TWEED'S HISTORY OF RINGS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER DESCRIBES THE ORGANIZATION OF TWO.

A Comprehensive Confession Begun by the Old Boss Before the Aldermen's Committee—Interesting Reading for the Past and Present City Politicians—Yet More Coming.

The examination of William M. Tweed by the committee appointed by the Aldermen to investigate the Ring frauds was continued yesterday. Among those who were attracted to the chamber of the Common Council were Charles Devlin, and his son, President Purroy, Aldermen Patchey, Simonson, Hall, Toomey, Jacobs, Gunther, Reilly, and Salmon, City Chamberlain Tappen, Excise Commissioner Patterson, Major George W. Sauer, ex-Alderman Michael Hoehy and Isaac Robinson, E. B. Shafer, and John D. Newman, Tammany's collector of political assessments. At 2 o'clock, Tweed, accompanied by his son, Gen. Tweed, and Major Quincey and Officer Genizel of the Sheriff's office, entered the room by the Aldermen's private stairs, and took a seat by his counsel, John D. Townsend.

H. L. Cole, counsel for the committee, said: "I presume that, as I see Mr. Townsend is now present, we will proceed with the examination of the witness Tweed—with the approval of the committee." Alderman Lewis, chairman of the committee, graciously nodded approval. Mr. Tweed, with uplifted hand, took the oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," as it was solemnly administered by the Chairman, and then the examination was begun, Mr. Cole asking the questions:

Q.—Mr. Tweed, I believe you are not a native of the State of New York? A.—I am, sir.

Q.—When did you first enter into public life? A.—After a long reflective pause. In 1852, I think.

Q.—Did you hold an office in 1852? A.—I was an Alderman in 1852-3.

Q.—What other offices have you ever held in the city and county of New York? A.—Supervisor, Commissioner of the Board of Education, Representative in Congress, and State Senator.

Q.—Will you be kind enough to state in what period you held each of these offices, respectively? A.—Alderman in the years 1852-3; member of Congress from 4th of March, '53 to March, 1855; member of the Board of Education, 56-7; Supervisor, 1857 to 1870; State Senator, 1870-71, inclusive. I was also Deputy Street Commissioner from 1853 to 1870, and Commissioner of Public Works, '70 to '71.

Q.—You were a member of the Board of Supervisors from 1857 to 1870? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—As the law then stood, what were the duties of the Board of Supervisors of this county with reference to financial matters? A.—They took charge of all county matters—raised the taxes.

Q.—Well, now, referring to the Board of Supervisors during the time you were a member of it, was there any combination or understanding between any of the members of that board with reference to the conduct of the affairs of the board? A.—There was.

Q.—Was that combination for an illegal purpose? A.—It was not.

Q.—Was it in any way a political combination to further the ends of any political party? A.—In a measure, it was.

Q.—Well, now, will you please state exactly what that combination was formed for? A.—The original combination was formed for the purpose of appointing Inspectors of Election. That was the first thing of it.

Q.—Will you tell us about it? A.—A law was passed by the Legislature giving authority to the Supervisors to appoint Inspectors of Election. I think that was in 1859 or 1860. The Democrats made a combination with one Republican that he should be away on the day of appointment—and he was away.

Q.—Was that arrangement one which contemplated the payment of money to that individual who was absent? A.—I understand there was such an understanding, but I don't know it.

Q.—Who was he? A.—He is dead now. I don't think it is of interest to mention his name.

Mr. Cole.—Well, I fail to see why, merely because he is dead, that question should not be answered.

A consultation ensued between Tweed and his counsel. The auditors in the background stood on tiptoe and pushed forward to listen. At length Tweed said: "If the committee insist upon it, I will have to answer it I presume, but I do not prefer to."

Mr. Cole—I do insist. I think you had better answer. A.—His name was Voorhies—Peter P. Voorhies, I think.

Q.—He was a member of the Board? A.—He was.

Q.—Well, who were the other members that made that arrangement with him? A.—Democratic members?

Q.—What Democratic members? A.—All the Democratic members at that time. I may not remember them all exactly, but I will give you what I think. Wet, Ecker was one, Walter A. Roche; Elijah F. Purdy, John R. Briggs, myself, and I think Wm. C. Conner and Isaac E. Bell; but I am not sure about those two. All the Democratic members any way, and they will be shown by the records.

Q.—Who made the arrangement? A.—John R. Briggs, I think.

Q.—Was it known to the other members that Mr. Briggs intended to make such a proposition? A.—Mr. Voorhies? A.—I think it was to the Democrats. It was to me, I know.

Q.—You are under the impression that Briggs was the agent? A.—Only what I have in the time.

Q.—According to your impression, where did the conversation take place you used? A.—I believe Mr. Fowler, Postmaster.

Q.—What was the amount? A.—$2,500.

Q.—Please state to the committee upon what property your impression was based? A.—Property. Mr. Briggs told me so. I knew what he was about, and what he was at.

Q.—What was the proposition as you understand it? A.—It required a majority of the Board present to select those inspectors, and Mr. Voorhies was to be away, and he was away on the day chosen.

Q.—Will you say that was the beginning of the combination? A.—That was the beginning of it.

Q.—Was there any other combination besides this one that? A.—From that time out it was a combination upon every subject almost that came up.

Q.—With reference to financial matters, do you know of any combination? A.—What do you mean?

Q.—Do you know of any in which the city treasury was to be plundered? A.—I know of one.

Q.—Please state to the committee upon what property your impression was based? A.—I kept changing, so that I was what I was and who it was.

Q.—Name the parties. A.—Myself, John R. Briggs, Richard Varian, Elijah F. Purdy, and Wm. Conner. I don't say any other one. I don't say who were in it at the time. If I had the records of the Board before me, I could tell.

Q.—Did Mr. Cole suggest to the committee the taking of a recess while the required records were sent for, which was done? In a few minutes a clerk came in staggering under a large pile of ponderous books, and Mr. Tweed turned over the leaves and refreshed his memory by consulting the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Supervisors for the year 1857 to 1870, inclusive. Mr. Tweed continued: I think I was president of the Board in 1858, 59, and 60. I was president of the Board when I was not in the Senate. I was President of the Board in 1860, and I was not in Senate. I expect that he was elected while I was in the Senate. I was defeated in an effort to get into the Senate, made large efforts to get into the Senate, made large efforts to get into the Senate, and I think Mr. Briggs, Conner, E. B. Jr., and myself, also formed the first combination I ever knew of in the Board of Supervisors for any purpose.

Q.—Were you present at any meeting of those persons who were in that combination when it was spoken of the combination to appoint Inspectors? A.—I think I was. I believe every body was present except Mr. Bell and Mr. Voorhies. A.—I have stated that Mr. Voorhies's nomination is what Mr. Briggs told me. I knew what he was about, and what he was at.

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