

Evening Telegraph

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1870.

THE ENGINEER CORPS OF THE NAVY.

We have every reason to believe that the staff-and-line controversy which has been agitating the navy for many years past will be definitely settled at the next session of Congress by the passage of a law that will give to the staff officers all the rights and privileges they can justly claim. A cause of present contention being removed, the attention of Congress ought to be seriously directed to a matter of much greater consequence, namely—the organization of the Engineer Corps of the navy upon a proper and substantial basis, and the establishment of an engineering school that will provide for the navy in the future a supply of properly trained officers of this class. It does not need to be demonstrated that in the future, as at present, steam and steam machinery will be elements of the highest importance in naval warfare, and the necessity for bringing the Engineer Corps to the highest state of efficiency must be recognized by all who give the subject the slightest consideration. A few years ago, in the midst of the war, Congress did, indeed, at the earnest solicitation of some of our leading naval engineers, authorize the appointment of cadet engineers, and made various provisions for their education. Those who drew up the law, however, either did not feel the importance of the subject sufficiently to give it the thought it deserved, or they were incompetent to understand the real requirements of the case, for the whole scheme fell through on account of its impracticability, and now there is the name of but one cadet engineer on the Naval Register. In the mean time the Engineer Corps has been exposed to the attacks of the line officers, who appear to be inspired by a fear that the engineers will "steal their trade," and to the demoralization induced by the bitter controversy on the subject of rank. The efficiency of the corps has been most severely crippled by the "improvement" introduced when Admiral Porter was managing the affairs of the Navy Department of sending out on each vessel a chief engineer and one or two assistants to have a general superintendence of the machinery, while the duty of standing watch was to be performed by machinists shipped for the purpose. This arrangement, we are sorry to say, was countenanced by many of the regular naval engineers, because they hoped thereby to escape much of the dirty and disagreeable duty that every person actually managing large marine engines in motion must expose himself to. An engineer who is afraid of getting dirt and grease upon his hands in the performance of his duty has no business to be in the navy, and if there are any members of the corps who are so fastidious that they would rather entrust the machinery of our national vessels to incompetent hands than to soil their own with vile grease, the sooner the Government gets rid of them the better, for it is certain that they are not inspired by that enthusiasm for their profession that all officers should possess if they are to be expected to perform good service. The plan of shipping machinists for a cruise or for a term of years is nothing more nor less than a repetition of what was tried in the incipency of the Engineer Corps when steam was first introduced into the navy. It was found then, as it will be found now, that men with sufficient attainments to be entrusted with the management of the large and complicated engines of our national war vessels will not enlist on the terms proposed, and that they will either be officers or else let the navy severally alone. The consequence will be that the Government will either be obliged to employ the services of incompetent persons, or else the few engineers on board of our man of war will be worked far beyond their strength. This latter result has thus far always occurred when the experiment has been tried.

This is but one example out of many that might be adduced to prove the fact that the Engineer Corps is not now upon a satisfactory basis, and this brings us to the necessity for a different kind of preparatory training for naval engineers than is possible at present. The members of the Engineer Corps of the navy are drawn from civil life, and are graduates for the most part either of our machine shops or our polytechnic colleges. It is rare to find a naval engineer who is, upon his entrance into the service, as thoroughly posted in both the theory and practice of his profession as he ought to be; and although, considering the disadvantages under which the corps has always labored, its general culture and professional attainments are most creditable, there are few of its members who will not readily admit that the present system is radically wrong, and that if the naval engineers of the future are to be what they ought, it is absolutely necessary that they should have all the advantages of a school conducted under the auspices of the Government, where both the theory and practice of engineering will be thoroughly taught. We do not think that it would be at all expedient to have such a school attached to the Naval Academy, but one might be established at League Island, where every facility for practical instruction would be afforded by the immense workshops that will be required for a great naval depot. The establishment of such a school as this ought to be an additional inducement for the Government to commence at an early day as possible the work of preparing League Island for the purposes to which it has been devoted. But even if all the difficulties that surround the project of establishing a naval depot at League Island are surmounted, it will be some time before the place will be in order, with all its workshops and other appendages in active operation, and meanwhile the improvement of the Engineer Corps and the importance of providing for its future

ought to engage the early attention of Congress. There is no more important subject connected with the management of the navy than this, and as there are no personal or class jealousies involved in it, as there is in the staff-and-line controversy, no good reason exists why active steps towards the creation of a school of naval engineering should not be undertaken at once, and the project advanced to a satisfactory conclusion.

REAPING CAMERONISM.

The bold fraud attempted by Senator Cameron to usurp the control of the Republican organization of the State, through the flimsy pretext of a Congressional committee, clarified the Republicans of Pennsylvania, and aroused them to vigilance against his studied attempts to debauch the party. His purpose was well understood. The Senators chosen at the late election will, during their last session in 1870, vote for Cameron's successor in the United States Senate; and he has aimed to attain the control of the means and organization of the party to force the nomination of his friends for Senators, or, failing in that, to compel them to yield to his demands under the threat of defeat. The general revolt throughout the State drove Cameron into a surrender of the control of the campaign into the hands of the State Committee, where it properly belonged, but he devoted himself with ceaseless energy to control the Republican Senatorial nominations. He succeeded by open purchase of conferees in forcing the nomination of Mr. Johnson in the Fourteenth district (Lycoming, Union, and Snyder), and made him afterwards publicly pledge himself to vote for Cameron's re-election. The people well understood that they were asked to vote for a man who meant to repeat the shameful Senatorial sale of 1867, at the cost of the honor of the Republican party, and they revolted boldly, making a change of 2400 on the Presidential vote of 1868. The vote for Senator in that district was as follows:—

Table with columns: PRESIDENT, 1868, SENATOR, 1870. Lists names and votes for Grant, Seymour, Geary, Foster, Johnson, Dill, Lycoming, Snyder, Union.

Grant's majority, 285; Geary's majority, 451; Dill's (Democratic) majority, 1119. In the Twenty-first, a double Senatorial district, the same attempt was made to subordinate a great party to the mean ambition of Cameron. He forced one of his favorites (Mr. Woods) on the ticket, and after the nominations were made, he coerced Mr. Wilson into an obligation to support his re-election. The result was a change of 3000 in the district on the vote of 1868, and over 1000 even on the light vote for Geary in 1869. The following is the vote of the district:—

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

Madame Seebach as "Mary Stuart." The utter usefulness of the Academy of Music for dramatic performances, except those of a purely spectacular character, has been demonstrated so often that it is wonderful managers and artists will risk money and reputation by going there. Of the many sufferers by the vastness of the Academy, Madame Marie Seebach, who appeared there last evening as "Mary Stuart," may be regarded the chief, unless, indeed, Mrs. Lander is entitled to share the distinction with her. Mr. Forrest, Miss Cushman, Madame Ristori, and Mr. Jannaschek are actors of such power and breadth of style that they can act with effect even in the Academy, but any one who has seen them in theatres of reasonable size can appreciate how much even they lose by going there. In the case of such an actress as Madame Seebach, whose style is marked by delicacy and grace rather than by boldness and vigor, it is only the possessors of powerful opera-glasses who are able to form an approximate judgment of her merits. Madame Seebach, by her performance of the heroine of Schiller's poetical tragedy last evening, amply demonstrated that her high reputation is well deserved, and that she is indisputably an actress of the first rank; and all of her auditors must have wished that she had been afforded an opportunity to display her abilities in a theatre where she could have herself full justice. As it was, she achieved a brilliant artistic success, and the audience fully made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in numbers. Schiller's Mary Stuart as a poem is entitled to nothing but praise. It does not fulfil the conditions of an acting tragedy, however, if we judge it by the best English standards, and the long explanatory dialogues and the want of movement make it an exceedingly difficult piece to represent in such a manner that it will not grow tiresome. In one scene only, where the poet, in violation of the facts of history, contrives a meeting between the rival queens and engages them in what we must not be considered as irrelevant in calling a grand scolding-match, is any regard shown for that important element of dramatic art which we designate stage effect, and throughout the rest of the play the unfortunate Queen of Scots appears as a passive sufferer. From the peculiar construction of the tragedy the character of "Mary Stuart" is an exceedingly difficult one to represent in such a manner as will make a decided impression upon an average audience; and if the first and fifth acts are hard to represent from dullness, the third act, where the quarrel scene comes in, holds out temptations for overacting and rant that none but an actress of superior attainments would be likely to resist. The character of "Mary Stuart," as drawn by Schiller, does not admit of many opportunities for variety in the manner of its representation, and the difference between the personation of any two actresses would depend rather upon their methods of acting and personal qualifications than upon any variations in general conception. Madame Seebach's "Mary Stuart" is essentially womanly, and with an art that is as great as it is fine she gives us, beneath the exterior of the sorrowing and broken-hearted queen, a glimpse of the wonderful eyes, the mask of whose charms appears to have as much power to blind men to her errors as they had three hundred years ago, when she destroyed her lovers with a smile. Slight in figure, graceful in movement, and with a most expressive countenance that is capable of indicating every shade of emotion, Madame Seebach outwardly fulfils the ideal of "Mary Stuart" better than any actress of the day, unless it may be Mrs. Lander. In the great scene of the third act she rises grandly to the height of the situation, and is terrible in the rage with which she hurls back the insults of the English queen, but the chief characteristics of her acting are delicacy, grace, and a capability of expressing all the finer shades of emotion. These qualities were particularly manifested in the passage to the first act where her young champion, "Mortimer," brings her news of her friends beyond the sea, with assurances of their sympathy; in the subsequent interview with "Lord Burlingame," when she is informed of the sentence that has been passed upon her; and in the affecting scene of the last act, when she bids farewell to her faithful companions, receiving a blessing from the faithful "Melton," and is only disturbed for a moment by the apparition of her lover, "Leicester," as one of the attendants at her execution. Her performance of the part lacks the wonderful power that Jannaschek and Ristori threw into it, but it is marked by a delicacy, refinement, and poetical sentiment of its own that set it apart from the efforts of those great actresses, and stamps it as a work of art of rare beauty. The company supporting Madame Seebach contains some excellent material, and particular commendation is due to Madlle Veneta for an artistic personation of "Queen Elizabeth," to Mr. Dombrowski, who appeared as "Leicester," and to Mr. Krauss, who represented "Mortimer."

Mr. Frank Drew at the Chestnut. Mr. Frank Drew appeared last evening at the Chestnut to a large audience, and received a most cordial welcome on his return to Philadelphia after an absence of three years, during which time he has been making the tour of the globe. The parts of "O'Brien" in The Irish Emigrant and "Monsieur Jacques" gave Mr. Drew excellent opportunities to display the chief characteristics of his style, which have not changed essentially during his absence. His "Monsieur Jacques" is now, as it always was, one of his most pleasing performances, and as an artistic piece of eccentric comedy it is in every way worthy of the hearty applause that it received last evening. As "O'Brien" in The Irish Emigrant Mr. Drew is not equal to some other actors whose representations of the part is indelibly impressed upon the memories of our playgoers, but it is nevertheless a performance of much merit, and combines pathos and humor in a manner that frequently calls to mind the fine comedian for whom the play was originally written.

The City Amusements. AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC this evening Madame Seebach will play "Lancaster" in the dramatization of Charlotte Brontë's celebrated novel. AT THE CHESTNUT FRANK DREW will repeat his personation of "O'Brien" in The Irish Emigrant and "Monsieur Jacques" in The Irish Emigrant. AT THE ARCH SHERIDAN'S comedy of The School for Scandal will be performed this evening. AT THE WALNUT Mr. J. S. Clark will appear this evening as "Young Gossling" in Fox and Goose, and as "Henry Dove" in Married Life. AT THE AMERICAN THEATRE, the great gymnast, will execute some wonderful feats this evening. AT LITREZ & BENEDETTI'S OPERA HOUSE an unusually attractive programme of musical instruments will be presented this evening, which will include, among other interesting features, a grand finale entitled From Ocean to Ocean, descriptive of the summer tour of the troupe and their marvelous adventures among the savages. AT THE ELEVENTH STREET OPERA HOUSE a Soiree d'Ensemble will be given this evening. AT THE ARCH STREET OPERA HOUSE a variety of entertaining features are announced for this evening. MR. CARL WOLFSOHN will give his first matinee of the season on Friday next, in the Foyer of the Academy of Music, when a programme will be presented which will include selections from the works of Bardioli, Chopin, Wolfsohn, Gutschalk, and Tausig. Mr. Wolfsohn will be assisted at this and the other matinees of his series by Mrs. Saittan, a singer of superior culture and abilities, by Mr. Rudolph Henzig, the celebrated violinist, and by Mr. William Stoll, Jr., the talented young Philadelphia violinist. Mr. Wolfsohn has done more than any other musician to cultivate a taste for classical music in Philadelphia, and his matinees are occasions of the highest enjoyment to lovers of the best musical compositions. The programme arranged for the present season presents many interesting novelties which will make the matinees unusually attractive.

THE ENGLISH OPERA.—The only opera company now before the public is the combination which will appear at the Academy of Music on Monday next, and which consists of most of the principal members of the two troupes of the last season. The artists in this company are all of high repute, and their ability to represent in excellent style the various works that are announced for the season of twelve nights and two matinees cannot be doubted. As our only certain prospects for opera this winter are those which this troupe presents, their performances ought to attract large and fashionable audiences. The operations for next week will be as follows:— On Monday, L'Introuvable; on Tuesday, Tancredi; on Wednesday, The Hunchback; on Thursday, Dinorah; on Friday, the first time in English; on Friday, Matilda; on Saturday, afternoon, Fra Diavolo; and on Saturday evening, Oberon. The price of season tickets for the entire series of fourteen performances is fixed at the very low rate of \$16, and their sale will take place to-day and to-morrow at the box office of the Academy of Music. The sale of single seats will commence on Thursday at the Academy and at the music store of F. A. North & Co., No. 1026 Chestnut street.

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