

(Written for the Miscellany.)

He Only Bent It.

Perhaps it is hardly fair to tell tales out of school, yet it seems to us rather tough, when a good joke is perpetrated, to keep a close mouth. There was a time in the history of the printing business of St. John when matters were rather lively, and we will now refer more particularly to the palmy days of the *Colonial Empire*—to the time when that concern employed some thirteen or fifteen compositors, and when, having worked all night and got the paper to press, McHenry would rush for the copy drawer with a handful of manuscript, and, were any of the boys preparing to go out in search of the “early worm” or a little breakfast, would immediately exclaim:

“Don’t stop, boys; don’t stop! Here’s copy for you; keep right along.”

Among the men employed was “Brunny.” Although very mild in manner, he was always suspicious of his fellow workmen, and did he happen to notice any two of them in conversation, he at once made up his mind that their confab related to him, and at its close he would sometimes assail either one or the other of the parties.

While two of the men were thus talking one day, one of them happened to glance at “Brunny” (who was keeping a sharp eye upon them) and smile. At the close of their talk, he waltzed around to him and remarked:

“Say, you’ve been talking about me.”

“Have I?”

“Yes, you have.”

“How do you know?”

“Oh, you needn’t think I didn’t see that d—n sickly grin on your face.”

“Can’t I smile without laughing at you?”

“Yes, you can *smile* without laughing at me; but if I catch you talking about me again, I’ll crack your nose. It wouldn’t take much to make me do it now.”

“You must remember that there is a police office; you would not cut a very graceful figure in that court,” replied H—d.

By this time “Brunny’s” hands had commenced to itch for a “crack at the nose” of the man who could thus insinuate about his form to his face; and having worked himself into a passion, the first thing we noticed was his fist circling through the air, and in an instant there came the sound of crashing glass.

All hands at once flocked to the scene of disaster, and discovered that in his effort to annihilate his supposed slanderer, “Brunny” had shot wide of the mark, and that in its aerial flight his hand had encountered the kerosene lamp suspended over the “cap” case of his adversary, who escaped with only a slight tap upon the shoulder. Of course, this proceeding “brought the house down,” and some of the boys suggested to “Brunny” that it would be a good idea to take a fresh aim and shoot once more.

H—d smilingly remarked: “Mr. —, you will have to pay for this,” referring to the broken lamp.

“Say, you had better keep your d—n mouth closed hereafter, or I’ll close it for you,” replied “Brunny.”

At this time the foreman, having recovered his wind, remarked that there must be no fighting in the office.

Again the victim gently hinted that the lamp must be paid for, and once more his assailant hopped around to him and in a threatening manner declared that he had not broken the lamp—that he had “only bent it!”

The foreman here interfered, and to give a finish to the whole affair, one of the men advised H—d to go out for a short walk while he would scare “Brunny” about the police court. While he was out, “Brunny” was approached:

“Well, Heenan, you’re in for it now.”

“How so? What do you mean?”

“He’s gone to the police office.”

“Say, do you think he’ll haul me?”

“He said he would.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t give him a good licking while I was at it. I wish I had.” (As far as the “licking” was concerned it was generally conceded that “Brunny” would have come out second best.)

Upon the return of H—d, on being questioned by the men, he said the warrant could not be issued until the next day owing to the great rush of business at the police office.

At this stage of the affair John M—ll, the “opera” singer of the room, advised an amicable adjustment of the trouble, and proposed that “Brunny” should apologize to his enemy and “stand treat” for the whole office, to all of which the now subdued man was only too glad to consent. And when Saturday came round, with a cheerful smile he invited all hands down stairs and fulfilled his part of the agreement. Before the crowd dispersed, however, he drew two of the boys aside and thus addressed them:

“See here, that was a bad scrape I got into. Don’t you think I got out of it pretty d—n easy?”

When the editor of a daily paper receives a visit from a couple of editorial brethren, when he is right in the middle of an able article on the “Demonetizing of silver,” he tries to make them feel “at home” but observes with a deep sigh of relief, as they disappear out of the door, “I thought those darned bores were never going to leave!” and then a few hours later his paper comes out, containing a notice like this: “We had the pleasure this morning of a very agreeable visit from Messrs. Brown, of the Jeffersonville *Banner*, and Jones, of the Center Point *Bingle*. Come again, gentlemen.”

A Wabash editor returns thanks for a cent-pede sent him by mail from Texas, being the first cent of any kind he had seen for months.