The Wasp
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Prattle

"In this case," said Judge Lawler, of the Police Court, with both eyes solemnly fixed upon his political future, "there is no doubt that Levison was shot, but the question which arises is whether the defendant had any justification in shooting him." Any legal justification, your Honor—any legal justification. Of course, your Honor has nothing to do with justifications which the law does not distinctly and expressly recognize as valid. You do not occupy the bench to give to any plea in justification an effect denied it by the statute. You discharge this defendant—a wife who had shot her husband—upon the ground that the latter would not work, "and frequently expressed a desire that his wife should support him by leading a life of shame." I ask you, Judge Lawler, where in the laws which you have sworn to administer, the expression of such a desire is mentioned as justifying assassination. You know, sir, that in discharging the defendant in this case you acted without legal warrant, betrayed your trust and violated your oath of office.

You say, Judge Lawler, that to rid the community of the class to which Levison—the shot *maquereau*—belongs "would indeed be a great boon," and you add that the defendant was "fully justified in acting as she did." Sir, you are an extremely dangerous person. You encourage assassination not only by condoning it, but by suggesting. To the probable retort of such a reasoner as you that I am defending the class to which the shot man belongs, I will deign no reply; the proposition that the community would be benefited by the extinction of the tribe, I scorn to employ my pen upon. You are welcome to whatever advantage you can derive from my indifference to the plaudits of the social gallery whose claps you trap. The essential point is that the law makes no provision for "ridding the community" of any class of men by private assassination. Judge Lawler, the Devil is ashamed of you; your example is making sin detestable.

I know not, Hager, how you like to stand
  Bound to the stake in fires of Eastern blame
For tardily admitting to the land
  That tailed Ambassador. Perhaps your name
  Will shine the brighter on the scroll of fame,
Illuminated by the blazing fagots
Wherewith of many a meal men cheat the maggots.

Your fault, at any rate, was very small
  To stir up such a hornets' nest of hate;
You but withheld a moment that which all
  His life he'd had: You shut the Golden Gate
  On one even then in a celestial state.
I wish you'd squeezed him—any man who'll cherish
A pig-tail should be made to squeal or perish.

Mr. Pickering has added to his repertoire of obituary poems a gem as dainty and pellucid as a tear on ice. The first stanza of this new "candidate for popular favour" is here presented, just as it left the elegiac poet's strong and tender understanding:

Darling Mary, you have left us,
  For a happier home above,
But the only treasure that we have
  Is your sweet memory for to love.

These noble lines seem to me the best product of the Pickeringian muse since the death notices of the *Morning Call* ceased to display, three times a week, the immortal quatrain—

Put away his little drum-sticks,
   Let his top and marbles be;
He has entered the golden mansion
  Through the door of diarrhoeeeee!

The caniolaters have scored another victory over humanity, decency and common sense. Miss Amelia Morosini, sister of the notorious Mrs. Hullskamp, has been bitten by one of their deities. The bit was of a superior quality, the brute being rabid, as indeed all dogs are. Every dog is loaded up with the promise and potency of madness. He will go poisonously insane between the time of inserting his teeth in your leg and the time of withdrawing them to insert them in the leg of your neighbour. It matters not to what breed he owes his allegiance—whether he is a Scotch terror, a mastiff, a mudhound or a Dalmation coach dog. Breed has nothing to do with it. Every cubic inch of every member of the species is all mad dog. The very fleas upon his back are mad, and their bite fatal. However, I would rather be bitten by a dog than by a person who loves dogs. In the one case I should die barking, snarling and snapping; in the other I might end my existence in the horrible act of caressing a dog.

"How many times," asks an inquirer in a religious journal, "ought a Christian to permit himself to be called a liar without resenting it?" Depends, I should say, on how many times he is one.

"All this talk about Miss Folsom
Is offensive and unwholesome
And intended to cajole some
  Thoughtless reader to infer
That I'm spooney on young ladies,
When in sober truth each maid is
An ambassadress from Hades,
  Or I fatuously err.

"As for widows, may the sakem
Of that jurisdiction take' em
And assiduously bake' em
  To a dainty nutty brown!
O I hate the tender passion

In a deadly kind of fashion!—
Bring the presidential hash on,
  Rose, and warm your brother's gown!"

Stephen Grover, thus abusing
All the women, fell to musing,
And his snores were soon effusing
  From the presidential snout.
Then ten kings of thought anointed
Rose and wrote, as they arointed,
That the wedding was appointed
  And the invitations out.

Of ex-President Arthur's illness the New York *World* is constrained to remark with pain that the patient's family and physicians have basely conspired to "deceive the public." Our esteemed (and wronged) contemporary points out with some severity that "the American public have a right to know the condition of the man who has been their President." This is probably the broadest and most definitive assertion of popular rights that has been made in our time. The right of the people to have something offered for sale by the newspapers means, of course, the right of the newspapers to something which they can sell to the people. A right like that finds its fittest champion in the public press, and in the public press the person who most naturally and appropriately expounds and upholds it is the coarse creature who "runs" the New York *World*.

When General Crook for Omaha took
  The trail he was far behind it;
But he swears to o'ertake that city or break—
  If he only can manage to find it.

Brother Parkinson, of the Carson City, Nevada, *Tribune*, was attacked the other day by a man named Connelly and struck in the face. The telegram relating this disquieting event adds that the city is "in a state of great excitement." With good reason, too. If Carson contains a man base enough to strike Brer Parkinson in the face it may contain an iconoclast who would fist the visage of Sam Davis, of the *Appeal*, and the face of Mr. Davis is one of Carson's most precious possessions. It is regarded with the same veneration, pride and affection as the footprints of the Homo Nevadensis—to which, by the way, it bears a singularly close resemblance.

No doubt, Sir Knight, upon occasions rare
Striking is wise, expedient and fair;
But don't you think 'twould serve the public peace
If more of it were done by the police?

Returning to his home the other day at an unseasonable hour, Mr. Bert Hollenbeck, of Santa Cruz, was pained to observe Mr. Sidney Brown at the bedside of Mrs. Hollenbeck, bathing that lady's head with vinegar. Possibly because he belongs to another school of medicine, possibly from considerations of economy, but probably actuated by some less natural motive which it is impossible to divine, Mr. Hollenbeck, in a few well-chosen and appropriate words, ventured to describe himself as a dweller in the tents of the opposition; whereupon Mr. Brown deemed it his duty to reclaim him with a chair. So effectually (under

Providence) did that humble instrument subdue his dissent that he afterward pawned a horse for money to pay the fine which the municipality thought it expedient to impose on the chairman of that meeting. It is to be regretted that the element of personal violence had a place in this occurrence and cut a figure in the subsequent proceedings. If the parties litigant had gone before the Court on the naked issue of the right of one man to bathe the head of another man's wife with vinegar, one of the most perplexing and troublesome problems of modern life would have been definitively solved, and we should all know where we stand.

When a supporter of this right is interrupted in its exercise a chair is not always at hand; and some men are of so implacable a disposition that two and even three chairs may be consumed in harmonizing them with their environment and persuading them to accept the facts of an unfamiliar situation.

Poor High is low, deprived of sense and breath,
While the police investigate his death.
When Resurrection's dawn shall stain the skies,
And all the dead in Christ shall first arise,
Then the detectives—energetic souls!
Shall scamper from their graves like rats from holes,
To the Recording Angel quickly fly
And ascertain who murdered William High.

Cleveland: "If Dan dies I suppose we shall have another presidential election."

Gladstone: "The painter who said: 'There is your portrait, the best I can do; but if you don't think it looks like you I'll alter it to suit'—was, in my judgment, a great artist."

Parnell (in his sleeve): "No notable reforms are ever effected by unlawful means."

Powderly: "I didn't know it was loaded."

Gould: "I will assert the sacred rights of my American citizenship and short the stock."

Chang Yin Hoon (*singing*): "I've been waiting for more than an hour, love."

Hearst: "Know all men by my bill for relief of the Californian University that the feud heretofore existing between me and education is composed."

Bismarck: "What are you doing there, my good friend?"

King of Greece: "Nothing."

Bismarck: "Stop it."

Estee: "Sold again!"

Ravelin: "As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye—" (*chokes*.)

Garland: "I didn't, I didn't, I didn't, I did not!"

The Public: "My friend, you did."

(Source: Archive.org, https://archive.org/stream/waspjanjune188616unse#page/n306/mode/1up)