

*The Wasp*  
April 3, 1886

**Prattle**

The New York *Tribune* believes the Panama canal will be completed in the time allowed, because M. de Lesseps is “moving heaven and earth” to accomplish that end. M.de Lesseps would get on faster, though, if he would move less heaven and more earth.

George Jones, who is under sentence of death in the Alameda jail, is seventy-six years old and very feeble from disease, and his case is on appeal in the Supreme Court. He will not hang: a man at his age may outlive a disease, but never an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Captain Boyton lay dying. He was passing the last fleeting moments of a natatorial existence. His breath was taken in vast shuddering gasps and he kicked all over. This was at Ghargharoo, in Central Africa, to which point the Captain had descended the river N’Yumzie. A single human being—a commercial traveller from Sacramento—stood at the bedside. It was a solemn and impressive moment. “I must leave you now,” said the dying man, with difficulty; “my hard and thankless life nears its end. Fatigue, privation and exposure have broken me down. For a quarter of a century, upon a hundred seas and a thousand rivers, I have toiled for man. The icy torrent of the mountain has tumbled me from cliff to cliff, and in the long sluggish reaches of tropical streams I have inhaled the deadly vapors of the night. To the comforts of home I have lived a stranger, from the joys of love and the profit of companionship an exile. But I die triumphant, for I have proved to the world that with my great invention I can navigate the longest river and the most tempestuous ocean.” “My zealous and successful but now dissolving friend,” said the Sacramento drummer, carelessly arranging his samples, “who ever said you couldn’t?” It was a cold, bitter and cruel revelation to the gentleman on the bed. He hadn’t thought of it in that way, and it was all new to him. Unfortunately in pursuing the novel train of reflections it suggested he fell over his own feet into his grave. That was in 1893.

In the instigation and encouragement of the boycott against the *Call* and *Bulletin*, the editors of the *Examiner* and *Chronicle* may justly claim the distinction of a sovereign meanness, with a reasonable hope that the claim will be allowed. I am myself (God be praised!) indifferently mean, and I hope not altogether without vanity in disclosure of the vice. I flatter myself that when I am as mean as I know how, the man who steals acorns from a blind sow is tormented with a sense of his own generosity. But when I contemplate the peerless unworthy of the journalists mentioned, and consider their inaccessibility to shame, I am plunged in a gulf of dark despair and racked with pains of immedicable envy.

The Rev. Dr. Munhall says there never was such a disposition as now to deify man. That may be so, but it needn’t worry the reverend doctor; at every deification bee that I’ve attended he has been excused from the panel.

“My dream,” sighed Stoneman, “now is o’er—  
I know that none admire me,  
And Secretary Dam no more  
Professes to inspire me.”  
And so he mourned, with tears bedewed,  
The treason of ingratitude.

Some of the newspapers are calling on the Administration to recover \$105,000,000 due from the Pacific railroads. By all means—at least by all legal means. Let Mr. Cleveland just make out a bill for the amount and take it right to the main office, with a four-horse team and a truck to bring away the coin. If they make any words about it he should put the matter into the hands of a collector who keeps an organ-grinder.

The President of Vassar College reports constant losses of money among the students, but the thief has not been found. He evidently doesn’t know where to look: “the thief” will be found running a caramelry somewhere near by. Let the villain stand forth!

When one reads in the dispatches that Antonio St. Jacobs has assassinated Seid Ali one hardly knows whether he is living under the Doge of Venice or the Caliph of Bagdad; but when he finds that the trouble was caused by Mrs. McCarthy he perceives that neither Bocaccio nor Scheherazade is doing the reporting, and he is still in the nineteenth century. In sober truth, this international romance was a flower of the Comstock Lode.

In the spring the statesman’s reason  
Lightly turns to thoughts of cash;  
And, in fact, at any season  
That is where it makes its mash.

The editor of the *Argonaut* and “uncertain others” are putting out a deal of blue bosh about boycotting being “un-American.” It is not un-American to stop dealing with one whom you do not like, and boycotting is nothing else. The boycott is sensible, fair and logical; it is the best and only peaceable solution of the Chinese problem. If the editor of the *Argonaut* does not like it let him boycott its supporters; that is to say, when they are closing the Golden Gate against the Chinese, let him coldly keep his nose out of the crack.

For years and years California’s position on the Chinese question has been conspicuously contemptible. We have been imploring Congress to save us from ourselves—to avert from our undeserving heads the consequences of our own selfishness. We have prayed that the Chinese might be kept away from us, in order that we might not hurt ourselves by employing them. Within the past fifteen years I have myself repeatedly submitted, with all due deference, that we need not employ them nor purchase of them if we did not wish, and that we merited no outside assistance so long as we did. Others spoke to the same effect, but we were a feeble and unheeded few. All eyes were turned to Washington, all hopes were centered in Congress. It is not surprising that the relief we got was grudgingly given, for our sincerity was open to disproof. If there had been no Congress to help us we should long ago have helped ourselves. But for our own apathy and greed there would not be today enough Chinamen in California to carry a lightweight Polish refugee into the Board of Education, nor to enable Horace Davis, by mounting their backs, to reach his own and from that proud eminence expound the principles of the Golden Gate Flouring Mills.

The boycott, then, is right and practical. But look you, friends: it is never seen alone. It has always an attendant—violence. In Ireland, where it got its name, there is no instance of a boycott unaccompanied by outrage—assaults upon person or property: arson, mutilation of cattle, destruction of harvests, intimidation, battery, assassination. In America it is the same way. Here the boycott is not yet wholly “differentiated” from the “strike.” Wherever the two have been tried the laws have invariably been broken—non-strikers driven from their work, machinery forcibly stopped, engines “killed,” windows smashed, the police stoned, men wounded and slain. Up to this time there has been nowhere an attempt to boycott the Chinese: they have been driven from their homes by cowardly mobs; their property destroyed, their lives threatened and taken. This is not boycotting; it is crime. It is naked and unashamed rascality. If continued it will, as it ought, bring upon us the military power of the Government, and we will pay in blood. You may think not. It was thought not in South Carolina.

As I have said it is unlawful to expel the Chinese by force from their homes, it is only fair to admit that there is eminent authority on the other side: Judges Sabin and Satan think that it is not; and Judge Sawyer is in such doubt about it that pending its determination by the Supreme Court of the United States he recommends that nobody be molested for doing as much of it as he likes. A United States Judge having given the signal, the throat-cutting, I suppose, may begin at any time.

The Day of Resurrection dawned  
And all the dead, awaking, yawned,

Though not a skull could even grin  
Till joined by its appropriate chin.

Lord! ’twas a wondrous thing to trace  
Those jaw-bones hastening to place.

For some of them were far away  
From where the other members lay.

Some, when the men who wore them dropped  
In death, had never wholly stopped;

And every time they tried to talk  
Their wagging was a kind of walk.

And some had been exported for  
Our troops in the Philistine war.

And others, strung with sounding wires,  
Continued their career as lyres.

Then Gabriel his trumpet loud  
Blew to arouse the sleepy crowd.

Each skeleton that heard the din  
Arose and buttoned on its skin.

The dead in Christ awakened first—  
Including Senator George Hearst.

Indeed, he'd been so good (except  
In spelling) that he'd never slept.

Greathouse was there, and it was known  
He had secured an extra bone.

Bill English lacked a head, but few  
Observed it, and himself ne'er knew.

When Stoneman joined the band divine  
He said: "I cannot find my spine."

"Stoneman's back-bone!—who's got it?" cried  
An angel, and Delmas replied:

"Nay, hold your peace—your outcry check:  
Ned Marshal wears it round his neck."

Said Ned: "He'll pardon me, I hope  
Here 'tis—I thought it was a rope."

It is said that when two San Franciscans meet on the out-bound Honolulu steamer  
they always address one another as "skipmate."

An Oakland Post of the Grand Army exults in possession of what a patriotic  
contemporary describes, with restrained enthusiasm, as "a war memento of considerable  
interest and merit"—the same being "nothing less" than a sabre and scabbard worn by the  
cavalry soldier who stayed the flight of Jeff Davis. A most impressive relic. If Jeff Davis had  
resisted, this is the sabre that would have cut off his head!

Publishing editorial "exposures" of the judge before whom one is being tried for  
libel is now known in journalism as "McDowellling." Thus language grows lush by the blood  
of the bold.

(Source: Archive.org, <https://archive.org/stream/waspjanjune188616unse#page/n254/mode/1up>)