

# Sierra County Advocate.

VOL. 2.

HILLSBOROUGH, SIERRA COUNTY, N. M. AUGUST 1, 1885.

NO. 22

## WASHINGTON LETTER.

[From our Regular Correspondent.]

WASHINGTON, July 18, '85.

The opinion of the Attorney General in the case of the Dolphin is likely to be a surprise to the country, and will be little less than a thunderbolt, not only to Mr. Roach, but to all government contractors. We may expect to see the opinion vigorously combated, and, until Mr. Roach has a chance to reply to General Garland with regard to the legal aspects of the case, it may not be becoming in laymen to prejudge the merits of the controversy. It will occur to most people, however, to ask what security a contractor has under existing usages that his work will finally be accepted by the Government. The opinion will certainly make contractors more cautious in the future, and will have a tendency, as has already been illustrated on a recent occasion, to keep them from bidding for government work. In almost all large jobs the work is passed upon by a subordinate officer or board, and partial payments made to the contractor, if the work is deemed satisfactory by the authorized inspector. A new and perplexing element is introduced, if we are now to understand that these under-officers have no authority to represent the government or construe an act of Congress and that the contractor at any stage of the work is liable to have his work rejected and to be sued by the government for the money paid him in installments by the treasury by the authority of the board of review.

Of course, if it can be shown that there was a conspiracy to defraud the government, to which the contractor, the board of review, and the Secretary of the Navy were parties, then there would be no difficulty in bringing an action, but in the present case no such charge is made, although it seems to be part of the creed of good democrats that all the navy dealings with John Roach are steeped in corruption. Possibly this conviction has had its influence in the present attitude of the administration. No doubt we shall all be sufficiently enlightened on the law and equity in the matter as the opinion opens the way to extended and expensive litigation.

The rules in regard to annual leaves of absence in the Interior department have not been changed and the same rules are in force that prevailed last year. The first Assistant Secretary, Mr. Muldrow, said yesterday that the subject of changes in the rules had not been taken under consideration.

The commissioner of the general land office has affirmed the right of entry under the public land laws and decisions of the Supreme Court, of lands heretofore withdrawn by voluntary action of the general land office, for railroad indemnity purposes, where no requirements of law existed for making such withdrawals. The effect of this decision, it is sustained by the Secretary of the Interior will be to restore to entry under the homestead and other laws many million acres of public land which have been kept out of market for many years because claimed by railroad corporations.

The successor of Mr. Foster as minister to Spain has not yet been decided upon. When Mr. Foster left here for Spain to negotiate a second treaty, the appointment was postponed until his return. The report that he will shortly be here has renewed the hopes of persons anxious to secure a snug foreign berth. The Spanish mission is considered one of the most desirable, and there are now more applications on file in the State de-

partment for it than there were for any other office.

The special delivery postal system provided for by the last Congress will be put in operation in the course of a month or two at about a dozen of the principal post-offices of the country, including New York, Boston, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington. The details of the system are now being formulated at the Postoffice department. The law provides that the attachment to a letter bearing the legal postage of a special stamp of the denomination of ten cents shall entitle the letter to immediate delivery at free delivery offices to be designated by the Postmaster General. It is believed that fifty messenger boys will be recruited at the New York postoffice and twenty-five at each of the large stations in that city. While no doubt is entertained that the system will pay its expenses in the end, it is feared that a year or more may elapse before the public will avail itself of the advantages of the new system to an extent that will adequately compensate the messengers employed.

LENOX.

## Relics of an Arctic Trip.

[New York Sun.]

Nearly fourteen years ago Capt. Carlsen, an adventuresome Norwegian sealer, sailed around the north end of Novaya Zemlia, and found an Arctic Pompeii on the shores of a little bay. No human being had been there before for nearly 300 years. About 300 relics of one of the most famous of Arctic expeditions were found buried, not under lava, and ashes, but under gravel and ice. They were in an excellent state of preservation, although nearly three centuries had elapsed since William Baronts and his men left them behind after spending the first winter in a higher Arctic latitude than explorers had ever experienced.

Capt. Carlsen found the house still standing which Baronts had built out of drift-wood that ocean currents had brought from the Siberian rivers. The roof had fallen in, and the house was filled with ice and gravel, under which were found tools, maps, rude scientific instruments, many household articles, ink-horns, pens, a clock, the barrel in which the explorers had taken vapor baths, and many other things. Students of Arctic literature had already read of many of these relics in the pages of G. de Geer, the historian of the expedition, whose minute account of the first winter spent by the white men above 70 degrees north latitude had excited enormous interest, and had been translated into all civilized languages, because before Baronts made the attempt it was not deemed at all certain that man could endure the winter night three or four months long and the severe cold of the north.

In the marine department at the Hague a model room has been built which is an exact reproduction of the Interior of Baronts' house on Novaya Zemlia, as Gerrit de Geer represented it. This room has been filled with the Baronts' relics, which are so well preserved that they give a lively idea of the home in which Europeans passed their first winter in the true polar regions.

## A Gentle Hint.

A Chicago judge recently rebuked a person who was sitting in the court-room with his feet placed upon the table by sending him, through the bailiff, a piece of paper on which he had written the following query: "What size boots do you wear?" The feet were at once withdrawn.

## THE WUMPS.

[Boston Courier.]

The wump comes when the hour is late To the pane where the light is shining, And the huge wump stands at the garden gate, His arms the maid entwining. The druggump waits for the steadily wink, The brand denominating, And the jurgump gaily takes a drink From the jug while his hook he's bottling. The pugwump kisses the nose of her pet, And foils him to her bosom, And the magwump waits for his office rat, And—well, we must excuse him.

## A Democratic Offensive Partisan.

[Louisville Courier-Journal.]

It has been the constant whine of the republican organs that "offensive partisanship" is only a pretext under which republicans are turned out of office and democrats put in. An offensive partisan, according to their interpretation, could only be a republican. It mattered not how active a politician a democrat official might be, he could not come under the classification, nor suffer the penalty of an offensive partisan.

President Cleveland, however, appears to take a different view of the question. He has an idea that an offensive partisan is a government official who neglects or abuses his office in the interest of politics; it matters not whether he be republican or democrat, and that the fact that he belongs to the one party or the other is no reason why he should not suffer the fate which he has prescribed for offensive partisans.

Not long ago Mr. George Parker, a Democrat was appointed a special agent of the treasury at Chicago. That was while the Illinois senatorial contest was in progress. Mr. Parker, instead of devoting his time and attention to his official duties, for which he was employed and paid, adopted the views of his prerogatives held by his republican predecessors and hid him away to Springfield and took an active part in the attempt to elect Judge Tree, a good democrat, to the senate. For this Mr. Parker has received notice that his services will be dispensed with by the government after the 15th of this month.

After awhile perhaps the people, both republicans and democrats, will become convinced that the President is in earnest in his professions of civil-service reform; that he is determined to conduct the government on the principles in the advocacy of which he was elected, and to observe conscientiously the laws which he has sworn to execute regardless of the politics of those who may violate them.

## Thirty Million More Acres.

WASHINGTON, July 14.—Land Commissioner Sparks has rendered an important decision in a recent case, affirming the right of entry, under the public land laws and decisions of the supreme court of the United States, of lands heretofore withdrawn by the voluntary action of the general land office for railroad indemnity purposes, where no requirements of law existed for making such withdrawals. This decision affects over 30,000,000 acres of public land which have been kept out of market for many years in the interest of railroad corporations. The commissioner cites at length from leading decisions of the supreme court, and concludes as follows: "Following these discussions, by the authority of which I am governed, I must hold that a withdrawal of land by the commissioner of the general land office when, as in the present instance, withdrawals from settlement entry, or other appropriation are not required by law, are effective only as information in defining the limits within which

indemnity selections may be made in a proper time and manner, but are not operative as a prohibition of settlements and entries within such limits under the public land laws prior to the time when a lawful selection by the railroad company has actually been made."

## Sure of Sugar.

June 30 the United States Treasurer mailed 45,183 checks in 45,183 letters to that number of persons in payment of \$7,963,319 interest due July 1, on United States registered 4 per cent. consols (consolidated indebtedness) of 1897, and on bonds issued to Pacific railway companies. It would be a good idea for Congress to enact a law declaring that all the paper money in the United States could be burned and all the metal money be sunk to the bottom of the sea and taxable ten per cent. interest bearing bonds be given therefore. Government bonds are the ne plus ultra of securities. The Government provides places of deposit for the bonds, it keeps the name and postoffice address of the bondholder, it makes out and sends to him or her a check for the interest due! All the bondholder has to do is to step to the front door when the bell rings, reach out and receive the letter from the mail carrier, take it into his parlor, get it and telephone a national banker to send up the gold coin to him. This is a severe stain on the rich. At times they catch cold by coming into the draft! The bonds they hold were obtained in exchange for legal tender money called in and burned after the war. If it is good to destroy four-fifths of the money of the country it must be good to destroy all of it. If it is good to bleed a horse down so he cannot trot, it is saving to bleed him down so he cannot eat. Then he won't kick!—U. S. Democrat.

## A Remarkable Class of Thieves.

[London Truth.]

The police of St. Petersburg have been for some time puzzled by the conduct of a remarkable class of thieves, who committed robbery not only in the open day, but, moreover, with ostentation. They were Fins, and were all young men. When arrested, they calmly pleaded guilty, and were sentenced for terms varying from one to three months. At the expiration of the sentence they promptly disappeared. It turned out that they had returned to their own country, and had there resumed their several avocations without loss of social position. The law in Finland forbids the enrollment in the army of any persons who have undergone imprisonment for civil offenses, so these enterprising Fins had deliberately sought imprisonment in order to avoid conscription.

Jud. Lafagan: The easiest way to outwit the world is to let it believe that it is smarter than you are.

Rev. Haber Newton joins the cremation crusade with the statement that it is duty to the living to burn the dead.

When Jesus went into the temple with a whip to drive the seers out, he did not wait to be swatted across the face with Civil Service breach cloth full of uncleanliness, but got in his work at once.—Ex.

Jud. Lafagan: The best critics of other people's actions, we have noticed, are usually those who themselves have failed ingloriously all around.

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