STARTLING DISCLOSURES!

THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING AND ITS HEAD.

A NEST OF CORRUPTION!

The Indefinite Contingent Fund Indefinitely Distributed.

A SAINTLY PROFLIGATE!

"WAYS THAT ARE DARK, AND TRICKS THAT ARE VAIN!"

AN INVESTIGATION IMPERATIVE.

[By an employee of the bureau]

[18—]

STARTLING DISCLOSURES!

By the various Acts of Congress having relation to the engraving, printing and distribution of the bonds, treasury notes and other securities of the United States, it is provided that a certain ratio of the amount represented by such securities—one per cent. in a part, and one-half of one per cent. in the remainder—be a fund in the Treasury to be drawn upon to defray the costs of such printing and distribution. Taking into consideration the vast quantities and the various forms of these securities, ranging from bonds representing many thousands of dollars down to pieces of fractional currency, and the changes and replacements that have been continually taking place, the sum they represent cannot, in the aggregate, be computed at less than twelve thousand millions of dollars. Such, according to the best lights which the published documents afford, is a close approximation to the true amount; and this at the lowest ratio would yield sixty, and at an average of the ratios, ninety millions of dollars as the sum contributed to the fund in the space of a little more than twelve years. This is what is known as the

INDEFINITE CONTINGENT FUND;

a fund which has no legal existence except as related above, and concerning whose magnitude and expenditure nothing directly appears in any annual report made to Congress by any officer of the government. Out of this fund, without any specific act of Congress for its creation, has grown, from small, and almost imperceptible beginnings, what is known as the

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING,

which, at first, employing the services of a few men and women to affix a stamp to the Treasury issues and trim their edges, has become an extensive establishment, giving occupation to from ten to fourteen hundred

superintendents, clerks, artists and operatives, and paying annually in wages and salaries, as well as for materials, over two millions of dollars. For the payment of this array of assistants, no appropriation is made by Congress; nor, with the exception of the Chief of the Bureau, do their names appear in the official registers. Wages, salaries and all the outlays of the Bureau for materials or services are paid on the order of the Chief on the fund under consideration; and except through the provision of law that all drafts for sums of one thousand dollars and upwards shall require the endorsement of the First Auditor of the Treasury, there is no check whatever upon the expenditures in behalf of the Bureau, nor any limit to the authority of its head, in respect to the purpose or amount of such expenditures. It will readily be seen that a fund so vast, subject to the control of one man, and with, in any case, little more than a nominal supervision cannot but afford an

INVITATION TO CORRUPTION.

A fund of from sixty to ninety millions of dollars subject to the call of an individual who is required to make no report of his acts to any higher authority, and is amenable to no rule except such an one as may be easily evaded, is a temptation to which no man should be exposed, and which not every one could be expected to resist. The fact that such looseness in respect to the custody and disbursement of public money is permitted to continue year after year, is a startling proof of the want of integrity or the want of capacity of those to whom the duty of protecting the interests of the State is entrusted. As this fund does not fall within the rule which requires that after a certain period, the balance of unexpended appropriations shall be covered into the Treasury, there are no means open to the inquiring public or to Congress of ascertaining its amount at any particular period, or of discovering by whom or for what purposes it has been depleted. How much of it has been from time to time drawn out to respond to party exigencies or to the private wants of men in power is, and perhaps must forever remain, a mystery. The fact that there is a fund so exposed to illegitimate reduction, while it invites robbery also invites suspicion, and whether the current suspicions have outstripped the facts or have fallen far behind them, is a point, which, for the sake of the public and of all honest parties, deserves to be fully investigated. There are, however,

IMPEDIMENTS TO INVESTIGATION,

which, in spite of a prevalent feeling that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is steeped in, to call them by no harsher name, abuses, have hitherto prevented, and unless there should come to be an awakened public sentiment upon the subject, may, for a long time, prevent an examination into their extent and character. This is due

to the fact that the Bureau, through the management of its Chief, has been enabled to establish a species of reign of terror over all or nearly all within the line of whose duty it would fall to ask the attention of the public to the circumstances, or to make them the subject of an official investigation. It is not so much because corruption is unsuspected as because men are afraid that a protest will in some way or other, react against themselves. There is scarcely a member of Congress who has not his niece, his poor kinswoman, or his female *constituent* in the Bureau; scarcely a journalist or correspondent who is not in a similar situation, and scarcely a man or woman in Washington who is not under like bonds to preserve the peace toward the Bureau and its dictator. As the rules of civil-service examination have not been applied to the appointees of the Bureau, as practically, the entire authority to admit and to dismiss is in the hands of the Chief, and as he is without limit in respect to the number or the compensation of his employees, it is obvious that his means to reward allegiance and to punish disloyalty are sufficient to place him almost beyond the danger of a serious attempt to interfere with his prerogatives. In fact it may almost be said that the abuses of the Bureau exist in the face of knowledge enough to render an investigation a matter of duty, and

BY TACIT PERMISSION,

on the part of those, whose obligations to the public are sufficient to render it imperative. Without doubt, it is a great convenience to a party to have a central fund with no red-tape Cerberus holding inquest over its mode of distribution, and a great convenience to public men to have an asylum where, without distinction of party, they may deposit at wages, their mistresess, relatives and dependents; but it is more than questionable whether either the public interest or private virtue is increased by such an arrangement.

GEORGE B. McCARTEE,

a man diminutive in stature, and equally so in ability and honesty, is the official head of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Within his department he is supreme and irresponsible. He appoints and discharges, he audits and pays, he contracts and purchases without restraint or supervision. In this nest of corruption—for it will appear in the sequel to be a nest of corruption, social as well as financial—he presides over a horde of timid dependents, and is surrounded by an array of spies and informers. To preserve his place and his power, to escape investigation and to prevent the disreputable secrets of his establishment from escaping to the open air is the calling to which his untiring vigilance is devoted; and, to this end, that reign of terror which prevails elsewhere and, in the city of Washington threatens all

who would call in question the acts of any branch of the local or general administration, is intensified in his immediate dominions. Each of his employees is kept, as far as possible, in ignorance of what is done by the remainder, and for one to be detected in imparting his knowledge to another is speedily followed by the expulsion of the offender. It is this which has made possible such transactions as the following.

A SPECULATION OF SIZE.

There is a process used in the preparation of the Fractional Currency which is called sizing. The pretended purpose of this sizing is to render the notes water-proof. Why the issues of the United States Treasury should be water-proofed or why these particular issues and not the others should be thus favored has not been explained, but such is the fact. Very costly and extensive machinery and a large number of operatives are employed to render the dimes, halves, and quarters of the Currency impervious to water; with what success, is to the public unknown, as the process of washing those evidences of National wealth has not been very generally adopted. The size employed in this branch of money-making is a cheap compound of soap and water, with a flavor of alum, costing, in all probability not over five cents per gallon, but which, being a patented article, is sold to the government at the handsome rate of two dollars. A certain Mr. Williams, a former, and, it is not impossible, a present partner of McCartee is the nominal patentee, and is and has been, for several years in the receipt of over one hundred thousand dollars per annum, for size on royalty, or both together. Machinery for the application of this material to the moneys of the people has been erected at a cost of over fifty thousand dollars, and experiments in different forms of machinery before that in present use was adopted, were carried on at the cost of the government, during which, large quantities of expensive implements and appliances were created and discarded. Besides this vast outlay for fixtures, and the annual one hundred thousand dollars paid to the said Williams, the process costs the government annually for wages paid to those employed in sizing, over thirty thousand dollars, and, so faithful is the head of the Bureau in the work of water-proofing, that when it was determined by the Treasury Department to withhold from circulation, three hundred and sixty thousand sheets of printed notes containing the head of the late Secretary Stanton, the whole of those three hundred and sixty thousand sheets, were sized, calendered and finished before they were delivered over to be destroyed. This liberality is in somewhat marked contrast with the spirit of economy lately manifested by the Chief of the Bureau under the influence of the recent retrenchment flurry, when he proposed to reduce the wages of the workmen under him from one dollar seventy-five cents to one dollar sixty

cents per day, and which he was only prevented from carrying into effect by the remonstrances of members of Congress and others who commiserated their condition. Every

GOVERNMENT HAS ITS SECRETS;

bnd there are men who conceal their good acts from public inspection, aut whether the darkness that surrounds the doings of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is the result of the modesty of its manager is not altogether apparent. It is, however, a fact, that the annual one hundred thousand dollars paid to the friend or confederate of Chief McCartee, is paid in such a manner, and in such sums that the drafts never pass under the inspection of any auditor of the Treasury, nor do the payments appear in any book of account of the Bureau or of the Department. Moreover, the sizing, machinery and process with their huge tanks and cauldrons and gangs of workmen and workwomen, which were once ostentatiously exhibited to visitors are now kept jealously closed from the eyes of those who might be tempted to inquire into their utility.

THE CHIEF IN A NEW CHARACTER.

It is well known, that in the Engraving and Printing Bureau, only the faces of the notes of the government are engraved and printed, the devices upon the backs of the same being done under contracts with the American and other Bank Note Companies in New York. The process is as follows: the paper is taken from the paper-room in the Treasury Building, carried to New York by express, and there receives the reverse impression. It is then brought back to Washington, where the obverse impression is given, after which the printed sheets are finished, divided, and the notes counted and prepared for delivery and circulation. The Columbia Bank Note Company, of Washington, was, for a long time, anxious to obtain a portion of the work of printing the backs of the notes, and made frequent application to the head of the Bureau for permission to contract for that purpose. These applications, however, were met by the reply that the head of the Bureau was determined to do the whole work—the backs as well as the faces—within his own department, and that as soon as the contracts with the New York firms had expired, and he could make the necessary arrangements, he was resolved to take the matter into his own hands. There was some surprise felt, therefore, by those, who knew the circumstances, when it transpired that extensive contracts for back-printing had been made with the Columbian Company. The reason for this alteration in the policy of the head of the Bureau was not understood, until the fact came to the knowledge of a few that he had become a large stockholder—the stock being issued in the name of, and held by, another party in the Columbian. This places the head

of the Bureau in the interesting position of a party acting as the government entering into a contract with himself as a private individual; and when to this is added the fact that a former subordinate in the Bureau, who was a small stockholder in the Columbian, was compelled through him to choose between the disposal of his stock or the surrender of his place, the rule by which he himself should be judged is readily discoverable. The convenience of an arrangement of this kind, and the facilities it affords for the accumulation of gain are obvious; but whether it is calculated to foster integrity or promote economy in the public service is more than questionable. And it is another significant fact in this connection that a number of the presses, employed by the Columbian in the work of back-printing came out of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the ink used for the same purpose is drawn from the same establishment. Of the facts as they are related, however, there can be, consistently with the truth, no denial, and they are all susceptible of proof by the mouths of creditable witnesses before any tribunal authorized to inquire.

A LIBERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Attempts have been made in some quarters to justify the practice adopted by several officers of the government, of employing a coachman and domestic servants, the subordinates of their respective departments. Whether it is right in any case is worthy of consideration; but, admitting it to be right in the case of Presidents and Cabinet officers, it is obvious that there is a point in the descending official scale beyond which it should be discouraged. Probably no one connected with the administration has manifested a higher degree of liberality towards himself in this respect than the head of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, several of whose domestics seldom make their appearance at the Bureau except at stated periods, to sign the payrolls and receive their respective salaries. These are facts which are known as well to persons without as to those within the Bureau, and the freedom and publicity with which it is done is proof of the sense of security under which the practice is prosecuted.

A SAINTLY DEBAUCHEE.

How far it is proper to inquire into and expose defects in the private lives of public men is a point upon which there is room for differences of opinion. When, however, a placeman makes extravagant pretences to virtue and sets up his purity as an especial element of title to the place he occupies, his lapses become a matter of public concern and this especially if he is seen to make use of the facilities afforded by his office to supply the means for illegitimate indulgence. George B. McCartee, the head of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, holds a

position of unlimited authority over the means of livelihood of more than five hundred women. It is not necessary to explain to what an extent this authority must afford him the agencies to prescribe the private conduct of those over whom his mastery is so absolute; or, how difficult it must be for women in need or in terror to resist the advances of one, who is so potent to reward compliance or to punish obduracy. Placed as the official guardian of so many, the head of this Bureau should be a man of *Irreproachable Character*, and this the present head admits by making extraordinary pretences to personal purity. He is a professor of religion, a loud professor; a pillar of the church of the Epiphany, one whose voice is heard loudest in the responses, whose *Amen* is the most sonorous, and whose boots creak the most emphatically while he passes the plate to receive the contributions of the faithful. He is one also who professes the utmost abhorrence of every form of vicious indulgence; who keeps a body of detectives in pay to spy out and hunt down all whom he suspects of unauthorized lapses from the laws of chastity, and from whose tongue drops in uncommon profusion the golden maxims of morality.

Yet Mr. McCartee is far from being the saint he represents himself. Closely kept as they may be and guarded by a system which punishes alike the guilty and the suspected, the secrets of the establishment do, nevertheless, now and then find their way to the light, making it certain that beneath the surface of fair profession and exterior decorum, there is a moral looseness which would create dismay if it were all exposed. The favorites of the head of the Bureau and of his masculine friends—for the establishment is an asylum for the paramours of more than one, and of those who rank higher than McCartee—are generally distinguished by the small services they perform and the high wages they receive; and this, to the disgust of the honest who are compelled to live in association with those who subsist upon what they consider the wages of prostitution.

A STATE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Details of the practices and their consequences in increasing the population of the republic might be multiplied to almost any extent; but there is one case, so flagrant in itself, and the facts of which are so susceptible of proof, that it will serve as a pregnant illustration of the moral condition of the Bureau under its present management.

Several months ago the widow of the lately deceased chief clerk of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was discovered by the lady in whose house she lodged in the act of having illicit intercourse with Geo. B. McCartee. It having been made necessary for the widow to vacate her quarters, she was taken possession of by McCartee who provided and furnished a house in which she now resides. She receives five dollars a day from the Bureau which she never enters except to visit the Chief and sign the pay-roll. Occasionally books of record or

of accounts are carried to her residence—which is against the rule of the Department—that she may seem to perform some public service. Two colored messengers of the Bureau are detailed alternately for her domestic occasions, or to drive her to her airings in a Treasury carriage drawn by a Treasury horse, and her sister receives four dollars and a-half per day from the same liberal source of supply, for which her services are neither severe nor important.

A LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

It would be irrational not to expect from so exemplary a professor as Mr. Geo. B. McCartee, a good display of official liberality towards his favorite conventicle; nor would expectation on that head be doomed to disappointment. The Church of the Epiphany may be said, without exaggeration, to flourish like a *willow planted by a river* under his patronage. To be a member of that communion is one of the directest roads to his favor; and wages in the Bureau rise in proportion to the zeal and devotion of the communicant; in fact, the Church of the Epiphany and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, seem almost to maintain the relation of mutual appendices, and to exhibit as perfectly as the circumstances will permit, that intimate union of the ecclesiastical with the political function, which, in the opinion of some, constitutes the best possible form of civil establishment. Nor does the patronage of the Chief of the Bureau end with this vicarious mode of contribution. The services of his official subordinates are freely lent to the Lord, whenever the occasion requires. Mechanics of the Bureau repair and embellish the sacred edifice upon similar terms of compensation, and the State without being made officially aware of the circumstance, becomes a laborer in the cause of spreading the gospel.

This statement has not been prepared with a view to cast discredit upon any worthy officer or merely to create a sensation. If one-half of the matters related therein are true, an examination into the financial and moral condition of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is imperative. Not without the most careful examination into the sources of positive evidences, have the charges of moral delinquency on the part of the head of the Bureau been prepared for publication, and the facts are now in the possession of too many to admit of their safe denial.

AN EMPLOYEE OF THE BUREAU.