

THE GROWTH OF BOSS FINDLAY.

ED FINDLAY, gambler monopolist and political boss, is neither an ogre nor a Napoleon. The successive steps by which he has attained his present prominence must have been a series of surprises to him; possibly they have turned his head a little or he would not have done certain greedy and foolish things that have lately made him especially odious to the decent people in this community.

There was a time, not long ago, when he stood notorious as much as he now courts it. He was of a temperament that could be described as "good natured;" he spent money freely and was easy prey for blackmailers; he attempted to interfere with nobody and planned harm for nobody; all he wanted was to be let alone. His slowly growing business of policy gambling, cautiously nurtured, gave him control of an increasing number of petty criminals and vagabonds whom he supported.

Meanwhile a lot of politicians, finding fat picking in this city and this county and anxious to perpetuate themselves and their kind in control, consulted the gambler and showed him greater possibilities than he had dreamed of. He furnished money and men when they were needed and they furnished him not only immunity from punishment by law, but the right to name candidates and pack primaries. Incidentally they gave him an absolute gambling franchise in Kansas City.

When he realized his impotence, he was flattered by the idea of being a "boss." Lacking the shrewdness to keep himself out of sight and be content with the large profits of his gang-guarded business he came boldly into the public view and attracted attention to himself by various impudent and outrageous acts. He personally conducted mobs that interfered with primary elections; he threatened men who opposed him; he called attention to the fact that certain candidates were, first of all, his servants; he appeared in a court room and attempted to "pack" the election of a special Judge to try a contested election case in which he was interested; he allowed his greed and impudence to control him so that he made direct attempts to swindle school children out of their pocket money; he sent some of his notorious assistants to Jefferson City to assist in defeating legislation that was desired by the people of Kansas City; he appeared in the City Hall whenever a local public measure demanded obstruction or modification to suit him and the gang.

Such acts as these have presented him to the public mind as a man of unusual boldness and ability, in his way. He is not. He is simply the product of the treatment he has had. He has gone on and he has gone too far, just as every man of small mental caliber and easy nature would have done in his place.

Back of him, and worse than he is, is the gang and the public office holders, who represent him and it. They are helpless without him and he is ruined without them. They co-operate against the good of the people. They serve each other and the public pays the damages.

There is no question of the extent of the control exercised by FINDLAY, representing as he does, the men who have developed him. It is absolute in this city and in this county.

But he is no Napoleon. And he is no ogre. He is, however, a public nuisance and he represents a great public danger.

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