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THE DAILY BEE.

TUESDAY, MORNING, APRIL 19.

THE SICKLES TRIAL.

We presume that before the end of the week the telegraph will make known the result of the Sickles trial. Our decided impression is that the accused will not be found guilty of the crime of murder. Either the jury will acquit him of the charge, or there will be a mistrial. There is no city in America—not even straightlaced and puritanical Boston—in which the judicial investigation of a case like that of Mr. Sickles would result in a conviction. Laws, after all, are but the embodiment of public opinion, and hence the statutes which are in direct conflict with the deliberate sentiments of a majority of the people are most unlikely to be enforced. We have seen this exemplified in our city, where a rigorous penal enactment against dueling is literally a dead-letter, and where sedulous efforts to procure a conviction in cases where the duello was characterized by circumstances of peculiar and revolting atrocity, have proved wholly abortive.

There is scarcely any conceivable offence which could be viewed with more indulgence, and for which more extenuating pleas would be advanced, than the murder of an adulterer by the outraged and avenging husband. The simple fact that the victim had violated the sanctity of the marriage bond, would in the eyes of thousands be a sufficient justification of the deed. Although circumstances might modify it, and seem to make that a murder which was intended as a succession to wounded honor and blasted peace of mind, although the deliberateness of the act might apparently enhance its vindictiveness, and the upraised dirk into the body of an unarmed, helpless, prostrate and imploring victim, might, to cool and dispassionate minds, wear the appearance of a premeditated and ruthless assassination, there are thousands who would regard nothing but the provocation, and would applaud the man who punished the outrage by death. These are the feelings which for the most part govern and guide humanity, especially in America, where we have not reached that refinement of civilization which blunts or dulls the sting of disgrace, and accepts pecuniary compensation as the price of dishonor. Hence our unbending belief that Mr. Sickles will pass unscathed through the ordeal of a public trial. There may be amongst the jurymen one or two who, yielding unto personal sympathy, would feel disposed to try the case by the law and the evidence, but such an verdict will be rare indeed. We should not, however, be at all surprised at hearing that the prisoner has been unanimously and honorably acquitted.

This is what may be expected, but not what absolute justice might exact. Opinions always differ in the case of a distinguished man, but the act is judged. Those who see only a trusted friend betraying the honor and abusing the hospitality of the man who confided in him, an adored wife, false to her vows and faithless to her obligations, a deceitful husband, with high-born rank and the opportunity of the crime, and relying reason and conscience upon behalf of the outraged, the storm of passion, which sees the death of Key, with the attendant moral and physical degradation of the adulterer, as a merited and just retribution for the injury done, and regards the offender as the victim of fate, and should be punished by less than a public execution. On the contrary, those who regard the affair in all its aspects, as prostrate the offender and aggravate the offence, who examine the chief and only evidence, who collect in the circumstances connected with the shooting, that revolver to deduce it from the premeditation on the mind of the homicide, those who believe that, save in self-defence, one man have right whatever to kill another for such injuries as the law is competent to redress, and who regard the act in question as a deliberate and premeditated murder, upon a deliberate premeditation, and upon a premeditation of those who previously outraged the man who should dead slayer with the knife, and that in pursuit of the outraged husband, and in pursuance of his purpose, he would not scruple to take the life of the man who had injured him, and who had taken his life instead of the traitor he intended to slay, such persons will not be slow to pronounce the act of Mr. Sickles a cowardly and premeditated murder, and to demand that the law should deal severely with the man who, in pursuance of the outraged feelings of a husband, and in pursuance of his purpose,