

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget – Hinkle editor  
April 24, 1886

### Newspaper Literature

If the young writers of the club desire to keep pace with the literature of the period, they can not do better than to carefully study the efforts of the local reporters, especially of those of the New York daily papers. If it be time that the men of genius are all now employed as reporters, especially as court reporters, then in the future histories of literature shall this the newspaper era, stand forth as prominently as do now the Augustine era, the Elizabethan era, and the choicest specimens of its productions, shall be taken from our daily papers.

Not long since, a Texan named Holland was tried in New York City for killing a counterfeit money swindler. Mr. Mameksen (sic), a lawyer from Texas was present at the trial, assisting in the defense. The ordinary mind would see in this trial no special opportunity for fine writing; no occasion for rhetorical display. But it is the part of genius to make its chief triumphs out of the common-place, to find its golden opportunity where others see nothing of even ordinary interest. The following from the Herald will serve as an introduction to some of the participants in this trial, & imparts that full and explicit knowledge as to their personal appearance, so necessary to a perfect appreciation of the importance of the occasion: “[ ] Fellows had of course dived into his favorite perch on the witness-stand, to offer colloquial distractions to the Judge, where, “like the flowers that bloom in the spring’, he seemed to have nothing to do with the case. On the other side General Pryor was, of course, the prominent figure, and as by fits and starts he tossed back his Indianesque tresses and revealed a visage that would have knocked Tecumseh, Black Hawk, or any Orthodox big chief silly, the untutored audience wondered what kind of a Texan he was, and whether he made the best score with a Remington or a Tomahawk. Lawyer Price was in full court dress. He wore a yard or two of white Chinese silk about his neck, and the most solitary solitaire that his (sic) brightened the fair face of Oyer and Terminer for many a day. Ex-senator Grady was busy. He had brought his lungs along, and they were needed. So he arose and outspread before a jury a striking resemblance to a king of diamonds who has not had the warm flush

of youth rubbed off him by manipulation; and he read a lot of letters from the biggest man (sic) in Texas which planted James T Holland on a pedestal of probity that challenged admiration and imitation.

“Gov. John Ireland wrote that the prisoner was, according to information and belief a harmless exotic in the metropolis, which had received a good deal of favor in Texas, to which it was indigenous, and an octogenarian named John Dunn, who is the treasurer of Leon County whooped it up in lively fashion for Holland, whom he had known since boyhood as a model young man, with an enterprising spirit and grit to back it up. Other letters were produced, and in reading them Mr. Grady was aided and abetted by Lawyer Makenson who had lassoed his wandering locks for the occasion, and with the aid of a local barber had got them into the corral.”

The defendant was placed upon the witness stand. His appearance and manner, his story and its effect are thus harmoniously reproduced by the same veracious Herald man.

“The tanned face was for the first time turned to the crowd. It was calm, collected, serene. the ferret-like eyes had lost none of their brightness, but they wandered over the room in a desultory way without finding a point to fix upon. Yet they might have found it. For just beyond the jury box, in the lawyer's enclosure, a dark, flushed face was turned upon the stand, and in the black eyes that looked from it, was a fixed, malignant gleam. “The” Davis was waiting there the words of his brother's slayer.

“Holland told his story. It was straight, circumstantial, connected. At first he spoke in an undertone, addressing himself to the jury alone. But before he had gone far it became manifest that the recumbent juror with the rosy cheeks had difficulty in catching a word over the ramparts of his shirt-collar, and the impassive juror with the light neck-tie and County Antrims was trying to work up enough boldness for an aural effort.”

Nor is the Tribune reporter a whit inferior in artistic skill. He rises with the occasion to the following sublime flight of fine writing.

“Then, Holland's lawyers undertook to show what an exceedingly good, peaceable, honest, amiable, and industrious young man their client is, by reading a baker's dozen of depositions from people living in and about the town of Abilene Texas, Holland's home. Holland himself first listened to

these euligisms on his character with some show of diffidence, as became a good and modest young man; but gradually he lifted his eyes from the floor, and an expression of complacency settled on his rosy little face. He was given a chance to tell his own story, and Mr. Makenson the Texan lawyer, helped him. As he sat in the witness chair, he had not at all the appearance of a man who would voluntarily seek a quarrel. He seemed too small in the first place. His mustache, like his chin, is weak and indefinite. His cheeks were thin, but Southern sunshine and Southern breezes had put more color into them than could be eradicated by six months' confinement in the Tombs. Altogether he looked like an inoffensive, rural sort of young man such as can be found by the thousands in country stores. "The" Davis presented a striking contrast to him. He is the sort of black-guard that lovers of artistic villainy would go into ecstasies over; tall, broad shouldered, thick-chested, with swarthy complexion, a luxuriant and graceful mustache, that and his hair jet black. But his black eyes are set in creamy yellow instead of white, giving them a wolfish aspect. As he eyed the little Texan, his face looked the embodiment of fiendish hatred, gaining in intensity by the gleaming white teeth which showed between his half-parted lips. There was murder in his glance, but the Texans only smiled derisively when they looked at him. They say that he is "all bark and no bite."

Now turn to the following from the world; which is so thoroughly devoted to the interests of Mr. Roscoe Conkling. That gentleman had by some accident gotten into court a little bit too early, and is idly loafing away the interval.

"Calmly looking out of a window yesterday morning, Roscoe Conkling saw across a little sunlit park with a dried up fountain a tall, white figure of Justice over the City Hall, with the sword pointed downward. He saw the dark iron-grated corridors from which the mighty Maloney fled like the dews of the morning, and he saw the window of the room where Tweed stood at bay like a hunted dog. On one hand was the square, brown building under whose roof the clanking music of hand cuffs echoes all the year round, and where the silent grand-jury sits betimes. Here were the steps on which Tweed defied public opinion with his famous "what are you going to do about it? There was the narrow path down which he walked to die in prison, a shattered, friendless old man.

"So Mr. Conkling leaned at the window, and looked steadily at all these scenes. His hands were locked behind him, and his head was bowed. In his strong face there was nothing reflected but quiet thought and utter

forgetfulness of all around him. Scattered about the room in which the ex-senator mused worthy actors in the great struggle against the Broadway Railway ring; and overhead swung big chandeliers of brown and gold in which little brazen dragons crouched like panthers ready to drop upon the fat, broad head and burly shoulders of Jacob Sharp below them. The head of the ring which has defied public opinion as brazenly as ever Tweed did look subdued. All the fine color which flushed into his cheeks and all the noble fire which sparkled in his eyes when he was writhing at the stake of truth, were gone. His features were pinched. His eyes were dull, and his bearing was meek. Many strange things have been demonstrated to Mr. Sharp since he came into the presence of Mr. Conkling. One of these is that public opinion lays away over a serpent's tooth, and also sticketh closer than a brother, thus combining the best qualities of two very old maxims. There was a time when Mr. Sharp smiled upon the reporters. He glowers and frowns now."

If such writing is expected from the newspaper local, what modest young man dare apply for a position in the metropolitan daily? Surely Mr.     must add a new chapter to his essay setting forth the difficulty in the way of the educated unemployed. None but men of the highest genius should venture into Journalism. Listen to the following from a New York paper of March 6.

"Gen. Sherman must in some way aroused the ire of this particular paper. Perhaps he had suggested a doubt as to the ability of the ordinary newspaper man to cope with and settle every problem whether in religious, scientific, or military prelemics. This is the withering information imparted to the general:

"It takes more brains to run a good newspaper successfully than it does to march a force of men through Georgia. There is brain enough on any leading New York newspaper to stock three such men as you and leave a surplus for emergencies. The press is moral, is honest, is just. Whatever its little eccentricities may amount to."

But let me make the newspaperman proud: we will close this by the following vigorous quotation from President Cleveland.

"I don't think there ever was a time when newspaper lying was so general and so mean as at present; and there never was a country under the sun where it flourished as it does in this. The falsehoods daily spread before the people, while they are proofs of the mental ingenuity of those engaged in

newspaper work, are insults to the American love for decency and fair play of which we boast.”

T. M. Hinkle