

# TRIUMPHANT PLUTOCRACY

The Story of  
American Public Life  
from 1870 to 1920

By  
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from South Dakota



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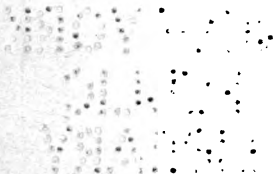
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## XXI. A LOST ELECTION

Before leaving the subject of American political life and its control by big business, I want to refer to one more incident—the election that cost me my place in the United States Senate.

Mark Hanna managed the campaign of 1900 and after McKinley took office Hanna managed the President even more successfully than he had managed the campaign. Through ten strenuous years I had fought Hanna and all that he stood for. I had opposed him on the gold standard issue; I had led the opposition to the schemes of the imperialists for annexing Hawaii; I had opposed the acquisition of the Philippines and the other Spanish colonies. I had opposed the trusts, the extortion of the railroads, the armor plate thieves, and had tried to save the public domain for the people. Consequently, when it came to the election of 1900, Mark Hanna spared no pains to insure my elimination from public life.

The incident which inspired Hanna with a particularly strong desire to have me out of the way arose out of a charge concerning a campaign contribution to the Republican party.

In 1895 I went to Europe and stayed several months. I returned on the American Line steamship "St Louis" in company with Cramp, the shipbuilder and owner of the line of ships. During the voyage I became well acquainted with Mr. Cramp and we talked a great deal together.

One day he told me that he had paid \$400,000 to Tom Carter, chairman of the Republican National Committee, to re-elect Harrison in 1892. He said that he was assured by Carter that his \$400,000 would certainly elect Harrison. Carter told him where he was going to spend the money, and that he "could get it back out of building ships for the Government after Harrison was elected." "Harrison was defeated," said Cramp, "and I lost my money. I have since looked the matter

up and have found that Mr. Carter did not spend the money where he said he would spend it, and I feel that I am a victim of misrepresentation."

Mr. Cramp wanted to know of me how he could recover the \$400,000, and I told him I knew of no way except to make terms with the next administration and increase his contribution.

In December, when the Senate had convened, I went one day over to Tom Carter's seat and told him what Cramp had said to me. Carter smiled and replied, "Well, we did hit the old man pretty hard."

Some time afterward, in a discussion with regard to the building of an armor-plate factory, I told on the floor of the Senate what Cramp had said to me about the \$400,000. Carter, ex-chairman of the Republican National Committee, and Mark Hanna, then chairman of the committee, were both in their seats, but neither of them made any reply or took any notice of my statement. Some time afterwards Senator Bacon, of Georgia, interrupted a speech by Senator Hanna to say:

Mr. BACON: "In this connection I want to call the attention of the Senate to the most remarkable thing I ever heard and the most remarkable thing I ever saw in the Senate. I fancy that the country has never been the witness to what we saw and heard in this chamber a few days ago.

"A senator in his place in this chamber stated as a fact that the manufacturer of ships, a prominent and the most prominent firm engaged in the manufacture of warships for the Government, had stated that in 1892 he was approached by the officers of the Republican party and induced to give \$400,000 to the campaign fund of that party upon the assurance that the money would be returned to him or made good to him in the contracts which he should have in the building of warships.

"Now, Mr. President, the remarkable thing that I want to call the attention of the Senate to is this: I heard that statement. I did not doubt that it would

then and there be promptly challenged. I did not believe that such a statement could be made in the Senate of the United States in the presence of the leaders of the Republican party and no one deny it or call it in question.

"Now, that was not made in a thin Senate; it was made in a full Senate. It was made when the chairman of the National Committee of the Republican party in the campaign of 1892 was in his seat and heard it, as well as the chairman of the Republican National Committee at the time, Mr. Hannah, and yet no one either challenged it or denied it.

"Mr. President, in the absence of such a challenge and such a denial, the country must believe it is true."

And Mr. Hanna made the following reply:

Mr. HANNA: "Mr. President——

THE PRESIDING OFFICER: "Does the Senator from Georgia yield to the Senator from Ohio?"

Mr. BACON: "I do, with pleasure."

Mr. HANNA: "The Senator alludes to the fact that the chairman of the Republican Committee was in his seat and did not deny the statement made."

Mr. BACON: "If I am incorrect in that, I certainly made it in good faith. I think I saw the Senator present."

Mr. HANNA: "If I undertook to reply to all such statements made upon this floor, I would occupy more time than the Senator from Georgia does in the Senate. I considered it unworthy of notice and declined to dignify it by a reply."

It may well be noticed that Mr. Hanna did not undertake to deny my statement and for this reason: Immediately after I had made the statement in the Senate several of the prominent Republican members of the Senate and a number of newspaper men went to see Cramp, and Cramp told them that what I had said was true; that he did tell me that he made a contribution of over four hundred thousand dollars to Harrison's campaign; that he made it upon the misrepresentations

of Tom Carter; that he consulted with me as to how to get the money back; that he had not told it to me in confidence, but for the purpose of securing my assistance in getting the money returned to him. One of the newspaper men reported what Cramp said. Of course, Cramp's statement to these Senators and newspaper men left the Republicans where it was impossible for them to meet my charge except by ignoring it.

After Hanna had said that if he answered such statements he would take more of the Senate's time than was occupied by the Senator from Georgia, and that the source from which the report came was unworthy of notice, I rose and said that perhaps I had something that would be of interest to the great man from Ohio and that did come from a source worthy of his notice. I thereupon stated to the Senate that I had in my hand a petition from the Ohio State Senate, signed by four out of the five members of the Committee on Elections of the Ohio State Senate, asking the United States Senate to investigate the election of Mr. Hanna to that body. I said that this petition charged that Mr. Hanna, to secure his election to the United States Senate, had purchased the votes of two members of the Ohio Legislature from the city of Cincinnati; that the purchasing was done by Hanna agents under Hanna's direction; that the sum of ten thousand dollars had been paid to one of the legislators; and I said that this petition had been referred to the Committee on Elections to the United States Senate. After I called the attention of the Senate and the country to this venal and corrupt practice on the part of Mr. Hanna in purchasing his seat on the Senate, the majority of the Senate Committee on Elections made a report and stated that, as no official person came from the Ohio legislature to present and to prosecute the case against Mr. Hanna before the Committee on Elections, they had concluded not to look into the matter. But the minority of the Committee on Privileges and Elections in the Senate made the following report:

"We cannot concur in the report of the majority of the Committee on Privileges and Elections in the matter of the report of the committee appointed by the Senate of the State of Ohio to investigate the charges of bribery in the election of the Hon. M. A. Hanna to the Senate of the United States.

"The charge is that early in January, 1898, an attempt was made by H. H. Boyce and others to bribe John C. Otis, a member of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio to vote for Marcus A. Hanna for the Senate of the United States."

Among other things, the majority of the committee had reported:

"Moreover, it seems clear to this committee that it would not be justified in recommending any action to be taken by the Senate without further testimony to be taken by the committee. The question whether additional evidence should be taken has been the only difficult question which the committee has considered. It is clear that Mr. Otis never had any intention of yielding to bribery. He encouraged Mr. Boyce by the advice of others only in order to entrap him. Then he carefully withdrew and substituted his attorney, Mr. Campbell, to continue the negotiations. Mr. Campbell labored to induce Mr. Boyce to offer money and, finally, as he says, obtained \$1,750 from him as part payment on \$3,500 to be paid for Mr. Otis' vote for Mr. Hanna, leaving \$6,500 to be paid if Mr. Hanna was elected. At this point, public exposure, through Mr. Otis, Mr. Campbell and their associates, took place, Mr. Boyce disappeared, and the incident was closed.

"That Mr. Boyce, operating in Cincinnati, where Mr. Otis lives, has relations with Mr. Hanna's representatives at Columbus, the state capital, the State Committee undertook to prove by the evidence of various detectives, professional and amateur, who listened at telephone wires and shadowed Mr. Boyce, Mr. Hollenbeck and others. The effort of the committee was carefully

and skilfully made. It was not wholly devoid of results; it raises pregnant suspicions that Mr. Hanna's representatives at Columbus knew what Mr. Boyce was doing. But this whole line of inquiry would require verification by testimony to be taken by the Committee on Privileges and Elections before that committee would be willing to found conclusions thereon."

The quotation is from the report of the majority of the committee. Now we will see what the minority further say:

"The attempt on the part of Boyce to buy Otis' vote for Mr. Hanna is clearly proven by Campbell who, from his testimony, seems to have been a lawyer of large practice. One thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars was paid in cash by Boyce to Campbell as attorney for Otis. Boyce agreed to pay \$1,750 more when Otis reached Columbus, and a balance of \$6,500 if Mr. Hanna was elected. . . .

"We think that the evidence to which we have already referred, standing as it does uncontradicted and unexplained, shows that certain of Mr. Hanna's managers at Columbus not only knew the purposes which Boyce had in view in Cincinnati, but also that they aided, abetted, and advised him in carrying out these purposes, and that this state of affairs existed while Mr. Hanna was present at his headquarters. . . .

"First, That many of the witnesses, whose testimony apparently would have thrown much light upon the subject under inquiry, denied the jurisdiction of the the committee and refused to testify under the advice of counsel, who stated that they represented the interests of Majors Rathbone and Dick and Senator Hanna; and,

"Second, That Mr. Hanna and his representatives had subpoenas.

"The report of the majority says they 'do not doubt that if facts appeared from the report of the committee of the State Senate requiring the United States Senate, out of a proper regard for its own reputation,



to take further testimony concerning Mr. Hanna's election, it would be the duty of the Senate to proceed without waiting for further prosecution of the case coming from residents of the state of Ohio.'

"We think such facts do appear from the report of the committee of the State Senate, and that this body should direct further inquiry and investigation to be made."

The minority who signed this report was composed of Senators Tubley, Pettus and Caffery.

After reading this and much more of the same kind of evidence to the Senate, I said:

"Mr. President, these things are known to the American people. It will not do for the Senator from Ohio to stand up here and say that charges of this sort—if he answered all that were made he could not do much else—are unworthy of consideration or notice. From the Senate of his own state come these charges; from a minority of the committee of this body come these charges, and yet the Senator from Ohio says they are unworthy of his notice—that they are little things."

This report of the Senate Committee is rather a remarkable document; all who signed the majority report were Republicans and Mark Hanna was chairman of the Republican National Committee, and the general factotum of the whole Republican party. He represented the interests of great business and was a business man. He had collected vast sums of money to corrupt the voters of this country and elect McKinley in 1896. So accustomed had the Republicans of the Senate become to the use of money that it did not disturb them at all that Mr. Hanna had purchased his seat in that body. The facts which I presented did not cause even a ripple of interest, and the Senators did not seem to care if the public knew all about it. During the quarter-century that has elapsed since this episode the purchase of seats in the Senate has become so common that it attracts no public attention. Why should it when even the presidency of the United States is put

up at auction in the Republican National Convention and knocked down to the highest bidder?

Mr. Hanna was furious at what I had said about him and he determined that he would have revenge! My term in the Senate would expire in 1901, and Mark Hanna made up his mind to prevent my re-election.

I was not running as a stalwart Republican in the election of 1900, for I had walked out of the St. Louis Republican Convention in 1896. I was running as a Bryanite on the Bryan Free Silver Republican ticket in South Dakota. Mr. Hanna raised a vast sum of money to corrupt the voters of South Dakota, and put in charge of the work Henry Payne, of Milwaukee, one of the well-known hangers-on of every Republican campaign.

Payne came out to South Dakota with \$30,000 and in conjunction with the Republican organization of the state and the help of A. B. Kittridge, a Sioux Falls lawyer, afterwards a Republican United States Senator, they polled the state of South Dakota on the probability of my election. This task was not a great one. The total population of the state at that time was only 401,570, with a total vote in 1900 of 96,124. Payne sent out 200 teams and visited every farmer and voter in the state. When they had finished the canvass they found that I had the state by several thousand majority.

This greatly alarmed Mr. Hanna and the Republican campaign managers, for they considered it of great political importance to get rid of me.

Senator Allison, of Iowa, came to Dakota to see how the campaign was going on. He made no speeches, but simply looked over the possibilities of eliminating me from public life. He was being entertained in my home town, when C. C. Bailey, a prominent attorney, asked him about me. Allison replied that I had the greatest power for making trouble of any man he ever knew, and that the in-

terests of the party and the people of this country would be best served by getting me out of the Senate.

Senator Nelson of Minnesota also came to South Dakota and canvassed the State and in his speeches said Mr. Pettigrew should be defeated because he had opposed the great business interests that controlled the Government and the Republican party and therefore, if South Dakota wanted to get anything out of the Government, they should elect a man that would train with the gang.

Theodore Roosevelt also joined in the contest against me as the candidate of the Republicans for vice president on the ticket with McKinley, and sent the following telegram to Senator Platt in October, 1900:

"Good Lord, I hope we can beat Pettigrew for the Senate. That particular swine seems to me, on the whole, the most obnoxious of the entire drove."

Why was Roosevelt opposed to my election? Because he was the candidate of the predatory interests that own the Government of the United States. Charles Edward Russell answered my question.

Asserting that many public men of value to the country have been cried down by the clamor of subsidized newspapers, Mr. Russell says further:

"I have seen this happen a thousand times. Every observer, particularly if he has been a newspaper man, must be familiar with it. Years ago there was a man in the United States Senate that certain newspapers did not like, because he had attacked the interests that owned these newspapers. The newspapers covered that man with ridicule by misrepresenting everything he did or said. They convinced a large part of the country that he was a wild, erratic, absurd, visionary; when, as a matter of fact, he had one of the coolest, clearest and steadiest minds I have ever known in a long acquaintance with public men and affairs. Yet the news columns drove him out of public life, to the great interest of the public interests. I

have no objection to mentioning his name. It was R. F. Pettigrew.

"He was ahead of the times, for his vision was clearer than most men now occupying positions of public trust, and he realized then that the interests were weaving the web of autocratic control about the several departments of the Government.

"Possessing the courage of his convictions, he stood almost alone as a target for the shafts of mendacious newspapers, many of them instigated by the sullen command of great wealth. They were merciless and the people believed them rather than the man who had interceded in their behalf."

After Henry Payne's canvassers had reported the result of their poll of the people of the state of Dakota, Hanna went out among the railroad interests, the trust interests and the financial interests of this country, and raised a special fund of \$500,000 to be expended in the purchase of Dakota votes. I did not believe that it could be done because I had great confidence in the farmers of Dakota and I had underestimated the resources of the business interests, overestimated the possibilities of ordinary human nature. Hanna himself came to South Dakota and stumped the state with Senator Fry, of Maine. The railroads furnished a special train. The State Committee had been lavish with its publicity and great crowds met the Hanna special at every station.

At Midson, where there is a normal school, Hanna began his speech by taking off his hat and saying, "You see, I have no horns."

The next day I addressed the same crowd—largely composed of farmers—and said, "Of course Mark Hanna has no horns, I dehorned him in the Senate." And then I told the story of how he had bought his seat in that body. A day or two after my speech at Midson, Hanna came to Sioux Falls and addressed

a large outdoor meeting and someone in the crowd yelled to Hanna to take off his hat and show the crowd where Pettigrew dehorned him.

I was very badly beaten in the election. After it was over I made an investigation to determine how the work had been done. The Republicans had visited every banker in every country town in the State; had deposited a sum of money with him, and had given him minute instructions as to the part that he was to play in the campaign.

The local representatives of the Republican party would then take a list of the farmers, and watch for each man. When he came into town they would take him over the bank and the banker would hand him ten dollars in cash.

"That is yours," the representative of the Republican party would state, "and if Pettigrew loses this township (or county) in the election there is ten dollars more for you at the bank that you can get by coming in and asking for it after election."

In some cases, in several cases of which I know personally, the sum was twenty dollars before election and twenty dollars after election.

Hanna boasted, after the election, that my name was never mentioned in any of his campaign speeches by either himself or Senator Fry. But his statement is false in this respect, for a Roberts County paper published the following just after Mark Hanna's visit:

"Mark Hanna at Sisseton Indian Agency, South Dakota, in an address to Two Stars, chief of the Sissetons, chaperoned by Mr. Sapackman, chairman of the Roberts County Republican Committee:

"I understand that half of you Indians are going to vote for Bryan and Pettigrew. I understand that your annuities from the Government, due in about six weeks, are \$22 per capita. That is enough for Indians who vote against the Great Father. If all the Sisseton Indians will vote the Republican ticket, I will have the Government increase their annuities \$75 per head.

This will give to the Sisseton Indians \$75 apiece instead of \$22 apiece. Do you tumble?"

"They tumbled and God did not forbid that citizen Mark Hanna should attempt to divert the will of the sovereign people or tamper with the sanctity of their ballots."

I have since talked with many of these Indians who heard Mark Hanna's statement to them, and who corroborate this story from the local newspaper. They also told me that Mark Hanna never made any effort to secure for them seventy-five dollars per capita which he had promised them if they would vote against me.

I also learned that, during the campaign, the Republican Committee of South Dakota had trunkfuls of blank passes from every railroad in the country. Upon these passes they could send a man and his family to any point in the United States or the adjacent countries and return, free of cost and at the expense of the railroad. I know of several prominent Democrats who made long excursions after the election, one of them taking his family to the Hawaiian Islands.

Mark Hanna had secured these passes by appealing to the railroads when they made their effort to swindle the Government out of the money which had been advanced to build the roads. He had also cited my bills for the Government ownership of all the roads in the United States, as well as my exposures of the swindles in connection with the Railway Mail Pay. Consequently the railroads not only furnished transportation, but a considerable amount of the money used against me. James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Road, told me afterwards that Mark Hanna had assessed him fifty thousand dollars, and he told Hanna that he not only would not give a single dollar towards trying to defeat me in South Dakota, but he would not give the Republican National Committee any money whatever if they were going to undertake the purchase of the voters of South Dakota.

After the election, I was in the Auditorium Hotel,

in Chicago, getting lunch one day, when a young man came in and asked, 'Is this ex-Senator Pettigrew?'

"Yes," I said, "it is."

"Well," said the young man, "I want to tell you of an incident that might be of interest to you. I was Mark Hanna's private secretary in 1900, and on election day Hanna left Chicago and went back to Cleveland to vote, leaving me in charge of the Republican headquarters. About ten o'clock election night, Hanna called me up over the phone and wanted to know about the election. I told him that McKinley was undoubtedly elected, and Hanna replied, 'Oh, I know that; but how about Pettigrew?' I thereupon replied, 'Pettigrew is undoubtedly beaten,' and Hanna said, 'If you are sure of that I can go home and go to bed and to sleep. I wanted to accomplish two things in this election—to elect McKinley and to beat Pettigrew, and I did not know which I wanted the worst.'"

I think that was the most striking compliment that was ever paid to my work in the Senate. I had kept up my attacks upon the plutocracy until their spokesman was as anxious to defeat me as he was to elect a president. I sent thousands of copies of the following letter to the voters of South Dakota in my campaign for re-election to the United States Senate in 1900:

"Sioux Falls, S. D., July 24, 1900.

"Dear Sir:

"I enclose herewith a copy of the platform adopted at Kansas City. It is a new Declaration of Independence. It is the platform upon which I am running for re-election to the United States Senate. I have been twice elected to the Senate from South Dakota, receiving the united support of the Republicans of the state, and in both instances also of very many of the Democrats and Populists.

"I am now a candidate for re-election upon the platform which I enclose, because I think it embraces the best settlement of the great principles involved in the

coming political contest that I have seen. I am not therefore a candidate for re-election as a Republican, for the reason that I believe this contest is not one between political parties, but is a contest between those who wish to preserve Republican institutions in this country and prevent the Republic from becoming an aristocracy. It is a battle between the Man and the Dollar; between concentrated wealth in the hands of a few people and the great mass of the people who have produced the wealth, but who are unable, owing to a pernicious system of transportation and combination of capital, to enjoy that which they produce.

“The Republican party has been captured by the evil elements, by the great transportation companies, the great money trusts, and the great combinations of capital which have gained control of our manufacturing industries. It is therefore for the interest of the Republican party to perpetuate that legislation which has produced the condition in regard to the distribution of wealth in this country, against which I protest.

“I have not changed my views upon these great issues since I ceased to act with the Republican party politically. My votes in the Senate on all these questions have been the same during the past four years as they were during the previous seven years. If I had changed my position on these questions my enemies would have ample proof of the fact in the Record of the Senate; but the votes which I have recorded show that my position has not been changed, but the position of the Republican party has changed completely—so much so that, when I offered an amendment to the last Republican Tariff Bill, refusing protection to articles controlled by the trusts unless they dissolved the trusts, and allowed free competition within our own country, every Republican Senator voted against it and defeated the measure.

“When the War Revenue Bill, to pay the expenses of carrying on the war with Spain, was under consideration, I offered an amendment to tax the products of the



trusts as a means of raising revenue, or compelling the dissolution of the trusts, and every Republican Senator voted against my amendment.

"We offered an amendment to levy a tax upon incomes to support our armies in the contest with Spain, and all the Republican members of the Senate voted against it, and the bill was so framed as to lay the entire burden of taxation upon the individual—upon consumption—so that the poor man would pay just as much as the man of enormous wealth.

"Against this unequal and unfair distribution of the burdens of taxation I protested, on the ground that it tended to the unequal distribution of wealth; and that where the wealth of a country was once gathered into the hands of a few men the manhood of the masses was destroyed and the institutions of our country endangered. But the Republican party, controlled by evil influences and headed by Mark Hanna, persisted in their policy, which has made it impossible for me to act with them politically.

"I left the Republican party in 1896 for the reason that I felt that the party had left the side of the people in its abandonment of bimetallism; but, above all, because of the fact that it omitted from its platform at St. Louis all allusion whatever to the trusts. Since that time, its course has been more and more in the direction of plutocracy, more and more in the direction of the government of the few to the disregard of the many, and their interests; and it has culminated in an effort to conquer people living in the tropics, and to annex to this country territory that will never be organized into states, and in the establishment of a colonial policy in violation of the Constitution of the United States and of the Declaration of Independence, and of every theory of Government we have advocated as a people."

"I believe that colonial possessions mean a standing army of great proportions, and a vast horde of office-holders serving a long distance from home, governing

an unwilling people, which must result in constant conflict, and end in the curtailment of the right to vote among our own people, and a suppression of all protest by the armed forces assembled and equipped in the first instance for the purpose of conquering these distant possessions.

“Under these circumstances, no matter what may be the consequences to me personally, I feel it my duty to do everything in my power to overthrow at the polls the dominion and control of the Republican party, and thus restore this country in letter and in spirit back to the principles and doctrines of its founders, so that it may continue to be an example to all people who believe in the doctrine of self-government, and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

“I thus write you this long letter, hoping to make my own position clear, and stimulate you to greater activity and effort in the coming campaign. I should like very much to hear from you on this subject.

“Yours truly,

“R. F. PETTIGREW.”