

## Correspondence.

ANTWERP, Belgium,  
Dec. 7th, 1872.

Editor Deseret News:

In company with President Smith and party, I arrived at Haarlem en route to Amsterdam, on Wednesday the 4th of December. It is a town of considerable importance, containing thirty thousand inhabitants—in former periods the residence of the Counts of Holland. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, during the Spanish war, the citizens of Haarlem, after suffering seven months' siege, in which they endured the severest hardships, were forced to capitulate. Ten thousand people on that occasion perished by famine or lost their lives in the terrible encounters of those bloody struggles. The commandant, and the Protestant clergy, together with two thousand towns people, were barbarously executed after having surrendered. Frederick of Toledo, son of the Duke of Alva, commanded the besiegers, and had given solemn assurances of life and honorable treatment. We saw traces of a striking character, still remaining as sad mementoes of the atrocious deeds.

St. Bavo, erected about three hundred and seventy years ago, is the principal church in Haarlem. This is a magnificent structure, four hundred and twenty-five feet in length; its nave is supported by twenty-eight massive columns, eighteen feet in circumference. This church is renowned for its famous organ, which, for a long time, has been considered the largest and most powerful in the world. It has four key boards—sixty-four stops, five thousand metal and two thousand wooden pipes; the largest of these pipes is thirty-two feet long, and fifteen inches in diameter. It is very beautiful—adorned with marble statuary, life size, and in attractive attitudes representing personages playing on instruments of various descriptions. We employed the organist and three or four blowers, to exhibit its merits. Imitations of different tones of the piano forte, the trumpet, whistle, battle call, sacred music, closing with a tremendous thunder storm—all were executed with admirable accuracy, fully satisfying us with its wonderful capabilities.

We saw a cannon ball which was nearly buried in the wall, having been thrown through an opposite window from a Spanish gun during the siege above mentioned.

While exploring this church for objects of curiosity, we were interrupted by the approach of a wedding party, which afforded some diversion, especially to our young tourists, who had never witnessed a Dutch wedding. The bride and groom were accompanied by a grave clerical gentleman, to whom we bowed with becoming reverence, and with smiles of our hearty approval to the happy groom and blushing bride. As we discovered nothing in the ceremonies surprisingly characteristic, I omit description.

In front of this church is a bronze statue of Coster, formerly a citizen of Haarlem, representing him as the inventor of the art of printing.

Having spent two hours in that interesting town, we took cars for Amsterdam, where we arrived about half past 3 p. m. Amsterdam is the great commercial city of Holland, numbering 275,000 inhabitants, of whom 57,000 are Roman Catholics, and 28,000 Jews. It is built over a salt marsh, upon piles driven from forty to fifty feet into the ground. We were informed that one house only, in this city, stands on any other foundation. These people apparently feel as secure upon these wooden posts as if founded on solid ground, although at one period, this faith in their safety was fearfully shaken. While busied in making canals and windmills—smoking t eir pipes, unsuspecting of danger, the enemy in vast numbers had succeeded in securing a lodgment beneath the city and commenced mining and sapping the entire substructure—penetrating and cutting into the very heart of these underpinnings. These fearful invaders were wood worms! They were honey-combing the wooden piles with alarming rapidity, threatening to tumble all Amsterdam into the great salt marsh. The whole city was in consternation! Every Dutchman's ingenuity and military tactics were called into requisition to devise measures to rout the enemy. Some of the crusaders were captured while working the trenches, and submitted to the inspection of zoologists, in hopes of discovering some vulnerable point, susceptible of attack, but all to no purpose

—still they were mining and sapping, boring and eating, and, by millions, doubling and quadrupling. At last, however, these belligerents ended their hostilities after the same fashion as Bonaparte's army in Russia—the Holland winter finished them. It appears that these insects had been imported by some vessel from a warm climate—the colder regions of the north compelling them to succumb and leave the honest Dutchman to smoke his meerschaum in peace and security. Living specimens of these insects are preserved in the Cabinet of zoologists in Amsterdam, where they may be seen by the tourist.

The expense of these foundations for building frequently exceeds that of their superstructures. The neglect of proper attention to this matter, is liable to result in disaster. An extensive warehouse, containing 3,500 tons of grain, was precipitated into the marsh in consequence of the inefficiency of the foundation.

The city is about nine miles in circumference—intersected by numerous canals, dividing it into nearly one hundred islands, which circumstance, in connexion with other resemblances has given it the title of the "Venice of the North." Many of these canals are very broad—flanked with avenues of tall elms, presenting a handsome and picturesque appearance, comparing favorably with the finest streets in any city we have visited. Two hundred and eighty bridges form the crossings of these canals. A reservoir about thirteen miles distant, supplies the inhabitants with drinking-water, which is conveyed in pipes.

We visited the Museum which contains many valuable paintings, chiefly the works of the old Dutch school. The finest edifice in Amsterdam is the "King's Palace," which rests on a foundation of thirteen thousand, six hundred and fifty-nine piles; its length is two hundred and eighty-two feet—two hundred and thirty-five in width, and one hundred and sixteen feet high. Its tower is sixty-six feet high, containing a splendid set of chimneys. The interior of the palace is grand and beautiful—its principal apartments, through which we passed, are constructed of white marble, and many sumptuously decorated. The "Council Chamber" is one hundred and twenty feet long by sixty broad over the entrance, and opposite to it we noticed flags and trophies wrested from the Spaniards and other enemies. We also visited the Navy Yard, and were conducted through the different departments of ship building. Steamers, monitors and iron clads were in course of erection. We were amused in viewing the operation of their ponderous and complicated machinery. By a downward stroke chunks over three inches in diameter were punched out of cold iron plate above an inch in thickness. Ponderous iron pillars were pared, polished and grooved blocks of iron eight inches thick were turned and twisted into every desirable shape. It seemed impossible that any projectile could be forced through an eight inch block of iron; we were, however, shown one of this description which had been perforated by a cannon ball after having passed through a covering of oak, at least one foot in thickness.

The most remarkable trade in this city is that of diamond cutting, which is done almost exclusively by Jews. The stones are cut or sawed through by means of wires covered with diamond dust and polished by being pressed by the workmen against a rapidly revolving iron disk, moistened with a mixture of oil and diamond dust. This last material has proved to be indispensable in this work, as no other substance will make impressions on the diamond.

Amsterdam is celebrated for its numerous charitable institutions. It has upwards of forty designed for the benefit of the sick, aged and indigent, lunatics, foundlings and widows, all being supported by voluntary contributions. Upwards of twenty thousand poor are sustained at the expense of private individuals. We saw a number of establishments for the poor, which appeared more like palaces for the rich than dwellings for the destitute. This city, as well as many others in Holland, is famous in its liberal arrangements for educating the poorer classes. The "Society for Public Welfare," founded in 1784, by a Baptist minister, is an admirable institution, having for its object the education and moral culture of the lower classes, and extending its operations throughout the kingdom of Holland. It comprises 14,000 members who subscribe two dollars annually. It educates teachers, publishes school-books, establishes Sunday schools, reading-rooms, and libraries, publishes

works of literature, bestows rewards, and confers public distinctions on persons who have made themselves conspicuous by their generosity and philanthropic conduct.

We left Amsterdam, Thursday the 5th, at 2 p. m., returned to Rotterdam, which we left on the following morning, and at 1 p. m. arrived at this place.

LORENZO SNOW.

## THE CREDIT MOBILIER.

Persons who wish to go to the bottom of the "Credit Mobilier" scandal, now so much talked about, will do well to read the report of Ames and Alley's lawsuit with the state of Pennsylvania in the 57th volume of the Pennsylvania state reports—the last (and 17th) volume issued by P. Frazer Smith, the present state reporter. It begins on the 23rd page of the volume and covers nearly 70 pages; containing the proceedings of two jury trials and two hearings under writ of error before the Supreme Court of the state. The first trial was November 23, 1869, before Judge Pearson, who so charged the jury that they gave a verdict of \$407,483 against the "Credit Mobilier" for a state tax on the fat dividends of that company in 1867-8, when Oakes Ames was placing the stock "where it will do us the most good." At that time, as shown in the trial, the capital stock of the "Credit Mobilier" was \$3,750,000 and it had declared two dividends, December 12, 1867, in bonds of the Union Pacific road valued at \$2,700,000; one dividend, January, 3, 1868, (in bonds) of \$637,500; two dividends (one cash and one bonds) June 17, 1868, of \$2,250,000 (cash) and \$525,000 (bonds); one dividend (bonds, July 3, 1868, afterward proved to be bogus) of \$2,390,625; and finally, one cash dividend, July 8, 1868, of \$1,125,000. This makes a total of \$3,375,000 in cash, and \$3,862,375 in good bonds, about two-thirds of which were valued at 85 and the rest at 35 at the time of dividend. Here then was an aggregate of dividends amounting to about 170 per cent, in seven months, not counting the spurious \$2,390,625; and upon this the state claimed a tax "of one-half mill on the capital stock for each one per cent. of dividends" above 6 per cent. a year, amounting to \$481,406, and a 10 per cent. penalty for failure to report dividends, of \$48,141; so that the whole amount claimed by Benjamin H. Brewster, the attorney-general, was \$529,547. The jury gave him, as above stated, 407,483, making a reduction for the bogus dividend of July 3, 1868. But Messrs. Ames and Alley excepted errors in the judge's ruling, and got a new trial, December 19, 1870—two years ago—before the same Judge Pearson, who laid down the law as he had been instructed by the Supreme Court, and the Jury again gave a verdict for the State of \$638,868; which, in November 1871, was again set aside, Justice Agnew dissenting, and another new trial has been granted.

In course of these trials, which, we presume, are still going on—for no Pennsylvania jury, we take it, will ever give a verdict for Ames and Alley—a host of interesting revelations were made and there are many yet to be made. It seems that the "Credit Mobilier of America" (so baptized by George Francis Train in 1864), was first incorporated as the "Pennsylvania Fiscal Agency" by the same legislature in 1859. The charter may be found in the acts of 1860 (not 1859,) page 896; and the original incorporators were Samuel J. Relocs, Ellis Lewis, Garrick Mallory, Duff Green, David R. Porter, Jacob Ziegler, Charles M. Hall, Horn R. Kneass, Robert J. Ross, William T. Dougherty, Isaac Huges, C. M. Reed, William Workman, Asa Packer, Jesse Lazear, C. S. Kauffman, C. L. Ward, and Henry M. Fuller. Duff Green, the old Jacksonian editor and politician, procured the charter and became president of the company which was exempted from individual liability in its stockholders, was allowed to buy and sell railroad bonds, advance money to railroads and contractors, make contracts, etc.—in short, to do almost everything but banking and the issue of bills. The capital stock was fixed at \$5,000,000, but business might begin when \$500,000 was subscribed and \$25,000 paid in. The agency organized, but the war coming on, and its projected operations being at the South, it did very little business. In 1864, by a characteristic fraud on the part of Duff Green's associate, who had been chosen secretary, the charter was sold out to Train, Durant, etc.—Green being supposed to be dead—and by act of March 26, 1864, the Pennsylvania legislature changed its name to "The Credit Mobilier of America." In 1865 a contract was made with one Hoxie, to build two hundred and forty-seven

miles of the Union Pacific road, and this contract was assigned to the Credit Mobilier; and the taxes due from dividends thus accruing were paid to the state of Pennsylvania. But, on August 16, 1867, Oakes Ames made a contract with the railroad, in which he was a large owner, to build six hundred and sixty-seven miles, and this was assigned October 15, 1867, to certain trustees, for their own benefit and for that of the Credit Mobilier, of which they were the chief stockholders, along with Oakes Ames. These "trustees" were Oliver Ames, John B. Alley, Henry S. McComb, T. C. Durant, Sidney Dillon, C. S. Bushnell and Benjamin E. Bates; and it is out of the action of these eight men that all the Pennsylvania lawsuits and all the congressional scandal has come. Precisely what the agreement of October 15, 1867, meant, no court has yet found out,—but under it the "Credit Mobilier" declared dividends of \$9,628,125, partly bogus, as above mentioned. Previous to this agreement, however, the state legislature had again amended the charter of Duff Green's old "Fiscal Agency," giving it larger powers; this was done, February 28, 1867.

In the course of these trials, John B. Alley testified that he went into the "Credit Mobilier" company in 1865, the Hoxie contract having been assigned to it in May, 1865; that Ames was in it before, and went in to avoid personal liability; that when the Hoxie contract terminated, J. M. S. Williams, now member of Congress elect from the Harvard college district, took another contract to build the road, which was not fully executed, but "was designed to have been turned over to Credit Mobilier, if certain legislation could be procured," which was not; that the Ames party in May, 1867, turned Durant out, who killed the Williams contract; that out of this quarrel grew at last the agreement of October 15, 1867, which brought in all the dividends. For the rest of the story we refer the curious reader at present to the Pennsylvania report above mentioned.—Springfield, Mass., Republican.

## PRESIDENT G. A. SMITH AND MR. THIERS.

Editor Deseret News:

Having found in *L'Evenement*, Victor Hugo's organ in Paris, a singular account of the reception of President Geo. A. Smith and party by Mr. Thiers, I literally translate it for the benefit of your numerous readers.

LOUIS A. BERTRAND.

"On the 16th of December, Mr. Thiers received Mr. George A. Smith, the President of the Legislature of Utah, in America.

"Mr. Smith, having presented himself at one o'clock at the presidential mansion, could not be received. Mr. Barthélemy Saint Hilaire (President Thiers's private secretary) had previously granted to him and to the Mormons of his party a ticket of admittance to the National Assembly.

"This evening Mr. Smith returned with seven persons of his retinue, all Mormons, and was received at about half past nine o'clock.

"He is a tall man, about fifty years old, with a very respectable appearance; he has, as well as his companions, rather a solemn and affected dignity which characterizes the chief of the Indian tribes, from which they use the expressive language; but nothing discloses in these men the fanaticism of their morals.

"The President of the Legislature of Utah conversed with the President of the French republic by means of an interpreter; he gave him some curious particulars on the Mormons, consisting at this time of Americans, Englishmen, Germans, Spaniards, Italians and a few Frenchmen, and numbering about 120,000 souls.

"They are going to Jerusalem to perform certain rites of their religion; for, in spite of their polygamy, the Mormons are Christians.

"Mr. Smith went away at about half past ten o'clock. After having explained to the President of the republic that he could not pass over Europe without presenting his respects to so illustrious a man, he intrusted the interpreter to tell him, 'that he implored the Almighty, with all his soul, to load with his choice blessings the President of the French Republic and the great people of which he is the leader.'

"Then he went away with his retinue, always with the same gravity.

"The Mormons will leave Paris for Palestine to-morrow."

Deeds and Blanks for sale at DESERET NEWS OFFICE.