THE PARSONS SCANDAL.

Commencement of the Investigation Before Commissioner Pratt.

ANNIE PRINDLE'S TESTIMONY.

Her Allegations of Misconduct Against The Marshal—The Witness Cross-Examined.

Three o'clock yesterday afternoon was the hour set for the investigation by U. S. Commissioner Pratt into the charges preferred by U. S. District Attorney Varian (at the request of Chief Justice Zane) against U. S. Marshal Parsons. The complaint, as filed, appeared in full in yesterday's NEWS.

The hearing is taking place in the Commissioner's Court room, in the Hooper block. Among the first to arrive on the scene yesterday afternoon were District Attorney Varian and his assistant, Mr. F. S. Stephens, by whom the prosecution is being conducted. Next came Marshal Parsons, the defendant, who until his attorneys put in an appearance, some twenty minutes later, passed the time in walking restlessly to and fro, and occasionally conversing with others present. His manner showed unmistakably the anxiety which he feels in the proceedings in which he is called upon to play so prominent a part. It was nearly 2:30 when the defendant's counsel, Messrs. Rawlins and Critchlow and Judge Henderson came in. They at once expressed a desire to pursue the depositions of the two women, Prindle and Faulkner, which had been taken during the morning, a request to which the commissioner at once acceded. Accompanied by the marshal, the three attorneys proceeded to a private apartment to peruse them, and were absent nearly half an hour. Upon their return the inquiry began. It being now after 4 o'clock, the witness Annie Prindle was then called to the stand. She was extremely pale and nervous, but gave her answers, on the whole, in a clear and straightforward manner, though her voice was so low at times as to be almost inaudible, necessitating the call for her to "speak up."

Mr. Rawlins first asked that all witnesses be excluded from the court room; and the commissioner so ordered.

Miss Prindle was then called by Mr. Varian. On being sworn she said her age was twenty-four, and she was from Minnesota. She was a trained nurse by profession and had been so engaged about four years. She came to Utah a year ago last May. She had been in the penitentiary since September 22nd, having been sentenced by Judge Zane to six months' imprisonment for assault with a deadly weapon, to which she pleaded guilty. On the day of sentence she was taken to the penitentiary late in the afternoon. From the court room she went to Judge Zane's office and from thence was taken into Marshal Parsons' private office, where she was given a seat and was introduced by having been introduced to him by Warden Vandercook. She remained in the marshal's office about an hour and a half. The marshal remarked (continued the witness) that he was sorry to see her go to the penitentiary, but promised he would do what he could to make the confinement there pleasant. He also said he wished it was optional for him to send me to the penitentiary or keep me in town, which he could look after me. He then ordered me to sit and hurry and started to drive me out. He said that he had relatives living near the penitentiary, and my attorney having asked him to do what he could for me, he would let me stay with them. He stated that he wanted to be a friend to me after my term had expired, and more than a friend to me during my imprisonment. He then took liberties with me, which I regarded as very improper.

Mr. Varian—Well, what did he do?

Witness—He kissed me and embraced me.

Mr. Varian—What did you do?

Witness—I pushed him away. He took me to Mr. Geyser's house that night and the next day I went to the penitentiary. On the Sunday following he came to the penitentiary and enquired as if I was coming out of the warden's office. He said he had wanted to see me but was too busy to come out. He then kissed me and embraced me, acted rudely, and said he wanted to get at me as soon as possible. The next time I saw him he came to Mr. Geyser's house. I was in the kitchen, and he served me in the same manner as at the penitentiary. He said he knew when the Geyser's were away from home, and he intended to come out to such an occasion and have me stay with him. I told him not to do it or there would "come be trouble." A week or two later I came to town with the marshal's permission to see my mother and have some work done by my dentist. After attending to this, I went to the marshal's private office. There were a number of people going in and out. When there was no one there he took me on his knee and held me to him, kissed me several times, and acted rudely. Mr. Geyser came in and the marshal sent him out on an errand. Then I went across the room and sat on the lounge. He then came up to me, exposed himself, disarranged my clothing and made grossly indecent proposals. As soon as I could, I left his office, and went out into the corridor where I remained for some time, and then went out to the penitentiary with Mr. Geyser. Afterwards I told the warden of the assaults made upon me by the marshal. Later the warden told me that he had positive order for me to go to Geyser's. I said that rather than go there I would be locked up, and I went into a cell and was locked up. About a week later, I was taken quite sick, and was confined to my bed for a week. During that time the marshal came to with Dr. Smith and remained in my cell until the doctor went out. Then he put his hand under the bed clothes, kissed me and said he was sorry to see me sick. This repeated misconduct of Marshal Parsons, she added, affected her mentally very much. Her reason for not caring to divulge what took place before she did, was fear, because she was a prisoner under the Marshal's control. After telling the warden what had happened she made some statements to members of the grand jury who visited the penitentiary. She afterwards told Prosecuting Attorney Stephens what had occurred.

Cross-examined by Mr. Rawlins, witness said, her parents resided in the city. She had acted as a nurse in Minneapolis and in this city, and gave the names of several families where she employed in Salt Lake. She was engaged for some two months at a boarding house here, occasionally nursing during that time at other places. Questioned as to her association with Sam Masterson, the man whom she accompanied to school, and for which offense she is now undergoing imprisonment, the witness said she committed the act through jealousy—because Masterson "went with other girls." At the time she did it she was under the influence of liquor, but had not been in the habit of drinking, either with Masterson or other men.

Mr. Stephens was about to object to questions on this head, when the Commissioner said he was disposed to allow considerable latitude in a case of this kind.

Asked as to whether she had not been criminally intimate with Masterson she denied this most emphatically. Masterson had been a friend to her. He might have been a married man, but she was not sure of this at the time she went out with him. She admitted that she had smoked cigars when nursing, as a preventative in cases of contagious disease, but she had not habitually done so. Some brandy was brought into her cell on one occasion by Dr Smith, the penitentiary physician, when she was sick, beyond mentioning to Mr. Vandercook, about the 22nd of October, the coming of Marshal Parsons, she spoke to no one else upon the subject until in conversation with Assistant District Attorney Stephens, about a week ago, when she went before the grand jury. She was on the way down to the city in the penitentiary wagon, with other prisoners, when she related the particulars to Warden Vandercook. She gave Marshal Parsons' conduct towards her as the only reason why she did not want to work in the Geyser household. The warden then said he himself would not insist upon her going there again, and that she could stay at his house, as the marshal's behavior had been indecent and outrageous. During the time she was at Geyser's house, two gentlemen, Mr. Daniels and a Mr. Williams, called upon her. The former was a bartender—he had not previously been a friend to witness. The object of his visit was to ask her if he should start a petition to obtain her pardon. Williams was "a smiling man," and she had known him for years; she came to the town. Both called in the day time, and the latter had a lady with him. Neither of them brought her any cigars or cigarettes. Should not tell Mr. Vandercook why she left the Geyers, but to others, including a fellow prisoner, named Maggie Faulkner, she had done so. After going before the grand jury, related what had occurred—not before.

Mr. Rawlins—Who called on you in your cell before you came down to testify before the grand jury?

Witness—My mother and sister, and I had also seen them at Geyser's.

Mr. Rawlins—And you never mentioned a word of what had occurred to them?

Witness—No, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—You were not afraid to tell them, were you?

Witness—No, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—Who called at your cell before you came to town on Tuesday morning?

Witness—No one but the guard.

Mr. Rawlins—Who called at your cell and remained a considerable time the day before you came before the grand jury?

Witness—I don't remember that any one called.

Mr. Rawlins—Now, if a gentleman was with you for an hour or over on that day, you would remember it?

Witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—And you say no one called?

Witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—Do you know Mr. Stark?

Witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—He has been to your cell, hasn't he?

Witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—Was he there on the day I mention?

Witness—Not that I remember.

Mr. Rawlins—Did Mr. Stark ever come to your cell and say any length of time?

Witness—No, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—Did Mr. Fields ever call on you?

Witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Varian here objected to this line of cross-examination going any further.

Witness, in answer to other questions, said that she did not even mention the matter of the marshal's behavior to her mother or sister, though she saw them several times.

Mr. Rawlins—You felt that your feelings had been outraged by a man who had you in his custody, who had control of you and yet, as I understand, you did not mention a word to any of the officers because you thought he might do you harm?

Witness—Yes.

Mr. Rawlins—And you did not mention the matter to your mother or sister, though you had the opportunity to do so?

Witness—No, I did not.

Mr. Rawlins—But you were not afraid that they would give you away if you told them that Marshal Parsons, while you were in his charge, had committed an indecent assault upon your person—you were not afraid to disclose that information to them?

Witness—I would not have been afraid to tell them, but I did not do so.

Mr. Rawlins—And you kept all this to yourself for weeks, and months, withholding it even from your mother and sister?

Witness—Yes.

Mr. Rawlins—This mother was not brought up at all until Warden Vandercook had been discharged from the penitentiary, was it? You did not disclose it to Mr. Vandercook, prosecuting attorney until after that, did you?

Witness—I did not know whether Mr. Vandercook had gone or not.

Mr. Varian at this point interposed another objection to this form of cross-examination.

Mr. Rawlins—We shall be able to show a conspiracy between certain persons who make this accusation against Marshal Parsons, and I therefore ask permission to have a large latitude of cross-examination, and to sift feeling this witness's credibility.

Mr. Varian—We have no objection to that if the defense can show a conspiracy, but we do object to questions being asked over and over again.

The commissioner repeated what he had before said, that under the peculiar circumstances of this case he was disposed to allow the defense every possible latitude.

Answering counsel the witness said—Mr. Field never visited me in my cell. He has been in there, but not to visit me. I could not tell how many times he has stopped into my cell.

Mr. Rawlins—Did you ever have any difficulty with the Banks girl?

The witness—Yes, sir.

Mr. Rawlins—What was the cause of it?

The witness—She told untruths about me.

Mr. Rawlins—What were they?

The witness—Maggie Faulkner told me that Miss Banks had told the warden that I had been criminally intimate with the guards.

This was objected to as hearsay and stricken out by direction of the commissioner.

Mr. Rawlins—Did you or did you not have the reputation among the prisoners of being criminally intimate with certain of the guards at the penitentiary?

Not thought Mr. Varian promptly to his feet with the remark—We object to that question as impertinent, scandalous, and not proper in any way.

Mr. Rawlins—We propose to make a distinct charge, virtually accusing the marshal of, at any rate, committing an indecent—a criminal assault upon this witness, against her will and lawful consent. Now I say that upon such a charge as that, involving the chastity of the person, we have the right, in reflecting upon the question as to whether she is to show her general reputation.

Mr. Varian replied that this was a charge of oppression and inhumanity towards a prisoner, and even if this were a specific charge of seduction, fornication, or bastardy, such a question would be improper. In no case could such a question as that be allowed to be put in a court of justice. "Did you, sir," turning to the defendant asked, "have the reputation among the guards and that it is commonly of being so and so?" The only field open to counsel was to show the woman's general reputation, and that must be in this community, not in a certain house. This, said Mr. Varian, was a "fishing" inquiry of counsel into the consciousness of this woman. He insisted strongly to her being asked if she did not know that her reputation among the guards and convicts at the penitentiary was so and so? As far as counsel for the defense could go was to ask her if she was guilty of these offenses.

The commissioner sustained Mr. Varian's objection.

Two further questions put by Mr. Rawlins, the witness denied having told the girl Banks that the reason she did not like the Geyser's house was because the mistress objected to her "sporting friends" visiting her there.

At this stage of the inquiry—it being 5:30—an adjournment was taken until ten o'clock this morning.

THIS MORNING'S PROCEEDINGS.

At 10:15 this morning the Parsons investigation was again taken up in Commissioner Pratt's court, the same counsel being present to represent the prosecution and defense as appeared yesterday. Marshal Parsons, the defendant, as before, occupied a seat by his attorneys and listened with the keenest interest to the further statements made by the witness Prindle.

Annie Prindle was re-called and her cross-examination resumed by Mr. Rawlins. The marshal told her, she said, that it was at Judge Powers' suggestion he intended to take her to the Geyser residence. She did not know whether or not her attorney did make that suggestion to him. While she was in Marshal Parsons' office on the occasion of her sentence, persons were passing in and out much of the time. The door was not locked. All the marshal's conversation with her on the subject of his wishing to be her friend was in an audible tone of voice; anyone near could have heard what he said. When he attempted to kiss her on the way to the penitentiary, while in his carriage, she became angry and slapped his face. He did not seem to treat it, however, very seriously. On their reaching the Geyser house the marshal expressed a wish that Mrs. Geyser should accommodate her and make her comfortable. She was to sleep at the penitentiary. Witness was next questioned as to her reception at that institution (where the marshal made her "good night" on leaving) and her daily life in the Geyser household. On the first occasion of the marshal's visit to the house after taking her there he came into the kitchen, talked with her for some five minutes and made repeated indecent proposals. Some of the members of the family were then in an adjoining room. He expressed his regret that the people were around, "as he wanted to be alone with her, and said in a low tone of voice that as soon as he could arrange it, he would come and see her alone. He then said and was caught hold of her limbs. She resisted and called "sickened" from the very first.

Mr. Rawlins—You persisted in this conduct for five minutes, you say, though there were people in the adjoining room?

Witness—Yes, I believe some of the family were there. The door was closed.

Mr. Rawlins—Why didn't you, when the marshal came and made indecent proposals, step to that door and open it, if it were closed?

Witness—I don't know that I thought anything about it; I only tried to protect myself.

Mr. Rawlins—Now, he didn't come there when you were alone on any other occasion, did he?

Witness—No, sir. To other questions she said she did not think the marshal would come to the Geyser house and make indecent proposals to her, notwithstanding his previous behavior, or she would have objected to go there in the first instance. She preferred to go to Geyser's rather than remain in the penitentiary altogether. She objected to his carriages in the private office at the penitentiary on a subsequent occasion. He then had hold of her arms and kissed her. She requested him, angrily, to let her go and tried to break away from him. A son of Mr. Geyser entered the room just at this time, and the marshal desisted on the opening of the door, which he had locked. On another occasion when the marshal was acting impertinently towards her in his office in the Wasatch building, Mr. Geyser came in, and he desisted, she has vigorously resisted his caresses all the time. He exposed himself to her and otherwise acted indecently. The case lasting until the seats had worn down just a bit. She forced herself away from him and went out of the room into the corridor, but did not cry out or tell anyone what had happened. This was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. On another occasion, when sick, the marshal accompanied the doctor into her cell but she had no resolution whatever of having sent for Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Rawlins—Didn't you send for Marshal Parsons that morning, by Mr.

(Continued on Page 8.)

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