

## A MAMMOTH STEAL.

THE ALLEGED SWINDLES BY THE NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN BRIDGE COMPANY, AMOUNTING TO MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

A good deal of noise has been made East about the wholesale plundering by the East River bridge ring, says a New York correspondent, but the whole truth has by no means yet been brought out. The *World* began an onslaught a few weeks ago, and threatened to expose every thief it could catch, but the contract was too large to be executed. It followed up Gen. Slocum until it defeated him as a candidate for governor; but when he was put on the track for congressman-at-large the *World* was constrained to draw its bridge exposure to an end. A quasi court has now been organized for the trial of the alleged swindlers. Mayor Grace of this city and Mayor Low of Brooklyn have agreed to sit as a tribunal—outside of law, to be sure, but backed by a robust public opinion. They will not have the power to summon witnesses peremptorily, or to inflict penalties, but they will invite witnesses, and all that are important will come. The official engineers of the cities, which includes Gen. Isaac Newton for New York, will measure the work from end to end, and ascertain the various kinds of materials used and the amounts. Two experts, who are at once merchants and bookkeepers, will inventory the property and material, and get the net results of the engineers' investigations and measurements. It is certain that a gigantic theft has been perpetrated, and that it will be exposed as thoroughly as was that of the Tweed ring. It is chiefly remarkable for two characteristics. It is the largest single steal in the history of the country, larger by \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000 than that of the Tweed ring. It has been organized and carried on with greater adroitness than any other in our history—by the side of Kingsley, Tweed was a mere child. The tracks have been covered up with amazing ingenuity. The ring buys quarries, foundries, saw mills, etc., thus constantly supplying itself and giving receipts to itself in such a way as to make investigation difficult. The scheme for the Brooklyn bridge is about sixteen years old. In New York City, Tweed, Sweeney, Connolly and Hugh Smith were omnipotent. Like Tweed, Henry C. Murphy was in the senate, and the two took the job of carrying the bridge bill through the legislature. Under their manipulation the bill passed in April, 1867. It was drawn in the interest of wholesale plunder. It simply provided that the trustees should build a suspension bridge with money furnished by the two cities. There was no restraints upon them. The trustees should be such enterprising private gentlemen as should subscribe the sum of \$500,000 to the great work. It was stipulated that the bridge should cost \$5,000,000 only, and should be completed ready for travel by June 1, 1870. William C. Kingsley saw

## THE CHANCE FOR A GOOD THING,

and he subscribed for the whole of the \$500,000 on the spot. Then he saw his confidential friends, men who could be trusted with important secrets, and he distributed among them the privilege of taking parts of this \$500,000. These public-spirited citizens became, by the term of the charter, trustees. They met and elected Henry C. Murphy president of the company, and Mr. Kingsley superintendent. They had the handling of all the money and were not accountable to any authority whatever. They could pay \$100,000 for a wheel-barrow, and there was nobody to object. The trustees also appointed an executive committee, virtually for life, and then passed the following:

Resolved, that the executive committee shall proceed to the construction of the bridge to its completion.

They also voted that Mr. Kingsley, superintendent, should receive for his compensation "15 per cent. of all the moneys expended." If the amount ultimately expended were \$5,000,000 it made Mr. Kingsley's compensation \$750,000. If the amount expended were \$20,000,000, to which they had already secretly agreed, it made his compensation \$3,000,000. The executive committee was made up as follows:—Henry C. Murphy, William M. Tweed, Henry W. Slocum, G. S. T. Stranahan, Hugh Smith and Samuel L. Husted. They paid one-tenth of their subscription of \$400,000, amounting to \$40,000. The cities paid one-tenth of their subscription, making \$500,000 in the treasury. Of this, 15 per cent., or \$75,000, was taken out and handed to the overworked Kingsley for a part of his pay. That is, these philanthropists had already withdrawn \$35,000 more than they had put in. But this \$3,000,000 which they expected to "appropriate" was to be the least of their perquisites. They organized financial machinery of the most intricate sort to enable them to steal at once magnificently and cunningly. They bought lumber mills, stone quarries, iron mills, and even the means of transportation. See how this elaborate system contrasts with the crude and clumsy method of Tweed!

I met on Broadway, recently, Judge Robert B. Roosevelt, whom I had not seen in months.

"So you had to get out of the board of bridge trustees?" I said.

"I should think so!" he exclaimed. "They not only would not let me know how things were going on, but they tried to convince me that it was something in which I should have no interest. They threw every obstacle in the way of an investigation. When I found I was being made a mere cat's-paw I got out, of course. I'm going to Florida for the winter."

On Thursday I met Col. — of the United States army. I must not use his name because he is engaged in unmasking these plunderers.

"They have been very shrewd," he said. "They have hoodwinked the public by putting some very respectable men among the trustees—always two or three of them, just for figureheads—and then gagging and binding them. The 15 per cent. commission the gang have always felt was among the least of their privileges, and, when a big boni was raised about it a while ago, they secretly muti-

lated their books and changed the 'fifteen' to 'five' where-ever it appeared. But they have stolen a pile of money."

"Did Tweed teach them any tricks?"

"Tweed! They could give him points. But on his trial he swore, you remember, that the bridge stock was given to him; it was not to cost him anything."

"How much has been stolen?"

"Well, the bridge will have actually cost when finished just about as much as William A. Roebling estimated it would cost fourteen years ago—between \$5,000,000 and \$7,000,000. The disbursements to all hands are said to have been \$19,000,000, and President Murphy recently announced that it would require \$3,000,000 more. At the most liberal estimate the actual cost of the bridge will not have been when finished more than \$8,000,000, being \$14,000,000 clear steal. This beats Tweed's court house."

"What is the chance of proving this?"

"It will be proved within a year to the satisfaction of everybody as clearly as Tweed's plundering; and I haven't any doubt that one or more of the leaders of the gang will land in the State's prison."

## BURIED ALIVE.

The question whether people are sometimes buried alive is one which, naturally enough, has excited a lively interest, inasmuch as it concerns us all. Many persons (the late Lord Lytton was one) have left special directions in their wills with a view to obviate all possibility of such a dreadful contingency, and cremation has found special favor with many for the reason that it is a certain preventive of any ghastly blunder in this respect. There is quite a literature in French on the subject, and great prizes have been awarded for learned treatises thereupon, while several German States have adopted the practical course of placing a bell-ropes in the corpse's hand which the slightest movement would affect, and we believe the same course is taken in Italy. Although such a terrible fate as burial alive is, happily, exceedingly rare, there is sufficient testimony to warrant the assumption that it has occurred. An instance almost occurred a few years ago in the case, thoroughly authenticated, of a railroad porter, at Cambridge, England, who was given up for dead, of bronchitis, by the doctor. "He was washed, laid out, and eventually put into a coffin. Here he reposed for two days, and the funeral was fixed to take place within a week. At the close of the second day, however, in the presence of several persons, he rose in his coffin, got up and took a seat. The surprise, not to say affright, of those who saw him may be imagined. The explanation is that during the agonizing spasm of the disease from which he suffered his mother gave him a sleeping draught which had stopped short of carrying him to the grave, though it had planted him in his coffin." Had this occurred here he would probably have been buried alive, but in England burial rarely takes place under a week. Again, this very year, the Cincinnati *Gazette* recorded a telegram from Charleston, West Va., viz.: "Miss Jenkin, of Blue Creek, apparently, fell dead last Monday. After the funeral services, while her friends were taking a last view of her body, signs of life were observed, and she was taken from the coffin and conveyed to her home. Indications of life are still visible." We are reminded of these cases by the announcement by cable, a few days since, of the death of an aged and eminent prelate, Cardinal Archbishop Donnet, of Bordeaux, who will always be remembered in connection with this subject. When the Interment bill was before the Senate many years ago, and the point specially under discussion was what time should by law elapse betwixt death and the placing a body in a closed coffin, the Archbishop rose, and in thrilling tones told to an awe-struck house the terrible experience of a young man who, as he lay given up for dead, was, by a merciful Providence, aroused by the sound of a familiar voice. The Cardinal spoke with deep emotion, and pausing a moment at the conclusion, said, "My Lords, I am that man."—*New York Times*.

## BEER-DRINKING NATIONS.

Recently-compiled statistics furnish some interesting data respecting the relative beer-absorptive capacity of various nations. The following presentation of the total quantity consumed in 1881, value thereof and average quantity drunk per head of population, is prepared therefrom:—

	Total No. gallons consumed.	Value.	Gallons per head of population.
United States.....	96,000,000	\$26,000,000	2½
United Kingdom.....	282,000,000	72,000,000	8½
Germany.....	240,000,000	65,000,000	5½
Austria.....	72,000,000	20,000,000	2
Belgium.....	48,000,000	14,000,000	9
France.....	48,000,000	14,000,000	1½
Russia.....	1,800,000	500,000	.02

The total value of the beer annually drunk in Europe and America is said to be no less than \$250,000,000. Of the whole quantity drunk in the United Kingdom it is estimated that, inasmuch as whisky is largely used in Ireland and Scotland, England and Wales must absorb the larger proportion. This will give those races an average of ten gallons of beer at least per capita per annum. The United States stands third in the list in quantity consumed, and fourth in average quantity consumed per head of population.

The Traffic returns of the Midland Railway of Canada, for the week ending December 30th, 1882, was as follows: Passengers and Mails, \$10,975.04; Freight, \$9,323.48; total, \$20,298.52 as compared with \$18,320.66 for the corresponding week of 1881, being an increase of \$977.86; and the aggregate traffic to date is \$1,065,611.84, being an increase of \$206,388.55 over 1881.

## OUTWITTING THE BRIGANDS.

(From Chambers's Journal.)

It was on such a morning as we fog-nurtured islanders seldom witness at home, that I stood upon the deck of the good steamer *Coumoundouros*, watching the nearing shores of the Piræus, which as all the world knows or should know, is the port of the classic city of Athens. The beautiful unclouded sky; the bright outline of the sun-bathed coast; the air laden with the scent of the distant Hymettos; the far eminence with the grand old Acropolis standing out white and bold in the clear atmosphere; and close at hand the mouldering tomb of Themistocles—all combined to arouse such poetic fancies in my mind, that I forgot for the moment the prosaic business upon which I had come. The screaming engine of the busy little railway which carries the traveller from the Piræus to Athens, soon reminded me, however, that I was accredited with a mission from a London Greek firm to their friends in the Attic city; and I was soon whirling over the sacred ground

Where History gives to every rood a page!

We passed the monuments of those doughty champions of the War of Independence, Karaiskakis and Mianulis, and many other objects of interest; and after a ride of three or four miles, I found myself at my destination.

After the first few days, I certainly had a very pleasant time of it, the few hours' work each day acting only as a stimulus to my varied pleasures; and having examined the Acropolis, and lunched by the fallen pillar of Jupiter, seated myself in the ruins of the Pnyx—whence Demosthenes declaimed, and Pericles evolved his plans—I looked around like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. I thereupon consulted my genial but unwashed host, Kyrie Antonio Pericles Pappagemetracopoulos—who, although Plato was to him a text-book, and the sayings of Socrates as familiar as the story of Tommy and Harry to an English schoolboy, was always as dirty as a sweep—upon the propriety of betaking myself to where

The mountains look on Marathon,

And Marathon looks on the sea.

For one might as well go to Egypt without visiting the Pyramids, or to Rome without entering St. Peter's, as to 'do' Greece and leave Marathon unexplored. And when my host tried to dissuade me by assuring me that a Greek gentleman's ear had been sent a fortnight before by the brigands to his obstinate relatives, to hurry the negotiations for his ransom, it so roused my blood, that I vowed I would go if I returned as close cropped as an English terrier. So away we started—myself and Themistocles the son of my host, a tall unshaven youth dirtier than his father—mounted upon two high-spirited donkeys, our revolvers well primed, and our commissariat well stocked. 'Adios Kyrie!' shouted my long-named host as we cantered off.

'Never fear,' I replied, waving my revolver defiantly, and feeling that I should be greatly disappointed if the rascals did not show themselves.

On we went, enjoying the scenery and holding a hybrid conversation—he in broken English, and I in sadly mutilated Greek—until in the excitement of the ride, and the glorious panorama constantly unfolding itself to our view, I entirely forgot that there were such beings as brigands in existence.

'Now,' said I to Themistocles, after a ride of some hours, during which my appetite had become unpleasantly sharpened, 'let us look about for a spot where we can bivouac in comfort.'

We soon found a delightful place, sheltered all round, save where through a small opening, we obtained a view of a charming landscape. Dismounting, and allowing our animals to refresh themselves on the grass, we soon made havoc of the good things we had brought. I was laying upon my back smoking a cigarette after the meal, gazing dreamily at the blue firmament; and being too lazy to rise, had called upon Themistocles to pass the bottle.

'Has the fellow gone to sleep?' thought I, still indisposed to turn my head. 'Themistocles!'

But Themistocles heard me not; and when I raised myself upon my elbow, I saw him standing, as if struck dumb and motionless with fear, staring upon the opening. Instinctively I leaped up and clutched my revolver; but before I took a step, the cause of Themistocles' fear became apparent; and three shaggy forms behind three blunderbusses aimed direct at me, made me fully aware that I was in presence of those scourges of Greece, the brigands! But oh! what a metamorphosis! Where were the natty green jackets with silver buttons, the plumed hats, and the *tout ensemble* of the brigands of my youth, of the operas and the picture-books? Three ragged, disreputable-looking figures, clad in greasy sheep-skins and dirty clothes, unkempt, unshaven, took the place of those tinselled heroes, and with stern gestures and muttered threats, ordered us to follow them. My first thought was resistance; but when I showed the slightest signs, the three bell-mouthed muskets were bent towards me; and I felt that the odds were too many, and determining to wait events, grimly submitted to be led down the mountain by our unsavoury guides.

At last, after winding through ravines and hollows, across glens and over mountain paths innumerable, this most unpleasant journey ended by our guides calling a halt as we gained the summit of an eminence surrounded by trees and tall rocks, forming an extraordinary natural fortress. Beneath our feet, in a deep ravine, with seemingly but one outlet, and excellently sheltered by overhanging foliage, was the camp of the brigands; and here we found the rest of the shaggy ruffians—with the exception of one who stood sentinel—enjoying their siesta with indolent content.