

THE MODOC BLUNDER.

Peace Commissions Appointed Only to Complicate Matters.

MEACHAM & CO. AT WAR IN COUNCIL.

Sam Case and Uncle Jesse in the "Secret."

General Canby Treated to Advice from Greedy Landowners.

APPLAGATE'S MINORITY REPORT.

The Indian Bureau Informed that the Commission is an "Expensive Blunder."

Odeon Not Likely to Agree with the "Oily-Tongued Orator."

VAN BREKERS' RANCH, March 14, 1873.

The Modoc question is still puzzling the Indian Bureau at Washington, and from the present aspect of affairs they will probably succeed in running up a bill bordering upon a couple of millions before their peace policy is successfully carried out. History credits the late President Lincoln with a little common sense, found in a remark made to his Secretary Stanton when General Grant took command of the army in the late rebellion—i. e., "that we had been commanding the army long enough, and it would perhaps be better to let Grant see what he could do." The good judgment displayed in that remark was plainly exemplified by the record of current events, and if the Indian Bureau were to take the matter into consideration they would see that the cheapest and most expeditious method of settling the difficulty would be to hand over their authority to General Canby, an officer whose years of experience among the Indians coupled with his actual presence on the ground and an army to back him up, would enable him to treat more successfully with the Indian, who has more respect for the force of arms than for promises which experience has taught him are only too often made to be broken.

NOW THE PEACE COMMISSION WAS APPOINTED.

We have just had the painful experience of the efficacy of a Peace Commission acting under the authority of the Indian Bureau, and their labors have formed a fit subject for the laughter of the citizens of California and Oregon. The history of this Peace Commission may be told in a few words. The Modoc trouble broke out, and Mr. A. B. Meacham, the late Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon, happened to be in Washington at the time. This gentleman is a gifted orator; as described by a contemporary, "words fell from his silvery tongue like peas rolling off a hot platter," and he has for a long time felt deeply aggrieved at his removal from office and the substitution of Mr. Odeon in his place. This war was a perfect godsend to this Meacham politician, and, seizing the opportunity, he laid forth to Secretary Deane, and expounded one of those shells of oratory, scintillating pellets of peace in every direction. The Secretary forthwith appointed a peace commission to arrange these Modoc troubles, in which Mr. Meacham was to act in conjunction with Mr. Odeon and the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, of Oregon. This, however, did not suit Mr. Meacham, as, perhaps in dreams of the future, he had seen a picture in which a war that broke out through the mismanagement of the present Superintendent was settled by the late Superintendent, a happy termination of affairs which resulted in the reinstatement of the late Superintendent in full power, adorned by a wreath of laurels. The silvery-tongued orator, therefore, hid once more to the Secretary, and once more his dulcet tones charmed the ear of Mr. Deane, and the names of Odeon and Wilbur were struck out and Jesse Applegate and Samuel Case substituted in their place. Everything satisfactorily arranged, Meacham started for the Modoc country, and arrived at Dorris' ranch like a conqueror come to deliver an oppressed people. He had no doubt of the success of his mission, as he could easily manage the rest of the Commission. Sam Case was an old friend, he could be relied on, and as for Uncle Jesse Applegate there could be no difficulty there, as Meacham knew Uncle Jesse and his partner (another man by the name of Jesse) had a little interest in certain swamp lands in which he might be able to lend assistance.

THE PEACEMAKERS AT WAR.

The Peace Commission established their headquarters at Fairchild's Ranch, and in two days after their first meeting Meacham's face wore the expression of a much-abused man. It soon leaked out that the Commission were in loggheads, as both Uncle Jesse and the old friend Sam expressed different ideas on the Modoc question to those propagated by the oily-tongued Meacham. His eloquence was wasted upon these two Oregonians, who only listened and laughed in their sleeve; in fact, one of them openly stated that the Peace Commission was a mere humbug, used simply as a cloak to cover the attack of Meacham against Odeon.

THE COMMISSION "AN EXPENSIVE BLUNDER."

Under existing circumstances it may be naturally inferred that the Peace Commission proved a stupendous humbug, or, as more explicitly termed by Mr. Jesse Applegate, "an expensive blunder." General Canby, however, fortunately arrived, and his suggestions were accepted by the Commission, and well-probably resulted in the surrender of the Indians if the latter had not been secured by the statement of a man named Blair, a pensioned convict residing in Oregon, who told them he had a warrant to hang nine of them when they came in and gave themselves up. These Indians have cause to be afraid of treachery, as some years back Ben Wright murdered forty-seven of their tribe at a peace feast; therefore such a statement totally destroyed the negotiations of weeks, and the work will have to begin again.

APPLAGATE AND CASE RESIGN.

During the past week Messrs. Jesse Applegate and Samuel Case both resigned their positions on the Peace Commission and returned to their respective avocations. Mr. Meacham, however, determined not to give up so soon, and remained a commission of one at Fairchild's.

BEFORE LEAVING MR. JESSE APPLAGATE SENT THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTIC LETTER TO MR. CLUM AT WASHINGTON, AS A MINORITY REPORT:

APPLAGATE'S MINORITY REPORT TO THE INDIAN HEADQUARTERS PEACE COMMISSION, FAIRCHILD'S RANCH, CAL., March, 1873.

See H. B. CLUM, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Sir—The Commission appointed to examine into the causes and bring to a conclusion the Modoc war having concluded its labors submit the following as their final report, to wit:

First—The causes leading to war were the dissatisfaction of Captain Jack's band of Modoc with the peace treaty of 1854, and refusal to abide thereto. To what extent wrongs justified resistance, the Commission having no power judicially to investigate.

Second—The immediate cause of hostilities was resistance by the Indians to military coercion. Third—Intentional surrender of the Indians, and the trial and punishment of the guilty by the civil authorities, would have been more satisfactory to the whites and a better example to the Indians than more eminent coercion. Fourth—Terms of surrender were offered the Indians to have the further effusion of blood and secure permanent peace by the removal of the whole tribe out of the country, a result scarcely to be hoped for by continued hostilities.

Fifth—The terms agreed to by the Commission were suggested and must be carried into effect by the military. A commission to negotiate a peace was therefore unnecessary.

Sixth—A commission to inquire into the causes of the war should be composed of men wholly disinterested in the findings of the commission. Dis-

rectly or indirectly, and clothed with full power to investigate.

Some of the persons of this Commission being charged to be hostile as it was a hindrance to negotiations. Having no power to administer oaths nor send for persons and papers, and the official acts of the chairman to be reviewed, the Commission was in every respect an expensive blunder.

STEELE'S NEGOTIATIONS RUMORED WORTHLESS.

Before the Commission broke up Judge Rosenberg, of Yreka, had been added to the Commission, as the suggestion of General Canby, and that gentleman, assisted by Mr. Elijah Steele, of Yreka, did good service in the negotiations that followed General Canby's proposition. Mr. Steele made several trips to the lava beds, and would have succeeded in obtaining the surrender of Captain Jack and his party if the lies of Blair had not upset all their calculations. The Indians had gone so far as to agree to come out and surrender. They were to be met by wagons half way to carry their baggage, but on the appointed day not an Indian made his appearance. Things since then have been in a state of *status quo*, and rumors were current that the Indians had deserted the lava beds.

MAJOR BIDDLE SCOURS THE LAVA BEDS.

General Canby finally ordered Major Biddle, of the First Cavalry, to come from Bernard's camp, at Clear Lake, to Van Dreem's with his troops, and on the 20th of March the lava beds were reached. Major Biddle arrived here last evening and brought in thirty-four Indian prisoners with him. Major Biddle reported to General Canby, who arrived here yesterday morning, that when about four miles south of Captain Jack's stronghold they came upon a nest of ponies, guarded by five Indians, four bucks and a squaw. Not knowing how peace matters were going on, they did not fire at the Indians, but simply surrounded the ponies and drove them into camp.

ORDNANCE AND MEACHAM PAID TO FACE.

Matters are now on rather a peculiar basis, as a despatch arrived to-day from Washington stating that Mr. Odeon has been added to the Commission. This brings matters to a most interesting crisis, as the Commission will now comprise Meacham, Odeon and Judge Rosenberg, the other two having resigned. It is very doubtful, however, whether Odeon will accept and face the music of the silvery-tongued Meacham.

TREMBLING EXTENSION OF THE WAR.

How long this war will be carried on by the Indian Bureau is hard to say, but it does seem an outrage to which they should have the power of running up such an enormous bill as they are rapidly accumulating. Grain is now twelve and a half cents per bushel, which is cheap compared with the thirty-five cents per bushel paid during the first part of the war. On an average each horse in the government employ costs one dollar and seventy-five cents per day for subsistence, and as there are about three hundred horses now in this county for cavalry and fighting purposes we can easily account for an expenditure of \$300 per day on that branch of service alone. The cost of freight on ammunition and rations for seven or eight hundred farms also no inconsiderable item of expenditure. There are also hundreds of other things that help to foot the bill to one of gigantic dimensions.

RENTS IN THE CAMP.

This camp is at present the headquarters of the army, and we have here batteries H, K and M of the Fourth infantry, companies A and C of the Twelfth infantry and troop K of the First cavalry, making in all about two hundred and sixty rank and file. Everybody is getting very tired of the inactive state of affairs and hope for some move that will lead to a conclusion of these troubles.

AMUSEMENTS.

Italian Opera—Miss Kellogg's Benefit.

The dramatic choruses of last evening duly interfered with the attendance at the Academy of Music. There were two features calculated to interest opera-goers—first, the benefit and farewell of the most popular of Antiochian singers, and then the debut of a new tenor. The opera was "Marta," which may be considered as a *mezzo* of popular tunes or a concert in costume. Miss Kellogg is entirely at home in the sparkling music of the title role. Last evening the presence of an unusually small audience and a conservatory of vocal tributes laid at her feet seemed to inspire her to special efforts. She was enthusiastically cheered in "The Last Rose of Summer," and repeatedly called before the curtain at the close of each act. The new tenor, Signor Verati, was the Lionel of the occasion. His voice, obscured by huskiness or nervousness in the *aria prope*, recovered itself in the succeeding numbers of his *aria*, and in his singing of the well-known "Marta" one could form a very good idea of his value as an addition to the company. That idea, we must say, is not a favorable one, which may be considered as a *mezzo* of popular tunes or a concert in costume. Miss Kellogg is entirely at home in the sparkling music of the title role. Last evening the presence of an unusually small audience and a conservatory of vocal tributes laid at her feet seemed to inspire her to special efforts. She was enthusiastically cheered in "The Last Rose of Summer," and repeatedly called before the curtain at the close of each act. The new tenor, Signor Verati, was the Lionel of the occasion. 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