

SOME FAMOUS CONTESTS.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATESMEN AND NEWSPAPERS.

Very Early in the History of the United States Government the Members of the Senate began to complain that the Journalists Printed Too Much.

WASHINGTON, March 13.—There seems to be an irreconcilable conflict between statesmen and newspapers. These men whose mission it is to do public things, and these other men whose office it is to find all about those things, are good fellows together, have many strong personal friendships one with another, and equally well know how to make use of each other's services and influence. But even such brethren as these cannot always live together in peace and harmony. Where all hands are independent and spirited, proud and pugnacious, there is sure to be a row sooner or later, and just now we have on hand a peculiar state of affairs in the big and beautiful Capitol of this nation. Up in the press gallery a daily jangle among the correspondents is (and I don't consider it a very good joke), "Excuse me a moment while I go down stairs and kill a congressman."

On the floor of the house there are plenty of men who said when Correspondent Kincaid shot ex-Congressman Taulbee, "The infernal newspaper chap ought to be taken out and strung up," or, "I am in favor of driving the whole pack of them out of the gallery." There was a good deal of this sort of talk when the echoes of Kincaid's pistol were still ringing in the marble halls, and for a few hours there was no little feeling both on the floor and in the press loft. All true and brave men are clannish, and there-



THE PISTOL INSTEAD OF THE PEN.

fore the statesmen were inclined to stand by Taulbee, while the newspaper writers were for Kincaid to a man. But the little flurry in this end of the Capitol soon blew over. It was discovered that the congressmen who made the ugly remarks about newspaper men as a class were the chaps who had felt the sting of a few small pieces of steel dipped in writing fluid, more poisonous, sometimes, than the compounds of the Borgias; and it was discovered at the same time that while newspaper men were disposed to do all in their power, in a legitimate way, to help their fellow out of his trouble, they did not indorse his methods, nor themselves go about with loaded guns seeking the blood of the representatives of the people. As a rule the house and the profession get along pretty well together.

At the other end of the Capitol the feeling is deeper. There the trouble is of ancient origin. History is repeating itself in the hostility which is now leading the senate to threaten the wholesale arrest of newspaper men for printing so called secret session proceedings and to close up the gallery heretofore devoted to the use of correspondents. It is a curious fact that the very seditious law under which the senate proposes to prosecute correspondents, or one very much like it, was passed early in the history of the republic as a means of regulating and intimidating the press. During the time of Washington and John Adams the Anti-Federalist press was very bitter in its criticisms of the administration. The Aurora, an opposition paper of Philadelphia, enraged the administration and the senate by printing, before the government got hold of them, Talleyrand's dispatches complaining of the partiality of the American government. This led to deep jealousy of the press in administration circles, where newspaper men were denounced as dangerous malcontents and usurpers of governmental authority. In 1798 the administration passed the seditious law, and the first victim of it was Matthew Lyon, of Philadelphia, who was tried for seditious conduct and sentenced to four months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of \$1,000 for printing a letter in which he stated that with the president "every consideration of the public welfare was swallowed up in a continual grasp for power, an unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation and selfish avarice."

While in prison Lyon was elected to congress and took his seat on getting out of jail. Then an effort was made to expel him as "a malicious and seditious person, of a depraved mind and wicked and diabolical disposition, guilty of publishing libels against the president of the United States with design to bring the government into contempt." This resolution was defeated, and Lyon kept his seat. He must have been a very pugnacious sort of a journalist, however, for soon afterward he became involved in a personal quarrel with a fellow member, Griswold, of Connecticut, and they came to blows on the floor, and one of them seized the poker from the fireplace and beat his antagonist over the head with it. Another resolution to expel was offered, but again Lyon was victorious, and he held his seat to the end of his term.

The seditious law was aimed particularly at the Aurora newspaper, and in a short time the administration was in a quarrel with the editors of that journal. All the newspapers stood together, just as they are likely to do at the present time if the senate carries its spite too far. Half a dozen prosecutions were started

at once, federal militia officers assaulted Duane, editor of The Aurora, and his lawyer, Cooper, was hounded to jail by implacable federal office holders. In 1812 the editor of The Alexandria (Va.) Herald, just across the river from Washington, was arrested for printing secret session news about the proposed embargo act, thrust into prison and kept there for several months. He refused to give the name of his informant, and was finally liberated.

In 1813 two of the greatest senators, Clay and Calhoun, united in a movement to expel members of the press from the floor of the old senate chamber, where they had been accommodated for many years, and send them to the gallery. The movement was successful.

Later, in Andrew Jackson's time, Reuben Whitney, who wrote articles for Frank Blair's Globe, was threatened with death in a committee room by Congressman Bullie Peyton and Henry A. Wise. These statesmen put offensive questions to Whitney, who retorted in kind, and bloodshed was imminent. Afterward Wise and Peyton confessed at the bar of the house that they carried weapons with an intention to use them on Whitney if occasion arose, and thus it is history records statesmen and not journalists as the first offenders in the matter of carrying guns with hostile intent.

The famous Cilley-Graves duel in 1838 was the outgrowth of a quarrel between statesmen and journalists. Cilley, a member from Maine, charged James Watson Webb, then a Washington correspondent, but afterward editor of The New York Enquirer, with having received a bribe of \$52,000 from the Bank of the United States. Webb challenged Cilley, sending his message by the hands of Congressman Graves, of Kentucky. Cilley declined to recognize Webb as a gentleman, and in that lofty manner which some latter day statesmen imitate, refused to "get into a difficulty with a public journalist." Of course Graves had to take up the fight on his own account, and promptly challenged Cilley. This challenge was accepted, and the preliminaries were arranged by Henry A. Wise and George W. Jones, the latter afterward a senator from Iowa, and still living. Rifles were the weapons, and on the fourth fire Cilley fell dead. He left a wife and three young children, and, having been a very popular man, his death in this manner caused a great deal of excitement all over the country.

It is worth while here to pause and remark that it was one of these quarrels between American statesmen and journalists that gave to the world the modern system of reporting legislative debates. In waging their persecutions of the press of Philadelphia, the Federalists of John Adams' day found it convenient to drive an editor named Cobbett out of the country. Cobbett retired to England and there began the first complete reports of the parliamentary debates ever published, while he also conducted a great political journal. Thus parliamentary reporting of the world over may be said to have been born out of the persecution of the press in free America.

One of the foremost of American journalists had a serious personal difficulty with a statesman. More than a third of a century ago, when N. P. Banks (whose white head is on the floor below me as I write) was speaker, Horace Greeley was a newspaper correspondent in Washington. As a correspondent he was as pugnacious as he afterward proved to be as an editor, and he succeeded in rousing the ire of a big, six-footer congressman from Arkansas of the name of Rust.

This fine specimen of the statesman met Greeley on the steps of the old Capitol and struck him with his fist, and was following this up with his cane when bystanders interfered. In the letters of Mr. Greeley recently published by Mr. Dana, of The New York Sun, this assault is often spoken of, and it is made plain that while not subdued the young correspondent lived in no little fear and trembling of the personal violence with which he was so often threatened. At any rate, he armed himself with a revolver, and allowed it to become known that he would not stand any more punning. After this he was not molested. Those were fighting days. It was at the same session of congress that Mr. Wallach, editor of The Washington Evening Star, then a struggling sheet, now earning an annual profit of \$200,000, was attacked on the street by "Extra Billy" Smith, an ex-congressman, who was getting rich out of some mail contracts. Smith knocked the editor down, but the latter got



HORACE GREELEY ASSAULTED, his assailant's thumb between his teeth, and it was never known who had the best of it.

An amusing incident of the year 1858 was the wrath of a member of congress from Wisconsin, William Sawyer, not related to the present senator from that state. Sawyer was written up in The New York Tribune as a "critter," who ate sausages behind the speaker's chair and wiped his hands on his bald head. "Then," said the article, "he picks his teeth with a jackknife, and goes on the floor to abuse the Whigs as the British party." Sawyer made a great fuss about this, succeeded in winning for himself the nickname of "Sausage Sawyer," and in having Richelieu Robinson, the writer of the article, expelled the privileges of

the floor. Robinson afterward became a member himself, and famous as the twister of the British lion's tail.

In 1845 John Nugent, a bright reporter on The New York Herald, obtained possession of an advance copy of Polk's Mexican treaty, a "confidential communication" to the senate. Of course he printed it, and for his enterprise was arrested and brought before the bar of the senate. There he refused to tell who had given him the document, and he was put in jail till the end of the session. There have been a number of such cases as this. In 1872 two newspaper men, White and Ramsdell, obtained a copy of a treaty in advance of its consid-



A PRISONER OF THE SENATE.

eration in the senate and printed it in The New York Tribune. The senate arranged them for contempt on their refusal to tell whence they had procured the copy, and confined them for several weeks in one of the committee rooms, where they were fed on oysters, terrapin and champagne.

A few years ago Senator Salisbury, of Delaware, who never liked newspapers, organized an investigation into the manner in which executive session secrets are obtained, and threatened all sorts of vengeance upon the offending scribes. The senate marched up the hill with the old senator, did its best to scare some one, and then marched down again. Hannibal Hamlin—nice old statesman he was, too—became enraged at a newspaper writer once upon a time and endeavored to have revenge upon the whole class by introducing a resolution to deprive the craft of the supplies of stationery which they had been getting for use in their galleries from the public stationery room. The correspondents proved that the value of the stationery used by them did not amount to more than a few hundred dollars a year, and invited the senate to cut off the supply. They did more; they at once began a merciless arraignment of senators for the manner in which they used up their stationery allowances in the purchase of opera glasses and similar articles for ladies who were not always members of their families.

The last conspicuous victim of a burning desire to regulate the press is ex-Speaker Keifer, who, at the close of the Forty-seventh congress, in revenge for some criticisms passed upon him in the newspapers, ordered the public admitted to the press gallery of the house. At the first opportunity the correspondents took possession of the gallery and barricaded its doors. Gen. Boynton, dean of the corps, and Mr. Barrett, now editor of The Boston Advertiser, stood guard behind that door all night, and when morning came and the public, armed with the speaker's passes, presented itself for admission, the door was hermetically sealed to all but representatives of the press. Keifer was beaten, and from that day to this the press has been anything but generous toward him.

The lesson of history would seem to be that the newspaper buzz saw is not a safe thing to fool with.

WALTER WELLMAN.

Senator Edmunds.

A correspondent says: Senators tell me that Edmunds is not half so much of a tyrant in executive session as some people think him. It all depends on the manner in which he is approached. A wiry, wary, sinuous old diplomat himself, who is fond of saying: "Now, as assuming such a thing to be, or to have been, and I don't know whether or not any such thing was, or will be, or was even thought of. If such a state of things should by any possibility arise, then I think"—thus fond of the hypothetical, the parenthetical and the impractical, and a confirmed dealer in satire, side strokes, and the most irritable of irony, never himself calling things right out by their right names, he is, curiously enough, an admirer of bluntness in others.

The Disastrous River Floods.

No levee system, and, in fact, no device that comes under the general designation of river hydraulics, seems capable of restraining the flow of the great waterways, notably the Mississippi, during the time of flood. Banks break, channels shift, ruin follows as surely almost as in the days when no efforts were made to curb the lateral expansion of a mighty volume of water. He who shall solve the problem and provide adequate means for the safety of life and property along the alluvial shores of America's great rivers will, indeed, deserve to reap honors, riches and an enduring name. The floods that herald the approach of spring are unusually serious, and call attention anew to this very important matter.

Green the Color Now.

Among the spring hats and millinery are an unusual number of greens. Some wreaths—and, in fact, most of them—are all in green, sometimes in three or four shades and sometimes only one. Hop blossoms and leaves are made up into rather low wreaths, with trailing ends. Burdock stickers and leaves are among the "high novelties," and they are certainly pretty when put in among soft black or other lace. I think greenish yellows and yellowish greens are the favorite shades. I noticed among the flowers that nearly all the field and wild spring blossoms are represented. Daisies for children will always be popular.—O. H.

"VOODOO JACK."

The Very Queer Doings of an Old Negro Doctor in Alabama.

In Tuscaloosa county, about two weeks ago, a negro known as Jack Moore, "Old Jack," "The Voodoo" and the "Black Doctor," was arrested on complaint of half a dozen colored people who claimed that he had been "kunjered" them. The laws of Alabama do not provide for the punishment of voodoo doctors, so old Jack could only be charged with disturbing the peace. When his trial came off his alleged victims were afraid to testify against the old man, and he was discharged.

I found Jack at his home on a big cotton plantation ten miles down the Warrior river. He was a house servant when he was a slave, and there is little of the negro dialect in his conversation.

"I was born in South Carolina about eighty years ago," he said to me. "My mother was nurse for my master's family and I grew up in the big house with the white children. They taught me to read and write, and one of my young masters was a doctor. I read some of his books and learned something about medicine when I was only a boy. When my mother became too old to nurse she made medicine for the negroes on the plantation. My master moved to Alabama a good many years before the war. I was an overseer over the other slaves for a while, and after my mother died I made the same medicines she had used and cured the slaves on the plantation when they were sick."

"But tell me something about your voodoo art?" I asked.

Old Jack laughed and said: "There is not much to tell. I have studied the moon and stars, and my mother taught me all about roots and herbs. I can cure any kind of disease, and then I can make people sick when I want to."

"What is the effect of a rabbit's foot or a dry snake skin?"

"A rabbit's foot will keep off fits and the snake skin cure rheumatism."

"Can you really bring good or bad luck to people?"

"I would be a poor doctor if I couldn't. I have a charm which will keep the evil spirits away, and one which will bring them to my aid. I fear no man, and if any one tries to harm me I can always get even with them. Some of the negroes that caused my arrest would not pay me for my medicines and sent off for a white doctor when they were sick. I put my spell on one of them and they all got afraid and had me arrested. They will be sorry for it when I am done with them. There'll be more sick niggers on this plantation than a dozen doctors can cure."

"How do you make your medicine, Jack?"

"That is a secret I will tell no one. There are plenty of negroes calling themselves doctors, but they don't know anything; they don't know how to make the medicine."

"I don't know anything about voodoo dances. The colored people here on the plantation have dances sometimes, and they come to me for love powders. They make folks love you when they are under the spell, but what are you asking me all these questions for? I have told you too much, never more than I ever told any other white man. You'll have the newspapers printing more lies about me if I tell you any more."

Among Jack's neighbors I found a feeling of awe of the old man. Many of them hated him because they believe he had "kunjered" them, but they dared not say anything disrespectful of him for fear he would hear of it and put a "bad spell" on them.

Aaron Perry had bought love powders from old Jack; he had attended one of the voodoo dances and had also been put under a spell by the old doctor. He refused to tell me something about the voodoo dances.

"Dem was love powders what ole Jack blow outen 's hand, an' da make eb'rybody feel sort 'er funny like. An' dem women folks! Da jus' sing an' dance an' laugh like da jes' tickled mos' ter deah. Now an' den ole Jack 'er lay down de fiddle an' de sprinkle more dem love powders an' den de dancin' go on er gin."

"Da all jes' stay right dar an' da dance 'til plain daylight, an' den da go home, an' fast thing eb'rybody knows da gin ter feel sick. Ole Jack 'er done put some sort 'er spell on 'em."

Green Weaver and his wife Matilda, who lived on a plantation lower down the river, had been "kunjered" by old Jack I was told, and I went to see them. I secured a picture of the couple as they looked before the spell had been put on them, and between that and their present appearance the contrast is greater than in the average patent medicine pictures of before and after taking.

Green, and his wife did not believe in his alleged powers and openly denounced him as a fraud. In time this was reported to the voodoo doctor, and one morning Green and Matilda found a snake skin and a lock of red hair on their front step. There was also a very small bag made of red flannel and filled with a dark powder. They were taken sick that day with chills and their backs ached.

They went for a doctor, and he pronounced it malaria, and prescribed quinine, but all the negroes in the neighborhood insisted that old Jack had put a spell on Green and his wife and a doctor's medicine would be fatal, so the quinine remained untried and the chills and back aches grew worse. At last they were persuaded by friends to send for old Jack and acknowledge their belief in his power. He accepted their apology, gave them some medicine and in time they recovered, but were wrecks of their former selves, so severe had been the "spell."

Among the white people old Jack is regarded as a worthless old rascal, who lives by working on the superstitions and fears of less intelligent negroes. A few of the negroes have no faith in his alleged powers, but they have little to say, because his following is so strong.—Birmingham Special to New York Herald.

A Dream That Did Not Prove True.

A queer story is told of Mrs. H. H. Burpee, a Rockland woman who planned to die, but didn't. Fifty years ago, when a girl of 12 years, she dreamed that the day of her death would be Feb. 12, 1890. So vivid was the dream that its memory has remained with her all these years, and as the day approached she made all preparations for it. The details of her funeral were carefully planned, her business was put in order, neighbors called in to witness the making of her will, and even relatives who lived at a distance were summoned to be present at her funeral. As the day passed and evening came, her faith did not waver, though she continued alive and in excellent health, and even when the next morning came she continued in the belief that she would die sometime during the month.—Lewiston Journal.

Some English Marriages.

Of 3,398 brides over fifty years of age who were married last year one secured a young man of twenty, three were accompanied by a man of twenty-one, and fourteen others kept their choice of striplings below twenty-five. In one of the last named cases the good lady was forty years older than her partner.—Manchester Courier.

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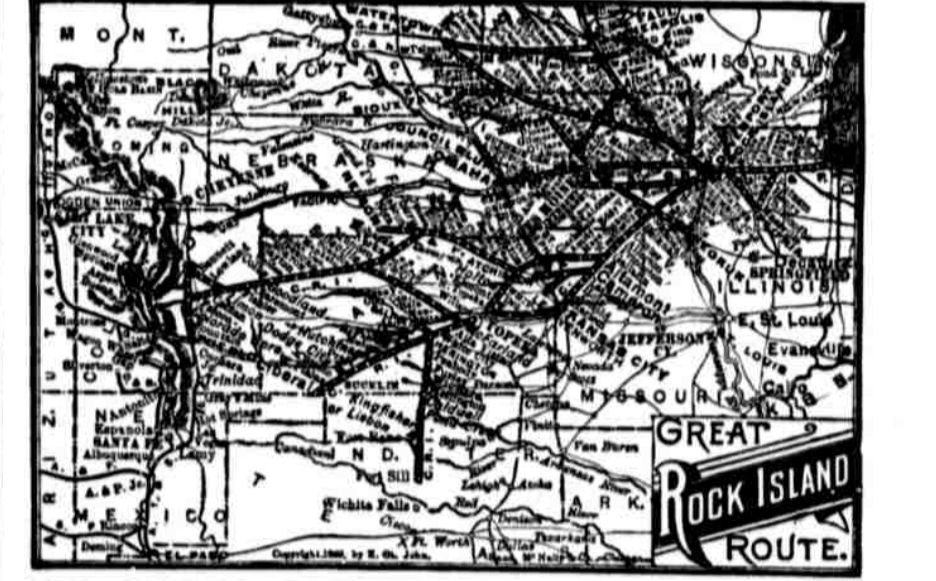
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