

**A HISTORY OF THE
PRIVATE, POLITICAL,
AND OFFICIAL VILLANIES
OF FERNANDO WOOD**

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A History of the Private, Political, and Official Villanies of Fernando Wood by Anonymous

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TO BROWN, BROTHERS & Co.,
 GOODHUE & Co.,
 GEORGE DOUGLASS,
 R. L. & A. STUART,
 JACOB LITTLE,
 SCHUYLER LIVINGSTON,
 MATTHEW MORGAN,
 R. H. WINSLOW,
 ROYAL PHELPS,
 DECOPPET & Co.,
 FLETCHER HARPER,
 WM. H. MACY,
 L. C. CLARK,
 THOMAS SMALL & SONS,

T. F. BULKLEY,
 WM. B. ASTOR,
 MOSES TAYLOR,
 WATTS SHERMAN
 WM. H. CARY,
 A. B. NEELSON,
 GEORGE NEWBOLD,
 CHARLES A. MORGAN,
 DAVID OGDEN,
 COURTLANDT PALMER,
 DANIEL DREW,
 ISRAEL CORSE,
 HORACE WALDO,
 E. M. YOUNG.

GENTLEMEN:

There is not an individual, nor any number of individuals in this great commercial metropolis, to whom we could with greater propriety dedicate this work than yourselves. You are ardent and zealous in the advancement of the commercial interests of our city, and of the whole Union, and must deeply deplore every circumstance that tends to retard mercantile enterprise. You are careful to uphold the true dignity of your profession, and to encourage the legitimate exercise of its duties. Most of you are known extensively as men of fortune, whose wealth equals that of princes, and your munificence, liberality and charity have been on a scale as magnificent as the fortune you have acquired. It is, or should be, the pride of your life that you have amassed wealth by honest enterprise and upright

dealing, and not by fraud and oppression. We believe each of you have a reputation for integrity in business, and would positively refuse to employ, even in the humblest capacity, in your mercantile establishments, or other places of business, a man who had been guilty of the grossest frauds in the transaction of mercantile affairs. You would certainly refuse to become associated with, or to admit as a partner in your business, a man who had, in a former partnership, plundered his partner in every possible way that his ingenuity could devise, and whose frauds had been proven beyond a possibility of doubt.

Entertaining this opinion, we have dedicated this pamphlet to you. We wish you to peruse it candidly; and we the more expressly desire you to do so, because we observe in the public papers, of a recent date, that you have voluntarily urged the present Mayor of this city to consent to a reelection. The individual you thus have honored with your approbation is the hero of these pages. He, too, has been a merchant, and we have faithfully portrayed his admirable qualifications for mercantile pursuits. You have recommended him for Mayor, though not one of you would consent to employ him in your counting-house, when his true character becomes known to you. We are ignorant of the influences that have controlled your action in this matter. If, as men of great wealth, you expect to give direction to public sentiment in the politics of the city, in the movement you have made, you will find that you have been mistaken.

We shall print for your special perusal, 20,000 copies of this pamphlet, and at least three times that number for the 60,000 mechanics, artisans, and laboring classes of this city, who have at least as deep an interest in the election of honest public officials as the 28 merchants to whom we have dedicated this work, or the "83 OTHERS," who, it is alleged, have joined you in the urgent request that the present Mayor would consent to a reelection.

BY THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages will be found a brief history of a series of mercantile frauds and villainies, and political and official wrongs, of the present Mayor of New-York. In recording them, we have not gone beyond the most undoubted and incontestable proof of their existence. We have not stated a fact, drawn an inference, or even imagined a single circumstance that has not been proven by testimony as strong as ever was given in a court of justice, and by men of as fair characters for truth and veracity, as ever were engaged in business in our city. The alleged frauds of Fernando Wood, are proven beyond a possibility of doubt. They stand on record, never to be effaced. No rebutting testimony has shaken the belief of any of the men who have investigated them legally. They are proven as plain as the sun of heaven at noonday, in an unclouded sky, both by direct and circumstantial evidence. No rogue ever resided within the walls of a State prison, or ever will, who was convicted of forgery by more unmistakable evidence, than that which was given to prove that Fernando Wood exhibited to Ed. E. Marvine, a fraudulent or forged bill of sale of the barque John W. Cater, and a forged letter purporting to have been received from T. O. Larkin of California. Yet Fernando Wood swore that such a charge against him was untrue! We will not argue what constitutes perjury in the legal sense of the term, but no one can doubt, after reading this pamphlet, and investigating the case for himself, that in a moral sense, Wood is guilty of both forgery and perjury!

The perpetrator of these frauds is now Mayor of this great commercial city, and a candidate for reelection. His friends will again appeal to the voters of this city for support. He has the whole of the vast patronage of the city government to aid him, and no one knows how to use this power more adroitly. What a sad commentary upon the mercantile enterprise, business character, intelligence, and integrity of our people, his reelection to the mayoralty would be! Those who supported him when ignorant of his frauds, may be excused. But now, when these villainies are proven, they can have no excuse for giving him their support.

If he, or those who may still believe him an honest man, feel aggrieved at the following statement of facts, there is now time before the election to show its falsity. If they can not do this, as honest men, having a desire to promote public and private morality, and preserve the reputation of our city, they will use every honorable effort to defeat his election.

What would be the effect upon the trade of our city, were all, or even a majority of our merchants, shown to be as devoid of mercantile integrity as Fernando Wood? Or what would be the effect upon the politics of our city, if all, or a majority of our leading politicians were proven to be as corrupt in business, private or official, as Mayor Wood? No people can long preserve a reputation for integrity, and no government can long be popular, where the perpetrators of such frauds

as those charged and proven against our Mayor, are elected to the highest offices. To suppose the reverse of this, is to admit that the majority of the voters are corrupt, or too ignorant to exercise the franchise with safety to the public welfare. We hope it will be long before this admission can be truthfully made in any part of this great and free republic.

High political excitement oftentimes leads to a close adhesion to party nominations; and the immense patronage of our city government, including a control over the entire police force, wielded by a tyrant hand, may force a nomination of the most corrupt man in the community. But we think the public mind will be aroused against Fernando Wood, to such an extent, that he will fail in his reelection. His true character will be portrayed so vividly that he can not succeed.

When a candidate in 1854, he sought interviews with many whom he had a right to suppose would oppose him, as they knew much of his real character, and of the alleged frauds charged upon him. He endeavored to persuade them that he had been unjustly accused; but when finding that he could make no impression on their minds in this direction, he then appealed to them for forgiveness, and solicited them to give him an opportunity to redeem his character through his election to the mayoralty. He stated, in some instances, that he sought this high position chiefly to remove, by his good conduct in official position, the deep prejudices that existed against him. This appeal induced some to support him, who otherwise would not have done so. When arrayed against a single opponent, Wood was easily beaten, as was the case in 1850, when he was beaten by several thousand votes. But he saw in the mayoralty contest, in 1854, that there would be several candidates, and that if he could get the endorsement of the Democracy, or of the Seymour party, he could slip in by a plurality vote. He was right in his calculation.

But what effort did he make to redeem his character after he was elected? His policy at first was to be bold, and *seemingly* honest, Napoleonic in the style of his public documents. But no sooner had he begun to get the good opinion of some who had opposed his election, than he found it convenient, and to his interest, to take a stroll in the neighborhood of the sunken ship Joseph Walker, lying at the slip, foot of Dover Street, in which entombed craft he imagined he saw a second John W. Cater. The first draft he made on the city treasury, on account of this sunken treasure, was a contract with his friend Jones to raise her, for the snug little sum of \$13,000! He succeeded in getting a greater part of this amount out of the treasury, when the press got hold of the matter, and further drafts on this account were dishonored. But his friend Jones got some seven or eight thousand dollars on this fraudulent contract.

This showed that the express desire to reform, when once in the Mayoralty chair, was a mere pretense for the perpetration of other frauds, if possible on a more gigantic scale, where the city treasury, much larger than Marvin's capital, held the plunder. His whole conduct while Mayor, has shown that he is the same identical Fernando Wood, who converted a bill of 75 cents, into \$100.75, and rendered it to his partner, thus fraudulently altered, and received the one half of the fraudulent amount from him in the final settlement of their accounts. He is still the same Fernando Wood—grown probably more bold in villainy, by having the people's endorsement for the mayoralty—that he was when he exhibited a forged bill of sale for the barque John W. Cater, by which he plundered his partner out of \$4000! Elevation to high official position, has about the same effect upon his moral nature, as the sight of a fat pullet does upon the physical propensities and appetite of a hungry fox. Such is the character of Fernando Wood, the Mayor of

New-York, as will be conclusively shown in what follows. Read, and then say whether he is persecuted, or whether he stands condemned of the perpetration of the grossest frauds in private business affairs, and in his official career. The cry of persecution will not avail now. Here are the charges, and the evidence of their truth; they must stand until shown to be false.

The acts of a public man are properly subjects of close scrutiny. His general character for honesty and fair dealing may be properly referred to when up for office, or when holding one. A man who will aid in the elevation to office, of such a man as we have represented Mayor Wood to be, is a dangerous citizen. It is, therefore, the duty of every man to satisfy himself whether we have charged him wrongfully or whether we have told the truth. We have simply stated the irresistible convictions of our own mind, and, we feel assured, those of the mind of every man who has been engaged in the investigation of the legal proceedings which have been instituted in the cases referred to in this pamphlet. We feel satisfied that no candid mind can come to any other conclusion than that to which we have arrived, if they will investigate the matter.

H I S T O R Y .

WOOD'S FIRST NOMINATION FOR MAYOR IN 1850—HIS DEFEAT.

In 1850, Fernando Wood became a candidate for the Mayoralty. On the eve of the election, there was sent to the office of one of our city papers an astounding document, a copy of a complaint made by the assignees of Edward E. Marvin, in a suit then pending in the Superior Court in this city, in which Fernando Wood was defendant. In this complaint Wood was charged with gross frauds upon Marvin, perpetrated during a partnership that existed between them in 1848-9. The proprietor of the paper to which a copy of this complaint had been sent, refused to publish the document, unless he could be satisfied of its general truth. It so happened that many of the alleged frauds perpetrated by Wood were easily examined. Documents were placed in possession of the proprietor of the paper, and several of the merchants, of whom Wood had purchased goods on account of the partnership, were visited, and the bills which Wood had rendered his partner were compared with the books of the merchants, when it was found that the grossest frauds had been committed. Being thus fully satisfied of the truth of the alleged frauds, the complaint against Wood was published, with strong editorial comments. Though Wood was defeated badly for the Mayoralty, many voted for him who would not had they believed the charges against him. They were made on the eve of the election, and many, therefore, doubted as to their truth.

Mr. Wood managed to keep this case in court until he again became a candidate for the Mayoralty in 1854. Then, too, the charges were reiterated in one of our city papers, but, unfortunately, their publication was again deferred until within a day or two of the election. Though much proof of the alleged frauds then existed, they were published in a paper not read by the masses, and, therefore, did not have that extensive circulation they should have had. This time, although Wood ran several thousand behind his ticket, there were so many opposing candidates to divide his opponents, that he slipped into the Mayoralty chair by a small plurality. The Seymour ticket was popular, as we all remember, and Wood was adroit enough

to identify himself with the success of that ticket, and was consequently elected. His official career while Mayor will be reviewed by one competent to perform the task. It is now being prepared for publication. The following pages relate more particularly to the deep villainy of Fernando Wood in those relations of life where honor and integrity shine with peculiar lustre, and where villainy has even a blacker aspect than when practised in official positions.

THE SECRET POLITICAL MASKED ORGANIZATIONS GOT UP BY MAYOR WOOD.

It is now about twenty years ago when Fernando Wood first became an aspiring and ambitious politician in this city. In 1840, he succeeded in being nominated and elected to Congress. For the purpose of securing the nomination, he organized a secret political association, composed of five members from each ward. This secret body met at No. 44 Chatham street, and all the members wore *masks*, and were sworn to the most profound secrecy. The form of the oath is now in possession of Mayor Wood, and is drawn up in language something resembling the oath which Morgan had published as that taken by Masons, a few years before our "model" Mayor came to this city to reside. The initiatory oath of this masked association was comparatively harmless to the one taken just before the candidate entered the inner temple at 44 Chatham street. The candidate for admission was blindfolded when he entered the room. His mask was so constructed that all was total darkness to him. All that transpired at these meetings were kept a most profound secret. Those who spoke disguised their voice so that they should not be recognized.

Several of our most respected and influential citizens were induced to join this masked secret organization, believing that the interests of the Democratic party were the object. Men of means were placed on the Finance and other important Committees.

Two of the five members from each ward were chosen to organize other associations in the city. For this purpose they were associated with three persons from each ward, not members of the association, and entirely ignorant of the existence of such a secret masked body. By these means a great variety of associations were formed, all of which were controlled by the central, secret, masked body, of which Fernando Wood was the originator.

The machinery was all in perfect order, and the design was to control all the nominations of the party in the city. It operated with a power unseen and unfelt by all the outsiders in the party. When Tammany Hall opened its doors to the nominating convention chosen by this secret, masked organization, so admirably was every thing arranged, that on the first ballot for members of Assembly, of which there were thirteen, chosen by general ticket, twelve were nominated nearly unanimous; and the other candidate of this masked organization was nominated on the next ballot. Wood was nominated for Congress, and nearly every man that he desired was successful. The outside Democrats could not tell how the thing was done, nor who did it. But it was done.

At the head of this singular organization was the man who is now Mayor of the city, and who asks to be re-elected. Several persons joined it without knowing or supposing that so many ridiculous features marked an entrance to it, or that its object was to give Fernando Wood the power to make all the nominations. Many, when they found out the object, were disgusted, and withdrew.

A similar association, except the masks, was recently organized by the Mayor to compel his re-nomination, and also to control every nomination made or to be made by the Democratic party this Fall. In this association none were admitted but those who were the friends of the Mayor, and many of them were his appointees to office, and quite a number members of the police, a body of men which the Mayor has publicly avowed should not mingle or take an active part in the politics of the city. In this movement the Mayor has so far been successful, although he has called forth an opposition in the ranks of the Democratic party that bids fair to insure his defeat at the polls.

**THE CELEBRATED PARTNERSHIP FRAUDS OF OUR "MODEL" MAYOR—
THE MARVINE CASE—A FORGED BILL OF SALE—TWO FORGED LETTERS
—A SCORE AND MORE OF FRAUDULENT ALTERATIONS OF BILLS AND
VOUCHERS—UNPARALLELED VILLAINY IN MERCANTILE LIFE.**

In the latter part of the year 1848, Fernando Wood designed sending to California a quantity of merchandise. The gold discoveries on the Pacific coast were then just beginning to excite the cupidity of our merchants and others, and Mr. Wood designed to be among the first to make his fortune in the California trade. Not being overstocked with cash at that period of his life, he very naturally looked about him to find pecuniary means to aid in the enterprise. He thought of his friend Edward E. Marvine, then residing in this city, who had been an old merchant, had retired from business many years, was worth about \$100,000, and had good credit with merchants who knew him. Between Wood and Marvine there existed a relationship, and a warm personal friendship. Under these circumstances our hero, the present Mayor of New-York, wended his way one evening, in the latter part of the year 1848, to the residence of Marvine, then living in one of our up-town streets. He briefly opened upon the object of his visit, but was told that, in consequence of some friends who had called that evening to see Mr. Marvine on a social visit, some other opportunity must be embraced by Mr. Wood to develop more fully his scheme of making a fortune in the California trade. The time and place for a second interview was agreed upon. At this interview Mr. Wood was fully prepared with a glowing statement, proving conclusively that if Marvine would join him in the enterprise, a large fortune would surely result. To convince Marvine of the success of the enterprise, he showed a letter purporting to be from T. O. Larkin, then residing in California in the capacity of government agent. In this letter Mr. Wood was strongly urged to send out a quantity of merchandise to California. Accompanying the letter was a memorandum which named many of the articles that should be sent as most suitable to the market at that time. In this letter, which was dated in July, 1848, it was stated that the pretended writer, Mr. T. O. Larkin, was greatly indebted to Mr. Wood, for important favors shown him, and that he would like an opportunity to return those favors, and that this was the first time he had had the means to repay the obligation. Mr. Wood was urged in this forged letter to ship some \$10,000 worth of goods to the California market, and he was told in it that he would realize \$100,000 profit on the shipment.

At that time Mr. Marvine had no reason to believe that this letter was a forged document, got up by Wood to induce him to enter into partnership with him. But such was its real character! Marvine confided in the truth of the representations made by Wood, and acceded to the proposal of partnership.

But before the partnership agreement was drawn up, Mr. Wood desired to perpetrate another fraud on Marvine. He had purchased an old barque, the "John W. Cater," for \$4000. He proposed that Marvine should purchase the one half of this barque, and that the goods for the California market should be shipped in her. He stated that the barque cost him \$12,000, and that he had just paid that amount for her in cash. He said he would sell to Marvine the one half of said barque for \$6000. Not finding Mr. Marvine so ready and desirous to purchase the one half of the barque as he supposed, and fearing that the reason of his hesitation arose from some doubts about the value of the vessel, or as to the price Wood said he paid for it, he, Wood, invented a plan to remove these supposed objections. To do this it was necessary to introduce another forged document, in the shape of a bill of sale, purporting to be the original instrument by which the barque had been conveyed to Wood, by its former owners. In this forged bill of sale the cost price of the barque was stated at \$12,000, and her age not over eleven years. Not for a moment supposing that Wood had prepared a false bill of sale, Marvine purchased the one half of said barque, at the price of \$6000.

These preliminaries being settled, the partnership agreement was drawn up and signed. In this agreement, the sale and purchase of one half of the barque, the price paid for it, and the manner of payment, were described. The parties also agreed to purchase \$20,000 worth of goods to be shipped on board of her, each