

THE COYOTE.

The Official Howler of the American Desert.

VOL. 1.

ABILENE, TEXAS, APRIL 2, 1906.

No 2.

A STRICTLY FIRST CLASS PAPER WITH A VERY LIMITED CIRCULATION.

Application to have same entered as second-class freight now pending before the Inter-State Commerce Commission. Final decision expected within next 53 years

A BADLY BUSTED BUCKET SHOP.

People are certainly peculiar creatures. They have such funny ways.

The way they howl about evil, and overlook sin; punish misdemeanors and countenance or condone crime, is disgusting or amusing as one may be inclined in views.

Reforms are the crying demand of the hour, and gambling of every kind is especially warred against as one of the greatest evils and principal industries of the age. Press, preachers, and politicians united and unanimous in demanding the full enforcement of the law against gambling.

Public sentiment must, and freely does, endorse this crusade. In fact, this cry of publicity agencies is merely the voicing demand of society's better element and impulse.

Are the people satisfied with whistling and letting off steam?

Because a few crap shooters, poker players and card sharps have been fined imprisoned or forced to flee, do the people believe that reformation is complete, evil conquered and gambling suppressed?

In nearly every town in Texas there is a bucketshop, or cotton exchange. Neither name is sufficiently expressive, for these institutions are nothing more nor less than gambling dives, representing the most pernicious and contaminating species of speculative infamy.

Shielded by the flimsy allegation of business mediums, they flourish in the most conspicuous part of the town, and have as their patrons persons most prominent in church, social, industrial and political affairs, men who by reason of their prominence, power and influence, are most responsible to society for their conduct and example.

There is in the statutes of Texas a very stringent law against bucketshops, but this law is evaded most completely by a sham in

the name of inter-state commerce.

These bucketshops are ostensibly branches of brokerage concerns outside of the state. The local manager merely receives and forwards money as a matter of convenience for the customer, charging a handsome commission for the convenience. The transaction is not complete until the money received by the local bucketshop has been telegraphed to headquarters outside of the state.

This makes the bucketshop an inter-state concern, and places it beyond the jurisdiction of state courts and state laws.

It is a brazen fraud in its very pretensions, a travesty on inter-state relations, an insult to decency, a crime against commerce and a burlesque on courts as dispensers of justice.

There are other burlesques on courts but the bucketshop farce heads the list.

Suppose some fellows should open a poker game in Memphis or New Orleans and establish a bucketshop branch in Abilene, money being received and handled for this game just as it is handled for produce gamblers: How would that loom up as inter-state commerce? What would the courts and press, preachers, politicians and dear people do about it?

Well, Bud, they would do plenty.

It would be classed as a low, infamous gambling joint. Your prominent citizen on his way to the cotton exchange would shun the poker branch office as one would a den of deadly serpents, and in wrathful tones he would speak it as a burning insult to society and a disgrace to the community.

If that concern was beyond the jurisdiction of public wrath and state courts there would be a special act of congress to cover the case, and if necessary there would be a special session of congress to pass that special act.

Which is why I say people are

peculiar creatures.

A man would have about the same chance for a square deal in playing poker by telegraph as he does playing cotton exchanges.

In reality poker and produce as played by telegraph should rank equally as "inter-state commerce."

They are equally "rank" when it comes to common decency.

Abilene has its quote of these "inter-state commerce concerns." It used to have one that it hasn't got now; and the court record facts concerning the busted bucketshop are certainly sufficient evidence as to how these concerns are conducted in order that state laws may be evaded, state courts defied and decency disgraced.

On or about the first day of January, 1905, a bucketshop was established in Abilene. This bucketshop known as the Abilene Cotton Exchange, did a thriving business until about the 30th day of March, whereupon the said bucketshop did then and there, as the petition alleges, go busted and smashed into smithereens, and did cease to be solvent and became bankrupt, and failed and refused to divvy up and the mischief was to play generally.

And great was the smash and the smithereens and the sorrows occasioned by the hereinbefore mentioned bust.

And many who were of the tribe of Lambs, and who had regularly gone forth daily unto the bucketshop, whistling their merry lays and rattling spondulix in their jeans, did now look shorn of all joy and left alone in the middle of a very bad fix.

And now those who were of the tribe of Lambs whistled not and sang not, neither did they rattle spondulix in their jeans. May be you have heard about it? If not I regret it very much, for I cannot chronicle in these columns that which they did—publishing cuss words being out of my line of business.

I could publish a few cuss words, but not all that have been coined and put into circulation since the English language was discovered,

and nothing short of that quantity would do justice to the subject in the matter of what those of the tribe of Lambs did when it dawned upon them what had happened previous to their taking a tumble

Everything from beeswax preferred to spot sow belly went off. So did one of the alleged partners in the bucketshop. He went away off and has never been heard of since. But to state this in a more eloquent, classical style:

The market slumped, one partner humped,
And the suckers got their cocoanuts bumped.

I don't usually write poetry. I do so only when a great woe is upon my mind and I want to make it unanimous.

Previous to the crash this institution was reputed to be a branch of a similar concern located in Memphis, Tennessee, or somewhere else within the jurisdiction of interstate commerce. At first the failure of the concern was attributed to the failure of the parent concern and the decamping of one of the principal officials, one Dryden, with the funds. As a cause this might have been alright, but as reimbursement it wasn't. Those of the tribe of ye Lambs in and about ye town of Abilene had about fifteen thousand dollars worth of grievances which could not be gratified by theoretical consolation. They wanted cash, and as a result of some of them trying to recover what they considered legitimately their own there were some locally sensational developments.

The concern was managed by one S. E. Donnelly, who seemed to be a pretty square sort of fellow, and who, for the benefit of the victims, did not hesitate to divulge all facts and information in his possession.

As a result of revelations made by Donnelly and others, Martin & Rawlins, of Merkel, instituted suit to recover \$800 which they had lost by reason of the failure, the defendants in this suit being the firm of Moore & Thomas.

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A Badly Busted Bucket Shop.

continued from page one

This suit, by agreement of the victims of the failure, was to be a test suit, and here are a few things incidental thereto:

The contract for the telegraph service was made by and between Donnelly and the local manager for the Western Union Telegraph Co. The contract for lease of the building used by the cotton exchange specified Donnelly as the manager and lessee; but Willis Norwood, owner of the building, positively declined to approve the contract for the reason that Donnelly was a stranger and his responsibility unknown. The contract was then signed by Moore & Thomas.

After the crash Donnelly produced a contract with Moore & Thomas, in which they agreed to pay Donnelly the sum of twenty-five dollars per week and ten per cent of all net earnings as compensation for his services as manager. When the suit of Martin & Rawlins was filed interrogatories were propounded to Donnelly and his contract was attached to his answers to the interrogatories.

In connection with explanations and statements repeatedly made to myself and others, Donnelly said a certain prominent local banker was a silent partner in the concern, but this banker's name does not appear in any of the contracts nor in the suit.

The defendants answered by a general and special denial to the plaintiffs' allegations.

Interrogatories were propounded to the defendants but they declined to answer, stating that to do so might incriminate them.

In their answer to the petition of the plaintiffs the defendants aver, among many other things, that it was a gambling, bucketshop transaction and that they were not liable for any loss or damage sustained by patrons of the bucketshop, a contention sustained by statutes and court decisions.

This or something else put a quietus on the lawsuit.

It is a violation of the law to gamble and it is especially wrong to violate the law on a credit.

To comply with the rules and regulations of "inter-state commerce" the money paid into this concern was sent away, and was in the care and keeping of one Dryden, a notorious gambler and speculator, which are, for practical

purposes, one and the same thing. One day, so the story goes, Dryden drifted. The balance of the story is composed of sobs, regrets, interrogations and exclamations.

Running a bucketshop was and is a penal offense. To evade the law the concern must be shielded by the cloak of interstate relations. This is alright if it doesn't leak out that the inter-state relations are purely mythical. In that event the offense becomes amenable to the laws and subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of the state.

In this case the contracts with Donnelly and Norwood, the statements made by Donnelly, the reasons given by the defendants for refusing to answer the interrogatories and the principal feature of their answer to plaintiffs' petition doesn't indicate inter-state connections, if I am any judge of states and connections.

The documents filed in the county clerk's office in connection with this suit belong to the records of the county, are public property and any one has a right to inspect them. For this purpose I visited the clerk's office and called for the papers, but behold the clerk couldn't find the most important ones.

Donnelly's answer to the interrogatories is gone.

Donnelly's contract with Moore & Thomas and made a part of his answer to the interrogatories is gone.

Moore & Thomas' reasons for refusing to answer plaintiffs' interrogatories is gone.

Moore & Thomas' answer to the plaintiff's petition is gone.

The attorneys for both the defendants and plaintiffs claim to know absolutely nothing about them. All of these lawyers claim to have hunted and hunted and hunted for those papers.

Most peculiar thing on record I reckon. The peculiar part is all that is on record now; the papers aren't.

It is a penal offense for any one to spirit those papers away from the clerk's office and destroy or in any manner suppress them.

Now, who committed this breach of the statute and where are those papers?

Have any other important documents been taken from the county clerk's office and never returned?

I do not wish to be understood as insinuating or intimating that any one connected with this suit had anything to do with the disappearance of those papers. Maybe some schoolboy swiped them in order to study a practical demonstration of frenzied finance.

I only know that the papers are

gone and that they should not be. I put in two days, the 14th and 15th of March, hunting for the documents but never obtained a clue as to where they were or went.

I called at the clerk's office on the 29th and asked for the papers again but was informed that they had not been returned or located.

This is in substance the story of a busted bucketshop.

I have used a local incident not because of personal ill feeling toward the principals, but because of the forceful facts in the case. They are facts of record and are public property. To avoid the semblance of vindictiveness I have scarcely made reference to verbal statements and have wholly ignored street talk.

If the mask was removed from every bucketshop in Texas how many respectable and prominent men would have their names tarnished by the revelations? How many men, really good of heart and not naturally bad of mind, but gone wrong in their thirst for wealth, their cravings for power and their craze to gamble, would be most conspicuous because of their sins?

The bucketshop is a powerful and rapidly multiplying curse. It should be the main object of the crusaders' assault, and its eradication the special effort of every one who would contribute to public welfare or society's morals.

How many respected, influential men by notoriously patronizing bucketshops are unconsciously leading the way to gambling hells and temptations' pitfalls?

Several parties have come to me with advice and intimations as to what would happen if I should publish this article, and I regret very much that such is the case, for I have been thereby forced, as a matter of pride and self-respect, to publish this article and make this perhaps unkind additional statement:

The fact that Messrs. Thomas and Moore are highly respected gentlemen, holding important stations in business affairs and being exemplary gentlemen in social life is no concern of this writer. I am not seeking to injure Mr. Thomas in business affairs nor in his position as Grand Chancellor of the K. of P. Lodge, as has been intimated.

Maybe these gentlemen are absolutely innocent of any connection with the busted bucketshop. If so they are most unfortunate in their position. Guilty or innocent, with such evidence against me I would plead guilty, ask for the leniency of the court, take my

soul-sick troubles to the Lord in prayer and abide the will of justice for vendication.

The further fact that neither of these gentlemen have ever wronged me personally, by word or action, is no reason why their names should not be used in this connection. If they are innocent the party responsible for mixing their names with the lawsuit and supplying the damaging evidence is the real wrong doer.

Guilty or innocent these gentlemen are the victims of the infamous bucketshop craze and should gladly join in a crusade against it, which is what I am doing, and their valuable assistance will be appreciated.

To show you that I am impartial I shall go after another bucketshop before long in which some prominent individuals will cut quite a figure. Abilene and Abilene people not connected therewith.

In this issue I had intended asking in a two-column article, why the city council does not advertise for bids for depositing city funds as the law directs, but space forbids and there's time enough yet. I asked the mayor and he said he was not "a d—n bit afraid of me nor anything I could say."

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Another Quarrel Started.

"I made these biscuits myself, David," said Mrs. Copperfield, with honest pride.

"They look very nice, Dora," replied David, picking one of them up and making an effort to split it. "And they are still hot. How long ago did you—ah!—cast them?"—
Stray Stories.

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FACTORIES AND FOOLISHNESS

Abilene is a good, solid, country town, surrounded by a magnificent, fertile and beautiful country, which by the natural and certain process of industrial progress should reach a high state of development.

Abilene depends solely upon agriculture for its subsistence, and so long as this condition maintains the town should grow as the country develops and prospers—that fast and no faster.

Should railroads come factories might, and probably would, reasonably follow and profitably exist.

What Abilene needs now is the development of fruit growing, agriculture, stock and poultry growing throughout the surrounding country. That would give the town certain and almost limitless sustenance, and it would give increased power for securing railroads and factories. By this means should railroads and factories never come the town and country would be alright, and if they did come the town and country would be better prepared to sustain them.

A one-story building on a firm foundation is worth more than a five-story building on a bed of quicksand. If you have a firm foundation you can safely add to the structure as circumstances require. If you haven't a good foundation the shebang is certain to tumble down sooner or later.

I got this information from a stone mason, but he was a thoroughly reliable, trustworthy man.

Booms are a detriment and speculators a curse to any town or country. As result of booms a few individuals profit; hundreds suffer.

Speculators are a species of microbes you can't tell much about. They injure the country if they prosper, and sometimes they almost ruin it if they fail.

Railroads and factories are not development; they are only agencies of development, and it depends to what extent they create fictitious prices of real estate as to whether they benefit or damage. Railroads and factories really benefit a country to the extent that they give increased and economical facilities for exporting and importing and utilizing products, and not to the extent that they create fictitious and fraudulent prices of real estate. Therefore a country needs railroads and factories just in proportion as each may be a benefit to the other.

Abilene will have another railroad before long, and that will be

a fine thing for the town and the country. It is a commercial, and an industrial necessity; but as a result of the tantrum real estate has taken by reason of this railroad I shouldn't be surprised if, ere long, it should tax the capacity of forty railroads to haul the disgust, disappointments, insolvents and regrets away from here.

This will not be the fault of the railroad, the town or country. It will be the fault of fools and speculators, but the town will get all of the abusing.

I understand that a scheme is now on foot to build a factory here, and that a special effort will be made to induce the Farmers' Union to take considerable stock in the concern.

If Mr. Farmers' Union wants to retain the top of its head it had better be careful how it blows down the muzzle of this weapon. It is loaded and cocked and has an automatic trigger on the inside.

But let us be honest and fair and decent about this matter.

As an enterprise a cotton factory would be a good thing for Abilene and the country. As an investment it would be a bad proposition. In the matter of operation the expense would doubtless exceed, or at least, equal the income. The benefits would therefore be cumulative and indirect.

Several things would militate against this enterprise, among them being the lack of railroad facilities, limited water supply and cost of fuel.

Its adjacent and natural trade territory would be limited to a small and sparsely settled country, and to get its products into this territory it would have to buck the trust, a by no means small obstacle itself.

I bucked a trust once. It is still doing business. The people said they would help me, but the next time I buck a trust I am going to do the promising and let the people do the bucking.

A cotton factory here would be a benefit to the local merchants to the extent that it would give remunerative employment to a limited number of persons who would naturally and necessarily put their money into circulation.

It would benefit the farmers to the extent that it would probably give them a slight advance in price for a small per cent of their cotton, and a slightly increased demand for such products as factory hands could afford in the line of vegetables, fruits, poultry, etc.

The products of this factory would be limited to the coarser grade of cloth, and it would probably to some extent cheapen the cost of those articles.

It would benefit schemers and

speculators to the extent that it would enable them to gamble in the fictitious value of real estate for awhile and then gobble up the factory for dessert.

Quite a number of factories have been established in Texas. Where the location has been judicious, the investment conservative, and the management wise results have been fairly satisfactory from a remunerative standpoint. None of these factories have been bonanzas, many of them flat failures.

At the little town of Marble Falls, in Burnett county, there is a great stone structure, built and equipped several years ago for a cotton factory. When I was there in 1900 the huge mass of masonry, stood frowning upon the mountain across the river, echoing the thunders of the cataracts nearby and casting its sombre shadows across the long since untrod ground around it. The factory was not alone in its idleness and desolation. Only a short distance away stood quite a village, most of the houses built as the homes of employees. But they, too, were vacant and falling into decay. Marble Falls was a very good and prosperous looking town, but the factory part of it was more like a grave yard than a industrial mart.

I understand that factory is still casting sombre shadows and frowning.

There is a considerable cotton factory at Hillsboro. If I am correctly informed it does only a reasonable quantity of business, and is now little more than self-sustaining; and it is also my understanding that this concern has already passed through the hands of a receiver. Hillsboro is a larger town than Abilene. It has considerable railroad facilities and is surrounded by a thickly settled country throughout which small and prosperous towns are numerous. If a cotton factory can be made profitable outside of a city or factory center Hillsboro should be an ideal location.

As an experiment a cotton factory would not be a bad proposition, but every cent subscribed for stock or in any way contributed should be charged to the experimental account. Then if the concern failed it would not be a sore disappointment and the loss would not be lamented. If it should prove barely self-sustaining the results would be an indirect benefit.

There are a number of cotton factories at other points in the state, and I understand that the total output of these factories is now taken by the jobbers.

The products of a factory are al-

ways handled directly by the jobbers, and now let us presume that the total output of a cotton factory in Abilene would be readily handled by the jobbers, be that output great or small, to what extent would this concern be profitable to the owners and to what extent would it be beneficial to the country?

It would be profitable to whatever extent the income exceeded the operating expenses, plus interest on the original investment, taxes, insurance, etc. The income would be contingent upon the market prices of the raw and manufactured article. To get the full results out of this concern would require shrewd, experienced management urged to the limit by self-interest. In other words, much would depend upon who owned and operated the mill as to results. Antagonistic interests would be fatal.

The mill should be owned by the merchants or the farmers or by individuals independent of both these classes. The merchants could afford to donate a bonus to the farmers or the farmers could afford to donate a bonus to the merchants or the merchants and farmers could afford to donate a bonus to a corporation independent of both classes, but as a co-operative plan among opposing interests it would be a farce and a failure, and if the interest of merchants and farmers conflict no where else they would conflict in the matter of jointly owning a cotton factory. The interest of the merchant-stockholders would require that cotton be bought as cheaply as possible and the manufactured article sold high. The farmer as a producer would want the top price for his cotton, and as a consumer he would want the manufactured article as cheap as possible.

His interest would be agin him a gwine an' a comin'. He wouldn't go very far, however, until he would come to a sad realization and a full stop.

Cheap cotton would be a loss to him. High priced goods would be a profit to him when he sold, but a loss to him when he bought, which he must necessarily do to a certain extent.

If the factory belonged to individuals the merchants and the farmers would be interested in a good price for cotton and in buying and selling the manufacturing article as cheaply as possible. This would make their interests mutual and their efforts co-operative.

Should a small factory go in here the benefits have already been sufficiently enumerated. Should a

large factory be established here its output might aggregate half a million dollars per year. Deduct from this a reasonable per cent of profit and every item that could enter the cost of operation and see how much cotton would find a market at this factory. Possibly five thousand bales. And how many of these five thousand bales would be bought elsewhere and shipped into this place? That would depend upon the market price of cotton here and elsewhere.

Bring a cotton factory in here and everybody in Western Texas would go wild about cotton, and the crop would be so increased that the yield would exceed the local demand as hundreds exceed fractions.

We need more hogs, more mules, more cattle, more chickens, more fruits and more feedstuffs.

A cotton factory would be a good thing for the town and the whole country, but to hold out to the people the argument and inducement that it would increase the price of every bale of cotton raised in this country, make the merchants all prosperous, give employment to all the unemployed people and produce big revenues for the stockholders would be a brazen deception, a fraud and a swindle.

If there was anything like a bonanza in starting a cotton factory here capitalists would be tumbling all over themselves, each one trying to get hold of it first.

A factory would not hurt the country unless the country makes a large aggregation of fools of itself in the matter of securing said factory. It would be a benefit to the town and country if secured judiciously and operated properly.

If individuals want to contribute to this scheme that is their business, and I see no special reason why it is not commendable as a spirit of enterprise.

If the Farmers' Union as an organization wants to take stock in a co operative concern of this kind that is their business and it will be about the last business they will transact as an organization.

The first thing would be a row as to who should boss the job, the next thing would be a bankrupted cotton factory and a high salaried receiver and then would come a sacrifice sale of the institution.

In so far as the farmers are concerned I make the prediction that a cotton factory here, using five thousand bales of cotton per annum, would not benefit the cotton market to the extent of twen-

ty-five thousand dollars per year. In other respects it would benefit the agricultural interests to some extent, and in many ways it would benefit the business men and laboring classes. But you can bet your sweet existence Mr. Speculator would be the principal polly-wog in the puddle.

If the Farmers Union wants a cotton factory they had better go it alone and not monkey with somebody else's scheme. Under the most favorable circumstances the income would hardly justify the expenditure and just at present it occurs to me that the Farmers Union has its hands full of important incidentals, that it has several matters to adjust and several reforms to inaugurate before it tackles schemes beyond its experience and comprehension, the existence of which are of questionable benefit to them at best.

It would seem to me that they had better get out of debt individually before they go to borrowing money collectively to build a cotton factory. And they had better beware of stock-holder schemes that are sure to fail and thereby certain to disrupt the organization.

The men who would most heartily enjoy the disruption of the Union will be most industrious and solicitous in their efforts to induce the Union and farmers generally to take stock in this scheme. Note their names and mark this prediction.

The farmers, merchants, property owners and people generally might afford to donate liberally to a cotton factory bonus, but beware of the heterogeneous joint stock company scheme.

Don't set around like a hungry, sleepy toad swallowing everything you hear, pro or con, but listen, watch, investigate, figure and then act.

Look out for your own interest first, the interest of your neighbor next and beware of bunco games all along the route.

When a smooth guy with a sangfroid countenance tells you that he is working solely for the good of the country sick the dogs on him and go on about your business.

Provoking.

"A girl with pretty ankles has a bad time of it," observed the home-grown philosopher.

"As to how?"

"The main time she wants to wear her nice open-work stockings is on a rainy day, and then like as not her mother won't let her."

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