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## “Blocks of Five” Dudley, Cartoon Celebrity

Roger A. Fischer\*

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Surely one of the lesser lights of Indiana's political tradition, William Wade Dudley rescued himself from complete obscurity by one momentous indiscretion. In October, 1888, Dudley wrote a circular letter to Indiana Republican leaders urging them to carry the state for native son Benjamin Harrison by organizing “floaters” (nonaligned individuals available to the highest bidder), into “blocks of five.” The ill-advised letter provoked an ugly controversy during the closing days of the election and introduced into the vernacular the terms *floater* and *blocks of five* as synonyms for electoral sleaze. For a season Dudley was an albatross for Harrison and the Republicans and a celebrated bogeyman among opposition Democrats. In one forum in particular, the cartoon art of Joseph Keppler's *Puck*, Dudley became a reigning symbol of Republican iniquity, and for the duration of Harrison's term Dudley, blocks of five, and floaters served as ubiquitous reminders of his tainted victory over Keppler favorite Grover Cleveland.

Born in Vermont on August 27, 1842, Dudley attended Phillips Academy and Russell's Collegiate Institute, New Haven, and settled in 1860 in Richmond, Indiana. Commissioned a captain in Indiana's Nineteenth Volunteer Regiment in 1861, Dudley led troops in combat at Second Manassas, South Mountain, Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, where an injury required amputation of his right leg. After serving out the war as an army judge-advocate, Colonel Dudley came home to Richmond to practice law and work as a clerk of court and as a cashier of the Richmond Savings Bank. His personality, combat record, missing leg, and penchant for “bloody shirt” oratory made him popular among veterans and increasingly influential in Republican politics as a min-

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ion of Oliver P. Morton. Appointed United States marshal for Indiana in 1879, he played a prominent role in the prosecution of Democrats for campaign irregularities in 1878 and two years later in the campaign of James A. Garfield, who in 1881 named Dudley United States commissioner of pensions. He headed the Pensions Bureau until resigning in the wake of Cleveland's 1884 victory and won praise for reforms that streamlined claims processing. In 1884 Dudley enjoyed some support among Indiana Republicans for the governorship but ultimately decided to remain in Washington, D.C., to practice law. In 1888 Harrison chose him as his personal representative on the Republican National Committee (RNC). He quickly became treasurer and for two years unwittingly immortalized floaters in blocks of five. He later practiced law in Washington with Indiana native Louis T. Michener until his death on December 15, 1909.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary assessments, discounting the hyperbole of friends and foes in the wake of Dudley's blocks-of-five gaffe, provide a portrait of an engaging and personally honorable man whose intensely combative partisan zeal brought him to the brink of criminality. "A thorough gentleman, upright in all his business and professional relations," Matilda Gresham wrote of him, but "in politics he believed the end justified the means." As a banker and lawyer in Richmond and later even at the helm of the scandal-plagued Bureau of Pensions, he earned a reputation for relative probity. As a political campaign operative, however, his reputation was unsavory. "In the effective use of money for purchaseable votes," wrote defeated 1880 Democratic gubernatorial candidate Franklin Landers, "there is no man in the country superior to Colonel Dudley." As historian H. Wayne Morgan has written, "If Dudley had a motto, it was 'Vote early and often.' He was familiar in circles that counted 'persuasion' more salutary than propaganda, and he did not shrink from the two-dollar bill that took 'floaters' to the voting booth."<sup>2</sup>

Dudley was well versed in such "competitive bidding" in 1880 and was certain that paid floater votes had carried Indiana for the

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<sup>1</sup> *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*. . . , see under William Wade Dudley. This work provides a detailed summary of his life but little information on his political activity. See also *New York Times*, October 31, 1888; *New York World*, November 15, 1888; Matilda Gresham, *Life of Walter Quintin Gresham, 1832-1895* (2 vols., Chicago, 1919), II, 472-83, 601; Harry J. Sievers, *Benjamin Harrison, Hoosier Statesman: From the Civil War to the White House, 1865-1888* (New York, 1959), 173-74, 197-98, 205, 209-10, 302-303, 350-51, 377-78, 393; Harry J. Sievers, *Benjamin Harrison, Hoosier President: The White House Years and After* (Indianapolis, 1968), 127, 149; Matthew Josephson, *The Politicos, 1865-1896* (New York, 1938), 299, 360, 422-23; and H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1969), 115, 311-12.

<sup>2</sup> Gresham, *Life of Gresham*, II, 478; Leonard D. White, *The Republican Era, 1869-1901: A Study in Administrative History* (New York, 1958), 210-21; Josephson, *The Politicos*, 423; Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley*, 311.

Democrats in 1884. After hearing reports in Washington, D.C., of a dead heat in Indiana, he responded on October 24, 1888, with the circular letter to GOP leaders back home to urge preemptive measures: "Divide the floaters into blocks of five, put a trusted man with the necessary funds in charge of these five and make him responsible that none get away and that all vote our ticket." Democratic officials secured a copy from a curious railroad clerk, and the closing days of the 1888 campaign were dominated by charges and countercharges over Dudley's rash dictum. While Democratic speakers and newspapers exploited his indiscretion, Dudley and other Republicans ingenuously declared the letter a forgery and threatened retaliatory lawsuits, and an angry and thoroughly embarrassed Harrison moved to distance himself and his campaign from the furor and from his old friend and lieutenant. Nevertheless, "Blocks of Five" Dudley reigned improbably as an American political celebrity.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the uproar, Dudley was patently no pioneer in political chicanery. Intensely polarized and almost perfectly balanced in partisan strength, "venal Indiana" was notorious during this period for bitterly contested, frequently corrupt elections with miniscule margins between victory and defeat, margins often secured with the votes of nonresident or irregular floaters at two to five dollars each. In a perceptive and persuasive study of the Dudley scandal, historian James L. Baumgardner has argued that aggressive but surreptitious pursuit of the floater vote, while simultaneously accusing the opposition of similar conduct, was standard practice for both parties in Gilded Age Indiana. Moreover, Baumgardner's analysis of the 1888 returns indicates that all but five Indiana counties voted altogether typically and that Democratic success in Marion County balanced abnormally high Republican turnouts in Carroll, Whitley, Ripley, and Perry counties, which effectively dismisses the possibility that Dudley's missive held the key to Harrison's 1888 Indiana margin. Concludes Baumgardner, Dudley's cardinal sin was one of indiscretion, a violation of the code of silence on the commission of corrupt practices: "It was one thing to be involved in corrupt practices; it was another to 'rub it in' by seemingly openly advocating their use."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For informative discussions of the blocks-of-five scandal, see Sievers, *Hoosier Statesman*, 417-23; Josephson, *The Politicos*, 430-33; Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley*, 311-12; and Eugene H. Roseboom, *A History of Presidential Elections*, (rev. ed., New York, 1964), 282-83.

<sup>4</sup> James L. Baumgardner, "The 1888 Presidential Election: How Corrupt?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, XIV (Summer, 1984), 416-27. For other studies casting doubt on the purported importance of fraud in determining Gilded Age elections, see Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago, 1971), 35-36; Paul Kleppner and Stephen C. Baker, "The Impact of Voter Registration Requirements on Electoral Turnout, 1900-16,"

Whatever its configuration, Dudley's transgression continued to occupy the American political limelight for more than two months in the wake of Harrison's narrow victory. It was only after Dudley's blatant threat to "explode a lot of dynamite" on GOP campaign machinations if made a scapegoat that frantic Republican topsiders quashed a pending federal indictment for campaign fraud. By now a pariah of gargantuan proportions in administration circles, Dudley managed to cling stubbornly to his position as RNC treasurer under Matthew Quay for two more years until new allegations of unethical activities finally prompted his resignation, but long before his eventual departure from the national political stage he had faded back into obscurity as a public figure.<sup>5</sup>

A noted exception to Dudley's rapid fade into oblivion was the cartoon art of Joseph Keppler. His *Puck* was the leading dime illustrated humor weekly magazine of its day and a stalwart champion of the defeated Grover Cleveland. Initiated in New York in 1876 by the Austrian-born Keppler as a German-language venture patterned upon the famed London publication *Punch*, *Puck* made an English-language debut a year later and rapidly revolutionized the medium of American political cartooning. In contrast to the stark black-and-white style and strident dogmatism of the legendary but fading *Harper's Weekly* pioneer Thomas Nast, Keppler and his *Puck* lieutenants endowed their lithographed cover and centerfold cartoons with rainbow coloration, wry tongue-in-cheek Viennese levity, and an affinity for elaborate scenes featuring caricatures by the dozens. Keppler's cartoons exhibited in abundance what Nast's most conspicuously lacked: a sense of humor that chided rather than condemned. Targets were cast not as Satanic monsters but as droll grotesqueries, as barnyard animals or vegetables or as men clothed in female finery, or even in such mildly risqué roles as ladies of the evening or pregnant brides. As circulation and profit soared, *Puck's* success begat a host of imitators;

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*Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, VIII (Fall, 1980), 205-26; and Howard W. Allen and Kay Warren Allen, "Vote Fraud and Data Validity," in Jerome M. Clubb, William H. Flanigan, and Nancy H. Zingale, eds., *Analyzing Electoral History: A Guide to the Study of American Voter Behavior* (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1981), 155, 167, 179. The general phenomenon of purchasing votes during this period is discussed in Genevieve B. Gist, "Progressive Reform in a Rural Community: The Adams County Vote-Fraud Case," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVIII (June, 1961), 60-78; and John Reynolds, "The 'Silent Dollar': Vote Buying in New Jersey," *New Jersey History*, XCVIII (Fall-Winter, 1980), 191-211. Useful as a synthesis of recent scholarship is Peter H. Argersinger, "New Perspectives on Election Fraud in the Gilded Age," *Political Science Quarterly*, C (Winter, 1985-1986), 669-87.

<sup>5</sup> Gresham, *Life of Gresham*, II, 604-18, provides a detailed account of efforts to indict Dudley and machinations to avert it. Information on Dudley's subsequent ethical lapse may be found in Sievers, *Hoosier President*, 200.

chief among the survivors was the Republican-oriented *Judge* (New York) and *Wasp* (San Francisco).<sup>6</sup>

Although *Puck* was born politically independent, its cartoons always represented Keppler's abiding disdain for political organization in general and political corruption in particular. He rivaled Nast in his hatred of New York's notorious Tammany Hall, and on the national stage his favored foils were the Ulysses S. Grant-Roscoe Conklin "Stalwart" Republicans and the various Bourbon Democratic regimes of the South. Since the emergence of Grover Cleveland as a force in national politics, however, Keppler had come increasingly to link political sleaze with Republican opposition. For Keppler and other Cleveland loyalists, paid floaters in Indiana and "colonial tramps" in New York City provided a less painful rationale for defeat than did the reality that their party had been thoroughly out-campaigned. For men of such mindset "Blocks of Five" Dudley provided a precious resource in an ongoing campaign to vilify the Harrison presidency until they could exact revenge in 1892.

Dudley had begun his odyssey toward political infamy too late for Keppler to exploit as a cartoon convention during the campaign, but in the four years that followed *Puck* artists featured him with regularity, along with floaters and blocks of five, as generic symbols of Republican corruption. Dudley's debut in the medium came in the *Puck* centerfold "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Turkey" of November 28, 1888, in which Uncle Sam was portrayed with a sumptuous turkey that represented the treasury surplus under seige by such unsavory Republican "hungry patriots" as Dudley, machine kingpins Thomas Collier Platt and Matt Quay, and Star Route scandal culprits Stephen W. Dorsey and Thomas J. Brady. Keppler's January 9, 1889, centerfold, "The Woods are Full of Them," included Dudley among the many Republican luminaries and rogues eyed for positions in the new administration by Harrison through his spyglass. Although Keppler's caricature resembled Dudley in facial features, it portrayed him standing on two sound legs, which was unusual after the prominence given by Dudley and

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Samuel West, *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler* (Urbana, Ill. 1988), provides a wealth of information and insights on Keppler's life and art. Of value as well is Draper Hill, "What Fools We Mortals Be: A Study of the Work of Joseph Keppler, Founder of *Puck*" (A.B. thesis, Harvard College, 1957). See also Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan, *The Ungentlemanly Art: A History of American Political Cartoons* (New York, 1968), 102-17, and Charles Press, *The Political Cartoon* (Rutherford, N.J., 1981), 254-59. Individual studies of Dudley contemporaries as cartoon conventions include Samuel J. Thomas, "The Tattooed Man Caricatures and the Presidential Campaign of 1884," *Journal of American Culture*, X (Winter, 1987), 1-20; Roger A. Fischer, "William Windom: Cartoon Centerfold, 1881-91," *Minnesota History*, LI (Fall, 1988), 99-109; and Roger A. Fischer, "Rustic Rasputin: William A. Peffer in Color Cartoon Art, 1891-1899," *Kansas History*, XI (Winter, 1988-1989), 222-39.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXIV (January 9, 1889), 330-31.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXIV (January 16, 1889), 346-47.

others to the right leg lost at Gettysburg. The first *Puck* cartoon to truly feature him, again on two healthy legs, was C. Jay Taylor's centerfold of January 16, 1889, "When Harrison Sounds that 'Bugle Call'—the Friends of a Pure Ballot Will Rally—As Above." Depicted were Dudley and his scroll—"Work the Floaters in Blocks of Five"—representing satirical symbols of Republican electoral purity; Quay with a barrel of campaign fund "fat," presumably fried from protectionist industrialists to aid Harrison's cause; and prominent Philadelphia retailer and Harrison fundraiser John Wanamaker, with his \$400,000 moneybag.<sup>7</sup>

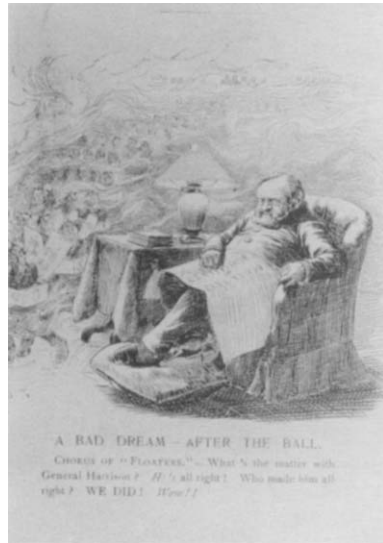
As Harrison's government began to take shape, Dudley continued to grace *Puck* cartoons with regularity, in company with a cast of party regulars who tilted somewhat toward the disreputable. A Keppler centerfold portrayed Dudley feasting upon a banquet of patronage delicacies, and a Taylor cartoon featured him in Union officer's attire lined up with Quay, Platt, and kindred souls under a White House sign "Promoters of Political Bribery Rewarded Here." A Louis Dalrymple centerfold, while not picturing Dudley, included a circus stepladder with one rung inscribed "Floaters in Blocks of Five." Another Keppler centerfold, "The Triumph of Boodle," cast Dudley as a Roman centurion marching alongside a bloated moneybags representation of Boodle, as another reveler held up a block-of-five parade standard. Such color cartoons, which were all efforts to establish Dudley as a key player in the new regime, surely reflected reality less than did Taylor's February 27 black-and-white drawing "A Bad Dream—After the Ball." The cartoon depicted a Harrison nightmare—an advancing mob of floaters inside blocks of five.<sup>8</sup>

It soon became obvious that Harrison, whose prickly propriety intensified after attaining the presidency, had no place in his heart or his administration for his former cohort, who had first imperiled his victory and then threatened naked political extortion to evade indictment. Frederick Burr Opper's May 15 *Puck* centerfold, "Going Back on the 'Blocks of Five,'" lampooned Dudley's pariah status superbly through a parody of William Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Harrison as Richard proclaimed, "Thou troublest me. I am not in thy vein!" Dudley was the rejected Buckingham who responded, "And is it thus? Repays he my true service with such contempt? Made I him King for *this*?"

Still another *Puck* commentary two weeks later referred to "the unspeakable Dudley, who may not dine at the White House," a theme sustained in a Taylor cartoon featuring Dudley and other

<sup>7</sup> *Puck*, XXIV (November 28, 1888), 216-17; *ibid.* (January 9, 1889), 330-31; *ibid.* (January 16, 1889), 346-47.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* (February 20, 1889), 426-27; *ibid.*, XXV (February 27, 1889), 2; *ibid.* (March 20, 1889), 49; *ibid.* (April 10, 1889), 104-105; *ibid.* (April 17, 1889), 120-21.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXV (February 27, 1889), 2.

outcasts shivering in a cold downpour while Harrison and his favorites kept dry under an umbrella of "Administration Patronage." Dudley's *persona non grata* status was echoed in Bernhard Gillam's May 25 *Judge* centerfold, "The Political Oklahoma," which cast Dudley, Quay, Benjamin Butler, and other administration rejects as disappointed "boomers" drifting back east empty-handed. One of only two *Judge* cartoons to feature Dudley, it followed the *Puck* practice of depicting him with two healthy legs.<sup>9</sup>

*Puck* adopted a have-one's-cake-and-eat-it-too approach to Dudley cartooning: it laughed at his banishment and yet contin-

ued through 1889 to portray him as an administration mainstay. A Dalrymple centerfold parodied the Eiffel Tower with an "Awful Tower" of Republican corruption; Harrison rested at the summit upon the shoulders of Dudley and Quay. In other cartoons Dalrymple drew Dudley as an anti-civil service African native, as a Harrison protectionist reveler indifferent to the suffering of unemployed factory workers, as a worshiper of Virginia GOP kingpin William Mahone, and as part of a "Blocks of Five Scandal" bundle of dirty laundry with Platt, Wanamaker, and Quay. Keppler featured him with other unsavory Republican rogues and special interests that forced a perspiring Harrison to churn out jobs from a patronage mill for party heelers and Grand Army of the Republic "boys in blue." Opper drew him as a sidewalk carnival shill trying to gull Uncle Sam into buying a ticket to the "Great Republican Moral Show."<sup>10</sup>

More in keeping with Dudley's diminished status in administration and Republican party circles, however, were *Puck* efforts commencing in December, 1889, to endow the blocks of five with a more autonomous identity as a graphic symbol of GOP sleaze

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* XXV (May 15, 1889), 208; *ibid.* (May 29, 1889), 226; *ibid.* (June 5, 1889), 256; *Judge*, XVI (May 25, 1889), 112-13.

<sup>10</sup> *Puck*, XXV (July 31, 1889), 384-85; *ibid.* (August 21, 1889), 432-33; *ibid.*, XXVI (September 4, 1889), 24-25; *ibid.* (September 18, 1889), 56-57; *ibid.* (September 25, 1889), 82; *ibid.* (November 20, 1889), 210; *ibid.* (November 27, 1889), 218-19.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXV (May 15, 1889), 208.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXVI (January 22, 1890), 382.

independent of its creator. Hence Dudley was separated from his "blocks," and in some instances, they were linked directly to innocent parties with more exalted standing in official circles. Especially victimized in this manner was Postmaster General Wanamaker. Although a veritable pillar of probity, Wanamaker was apparently offensive to Keppler, perhaps because of his fundraising skills, mercantile background, Philadelphia roots, and ostentatious display of evangelical piety. A Taylor cartoon portrayed Wanamaker pasting a Republican party elephant, head to foot, with broadside ads that imitated his legendary drygoods promotions, including "Blocks of Five for Children." Similarly, Dudley was not included with Wanamaker and others who were trying to keep a "Blocks of Five Scandal" skeleton confined in a "Republican Family Closet." Appropriately enough, Dalrymple's January 22, 1890, cartoon was entitled, "They Can't Keep Him Hid!" A Keppler centerfold depicting the admission of new states as a picnic featured a box of "Blocks of Five Cigars" but not Dudley himself. A savage Keppler centerfold that castigated braying holier-than-thou jackasses Wanamaker and purity gadfly Anthony Comstock (for Comstock's attempt to ban a Leo Tolstoy volume from the federal mail) utilized a Wanamaker emporium backdrop and featured such specials as the volume *How to Make a President*, by W. W. Dudley, and Wanamaker's "Patented Pictorial Blocks of Five (to teach the alphabet of political morality)."<sup>11</sup>

While the blocks of five were taking on a separate symbolic identity in 1890 *Puck* cartoons, Dudley remained in his own right a useful convention for Keppler and his artists. One Keppler centerfold cast Dudley with Harrison, Wanamaker, Quay, and others as crewmen throwing overboard the ballast of morality and reform ideas to lighten the load of the foundering clipper ship *Grand Old Party*. Dudley's utility as a generic symbol of campaign fraud grew even more attractive as the 1890 congressional contests neared. Taylor's September 17 centerfold, "A Monument of Scandals," creatively caricatured the Harrison administration as a human tower of corruption. The cartoon included Dudley holding a figural block-of-five with the heads of a quintet of floaters. A Dalrymple centerfold that featured long columns of farmers parading for tariff reduction placed Dudley in a protectionist balcony with Harrison, Wanamaker, Quay, William McKinley, and others. Such efforts continued even after Republicans lost control of Congress in 1890 and were put on the defensive for 1892. The October 28, 1891, Keppler cartoon, "Sizing It Up," featured Cleveland eyeing Harrison's

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVI (December 11, 1889), 286; *ibid.* (January 22, 1890), 382; *ibid.*, XXVII (July 23, 1890), 352-53; *ibid.* (August 20, 1890), 416-17.

throne while resting upon a pedestal of party corruption held up in part by Wanamaker, Dudley, and five numbered blocks.<sup>12</sup>

By this time, however, Dudley was beginning to provoke the interest of cartoonists less for his old indiscretions intended to elect Harrison in 1888 than for his new activities aimed at dumping him in 1892. Michener's unstinting efforts to reconcile his two close friends had not borne fruit, and during the winter of 1890–1891 another incident had foreclosed any possibility of such an event. Dudley, it seems, had purchased three acres of reclaimed swampland in Washington, D.C., and immediately tripled his investment by selling the land for the new Government Printing Office—all done at the assent of Secretary of the Treasury William Windom. Alerted to the potential of a new Dudley scandal by Attorney General William H. Miller, Harrison enlisted George Frisbee Hoar of Massachusetts and Preston B. Plumb of Kansas to annul the deal in the Senate after branding Dudley's venture in debate "a little fishy" and exhibiting "certain badges of fraud." Concurrently, Harrison finally secured the resignations of Dudley as RNC treasurer and Quay as RNC chairman; the latter was an even greater embarrassment in the wake of a felony indictment for misuse of public funds. The housecleaning did not come without cost to Harrison, however. Dudley and Quay were soon working actively with Platt, Russell A. Alger, and J. Donald Cameron as leaders of an anybody-but-Harrison movement for 1892.<sup>13</sup>

Initial recognition of Dudley's apostasy came not in *Puck* but in *Judge* in a September, 1891, Grant Hamilton centerfold casting Dudley, Quay, Alger, and Joseph Pulitzer as jackasses pestering James G. Blaine. Keppler's immediate response was to avoid taking sides in a Republican family squabble but instead to utilize the union of Dudley and Quay as a merger of corruptionists symbolic of the party's endemic ethical shortcomings. A panel in an Opper Thanksgiving centerfold featured convicted Philadelphia city treasurer "Honest John" Beardsley with the whimsical blessing, "Quay and Dudley are still at large, it is true—but we've got Beardsley!" The December 9, 1891, Taylor cartoon, "A Hustling Competitor," portrayed New York Governor David B. Hill, one Democrat Keppler loathed as if he had been Republican, entering the business of stealing state elections across an alley from the dominant concern in the trade, the firm of "Quay, Dudley & Co. State Stealers."<sup>14</sup>

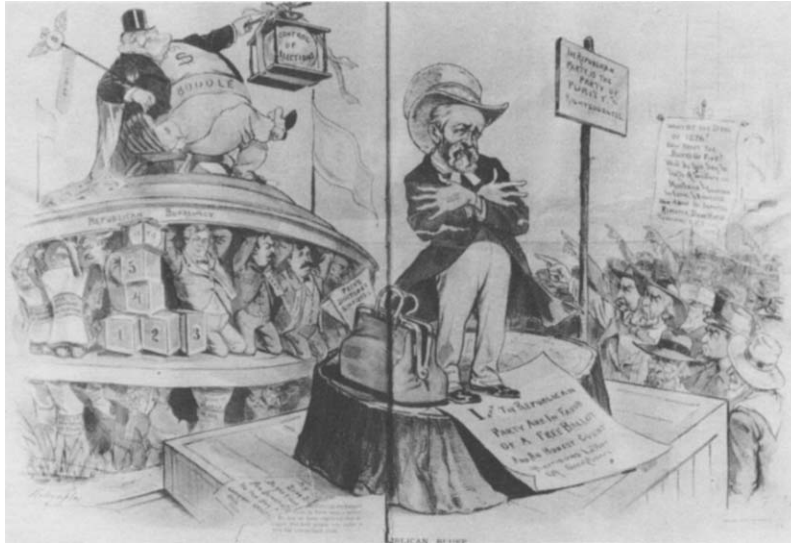
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVII (May 21, 1890), 200-201; *ibid.*, XXVIII (September 17, 1890), 56-57; *ibid.* (October 22, 1890), 136-37; *ibid.* (November 26, 1890), 224; *ibid.* (February 4, 1891), 412; *ibid.*, XXX (October 28, 1891), 145.

<sup>13</sup> See Sievers, *Hoosier President*, 200; George Harmon Knoles, *The Presidential Campaign and Election of 1892* (Stanford University, Calif., 1942), 36.

<sup>14</sup> *Judge*, XXI (September 12, 1891), 374-75; *Puck*, XXX (November 25, 1891), 216-17; *ibid.* (December 9, 1891), 269.



Reproduced from *Puck*, XXVIII (September 17, 1890), 56-57.



“THE GREAT REPUBLICAN BLUFF”

REPRODUCED FROM *PUCK*, XXXII (OCTOBER 5, 1892), 104-105.

As the 1892 campaign unfolded, however, *Puck* managed to malign both Blaine and Harrison with the onus of Dudley and Quay. The latter pair were portrayed in a Keppler centerfold among the “Ancient Order of Blainiacs” pushing their champion into the fray in a wheelchair. A black-and-white cartoon drawn by Keppler’s son Udo featured Dudley, Quay, James S. Clarkson, and Joseph B. Foraker as assassins lurking with daggers behind White House pillars for an assault on Harrison. *Puck* solicitude toward Harrison was short lived, however, for once he became the Republican standard-bearer for 1892, cartoon after cartoon down the homestretch vilified him as master of spoils statecraft and the beneficiary of campaign corruption exemplified by “Blocks of Five” Dudley. A Keppler centerfold parody upon Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier’s painting *The Last Review* depicted Harrison on a wooden hobbyhorse reviewing a loyal army of protected trusts, corrupt lobbyists and pension agents, tariff-fattened tycoons, and men identified by their banner as “Floaters in Blocks of Five.” An October 5 Dalrymple centerfold, “The Great Republican Bluff,” featured Harrison sanctimoniously proclaiming the GOP a “party of purity and righteousness,” obscuring a Republican Supremacy monument exalting King Booodle on a platform held up by various figures and symbols of party infamy, including Dudley and five numbered blocks.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Puck*, XXXI (June 1, 1892), 232-33; *ibid.* (June 8, 1892), 242; *ibid.* (August 3, 1892), 380-81; *ibid.*, XXXII (October 5, 1892), 104-105.

"The Great Republican Bluff" marked Dudley's final appearance as a color cartoon caricature, although his legacy as founding father of blocks of five and floaters lived on monochromatically for another season. An October Keppler centerfold portrayed Quay lieutenant David Martin, whom the Democratic press was promoting as the Dudley of 1892, holding out for GOP pharisees filing into church with a sack inscribed "Republican Fund to Buy Floaters." *Puck's* other nominee for honors as 1892 "son of Dudley" was Thomas H. Carter of Montana, who was vulnerable as chairman of the Republican National Committee and Harrison's reelection effort despite his spotless reputation. An Oppen election-eve centerfold cast Carter as Boodle deploying the "Republican Corruption Fund" to "work blocks of five" and "to buy floaters." Several weeks after the Harrison defeat, a Keppler centerfold included in the wreckage of the Republican campaign a red block sporting the numeral 5.<sup>16</sup>

Thus ended the legacy of William Wade Dudley and his infamous blocks of five in American political cartoon art. A peripheral player at best, without the notoriety or significance of such miscreants as William M. Tweed or, for a later generation, Richard M. Nixon, Dudley lacked the stature to develop into an enduring, generic symbol of sleaze in American politics.<sup>17</sup> His infamy, and by implication Indiana's infamy, lasted less than four years. And yet for that short season Dudley proved almost uniquely useful to *Puck* cartoonists eager to portray his Republican party as a cesspool of spoils, special interests, and campaign corruption. Keppler and his staff artists utilized many Republicans in that effort. In a majority of instances, including their sustained sorties against such figures as Harrison, Carter, and Wanamaker, creative character assassination was compromised by the ethical probity of the figures targeted. Even with the likes of Quay, Platt, and Blaine, suspect reputations were balanced by lofty titles, positions on the salient issues of the day, and in some cases by praiseworthy deeds. Dudley, however, was unsullied by great honors, thoughts, or deeds. An obscure figure, his renown had come completely through his advocacy of floaters deployed in blocks of five to deny the integrity of the democratic process. Rarely in two centuries of American political cartooning has partisan art been afforded the luxury of such a faithful imitation of life.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXII (October 19, 1892), 140-41; *ibid.* (November 2, 1892), 168-69; *ibid.* (November 30, 1892), 222-23; Gresham, *Life of Gresham*, II, 607-608; Knoles, *Presidential Campaign and Election of 1892*, 123, 147, 205.

<sup>17</sup> For a study of this phenomenon, see Roger A. Fischer, "The Lucifer Legacy: Boss Tweed and Richard Nixon as Generic Symbols of Sleaze in American Political Cartoon Art," *Journal of American Culture*, XIII (Summer, 1990), 1-20.