

# GROWING INDIGNATION OVER BRUTAL AFFAIR AT MARTINEZ

## Press and People Roused by Assault on Reporter.

## Demand the Punishment of Thug Willison and His Fellow Curs.

**W**ITH every day's work upon the investigation of the Contra Costa scandal it becomes more certain that the inwardness of the Courthouse job will be exposed. Every day's work toward fixing the blame for the outrageous assault upon Reporter Rowe at Martinez last Tuesday makes it more certain that the diabolical truth of that affair also will be revealed, and that the "Courthouse thugs" will be adequately punished for their dastardly crime.

This is not the time for the publication of the facts that have been brought to light since "Thirty-Dollar" Willison and his pals, Lewis and Love, all but did Reporter Rowe to death. But the "Chronicle" may safely promise that there will be before long a complete uncovering of the whole disreputable business. When the investigation has been finished and the results have been made public the "Courthouse push" of Contra Costa, from Charles F. McCarthy, head of the Pacific Construction Company, to "Thirty-Dollar" Willison, briber, bully and coward, and to the thugs of lower degree, such as Lewis and Love, together with every official of the county or of the county seat who has fingered dirty money during the deal, will have been exhibited to the public gaze for what he is.

As for the Town Constable, Rogers, who stood idly by while Reporter Rowe was being all but murdered by the curish Willison and his fellow-ruffians, it is for the respectable citizens of Martinez, whose lives and property depend for their safety upon his fidelity and courage and honesty, to say what shall be done with him. The editor of the Daily Press of Martinez has already said that Rogers should have his star taken away from him.

### THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER.

Now comes the Weekly Times of Pinole saying some pungent things about the assault and the parties to it. In the local columns the Times gives this account of the assault:

Tuesday, in Martinez, George A. Rowe, the "San Francisco Chronicle" reporter who wrote the recent articles in that paper about the new Courthouse building, was assaulted by James Willison, Charles Lewis and Joseph Love of the Pacific Construction Company.

Rowe was on his way to the Courthouse in company with a Grand Juror at the time, when they were met by Willison, Lewis and Love. The party with Rowe had business in one of the offices near by and left Rowe standing on the street awaiting his return. Willison approached Rowe, who is a small man, and dealt him a stinging blow in the face which fell the reporter to the sidewalk. Rowe arose and grappled with Willison, throwing him heavily and falling upon him. At this juncture Lewis and Love stepped in, and, after releasing Willison from the reporter's grasp, all three set upon the man unmercifully beat and kicked him in irresponsibility. In the melee Rowe attempted to use his revolver, but the weapon was wrested from his grasp. A brutal kick struck the reporter on the left temple and cheek, making a wound from which the blood gushed. Another kick broke two of his ribs, but notwithstanding the injuries, he fought on gamely until he became unconscious.

The victim of the assault was taken to Dr. Breneman's office and there restored to consciousness.

### STINGING EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Still stronger is the editorial comment of the Times upon the outrage. It says:

The brutal assault upon the "Chronicle" reporter Thursday at Martinez by Jim Willison and two henchmen is another blot on the name of the county seat, and the parties to the dastardly outrage should not go unpunished. Of course, there are those in the county seat town who are jubilant over this cowardly attack upon the man who exposed and wrote up the dealings of the new Courthouse, but the better element is rising in indignation at the crime.

Similar assaults have taken place in that town and the guilty parties have gone unpunished at each offense. The peace officers of Martinez have closed their eyes upon their duties and the hoodlum element holds full sway.

If it is true that ex-Sheriff Rogers, now constable in Martinez, stood idly by and watched these three men assault their victim, and did not offer to do his duty as an officer, or, so far as restoring the peace is concerned, is it any wonder that it makes it unsafe for a stranger to tread the streets of that town? Why did he not do his duty and place this trio under arrest immediately? This matter of officers ignoring their official duties when a "friend" (cocktail route or otherwise) is concerned has gone too far for public safety.

An officer elected by the people should never overlook his duty. It is not only a cowardly act, but also a menace to the public, who look to this functionary for the keeping of the peace in the community. Suppose this assault had terminated in murder; how would Mr. "Bill" Rogers feel in his position as constable?

Willison, so far as known, has made no public denial of the reporter's exposure of the bribe, and were there no truth in the matter he would be amply justified in bringing it before the court instead of resorting to these hoodlum tactics. This last play only strengthens the truth of the reporter's story in the eyes of the public.

Another disgraceful part of the affair was, after the three big men had beaten the little man into insensibility, they proceeded to celebrate the event by repeating, with other members of the gang, to the various grogshops, where the matter was discussed with hilarity. No attempt was made to place the fellows under arrest, and the peace officers did not go so far as to even ascertain the extent of the injuries inflicted upon the victim of the cowardly trio.

Now it behooves the good citizens of Martinez to investigate this matter thoroughly and ascertain the reason for township officials shirking their duties. This disgraceful scene should not again be repeated.

### STATE PRESS AROUSED.

Interest in the affair, and indignation over the brutality and cowardice that marked the conduct of the cheap coward, Willison, and his still cheaper pals, Lewis and Love, continues to spread throughout the State. The San Jose News, under the heading "Assaults a San Jose Reporter—Three Toughs Beat Scribe," prints this account of the disgraceful affair:

George A. Rowe, formerly a reporter on a San Jose paper, but now connected with the "San Francisco Chronicle" was assaulted and severely injured by three men at Martinez on Tuesday.

The assault was the result of a series of articles which the "Chronicle" had been publishing relative to the Martinez courthouse scandal.

Rowe was the author of these articles

### THE MARTINEZ OUTRAGE. (From the San Jose Herald)

The assault made upon George A. Rowe, the "San Francisco Chronicle" reporter who exposed the Contra Costa county "Courthouse push," by those whose corrupt methods he had made public, was one of those peculiarly exasperating outrages which arouse universal indignation.

The assault was cowardly in the extreme, for it was made by three men upon one; it was inexcusable, for he who strikes a reporter because of an article which appears in a paper is a man who quarrels with a workman for observing the directions of his employer.

Mr. Rowe was detailed to investigate the alleged corruption in Contra Costa county. An effort was made to bribe him to betray his paper, but the attempted bribery failed. The alleged corruptionists, where bribery failed, substituted cowardly and inexcusable assault.

Mr. Rowe is well known in San Jose, having been connected with the Herald for a year or more. During the city editor's vacation he occupied that difficult position for two weeks, and his work was good, whether he acted in the capacity of reporter or editor. His conduct while here was uniformly that of a gentleman, and he is not the person to place himself in a position where such an assault as that of which he was a victim would be in the slightest degree justifiable.

and his assailants were Jim Willison, Charles Lewis and Joseph Love, who are alleged to be members of the gang which was assailed in the articles.

The assault occurred on the main street of Martinez just after noon recess of the Contra Costa Grand Jury, which devoted all of its session yesterday to the courthouse scandal.

Mr. Rowe was in Martinez in response to an official intimation that his testimony would be desired during the inquiry.

With him he took data concerning the names of witnesses to be called and questions to be put to them.

The victim of the courthouse thugs was carried, still unconscious, into the office of Dr. J. T. Breneman, who gave him temporary relief.

Later on he took the train for San Francisco.

Reaching San Francisco Rowe carried out his assignment precisely as if he had been uninjured.

Though racked by the pain of his broken ribs, and wincing with every breath, he reported fully all that had occurred, dictating a complete statement of matters that will be of interest later on.

A physician had been summoned, and as soon as Mr. Rowe's work was done he was taken away for further dressing of his injuries and was then removed to his home.

The physician ordered absolute rest for several days, fearing that in addition to cuts and bruises and fractured ribs there might be more serious internal injury.

Rowe is well remembered in this city, where he wielded a vitriolic pen for a local paper during the recent heated political epoch.

He was a man of wide experience, and his adventure at Martinez will only add another to the many thrilling episodes of his newspaper career.

### TIME FOR A LESSON.

The Alameda Enclinal, conducted by George F. Weeks, than whom no California editor has a higher reputation for courage and conservatism, says, apropos of the assault upon Reporter Rowe:

Another newspaper man has been brutally beaten and maltreated while in the performance of his duty. The past year has seen something like half a dozen such instances in and about San Francisco. And no one has been punished for such assaults. Yet we are told that such a state of peace and quiet prevails that there is absolutely no occasion for any one to carry arms for self-protection. But if some of these assailed newspaper men had been armed and had killed their cowardly assailants it would have been a good job well done. It is high time some one were taught a needed lesson in this regard.

### ought to be indignant.

In the Martinez correspondence of the Oakland Enquirer occurs this pregnant paragraph:

There is a general expression of condemnation among the more prominent citizens of the assault upon Reporter Rowe of the "San Francisco Chronicle."

Well may the men of Martinez and of Contra Costa county be indignant. It was not enough that the Pacific Construction Company should, by what means is yet to be fully exposed, saddle upon them a debt of half a million dollars for a Courthouse on which they had planned to spend \$100,000, but the chief representative of the company in Martinez, the bully and coward Willison, caught in a contemptible attempt to bribe a reporter not to dig too deeply into the Courthouse scandal, must needs make a public street of Martinez the scene of as despicable an outrage as ever brought shame upon a California community. It is high time that the people of Martinez should be indignant and that indignation should move them to action. The municipal disease which breaks out in "Dirty Dollar" Willisons and exhibits such symptoms as the cowardly assault upon Reporter Rowe and as the conduct of Constable Rogers, who would be complimented by the term "coward," needs a drastic remedy.

The remedy is in the hands of the people of the outraged community. Let them apply it.

### PLAIN, STRONG LANGUAGE.

The Crockett Signal does not mince matters in speaking of the Courthouse scandal and the thuggery in the case of Reporter Rowe. Its account of the assault is headed "Brutal," and the language is strongly condemnatory of the thugs and their conduct. In an editorial headed "Up to Martinez," the Signal says:

Contra Costa county is receiving a most unenviable reputation all over the State through the action of its Board of Supervisors and others mixed up in the new Courthouse steal. Tuesday's brutal assault on the "Chronicle" reporter added the one thing needful to put the finishing touch on the whole rotten business.

It is now up to the citizens of Martinez, where the whole rottenness has been perpetrated, to take some steps in the matter and do something to clear the name of their town from the odors surrounding it.

There must be some of the citizens there who are not in on the deal in any manner, and their duty now is to bring action and insist on an airing of the whole business.

### DISGRACE TO COMMUNITY.

In its editorial column on Friday the Willows Journal had this to say of the Martinez outrage:

The "Chronicle" published an account of the great Courthouse swindle in Contra Costa county, in which the county started out to build a \$100,000 structure. By skillful manipulation of the push the Courthouse will have cost over \$500,000 before the boards are paid.

A "Chronicle" reporter was set upon and brutally beaten by three of the thugs concerned in the swindle. This happened in the town of Martinez while the reporter was on his way to the Grand Jury room. A constable named Rogers stood by and made no effort to protect him.

When a community suffers itself to get into the hands of dishonest officials it must expect that the constables will of necessity stand in with the powers that be. The matter is a disgrace to that community, and no doubt there are many in the county who will feel the disgrace keenly.