

SHERMAN AND THE SAN FRANCISCO VIGILANTES.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN.

[LETTERS written during the time of the great Vigilance Committee of 1856 at San Francisco, and containing some account of its work as viewed by an interested resident of the place, are rare in the literature of the subject, and are sure to be valuable. How much more must this be true of letters written under such circumstances by General W. T. Sherman! The case for the Vigilance Committee is authoritatively stated in the November number of this magazine, by the former president of the committee, Mr. William T. Coleman. Sherman's relation to the committee has been described by himself in his "Memoirs," and that account has led to considerable controversy. As major-general of the State militia, he was, until his resignation in June, the official opponent of the committee. His "Memoirs" criticize its doings with severity; and the defenders of the committee have replied with vigor. The "Memoirs," written long afterward, it is claimed contain, as regards this portion of their text, some obvious historical errors of detail; and on this ground argument has been made against Sherman's whole case. It is therefore especially fitting that his later statements should be either corrected or borne out by means of his contemporary record of his impressions. Such a record the following correspondence furnishes.

Of General Sherman's own position during this period, it remains here to point out how hard a one it was. As a banker he was as much interested as were others of his class in the purging of the community. As a business man, moreover, he was also naturally disposed to act so as not to alienate his fellows, who were nearly all in sympathy with the movement. In fact, as the following letters clearly show, he was himself not at all devoid, at the outset, of an appreciation of their motives. But not only was he opposed to the committee from the strongest conviction of the general impolicy and the special danger of the movement, as his "Memoirs" show, but having accepted the Governor's appointment as major-general of the State militia, he felt the loyal instincts of the soldier setting him actively against the extra-legal position of the committee. It was his duty to act with the Governor. But the Governor began by an effort to treat privately with the committee. The effort led to a controversy in which a question of veracity was soon involved, and Sherman still sided with the Governor. A little later, he had to undertake the trying task of raising a force of militia in a community where only a small minority sympathized with his cause. Arms were lacking. Appeal was made to Major-General John E. Wool for the use of the arms at the United States arsenal at Benicia. The appeal led to another controversy, which soon involved another question of veracity. Meanwhile Sherman

had not forgotten his right and his duty to seek such terms of compromise with the leaders of the committee as could be honorably obtained, through the aid of certain conciliatory persons who were anxious to act privately and unofficially as intermediaries. These efforts at mediation were thwarted by Judge Terry and other violent counselors who had the Governor's ear. Thus all Sherman's plans were defeated; he resigned his commission to the Governor, and returned to his private business. Henceforth he remembered the committee with increasing disapproval.

The story of these matters fills up most of the letters here printed. In following the incidents of the time, the reader may be aided by a table of chief events and dates, mostly chosen from the early history of the committee.

Wednesday, May 14.—King publishes an article concerning Casey, the "Bulletin" appearing about 3 P. M. Between 4 and 5 P. M., King is shot by Casey, who is imprisoned. By 6.30 there is an excited crowd about the jail, which the mayor tries to disperse. Excitement continues all the evening, with public speeches, resolves, etc. Later Mr. Coleman and his friends prepare the "call of the committee of thirteen" for the morning papers, and agree on a plan of organization for a vigilance committee.

Thursday, May 15.—Vigilance Committee begins the general organization, and the Executive Committee begins secret meetings.

Friday, May 16.—Drilling of members of Vigilance Committee begun on a large scale. Sheriff Scannell calls for the posse to defend the prison. Governor Johnson arrives in the evening from Sacramento, and interviews privately the vigilance leaders.

Saturday, May 17.—Vigilance Committee removes to its permanent quarters on Sacramento Street. The vigilance guard of ten admitted to the city prison. Orders privately given for the movements of next day.

Sunday, May 18.—Vigilance guard early withdrawn from the prison. Seizure of Casey, and an hour later of Cora, accomplished shortly after midday by the whole assembled force of the committee.

Tuesday, May 20.—King dies of his wound about 1.30 P. M. Casey tried by the Executive Committee for murder that evening.

Thursday, May 22.—King's funeral. Execution of Casey and Cora.

May 23-31.—The committee continues its activity by arresting persons, investigating cases of election frauds and of similar offenses, and by preparing to banish offenders.

May 31.—"Yankee Sullivan," a prisoner of the committee, commits suicide at its quarters. At Benicia, in an interview between General J. E. Wool and Governor Johnson, Sherman being present, Wool makes what both Johnson and Sherman interpret as a promise of arms from the United States arsenal for the suppression of the committee.

June 3.—Governor Johnson issues proclamation declaring San Francisco to be "in a state of insurrection."

June 4.—Governor Johnson, by the hand of his aide, Colonel Rowe, forwards request to General Wool for the needed arms from the arsenal at Benicia. At San Francisco, members of a "conciliation committee" carry communications between Sherman and the Vigilance Committee, hoping to bring to pass some peaceable settlement.

June 5.—General Wool replies that he has no authority to grant the Governor's demand.

June 7.—Governor Johnson repeats his demand upon General Wool for arms, making a formal and urgent requisition. At Benicia, on the same day, the Governor meets Sherman and the "conciliation" delegates from San Francisco. The peace negotiations fail. Sherman resigns his commission as major-general of militia.

June 9.—General Wool finally refuses to aid the Governor against the committee.

June 19.—The Governor writes to the President, asking for national aid in suppressing the committee.

June 21.—Judge Terry at San Francisco resists and stabs a vigilance policeman, and is arrested.

July 19.—The President writes from Washington, declining, on grounds of constitutional law, to interfere to suppress the Vigilance Committee.

July 29.—Hetherington and Brace hanged by the committee.

August 7.—Judge Terry released by the committee.

August 18.—Final parade of the Vigilance Committee.

November 3.—Governor Johnson revokes his proclamation.

The fullest account of the Vigilance Committee yet printed is that in the second volume of H. H. Bancroft's "Popular Tribunals." The official correspondence of Johnson, Wool, President Pierce, and others, relating to the affair, is printed in the "Senate Executive Documents," 1st and 2d Session, 34th Congress, Vol. XV., Doc. 101; and 3d Sessions, 34th Congress, Vol. VIII., Doc. 43.—EDITOR.]

THE SHERMAN CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

[Extract from a letter, no date, from General Sherman to Major Turner of St. Louis, contained in a letter from Mrs. Sherman, dated May 18, 1856, to her father, Mr. Ewing. The letter to Major Turner, as appears from its contents, was also completed on Sunday, May 18, but was begun on Saturday.]

THIS steamer will bring you news of most distressing character, growing out of the shooting of James King of William, editor of the "Evening Bulletin," by Casey, editor of the "Sunday Times," the same man who so recklessly attacked all the bankers and decent people of the city. I will send you so many newspaper extracts that I may confine my letter to my own personal history, and I beg you to preserve this, in view of any untoward events, in which, in spite of all caution, I may become involved.

Shortly after the sailing of the last steamer, several gentlemen connected with the volunteer companies of the city mentioned that Governor Johnson would offer me the appointment of Major-General of the Second Division, California Militia. I expressed a strong disinclination to do anything at all, and hoped the Governor would do no such thing. The Governor soon after called in person and offered me the appointment. I expressed a dislike to do anything that might distract my attention from business. He assured me . . . that it

was simply for the purpose of organization, and that no expense would be incurred and little time needed to perform its duties. I gave a reluctant consent, which, at the time, I felt to be imprudent. Last Saturday, feeling the want of exercise, I crossed the bay to Oakland, got a horse, and took a ride over the mountain toward Monte Diablo, making a circuit back to the city. On my arrival, on Monday, I found a commission awaiting me, which I accepted, and wrote for a copy of the laws governing the militia, meaning to take my time to appoint a staff and do what seemed requisite. On Wednesday, after bank hours, I came home, and about half-past eight o'clock Bainbridge and Helland came out and told me that King had been shot by Casey, and that excitement ran high. King's articles have all been provoking, and I have long expected him to be attacked, and therefore was not astonished; and had the populace got Casey that night and hung him, I would have rejoiced, but Casey was smart enough to have himself confined to the jail before feeling had become concentrated. The mayor called out the volunteer companies—three of infantry amounting to some sixty men turned out; a few straggling, mounted men and about a dozen men stood by two guns, six-pounders. That night passed off without violence, and next morning, Thursday, I went to the bank as usual, when I found everybody intensely excited, threats to take Casey and Cora and hang them, and a revival of the old Vigilance Committee. A public call was made for the old members of that committee at a certain room, round which was gathered all day a large crowd. I went to the mayor, Van Ness, a large, good man, but as usual so mused up and involved in old business that he could do nothing. I then saw the officers of the volunteer companies, and found them wavering. I went to the jail and found the sheriff, a strong, gross, bluff, athletic man, surrounded by his deputies, in a kind of anteroom, excited, and apprehending an attack on the jail each moment. . . . I informed the mayor that the jail could not be defended, that the mob could occupy a few of the buildings, and completely drive out any posse the sheriff might command. What complicated matters was that the sheriff and his friends are "shoulder-strikers"—the very class against which is raised this storm of indignation. Colonel West, Major Johnson, and a few of the volunteer officers thought maybe in the course of the day they could prevail on some of the volunteers to act, when I pointed out to them that the only possible way to hold the jail against a mob was for the sheriff to occupy the jail with his deputies, the police, and such citizens as would serve as a posse, and

the military companies to occupy such buildings round about as would prevent their occupation by the mob. I then went about my business, but went down town that night, walked about town, and found, as I expected, that the volunteer companies had not turned out, that there had been no mob, but that the Vigilance Committee were in session, enrolling men, and keeping up a secret dread of some violence. Friday was the same continued excitement, but no direct attack on the jail or direct interference with the civil authorities. On Friday afternoon the mayor called on me, saying he had telegraphed to Governor Johnson to come down, and had received an answer that he would be down that evening, and he requested me to meet the Governor at the boat at half-past nine. About the same time a formal writ was served on me commanding me to meet the sheriff at the Fourth District Court-room at half-past three p. m. I went, and found about a hundred people who had been summoned.¹ The sheriff called out the names of all on whom the writ was served, and it seemed about one third had come. These were mostly lawyers or persons in some way friends to those in jail. . . . The sheriff commanded all to accompany him to the jail, to obey the law and prevent rescue. I did not go, but told the sheriff that I had to be at the Sacramento boat on its arrival. I came home to dinner, and before leaving the table, Hall McAllister and another gentleman came out and said that the posse comitatus at the jail, composed of some sixty gentlemen, had organized at the jail by electing me as captain, that it was understood to be indefensible, and all wanted to see me. I explained to them that I could not act as captain of a sheriff's posse; that the sheriff was of law and necessity to command their services; that I was major-general or nothing; that there were no forces and I could not exercise military command at all; that I had an appointment to meet the Governor, with whom I should probably be engaged all night, but that I had no objection to give my advice and counsel. I went with them to the jail, found there the sheriff, his deputies, and policemen, amounting to about thirty men, and the citizen posse. They clustered around me, anxious and concerned. The duty was a most disagreeable one, to defend a jail against an infuriated mob, to defend two such scoundrels as Casey and Cora. I told them frankly that the only influence their presence could exercise was a moral one, the consciousness of sacrificing their comfort and endangering their lives in the maintenance of

organized law, as against the violence of a mob. I pointed out the weak points, and concluded that to defend the jail successfully certain buildings outside must be occupied. Upon examination, this move was too late, for the Vigilance Committee had them all filled. There was no alternative but to desert or stay in that open corral. The night was bright moonlight, and beautifully serene, contrasting with the tremulous fears of the doubtful and the growing passions of the determined. I became satisfied that unless King (from whom bulletins of health came forth almost every hour) died, there would be no direct attack upon the jail until the Vigilance Committee had strengthened themselves by enrolling their entire force. At half-past nine o'clock Friday night, I went to the Sacramento boat to meet the Governor; found his brother and Captain Garrison waiting for him too. The *Senator* came along the wharf; we stood at the after-gangway, but the Governor did not come ashore. Soon we heard he had passed up the wharf, having landed from the lower deck at the forward gang-plank. So we followed him up to the International Hotel and there found him. Johnson is a young man, very pleasing in his manners, a lawyer of intelligence, and I am satisfied, if he had the power, would sustain the law. We told him all that had occurred, described to him the position of things, the small civil force the sheriff had, the danger of the posse of good citizens, who, at his call, were now gathered together at the jail. We went thither, when he saw for himself how utterly indefensible the jail-yard was, open to the rear, overlooked on all sides by brick houses with parapet walls,—no part of the interior of the jail safe from shots but the cells, which are full of prisoners; the wall at one corner almost undermined, a large wooden gate on a side alley which could be cut through in a minute. Indeed, if I were forced to meet an armed mob, I would rather be in an open prairie than in that jail. The Governor saw the entire mass of people arrayed against the civil authorities, the only military force in existence sharing the feelings of the people, the cause of the civil authorities being a bare naked principle with two such wretches as Casey and Cora as its exponents. All this time the Vigilance Committee was strengthening its numbers, then 2500, now 5000, having at its head such men as William T. Coleman, the brothers Arrington, Flint, of Flint, Peabody & Co, Myras Truett, and indeed all the large merchants, active controlling members, whilst Parrott, Ralston, Drexel, Sattler and Church and most of the rich men are contributing means and countenance sub rosa. I suggested to Johnson for us to go right to their headquarters at the Turn Verein Hall on Bush

¹ The San Francisco "Herald's" list of those enrolled at this meeting contains 54 names.—EDITOR.

street, and we all concluded to go — Garrison, the Governor and his brother, and myself. We reached the hall about eleven o'clock at night, found it lighted up and a stream of people coming and going. . . . After a little delay we were admitted into a bar-room at the right, where we sat down and Mr. Coleman, President of the Vigilance Committee, sat down and had a very general conversation, in which Coleman said the purpose of the association was not designed to subvert the law but to assist it in purging the community of the clique of shoulder-strikers, ballot-box stuffers, and political tricksters generally; that the courts and juries had become of no use, and that they must be purged or spurred on; that they did not meditate violence, and were willing to await King's fate. If he dies, Casey to be tried and speedily executed. All this was fair, and we almost coincided with him in opinion. At first he intimated a desire that Casey should be given up to them, but Governor Johnson told him distinctly that he would enforce the law as speedily as its forms would allow, but he would never consent to Casey being taken from the sheriff's custody; but that if the committee felt any uncertainty about Casey's being safe in custody there was no objection to a few men of their number being admitted, who were to be considered as assistant-guards but under control of the sheriff. It was then agreed that if such an arrangement were made that the committee should pledge themselves that those of the committee so admitted should not attempt any violence or league with those outside, but if a change of purpose became necessary the committeemen should be withdrawn and reasonable notice given. Coleman then went into the large hall, and after some time returned with six other gentlemen, with whom further conversation was held, all to the same effect, and the treaty was made verbally, Governor Johnson telling them that he treated with them as individuals, and not in their capacity as a body of men leagued together for a purpose unknown to the law. We were there till half-past one at night, and parted with a clear, distinct understanding that no mob violence was contemplated at all, and no demonstration on the jail should be made until their guard was withdrawn and reasonable time thereafter to enable the sheriff to resume the status quo. We agreed to meet at the jail at two o'clock to admit their ten men — the sheriff being at liberty to keep as many as he pleased. We went to the jail, found the sheriff disinclined to admit the enemy, but as he could not depend on the citizens to defend the jail, he became satisfied his only chance of life was to save time, and therefore consented. At two o'clock Friday night ten men of the Vigilance Committee were

introduced, and a room in the jail placed at their service, and one or two of them were allowed to stand or sit near the cell door in which Casey is confined. Coleman and Truett came with their posse, assured themselves that Casey was there, and we all left, thinking that, under the circumstances, it was the best thing then at our choice. We all parted Friday night at three o'clock, satisfied to await King's fate, and believing that the community at large would be satisfied.

SUNDAY, 12 o'clock.

Governor Johnson has just sent for me. He is at the International Hotel on Jackson street. My belief is that the leaders are not able to control their men, and that they will be forced to extremity. I believe Casey and Cora to be doomed; if the sheriff resists and blood is shed no man can foresee the result. All the elements of the Paris committee of safety are here, and once put in motion they cannot be stopped. I regret having been placed in this position, but I am bound in honor to serve the Governor of the State to the best of my means and ability.

2.15 P.M.

I have just returned to my house. I went to the International, and on my way saw crowds hurrying in the same direction. When I reached the hotel I found the Governor and mayor on the roof along with many others. He simply pointed toward the jail; all the houses commanding a view were covered with people. Telegraph Hill was black with them, and the streets were a complete jam. He told me that the committee had sent him word at half-past ten that they would withdraw their men, and the treaty was at an end. Johnson went immediately to the jail and found the sheriff with his deputies and a few citizens. The sheriff has been firm and constant, and he very properly asked the Governor to give him some orders how to act in case the committee demanded his prisoners. The Governor told him that, if they appeared with sufficient force to make resistance idle, he might surrender his prisoners under protest. If the sheriff should fire on that mob the immediate result would be terrific, whatever the future effect and consequences yet in the lap of futurity may be. Well, shortly after, the masses of people began to move toward the jail, covering all the houses and hills, soon followed by the committee in full organization, 2500, armed with muskets, rifles, a field-piece, besides as many more arm-in-arm, silent and quiet, whilst at least five thousand men flocked up as to a show. When I reached the roof of the hotel there must have been *at least* ten thousand people within a rifle-shot of the jail. Soon a man rode by on a white horse, followed by a carriage which stopped at the jail door; soon a shout announced success, and the procession began

to move from the jail, down Kearny to Pacific, Pacific to Montgomery, Montgomery toward Sacramento, when I lost sight of them. It was headed by two platoons of about sixty or eighty men, with bright muskets, then the carriage with Casey with two files of armed men on each side, these followed by a promiscuous crowd. A great many armed men appeared to remain at the jail. This Vigilance Committee seem to take the old one of 1852 as their model, and as that one hung their prisoner at 3 P. M. on Sunday, I take it for granted that before the ink dries on my sheet, Casey will be hanging from some beam out of some committee-room of that power that now governs San Francisco. Soon after the passage of the crowd Sheriff Scannell and his deputy, Harrison, came on the roof of the hotel to see the Governor, but he had disappeared; we descended the roof to his room, but he was not there; we searched through the hotel without success.

Whilst this was transpiring, Scannell told me that Coleman and Truett were the spokesmen; that they demanded Casey, whom he surrendered under protest. They took Casey from the jail and despatched him in the manner I have stated, and then demanded possession of the jail.¹ This not being contemplated, his instructions did not cover the case, so he and his deputy ran down to see the Governor, and thus far he has not seen him. But I did not stay long. I came home. San Francisco is now governed by an irresponsible organization claiming to be armed with absolute power by the people. The government is powerless and at an end. I don't care if they take the jail, the courts, and what they please. Coleman told me he thought they could control the movement; I doubt it, for reasons I will now proceed to explain in continuation of the events of yesterday. On Friday night we made an agreement with the controlling members of the Vigilance Committee that, to be assured of no complicity of the sheriff with his prisoner, they should have a force of ten men nominally under the orders of the sheriff. Yesterday the sheriff suggested to Johnson to try and get the number diminished to five, when he would reduce his force in proportion—this under the supposition that no attempt to take the prisoner would be made until King's fate were determined. So yesterday at 1 P. M. the sheriff asked me to walk with him to the committee to make the proposition. We found new men—a new tone—and a positive refusal to reduce the number. In reannouncing the conditions agreed on the night before, we claimed

that *reasonable* notice should be given; that, too, they denied. New elements were at work, and outside pressure was brought against them which they could not resist; an absolute issue of fact presented itself, and Governor Johnson found himself in a most delicate position: to have conferred with an illegal body; to have admitted spies and enemies in the jail. We asserted so positively this change of promise, this want of truth, that we agreed to bring Garrison; we found him about 4 P. M. and his memory was positive, and with him we again went to the committee-rooms; again a change of men more rabid than ever, asserting that they never contemplated a trial of Casey save by themselves. This was so utterly at variance with their stipulations of the night before that we sent for Coleman and Arrington and one other who was present the night before, and these had to confirm our version of the agreement; quite an angry debate followed among themselves, showing a division of purpose, the very object we had in view.² But, as always, the most violent prevailed, and the honorable stipulations of Friday night were thrown on Mr. Coleman individually. Coleman reiterated them, and as no conclusion could be come to, they asked to advise with the society and agreed to come to the hotel at half-past eight last evening. They did not get there till a quarter past nine, and made short work of it. The society had overruled Coleman, and would make no promises or pledges, but simply agreed to give the Governor notice before they withdrew their men, which we all knew was to be the signal of attack. This morning's notice and the taking of Casey are told.

The hanging of Casey and Cora are trifles compared with what may follow. The Vigilance Committee are now in full possession of San Francisco, and in a free American country, where we pay taxes of four per cent. on full valuation, we are now at the mercy of irresponsible masses. To be sure, the heads and guiders of this business are deemed some of our worthiest and best men, who profess to improve on the law and its administration. They may succeed; they say they did so succeed in '52 [¹⁸51], and a few days or weeks will demonstrate. There are vast numbers of men here, desperate, too lazy to work in the mines, unable to go away, strong for mischief and powerless for good. This class did not exist in '52. At all events, I am not implicated with it, and, though it may be impossible, I will endeavor not to provoke the special enmity of our new rulers.³

¹ This statement of Scannell's was in part inaccurate. The next demand, after taking Casey, was for Cora, and they gave the sheriff another hour to comply. The demand for "possession of the jail" was made as a formality, in writing, and *before* Casey was taken.—EDITOR.

² Rumors of such "division of purpose" were very soon abroad, and are mentioned by the San Francisco "Herald" of the next day.—EDITOR.

³ Rumor at this time also asserted that Governor Johnson had approved and consented to the seizing of

II.

W. T. SHERMAN TO HON. THOMAS EWING.

BANKING HOUSE OF LUCAS, TURNER & Co.,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., May 21, 1856.

(In haste)

MY DEAR SIR: I take it for granted you will be sufficiently alarmed at the condition of affairs here as reported by the papers. . . . There is no doubt that James King of William was indiscriminate in his abuse, but the public offices heretofore having been controlled absolutely by politicians who did not scruple to use such men as Casey, Billy Mulligan, Charley Duane, *et hoc genus omne*, all graduates of New York prisons or political clubs, the public generally approved King's bold course in assailing that class of men, at the same time refusing to fight a duel.

Our courts here and our authorities are about as good or as bad as you would expect from the elements that make up our population. They have all been elected by the people themselves, either as Democrats or as Know-nothings. Nevertheless the merchants and people who despise the kind of men who hang around the polls, the public offices, the courts, etc., are and have been perfectly sick and tired of the class of men referred to; therefore, when James King began his career and pitched into the rowdies with such zeal and boldness, he met an unexpected encouragement which on several occasions upset his vanity. The murder of Richardson by a low gambler, Cora, and his acquittal raised the same feeling against the courts, and it is useless to talk to our best men here about them; they assert, with some show of truth, that any man with money can, through the sheriff, so pack a jury that they cannot agree. All these elements were rife when King was shot by Casey, one of the most skillful politicians of his day—he is a New York convict, editor of a newspaper established here to levy blackmail, and a member of the Board of County Supervisors, when he was not even a candidate. He himself admits that during the election he did not propose to have himself elected, but when they commenced counting the votes he found his opponent in wire-pulling and rowdyism—Yankee Sullivan—had been stuffing a little too strong. He got tickets printed with his own name, and caused the inspectors to put them in the ballot-box, and to declare him (Jim Casey) elected. These facts, 't is said, are notorious, and were well known to the Board of Supervisors, when by vote they declared him elected. The Supervisors control the county expenditures, and it is said they share

Casey and Cora. The "Herald" (anti-vigilance), while not believing this rumor, speaks with great severity of Johnson's conference with the committee.—EDITOR.

every appropriation made. It is not then astonishing that this murder in broad daylight in the very center of the city should produce such commotion. I was not surprised to learn the next morning after the occurrence that the jail had been threatened, and that a deep-seated determination existed to hang him whether King died or not. By circumstances I was compelled to examine the jail and see how far the military companies could sustain the civil authorities. The military companies shared the general sentiment, and would not risk themselves to defend such rascals as Cora and Casey. The whole mass of the people were of like sentiment. The city police is small, mostly distributed about the courts as messengers, etc., and of the very class of men against whom the storm was brewing, and the sheriff, also a "shoulder-striker," was absolutely abandoned by his friends. At no time, by concentrating these discordant elements, could I count on more than one hundred inexperienced men. The jail, too, is a single-story yard, with a cluster of cells, covered with a roof of one-inch plank and tin; its front is above the grade of the street, but the hill rises so rapidly to the rear that its back wall and roof are absolutely flush with the ground, so that you walk down the hill and on the roof without losing step; the whole interior is overlooked by a great many houses all round it. With equal numbers I would rather have been outside than inside. I therefore advised the sheriff how to act should he be assailed by an indiscriminate mob. I had been appointed, by mere accident, the day before King was shot, a major-general of militia, but I have never attempted to exercise authority, because there were no forces, or what few there were in the shape of volunteer companies were on the other side, or so unreliable that none but a fool would count on their fidelity in time of real danger. Therefore, whenever called on I have advised, but have declined to attempt action without reliable men. As long as the matter rested with an unorganized mob there was little or no danger, but soon it was observed that all the discordant elements were drawn together under the name, and after the precedent, of the old Vigilance Committee. Long lines of men were seen passing in and out, oaths were administered, depots opened for recruits, muskets, rifles, and cannon bought, subscription papers carried round in broad daylight, and no one could help it. Over one thousand sworn men were banded together, and William T. Coleman, one of the largest merchants of this city, son-in-law to Daniel D. Page of St. Louis, and a man of fine impulses, manners, character, and intelligence, was made president. He has not much education and not the least doubt of himself, his motives

or intentions. The legal government of San Francisco was paralyzed, and the mayor in his helplessness telegraphed the Governor, who came and was as powerless as anybody else. The entire community was on one side. The new organization was the power, the only organized power here, and with the design of saving bloodshed we put ourselves in communication with them. They assured us as men, as acquaintances, etc., that they would commit no murder, no bloodshed, no violence; but that justice, summary justice, must be done. I cannot tell all that was done, and how futile that was. The papers will blame Johnson for treating with the enemy, but there was no other person, and he had to attempt that or nothing. Now King is dead and Casey is a murderer; Cora is a murderer; both must be hung; far better were it if they could be hung by law, but the Vigilance Committee cannot help themselves. All business is stopped, and immense masses of men idle in the streets watching for blood. Thus far the committee have been exceedingly cautious—a little too much so, for the masses may become uncontrollable; yet thus far no violence has been committed, and I have the most positive assurances from their leaders that none is intended—they even pay the passage to New York of such rowdies as cannot pay their own. They declare their intention to purge the city of rowdies and criminals, but they also have shown an enmity to the free expression of opinion that looks like other similar events of history. These events have shaken my confidence in this city, and once or twice I have wished that [my family] were in a safe place, and regretted that I ever incurred the expense of my dwelling-house, which must tie me down here. Of course I myself cannot leave here, but if matters do not improve, I may at some future time accept your kind offer to take them home till such time as I can properly return. . . . Understand, I fear no molestation of person, but I fear the effect of this on property, on money, and credit.

Your son, W. T. SHERMAN.

[The above letter was written to the Hon. THOMAS EWING, Lancaster, Ohio.—EDITOR.]

III.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,
June 16, 1856.

HON. THOMAS EWING.

MY DEAR SIR: *The Golden Gate* arrived yesterday, Sunday, and brought Ellen her home letters, which contribute very much to her happiness. I know full well that you will feel

a deep interest in events passing here, and that to a perfect understanding of the part I have played, you will want more exact relations than our newspapers will give. You already know of the hanging of Casey and Cora by the Vigilance Committee. When that was done we all supposed the Vigilance Committee would have adjourned and things be allowed to resume their usual course, but instead, they hired rooms in the very heart of the city, fortified them, and each day the papers announced some act that looked like a perpetuation of their power, such as constructing cells, arresting men who were supposed to have been concerned in previous ballot-box stuffing. On the 30th of May I received from Governor Johnson a telegraphic despatch dated at Sacramento, requesting me to meet him at Benicia, which you know is the site of the United States Arsenal. . . . I went up and Johnson came down, and we met at General Wool's room at the American Hotel. After some preliminary conversation Governor Johnson stated that in the discharge of his duties as chief executive of the State it might become necessary for him to call out the militia to enforce the laws, but that he had no arms or munitions of war, of which General Wool had control of an abundance, and he inquired if in the case stated he could depend on a supply, saying the same could be deducted from the next year's quota of the State of California, or that he would pledge the credit of the State to pay for any loss. . . . General Wool replied in substance that "no person except the President of the United States could grant arms or munitions to a State in case of an insurrection, but a case might arise when a general of a division might take the responsibility and this might be one."¹ The next day by invitation we all went with the general to inspect the arsenal, where we found an abundance of material. After the inspection the Governor, his brother, the Secretary of State, and myself rode over to the Navy Yard, where we found Commodore Farragut in command of the yard and Lieutenant Boutwell in command of the sloop of war *John Adams*. Our purpose was to ascertain whether we could get the assistance of the sloop of war, to drop down to the city to serve as a kind of depot, the city being in absolute possession of the Vigilance Committee. At the Navy Yard we were unsuccessful, the officers being unwilling to commit themselves to anything in a controversy of the kind. We returned to Benicia same day, and on our way back I impressed on Governor Johnson the necessity of having General Wool commit him-

¹ In a letter of June 9, addressed to Johnson, Wool admits having said in these interviews, when "strongly pressed," "that a case might arise when I might deem it proper to assume the responsibility of issuing arms

on your requisition." The same admission is made in a letter to Sherman which formed Inclosure No. 3, sent by Sherman with the present letter, but not printed here.—EDITOR.

self completely, and as we expected the boats along about 7 p. m., the Governor designing to return to Sacramento and I to San Francisco, General Wool accompanied us to the wharf, where Governor Johnson called him aside with me and said, "Now, General, all our plans turn on you; in case I am compelled to call out the militia can we depend on you for the arms?" General Wool said, "Yes." The Governor then asked "as to the form of the receipt or requisition," when the General said, "Never mind, when the time comes you send me a requisition and I will see that it is attended to." I was satisfied with this. On the 1st of June a writ of habeas corpus was issued by Judge Terry of the Supreme Court, in San Francisco, commanding the sheriff to bring before him the body of one Mulligan, known to be in the cells of the Vigilance Committee.

That writ was disobeyed or resisted, and the fact certified to the Governor at Sacramento, who on the 2d inst. wrote me the order which you will find embraced in my printed orders.

Although I supposed he designed to issue a proclamation, I of course acted on his orders to me, and issued mine, in which you will see that I declared that I did not commit myself to the past, but only undertook to enforce all writs issued after that time.¹

This order was put into the hands of the printers that afternoon, and about midnight I received from Governor Johnson a letter saying he would send his proclamation down by telegraph that night, and asking me to cause it to be published in all the morning papers. I waited until past one o'clock that night at the telegraph office, and received the proclamation and caused it to be published as directed. The proclamation was stronger than I expected and more than I would have advised. I did not think it necessary to declare the county in a state of insurrection. Still that was none of my business. The publication of the proclamation and my orders caused a tremendous excitement. Everybody supposed that civil war would forthwith be inevitable and the Vigilance Committee were alarmed at the course of things. They immediately despatched their prisoners, who were no loss to the country, and here things might have stopped. This occurred at the time of the sailing of our last steamer, viz., June 5.

Men began to enroll on the side of the authorities. Companies began to form, and the moderate people became much alarmed

as a conflict seemed to be pending. All the time, however, the Vigilance Committee were strengthening in numbers and in material. Messages came to me that the committee were done, with the exception of warning out of the country certain loafers and men against whom they had undisputed testimony of having been concerned in former election frauds.

As men were enrolling on our side pretty fast, the Governor sent by his aide-de-camp, Colonel Rowe, to General Wool a letter requesting him to issue to me, on my requisition, such arms and munitions as I might call for. That letter was handed to General Wool at Benicia, who replied to Governor Johnson in writing, a copy of which I send you, marked "1," and told Rowe that in the then state of feeling he thought it unsafe to send arms to San Francisco. When Rowe told me this I was thunderstruck, as I could look nowhere else for arms, and the idea of enrolling the militia without arms was an absurdity. I waited a day to hear from the Governor of General Wool's exact reply to him, and it not coming, I wrote to General Wool myself, on the 6th, a letter, a copy of which, marked "2," is inclosed herewith. This was on Friday. On Saturday I received from Governor Johnson Wool's reply to him, also a message to meet him again at Benicia.

That was the most eventful day of this affair. I had absolutely kept secret the refusal of arms by Wool. I had not yet received his answer to my letter, and hoped he would stick by his verbal promise. At the same time a committee of our best men were going between me and the Vigilance Committee, to see if at an interview with the Governor the whole matter could not be arranged without an appeal to arms.²

This committee ascertained that the Vigilance Committee would forthwith discontinue any military display on the streets; that they would make no more arrests; that they would submit to the service of any writs, either to take parties out of their custody, or for their own arrests to answer for past acts. They would not publicly disband, as they said they had to perfect their record to justify former acts of violence by them, and they wanted to coerce certain offensive men to quit the country, but to accomplish this purpose they would not seize their persons, or if they did the sheriff might take the men if he could find them. They wanted a back door out of which to escape, and I was willing to afford it to them, for I knew their strength, and our weakness. I did

¹ These documents inclosed with the present letter are not printed in the present publication, as they contain nothing previously unknown.—EDITOR.

² As to the negotiations for peace, compare the above with the article in the "Overland Monthly" for November, 1874, and with Sherman's "Memoirs."—EDITOR.

all I could to separate the principle from the facts. The Law and Order party, as we were styled, was in public estimation synonymous with the rowdies, shoulder-strikers, and ballot-box stuffers, and our only chance to undo the effect of such clamor was to admit the fact that crime had not been punished heretofore as it ought, and that the ballot-box had been in the hands of rowdies and loafers, but that instead of violent remedies the true course was to devise some legal mode of redress. I thought if we could array on our side all citizens who thought the committee had gone far enough, we would be able to take a bold stand.

My purpose was to use this committee as intermediaries between the Governor and the Vigilantes, if for nothing else than to establish the fact the Governor was right and the committee wrong, and thereby force the moderate men of the city to take our side. We went to Benicia, got there about one hour before the Governor came in the Sacramento boat. I conducted the committee, of which Mr. Crockett was chairman, to the hotel and introduced them to General Wool. I then asked General Wool for an answer to my letter, but he said, inasmuch as I was there he would only say that his answer was the same in substance as his to the Governor. I endeavored to get him to reconsider, but he would not, and it was with great difficulty I succeeded in getting from him the written answer he had before prepared, herewith marked "3," and which he wanted to withhold when he knew I had come up. About dark the boat arrived with Governor Johnson. I hurried to the wharf to meet him, and found him in company with certain gentlemen known to be of the most ultra kind, men of violent feelings and who were determined to bring about a collision of arms if possible. I withdrew him, and he wanted to know if it was true a Committee of Vigilantes were up to see him. I told him no, they were not Vigilantes, but moderate and respectable men, who as yet have not taken part one way or the other, and who represented that middle class out of which we would have to derive our strength. I hastily explained to him that the enrollment of men was proceeding slower than I wanted, and that our cause was hopelessly lost if Wool's decision got out. Governor Johnson was so incensed, and justly so, at Wool's course that he would not stop at the same house, and proceeded to the Soland Hotel, some two blocks further from the water. I talked with him till he reached the hotel and supposed I had disabused his mind of the impression he had received that the gentlemen who had come up to see him were Vigilantes; and when he said he would see them, I returned and told Mr.

Crockett that the Governor was ready to receive the committee. They started, and in some fifteen minutes I followed, and found the Governor in a kind of parlor over the bar-room at the Soland Hotel, and with him were Judge Terry, an editor from Sacramento, Colonel Baker, Jones, of Palmer, Cook and Company, the men against whom of all others in the State there lie the most violent prejudices, and who knew that I did not like them. On entering the room I asked, "Where is the committee?" "They are writing something in another room." I thought that was right, to reduce the points of their proposition to writing, that no further mistakes should occur, and was surprised when a subcommittee came in the room with a written application to come into the Governor's presence. I now inclose a slip of newspaper in which that interview is described by the committee itself. Johnson did not mean discourtesy, but the committee would not believe otherwise, and the whole effect was bad. I found myself strangely placed: under a militia commission to quell a civil strife, the mass of people against me, arms refused by the only authority that could give them, and the Governor under other influences than my own. I believe that night through the instrumentality of that committee I would have brought the Vigilantes to a dead standstill, with absolute submission to the law, or could have so placed them in the wrong that all good and moderate people would have joined us, but these men, Terry, Jones, Baker, etc., had made the Governor believe the committee was caving in, and that he must follow them up rapidly and force them to disband absolutely, to submit unconditionally. If he had the force or backing of the people such a stand would have been right, but at that moment, though he thought otherwise, I was convinced that nine tenths of the people of the State ratified the acts of the Vigilance Committee, but many, a great many, were willing to say they had gone far enough and should stop. General Wool having denied arms, and the Governor having assumed such high grounds against my known advice, I was forced to resign and trust to my motives being understood, and to that end I had published in all the papers Monday morning a letter, of which you will find a copy¹ in the same newspaper slip. . . .

With my resignation all show of resistance ceased here. Nobody but the most active would serve under Volney E. Howard, and the Governor holds out at Sacramento yet, sticking by his proclamation, but he has no person to enforce it, and at this moment the Vigilance Committee has absolute sway in this city. What they

¹ See a copy of the most of this letter in the supplement to the present one (p. 306).—EDITOR.

propose to do, how long their power is to last, or whether they will consent to the courts exercising any power, are questions that no one now asks. All men now hurrah and applaud their wisdom, and even such as Governor Foote, Baillie, Peyton, Mr. Duer, etc., etc., approve all they have done and all they intend to do without being able to answer even, who are they? who appointed them? what are their names? All these are trifles. The committee have published a sort of Declaration of Independence, a constitution. They, over the signature of "33 Secretary" announce their will, and it is bowed to. The preachers applaud their wisdom from the pulpit, although their armed bodies parade the streets on Sundays, and close up any thoroughfare they please by files of armed men. They have a perfect citadel, with cannon above and below, a perfect arsenal of muskets within, and I do not doubt that six thousand armed men will obey their decrees quickly, energetically, and cheerfully. Who are the men who have in a civilized city arranged and organized such a power? Why, very ordinary men. I know most of them, and individually or collectively they are no better than the heterogeneous crowd of which our city is composed. Some of them have been ballot-box stuffers, some of them are rowdies, and more than one is accused of having fled from other countries for forgery or crime. Yet others are good, intelligent, clever, well-meaning men, who are fanatic and believe they are serving their God and their country. . . . Steadily they have organized a power irresistible by any force at the Governor's call, and have wielded that power without violence. I never feared any danger from them as a body, if they could control their men, and my apprehension was that in case I were found to arm my side, a general battle would be drawn on by detached parties, in which event it would have been entirely ruinous to the city. It was this apprehension that made the committee agree to the terms they did.¹ Since my resignation I have purposely kept close to business, have not spoken to either party, and have announced my intention in any row to stand by and defend the Bank. . . .

June 17. I was interrupted so often yesterday that I fear I have not made myself as plain as I could have wished, but I have not the time to amend it now, trusting to your knowledge of men and motives to divine the truth. Governor Johnson is a young man elected by the Know-nothing party, and of a high personal character. When, however, this storm burst upon him his old friends left him, and he was found to ally himself with men who had private griefs to avenge, or who acted from extreme notions.

¹ That is, to the terms carried by the "conciliation" committee to the Governor.—EDITOR.

Few about him were governed by his high, pure principles. He felt as though the honor of his office might be stained whilst in his hands, and he strove to arrest it, but he miscalculated the strength of his adversaries. He is now powerless; for the militia, his only reliance to coerce obedience to his orders, have deserted him in mass, leaving him the naked, unsupported position of governor. Had I been otherwise situated, I might from sympathy have continued to aid him, but by so doing I would have driven off our business, for so high has this feeling run that all business men have yielded to it, and have regarded those who favored the cause of Law and Order as enemies of the people, and withdrawn their patronage from newspapers and all other interests controlled by Law and Order men. I don't think any man in California thinks the worse of me, for our business has not suffered, although I have been known from the first as an opponent of the Vigilance Committee. Though I was accused in the newspapers of threatening to lay the city in ashes, nobody believed it, and the most rabid had to admit that from no act of my life could I be classed as a rowdy or friend of the ballot-box stuffers. What is to be the end of this no one can tell. I fear no violence, but expect the Vigilance Committee will force away their present list of culprits, and then drop back into their business, for the expense of their organization must be heavy, and will as usual fall on a few of the most zealous, who, as soon as their zeal evaporates, will give in. How few the courts will disturb is a doubtful question, and on it may depend the future conduct of the committee.

Affectionately yours,
W. T. SHERMAN.

SUPPLEMENT TO III.

Inclosure (No. 1).

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE
PACIFIC,

BENICIA, June 5th, 1856.

To his Excellency J. NEELY JOHNSON,
Governor of California.¹

SIR: I had the honor to receive last evening your communication of the 4th inst. by Colonel E. A. Rowe.

In reply I would remark that, on examination of the laws of Congress, I find that no person has the authority to grant the request therein presented but the President of the United States. In a recent contest in Kansas Territory, somewhat analogous to that which you state exists in the city of San Francisco, on application, I believe, of the governor of the Territory for arms and ammunition to aid in suppressing it, the President refused to grant them.

Under these circumstances I am constrained to decline granting your requisition.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN E. WOOL, Major-General.

Inclosure (No. 2).

SAN FRANCISCO, June 6, 1856.

GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL, United States Army, Commander Pacific Division, Benicia.

MY DEAR GENERAL: I was surprised beyond measure to hear yesterday from Colonel Rowe, who brought me a copy of Governor Johnson's letter to you of June 4, that you expressed a determination not to risk the issuance of arms to the militia of this State, under the present aspect of things.

After your assent to the Governor's request in my presence to issue such arms as would be required in the present emergency I cannot think that Colonel Rowe could have got the exact meaning of your reply.

Governor Johnson has issued a proclamation and I have issued orders for the enrollment of the militia. And already several companies have reported, and many more are known to be progressing in the work. Now if we cannot count on getting arms and ammunition as a certainty I should know it as soon as possible. I assure you on my honor that I will not call for a musket or a cartridge till I am dead certain that the arming the militia will at once restore authority to its legitimate channels. If the number of men or if the character of the men who offer their services are such as I am not willing to command, I will not receive their service.

But I think, my dear General, I should know at once—to-night if possible—by the Stockton Boat, whether in case I call for arms I can have them.

Your friend and servant,

W. T. SHERMAN,

Major-General, California Militia.

GENERAL SHERMAN'S CARD TO THE PUBLIC ON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION.

[The "San Francisco Evening Bulletin" of June 9, 1856, contains in its news columns what appears to be the most of this card, which it apparently does not publish entire. What is given reads: "I think I have already said and done enough to convince all that I am not an advocate of the Vigilance Committee; and whilst I would have contributed my assistance to expel from our midst all rowdies, ballot-box stuffers, and shoulder-strikers, it would only be by the application of some legal mode, which I believe does exist, and not by resorting to the organization of a committee, which in the enforcement of its decrees has been compelled to resist the sworn officers of the law.

"When, however, the Vigilance Committee had become installed in power, and I had received the orders of the Governor to organize the militia to aid the sheriff in the execution of his duty, I did my best to influence and command all good citizens to enroll themselves into companies, promising when a sufficient number were enlisted, provided the necessity still continued, to arm, equip, and muster them into the service of the State. I based my promise of arming the enrolled militia on a verbal assurance, given to Governor Johnson by General Wool, in my presence, to issue from the United States Arsenal, on a proper requisition, such arms and munitions of war as the emergency might call for. It is now no longer a secret that when the written requisition was made, General Wool had changed his mind, and had discovered that he had not the legal power to grant the request.

"I have at all times endeavored to calm the public excitement; I have counseled moderation and forbearance, but I was forced to conclude that these moderate counsels did not coincide with the views of Governor Johnson, and, in justice to him, I felt bound to afford him the opportunity to select some representative here whose ideas were more consonant with his own."

COMMENTS ON III.

THE controversy with Wool about the broken promise of aid continued for a good while. The Executive Documents above cited contain much correspondence bearing on the matter. Wool's position is sufficiently indicated by his letters referred to in a foregoing note.

To explain the warmth of feeling which the subsequent letters of this correspondence will show, it is well to point out, as an added motive from this time on, that the Vigilance newspapers, in the first week in June, contain very violent assaults upon Sherman. His proclamation calling for volunteers was burlesqued in the "Alta." "Bulletin" correspondents called him a "traitor" and his volunteers "mercenary hirelings," and much more of the sort appeared. Side by side with such attacks there are beseeching appeals to him as a man and a friend to come out from amongst such evil associates, and the "Bulletin" congratulates him warmly when he resigns; whilst he cheerily says, in the foregoing letter, that he believes that no man thinks the worse of him after all, yet these things wore on Sherman's patience, and the sense of failure was henceforth present.—EDITOR.]

IV.

BANKING HOUSE OF LUCAS, TURNER & Co.,
SAN FRANCISCO, July 2, 1856.

DEAR TURNER:

The last advices explained the condition of public affairs up to the 20th ult., at which time the Vigilance Committee were in full blast. There was an apparent submission to them

which looked like a perfect calm, but every thinking man knew that at any moment the whole might explode. Sure enough, on Saturday the 21st, occurred one of the most disgraceful scenes that can be imagined. It seems that General Howard, who succeeded me in the management of the military affairs here, was gathering arms and munitions, picking them up wherever they could be found. A small schooner, the *Julia*, had about one hundred and thirty muskets on board, and whilst on her way to the city was intercepted by another small vessel with Vigilance Committee men on board, headed by one Durkee, who took the arms and the three men in charge in custody, and on reaching the city the arms were taken to the fort of the committee, and the three men turned loose; these were named Phillips, Maloney, and McNab. These men went before the United States District Court and filed a complaint against Durkee for a piracy on the waters of the bay, and the committee, finding themselves about to be embroiled with the United States Government, discovered that Maloney was a bad character, a ballot-box stuffer, and accordingly issued their orders for his arrest. This order was placed in the hand of . . . Hopkins, who proceeded to the room of R. P. Ashe, navy agent—brother-in-law of Dr. Moses in your city. He has been a most violent opposer of the Vigilance Committee, and was captain of one of the companies enrolled under my orders.

His room is over Palmer, Cook & Co's bank, and Judge Terry of the Supreme Court was staying with him. Terry too is a most violent opposer of the committee, is the judge whose will was disobeyed, and who has honestly opposed the progress of the committee by all the influence he possesses. When Hopkins reached the room and asked Maloney to go with him, Ashe, Terry, and others present put Hopkins out. He immediately sent word to the committee-rooms for more force to arrest Maloney. Ashe, Terry, and others in the room with Maloney took such weapons as they could get, and started for one of the armories used by one of the State Volunteer Companies, on Jackson street, between Kearny and Dupont. On leaving Palmer, Cook & Co's buildings, they were followed by Hopkins and others, who endeavored to seize Maloney, but Ashe and Terry interposed, and they had nearly reached the armory, when Hopkins seized the gun in Terry's hands, a scuffle ensued, a pistol went off, and Terry, a strong fine-looking man, excited, announced himself a judge of the Supreme Court, commanded the peace, and endeavored to escape from Hopkins, who held his gun with his left hand, and with his right grasped Terry by the hair or neckcloth. Then Terry drew his

knife, showed it to Hopkins, and stabbed him in his left shoulder. Hopkins by this time had Terry's gun, with which he ran down the street, crying he was stabbed (or killed). Maloney, Terry, Ashe, and party thus reached the armory, which is in the third story of a fire-engine house. Then arose such a tumult as I never witnessed. The Vigilance bell pealed forth its wildest clamor, and men ran, calling, "Hang him! hang him!" All kinds of stories flew about that Terry had shot Hopkins dead, and indeed it was hours before the truth was known; all stores were closed; so wild was the tumult that I had the money put in the vault and locked, and commanded all the clerks to stand by. Crowds of people with muskets, and swords, and pistols poured by up Jackson street, and a dense mass of men filled the street from Montgomery to Stockton. Knowing Terry and Ashe to be desperate men, and hearing that about fifteen or twenty of their friends were with them, I took it for granted that blood would be shed; but after some talking they concluded to surrender, and were conducted under strong guard to the Vigilance Committee rooms. At the same time all the armories of the State Volunteers were surrendered, giving up their arms and accoutrements—a regular *coup d'état à la Louis Napoléon*. Thus from that day the State of California ceased to have any power to protect men here in defense of her sovereignty. . . . Since that day nothing has been done in the military way, except by the Vigilance Committee, who have their rooms fortified, and whose companies are marched through the streets at all hours. Some are being uniformed, and some bands of music are now being formed, so it may be they intend to keep up their military power a long time. In the mean time Terry is in the cells of the committee. At first they were disposed to treat him well, allowed his wife to see him, but of late they have changed, and now they permit no one to visit him. I inclose you a slip containing a letter from Mrs. Terry, and I know you will agree with me that this is a case of such cruelty that, without knowing, we could not believe such a thing could be enacted in an American city. For ten days Hopkins has been lying on his bed, with reports coming every hour that he was getting worse and even dying. The newspapers have been inflaming the public mind, and that "Bulletin," the cause of all this civil strife, announces its dictates, which are promptly obeyed. To it Judge Terry is indebted for the cruelty shown him. When it was generally understood that during his confinement he was to have a room and be allowed the company of his wife, the "Bulletin" announced that such would not be the case; and that the editor was *happy* to an-

nounce that Judge Terry would not be treated a bit better than Casey and Cora; that he was confined in the same kind of cell; that he would be tried by the same law; and, if found guilty, suffer the same penalty. It has now been acknowledged that if Hopkins died, Judge Terry would be hung; if Hopkins recovers, then he will be banished. At all events he must be made to resign; but he will not resign, he says; he would rather die than be dishonored. He was imprudent in this matter, for as judge he ought to have kept aloof on the score that the questions involved might come before him as judge. So satisfied was I of this that, when in command here, I requested Johnson to call him to Sacramento, which he did; but when I resigned he came again to the city, and the result is he is in the power of the committee. . . . I hope Hopkins may recover, in which case the committee can do nothing to Terry; but if he die we may have further commotion. I am sick of this whole matter, and I believe the community is fast becoming so, and therefore I will drop the subject, leaving the newspapers to keep you advised of the progress of this singular revolution. I am out of it, and believe that I have lost nothing in public estimation in what I did; at all events it is a lesson I will never forget—to mind my own business in all time to come.

Your friend,
W. T. SHERMAN.

TO HENRY S. TURNER,
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

BANKING HOUSE OF LUCAS, TURNER & Co.,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., July 7, 1856.

MY DEAR BROTHER: The steamer sails to-day and will bring you news of the same character as the two past. The Vigilance Committee is in full blast, still exercising full control; has Judge Terry in their power, and had the man Hopkins died, they would have hung him. Now the probabilities are they will send him away. Where the matter is to end I cannot imagine; but I think the community is getting sick and disgusted with their secrecy, their street forts and parades, and mock trials—worse, far worse, than the prompt, rapid executions of a mob or lynch court. Since my resolution I have kept purposely aloof from all parties, either one way or the other. Being in a business where large interests are at stake, I cannot act with that decision that would otherwise suit me. I do not think that there is any necessity for the interference of the Federal authorities, but that before we can hear from Washington the matter will be over and forgotten. . . .

Your affectionate brother,
W. T. SHERMAN.

BANKING HOUSE OF LUCAS, TURNER & Co.,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., August 3, 1856.
MY DEAR BROTHER:

Here in this country the democratic, common element prevails to such a degree that, as you will have observed, the influence of the Governor, Mayor, and all the executive authority has been utterly disregarded. For three months we have been governed by a self-constituted committee, who have hung four men, banished some twenty others, arrested, imprisoned, and ironed many men, and who now hold a judge of the Supreme Court in their power, the authorities being utterly unable to do anything. . . . There is no doubt we have had a bad administration of law here, and more than a fair share of rowdies; but I think the committee itself no better, and if we are to be governed by the mere opinion of the committee, and not by officers of our own choice, I would prefer at once to have a dictator. The committee is now in a bad fix. The man whom Terry stabbed is well. The Executive Committee of Vigilance are willing to acquit him; but before they can act in such a matter, by their by-laws they must submit the case to a Board of Delegates, composed of three (3) from each of their military companies. This Board of Delegates, of course, want action, and they insist that Terry shall resign his office and go away or be hung. There is a sloop of war here, the *John Adams*, whose commander says that he will intercept any ship that attempts to carry Terry off. So that it will be difficult for them to banish Terry, and it is not impossible that they may yet hang Terry to save themselves the consequences of his return to the bench. If there is not an entire revolution and withdrawal from the Union, then all these acts of violence must come up before our courts on action for civil damage; and it is likely if Terry returns to the bench he will have some feeling against the men who have kept him imprisoned for some two months with daily expectation of death or banishment. We are waiting to hear what President Pierce will do in this matter. I doubt if he will interfere as long as the trouble is local, and as long as those men do not try to bring about an absolute revolution, which I do not think they have yet contemplated. My own opinion is the committee is tired of its position, but finds it difficult to withdraw from the complications in which they are involved.

Affectionately your brother,
W. T. SHERMAN.

[We may close the correspondence with an extract from one later letter, written a short time after Terry's discharge and the final parade.—EDITOR.]

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF AUGUST 19.

It is pretty generally acceded to that Terry's friends in the committee had to log-roll and stuff the box in order to save him. I know that some of the most conservative of that committee hurried Terry aboard the *John Adams* at two o'clock at night to save him from

the vengeance of the more rabid faction. The committee yesterday had a grand jubilee, and for the time being are retired from the public gaze, but nobody can doubt that in any case of danger to themselves they will again come on the tapis.

Your affectionate brother,
W. T. SHERMAN.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

The Christmas Century.

FOR the first time in many years THE CENTURY greets its readers with a regular old-fashioned Christmas number — with a difference. The difference may be felt in the absence of some of the approved conventionalities; but the Christmas quality, we think, will also be felt here and there throughout the number both in illustrations and text — sometimes ostensibly and objectively, sometimes subtly enough.

As one grows older in this world of realities, one begins to stiffen the back against the sentimental. True sentiment is upheld with force and arms against sentimentalism. As one grows older, still, in this world of realities, the back does not always so quickly stiffen even against the sentimental — even against the sentimental Christmas, even against the sentimental Christmas number. The present can hardly be said to be the "sentimental Christmas number"; but if the Christmas reader finds in it, and is pleased to find, a godly share of the true Christmas sentiment, how well content will be those who shall have — then successfully — gathered together the art and literature of the CHRISTMAS CENTURY!

Charitable Reform of High Public Value.

THE State Charities Aid Association, which has done so much during the last nineteen years to improve the condition of the inmates of poorhouses, almshouses, and other charitable institutions in the State of New York, is engaged in several new movements, all of which are most commendable, and two of which are of such vital importance that we wish to call special attention to them. Surely no time more fit could be chosen in which to speak of the humane work of this Association than the Christmas season.

Let us say at the outset that it is to the organization mentioned that the State owes the passage of the humane and most desirable law transferring the pauper insane from the county poorhouses to the State institutions provided for such patients. This was merely the culminating reform in a long series, beginning in 1872, when the Association was formed, and including such notable achievements as the initiation of tenement-house reform, the establishment of the first working-girls' clubs, and the establishment of municipal lodging-houses, all in New York City, and the establishment of temporary homes in Ulster, Westchester, and Queens counties. It should be borne in mind that the Associ-

ation is a voluntary body, and is supported entirely in its work by voluntary contributions. In other words, it is a body of humane men and women who have voluntarily given their time and energies to the task of making more comfortable the lives of the most helpless of their fellow beings, relying entirely upon the sympathetic aid of other humane men and women to defray the pecuniary expense of their labors.

It is to an association of this high and unselfish character that we call the attention of THE CENTURY'S readers, in the hope that needed assistance may thereby be encouraged from many quarters. The first of the two objects of the Association upon which we wish to dwell especially is the establishment of a State institution for epileptics and their removal from the poorhouses and almshouses. There are at present about five hundred such patients in the county and city institutions, in which there is for them no special medical treatment, little employment, and no training or education. Under such conditions of neglect and idleness the result is almost inevitably to make the victims of the disease permanent paupers. Under skilled medical treatment it cannot be questioned that some of them might be restored to health, and others might be so far benefited that they could be restored to their homes or friends. Many of them, either because of their infirmity or lack of training, have no occupation, and are unfitted to compete with able-bodied laborers in case they are discharged from the almshouses. If they were taught some useful calling while in them, their prospects for making their own way in the world, and leading happy and useful lives, after leaving the institutions would be greatly brightened.

The epileptics are almost the only defective class for whom society has made no especial provision. In an earnest plea for separate asylums for them which Dr. Frederic Peterson, a high authority on nervous and mental diseases, made a few years ago, he said:

The sufferer from epilepsy has been left to shift for himself, often an outcast from his family, usually expelled from the schools, denied industrial employment, shunned to a great extent by his fellows, left to grow up in ignorance and idleness, companionless and friendless, a prey to one of the most dreadful and hopeless of maladies, refused admission to general hospitals, and only at last given refuge in either an almshouse or insane asylum.

He is driven to find shelter in an asylum, not, as a rule, because he is deprived of reason, but because there is no other place for him to go. There are thousands of epileptics in insane asylums to-day who do not belong there, for many will be found among them who are not