

REN AND MEASURES AT WASHINGTON.

From Our Own Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4, 1868.
After the vote had been taken on the articles of impeachment last session, and the air was thick with rumors of certain Senators having been bribed, Senator Conkling, of New York, delivered a speech wherein he argued that some punishment should be inflicted upon the newspaper correspondents here, who were for the most part responsible for these rumors. Government officials, especially those who are in high positions of honor and trust, should, like Caesar's wife, be above suspicion. But the honorable Senator could hardly have forgotten that there have been instances of official dishonesty, of which even the Senate was obliged to take notice. While a member of the House he had himself exposed the misconduct of an official in such a manner as to secure not only his removal but the abolition of his office.

Dishonest Politicians.

There is a vague idea among the masses of the people that politicians, taken as a class, are neither the most reliable nor the most conscientious of men. Some, indeed, go so far as to suspect their honesty; but these, let us hope, constitute but a small number who have had a bitter experience. It is better that the people repose confidence in their public servants, even though that confidence be occasionally abused, than that a general feeling of distrust should exist. Still, whoever has been a close observer of men and things here for any length of time cannot ignore the fact that there is an inviting field of missionary effort for any one who considers himself proficient in impressing upon men the importance of a close adherence to the eighth and the tenth precepts of the Decalogue. Of course I do not allude to the common forms of dishonesty in politicians, such as infidelity to party and what is vulgarly termed "going back upon" one's personal friends. These are of such ordinary occurrence that people have come to regard them very much as they do changes in the weather. When men, however, attempt to use their official positions for personal profit and aggrandizement, it is due to the public interest that they be mercilessly exposed.

A Case in Point.

A few months ago an extensive "ring" was organized here to make a raid upon the Pacific Railroad, for what purpose your readers can judge. The idea was to get the President to withhold the bonds voted as a subsidy to the road by Congress, and thus bring the work to a halt until its officers should "come down" with something handsome. A story was framed to the effect that the road was not properly constructed, and that it was being built hastily, so that the officers might obtain the Government bonds and put their own upon the market. The Secretary of the Interior made himself extra officious in bringing the matter to the attention of the President. That official, with his well-known disposition for punishing frauds upon the Government, at once appointed a special commission, consisting of General G. K. Warren, J. Bickensdorfer, and James Barnes, to examine and report upon the construction of the road.

Animus of the Movement.

In the appointment of this commission, named by the President, it is said, at the instance of the Secretary of the Interior, something of the animus of the proceeding was made manifest. Not one of the three practical railroad men. General Warren is an officer who gained some distinction in the Engineer Corps of the army during the war. The other two are civil engineers of very ordinary professional ability. Bickensdorfer was formerly an employe of the Pacific Railroad Company, but was discharged for incompetency. It is suspected that he was the person who first gave currency to the story that the road was improperly constructed. The report itself shows that he has been the moving spirit in the whole matter. Very much of it is taken up with an argument to show that the company did not select a proper route for their road. Now it happens that upon this very subject Bickensdorfer disagreed with the company while in their employ.

Suspicious Conduct of Secretary Brown.

These special commissioners presented their report to the Secretary of the Interior some days ago. After it came into his possession it was sedulously kept from public view. In the meantime a certain newspaper correspondent here, holding an official position in the President's household, commenced a systematic attack upon the road, intimating in his dispatches that the report of the special commissioners would show that the stories heretofore circulated about the imperfect construction of the road were fully sustained. The President's "organ" here, which is Browning's as well, opened its batteries upon the officers of the road, and strongly hinted that they were little better than common swindlers. Still there were no signs of anybody "coming down" with the "needful." The officers of the company had heard about the appointment of the special commission; they had heard through the newspapers that a report had been made, and that its statements were damaging to the road. But they knew nothing of its character. A few days ago Thomas C. Durant, Esq., Vice President of the road, with two or three of its officers, arrived here, to request a copy of the report from the President. Mr. Johnson frankly informed them that he had not seen the report.

Browning Withholds the Report.

It appears that Secretary Browning had locked up the report of the special commission in his office. Instead of laying it before the President, as he should have done, he, with the rest of the "ring," went around circulating all sorts of stories prejudicial to the road. The "special correspondent" of the party took the trouble to telegraph his papers (one of them in your city, I believe) that on Tuesday last the matter was laid before the Cabinet by Brown, and that all the members thereof had concurred in advising the President to withhold the remaining bonds due the road. This was a pure fabrication, put out, it would seem, as a snail effort to frighten the officers of the road into "coming down" handsomely. Attorney-General Evarts, who had the honor to be named in the Cabinet, informed Mr. Durant that nothing whatever was said in the Cabinet about the matter, that no member of the Cabinet except Mr. Browning, who still had it in his possession, had seen it, and that the President was entirely ignorant of its contents.

The Report Falsifies the Stories of the "Ring."

The presence of the officers of the road, and their manifest determination to ferret the matter out, seems to have had the effect of making Browning lay the report before the President. It reached him on Wednesday last. On the evening of that day Mr. Durant succeeded in obtaining a copy of it. He found the concluding portions of it so utterly contradictory of the stories so industriously circulated by the "ring," that he immediately gave it to the country through the Associated Press. The report, which is very long, is on the whole favorable to the road. The flaws it mentions are such as all practical railroad men would

recognize as incident to a newly-constructed work, especially one of such magnitude as the Pacific Railroad. But there is not a particle of evidence to sustain the stories about meditated fraud on the part of the officers of the road, so freely charged by the Interior Department and its flock of greedy cormorants.

The Inference.

In view of all the facts now made public, there can be but one theory concerning the object of this raid upon the Pacific Railroad. Over four millions of dollars are yet due the company from the Government. Of course, it would be impossible for them to finish the road, should this be withheld, without disarranging all their plans and injuring their credit. Browning and his friends are thoroughly aware of this fact. They are in the last months of their control of the Interior Department. It may be that the Indian Bureau and the other sources of public plunder have not yielded well for the last year or two. Here was an opportunity which should not be allowed to go unimproved. Railroad companies are supposed to be rich. Why should they not be liberal?

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

Mrs. D. P. Bowers as "Elizabeth."

Giacometti's play of *Elizabeth* is a clever production, and it affords opportunities for a capable actress to display a wide range of abilities. It does not, however, as well on frequent repetition as *Hamlet*, for instance, and seen too often, it is in fact a trifle tedious. Mrs. Bowers essayed the role of "Elizabeth" last evening, on the occasion of her benefit, for the first time in this city, and that the audience was not as enthusiastic as they should have been must be attributed to the fact that the play has lost something of the charm of novelty. Mrs. Bowers' performance was in many respects excellent, although we do not think that the part is one exactly suited to her style of acting. In the early scenes especially she was too boisterous and too deliberate in her utterance. This, however, wore off to some extent as the play progressed, and in the second and subsequent acts some of the most striking points were rendered with fine effect. Mrs. Bowers, however, appeared to the best advantage in what might be termed the comedy scenes, and the little love passage between "Elizabeth" and Essex" in the second act was the most pleasing portion of the performance. While giving Mrs. Bowers the credit she is entitled to for her "Elizabeth," we cannot help expressing the opinion that she would do better to drop it from her repertoire, and adhere to the line of parts in which she is really great. Her "Donna Diana," for instance, in *Love's Masquerade*, Mr. Westland Marston's adaptation of the classic Spanish comedy of *El Desden con el Desden*, is a remarkably fine personation, and we wonder that she does not play it more frequently. *Love's Masquerade* was performed at the Walnut about two years ago, and it was much applauded by a large and appreciative audience. The comedy itself is elegant and very entertaining, and the part of "Donna Diana" is one of Mrs. Bowers' best. Mr. Waicot, too, on the occasion referred to, acted the part of "Don Cesar" finely, and we would like to see him and Mrs. Bowers in the same piece again. We hope, however, if the play is given during the present engagement of Mrs. Bowers, that he will make a judicious selection from his wardrobe, so as to be able to dress the part better than he did two years ago. What is the meaning of the phrase "for this occasion only" appended to an actor's name in the playbills? Mr. Waicot has been announced as the representative of "Lord Bacon" "for this occasion only" more times than we can well remember. Last night he acted the part as if he wished that "this occasion" might be the last he would ever be called upon to give countenance and support to Giacometti's burlesque of "the large-browed Verulam," and in this our wishes entirely coincide with his. Mr. McCollum made a very indifferent "Essex," except in the quarrel scene in the third act, when he played with some degree of energy and expression. The other parts were not done in such a way as to advance the reputation of the actors.

The City Amusements.

AT THE ACADEMY Adèle's opera of *L'esprit Mercantile* will be performed at the Academy to-day. Faust will be given this evening, with Madame Kottler as "Marsacette," Madame Cellini as "Mirel," Herr Himmelman as "Faust," Herr Formes as "Valentin," and Herr Hermanns as "Mephistopheles." *Ernani* is announced for Monday and Tuesday. AT THE GRAND OPERA There will be a matinee performance by the circus troupe this afternoon, at which a programme especially adapted to the tastes of the juvenile portion of the community will be presented. Robinson, the great rider, and his little son Clarence, will appear, also the diminutive ponies, comic monkeys, and amusing dogs. At the evening performance an attractive Saturday night programme will be offered. AT THE WALNUT Mrs. Bowers will appear this evening as "Mrs. Haller" in *The Stranger* and as "Lucretia Borgia." For Monday evening *Camille* is announced. A Christmas piece, entitled *The Orange Girl*, is in preparation, and will be produced during the holidays. AT THE ARCH Mr. R. Craig will have a benefit this evening, when he will present a new burlesque on *Barbe Bleue*, which will no doubt be infinitely amusing. The performance will commence with the French comedy of *Young Men*, and it will conclude with *Robert Macaire*. Mr. Craig will also give imitations of Stuart Robson and Charles Dickens, and will make a speech before the curtain after the manner of John Brougham. We understand that all the seats are sold for this evening, so it is unnecessary for us to express a hope that Mr. Craig will be complimented by a full house. AT THE AMERICAN there will be matinee and evening performance to-day. AT THE THEATRE COMIQUE the price of admission to the matinee to-day will be twenty-five cents to all parts of the house. The performances at this establishment are varied and interesting. CARL BENTZ AND MARK HASSLER'S ORCHESTRAN will perform at Musical Fund Hall this afternoon. MR. RUFUS ADAMS will give select readings at Concert Hall on next Tuesday evening, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association. Tickets can be procured at Grant's music store, No. 921 Chesnut street. AT THE CONCERT to be given on Monday evening at the church corner of Broad and Sanson streets, for the benefit of the National Printing Association for the Blind, a number of eminent musicians will appear, and a fine entertainment may be expected. It is the desire of the association to place good books, printed in raised letters, in the hands of every blind man, the object of the concert is to raise funds for carrying out this object. MISS CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG will give a grand concert at the Academy of Music on Friday evening, December 18, for the benefit of the Lincoln Institute for Soldiers' Orphans.

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