

THE PANAMA SCANDALS.

PARIS, DEC. 28.

During the last two days some papers have given publicity to the rumour that the result of the autopsy of Baron Reinach's body had been to indicate that he had taken poison some eight hours before going to bed. The monstrous insinuation was thrown out that poison was administered to him by one or more of those who were known to have called upon him at an early hour in the evening of his death. The insinuation and these rumours have been scattered to the winds by the appearance in this evening's *Temps* of a note stating that Dr. Brouardel conferred yesterday on the subject with M. Franqueville, and that up to the present, in the viscera submitted to ex-

amination, not a trace of poison of any sort has been detected. The organs have been found to be absolutely healthy, and Dr. Brouardel concludes that death was natural. But it is a significant indication of the tension now existing in Paris and of the morbid credulity which characterizes almost everybody, that a man like Dr. Brouardel, distinguished as a *satant* and a man of honour, should feel it necessary to ask the Court to appoint two chemical experts to attest the accuracy of his conclusions. This of itself is a sign of the times.—*Our Own Correspondent.*

PARIS, DEC. 28.

According to the *Figaro*, the authorities in the course of their search at the offices of the Panama Company made a most important discovery—namely, a copy letterbook belonging to M. Fontanes which, it is said, compromises a large number of Senators and Deputies. The book is said to reveal the whole of the company's correspondence with M. Cornelius Herz and M. Arton in regard to the steps which it was proposed to take in Parliament, and to contain the names of all concerned, together with their individual demands, and records of the payment of various sums, with dates.—*Reuter.*

VIENNA, DEC. 28.

To-day's *Deutsche Zeitung* publishes an account of an interview which a member of its staff has just had in Paris with M. Zola, in the course of which the great French novelist expressed himself as follows :—

“ It is an affair which will have no further consequences. What, indeed, has this scandal divulged that is new? The whole thing is a well-known story, and one which is common to all Europe. The only difference is that our eager and reckless Press deals in broad daylight with what in other countries is simply hushed up. It is in our character to get excited and to do everything hastily, whereas in your own country, Germany, and also in Italy the greatest discretion is observed. Our politics are as honest as any in Europe. You know very well that the French woman is just as honest, that she is just as virtuous a girl, and quite as faithful a wife and good a mother and daughter as those of any other country. But we have a Press and a literature that thirsts for facts, that fanatically and without circumspection ferrets into every corner of human corruption, revealing what in your country is carefully concealed. I ask you what does the Panama affair prove? That politics cost money, that you take money where you can get it, and that all Parliamentary groups have their own financial friends behind them. Do you believe it is different in any country in Europe? It is certainly mean, but politics are precisely a very dirty business and will always remain so. It may be a fault, but it may also be a virtue, for us to wash our dirty linen in the presence of all Europe. The Republic is strong enough to take such a liberty without incurring any danger. I have firm confidence in the security of our future, which can only be furthered by the severity of our self-criticism. We possess the most laborious and honest officials, the most honourable and fearless Press, while our Parliamentarians are no worse than their business obliges them to be. The Royalist hopes are ridiculous, and the victory of Socialism, in which I believe, is not yet at hand. The present Republic will pursue its course in peace.”

Another Viennese newspaper has received a letter from M. Jules Simon, of which the following is an extract :—

“ There can be no doubt that certain rogues intimidated the Panama Canal Company in order to extort money from it. Some of them were even members of Parliament. If there had only been one it would have been too many. Yet perhaps it will be found that there were five or six. It will be difficult, perhaps impossible, to prove that the money received influenced their votes. As a matter of fact, reduced to its proper proportions, the affair does not justify the fuss to which it has given rise. The stories connected with it have been exaggerated in such a manner, and such a *mise-en-scène* has been arranged, that to me, at all events, it appears that the objects in view were noise and scandal rather than justice. There was a moment of confusion, but now people are beginning to return to truth and good sense. The promoters of this business have every reason to be satisfied with our excessive credulity.”—*Our Own Correspondent.*