

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY AUGUST 14 1897.

## FINISHING JOE FOWLER.

THE LAST JOB OF THE SOCORRO VIGILANTES.

He was a Bad Man, but a Good Philosopher and He Approached His End at the Cottonwood Tree With Dignity and Resignation—Story of a Man Who Helped.

PITTSBURG, July 31.—The frequency with which lynchings occur at present reminds me of the stirring times when I myself took a prominent part in such affairs said C. A. Purvis of Las Vegas, N. M., at the Henry a few nights ago. "In fact I never hear of a lynching without recalling the last one in which I took part—the lynching of Joe Fowler in Socorro, N. M. in March, 1884. It was the last job done by the Socorro Vigilantes, of which I had the honor to be an active member. It was our eight within a short space of time, and though we remained together long after Fowler's case had been settled, we found it unnecessary to do any more.

"I doubt if the history of the great West where the gun and rope were law for so long, can show a lynching surrounded with more sensational details than that of Fowler. Joe was swung from the big cottonwood tree on McCutchen street for one cold blooded, cowardly murder—the killing of Johnny Cole in the Monarch saloon—but after he was gone we found eight corpses buried on his ranch at Bear Springs, thirty miles out. He had no doubt enticed the persons there and killed them for what little money they had. We also traced to him the stealing of many cattle and horses within the year which he had lived at the Bear Springs ranch.

"Fowler had a history which we were never able to trace. He dropped into Santa Fe one night, went against a faro game which a black-eyed girl named Belle was dealing. He took a fancy to her, won a few hundred from her dealing, and married her that night. They next turned up at Bear Springs, which he bought. I need to get glimpses of Joe and Belle Fowler as they came dashing into town about once every two weeks. Belle rode astride her mustang and could put many of the old-time crack cowboys to shame by the way she handled her horse.

"At this time I was office boy on the Sun the only paper of which Socorro could boast. I was just out of my teens, and it is needless to add, was the youngest member of the vigilantes. One day at the far end of April Fowler came dashing up to the office about noon. He was ugly drunk, I saw at a glance. He walked in, and throwing down a gold piece ordered me to insert in the paper an advertisement saying that all persons having bills against him should present them at the bank within one week, as he intended jumping out at at the expiration of that time. He had sold his ranch for \$50,000 and wanted to square up with every one. He was a nervous, quick little fellow, weighed about 145 pounds, and seldom talked without his hand on his gun. His alertness alone would create suspicion that all was not right with him. His conversation told that he was educated.

"Fowler evidently had come to Socorro for trouble that day. He walked out of our office and almost fell over the Rev. J. M. Robinson, pastor of the Baptist church. Joe pulled his gun and ordered the minister to dance a jig, firing a shot at his feet just to start him right. The minister danced, Joe shooting under his feet occasionally just to make him go higher. When both Joe and the minister got tired of this Joe started down the street loading his empty guns.

"Joe led the gang into the Monarch saloon, which was kept by young El Cutler, who had just come out from New York. Fowler ordered drinks for the crowd. 'Give them all whiskey, and show me the man who renegees; this is Joe Fowler's treat,' he shouted, as he sent a shot through the big mirror. Cutler gave a shout of dismay, but Joe had him covered with his gun.

"Maybe you don't like that," he said. "Well, let's see how you can dance. Just climb up on that bar and see how fast you can go. Come, quick!"

"There was no room for argument. Cutler had to climb up on the rough bar, where in abject terror he performed a highland fling. While Fowler was enjoying the show, keeping his man covered, City Marshal Bob Munroe came in and aided by Squire Dougherty and Cale Demming, had Fowler on the floor and his guns taken away in a moment. Joe submitted,

meek as a lamb, when he saw he was up against it and we thought it was all over. Johnny Cole, who knew Fowler better than any one there, interceded for him, saying he was drunk and asked to take him home. This privilege was granted Cole by Munroe who had started with Fowler to lock him up. They hadn't gone three steps in the crowd when Joe pulled himself loose and like a flash threw himself on his friend, I saw the flash of steel as Fowler ripped his friend wide open with an upward swing. Cole fell over with an agonizing cry as Fowler again sank his knife into his breast.

"To this day, I cannot understand why Fowler was not shot down in his tracks. Bob Monroe dropped his gun and came to the floor on top of Fowler. Poor Cole died in my arms. Of course, there was no hope for Fowler; he must swing, and at once. Some one brought a rope, but at the sight of it Joe sobered up and began a plea which won time for him. He said:

"Boys, give me a little time. I killed him, and I deserve to die, but I'm not ready. I was dead drunk. Give me a little time to get ready. I can't get away. Don't throw me before my Maker this way. It ain't right."

"Of course there were those who thought he hadn't given poor Cole much chance, but owing to Col. Eaton, who was the recognized leader of the Vigilantes, the rope was taken off his neck. Col. Eaton made Joe promise that if he got a trial by jury and was convicted he should make no appeal, but would submit to the death penalty. This Joe promised. He was tried the next day, and after an hour's work he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to die in thirty days. The look of satisfaction which Joe gave as he was led from the court room made some of us uneasy. It was plain that Joe didn't intend to be hanged, so to make things secure the Vigilantes decided to stand guard over him until the day of the hanging. The honor of our organization was at stake. We had turned over a re-handled murderer to the law and didn't propose to see him escape, as we were confident he intended to do.

"We had a heavy chain forged around Fowler's body and chained him to a big rock in the cellar of the lock-up. We drew lots for turns at standing watch, and I got second trick. Loaded down with my rifle, I was pacing up and down in front of the little lock-up when Belle Fowler arrived. She had just heard of the tragedy and Joe's conviction. She wanted to see him, but I refused to permit her to come near the lock-up. Her ravings were something awful, but she finally rode away, vowing vengeance on the whole town and asserting that Joe would never hang. For twenty nine days she rode that thirty miles each morning and was turned away from the little jail just as regularly by the boys on guard. She would then ride back to her ranch. On the afternoon of the twentieth day the whole town was paralyzed by the announcement that Fowler had broken his word and had applied for a new trial. It was also soon known that Ben Thompson, Curly Bill, some of the Earp boys and other well-known killers were heading toward Socorro and would arrive that night. The whole scheme was now clear. Belle Fowler had secretly sent for Joe's friends intending to make a rush and a rescue. We were never able to figure out just whether it was intended to attempt to rescue that night or to start a rescue that night or to start a gun play at the hanging was to occur the next morning. The train by which Ben Thompson and the rest of the thugs were to come arrived a little after midnight. As Thompson stepped off the train, followed by a gang, he walked right into the range of about twenty guns. The Vigilantes were on hand ready to make trouble for anybody. From behind his gun Col. Eaton told our visitors that they weren't wanted in the town, and then, to save trouble and undertaker's fees, they had better pile on the train and get out. This they did, and the crew was ordered not to stop inside of sixty miles.

"As the train pulled out not a word was spoken. All by common consent turned toward the jail. Joe Fowler had broken faith, and he must die. I was one of the first to reach Fowler, who was chained to the rock. He greeted us cheerily.

"Well, boys, do you want me?" he said. "Yes, Joe, we'll have to attend to your case, I guess; you broke faith with us, you know, said Col. Eaton.

"Yes, I guess that's right. But you ought to give a fellow a chance."

"Giving you the same chance you gave poor Cole," said Eaton curtly, as he motioned to his men to set to work on the chain.

"Seeing there was no chance of arbitrat-

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ing, Joe shrugged his shoulders and watched the chain butting. Catching sight of me, he said:

"Hullo, kid; you going to my funeral, too? Pretty cold night to do a trick like this on a fellow, ain't it?"

"Joe was thinly clad and the night was bitterly cold. As we started out I slipped off my heavy overcoat and threw it round his shoulders.

"Thank you, my boy; I won't need it long," he said. As we reached the open air he drew a lungful of that biting air and said with a laugh:

"Short prayers tonight, boys, eh? Let's hurry it up so you can get home. Don't keep me waiting long in this cold, or you'll miss your fun."

"The big cottonwood tree on McCutchen street was reached quickly. Like a flash the rope was around the murderer's neck and the end thrown over the limb.

"Anything to say, Joe?" asked Col. Eaton.

"Nothing, only that I wish you fellows would let me do this job myself. I don't like being snuffed out like common horse-thief. It's a disgrace. Let me climb up there and tie the rope fast and then jump off and pop my neck."

This request was not granted; the vigilantes wanted to do the job themselves and they did it. A few moments later Joe's body was dangling from the tree. Next morning Bell Fowler rode into Socorro on her mule at a furious rate. Before she reached the jail she had heard the news of Joe's death. She quickly turned her animal and rode rapidly away. She never appeared in Socorro from that day to this I have never heard of her.

### A DOCTOR FULL OF NERVE.

He Tackled Creede at Its Worth and now has gone to the Klondike.

There was a young doctor chap from our camp went up to the Klondike country a little over a year ago," said Seeley Quintman, a Creede mining man, to a Rocky Mountain party of other miners here the other night, "and although none of us had heard anything from or of him since he struck St. Michael, I guess he's taking care of himself all right. That's what he did in Creede, any how; and a young tenderfoot who could make himself felt and respected in Creede, when Creede was bad for a fact, four days after he arrived there, and not only do that, but hold his grip and made about all the money that was made in his profession in the camp, is not liable to go very much up against it in the Klondike country or anywhere else.

"This young doctor man struck Creede from one of the New Jersey towns—I think it was Trenton—about three months after the find and the rush, with hardly more than \$20 to his name, as he afterward told me. He had had a shingle tacked to the front door of a boarding house in his Jersey town for a year or so, barely scraping up a living, and so he packed his duds and started for Creede at a venture. He wasn't more than 27 at the most, but he had one of those long-pointed beards and a quiet way of talking, and so seemed a good deal older. More over, he was very neat and well dressed when he got in, which excited prejudice against him. The first day he arrived he scoured around and got a room at Carney Medwin's boarding house and nobody knew but what he was a tin-horn or a short-card player until he tacked out his sign on one of the weather boards of Carney's shack.

"He put in his first three days strolling around with his hands in his pockets, wondering, I suppose, how he was going to pay his board when it fell due. On the night of his fourth day in camp—a Saturday night it was, he was standing at the entrance to Ned Roloff's dance tent watching the girls

do the fling for the end-of-the-week spenders, when he saw a big man heavily armed, and with 'bully' stuck out all over him, stride over to one of the girls who had been dancing and deliberately smash her in the face with all his might, knocking her flat to the floor of the tent. The other men there were either too busy or too drunk to notice this play but this young doctor man was neither busy nor drunk, and he was as game as the devil in the bargain. If he hadn't been game he would not an unarmed man, have jumped with two bounds at Pete Moxie, the woman hater, and one of the worst men in the camp; and if there had been any yellow in him, he wouldn't have thrown his left arm around Moxie's bull neck, thrown Moxie's head back with a twist fit to break his neck, grabbed one of Moxie's big guns from his belt with his right hand and bated Moxie one hard knock just above the ear with it that laid him flat not three feet from the unconscious woman.

"Well, gentlemen, that was the suddenest the nerviest and the most successful play ever made by a tender foot. It first stupefied them amazed and then filled with admiration every man in the tent. The next they saw this tall young chap do was to bend over the woman and order—order wind your—Frank Dillingham the night marshal, who had stepped in, to bring some water for the unconscious girl. Frank looked at the doctor man for a minute. Then he turned to the gang.

"Who is he? he inquired.

"A pill-guy, new in the camp," one of them answered.

"Well, by God, whoever he is," says Frank, "he's going to win here," and he walked up to the bar, got the water, and handed it to the young doctor without a word. I don't suppose Dillingham had done anything any man had ordered him to do since he was a boy.

"The tenderfoot doctor got the girl around all right in a minute, and she began to whimper for fear of her life at Moxie's hands. Just then Moxie came to of his own accord, looked around him with a scowl, and seeing the young doctor man bending over the girl, he scrambled to his feet with:

"You damned pup, it's your life or mine," and started to unhitch his knife.

"Yours, then, Pete," said Dillingham's voice, and Pete wheeled around to see himself doubly covered by as unerring a shot as ever made trouble or preserved peace. Moxie's hands went up for he was yellow all through at sight of the inside of a barrel.

"But I'll have his damned life yet," he growled.

"Not in this camp, you won't," said Dillingham, "for you're going to take the night coach, and I'm going to stay right along with you to see you pack."

"And Moxie did get out of the camp that night, too, you can gamble. Well, sirs, there wasn't anything too good in Creede for this young doctor man from that time on. There was only one other medical man in the camp then—though slews of them came along later—and he was a rather rummy old chap who knew more of the gin mills than he did of his office, and the young fellow got all the work. There was a lot of it, too—chiefly in the d. t. line, and later, when the camp became crowded, cuts and bullets more than enough to keep the tenderfoot doctor busy. He made some corking big fees, too, and sent the most of it to some girl he knew back here in the east to keep for him until the proper day arrived. When things began to slump a little in Creede last year and the tip got to the camp from fellows up in the Klondike how well they were doing there, the young physician decided to go to the new field to do a little prospecting, instead of man-patching, and I'll bet he comes back with one of the heaviest sacks of the lot in a year or so."

### Paris Fashion in Dogs.

A Paris correspondent writes: "The fashion in dogs in Paris is as changing as any other. The canine exhibition which is now open on the Quai de l'Orangerie reflects the latest taste in the matter. The vogue of the poodle is at an end, and for the moment no dog can aspire to the epithet of chic unless he be large or most diminutive. Danes are most in favor of the former class, and Scotch terriers and toy bulldogs of the latter. German bassets are also highly esteemed, and among the finest is the capital are those owned by Miss Maud Canne, the indefatigable champion of the Irish cause in France. Some parisian dogs enjoy a wide celebrity. Such is the case, for instance, of Ali, a blue Dane belonging to the Duchess d'Uzes, of Miss, the Comtesse de Burgnes' Pomeranian, and of Flic and Flac, Mme. Bernhardt's Russian dogs.

## Sarsaparilla Sense.

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