

Scenes in California.

CALIFORNIA.

The San Francisco Vigilance Committee.

(Correspondence of the N. Y. Journal of Commerce.)

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 5th.

The Committee of Vigilance is a secret body every member sworn to keep secret all proceedings which may be proposed or adopted by the body, and to give all needful assistance, even life itself if necessary, to carry out its aims and object. Yet, nevertheless, much does leak out, and I will try to concentrate all into as small a space as possible for your columns.

The Executive Committee is composed of 40 members, besides two Secretaries. The President of this body is understood to be Wm. T. Coleman, Esq., a merchant of high and honorable standing here and elsewhere. The others are taken from all classes and conditions of men—merchants, doctors, lawyers, ship carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, iron mongers, &c.—perhaps two-thirds of the whole are composed of the mercantile jobbing houses of our city.

The General Committee is composed of about 6,000 members, whose names, residences and places of business, are duly enrolled, and signed to the Constitution. The Committee is divided into about 35 divisions or companies—three of cavalry, two of artillery, and the remainder of infantry.

There are about 100 men constantly on duty, day and night, in and about the garrison, without pay, fee or reward; all voluntary; four hours off and on during the 24 hours—one company on during the day, another at night.

The garrison is, in all respects, in good military order. Barracks for 150 men (relief guard) with blankets and mattresses, sutlers' quarters, &c.

The establishment is even provided with horses, everything ready and on the premises for a campaign. To show the true feeling of the people, I have seen frequently men on duty, with their white locks, over 60, and others 65 and 67 years of age.

Men claim him as their friend and advocate. In regard to the public press of this city, all are in favor and strongly endorse the acts of the Committee, save and except the Sun and Herald, whose circulation combined is not probably more than two-thirds of that of the Bulletin, while the Alta, Chronicle, True Californian, Town Talk, Globe, and some thrice French papers, and all dailies, fully endorse the Committee.

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Now, you and your readers are ready to ask, what of all this? What are you aiming to accomplish? I answer, to rid the city and State of the murderers, rowdies, ballot box stuffers, and such like men who have stolen our birth-right and made slaves and hirelings of those whom they by force have driven from the polls at the mouth of the pistol, shoulder, or knife; and who have controlled our elections by the use of false bottomed ballot boxes and thus foiled the known and express will of the people.

Now, to come back to the all-absorbing and engrossing theme and topic of the day, the Terry trial. I beg, first, to remark, that if not mistaken, it is necessary for the Executive Committee, acting as a jury, to give a majority vote, to decide a case; that done, the verdict, and the entire testimony taken on the trial, go to a board of delegates for concurrence.

These latter are composed of the captains of each division, and two men chosen from their respective companies; so that there are with the field officers [also delegates], some 112 delegates. A two-thirds vote [or majority] is necessary to carry a verdict of guilty or acquittal. It is generally understood that in the Terry case, in the executive body; or, if not so, a bare majority in favor of acquittal, while, on the other hand, the delegates are almost to a man in favor of a verdict of guilty.

Ten thousand rumors are afloat as to the finale of this case, and predictions are abundant as to the disposal of Terry, and its effect upon the people and the Committee. Some predict an immediate dissolution, and a general disbanding of the association. Others that the people will suddenly rise up, in conjunction with the dissenting (or minority) Committee men, and will imprison and prosecute, and harass and torture the native members of the Committee of Vigilance.

Now, in conclusion, let me add, that this Vigilance Committee is composed of the poor as well as the rich. I have seen two men at one time standing sentinel with muskets on their shoulders, on the sand bags in front of their shoulders, that were worth each their hundred thousand dollars in cash; while, at the same time, by their side stood men who had left their workshops, their daily toil, and lost their usual daily gains, for the purpose of doing what we all believe is a duty we owe to our mothers, wives, children, and property.

MILKING COWS BY MACHINERY.—The Scientific American gives an account and engraving of a new invention for the Dairy, which is applied to milking cows. The milking is done by means of a crank attached to a shaft, on which there are four elastic arms of steel, the ends of which are furnished with rollers. On one side of the ring in which the rollers move there is an elastic pocket in which the animal's teat is placed. The back of this pocket is stiff, so that when the rollers revolve they will come in contact with the front part of the pocket, and press it with the teat against the back part. The teat thus pressed is relieved of its milk, which flows down through the pocket, and through a hollow case of the instrument, into a tube, and thence into the milk pail.

Miscellaneous.

Overwhelming Proof—Clear as Mud.

The Buchananites are in a terrible stew about the Catholics, and are now engaged in proving that Col. Fremont is a member of the Romish Church. They contend that "Americans" cannot vote for him on that account, and cordially invite them—even the bloody "dark lantern" Know Nothings, to rally for Buchanan, and save their sinking ship.

Col. Fremont and his wife Jessie belong to the Protestant Episcopal church, and never did belong to any other. Still the Buchananites have "proof to the contrary, just got out fresh from the mint, by a leading Buchanan man of Boston. It is as follows:

1st.—When the runaway match of Fremont and Jessie Benton was agreed upon, they were married by a Catholic priest, because no other clergyman would offend old Benton by performing the ceremony. John and Jessie were determined to get married, and it seems they were not very particular about ceremony. They are, therefore, Catholics.

2nd.—Fremont once gave employment to a Catholic servant.

3d.—Fremont was once sick, and after his recovery, he was visited by a Catholic Priest. Erasmus Brooks knows all about it.

4th.—A gentleman once offered him a Protestant book to read, which he didn't do, saying that he hadn't time. Erasmus Brooks has the proof of this.

5th.—A gentleman whose name is in possession of Erasmus Brooks once saw Fremont wash his hands in holy water.

6th.—Fremont crossed the Rocky Mountains which everybody besides Erasmus Brooks knows to be a fact.

7th.—Fremont, after he conquered California, once went into a Roman Catholic church in that country, and conformed to the rules of the church by taking off his hat.

8th.—About one year after he was married, his wife Jessie said to him on Sunday morning, "John, my dear," says she, "won't you go to church?" "No," says John, "I don't feel well." "Oh," said Jessie, "I'm sorry for that, what's the matter, dear?" Says John, "Oh, not much, only a very slight indisposition, and I would rather be excused, but, my dear, don't stay at home on my account."

Whereupon Jessie went to church, and it is strongly suspected that as soon as Jessie had left for the Protestant church, Fremont sneaked off to the Romish church. The Buchananites dare the friends of Fremont to prove that he didn't go.

9th.—A man who slept with Col. Fremont long before the latter had a wife to sleep with saw the Col. take off his unmentionables, when he discovered the fact that he habitually wore crossed suspenders. The affidavit of this fact is now in the hands of Erasmus Brooks and will soon appear in the N. Y. Express.

10th.—Mrs. Jessie Fremont, only a few weeks back, gave an old Irish Catholic beggar woman a sixpence, whilst walking up Broadway, New York. Erasmus Brooks saw this with his own eyes, for he followed the Fremonts on purpose to watch their doings.

Singular Baptismal Superstition.

On a recent Sunday, at a certain country church in Worcestershire, there were 3 christenings, 2 boys and a girl. The parents of one boy were in a very respectable class of life; the parents of the other two children were in humble circumstances. The parties at the front had been duly placed by the officiating clergyman, and as it happened, the girl and her sponsors were placed last in order. When the first child—who was the boy of the poor parents—was about to be baptized, the women who held the little girl elbowed her way up to the clergyman, in order that the child she carried might be the first to be baptized. To do this, she had (very contrary to the usual custom of the poor, who in essential points, are generally as refined as their superiors,) to rudely push past "her betters"—i. e., the sponsors of the second boy. As she did so, she said to one of the sponsors, by way of apology, "It's a girl; so it must be christened first; and christened first it was. But the peculiar manner in which this was brought about showed that the woman was influenced by some peculiar feeling; and on the next day an opportunity was taken to discover her motive. This was her explanation: "You see, sir, the parson hint a married man and consequently is disfavorable to children, or he'd never put the little girl to be christened after the boys. Although it sadly fluster'd me, sir, to put myself afore my betters in the way which I was fosed to do; yet, sir, it was a doing of a kindness to them two little boys, in me setting my little girl afore 'em."

"Why, sir, I has astonished as you don't know. Why sir, if them little boys had been christened afore the little girl, they'd have had her soft chin, and she'd have had their hairy beards—the poor little innocents! But, thank goodness, I've kept her from that misfortune! And the women really believed that she had done so; and the generality of her neighbors shared her belief.

A Russian Mistress Jealous of her Slave.

The Allgemeine Zeitung of the 21st of July, gives the following illustration of serfdom in Russia, as of recent occurrence:

Among the serfs owned by a widow lady, was a girl who had been brought up with unusual indulgence, had received a superior education, and acquired manners far more cultivated than belonged to her class, to which advantages was added the natural gift of an attractive person. At an early age she was apprenticed at St. Petersburg to a French dressmaker; and having attained some skill in the business, was after a time offered profitable employment.

This her mistress permitted her to accept, on the usual payment of an obrok to herself in lieu of her personal service. The girl conducted herself well in her situation, acquired a knowledge of the French language and formed habits of considerable refinement. Here she attracted the notice of an officer of the rank of colonel, who in due time proved his attachment by offering marriage. The girl accepted the proposal, and nothing remained but to obtain her freedom from her mistress. The purchase money the colonel was willing to pay. This ought to have been regulated by the obrok which the girl had paid, calculated by so many years' purchase. The officer was not disposed to cavil about the price, but on applying to the mistress, to whom he unfortunately explained his purpose, he received for answer that on no terms whatever would she emancipate her slave.

Every effort was used to shake the resolution, which appeared unaccountable; but argument, entreaty and money were alike unavailing, and the lady remained inexorable, giving in the end the clue to her obstinacy by observing that she would never see herself take precedence of her, as she would do if married to a colonel, while she was herself but the widow of a major. The match was necessarily broken off; and the girl's prospect of happiness destroyed. To complete her misery, her mistress revoked her leave of absence, and ordered her as soon as possible to return to her native village, accustomed to the habits and customs of civilized life, was clothed in the coarse garments of an ordinary peasant, and was forthwith ordered to marry a rough moujik of the same class. Revolting at this tyranny and refusing to obey, she was flogged, and though she still resisted for a while, a long continuance of cruel and degrading treatment conquered her in the end, and she was forced to submit to the miserable lot entailed upon her by the wretched jealousy of her heartless mistress.

BRILLIANT TO THE LAST.—A gentleman writing from Paris, states that M. Place, the French banker, who recently failed for the immense amount of sixteen million francs, gave on the evening before the grand catastrophe, a splendid dinner to which were invited all the celebrities of a certain grade upon the Bourse, together with an equal number of ladies. The feast was one of the most recherche kind—the cost probably being not less than twenty-five dollars a head; and the buoyant spirit of the liberal host was the theme of general admiration. When the enthusiasm was at its height a magnificent dessert was placed upon the table, having in the centre a vase of silver gilt, which M. Place ordered the waiter to pass round to the ladies, as it contained a few nuts for their especial cracking. Every lady then plunged her hand within the vase, and drew forth whatever chance bestowed in the shape of some rare jewel, the cheapest of which could not have been less than sixty dollars, while some of them were of great price. After this delightful ceremony the generous host took his leave amid the reiterated applause of his guests. The next day his house was silent and deserted, and a defalcation of sixteen million was announced before the tribunal of commerce.

A SINGULAR ACCIDENT.—A young Irishman residing in Bristol, England, while larking, ran after a girl who was engaged in sempstress work, and gave her a hug in sport; but it proved anything but sport to him, for as he pressed her to his bosom, it turned out all but a fatal embrace, as a needle which she had in the breast of her gown, literally entered his heart, and broke off short, leaving nearly three parts of an inch of the steel in the muscles. He instantly felt sick and faint, and was taken to the infirmary, when it was determined to make an effort to extract the broken needle, as should it remain where it was, death must quickly ensue from inflammation of the heart. A physician, accordingly, cut through the outer flesh, and having laid bare the surface of the heart, discovered a small portion of the needle fragment protruding, and with the forceps he drew it out.—The delicate operation was most successful, but, as much inflammation had set in before the needle could be extracted, it was at last accounts very doubtful whether his life would be saved. It is, however, a most uncommon operation and singular accident, showing that even the heart itself may sustain a sharp wound without death immediately following.

AN EYE-WITNESS.—Rev. H. P. Cutter, Burlington, Vt., has lately returned from Kansas, after travelling for several weeks in different parts of the State. He has lately addressed a meeting at St. Albans, and we hope he will be heard in many other places as his statements are perfectly reliable. He represented the climate to be salubrious, and the soil unsurpassed for richness and fertility. He speaks highly of the spirit of the women in Kansas, and says he saw only one proslavery woman—the wife of Charles Spaulding, a Vermontier. We copy from the Messenger a brief sketch of the way he saw affairs managed by the "Law and Order" or proslavery party:

"Before he went to Kansas he was hardly prepared to believe that the heart rending stories that are constantly reaching us from there were true. His mind was now changed. From what he had seen with his own eyes, and heard with his own ears, he was prepared to believe almost anything. Every one there who was formidable to freedom was stamped 'a d—d Abolitionist,' and was threatened and insulted by the land pirates who infested that fair Territory. Freedom of speech was not allowed there. All the arguments that they made use of were the bowie knife and revolver. Coleman, the murderer of Dow, was pointed out to him by Charles Spaulding, a Montpelier boy, but he was sorry to say a member of the so-called 'Law and Order' party. Coleman was armed to the teeth, and was exercising his authority by charging an honest and thrifty looking man with stealing a pair of oxen which he was driving.

"The owner of the oxen, appealed to another man as to the fact that he was the rightful owner. The man said he was. Coleman asked him if he was a 'Law and Order' man. The man replied, 'I am an American Citizen.' Pressing the question twice or three times in a threatening manner, the man charged him with being a murderer, which put a damper on the guilty wretch. The owner of the oxen, in company with two 'Law and Order' men' was obliged to go back some forty miles to prove that he was the owner of the oxen. Such and similar things were every day occurrences."

THE "CHARTER OAK."—The Telegraph brings us intelligence which will cause a pang of regret in every American bosom. The destruction of the celebrated Charter Oak tree at Hartford, Connecticut. Among the earliest of that long series of aggression on the part of Great Britain, which resulted in the American Revolution, was a measure for the destruction of certain Colonial charters, especially that of Connecticut. The Commissioners for this purpose, with the Solicitors of the town, were assembled in the Town House on the evening of the 9th of May, 1680.—Suddenly the light were extinguished; but when replaced, the charter was gone, and the keenest scrutiny could not detect the daring hand which had removed it, or the place of its concealment.—The old oak tree, though whispering to every breeze, was mute as to the treasure concealed in its bosom.—The storm of war swept over the land, and the watch fires of the revolution illumined its ancient branches, ere the sacred deposit was restored to the patriotic descendants of those who secreted it. Since the "Charter Oak" has been an honored object of interest, not merely to the mighty nation which has grown up under the shadow of its renown, but to every man, of whatever clime, who loves all acts which tend to the subversion of arbitrary sway. It has stood until the feeble colonists who be held it in its prime, have, through their descendants, increased to the first rank among the nations. Let no ignoble use be made of its decaying branches, for its history is a thing consecrated for all time in the hearts of free people.

SQUIRE H—'S INDIGESTION.—Old Squire H— was a very successful and substantial farmer in an interior town of Massachusetts; and a more amusing eater never lived in any town anywhere. And especially much did he eat when fresh pork was to be his nourishment. Well, at a certain time one of his hogs had been killed. The next morning there was fresh pork for breakfast, and the old man ate most wondrously. In the course of the forenoon he ate his luncheon, consisting of bread and butter, mince pie, and cheese. At noon his dinner consisted of fresh pork, pickles, mince pie, and the usual accompaniments.—His afternoon's luncheon was like that of the forenoon. When he came home to supper his favorite dish had not been prepared as part of that meal. The old man fretted and scolded till fresh pork was added to the substantial! He ate voraciously, as usual. In the evening he toasted some cheese, buttered and ate it.—Just before going to bed, he roasted a couple of apples and ate them. In the night he was taken with a severe colic. The doctor was with him till morning, and nearly wrought miracle in saving the old man's life. The next day Bolles W—, one of his neighbors went in to condole with the "Old Squire." "Faithful Bolles," said the old wretch, "like to have died last night. I'll never eat another roasted apple as long as I live. 'Did love them very well, and last night I ate only two, and they nearly killed me.' Bolles never told his story without laughing.