

## The People's Uprising

This poem deals with activities in the Kansas Statehouse from a Farmer's Alliance (or Populist) perspective. A number of Kansas politicians are named in the poem which implies that the Farmer's Alliance had some success against the Republican "bosses" of Kansas. The flyer was printed by the Spirit of Kansas, Topeka, a weekly newspaper published in Topeka from 1884 through 1892 (previously published in Lawrence).

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### THE PEOPLE'S UPRISING.

On Shunganunga's classic banks  
The bosses played their cunning pranks;  
Those brilliant Kansans, bad and good,  
Our Coney Pat, and J. G. Wood,  
Bill Higgins, Hudson, smiling Joe,  
And J. B. Johnson in the row,  
And A. P. Jetmore, tall and big,  
Aspiring and concealed prig.  
And George R. Peck, of Santa Fe  
Between the lines we plainly see,  
Has one eye on the railroad train,  
While close along comes Printer Crane;  
With half an eye he plainly sees,  
And T. D. Thacher quite agrees,  
That one who can state printing get  
Can make a net the softest yet,—  
These and others make up the ring  
That thinks to run the party thing.

You'll find them round the state house  
[square,  
Watch them look o'er the field, and swear  
How all shall feel the party whip  
Who from their necks the yoke would slip;  
Hear them good General Rice berate;  
See with what venom and what hate  
They curse, until one's whole frame tingles  
Because he played poor John J. Ingalls.  
Hear how they damn the *Champion*,  
When late it put such damper on,  
And loaded down with heavy clogs  
The hopes of Kansas demagogues.

Ne'er yet before saw they such straits,  
Ne'er yet before were their poor pates  
So nearly stunned with awful shocks,  
So threatened at the ballot box.  
But not inclined to yield at all  
They send abroad a glowing call,—  
Believe themselves as wise as popes,  
Quite fit to lay the party ropes,  
With wires to pull, and dirty work  
Fit for a heathen or a Turk.  
The work is old, 'tis really dirt  
To wave anew the bloody shirt.  
Not every one is low enough,  
Not every one so coarse and rough—  
To stain the lives of well bred folks,  
And blacken names like L. L. Polk's.

Sam Crawford, then, among the rest,  
Pops from out his feathered nest.  
He yearly costs ten thousand dollars,  
Of course he'll wear the party collars.  
So in long and bungling letters,  
Spins gauzy falsehoods of his betters.

The times are strange and things in doubt,  
The farmers turning things about,  
The politicians, wondering feel  
Great concern for the public weal,  
But more indeed for their own pockets  
As limbs torn from their very sockets.

So bosses oft in conclave meet,  
To conjure how to keep their feet,  
Since often now a light goes out,  
Not oft, like Campbells in a bout,  
But oft in squads with steady tramp  
Of useful workers come to camp.  
Behind are left all party lines,  
There're coming now to down combines.

A puzzle racks the bosses' brain,  
How to keep in from drenching rain,  
Where to fly to reach a cover  
And not be deluged by one Clover.  
Then when the bosses oft have met,  
Tried hard to swim and not get wet,  
Worked long to save the party craft,  
So fully rigged afore and aft,  
With life boats hanging to the davits  
Long life leases' they would have it,  
To party power, well settled down  
For them to rule without a crown,

But country rustics, waiting round,  
Instead of delving in the ground,  
Declared their right to take a hand  
In ruling o'er this favored land.  
Then bosses met and pondered well,  
What tales could they the farmer tell  
What explanations they might make  
To keep him down for their poor sake,  
For be it known, their plans were laid  
And all arrangements well nigh made,  
For every office to be filled  
In every field that could be tilled.

Without attempting here to tell,  
From Humphrey down to Hallowell,  
They had a place assigned to all  
With farmers pushed hard to the wall.  
Sure never had it been their place  
Aught else to do, but vote with grace  
Such tickets made and studied o'er,  
As rings put out, and nothing more.  
So when the boos from shop and farm,  
With not a thought of doing harm,  
With no desire outside their right,  
Still hardly knowing half their might,  
Began to talk and organize,  
No fear of bosses in their eyes,  
The state house ring no clamor made  
For voters were their stock in trade.  
But soon with scorn and then defiance  
They met the farmers' state alliance.

Then Ingalls made with Hudson Joe,  
A patched up peace, two months ago.  
This peace as soon as brought about,  
Twas thought would knock the farmers  
But being made of firmer stuff [out.  
The bosses found it not enough;  
For meeting soon in state convention  
The alliance said twas their intention,  
To place John James high on the shelf  
Where genius left quite to itself  
Might soon bring out that striking novel  
Of pictured life in hall and hovel.

Astounded stood the state house ring  
That farmers dare do such a thing.  
What right had they, mere clodhoppers,  
Working men and low wood choppers  
To even doubt the bosses' right  
To name the tickets, honor bright,  
That they should vote without suggestion,  
Vote them straight and make no question?

In olden days a right divine  
Made lords and kings. Now they incline  
That party lords, not less than kings,  
Can squeeze mankind like senseless things.

The *Topeka Capital* says that L. L.  
Polk is only a corn doctor. Well, corn-  
doctors may be very useful, since

No one with ease and grace can kick  
With corns and bunions growing thick;  
And if reports are true we fear  
The people hard will kick this year;  
And when the farmers raise their feet  
To lift the bosses from their seat,  
'Twill prove that Polk is apt again  
And fit to raise both corn and Cain.

To be continued.

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