

The Wasp
May 1, 1886

Prattle

Our shrimp-pink contemporary of Merchant street hath a toothsome 'dote about Frank Pixley being taken red-tongued in the act of profanity by "a gentleman with a sleeveless arm," who turned out to be General Howard. General Howard having but one arm is a Christian fool to expose it the like o' that.

United States Senator Platt thinks it an argument in favor of open executive sessions that ten thousand (10,000) newspapers have demanded them; and the back of him is bruised blue by editors wreaking upon it the manual testimony of their approval. Mr. Platt's capacious receiver may be able to detect in their demand the voice of public opinion, but his transmitter will hardly succeed in persuading others to that view. The newspapers favor open sessions, for they desire news, which, haply, they may sell; and that is all there is of it. Privacy is their aversion. If they could have their way there would be in all the world no closed door, no drawn blind, no sealed letter, no private entertainment, no domestic circle where the reporter is not permitted to push his unholy feet. If there had been a newspaper in Bethlehem at the time of the Nativity it would severely have condemned the "star-chamber" proceedings at the Sacred Manger.

The proceedings were not so very private: according to the Old Masters there were present as spectators an ox and a donkey. The former, no doubt, was an Orthodox, and the latter may have been a representative of the Jackassociated Press.

Sir Sydney and Lady Waterlow will leave London in a few days for the United States in a White Star steamer. A large party of friends will accompany them, so the stateroom of the Adriatic will be well occupied.—Weekly Toadeater.

O Heavenly muse, I pray thee sing
How big a crowd they mean to bring.

Enough to make the ship go down—
People of weight in London town.

What then, celestial maid, shall save
Their bodies from an ocean-grave?

Before the ship's beneath the tide
They'll drop their *H's* o'er the side.

Our no less estimable than esteemed contemporary the *Vespertine Staddle* (colloquially known as the *Dampost*) defends Mr. Hanna, United States Minister to the Argentine Republic, against the charge of boorish manners by pointing to the fact that he is

“an old-fashioned Democrat”—though truly fashion is less capricious than this would seem to imply—that he tells good stories and sings tolerably well. All this, however, is true of John L. Sullivan. It is added that there is reason to believe Mr. Hanna an honest man. It is positively known that the late Charles Guiteau (f’reample) is honest, yet we would not have him for a Minister though his bones were articulated with gold wire. Finally, our illucid contemporary, admitting that Mr. Hanna “doesn’t care a straw for etiquette,” admits everything, and that’s what’s the matter with Hanna.

Speaking of the late Mr. Guiteau, I recall with still lively amusement the extraordinary variety of pronunciations of his name current in the first days of his eminence. There was nothing of two syllables that our people didn’t call it, but the loftiest intrepidity in making the “leap in the dark” was shown by a certain gentleman of my acquaintance (I will call him Masterson) against whom another man had laid a wager that the correct pronunciation was Gwit-too, and that I would so decide. It seems exceedingly dishonest, but under the circumstances you would have decided that way yourself. The circumstances were that just as I was going to award the stakes to Mr. Masterson that gentleman incautiously disclosed the pronunciation that he favored. That, of course, was a matter outside the bet, but it would have influenced a saint in Heaven. Mr. Masterson called it Go-shay!

A stalwart young Knight of Labor
Exalted his saw-edged saber.
 “Ha-ha!” exclaimed he,
 “I will strike. Let me see—
O yes—I will strike my neighbour.”

But ere he had made a fair start he
Discerned something queer in that party
 And asked: “Who are you?”
 “I’m the Sovereign Hoodoo
Of the Knights of Capital, hearty.”

I can’t say the foregoing is very good poetry, but it is the best article of prophecy that you’ll find in the market.

The yearly period of the rural picnic has ensued, and the Spring Savage celebrates the season by execution of his Lord’s Day outrage in his immemorial way. Alike to him the picnic heavenly of the serious and the picnic secular of the unelect—he is ever in formidable attendance to gloom the festivities with effusion of unedifying speech, and energetic action tending to discomfort. He achieves a copious output of general offensiveness—in the contemplation whereof he takes an honest pride. Doubtless Providence had hoped to find in him an humble instrument for suppression of the picnic, but as yet he wounds it without slaying, and marring, is unable to efface. Despite the menace of his imminence and the terror of his presence in the flesh, the infatuate fool and fooless will have their sylvan orgies, gormanding and spooning no end, incinerated of face, anted of leg and illuminated worse than a mediaeval missal by the fiery caresses of the poison oak—*Upas Californica*. The *Hoodlumnus devastator* is, in truth, but an added terror; those which inhere in the picnic itself, and are inseparable from its enjoyment, are superior afflictions. The patient soul who can endure the picnic polar viand, the Judas kiss of the picnic infectious vegetable, the insectual liberties and reptilian presumption, the dermic attentions of the ingraining dust, the general peripheral gumminess and wanton intestinal pang, the propinquity, gregariousness

and bad spooning, should smile a welcome to the hoodlum's bludgeon and give eager ear to the choicest and rarest marvels of his objurgatory vocabulary.

With ghastly memories of Hirsch and High
Lying supine and livid in the dark—
Remembering the Sharon gate near by,
And of Frank Pixley's nose the awful arc,
Semitically supercrescent, I
Am not enamored of our public park.
Indeed, if lying in my way I found it
I'd turn to right or left and go around it.

Tis true that Hirsch and High are buried now
(Their souls, no doubt, have into Heaven been cast)
The Sharon gate's not builded, I'll allow,
And Pixley's nose is out of joint at last;
But all things hideous appear, somehow,
To crowd the present, though unborn or past;
And so I drive not through those haunted acres.
Besides, my carriage still is at the maker's.

Captain Poole, of the steamer Solano, reports having seen a comet at four o'clock Saturday morning, northeast from Benicia.—Oakland Times.

Northeast from Benicia, quoth'a! Pray what would have been its direction from San Jose, New York or London? I congratulate the *Times*: the first big drop of the imminent deluge of astronomical ignorance which the press will now pour out anent that "celestial visitant" has fallen from the cloud of its own understanding. This is no small distinction, but if the proprietor had enough professional pride to care less for glory and more for gain he would try to elevate his paper to the intellectual level of the criminal class.

I don't see no kind o' sense in all this here talk about teaching the English language in them gramer schools and high schools and in the State Unaversaty. If a man can't tell all he knows without he has studied four years how to say it, it's because he knows something which aint worth saying. I never seen the day when I couldn't express my thoughts forcible and eleganter than them as is making all this row and wanting everybody learnt to speak good enough for a newspaper. And the editor of the *Examiner* he says that's jest the way with him.

Visalia has compelled all her idle and dissolute characters to pick up their feet and move on. This is about as severe as the action of the Sheriff of Sonoma in the early days, who, learning that the prisoners in the county jail had a reprehensible habit of going out nights to steal chickens, kicked every mother's son of them into the street.

The trial of May Jackson is again postponed and she is hard at work on her book. It is to be entitled. "The Peaceful Person's Guide to a Quiet Life; or, Vitriol-Throwing as a Means of Avoiding Litigation."

I cannot afford to marry. I am too poor.—Cleveland.

Well, yes, Grover, that's fact: you are one of the poorest Presidents we have ever had.

As I bought my morning cigar
And unfolded the Rising Star,
A sailor man lounged at the bar.

“Now tell me, O man of the sea—
However can this thing be
The papers are telling to me?”

“They say that the divers yet
From the wreck of the Oregon get
Dry-goods! I should think they'd be wet.”

That sailor man made reply,
With a very significant, sly,
Slow wink in his weather eye:

“Their dryness depends, you see,
On how they are treated. I'm free
To confess it's the same with me.”

It is “authoritatively announced” that ex-Secretary of War Lincoln is out of politics.
PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENT. When a man had declared himself out of politics he commonly runs for office.

IDENTICAL PROPOSITION. When a man is about to run for office he commonly declares himself out of politics.

INEVITABLE INFERENCE. When politicians find it advantageous to have it thought that they are out of politics there must be something essentially disreputable in politics.

QUESTION OF ENTRANCING INTEREST. What is it that is essentially disreputable in politics?

GRAND CULMINATING CONCLUSION: It is the politicians.

A man living in Merced has gone mad because he was drunk when his wife died. Do Merced men expect their wives to live forever?

Louis T. Haggin has decided to withdraw his application for the Austrian Mission.—
Press Telegram.

The cowardly fellow!—there was no danger at all of his getting it.

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