set it down for a "socialist" or "anarchist" organ, and others of whom, being of the general mass of the population, but advancing by only slow degrees in thought, might dub it a "crank" publication. Its attacks are really not against even a particular phase of monopoly, but rather a particular kind of transgressing individual. It seeks out the distinct person, as if he and only he by his own moral turpitude were the transgressor; as if the monopoly powers he possesses do not exist elsewhere and in other hands would not produce similar results.

In this way Privilege, by the hurt it can do or by the prejudice it inspires, puts limitations upon even those monthlies and weeklies that attack its outposts. As Privilege grows stronger, the attacking power of such publications weakens, unless, indeed, the body of the people themselves become thoroughly roused. Then all individual wills must succumb to the collective will, if that collective will be well directed. But short of these conditions, Privilege, as it gathers strength, gathers sway over this division of the press.

And what is to be said of the monthlies and weeklies is to be said of the dailies, which it has far more need to control, since the daily papers reach the mass of the population more intimately and more often.

The increasing cost of making a newspaper has helped this, since it has put restrictions upon competition. A legend of newspaperdom is that Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the elder, started the *New York Herald* on a dry-goods box. His means were undoubtedly meager. At that time much was not needed. Energy in getting local news and attractiveness of presentation were the chief requisites of newspaper making. But competition for readers in order to attract advertisers has within the past three or four decades added enormously to the cost. While the quantity of local news has been greatly increased and a remarkable era of effective and varied illustration has been opened and developed, there has been a still more remarkable, an almost bewildering, advancement in telegraphic news. This was the least part of our dailies of three generations ago. It now vies with local news in importance, for it offers the daily doings of the globe.

But telegraphic news is, as may be judged, very expensive. The first cause of this is that the telegraphic service in this country is not made a part of our efficient, accessible and same-rate-to-everybody post-office system, as it is in most of the countries of Europe, but is in the hands of private companies and subject to their high and discriminating rates. That is to say, the telegraphic highways in this country are in private hands. The high rates charged make a larger capital necessary to establish a newspaper than would be required if the rates were low. It discourages easy newspaper rivalry. It tends to concentrate the newspaper business in the hands of the comparatively few persons who, knowing its requirements, can afford to pay the telegraph charges. The principle is the same as a high liquor license, which prevents the starting of rival saloons that would come into existence did no such tax exist. It is also like a Federal internal revenue tax on, say, alcohol or matches, which adds so materially to the outlay necessary to engage in that line of enterprise as to shut out such as would be glad to enter the field against

those already there. In this way the newspapers that now exist have to pay a heavier telegraph toll than they would were the telegraph lines a department of the postal service. But they are willing to pay it, and they make no general demand for a postal telegraph, because they are now free of competitors which then would embarrass them.

And if high rates operate to discourage the weak and consequently help the strong, discriminating rates do so still more. Discrimination occurs through secret rebates. If not so open as formerly, yet it is done. And it goes to the benefit of those papers which can bear the requisite influence upon the telegraph companies, just as railroad rate discrimination favors those on the inside who can exert the "pull."

Still another circumstance that works to the advantage of the big and the disadvantage of the small paper is the leased wire between the greater centers. This is a cheap way for the larger papers to handle a considerable part of its special telegraphic news. It is beyond reach of a paper having only a small amount of such special matter.

In this way it is seen that in the telegraphic field the strong papers have great advantages over the weak ones. All these advantages stand against the starting of new papers, and to them must be added still another element, a combination of the stronger papers into telegraphic news-sharing associations.

While the general wire service of an American newspaper is very costly, a joining together of a great many papers throughout the country in an Associated Press reduces the cost to each for news which they may share in common. None but members can get this service, and new members, except in new news centers, are not admitted. The purpose is not only to reduce the cost of such service to the lowest point, but to make a monopoly of it to those included within the combination. In the course of time outside weaklings and bantlings must needs combine to establish a common "wire service" for themselves. They in turn

shut out papers yet to be born. In this way the news associations contribute materially to prevent the birth of daily newspapers.

Nor is it probable that the old "cribbing" channel will much longer be left open for the free-lance newspaper. It is a habit among newspapers to appropriate or "crib" local news from each other. Out of this habit, and impelled by the adverse circumstances which have just been specified, the weaklings and bantlings came to "crib" skeletons of wire news from any available source. That is to say, discouraged from getting news in the legitimate ways, the smaller papers resorted to ways that were illegitimate. These skeletons were "padded" into extended reports. This came to be called "grapevine telegraph" service. Many of the proudest dailies of to-day used "grapevine" at the start. But the Associated Press and the great newspapers individually are now invoking the copyright law against it.

Not that Congress has made the copyright act broad enough to fit the case, for it has not. In some of the British colonies legislative acts have in recent years been passed to conserve news rights; but in this country Congress, for whatever reason, has refrained from taking any such step, nor does it seem likely soon to do so. Still, in cases where the legislative branch of the Government has failed or refused to act, our courts have been found to be accommodating; and the Federal courts are now reading things into the copyright act of which Congress obviously never dreamed. This belongs to the body of "judge-made" law, many instances of which we have seen in the labor injunction cases.¹

One of the judicial extensions of the copyright act occurred in the case bearing title of *American Press Association, Appellant, vs. Daily Story Publishing Company*.²

¹ Book V, Chaps. I and II.

² United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, No. 864, October term, 1901; May session, 1902.

Another case was that of the National Telegraph News, F. E. Crawford and A. K. Brown, Appellants, *vs.* The Western Union Telegraph Company.¹ Circuit Judges Jenkins and Grosscup and District Judge Bunn sat in the latter case, and affirmed exclusive right of the Western Union Company to news transmitted by its "ticker" instruments in advance of others. That the principles involved, or evolved, had very much wider application than this case, however, was demonstrated by Judge Grosscup, who read the opinion of the unanimous court. The judge said, toward the end of his opinion: —

Is the enterprise of the great news agencies, or the independent enterprise of the great newspapers, or of the great telegraph and cable lines, to be denied appeal to the courts, against the inroads of the parasite, for no other reason than that the law, fashioned hitherto to fit the relations of authors and the public, cannot be made to fit the relations of the public and this dissimilar class of servants? Are we to fail in our plain duty for mere lack of precedent? We choose, rather, to make precedent — one from which is eliminated, as immaterial, the law grown up around authorship — and we see no better way to start this precedent upon a career than by affirming the order appealed from.

That is to say, these three Federal judges, by "making a precedent" through an enjoining order, make into law what Congress has not seen fit to enact! And here again it will be observed that, like the injunction issued by Judge Grosscup in the Pullman strike, this order was not issued in behalf of the humble citizen. Nor apparently did the court have the parties in the case chiefly in mind. It was thinking more particularly of, to quote its language, "the great news agencies," of "the great newspapers," and of "the great telegraph and cable lines" — always of the great interest, not at all of the small, struggling one.

By virtue of such construction of the copyright act, the Associated Press and the larger newspapers individually, which regularly "crib" from the European papers, will be

¹ United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Seventh District, No. 789, October term, 1901.

able to prevent all "cribbing" from themselves by the weaker papers at home. If such a principle can apply to telegraphic news, it can apply to local news as well. Incidentally it carries with it a power to harry and kill a weak or new paper with litigation over trumped-up charges.

This, of course, is not to say that stealing should not be stopped. But if it is to be stopped in one instance, it should be stopped in all. If the weak papers steal news, it is largely because the opportunities to transmit news are practically stolen from them — being closed or made difficult for them. The abolition of stealing should apply to both cases. But the courts, so ready to construe the law to conserve the interests of the great, have no thought of the others. And this, as we have seen, is but a part of what confronts the lesser paper. The whole telegraphic news practice, which now is such an essential part of our newspapers, from first to last piles up advantages for the strong and refuses them to the weak.

Further advantage accrues to the larger newspapers from the constraint all are under to use high-priced, patented machinery — type-setting, stereotyping and printing. A peculiarly heavy burden for the small journal has arisen from the formation of a monopoly combination of the white paper manufacturers. Controlling the easily available supply of wood pulp, from which the newspaper webs and sheets are made, most of these manufacturers have entered into "a community of interest," by which the output is limited and the price put up. This advance has been considerable even for the newspaper which is a large user and can place a very large order. For the small paper, which can order only a little at a time, the advance has proved exorbitant.¹

It is true that in the villages and smaller towns it is now

¹ See testimony of Mr. Don C. Seitz, representing the *New York World*, and Mr. John Norris, representing the *New York Times*, before the House Judiciary Committee, Washington, D.C., commencing April 5, 1904.

possible to buy a daily service of "plate matter," made in New York, Boston, Chicago, Washington and other centers. This matter offers variety — from editorials and fashion gossip, to useful household hints and telegraphic brevities. It is made into thin type-plates, and shipped in small wooden boxes. The plates are ready to be fastened on metal blocks in a "form," and within a few minutes after they are received the press can be started.

But the railroad facilities that make the shipping of these plates to points within a radius of one, two, or three hundred miles of a plate-making center offer like facilities to the metropolitan dailies, which accordingly have wonderfully extended their circulations. The "bulldog" Sunday morning edition of some of the New York papers, for instance, goes to press on Saturday afternoon as early as four o'clock. This edition is sold on the news stands on Sunday morning in some of the Southern States. The large papers in Washington, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and New Orleans also have early train editions which circulate over the Southern States, so that small local papers have poor chance against these great rivals.

And, then, too, since advertising in any considerable volume will go only to the large or influential circulation, and since advertising is the staff of life to the newspaper, the weakling has no chance, and all things join to discourage the starting of daily papers, at least in the main centers, unless such new enterprises be heavily backed.

Thus we see the march of concentration in the newspaper field. Other centralizing processes have been at work, but thus far have not proved successful. From time to time efforts have been made to draw the newspapers of a given locality into close business relations. In Philadelphia, for instance, an agreement was mutually entered into to accept no death notices for an individual paper, but only on the understanding that they appear in all, a rate for the

combined publication being fixed. The plan was short-lived, however. It did not work smoothly and was abandoned.

On the other hand, the coercive principle was tried in Milwaukee. Had it been successful, it might have proved a formidable weapon in the hands of monopoly. But it was too plainly in violation of personal and property rights, and the higher courts fell foul of it. The *News*, the *Sentinel* and the *Evening Wisconsin*, all published in Milwaukee, entered into a business agreement to force advertising away from a newspaper rival, the *Journal*, which was a very successful publication and which had raised its advertising rates. The allied papers announced that if any person should agree to pay the increased advertising rate charged by the *Journal*, he should not be permitted to advertise in any of the three other newspapers except at a corresponding increase of rate, but that should he refuse to pay the *Journal* the increased rate, then he should be allowed to advertise in any of the other three papers at the rate previously charged.

One of the statutes of 1898 of the State of Wisconsin imposed imprisonment and fine on "any two or more persons who shall combine . . . for the purpose of willfully or maliciously injuring another in his reputation, trade, business or profession by any means whatever." Under this statute the publishers of the leagued papers were convicted and sentenced. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin upheld the action of the lower court. Their case was then appealed to the United States Supreme Court on the ground that the proceedings violated the rights of the plaintiffs under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Presumably the passage was in section one of that amendment, reading: "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." But the appeal was of no avail. With but one dissenting voice, the Federal Supreme Court affirmed the

decision of the State Supreme Court. Justice Holmes read the opinion of the Federal Court and said:—

There is no anomaly in a statute which punishes a combination such as is charged here. It has been held that even the free use of land by a single owner for purely malevolent purposes may be restricted constitutionally, although the only immediate injury is to a neighboring land owner. Whether this decision was right or not, when it comes to the freedom of the individual, malicious mischief is a familiar and proper subject for legislative repression. Still more are combinations for the purpose of inflicting it.

It would be impossible to hold that the liberty to combine to inflict such mischief, even upon such intangibles as business or reputation, was among the rights which the Fourteenth Amendment was intended to preserve.

But if these centralizing moves have failed, other attempts will come under the régime of Privilege— attempts that will be successful. For do not all these things make for the triumph of Privilege? The general interest is best served by a fair field and no favor for newspapers, where the cost of production is at the minimum and there is open invitation to competition. Privilege, on the contrary, asks a restricted field, the least competition; so that, obtaining the ownership or influence over existing newspapers, it will dominate. Our newspaper field *is* now to a great extent restricted; competition, relatively speaking, *is* limited; Privilege *does* own or influence most of the newspapers, if in differing lines, and to that degree it *now* rules.

Yet the public is not altogether deceived. It sees the livery. It reads this or that paper and makes allowance for bias. This is a habit of the people. It began with the free utterances of the press. Every citizen exercised the same freedom to judge as the editor did to write. And thus it was that De Tocqueville wrote half a century ago that “the personal opinions of the editors have no weight in the eyes of the public: what they seek in a newspaper is knowledge of facts, and it is only by altering or distorting those facts, that a journalist can contribute to the support of his own views.”

Who will say that, speaking for the press at large, this is not so in this country to-day? How common is the remark: "I read the *Star Spangled Banner* for its bright and reliable news reports. I care nothing for its editorials, because I know the editor has political or other axes to grind"! This is one way in which the public shows independence, and that independence now and again becomes marked when the polls are carried for some measure despite the combined opposition of the press. But on the whole, Privilege, as it grows stronger, strives to strengthen its hold on the channel of news, whether of the newspaper or of the higher periodical press.

This is not to say that the entire press is actually in bondage to-day. Some of the greatest newspapers and periodicals are free in all respects. But the large majority of the dailies, weeklies and monthlies turn pleader and champion for Privilege in this, that or the other respect, each in its own way, some all the time, others only on rare occasions. And if Privilege shall wax in power, it must certainly increase its influence over the press, for that is the means of informing the public mind. Unless the informing be in favor of Privilege, it must be against Privilege. In the nature of things, the press in the United States must as a whole be for or against Privilege. Privilege is busy every hour binding it to itself. "From the control of the markets to the control of the minds of the people — this is the line of march," says Mr. Henry D. Lloyd. But the case is yet broader. It is: From the possession of or the desire for privileges to the control of the minds of the people.

Nor can any appreciable change in these relations reasonably be expected to follow the college rearing of the working newspaper man. That would give him a more varied stock of knowledge and a more finished technical skill. But would it enable him to see the workings of monopoly any better than he can see them now, or release him from any of the restraints in his

newspaper attitude toward monopoly that check him now?

The distinguished journalist and public spirited citizen, Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, the owner and editor of the *New York World*, who has given a million dollars for the founding of a college of journalism in Columbia University, would develop an *esprit de corps* in the profession akin to that with which the military academy endeavors to imbue its graduates. Says he:—

If such a class spirit existed, no editor who had degraded himself by becoming the hireling of any Wall Street king or ring would dare to face his colleagues. He would be too conscious of having been false to his better nature, and equally false to the traditions of his college and of his profession. . . . The knowledge that a reputable journalist would refuse to edit any paper that represented private interest against the public good, would be enough of itself to discourage such an enterprise. Such a refusal would be as severe a blow to public confidence in the newspaper as the rejection of a brief by a high-minded lawyer is to the standing of a case in court.¹

Would that this could be so, but Mr. Pulitzer must realize that no amount of such "class spirit" will change the conduct of working newspaper men as a body, if the papers on which they must work are not impelled by similar principles. It is not necessary to suppose all editors to be like the one of which Mr. Walter S. Logan, ex-President of the New York Bar Association, wrote in congratulating Congressman Robert Baker of New York for introducing an anti-railroad pass bill into Congress. "I rode the other day with the editor of a leading daily," said Mr. Logan. "He pulled out a bunch of 'annuals' that would take him half over the country. He always had them in his pocket when he was writing editorials on the relation between the people and these railroads giving him the passes." Railroad passes are undoubtedly persuasive with a great many small papers, just as they are with a great many legislators and other

¹ *North American Review*, May, 1904.

public officials. Such editors are usually the owners of the papers they edit. Passes constitute part of their valued perquisites, which they are unwilling to lose. They therefore keep the peace with the railroads of the neighborhood. But in the large cities railroad passes do not often buy editors. That would be trivial compared to the value of a metropolitan newspaper's advocacy. But a better reason is that the railroads own or, through others, exercise a direct or indirect influence over the papers; and that ownership or influence the editor must heed or get out.

"The policy of this paper is devoid of principle," protested an aroused editorial writer to his employer. "I know this speech means insubordination, and so with the declaration goes my resignation." The resignation was not accepted because the proprietor really wished his newspaper to adopt a principle, and because he valued the honest, outspoken words. But of how many newspaper proprietors of the first magnitude may this be said? Just as the vacant chair and the walking stick of the dead and gone Peter Stuyvesant were potent in the council of the New Amsterdam Fathers, so in the editorial councils of most of the great dailies the spirit of privilege is present. There are steam railroad, pipe line, street railroad, telegraph, telephone and gas privileges; there are electric lighting, heating and power privileges; there are mineral, oil, timber, agricultural, grazing, urban and suburban land privileges; there are incorporating, patent and tariff privileges, and a brood of lesser privileges growing out of these and belonging to legislative enactment, judicial favoritism and political graft. These vast, immensely powerful, ramifying and, for offensive and defensive purposes, coördinating powers of privilege, want the voice of the press to influence the people. And when they cannot purchase it, they try any of a thousand other expedients at their command.

Picture a session of the editorial council of a great

morning daily. The departmental heads are gathered about a large table, and each in turn reports the important news features in sight for the next day's issue. In this way all the news and comment departments act with full knowledge and in harmony. The city or local editor generally has the heaviest budget, and in this instance he has at the head of his long-written list what he calls "a first-class sensation and scoop."

"Well?" says the chief editor, expectantly.

"Smithson, our City Hall man," observes the city editor, "has got under the lid of the gridiron railroad grant — names, dates, places, amounts, affidavits — everything. Good for two pages, straight running. Not another paper has a peep at it. Will give the town the biggest shake-up it has had in a year!"

"Any important people involved?" asks the chief, with easy self-command.

"Traced almost up to the door of old Croesus himself, and inferentially to a lot of highly respectable —"

"Hump!" breaks in the chief; "it reminds me of an epoch in New Orleans history. The city had descended to the depths, perhaps owing to the post-bellum 'black-and-tan' politics. Some of the best and most substantial men of the town got together and resolved to make a change. They needed a newspaper to help them in the task. They bought the *Picayune*. The difficult thing was to find a suitable editor — some man whose name would stand for honesty, ability and fearlessness. Colonel Daniel Dennett of the parish of St. Mary's seemed ideal. His character was unimpeachable. He had a brilliant, fearless, pungent pen. He was known and honored far and wide in the planter region as the publisher of the *Planter's Banner*. A committee waited upon the colonel and formally invited him to come to New Orleans and accept the editorship of the *Picayune*. 'Strike with a free hand,' said the committee. 'Clean up the town.' Colonel Dennett accepted, took a little time to fit himself

in his place and size up things, and then, with an avalanche of eloquence and a blaze of indignation, fell upon the great Louisiana Lottery as the first evil for extermination.

"The Lottery was at that time in the heyday of its power. Colonel Dennett's intrepid onslaught spell-bound the town. The *Picayune's* board of directors met hastily, and Colonel Dennett was requested to attend. 'How is it, Colonel,' asked the chairman, 'that you way-lay in this astonishing fashion one of the great institutions of the State?' The doughty colonel replied: 'You said: "Strike with a free hand. Clean up the town." I struck the Lottery, which appeared to me to be good for a start.'—'But,' rejoined the chairman, 'I neglected to tell you that President Charles Howard of the Lottery Company contributed \$100,000 toward our purchase of this paper. It hardly befits us to use the paper in which he owns a large interest to torpedo the company of which he is president.'—'Then your injunction to me,' observed Colonel Dennett, 'is not to be to strike with a free hand; clean up the town?'—'Oh, yes,' answered the chairman of the board; 'strike anything, barring the Lottery.'—'Ah!' said the colonel, 'you mean, clean the town, but leave the corruption. I decline the task. Gentlemen, I resign.' And he went back to the parish of St. Mary's and the *Planter's Banner*."

A pause falls upon the council when the chief finishes his anecdote. The city editor is the first to speak. "I suppose that means that the gridiron sensation is not to be; that it's dangerous; that it may reach somebody at court. Well, it breaks my heart; but I'll kill it. A wink is as good as a nod to a blind ass."

"This council," adds the editorial writer, "being said ass." Nobody disputes the assertion, and the council resumes its routine.

