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Union Man in a Rat Hole.

In the spring of 1865 I blew into New York from the Pacific coast, after five years' absence. May 1, at Aspinwall, on climbing to the deck of the Atlantic steamship, the first thing I saw was a large placard nailed to one of the masts, which read:

"President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on the night of April 14 by John Wilkes Booth, the actor, while attending a performance at Ford's theater, Washington."

Imagine the sensation caused by that announcement among the more than 1,000 passengers!

I mention this incident because of the fact that the San Francisco Press, a "secesh" "rat" sheet, re-echoed the cry of the assassin, "Sic semper tyrannis!" for which the office was gutted and its contents thrown into the streets by an infuriated mob; and the Press, then and there surrendering up the ghost, has indirectly to do with this story.

I was made a member of No. 6 May 12, 1860, and worked on the Herald until

the following fall; so on my return naturally "showed up" there. The chapel father reported a big sub list, and suggested that as I was little known outside of the Herald I should go over to the World and strike Pinkerton for a job.

This man Pinkerton is no doubt remembered by many oldtimers as one of the meanest, most vicious "rats" the earth ever produced. He was an overgrown, brutish-looking fellow, with a voice like a steam whistle—shrewd as he was unfair. When he snorted an order from the bullpen some trembling rodent was sure to drop a handful of type. After growing a long tail in Philadelphia, Pinkerton went to New York and induced the management of the World to make him foreman and employ non-union men, a gang of whom was always at his beck. Be it said in extenuation for the World owners that at the time he applied to them they had sunk upwards of \$300,000, and were willing to accept most any proposition looking to a reduction of expenses.

No. 6 was anxious to sneak union men into the office, with the view of ultimately rooting Pinkerton out. Let me state here that the scheme worked beautifully. It was soon discovered by us "square men" that he was systematic-

ally falsifying his reports and pocketing the pay of several dummies regularly appearing in his composition accounts; also, that some ten girls who were setting the fat matter in a side room were of doubtful reputation, and the room was slyly referred to, even by his henchmen, as "Pinkerton's harem."

These facts having been laid before the management by a union committee, an investigation resulted in Pinkerton and his gang being incontinently fired. He was also arrested and forced to cough up some of his pilferings.

From that day the World has been, I believe, a staunch union office. So I can congratulate myself that the World is some better for my having lived.

Of course, I had to ask permission of Pinkerton to be placed on the sub list. He wanted to know where I worked last and I said on the San Francisco Press—which I trust was an excusable lie. He posted my name, and within a few minutes I was throwing in on No. 36

Next morning Pinkerton bawled out: "Who worked on 36 last night?" I answered that I did.

"Come 'ere!" and on my arrival at the bullpen he asked:

"How long since you arrived from 'Frisco?"

"A week."

"Ever worked in New York before?"

"No."

"You are not a union man?"

"No."

"You look like you have the union brand on you somewhere, but I want to get rid of that d—d clam-catcher holding 36, and you may represent it until further orders. Mind your own business, and keep your mouth shut."

There was a daisy rule—that the dirtiest take had to correct the whole galley; and say, it was a corker! The blacksmiths would set type three hours and hammer the rest of the night. If this rule was intended to weed out the worst, it was all right. They soon got weary. In the next six weeks not a galley was passed to me.

One day I had my cases thrown in by a noted San Francisco forty-niner, who in the golden days was paid at the rate of \$150 for six day's work at case. He had degenerated somewhat, but was still a good printer when not boozed. On this occasion he was pretty shaky and "mixed the babies up"

I did not read my sticks and that night a "take" full of typographical errors was passed to me. The proof as a whole was a sight. I corrected my matter,

pulled my slug, and laid the galley alongside of the night foreman, explaining how my cases came to be foul and saying that as I had no anvil I could not correct the rest

It was my turn to get fired, but I heard nothing more of it, possibly for the reason that among the forty alleged printers there were not more than a dozen good ones—most of them “sneaks” like myself. (Among the latter was Arensburg, the “fast crab,” who on a bet set nearly 2,200 of solid minion in sixty minutes.)

Manton Marble was the editor of the World. Horace Greeley was then editor of the Tribune, James Gordon Bennett—the elder—of the Herald, Charles A. Dana of the Sun and Raymond of the Times. What a galaxy! “Newspaper Row,” or the world, never before or after saw such an array of brilliant writers within gunshot of each other, and at times all mad enough to shoot.

It was Mr. Marble's habit to prepare his copy during the day, attend a club or theater during the evening, and show up about 11 o'clock for proofs, and woe to the piker who delayed a galley.

One night an editorial severely criticizing General Daniel E. Sickles, the gallant one-legged civil war veteran, was

run out. It was a day or two after the encounter in Washington in which General Sickles shot and killed Philip Barton Key for alleged intimacy with Mrs. Sickles, then a popular leader of Washington society. General Sickles himself had a past master's reputation as a gay Lothario and, as he was figuring in politics as a Republican, the article scathingly denounced the killing as the cowardly act of a disreputable bully.

I had emptied a small take of the stuff and was on “waiting time,” when I noticed that the rodent on 37 was in trouble. Mr. Marble's manuscript was nearly as bad as Horace Greeley's “chowchow,” and, with a take before him 37 was leaning on his elbows in despair. Suddenly he said:

“Excuse me, but I've been to every man in the alley, and not one can read ‘this piece,’ or start it. Can you?”

I had glanced at the manuscript and saw at once that it was a pertinent quotation from “Richard III” which I could quote from memory.

“What's the matter with you?” I said “That copy is like re-print.”

“Well, I don't know about that, but I do know I don't want to lose my situation, and will give you a dollar to take it off my hands.”

"Dig up"

He handed over the price and reached for the copy, when I told him to leave it where it was. I then set the following, only referring to the manuscript a couple of times for feet and punctuation:

"Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,

Our bruised arms held up as monuments;
Our stern alarms changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war has smoothed his wrinkled front,

And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute."

Fancy that poor rodent's astonishment when the proof came with that take in blank verse and not an error!

He never spoke to me again, knowing that I despised him; but his eyes haunted me for weeks like a board bill. Whenever I was working and he waiting for copy, I never turned without catching him gazing at me intently, as if I were a being of supernatural powers; and I surmise the ease with which I disposed of the manuscript and took his dollar was a mystery that he never solved or forgot.

Savannah Just After the War.

An all-around printer, and a good one, early in 1866 I was a new arrival at Savannah, Georgia, from New York City.

Savannah then had three dailies—the Republican, News and Advertiser. I began subbing on the News, and had in several strings, when a committee from the Republican chapel called on me. A serious business requiring immediate adjustment had arisen between the chapel and proprietor, and trouble was feared. New body-type had been put on, "minionette," alleged to be "minion," but it was four lines to the thousand less than minion and way under the scale. The boys were home-made (Georgia "crackers"), and, it being just after the war, knew more about filling "Yanks" with old type-metal than firing type at a galley; but it needed no wise guy from New York to tell them they were being handed something awful. What they wanted to know was what to do, as in such cases made and provided. They having passed it up to me, after careful measurements I suggested that if they would make up a scale nonpareil one way and minion the other it would be about the thing.

This plan worked, to the disgust of an "old spav" in the front office, who had been allowed to order the new dress upon representing to the proprietor that he could save him some money. The proprietor was not a practical printer or he would have known better.

Foreman Henry Middleton was in tribulation that day. The Johnny who held the ship-news case had thrown up his job, saying it was "too hard," and for the same reason no one around the office would have it. Plain reprint-pounders were those early-day "crackers." Mr. Middleton put me on the cases for that night, but the next day told me to keep them, and told me to use my own judgment as to style, so the department would be reasonably fat. Thenceforth 12,000 was an average string for the undersigned.

The Republican was owned by John E. Hayes, no doubt remembered by relics of the last generation as the intrepid war correspondent of the New York Tribune. At the front he was a tireless worker, and a wonder as a reporter, giving the most brilliant, complete and accurate accounts of battles, skirmishes and army movements; and, by sending them North by the first courier leaving headquarters with dispatches, he enabled the Tribune

to scoop all competitors. People wondered how the Tribune managed to print the news one day ahead.

Hayes was solid with the generals and corps commanders, because he drew the line on strategical movements and they could trust him. This virtue made him a great favorite with General Sherman, with whom he marched through Georgia, and whose tent he is said to have often shared.

When Savannah capitulated he was one of the first to enter its lines, and in a few weeks was handing to its unrepentant citizens a first-class, red-hot Republican daily. This was made possible by his finding and the confiscation of a complete rebel newspaper plant that had been stored away early in the war, when newsprint ran short. General Sherman turned the plant over to Hayes, who went North and succeeded in digging up a prominent politician with money and an eye on a Georgia senatorship or something like that. While most of the people were still sullen, rebellious at heart, and not in need of Yankee papers, the city's business interests, stimulated by Northern capital, were rapidly reviving and afforded commercial patronage that went far toward paying the Republican's expenses.

Mr. Hayes, being an irrepressible secession hater, lost no opportunity to pump hot newspaper shot into the older rebels who were instrumental in forcing Georgia into the fight. One time he got more than he sent, as the sequel will show.

Just before hostilities began there were \$40,000 of government funds in the Savannah postoffice, and the postmaster, Solomon by name, was relieved of the cash by a band of guerrillas. Solomon was one of the most prominent and respected of Savannah's citizens, but the Republican got after him, alleging that he had connived to turn the trust over to the confederacy. Hayes was sued for criminal libel. In the suit that followed it was proved that Solomon had repeatedly warned the authorities at Washington that the funds were in peril and asked to be relieved of the responsibility. The verdict was a fine of \$1,000 or six months' imprisonment. Hayes argued that the \$1,000 would be easy money and took the six months, writing his editorials from the county jail.

One night he sent in a "must" that made a column. It related that Professor Alexis, a noted far-eastern traveller, was a passenger on the English barque Hindu, reported in the shipping lists as ar-

iving that day with a cargo of silks from Calcutta, India; that the professor had just spent several years in the interior of India and Tibet, during which he had by close investigation gained an insight into mysteries and occult wonders practiced by the mahatmas and fakirs; that among those of which the professor had practical knowledge was power to suspend the effect of flames and heat, by which, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego of old, a possessor of this strange secret was enabled to pass through the fiercest flames unharmed; that the professor, being a former college chum and intimate friend of the editor, had been induced by Mr. Hayes to postpone his intended immediate departure for Washington, and at 10 o'clock on the following day would give a free exhibition of this miraculous power in the city park.

Next morning, in the center of the park, where ground had just been broken for the site of a public building, were piled five kerosene barrels. I have a vivid recollection of this fact, for, with the entire Republican gang, I wanted to be shown, and, when the "jig was up," instead of going to bed I had stayed up to see the sight. We marched to the park together, and had an excellent view of

the barrels. Many people had arrived, and by 10 o'clock nearly every inhabitant except the halt and the blind was leaning on the fence or reclining on the green sward.

Overlooking the park was the county jail, and the editor's cell window. Seated at a table, he was apparently preparing copy, occasionally glancing at the crowd in an abstracted manner. The crowd viewed the formidable display of barrels in silence, no doubt awed by thoughts of the wonder about to happen. Darkies in droves looked on, wild-eyed, with a rabbit's foot in each hand.

But as 10 o'clock went by, and minute after minute elapsed with no sign of the professor, the crowd began to be restless. At about 10:30, a lank-looking Johnny slouched over to the center of attraction and gave one of the casks a kick. It was empty!

For a minute everybody stopped breathing. Then the Johnny mounted the barrel and shouted:

"Mr. Mayor, suh, I reckon this heah crowd has been fooled good and plenty. This 'bein' the 1st of April, when we-all can stand a little fun, I move you, suh, that we give three cheers for John E. Hayes." And say, those cheers were given with a hearty good will and a tiger.

The incident proved a capital advertisement for the Republican. From that day the editor had the passive good will at least of many natives to the manor born who before had hated him. Upon his release he went north for a respite, and incidentally to mend his finances.

Knowing that Mr. Hayes was hard pushed, and that his employees held him in high regard, as the holidays came on the Republican manager suggested that, unknown to the editor, we get up a Christmas edition (newspapers were not published then on holidays) and turn the net proceeds over to him as an expression of our good will.

The scheme started in like a charm, and, so far as patronage was concerned, columns and columns of juicy advertising were secured in a day. Then we all worked overtime and, at the end of a week, on Christmas Eve, had all but the last pages printed of an edition, good at least, for the price of the editor's fine.

Then there came a crash. The last forms were being sent down when, just as they were put into the slide, the hoist rope broke and the next instant they were in the basement, a fearful mass of pi.

The situation was hopeless. The pidd matter included the front page and most

of the solid reading. With copy destroyed and everybody "all in," the pages could not be reproduced.

On Christmas Day there was a discovery that would make good stuff for "the denouement" of a novel. The sliderope being a new one, Mr. Middleton was at a loss to conceive how it could possibly have parted. Curiosity led him to examine the supposed broken ends, and the mystery was solved. The rope had been nearly severed with a sharp knife.

The old spav in the front office had opposed this enterprise from the beginning, and done everything he could to throw it. He was a dyed-in-the-wool "secesh" and hated Mr. Hayes. Also, as it proved, he was a past master in making a get-away, for after that dreadful Christmas he was never seen in Savannah again.

A Tourist's Strike.

Many old handsets, of the Northern states and Canada at least, remember when the Detroit Free Press went into the union junk heap—about 1868—the result of a strike that, as I have always believed, with a little diplomacy might have been avoided.

Just returned from the west, I caught on at the Free Press and threw in cases the very day of the walkout. Several times while distributing I noticed knots of the boys in earnest conversation, but had no idea of what was up. To this day I do not know the real inside of the differences that were breeding trouble; they had to do with small "fats" that belonged to the dead galley and were being lifted by the office.

It was nearly time that night—7 o'clock—when I rolled my sleeves. Not a light had been turned on, and as no one was present but a man at the stone I asked him what was the matter:

"I don't know yet," he replied, "but believe the printers have struck. They have had conferences with the proprietors, and there was a special union meeting this afternoon."

