

# Correspondence.

Banning's bill creating uneasiness among the dogs and pups of war—it is opposed by strategy unknown to Jemini—Mrs. Banning ostracised by the wives and mothers-in-law—An episode of the investigation—Prospects of the Texas Pacific Railroad bill—Cupid in the Senate chamber—A glittered wedding of November and June.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 1878.

Editors Deseret News:

General Banning's new army bill is creating an alarming commotion in military, naval, and social circles. If it is passed it will cut down the pay of officers very materially, and save the people \$1,500,000 annually. The opposition to the bill is expressed in various ways sufficient to prove that the army and navy, as represented by their officers, understand the strategy of politics and diplomacy, as well as the strategy of more heroic fields. The navy is interested and alarmed because there are precisely the same reasons for reducing the pay of naval officers as for reducing the pay of the officers in the army. It is believed by many here that the speech of Isaac Bennett, at the recent socialist meeting in New York, in which he urged the abolition of the army as a necessary step to insure the rights of laborers, and make them equal with capitalists, was instigated in official army circles, and is a part of an elaborate scheme devised to defeat the bill. A gigantic army lobby is at work in Washington, and has been at work for a long time, while the wives, sweethearts, daughters, and mothers-in-law of army officers, are helping in their natural silly way by giving Mrs. Banning the direct social cut. To be ignored by the army and navy transcendental social coterie in Washington, is, for those who care for such things, exclusion from the earthly paradise.

Last week the House committee on military affairs, had on the witness stand Captain Rockwell, Department Quartermaster at this post. He was first examined as to his own pay, and testified that his salary proper was \$2,000 per year, his longevity allowance \$600, allowance for quarters \$648, forage \$240; fuel \$145, amounting in the aggregate to \$3,633 per annum. Further questions elicited the facts that, before the war and for two years thereafter, he and officers in similar positions were paid, perquisites and all, but \$1,650 per year. It is the duty of Captain Rockwell as Department Quartermaster to contract for the rent of officers' quarters; he does this, he stated, "asking no questions." The wives of a number of Generals, it was intimated, in an examination on this head, would be found receiving rent from their husbands for the houses that both occupied. In the matter of forage, Captain R. testified that it was the habit of officers to take the forage to a livery stable, which in return furnished his wife and family with horses and carriages.

The following questions and answers, during the investigation, will throw some light on the means and methods of extravagance in army pay. Question by General Banning: "Suppose a colonel stops at the Ebbot House on court martial duty in this city, at the end of the month do you pay for five rooms at \$18 each or \$90 in all, and \$20 for fuel, making \$110 to the landlord?" Answer, "Yes." Question—"The law says that you must give him five rooms at \$18 each; do you pay on this certificate that he has occupied these rooms?" Answer—"I do not pay on his certificate, I pay on that of the landlord." Question—"Is it on a certificate that he has occupied five rooms?" Answer—"No, sir; I suppose that he has occupied more than five, probably twenty." Question—"How is that?" Answer—"Well he has occupied the dining room, the parlor, the office, his bed room, and probably another room." Question—"And is it upon this supposition that you find he has occupied five rooms and pay the landlord \$90?" Answer—"Yes, sir."

There will be other rich developments in the investigation of the army and navy. A number of members have been for weeks preparing speeches, and at the proper time will be on hand with the facts and rhetoric. The officers who have been in Washington off duty for from one to three years are, of

course, much troubled at the prospect of having their pay reduced, and some of them threaten to resign before they will return to their regiments.

Notwithstanding the recent formal anti-subsidy vote, by Congress, there is reason to believe that a bill extending aid in some form to the Southern Pacific Road will be passed this session. A new bill has been devised which reduces the subsidy asked for to about \$17,000,000, and an average of about \$10,000 per mile. Under this bill, branches at New Orleans, Memphis and Vicksburg, are proposed.

Sweet society is just now sweetly agitated over the formally announced engagement of Senator Donald Cameron, and Miss Lizzie Sherman, the niece and prospective heir of the rich Secretary of the Treasury. The Secretary is childless in his own family. The young lady is passably pretty, plain but elegant in her street and driving attire, and just 22 years old. Senator Cameron is an interesting young man of 47, with stiff hair, inclined to redness or rather blondness, heavy incorrigible moustache, low brow, and he wears in the Senate chamber, a short sack coat. This union of the houses of Cameron and Sherman will cement extensive political and financial interests—broad acres, grand palaces, blocks of tenement houses, and immense patronage. When old Simon passes the sceptre, the prince of Pennsylvania will, at least, not be left without "the sinews."

C. A. S.

## REMARKABLE LIFE AND DEATH.

The Leper Governor.

The Honolulu exchanges announce in brief the death of Wm. P. Ragsdale, Governor of the Leper Settlement on the Island of Molokai, Sandwich Islands. The decease of so noted and remarkable a man, in the prime of life, deserves a more extended obituary. "Bill Ragsdale," as he was popularly known, was a Hawaiian by birth, his mother having been a native and his father an American. By profession he was a lawyer, speaking English as fluently as Hawaiian, and the most noted orator of the Hawaiian kingdom, whites and natives included, and among the latter there are many conspicuous orators. The manner in which Ragsdale discovered that he had the leprosy, as told by himself is most interesting, and especially from a scientific point of view.

The deceased resided for a number of years on the Island of Hawaii, and had an office at Hilo, the capital of the Island. One night he was studying up a law case in which he was deeply interested, when the chimney from his lamp fell on the table. Although the chimney was hot as fire, "Bill," in his excitement, picked it up and set it in its place without experiencing the least inconvenience, such as would naturally result to a really sound person handling a red-hot lamp chimney. He reflected for a moment, looked at his hand, but could not discover the least sign that it had been burned. He then took off and put on the chimney repeatedly, and with the same result. This experience convinced him that he was among the afflicted, and he lost no time in communicating with the authorities. An examination was made, and medical authority declared that he was afflicted with leprosy. Dr. Trosseau, four years a physician at Honolulu, but now a resident of the Island of Hawaii, made the principal examination.

Up to this time no person on the islands ever dreamed that Bill Ragsdale had the leprosy, and some doubted, even after the examination, if he was so afflicted. Bill, however, was personally convinced that he was so afflicted. The police did not arrest him, however, owing to his exalted position, as was common with those suspected of being lepers, so he voluntarily delivered himself up as a victim of the terrible disease. He was then sent to Molokai and installed as Governor of the leper settlement, which position he held for a number of years, up to the time of his death last month. Soon after his isolation from the world and his friends, the disease made itself more apparent, and there were none so incredulous as to believe that he was not forever afflicted with the leprosy.

During his administration of affairs he was as successful as he was

popular. There were and are about 800 lepers on the settlement, but by his tact and kindheartedness Ragsdale made the most extraordinary and saddest community on the face of the earth as cheerful and happy as the unfortunates could be. By his advice the government made many reforms, and the lepers recognized him as a father. One of the most peculiar and startling phases connected with this episode is the fact that Mr. Ragsdale, who was a married man with a family, took up with a young woman on the settlement of Molokai, who fell in love with him. She was remarkably handsome, of splendid physique, and had already buried two husbands or lovers—for both terms are substantially the same with the Hawaiians free from missionary influence. Both her husbands, as we will call them, died of leprosy, yet the wife, as she must be termed, was never afflicted with it. She fell in love with Ragsdale, and they continued to live in the most perfect harmony, the wife not having the least fear of being subject to the frightful affliction of her husband. She still survives him, and is in perfect health, or at least was so not long ago.

It may be here remarked that there are some 75 individuals on the leper settlement who are not afflicted with leprosy. These have voluntarily exiled themselves on account of the deep love and affection they have for their friends who are lepers. They mingle freely among the sorrow-stricken, eating out of the same calabash of poi, and drinking from the same cup, chatting and talking together on the same mat, and even sleeping together. Still some of the very healthy persons, indeed the majority of them, never catch the leprosy. In a word, they have no fear of it at all.

Who the successor of the deceased leper Governor will be is not known. It was believed at one time that Peter Kao, a cousin or uncle to Queen Emma would be Governor, but by influence this leprous chief has been allowed to leave the settlement and is now a resident of Honolulu. Peter had a nice cottage at Molokai, and, as becoming his rank, had servants to wait on him. During his sojourn there he enjoyed life as well as could be expected, and had the good will of the lepers at large. Now that he is free, and Ragsdale dead, it will be difficult to find the proper man to fulfil so delicate a duty. The Hawaiian authorities have many faults and shortcomings, but the humanity they exhibit toward the lepers, in providing and caring for them, is greatly to their credit. The settlement is under the taboo; that is, no human being is permitted to enter the dreadful locality without a special permit from the board of health of Honolulu. It is very difficult to get this permit, so that not one foreigner in a thousand ever can visit the leper world of Molokai.

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