

ing a word of him in private. No sooner were their two heads together than Colonel Duggins, the Alcalde, after having fairly surrendered, could not resist the opportunity, and fired. The idea was, that he had no special enmity to Colonel Rigg. The wide-awake hat on the Colonel's head was sent spinning, and Mr. Malloch, though noway hurt, looked like to faint. The Colonel's rifle was at his shoulder in a twinkling, and at the crack of it one would have thought the old alcalde jumped right over a knot of his people in the middle of the Plaza. He fell stone-dead, and was carried into the Custom-house. Some one picked up the Colonel's hat and handed it up, pointing to the bullet-hole. He put it on again without taking further notice, after which all he had to do was to see matters settled quietly in town.

You would have supposed every one in the city, harbour, fort, and Contra Costa, was "on the Vigilance ticket," as the saying went. The jail, to be sure, had to be battered down, at which the firemen could be heard busy, and the engines were playing water to lay the dust; but all that hindered was the timber walls, locks and bolts, and that was soon over. There were only the chief prisoners, with, of course, the Vigilance men captured over night; the rest were thought nothing of, and probably escaped. They were lifted into the carriage beside the Colonel, and driven round to the committee-rooms, where the leading men of the movement were gathering for the occasion. I could not make sure as yet of the number of the unfortunate men; there was no seeing them as they went along. Every one seemed to be their enemy, neither guard nor handcuffs being needed; now would come a yell with the name of Bob Mackenzie, and again it was Sam Whitaker.

The Vigilance Committee chambers consisted of the upper floors of two large frame-houses in the principal part of the city, near the Plaza or square, but fronting Battery Street, in the block between California and Pine Streets. The lower portions were used as mercantile stores, and in the two gable-ends above were a pair of double doors, with projecting cranes and pulleys to hoist goods from the drays. Here we could now see the ropes being reeved for immediate execution; a terrified jailer stood by to identify the prisoners, while the committee were ranged behind, some taking off their coats, and appearing in their shirt-sleeves. The crowd was packed below into every opening; all the windows and roofs were occupied. Still, if a member of the committee wanted to get through to his place above, way was made for him, the people more than once

almost lifting him along. Among these was my former employer, Mr. Malloch, still looking rather pale from his late accident. There was no fear of this sort of thing now, of course, but I began to be alarmed afresh lest my fears should prove correct about the young man; for the people were not to be trifled with any longer. I did not see exactly where Mr. Malloch got to; everything else was now thrown into the shade by the reappearance of the Colonel's carriage. It was now empty save for the driver, who stood up with a huzza as it dashed round the corner of California Street. One of the double doors was then thrown open, and some of the members came forward to address the public. A few words were said to the effect that the men were safe and ready, the only question being what to do with them. There was one roar of "Hang them up—now and here!" After that, the sounds were like the sea in a gale off Cape Horn. The other door flew wide, showing three men pioned, the ropes round their necks, and the ends leading from the tackle to the hands of the committee, who were ranged in as many groups behind. Where I stood, it was too far off to distinguish faces. So far as concerned the figure of at least one of the men, I knew nothing; Whitaker's square build could not be mistaken, nor his actions either, for he was trying to work the boots off his feet, evidently to kick them down among the mob. He had nearly managed it with one, when Colonel Rigg held up a hand where he stood out at the side, and dropped a handkerchief; that moment the committee turned their backs and ran off inwards with the ropes, like a full ship's crew with the three topsail-halliards after reefing. All that could be seen then was the three bodies quivering and turning aloft; but my very heart grew sick at the sight. I knew by the legs of the tallest that the attempt on the *Cornucopia* had been dearly paid for—a long way dearer than I could have wished, even though "Jack Wilkinson" had run me still closer.

In the afternoon, when they were cut down, a coroner's inquest was held on the bodies. The verdict found by the jury was, that Samuel Whitaker, Robert Mackenzie, and John Wilkinson, had "come to their death by the act of a body duly styling themselves the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco, and this on Sunday, the 24th of August, 1851." It was afterwards said that some of the members had felt a good deal on the occasion. This must have been the case. I should say; at the same time others were seen to stand in the next doorway, while