

San Francisco News Letter
January 29, 1876

The Town Crier

“Hear the Crier!” “What the devil art thou!”
“One that will play the devil, sir, with you.”

“Card.—The *News Letter* of the 8th contained an article reflecting upon J.T. of Redwood City, for kicking his wife out of doors the night after he joined the Church, and also that he beat her with his mother’s rawhide. I am J.T.’s wife, and i cannot see my husband wrongfully lied about. All the kicking that was done, I did myself Neither did he beat me with his mother’s rawhide. We merely had a misunderstanding, and had it not been for gossip and interference, there would have been nothing of it, and I am determined to stand by my husband.
L.T.”

This emanation we clip from the *San Mateo Gazette*, and we congratulate the fair writer upon the intense satisfaction she must experience at thus publicly informing mankind at large and the immediate relatives of *Mr. J.T.* in particular, that the gray mare is the better horse. Of course we knew all the while that it was *she*, and not *he*, that did “the kicking,” but it was our natural gallantry towards the *gentler* sex that inspired our abortive attempt to conceal the precise occupant of the domestic unmentionables in this case. Perhaps we were inaccurate in designating the cowhide as the property of *Mr. JJ.T.’s* mother. *Mr. J.T.’s* domestic status would clearly suggest an extensive juvenile acquaintance with that cheerful emblem of maternal authority, but still it is possible we were wrong. Perhaps the cowhide belonged to his grandmother, or it might be an heirloom in the family, or yet the gift of a deceased friend. We will waive this little point, however, and only regret that *Mr. J.T.* herself is not more definite in the premises. For instance, why leave the public in harrowing uncertainty as to *where* she kicked her husband. Is she religiously disposed, *Mr. J.T.* diminutive as well as amiable, or did his energetic spouse have to climb a chair to successfully apply the necessary pedal correction? If so, how about her pullback? And, finally, was *Mr J.T.’s* ultimate design in “joining the church” to ask the prayers of the congregation for “a person in affliction.” We make this inquiry inasmuch as *Mrs. JT.’s* resolution of standing by her husband seems involved with a perceptible tendency towards standing *on* him.

The *Town Crier* is in continual receipt of melancholy communications, plaintively inquiring wherefore he does not point the slow unmoving finger of scorn at various stated abuses and public nuisances. He is asked why he does not wet—what an indignant flatterer denominates his “vitriolic”—pen in denunciation of, for instance, the venerable “long bit” swindle of the saloons. Or the badly disguised sneak thieves called laundrymen, who exact a sort of white-mail from their customers’ apparel—the one under the Russ House, for example. He is informed, with almost monotonous regularity, that the circling orb of day does not look down upon a more outrageous imposition upon the forbearance of an outraged community than the miserable apology for a common carrier entitled the North Beach Street Railway. He

is implored to comment upon the fact that the cars on this line are slow; that they are traveling museums of local insectiverous specimens that would put Harry Edwards' collection to shame; that they are as foul as a hoodlum's mouth, and as uncomfortable as insolence and rowdyism can make them; that the stench of the delectable localities through which they pass are as nothing compared to their own indescribable native odor. To these unhappy correspondents the *Town Crier* pauses to say that his stentorian voice has been cracked, lo! these many years in bellowing the changes which his bell has rung upon these, and other drawbacks to a mundane existence, to which such trifles as these are as the molehill to the mountain. It is enough to discourage that first great power of civilization, the printing press itself, to behold the prodding and buffets that inconceivably dull ass, the public, will endure before its somnolent brain is invaded with the tardy impulse of kicking. Why doesn't someone, for example, open the ball by inditing the officers of one of these lines of movable pest-houses? Or, better still, let us have the speedy, effective and beneficent ministrations of a Vigilance Committee again amongst us. Welcome, the emphatic hemp and the persuasive lamp-post!

The astrologers are having the proverbially hard times of the prophet in his own country. These mysterious beings whom an inscrutable Providence has endowed with the constitutional aversion to soap, and a power of making everybody's fortune in stock except their own, are aggrieved that the Board of Supervisors has refused their petition to be relieved of the present \$50 tax. It would naturally occur to the uninitiated in the solution of the complex difficulties that surround the "dark-haired gentleman and the light-haired lady" that this municipal hardheartedness might have been foretold. It is only fair, however, to assume that the planets in their courses refuse to risk their mundane reputations upon the movements of that vagarious body known as "the Board." In the debate concerning this material request from these branch offices of the devil, the report says: "Mr. Gibbs hoped the tax would be trebled, for the so-called fortune-tellers and clairvoyants were trafficking in the ignorance of poor deluded creatures. He said, 'As far as a big petition is concerned, I can go out myself and in two hours procure twice that number of names to a petition asking for the hanging of every member of this Board. They are worse than the hoodlums, and I believe a large part of the prostitution in San Francisco and other cities is brought about by these very seers.'" That the supervisors are worse "than the hoodlums" may be generally admitted, but the rest of Mr. Gibb's assertions has as yet been only suspected. As far as the hanging sentiment of the city is concerned, however, he is painfully correct.

Mr. Press-Gag Laine can now claim to have experienced all the satisfactory fullness of sensation attendant upon the act of butting one's head against a stone wall. The *Town Crier* had marked the approach of this unsophisticated lap to the slaughter with the same species of secret exultation that illumines the contemplative spider noting the advance of the unwary blue-bottle. That there should be found, among all the tiresome ranks of devoted idiots at Sacramento, even one willing to take his political life in his hand, and gratuitously lay himself forever open to the slings and arrows of the press, was of itself a piece of good fortune too great for description. Such a change to put on the metaphorical thumb screws and apply the molten lead peculiar to the *Town Crier's* gentle craft does not often occur. But as the school boy saves the red side of the apple for the last, so the *Town Crier* foregoes the dissection of Mr. Laine's idiocy for a time, in order that he may figuratively file anew his ... over so unusually appetizing a meal.

Mr. Undertaker McGinn's friends seem to take exception to our little reonstrance of last week anent that gentleman's design of personally inaugurating the Day of Judgment. We

are therefore in receipt of a communication, dating, singularly enough, from Mr. McGinn's own anterooms for departed spirits, and which contains the united profanity and strictly original syntax of "Manny Citizuns." These organized assassins of Lidley Murray inform the *Town Crier* that, among other things, he is a "scurrillious reptil," for whose demolition the Ibernian Gabriel referred to is already crewing iron heels on the small child's coffins he wears as shoes and advertisements at the same time. Thee *Crier* is also informed, with crushing sature, that Mr McGinn will omit any attempt to "ressurict" the writer from the silent tomb when he obliges "Manny Citizuns" by retiring thither. If we could have Mr Jimmy McGinn's *unfeigned* handwriting to this effect, we should feel easier. If anything could induce us to cling convulsively to this delusive world it would be the possibility of that horrible "something after death," the postmortem attentions of the sepulchral McGinn. Finally, it may save this premature performer upon the last trump some unnecessary business solicitude to state that the Mr. Murray above mentioned was a gentleman formerly connected with a stupid book entitled the "English Grammar," and who died a very long time ago indeed—so long that his present resurrection would result in very small dividends indeed.

M. Ragoullit, of the French Academy, has just read a paper before that body promulgating the scientific fact that early in the year 2086 A.D. a tidal wave will submerge this entire coast, and extend a hundred and eighty miles inland. It is well to take time by the forelock in such little matters, and we therefore announce that the publication office of this paper will be removed to the top story of the shot tower, corner of First and Howard streets, in the early part of the next century but one. As it is desirable to save the lives of our most eminent citizens first the ball on the extreme top will be exclusively devoted to the writer of this column and his dog (this dog is very savage) during the wetness referred to. "No Chinese need apply." An experienced corps of swimmers have been engaged as carriers, and the collection department will be in charge of Capt. Boynton and Michael Reese. A submarine cable will connect this office with the steamboat landing on the Palace Hotel roof. No fish taken for subscriptions. Reporters are expected to furnish their own skiffs and diving armor. Correspondents are requested to see that bottles containing contributions are tightly corked. For the largest number of subscriptions to any address a superb chromo of the deluge will be presented, or an elegant rosewood raft, if preferred. Now is the time to get up clubs!

The Spring Valley Water Company must expect the immediate declaration of a *vendetta* between that corporation and every professional quill driver in the city. It is not so much the fact of its dispensing a liquid that is more than suspected of containing certain disturbing and unsavory constituents. The fraternity (we regret to say) has a profound disregard for the bibular recommendations of the aqueous fluid; but the course of this company has certainly corrupted to like impositions that other combination of thieves controlling the Gas Company. Water we can do without while fortified by the cheering contiguity of the consoling grog-shop, but to deprive the newspaper scribe of the privilege of wasting the midnight gas is a more serious matter. The miserable mockery that is supplied by this last company at extortionate rates, the flow of which droops mysteriously off with clockwork regularity at certain hours of the night—suggests the gloomy but endurable thought of the outer darkness prepared for the wretches that sell the same.

The sheriff of Alameda County is obviously emulative of our own immortal Jimmy McGinn's insidious attempt to bring about the millennium in thirty days without grace, play or pay. He sends us what we are bound to admit is a most admirable bill looking to the institution of a Special State detective Force, but which has probably about the same chance of passing the legislature as that remarkable body has of passing through the Golden Gates of

the Celestial San Francisco. Let no one imagine, however, that the *Town Crier* is about to crack the ringmaster's whip or assume the cap and bells on this subject. There is not a single scintilla of fun in the dismal reflection that murder, rape, robbing, violence and every species of outrage and infamy flourish like the green bay tree in our midst, while our state government (God save the mark!) and our municipal powers that be look on with apparent listless apathy. Unmistakably there is honor among thieves.

It would have been a little decent at the funeral of Benjamin P. Avery had our Christian brother Stebbins refrained from insulting the Chinese merchants who were temporarily his divine Master's guests. To speak of them as an uninspired, lifeless mass was scarcely polite, and reference to their overflowing the Pacific coast as a deluge—like punishment permitted by the Almighty—was really hardly delicate. These fat servants of God, who get by stipends for whining out dictates to the Supreme Being which they call prayers, evince occasionally as much sensitiveness and fineness of organization as may be looked for in the wart of a rhinoceros, or the legendary silk purse; and when brother Stone followed with a prayer, as like the humility of his Lord as a bad oyster is to a twelve carat diamond, the effect on every sensible heart was to make it cry feebly, "Thank God, I'm infernally wicked!"

The Royal Chinese Temple of Thespia, in the delectable locality that smells to heaven under the designation of Chinatown, is becoming a den of thieves to an extent that feebly but measurably reminds the hapless visitor of the City Hall. We do not believe this to be directly the fault of the Chinese proprietors of this place, but it seems that these guileless children of the Occident have fallen into the hands of about the most hang-dog and disreputable looking lot of vampires, and that run the place entirely for their own peculiar benefit and profit. The minor feature of insulting such members of the press as happen to visit this theater in company with newly arrived friends is a small matter comparatively, but to patiently endure the rudeness and profanity of the gag of cutthroats that hang around its doors for the privilege of seeing them coolly pocket the property of their benighted employers, is rather too much for the endurance of the average Caucasian.

"Some Mussulmans in Canada having prevented Christians from entering a church, a contest arose, in the course of which about twenty persons are said to have fallen on both sides." This remarkable piece of information we clip from the *Bulletin* of last Monday. It is rather a relief to the student of the fearfully and wonderfully constructed grammar of the *Bulletin* to behold its aspiring pens at length essay the alluring field of geography. We hazard the inference that the chief danger to these Canadian Mussulmen lies, as of old, in the jaw bone of an ass.