

*The Wasp*  
March 20, 1886

*Prattle*

Yes, "T. C.," the outlook for the reclamation of your mental *mauvaises terres* is encouraging. Your classical quotations and allusions are worse than they were before even I with my poor scholarship ventured to rebuke you, but there are more of them; and this, I take it, is a healthy sign, for it shows your keen sense of your deficiency. The more sharply one feels the exposure of his ignorance, the more he displays it by venturesome efforts to seem learned. Your guilty conscience has of course already apprised you that these remarks are made with reference to those marvels of Latinity wherewith you illuminated your page last week—those extraordinary example of declension, "*dramatis personae*" and "*cum granis sali*"!

I marvel at your mad desire  
To monkey with the Latin,  
My friend; for always 'tis the fire  
You're doomed to see your fat in.

What! Flout the flame? Alas, poor moth,  
Why should you be so hot to?  
Why take such pains to boil your broth  
When 'tis so easy not to?

An Oakland preacher, who was knocked down the other night and severely beaten by two persons unknown, makes a great outcry about an "attempt at robbery." That's like the clergy—you must swallow their doctrines alive: the faintest manifestation of dissent is punished by ascribing some base motive.

A local "Knight Templar" has been at St. Louis and arranged for seventy black horses for his "Commandery" to wedge their legs apart with at the coming conclave. It is to be hoped he got fast colors; the midnight steeds ridden by the same warriors here three years ago flew all manner of colors when they had perspired a little; and one which had backed under a running water-pipe presented an appearance from which the eye of modesty instinctively turned away, leaving the unconscious rider unmarked in all his gorgeousness. At a little distance that sable charger looked as if he had been sitting in a pile of flour.

Among the grounds for a writ of habeas corpus in the case of a man whom Judge Gibson recently sentenced to the State prison, it is declared that after conviction the prisoner was not invited to state his objections to punishment. Under the circumstances—seeing that nothing he could say could possibly save him—I think it would hardly have been held a criminal obstruction of justice if he had ventured to state them without invitation.

Harlan, the Woodland assassin, also wants to get out by *habeas corpus*, on the ground that “confinement is injurious to his health.” The late Mr. Craft, confined in much stricter limits than Mr. Harlan, is not kicking.

The poisoning of eighty inmates of the Lebanon, Pennsylvania, alms-house proves that study is still given to the great social problem of pauperism, and progress made in solving it. The solution in this instance was four pounds of arsenic in a barrel of coffee.

The Rev. Dr. Ravelin is working the anti-Chinese movement for all there is in it. He goes about “sanctifying the occasion” as hard as ever he can. There is room in this question for a good deal of difference of opinion. For examples, Dr. O’Donnell may differ with Col. Bee; the editor of the *Call* with the editor of the *Occident*; I with everybody, and Pixley with himself. But on one point all decent men are agreed—and that is that if the Lord were in California today he would not be found before excitable mobs, crimsoning the situation with incendiary speech. Indeed, in almost any comparison between the parties named differences would probably be found which even Omnipotence would hardly be able to explain away.

Mr. J. E. Tippet, for twelve years Assistant Secretary of the Bohemian Club, has resigned and has gone to Boston.

Well, Tippet, here’s my hand—good bye.  
’Tis right that you consult your  
Best interests—perhaps they lie  
In beans and culture.

But still your ear will never cease,  
Wherever you debark it,  
To miss the cackle of the geese—  
Those in the market.

I fancy when you leave the Club  
That many a heart will mellow,  
And many a wag will swear the Hub  
Gets one sound felloe.

As time goes by it seems to me  
That Fate grows more imperious,  
And partings all appear to be  
A shade more serious.

Well, au revoir—St. Peter winks  
At sins which have the frost on:  
I’ll meet you, then, at Highest Jinks,  
In Upper Boston.

I should dearly love to know who wrote the biographical sketch of the late Senator Miller which was published as an advertisement in various daily newspapers. A more discreditable performance than the military part of this memoir it is difficult to imagine. What new honors did the writer hope to add to the memory of a really brave and capable soldier by setting him up in the character of a “day-saver”? It seems that on both days of the battle of

Stone River, General Miller's soldiership "saved the day." To such stuff as this it ought to be a sufficient reply that on the first occasion the day was not saved, and on the second it was not imperilled. I believe I am myself the only man who was present at the battle of Stone River who did not either "save the day" or assist in its salvation by his brigade commander.

General Miller's method of saving the 31st of December (according to this superserviceable historian) was to "form his men in convex order"—a most remarkable manoeuvre, probably adopted for the purpose of bewildering the enemy, and giving the added advantage of a divergent fire. In this position his command—one whole brigade—"saved the day" by repelling three consecutive attacks of six Confederate brigades. As everybody else on our side except this Spartan band had unkindly run away and the enemy's whole army was available for operations at this point, Bragg ought, after the second repulse, to have brought up another brigade; but he was probably averse to the "further effusion of blood." In not saying that the seventh brigade was actually added, the writer of this extraordinary memoir must be held to have acted with rare and commendable moderation. Six to one are odds that the "day-savers" commonly had against them, but in this instance the opportunity to ignore the traditions must have been very "invitin'."

I am confident that General Miller never put forth any such ridiculous claims for himself as this person puts forth for him—or rather against him. Among my other reasons for thinking so is this. A few weeks before he left for Washington the last time, he and I were speaking of that very battle and the bitter controversies that arose from it among the glory-grabbers, and he related with evident enjoyment how some of these gentlemen, immediately after the engagement, were heatedly debating their respective claims in the presence of General Thomas. Thomas listened with indifference for some time and then in a tone that was a verbal expectoration exclaimed: "Bah! What's the use of blathering about a baaattle?" To the mind of that great soldier, who lost no fields and won no fame, a senseless discussion and a battle were equally trivial.

Apropos of day-savers, I beg to submit the subjoined lines as an epitaph (when occasion come) for all the private soldiers of the great rebellion:

Their drums are stilled in all the South;  
They're sleeping, East and West,  
With dust in every silent mouth—  
A worm in every breast.

Though mean their station, yet they served  
With willing heart therein:  
Their friendly approbation nerved  
The generals to win.

It is evidently impossible to find a jury that will convict Maroney for shooting in open court the lawyer who was insulting him. For my part, I am unaffectedly glad, not that he shot the lawyer, but that having shot him he cannot be punished. The plea of temporary insanity was never more absurdly urged than in this case, but also it never better served the ends of justice as distinguished from law. If any other lawyer feel it as a grievance that he is shot while discrediting a witness by method of vilification, I hope the same action will be taken as in this case—make him a judge and let the shooter go. Suggestion to Witnesses: If

you have conscientious scruples about shooting a lawyer who insults you, take a pop at the judge who permits him.

O Senator Evarts, you promised to teach  
Your currency views in a formal speech.  
We know them, though, now, without being told,  
For "speech is silver, but silence is gold."

Our great local journalist, the Fat Boy at the Fireside, has found a judge who reviews testimony "with an unsparing hand." How dares the Fat Boy enter the arena of letters with such a metaphor flying from his mast-head to poison the public mind?

The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia *Press* is easily excited. He is a self-burner: he kindles his imagination with his own flame. He took a look at Senators Fair and Stanford the other day, and the double delight was almost too much for him; it set him all afire. "There is something fascinating," says he, "in the thought that a blanket thrown over the forms of these gentlemen would completely hide from view the owners of at least \$50,000,000." The total eclipse of two millionaires, for however brief a period, he evidently regards as a disaster almost too appalling for contemplation. The thought's fascination is the fascination of the horrible. The man will go mad.

A New York Professor of Department apprises gentlemen that he is able to teach them how, by tone and manner and look, they may express to women any degree of affection that may be desired. Desired by whom? If the ladies of New York desire any other degree than the highest, the Professor probably serves a useful purpose in the economy of nature; but I think they do not. My observation is that nowhere in the world is it worthwhile to express to a woman anything but the profoundest adoration. I say my "observation"; I mean that I have observed that I have been told so.

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