

The Wasp
September 4, 1886

[Editorial]

We are curious to observe how the murderer of young Guindon is to be acquitted. There are people who do not admit that his action in shooting down a young man without cause or provocation was right; and some go so far as to say that even if the victim had been an old man there would have been a suspicion of unfairness about it. To satisfy the scruples of these people it is desirable that the prisoner be brought to trial and acquitted as soon as possible. The case seems to have been specially designed to test the acquitting powers of the courts to their utmost, but the prisoner and all our judges are prepared to meet the issue cheerfully and without evasion. We already observe a point that the prosecution will find it difficult to overcome: the coroner's jury declared that the deceased came to his death by hemorrhage, and that the wound was made by a bullet which "emanated" from a pistol in the hands of the prisoner. In the face of such a statement as that it will be no easy task to convince twelve good men and true that Guindon was shot, or even that he is certainly dead. It will be observed that we suppress the prisoner's name: we do not propose to advertise him until we know what kind of a show he is going to be after acquittal.

Randolph Kalloch, a son of ex-Mayor Kalloch, was arrested the other day in this city and taken to Fresno to answer to charges of assault to murder, battery and disturbing the peace. It appears he stabbed a man in a quarrel "about a woman." And so, from generation to generation, the family type is preserved—through all the beads runs the same thread, and the chip is grained like the block. If the Rev. Isaac were in Heaven he would look down on Randolph with a smile of pride, saying: "Well done, my child, well done! Thou art worthy to stand with thy brother and to succeed thy father; for like him thou sheddest human blood, and like me—well, Randolph, child, I never hurt anybody in a quarrel, but—but it was always about a woman."

Josh Billings' mule which behaved itself so many weary years in order to get a faultless opportunity to kick somebody's brains out was not a very deep and designing mule, after all, as compared with Superintendent Lawton, of the Mint. Ever since he was instated in office Mr. Lawton has firmly but kindly resisted the "pressure" and would make no "changes." Almost any day this amiable man might be seen seraphically smiling upon a square mile of applicants and influential politicians and softly expounding to them such generous views and charitable sentiments regarding the worth and efficiency of the statesmen already provided for by his predecessors that for the moment his ambitious hearers experienced a sincere penitence for having tried to disturb so admirable an arrangement and displace such noble gentlemen. And the noble gentlemen themselves, many of them mossy-backed and leech-hung and weak-eyed from long seclusion in the sunless jungles of official life, bobbed their moldy prows in approval, confirmed his view of their merit, sang a few bars from the Chorus of Indispensables and

resumed their immemorial snores. On Tuesday this slumbering thunderbolt turned himself loose—this coiled earthquake lashed out—this violet-skirted and poppy-crowned volcano parted in the middle and flung fire. Two scores of patriots were told that it was time to get up and dress for death, for the Reaper was a-reaping. There was melody, there was movement, there was confusion of tongues: Lawton was abroad in the land the worst way; “the blessed seals that closed the pestilence” were broken; hearts and heads were cracking all round; it thundered everywhere. And when it was all over, and the dead had fallen into line to go to the graveyard, each poor corpse fondly hugging its dissevered head and kissing its cold lips, that angel Superintendent might have been seen sweetly contemplating the procession and softly cooing to himself: “I did it with my little hatchet.” There is something new under the sun. It is the public estimate of Superintendent Lawton. Why, the man is a midnight conflagration!

I stood in a dream by the Gubernatorial chair,
And the masked incumbent was singing a popular air:

“My name it is Jo. Bowers—
I had a brother Ike.
I came from old Missouri,
It’s all the way from Pike.”

“O jocund Jo. Bowers, I beg that your mask you will raise,”
I cried, “and dispel this dream like a summer morning’s haze.”
Then my vision broke up and the fragments began to drift
As the face shone out like a sun — the face of John F. Swift.

“John.F. Swift, why do you sing
That you are Joseph Bowers?
Think you it is a noble thing
To claim another’s powers?”

“Nay, Jo. and I in early youth
Were born in Pike. O all untruth
I hate beyond expressing!”
Thus that veracious man replied,—
“Of ugliness, alas! I died:
'Tis Joseph you’re addressing.”

A woman who aspired to a position in the Custom House and incurred an examination under the civil service rules complains that she was required to spell the word “ullaged.” As there is no such verb as “to ullage” it follows that there is no such past participle as “ullaged” and she holds that her ignorance of its orthography should have been overlooked. As her duties will consist in searching the persons of female immigrants for smuggled goods, we agree with her that she might advantageously have been tested with a different class of words; but if we know how to spell one of them ourselves you may bite us with a brace of dogs. A ludicrous incident of this unhappy woman’s failure was her visit to several well-known citizens to ask them to spell the words upon which she had tripped—one of these gentlemen being our

distinguished contemporary, Mr. Frank Pixley. Mr. Pixley is a writer of high ability, but his system of orthography has not yet been adopted by any university in England or America. It is well known that he spells "God" with two d's, though it must be admitted that in writing "religion" he uses but one. In the golden prime of Sandlot agrarianism he had occasion to embellish an editorial with references to the Gracchus brothers of Rome—now deceased. The plural bothered him a bit, but finally he called them the "grackusses" and was happy. In visiting the *Argonaut* office for the true solution of a problem in orthography, the lady should have asked for the junior editor, Mr. Jerome Hart, who knows accurately how to spell, and doesn't know another thing in all this wide, wide world.

When the great storm struck Chicago last Sunday morning religious services were in progress in many of the churches. While the sacred edifices were rocking as if tossed on the billows of an earthquake, their bells wildly clanging in the staggering towers—when alone the blazing lightning revealed the dismal situation, and between the thunder-shocks was heard the striving of the monstrous winds, punctuated by explosions of powder magazines fired by flames from heaven—when God in His sublimest majesty was indeed in the midst of those who were gathered together in His name, the behavior of the worshipers was most unaccountable, and it pains us to record it. They did not consign themselves to the care of Him who "plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm"; they no more averred that "behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face," nor did they "trust Him for His grace." That "the good are His peculiar care" did not seem to them at the moment an adequate and trustworthy assurance. The near prospect of the Better Land was disappointing—they "cared to stay." Instantaneous translation to everlasting bliss was about the last thing that they would have chosen. Wherefore these the brethren and sisters of the saints, these children of light, these soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb did most dismally exclaim and energetically exert. They stayed not upon the order of their shrieking, but shrieked all at once and all the time, mounting one another's shoulders the while, to attain the doors and windows and escape from the Presence. Nor do we read that those holy men, the priests and parsons, tarried in the sanctuaries, exhorting to resignation, smiling in the face of death and saying "Thy will be done." From observation of the species in like emergencies we infer that they were loud in lung, conspicuous for feats of leg, eminently navigating the seas of human heads. Amongst the many quick and strong emotions stirred by religious faith we must apparently not number an intemperate greed of eternal bliss: the true Christian is willing to wait.

One of the greatest and noblest philanthropists of the century is Mr. Burnette G. Haskell. This gentleman is a leader of a seamen's union, and is managing a strike for the sailors under his benign sway. He recently issued an address to them—a kind of imperial rescript, indicating the trend of his sovereign will in the matter of resisting the Tyrant Employer. "Never give it up until ordered by the union," says this sturdy old salt. "Never yield a single inch. Remember your glorious history and die in the streets of San Francisco of starvation, before you think of yielding." This is devotion itself: rather than abate one jot or tittle of his demand, Mr. Haskell is willing that every man Jack of his followers shall starve, even if they all come out of their holes to die and lay their slovenly unhandsome corpses between the wind and his residence. What was the patriotic self-denial of Artemus Ward to this? Mr. Haskell promises that if matters come to the worst he will himself be the first man to beg bread for his followers, from house to house. We wish he had not said that; we do not like to contemplate him in the attitude of supplication.

He would be a greatly grander figure standing unconquered, with his arms folded across a full stomach, scorning the bread of charity and winning for his men the glory and distinction of a triumphant death, their bellies all sticking to their backs.

There are some things, Mr. Irish, which we must be excused from believing. Among them is the statement of your young man that in nominating Mr. N. Greene Curtis for temporary chairman of the Democratic State Convention, Senator Clay W. Taylor mentioned him as “a gentleman as well known and time-honored as the “White Navarre.” No, the Navarre boom ran its course during the last presidential canvass. It killed one of the most eminent and popular men in the country, and it sleeps in peace alongside his political grave. The truth is, Mr. Taylor was speaking, at the moment, of Governor Stoneman’s hopes of renomination and called him, naturally, the “white-plumed Never.” Your young man’s ear is out of tune, that is all, Mr. Irish.

There are enough men whom the ties of party do not bind closely to punish any misuse of power by a nominating convention. — The Call.

And then there are enough and more than enough of another sort of men to make a devil’s clamor with their cries of “mugwump!” Neighbor, you are one of that sort.

Mr. Fred Emerson Brooks, the distinguished local poet, has had the bad luck to lose another mother. These repeated afflictions of Mr. Brooks have palled the cosmos in gloom and thrown a wet blanket of seriousness even upon San Francisco. After the night the day: the smile succeeds the tear—and this city will yet discern in the unspeakable losses of Mr. Brooks its own inestimable gains. If he kept his various mothers we should not have the touching verses in which he bewails them. It is hardly too much to say that our Western literature is mainly fertilized with the bodies of Mr. Brooks’ sainted dams. On his latest bereavement he “touched his harp” (“and nations heard, entranced”) as follows—we quote from the undertakers’ column of the *Morning Call*:

Oh! mother dear; must you part
From those you loved so dear.
Your loving words and tender care;
Oh, God ; must we part?

In publishing these noble lines, Mr. Brooks’ modesty constrained him not only to suppress his own name, but to give a *nom de plume* to the remains—the furthest point to which anonymous writing has been pushed in San Francisco, though in “Adonais” and “Lycidas” Shelley and Milton did the same. We mention them in illustration, but should not think of comparing their work with that of Mr. Brooks. Even in the matter of punctuation he dominates them like a step-ladder.

Our daily newspapers are a well-spring of delight; their naiveté is refreshing and wholesome no end. They are all publishing grave and prophetic editorials on the revolution in warfare which may be expected from a French gun which throws a shell through twenty-eight inches of steel and nine feet of wood. They think this settles the question of the further employment of iron-clads in war. We beg their pardon, but it was settled two or three weeks ago

right under their noses, at Fort Mason, when dynamite shells were thrown from ordinary guns, with no penetrating power at all, but with a smashing power a hundred times more effective than that of the French shell. The ludicrous feature of this is that these newspapers, which discerned no significance in what was going on at Fort Mason, and gave it not a line of editorial comment, all had reporters there who accurately enough described all they saw. It is surprising how distance magnifies: if the Crucifixion had occurred in San Francisco these editors would first have assisted at it and then mentioned it in four lines as “an indignation meeting on Nob Hill.”

It is disagreeable to have to confirm an opinion held by a contemporary, but when the *Bulletin's* special correspondent telegraphed from Los Angeles that “The selection of Swift was due mainly to his strength as a candidate and a man” we could not conscientiously deny it; and reflection convinces us that it was due to that altogether. We think, indeed, that the result would have been brought about by his strength as a candidate alone; though doubtless the knowledge that he could thrash any man in the convention was not without a certain hastening influence upon delegates physically feeble.

In nominating Mr. J. E. Denny for Controller, at Los Angeles, Mr. Sanders of Tulare explained in noble simile that the candidate towered over every one of his political rivals as a mountain overlooks a cow.

Lo! Delegate Sanders—that grand and stupendous
Convulsion of Nature—is (angels defend us!)
Eruptively heaving with all of his powers,
And Pinnacle Denny arises and towers!
Let eminent Shasta now look to his laurels,
The clouds to their unity, cows to their morals.

Governor Stoneman says the best thing the Legislature can do when it convenes is to adjourn. This good man has at last trained down his ambition to a practical fighting weight: His only political aspiration is to die and enter Paradise as the Penitent Thief.

A calf by some disorder struck:
Too sickly to stand up and suck—
A feeble calf—a calf that bleats
In vain for the unstooping teats,
Till, hoisted by assisting hands,
Unsteadily to feed it stands
(So calves'-foot jelly comes to be
The type of instability)
Is called by farmers “on the lift”—
And that's what ails you, John F. Swift.
Good Lord! it makes a fellow shudder
To hear you serenade that udder!

The efforts of General Miles to induce the Government to remove the Apaches from Arizona reservations to reservations in New Mexico have been “crowned with success,” and the

consent of New Mexico and the Apaches is now all that is lacking to a consummation of the scheme. The advantages are very great. New Mexico is not so thickly populated as Arizona, and when the hot-blooded buck blooms in the spring and eschews the comforts of his home for the hardships and privations of the war-path he will have to travel more miles per murder than he ever did before in all his life. Some of the remoter settlements he will probably miss altogether, and that will break his heart when he learns about it. We regard the removal of the Apaches to New Mexico as a piece of masterly strategy, worthy of a Turnbull.

Last Tuesday's earthquakes—for it is obvious from a comparison of time that several shocks occurred, and that no one was felt over the whole area affected are a very serious matter. It is natural, under the circumstances, that we of California should find something in the misfortune of our Eastern friends and other enemies that is not altogether displeasing; for while our State has been treated with gentlemanly consideration and forbearance by earthquakes, it has suffered somewhat at the hands of their camp-followers, the correspondents and editors of the Eastern press. We indulge the hope that these persons will henceforth cease to employ the brief intervals between their cyclones in diligently promoting and spreading a sense of the disadvantages of the occidental temblor. Thus much by way of "improving the occasion" in the manner of our good friends the parsons. *Au reste*, we trust these will not fail to add this most interesting phenomenon to their other evidences of the distinction which man enjoys of being the peculiar care of a Providence who has ordered all the arrangements of nature to the service of his needs. It is hoped there may still be time to enforce that cheerful view before another shake shall rattle down all the edifices specially erected for its enforcement.

We should dearly love to bask in the genial sunshine of a world where newspaper reporters were not permitted to say "very unique," or "the most unique." "Unique" means sole, or single, as its obvious derivation, *unus*, one, ought to show, even to a reporter. Uniqueness can have no degrees of comparison. A thing is unique or it is not: one thing can't be more unique than another, for if it is unique there is no other. That is why we began this paragraph with the statement that we should dearly love to assassinate all newspaper reporters and execute a light and graceful dance upon their remains. And, by the tail of a dog! we mean to do it.

Mr. Gladstone is not as dextrous a wordster as his late antagonist, Lord Beaconsfield, but he has made some notable phrases in his day, and not the least pleasing of them is his new description of England's rejection of Irish Home Rule, as compared with its acceptance by Ireland. He calls it her "slower acknowledgment." We observe with interest and, we trust, instruction that the lesser Gladstones of the American press take the same iridescent view of the matter, interpreting the hideous defeat of Home Rule as a glittering prophecy of success. As victory is the opposite of defeat, they ought, logically, to thank Heaven that their principles were spared the disheartening calamity of acceptance.

Education, religion, art and industry are doing much to "improve the condition of the masses" and the editorials of Deacon Fitch to entertain them; but earth is still a long way from Heaven, and we cannot expect an absolutely faultless felicity until the Niagara whirlpool is got into position under the Brooklyn bridge, so that both can be "done" at once.

News comes from China that a massacre of Christians is in progress. This shocking brutality proves the Chinese character to be essentially barbarous and altogether irreclaimable by the agencies of a higher civilization. Particulars of the outrage are lacking, but it probably occurred in the province of Wyo-Ming, which has a bloody reputation in that way. If so, the Christian populations of the cities of See-attul and Truc-kee are probably in danger of being driven out. It makes one burn with indignation to read of these unprovoked attacks, inspired by race antipathy and heathen zeal. We are now burning very brightly.

There is one plank in the Democratic platform which we like—the one which favors “liberal treatment” of our citizen soldiers. They should be treated liberally and frequently. That is what they enlist for.

Our Eastern brethren are uninstructed in the matter (and manner) of earthquakes. Many of the dispatches of last Tuesday night began: “An earthquake passed over this city to-day.” It is under a city that the earthquake passes, unluckily.

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