

*The Argonaut*  
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*Prattle*

Livingston, the Crow Creek Indian Agent, whose immatchable thieving drove to suicide not only the sensitive accomplices whom he excelled but the savages whom he starved, is described as an Episcopalian in good standing who had the pious habit of giving to chapels such “testimonials” as stained windows. It is to be hoped these various windows may be all collected in a memorial chapel dedicated to St. Mammon, with an officiating priesthood of American statesmen supported by the Government. It should be erected over the mouth of the Mammoth Cave, which it is believed would serve as a sufficiently roomy crypt for the burial of such eminent official thieves as have given imperishable luster to the annals and institutions of this country. In the “dim, religious light” of this monumental edifice there should be continual prayer for the “active participation” of clean-hearted gentlemen in the political affairs of a nation in which they form the one-one-hundredth part of the voting population.

The treaty of Berlin assures the independence of Montenegro, forbidding her at the same time to have a navy and a flag. Montenegro should be the happiest of nations—independence without a Fourth of July, politics without a Robeson, poetry without a Drake!

Kearny explains that he goes East “to set the working-men thinking.”  
O Denis, Denis you are mad!  
What is it you would do?  
The more they’re taught to think, my lad,  
The less they’ll think of you.

It is rumored in newspaper circles that the *Call*’s obituary poet is to have his pay raised to ten dollars a week, and will be immediately laid on in the “Produce Arrivals” department, in which the announcements of importers who can afford to pay will be made alluring, somewhat as follows:

“JOHN SMITH & CO.—335 sks. New Potatoes.  
“Dearest tubers, you’ve arriven.  
On your substance we will meal;  
You to us, by G--, are given  
You for us the cook will peel.  
Eat. 19.”

This, the bard’s maiden attempt in his new “sphere,” is under consideration by the editor, who regards it as ambiguous; he being unable to determine whether the third line of the poetry is

gratefully reverent or shockingly profane. Nor from the fourth does it appear with sufficient clearness whether the cook is to peel the potatoes or the potatoes are to peel the cook. The concluding word (with appended numerals) seems to be either descriptive or mandatory, according as it may happen to be bad Latin or good English. If there is anything more impenetrable to the Pickeringian understanding than Latin it is English.

Here is another and rather better sample of the work of the commercial muse, the lines having received unreserved editorial approval:

“ROBINSON & BROWN—400 doz. Ears Green Corn.

“Open wide the pearly gates  
That lead to the stomach’s floor;  
The cobs will suffer in passing through.  
But their sufferings can be bore.  
Going to join the Lima beans.”

“If the jurisdiction of the Justices’ Court is materially enlarged,” says a morning journal, “a higher standard of qualification should be required for candidates.” Certainly; instead of knowing but one “working politician” they should be required to know two.

We are to have great things in photography. Mr. Muybridge photographs the whirling wheels of a sulky so instantaneously that the spokes are sharply defined; they have not perceptibly moved during the operation. He shows us the flying horse, clear, distinct, its feet all in the air. It is wonderful, it promises. Shall we not have, O brethren, faithful pictures of faithful women—of “Madge, and Lou, and Bella, too,” as they looked while true to us? Ah! The devil! It requires electric light, and how shall it shine in the superior radiance of a flash of constancy?

A hat-rack sneak thief whom necessity has compelled to accept an engagement as a reporter on the *Chronicle* gives an elaborate description of the inside of a private dwelling, and boasts of his enterprise in obtaining admission against the wishes of the owner, a lady recently widowed. It would be useless to tell this fellow he is a blackguard, for that he already knows; equally futile to ask him not to be, for that he likes to be. It is impossible to disclose his name until it is disclosed to me, and would then be unadvisable for he would call it fame, consider me his benefactor, and enjoy the satisfaction of ingratitude. Blackguards are society’s dead, of whom we speak no evil because they do not mind it.

“Rutherford,” said Mrs. Hayes, looking across a pile of official documents to where her consort sat knitting in the chimney corner, “is it true that our son Webb is going to marry that Ohio girl?” “I—I—believe so—that is, if you are willing,” was the propitiating reply. “I do not know that it will affect me; I am not the president of a party, particularly of a wedding party. The question is, can you, with your inexperience in the direction of affairs, afford to assume the responsibility of a mother-in-law?”

The popular negro melody, “The Old Folks at Home,” was written by a brother of Mr. Jo. Murphy, the no actor. This interesting statement is made on the authority of the latter gentleman, who has not, however, pointed out the numerous, albeit unimportant, verbal changes the great work has undergone since it left the fraternal hand, as, for example, in the lines:

“One little hut among the bushes—  
One that I love—  
Still fondly to my mem’ry rushes,  
No matter where I rove.”

As originally written these lines were far finer. They read thus:

“In me minery green is the lovely shabeen  
In the bog that’s beneath the hill,  
Where I shmoked me dudheen, and drank me poteen  
From Larry O’Faherty’s shtill.  
And me eye-wathers flow as me brother Jo  
Is perfarmin’ his barn-door jig,  
Wid his illigant grace and intelligent face  
Recallin’ me father’s pig.”

I am sorry to observe that Mr. Lynch, of this city, a gentleman aged sixty-three has committed the happily not very common error of killing his wife, with whom he had lived for forty years, but whom he must, of course, henceforth live without. Mrs. Lynch’s offense consisted in declining to drink a glass of beer when requested; perhaps it would be more accurate to say refusing when commanded. For this the husband deemed it expedient to cut her fatally in the abdomen, though few will agree with him that such a course was either necessary or humane. On the other hand, if the beer was good there is no obvious reason why the lady should have refused it. It is to be hoped a sample has been preserved for the use of the jury.

It is a matter of taste, and even the most exacting criticism must allow something for the sentimentality inseparable from such occasions, but in a purely artistic sense Mr. O’Connell’s farewell verses to Mr. Edwards would have been better without the “dears” and the “Harrys.” If it is true, as Mr. O’Connell says, that “the love of man for man” is a greater blessing than “the cooling mist that freshens all the glade” (and I do not doubt that it *is* true), still, that is not the way it is preferably expressed. That method is rather unpleasantly suggestive of the love of gent for gent.

It has been warm beyond the mountains—the Southerner larded the lean earth with his fragrant fats and oils; the Easterner navigated his own perspiration, occasionally endeavoring to effect a landing to bury his melted neighbor in a rat-hole. In St. Louis twenty perished in a single day. This is gratifying. It accentuates the advantages of “the finest climate in the world, sir”—our climate. On Saturday last Sacramento simmered at 94 degrees; Calistoga gently stewed at 96; Chico was crips at 98; Marysville broiled at 99; Woodland was grilled at 108; and at 110, Davisville, Rocklin, and Sheridan were done to a delicate and appetizing brown. There were no deaths; Californians do not die from heat. They are accustomed to it. Still there were many who feared the weather might take a turn and be fatally hot. They had not lived as piously as they ought. They made ready their blankets.

The efforts of the Widow Van Cott to snatch the San Francisco sinner like a brand from the burning seem to have commanded but indifferent success. Tomorrow will be the last day of

her mission, and the harvest of immortal souls is still unreapt, and the Adversary knocketh together his header for the garnering thereof.

O Widow Van Cott, though your zeal is too hot  
To measure with any pyrometer,  
It is wasting its blaze in attempting to raise  
Our spiritual thermometer.  
If 'twere orthodox  
It would send up stocks.

Ah! those ambitious, war-loving, bloodthirsty despots of Europe, what is it they would be at with their expensive Congress, their long subtle machinations, their tedious “mediation,” and “mutual concessions?” What is this so-called “Treaty of Peace.” Do they think they can throw dust in the eyes of “forty millions of American freemen?” — *do* they? All this trouble and worry to save the “down-trodden masses” from the “horrors of war?” Bah! it is not credible. It is not of the nature of “tottering despotisms” to mean mischief and murder? Are we to suppose that “effete monarchies” are grown averse to shedding blood and not wiping it up? Shall not trembling tyrants (“Thy banner-r-r-rs make tyranny ter-remble” — sing) practice its immemorial prank upon “pop’lar liberty” as heretofore? Suffer not, Columbia, thine eyes to be obscured by pulled wool, but with hand on sword be thou vigilant to compel the peace of Europe. Meanwhile, O daughter of the gods, it is to be remarked that you are doing your evil best to provoke a war for territorial aggrandizement with the “Sister Republic.”

If someone will kindly ascertain who is Mr. Ben. Butler’s political agent on this coast, and quietly brain, eviscerate, or otherwise admonish him, he will “do the State some service.” Kearney openly favors the Butler person for president, and goes East to arrange the terms for his support. The *Post* publishes with paraded approval the mischievous fellow’s old speeches on the Chinese-must-go question. The *Call* in its characteristically sneaking manner hides away in its editorial columns (for future display to prove that it has been right from the start) a commendatory article on his grave opinion that no man who works for the Presidency can get it — a dictum that from him has the temperature and quality of a sigh uttered across a dish of ice-cream with a brass spoon in it.

Col. Jackson, of the *Post*, has imported a poet, one Col. Richard Realf, “whose already achieved and honorable reputation,” says the consignee, “entitles him to a hearty welcome in this State.” Turning to his work — “a charming poem,” Col. Jackson says — my eyes light upon these two lines:

“In the concert halls, where the lyric air  
In palpitant billows swims and swoons.”

It is enough; I welcome the warrior-critic’s warrior-poet to a seat amongst the local bards. Make room there, you vagabonds. Mah’ny, shtop twirlin’ that shillaly; ye’ll be hittin’ the gentleman’s nose. Dam, *you* Dam, uncross your legs, sir, this minute; and you, Captain Stuart, stop inflating, and turn your edge to the front. There, Colonel, squeeze in — somewhere. No kissing Theresa.

A colored witness before the Branch Potter Committee at New Orleans justified his perjury on a former occasion by explaining that he did not kiss the Bible. How does he know? The good book may have been lying around on his lip somewhere all the time he was testifying.

There are seventy-two postmistresses in this country, and what they don't know about the relations between the men and women who seal their letters to one another with ingenious care could be painted in Roman capitals on a dogfight without compromising any lady in the land.

"Them Christians"—dear disinterested souls—are urging Lord Beaconsfield to wrest the Holy Land from the grasp of Islam. No, no; the time is gone by. The Crusader sovereigns were right enough; they wanted the Holy Land, and offered payment in the lives of their subjects—like the grand gentlemen and kings that they were. Their rascally following of knights and knaves were better dead than alive, and the expense of getting them off their hands these provident princes defrayed by plundering their allies. But the Holy Land now would cost money, good, hard, useful money—and no lives. The thought is revolting.

Of the late Col. Lawrence, journalist and patron of genius, Mr. Pickering avers that he "brought out "that luminous humorist and delectable lecturer, Mr. Prentice Mulford.

When Lawrence cried: "I've brought great Mulford out,"  
And set him 'fore the people to beguile 'em.  
They said: "On *corpus habeas*, no doubt,"  
Then — when they'd heard him: "Pray from what asylum?"

"Missis isn't to home, sir," said the carefully instructed parlor-maid to the pastor when he called. "My child," said the good man sadly, having in mind the divine ordinance, "do you know what it is that people who tell falsehoods do not keep?" "No hired girl," was the sententious answer.

Really the press is a great convenience. There is not a daily paper in the city but has informed its readers that those evicted cyprians have resumed business in—Street.

"The Russians must go."—*Mehemet Ali*. "Ah! but the English must come." — *Caratheodora*. "Everything comes to him who waits." — *Andrassy*. "See what a just division: Turkey gets as much as any of them." — *Bismarck*. "The war was undertaken to ameliorate the condition of Christian peoples; look at England and say if we have not succeeded." — *Gortschakoff*. "La Belle France emerges with glory undimmed." — *Maddington*. "There seemed less hazard in establishing a Turkish protectorate after than before the war." — *Beaconsfield*.

There is considerable appreciation of "the problem" in this item from an Eastern journal: "A California law forbids the purchase of bricks made by Chinamen for public buildings, although they are much cheaper than others; but the contractors get all the benefit intended for white laborers, for they slyly buy the Chinamen's bricks."

New York has a Society, and is to have an Institute, for the preservation of the Irish language. This is the first evidence that the Americanized Irishman means to hold his tongue.