The Nation.

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The Week.

MAYOR HALL has made a third defence of himself against the charge of being privy and consenting to the thefts from the City Treasury; but it is like his two previous defences—corroborates the charge and deceives no one. For a sample of it this will serve: He says that the *Times* makes a great parade of disclosing *secret* accounts, whereas in point of fact the very accounts which are now brought forward in that paper were long ago freely and fearlessly printed and published in the Reports of the Board of Supervisors. So they were, after a fashion; but when the taxpayer reads the words, "May 31, 1869, A. J. Garvey, Repairs, etc., $36,762," or, "July 5, 1869, G. S. Miller, $49,763 80," it conveys much less information to him than when he reads in the *Times*—as he would be able to read also in Comptroller Connolly's quarterly exhibits, if that official had not for two years declined to make any—that Mr. Garvey, in 1869 and 1870, for plastering and painting county buildings, got $2,870,464 06 of the public money; that J. H. Ingersoll & Co., during the same time, got for furniture and "repairs," $5,663,646 83; and that, in brief, the repairing, furnishing, plumbing, etc., of the County Court-house—as yet unfinished, and, according to Mr. Nordhoff, shabbily furnished—cost us, for the one building, all but seven millions of dollars—$6,997,893 24. The printed accounts, huddled into thick volumes, of which perhaps half-a-dozen are in existence, and which are in no sense accessible to the public, are not calculated or intended to convey any information whatever to anybody, and do not. It is the intention of the law that the Comptroller's exhibits shall do that; and, naturally enough, it is the intention of the Comptroller—whose books are of course kept with a technical accuracy equalling that of any set of books anywhere—to pursue the tenor of his peculiar way as noiselessly as possible, and not every three months attract attention to himself and his accounts. The Mayor, then, makes no defence at all, but gets into the box as witness against himself. More than that, he is defiant. Being interviewed, he took the line that "even if there was anything in it, it would blow over before the next election." "We have got the State," he says, "and we mean to keep it."

Perhaps he is right, and it may be that out of these disclosures no harm will come to himself, or Connolly, or any other of the set, unless, indeed, the exposure should interfere with the success of the Viaduct Railway. We do not observe that crowds are flocking after the shares of that stock, though, with a moderately honest city government, the books would hardly have stood open three days. Considering the length of our unfinished Court-house, and that the Viaduct road, in its two branches, would include something like fifteen miles of brick and mortar work for Mr. Garvey and the other gentlemen to construct and equip, the proverbially timid capitalist may be held excused, under the circumstances, for hanging back a little at first. A public meeting is to be held, it is said; but there is no saying that anything practical will come of it. It may be doubted if there will be any of the talked-of combinations to resist taxes, or any impeachment of the Mayor, or any criminal prosecution of Tweed. People buy the *Times*, and read the figures, but each passes on to business, and declines to pull down on his head heavier assessments, or lose time and money attacking swindlers in courts which they own. But it is certain that the publication of the accounts, whether or not it shakes the Ring in this city, has made many Democrats angry with it, and it is not unreasonable to expect, Hall's impudence to the contrary notwithstanding, that we may have are forming legislature next year and a new charter; which it is not so certain, we trust, as the *World* thinks, that Governor Hoffman will veto. Yet, when we think of Mr. "Hank" Smith, and of Mr. Charles Spencer, with his large family Bible, and the very wicked but still not unique Mr. Winans, it is but a chastened hope we indulge after all that the legislature can help us. Still, that there are many thieves is small reason for not pushing to the wall when you can all you can catch. We suggest the work as a good one for the Bar Association of this city when it gets Mr. David Dudley Field's case finally disposed of.

Mr. Marshall O. Roberts, a prominent Republican, to whom we referred last week as a gentleman who had vouched for the correctness of Mr. Connolly's accounts, has published a card, in which he begs to call the attention of the public to the fact that he did not examine into the condition of all the departments of Mr. Connolly's office, and that the certificate which he and his committee gave Mr. Connolly "referred only to the securities comprising the Sinking Fund, and the manner in which the accounts relative thereto, and to the debts of the city and county, were kept." The fact is, that in the stress of an election, when the Comptroller was accused of withholding his accounts, and of withholding them because he did not dare to publish them, so full were they of evidences of his own and his friends' dishonesty, he invited Mr. Roberts, Mr. J. J. Astor, and four other gentlemen of weight in the community, large taxpayers, to come in and examine his books. They complied with the invitation, and everybody said that we should now know whether or not Connolly was slandered. "We certify," said this committee, "that we have made an examination of the affairs of the Finance Department and Sinking Fund of said city—"Finance Department of said city," not of "said office"—"that the entire office was thrown open to us"—the "entire office," not "a single department of said office"—and "all the account-books, securities, and records of the said Department and Sinking Fund were submitted to our inspection and examination." . . . "And we further certify," they say, at the end of the report, "that the account-books of the Department are faithfully kept." This is language which Mr. Roberts and Mr. Astor must have suspected would, by most people, be taken—as, in fact, it was taken—to mean that "Connolly was all right," and that, from partisan feeling, the Republicans had been clamoring false charges against him. But, however that may be, Mr. Roberts could have had no doubt as to what would be the interpretation of the last sentence of his report: "We have come to the conclusion, and certify, that the financial affairs of the city under the charge of the Comptroller are administered in a correct and faithful manner." Now they came to this conclusion either with such an examination as alone could justify their putting their names to such an assertion concerning such a man, or else they came to it without such an examination; and, in either case, the public may rightly be curious as to what could have induced them to sign the report. Tammany does nothing for nothing; why should prominent Republicans have done anything for Tammany? Mr. Roberts's card is not quite an explanation of his course on the occasion in question.

It is understood that the sub-committee appointed by the Congressional committee which was ordered to investigate the affairs of the Ku-klux Klan in the South are going to report, and are going to report that there is such a thing as the Klan in existence; that it does attack people for their politics; is composed of "Conservatives," and contains no Republicans; has committed many most bloody and shameful outrages, and that the Ku-klux law was necessary and is beneficial. We ourselves have no doubt that the passage of the Ku-klux law was inexpedient and wrong; and we shall wait for some time before believing that the law has practically been of any benefit, all the time believing that any benefit it has brought us has been very dearly bought. As for the rest of the report as above summarized, we are ready to accept it as the truth, and nothing but the truth; but it is not at all the whole truth. Here are some figures from Louisiana which we consider strictly germane to the matter which the Committee has in hand, and which will, at any rate, get some of the country's attention: Between 1850 and 1860, the State tax in Louisiana ranged from twenty-

one cents on a hundred dollars to twenty-nine cents. In 1865 and 1866, it was thirty-seven and a-half cents; in 1867 and 1868, it was fifty-two and a-half cents; in 1869, it was seventy-five; in 1870, it was $1 45; and for this year it will be considerably more than $2. Next, it is to be considered that while the taxes have been thus increasing, the State's expenditures have been constantly in excess of the receipts. Mr. James Graham, the State auditor, certifies that the excess in the fiscal year ending in 1871 is $8,778,618 15—making the total debt of the State nearly $49,000,000. At the breaking out of the war, Louisiana had a debt of $10,000,000; in 1868, this was $14,500,000; in 1869, $22,500,000; in 1870, $41,000,000; and, as we have said, in June, 1871, nearly $49,000,000. But formerly, before 1860, a sixty days' session of the legislature cost from $100,000 to $200,000; the regular session and extra session of 1870 cost more than $750,000; and the regular session of 1871 cost more than $9,000,000. The State Treasury supported at a cost, in 1870, of $432,000, and, in 1871, of nearly $400,000, about thirty sheets (newspapers in name), printed in the country districts, and, in great part, conducted by members of the legislature. The State is, in short, as North Carolina has been, as South Carolina also has been, and as nearly every Southern State has been, the prey, since 1865, of grossly and shamelessly corrupt governments, whose officers have made fortunes, and of rings of railroad and other speculators.

Surely it is not wonderful that the respectable portion of Southern society, seeing what rogues and thieves their rulers and lawmakers are, should not be very earnest in putting down the bands of lawless young men who, if they do disgrace themselves, their State, and often humanity itself, do also sometimes whip a greedy tax-collector, shoot a bribed law-maker, and compel a disreputable office-seeker or office-holder to run the country. It was only this last week that the leading Republican paper of Charleston, while supporting no less Radical a candidate than Mr. Gilbert Pillsbury, an old-time Abolitionist, who is now the mayor of the city, and is up for re-election, pronounced a good part of the rest of the ticket an insult to the honesty, intelligence, and decency of the party. It was of necessity that, in a country like the South, violence should be the response to the frauds and rascalities carried on by such peculiarly sneaking and base rogues as were too many of the Southern "carpet-baggers." In view of the cost of reconstruction in money, in the reputation of the North, in the embittering of the South, in the wrenching which such legislation as the Ku-klux law has given our system of government, it is far from clear that it would not have been cheaper if we had abandoned Mr. Lincoln's system of galvanized States, and garrisoned the Southern country for five years, keeping it in order with soldiers till the Southerners themselves were ready to behave sensibly. It would have cost us fully as little in money, Constitution, and credit as we have had to pay out on the other system; and we are not done yet. However that may be, Louisiana's case will bear thinking of when the Ku-klux Committee comes to report. And how anxious as national Republicans we ought to be that the Republican party of Louisiana should get Dunn for manager—or chief warden—instead of Warmouth, or Warmouth instead of Dunn!

The authorities of the American Labor Union have convinced themselves that neither of the two great parties can be depended on, and that there must be a new Workingman's Party, in which persuasion they have called for a political convention, which is to meet at Columbus, Ohio, in October next, and nominate a candidate for President and Vice-President. The more usual and natural way of launching such a party would seem to be to set it on foot in the legislative or, at the most, Congressional, districts first, and not begin in the national field. By so doing, the class of gentlemen who are apt at first to control the political springs of such organizations as Labor parties, Eight Hour parties, Prohibition parties, Woman Suffrage parties, and the like, can get themselves nominated and, for making the run and drawing away votes from the other side, can secure fair wages from one of the two great parties; or may even secure an election in which neither

are various things that may be done. Such bodies are usually too small for the Presidential field. But the Labor Union men have decided otherwise, and have already made a sort of a platform for their candidates to stand upon, and are going to hold a non-political convention at St. Louis and discuss it. Some of their principles, as set forth in a printed "basis," may be thus stated: A man will work and earn money, and then, when a law is made so ordaining, he will lend it to B at a rate of interest that he does not like, although B, rather than not have it, will pay more interest than the law ordains; a man in Massachusetts will employ a million dollars a year in running a seven-hour factory at a loss, and will not transfer his money to ten-hour factories in New Hampshire or Rhode Island; the price of a miner's labor for a day may be fixed by statute at a sum three times as large as at the passage of the statute, and he will thenceforth be able to save much more money than before, because no other prices in the community will advance in the least; an irredeemable paper currency is the best currency for the poor man, and "a gold basis is a fallacy." There is not the least exaggeration in these paraphrases of the statement made by the "basis," as the discussions at St. Louis next week, to which we invite the attention of our readers, will make manifest. They are "advanced" ideas certainly. The leaders use our old method—but timorously. The legal mind infects them. As their platform shows, they recognize the omnipotence of the statute, but our simple, earnest, radical measure of moving the previous question, and their passing a bill ordering the Government presses to print for each citizen such quantity of greenbacks as will make him wealthy, they are not yet "educated up to."

The shocking accident, on Sunday, at the Staten Island Ferry had some peculiarly pathetic features. Many of the killed and wounded were women and children; they were poor hard-working people who were about to make a cheap holiday by taking a twenty-cent sail, away from the stifling air of the city into the coolness of the bay; of those who were not killed instantly by crushing or more slowly by drowning, many were agonizingly scalded. It is a long time since a more miserable accident has occurred. How it happened will only be known after the investigation, and may likely enough never be known, it not having been the way of such investigations to be very strict or very satisfactory. But who was the immediate cause of the accident, and what shall be done with him, are not questions that it is very profitable to consider on such occasions. As to punishment, juries will never do anything in such cases, because the intention to kill and maim is always utterly wanting; and even when there has been an error of judgment, or a neglectfulness, or even a carelessness, that we are almost justified in calling criminal, still the juries are apt to think, or, indeed, to see, that the offender's sense of guilt and remorse, and the usual loss of his place, and injury to his prospects, is punishment sufficient for his offence. The profitable thing to do in presence of such a calamity as this ghastly destroying of more than seventy men, women, and children, and the wounding and disfigurement of some hundred-and-odd more, is to consider whether or not some new safeguard, applicable generally, cannot be thrown round all our steamboat travel. To this end the knowledge and the usual methods of this particular inspector should be most rigidly examined in the light of testimony from experts, and as heavily visited as possible, if he has been inspecting with insufficient knowledge or insufficient care, and taking fees for sending people to their death. And the general subject of the management of our ferries—a very profitable franchise—may properly be examined thoroughly. On one or two of the lines of travel between the city and suburbs, the treatment of passengers—shut into a floating sty with cattle, and abused by ruffianly deck-hands; kept waiting hours in the ice because the employment of ice-boats costs money; made to wait sometimes a whole night away from home because a boat is taken off without warning—has been a disgrace to the city. Of some of the companies no harm is to be spoken; of others, nothing else; and the general reputation of this Staten Island Company is not in all respects

The great export staples of the country—cotton, breadstuffs, meats, and petroleum—continue to decline slowly and steadily. Neither the ease in money (so-called) nor the general belief in the prosperity of the country can rouse the spirit of speculation; and, in the absence of speculation, large stocks of merchandise are gradually producing the inevitable result—a decline in price. The prospects of the growing cotton crop are improving; and although the unquestionable reduction in the area planted will probably diminish the crop to some extent, even with the most favorable weather, yet the sensational statements of a month or six weeks ago no longer find belief even among the credulous. Breadstuffs have fallen but slightly, owing to continued uncertainty about the condition of the European crops. But in meats and hog products the decline has been sharp, the market for these having been upheld for months past by a bold and tenacious speculative combination which must have resulted, or will yet result, in severe losses. In fact, scarcely any business is at this moment carried on with great profit; and it is no wonder that the hotels at the seaside and watering-places complain of the limited number of their guests, and still more of their limited expenditure. The coal producers continue their insane course, sending to the market at the rate of twenty-six millions of tons per annum, although the largest consumption never yet exceeded seventeen millions. The iron men are faithfully keeping them company. Real estate is dull, as usual at this season, except in the case of "Ring" operations in Westchester County and elsewhere, supposed to be based upon the probable effects of the Viaduct Railway.

Wall Street is sighing for movement of some kind to relieve the dreary dulness. Just as in the merchandise markets, everything is on the decline except Government bonds and the stocks of half-a-dozen great roads, which are forcibly upheld by the great manipulating cliques, aided by some over-confident bank-managers. The latter, misled by the overabundance of money, as it is called in Wall Street (but which in reality is nothing more than an overabundance of bank credit, arising from the simple fact that nobody wants it), are furnishing the means by which these clique combinations are carried on, and are thereby simply still further deferring the day when these gigantic rings will be obliged to follow the example of the pork and grain merchants—and sell. This policy of the banks—an unwise policy, on which we have commented for a year past—is attracting attention in commercial circles, whose interests have during the last few years been systematically subordinated to those of Wall Street cliques, whose operations are invariably injurious to the whole community. Foreign exchange has declined, chiefly in consequence of some of the bank operations just referred to. The export of specie has correspondingly fallen off, and gold is barely steady. While "bank credits" are obtainable at two or three per cent. per annum, "choice" first mortgage railroad bonds are obtainable at prices that net nine and ten per cent. per annum, and nearly the same interest can be obtained on mortgages on city real estate. Yet the talk of the City is the cheapness and abundance of money!

Mr. Gladstone has found in the House of Lords all the support he needs, if not all that he could desire, for his method of checkmating that body in regard to the purchase of commissions. On Monday a vote of censure was moved by the Tory leader, and sustained by the ablest of his party, as well as by Earls Derby and Russell, but was opposed by Lord Penzance, among others, who maintained the constitutionality of the measure resorted to by the Premier. It was defeated by a majority of 80, making Mr. Gladstone's triumph complete. An attempt to couple with this censure a rebuke for the ratification of the Treaty of Washington without consulting Parliament, shared the fate of the motion. The English Commissioner under the Treaty has just been appointed, in the person of the Hon. Russell Gurney, M.P., Recorder of London. He was one of the commissioners sent to Jamaica to take testimony concerning the rule of Governor Eyre.

In the recent news from abroad, nothing is more striking than the member of the Thiers government, a sort of minister without a portfolio. With General Faidherbe he seems to have formed an alliance for political purposes, and a scheme which they have devised for reorganizing the army and the civil service is said to have been approved by Thiers and MacMahon. For the present, undoubtedly, he can better accomplish his ends indirectly than as a Cabinet officer. The elections have shown him to be a favorite with the army, and he has sufficient popularity, both in and out of Paris, to retain his seat in the Assembly. It would be easy to predict for him a steadily broadening and even brilliant career if only his ability were in question; but the lack of honesty and of wisdom which characterized the dictator will, in our opinion, prove fatal to his pretensions to statesmanship. We have the less hesitation in thus prejudging him because he has been revealing his plans to the radical delegates at Bordeaux, and has gone back to '89 for a working model, and has the same extravagant belief in the virtue of the name Republic that he showed during the war—a faith just as respectable as that in the name Commune—and looks to the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine in ten or, at the most, in twenty years. The one thing he seems to have learned is, that the peasants must be educated, and military service made compulsory on every citizen.

It is only fair to set against the picture of Alsace which we drew last week some of the later representations of the German press, which if they do not disprove the general correctness of the statements on which we relied, at least do something to lighten up the prospect. The first explanation of the prevailing discontent is, that everything is in a transition state, that the débris of the war is not yet cleared away, and consequently that material interests absorb for the present the chief attention of the government. The courts not being yet fully organized, it is difficult for creditors to enforce their claims, and business is further deranged by the mixed currency, by the blocking of the railroads (busied in transporting prisoners of war), by the higher fares and charges, by the alterations in the tariff, and by many other attempts at and results of adjustment and reconstruction. The war indemnity has been delayed, as if, apparently, the money must first be drawn from France, and reports of differences between the civil and military authorities add to the general distrust and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, in spite of numerous invitations to emigrate to Algeria and elsewhere, the Alsatians show no disposition to budge, and the number of inhabitants who are wholly German in blood and speech is so great that it seems impossible that they should not eventually be won over. When the war-damages have all been settled, the courts opened, and the schools established (not, doubtless, without considerable opposition), and the normal condition of the territory has been reached, it will be time to take a fresh survey, and then judge if the people are irreconcilable. Of the elections which have just taken place, we have, by Cable, contradictory reports from Paris and Berlin. The war, however, has made us accustomed to these.

The radical reforms in the public instruction of Russia which we lately gave some account of, have received the sanction of the Emperor, and are now being carried into effect by the joint efforts of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Public Instruction. The Emperor was called upon to decide a difference of opinion in his Council in regard to the admission of scholars from the *Realschulen* to the universities. In these schools Latin and Greek are not taught, but the majority, nevertheless, favored admission, while the minority on this ground opposed it. The Emperor took the side of the classics and refused admission, and, probably, acted wisely. His reign has now witnessed two of the greatest political and social changes which could be effected in the polity of any people, the last being the proper complement of emancipation, and only second to it in importance. The popular reception of the new scheme is very gratifying, and St. Petersburg has led off by devoting an annual sum of $60,000 to establish and maintain twenty primary schools. Nor is the educational movement confined to one sex. Permission has, after some shyness on the part of the Government, been given to found a sort of high-school for women in Moscow, the chief promoter of this enterprise being the rector of the university. It is designed for all women, whether married or single, who choose to