

## France's Second Empire.

## QUEER REVELATIONS OF THE COURT LIFE OF THAT PERIOD.

(From the London News.)

Walking down the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle with a most respectable Bonapartist, on our way to see "La Petite Marilee," I asked him why he wanted to have the Empire back again, when he gave due consideration to the fact that comic operas, with frisky music, toothsome suppers, and actresses without any Quakerlike superabundance of clothing, were still as plentiful in Paris as ever. The Imperialist gentleman acknowledged that this form of debate was not without a show of reason, in so far as the right of private judgment was concerned, and that every politician's innermost thoughts were his own, whatever sentiments he might think fit to express in public, as that admirable philosopher, single speech Hamilton, had taught the British legislators of the last century in his immortal work on Parliamentary logic; but my friend (who is a serene and fat man) demurely added that he had observed it gave a man better social standing to be a Bonapartist than to be a Republican; and as he had a comfortable income which sufficed for all his wants, he was not obliged to be rational.

This answer set me thinking of a curious manuscript memoir I have lately seen, and which is making some noise in select society at this present writing. It is the unvarnished tale of the old court life of the late reign, and contains some revelations queer and sad about the Second Empire. It is from this memoir I learned that, after the Orsini business, a Perfect—no matter who—received an order from the Minister of the Interior to arrest twelve of the inhabitants of his department. "Who?" inquired the Perfect. "Never mind who," replied the Minister, with a jolly frankness which became him well, "only strike high, to strike terror." Consequently a dozen local notables, comprising a scientific chemist, a manufacturer, a paper maker, four lawyers, and five notaries were hastily thrust into prison. The cause of their incarceration was never explained to them, but it cost them a round sum each to get free. Indeed, while even cario tourists represented Napoleon III. as a Sphinx of wisdom, arrests of citizens and most other affairs of State appear to have been sheerfully managed by chance or rule of thumb. There was not half so much talk about legislation as there is in constitutional countries; for the Imperial councils were occupied with more serious matters, and had an especially tender regard for female sufferings. Thus at a Cabinet Council held at the Tuilleries, and presided over by Cæsar in person, the first question discussed was the hurt which a dancing girl had done to her ankle. It was spoken of in whispers as a deep secret. There were nine members present at the Minister's table.

## CARES OF STATE NOT WEIGHTY.

They sat well back in their chairs as men who had nothing to do, and saw no need to excite themselves, and they looked admiringly at their own nails. After the incident of the dancing girl had closed, silence reigned over the august assembly. The Emperor seemed to be suffering. His face, says the memoir, looked "extinguished" and he appeared to have in him no more life than sufficed to twirl his moustache. He was ashen pale. At length, as nobody spoke, his Majesty started, as though out of a dream, and muttered in a drawing, pasty voice, "Monsieurs, la session du Corps-Législatif va être close." Then the Ministers

woke up at their Sovereign's call, and dutifully commented on the budget in a sense favorable to Cæsar's wishes, which possibly had been explained to them by the Duc de Morny. They also made financial arrangements which were not precisely in accordance with the views of Moses after he had transcribed the decalogue. The Emperor approved these proceedings with abstracted nods. He affected even to listen to what was said. His eyes had a vague expression, however, and he was almost dazed by the light of a great window which faced him in the council room. All the Ministers approved what the Emperor had approved, without further observation. Then there was another silence, while the Emperor's face and his eyes turned yellow with sickness and pain. The council sat about an hour.

The manuscript above mentioned hints that the Emperor was silent on these occasions, because he was afraid of being dragged into personal altercations, which were very hot and fierce at the Councils held in the commencement of his reign. Moreover, he was not a ready speaker, and preferred to express his thoughts in anonymous writings, when he could say what he pleased, and incurred no responsibility. He had quite an itch for writing behind a screen, and had a strong personal love for the press. Sometimes he wrote long and rather prosy articles with his own hand, supporting attacks on his own Government—a trick in the fabrication of certain shades of public opinion which he had, perhaps, learned from Palmerston. His dream was to have a journal of his own, and he had actually a finger in the ple of several news sheets, which were popularly alleged to belong to the opposition. Sometimes he wrote things which strated his own censors, and on one occasion a publisher was arrested for selling a pamphlet which Cæsar himself had dictated, and in which he openly advocated a mysterious sort of socialism. His ministers often betrayed each other with great impudence, and fell to loggerheads in the Council. Elsewhere they frequently made up their differences, and spoke of his Imperial Majesty between themselves as "Le crapaud."

## THE EMPEROR'S GAMMON.

When the Cabinet Council above described was over, the Sovereign invited his Prime Minister to retire with him into his study for a private conference. It was during such consultations that the real work of the empire was done or prepared. The sanctuary in which Cæsar formed those designs which upset the Austrian monarchy and founded the kingdom of Italy was a narrow closet, choked up with newspapers till there was hardly room to turn in it; and books were strown all over the furniture as though it had rained literature from the ceiling. When the Emperor and his Premier were alone, his Majesty lit a cigarette and benevolently tried to bamboozle the Minister with ways which were quite affectionate. Then, having exhausted the arts of gammon, he began to snap, and displayed some exceedingly pointed teeth. He was always well primed for mischief, because toadies and sycophants constantly tickled his ears with scandalous stories about all his Ministers. The very corridors and cubboards of the palace, too, were full of slanders. Not only the imperial chamberlains, grooms, and equerries fetched and carried calumnies, but Cæsar had also a private police, composed of cunning observers. His Majesty was fond of spies, and loved to set them watching other people's behavior in an underhand way where they were least

suspected. He knew the amount of his Ministers' washing bills, and the sums they paid their butlers, footmen, porters, and even their corn cutters.

Of real power, however, even at the height of his glory, he had of course none. His Ministers duped him with amazing audacity and complete success. He could not obtain so much as the promotion of a subaltern officer from them, or the dismissal of a subperfect who had offended him. It was all lip service that was paid to him, and he knew it, resenting the humiliations inflicted upon him in his own manner, which was voiceless. He had a habit of patting this off, and disconcerted his opponents by expressing his willingness to wait ten years for anything he wanted. His favorite and most famous saying was "Tout vient à qui sait attendre." He had a passion for waiting, and was a patient, painstaking, dilatory man, but not bright, as was commonly supposed—at least so says the memoir. When listening to remarks which were distasteful to him he had "a pale, impenetrable smile"—the ghost of a smile—especially while he was inwardly manœuvring to get the better of his company, and he always acted suddenly. Many of the ladies of the Court, suggests the manuscript darkly, were in no sense conspicuous for the rigidity of their principles. They showed an astonishing dexterity in acquiring property; they became intoxicated with the largeness and rapidity of their gains, and they were "mordues par la passion du vol." It would be a strange story that these memoirs relate, if something vastly like it had not been told of all courts and of all republics in all ages.

## A PROPOSED NEW NOBILITY.

The question of a new nobility occupied the Court a great deal from about the year 1863 to 1865, and no man know on which side bread is best buttered would have objected to be one of the Emperor's nobles. Indeed, his Majesty's scheme for a peerage which should be all his own was by no means devoid of plausibility. He saw that titles without functions, and honours without revenues, were but laughable distinctions, not likely to command respect among a ribald generation of journalists and burlesque writers; so he determined that his courts and barons should be people wielding a real authority, and able to insist in obedience and supremacy because of it. He set about his work in a circuitous fashion, as usual, but his intentions were sincere. Thus the Government began by submitting to the Corps Legislatif the project of a law to punish by fine and imprisonment any persons convicted of having arrayed themselves in these titles. The Emperor was anxious to give a formal sanction to ancient honors by these means, and to prepare for the creation of new ones, knowing how potent a persuader the power of conferring dignities is in the hands of a cautious and politic prince, because it provides him with something to give away which is much coveted and which costs nothing.

## The Ocean Yacht Race.

THE "COUNTESS OF DUFFERIN" PORTS ON LIST, AND BEATS THE "AMERICAN." The New York Herald, of July 30th, gives a very full account of the ocean yacht race in which the "Countess of Dufferin" defeated. It says:—There were three schooners entered—the "Blair," "Wanderer," "Tidal Wave," "Ambrosia," and the "Countess of Dufferin," the last of which is known for their former achievements, the fifth a vessel from which great things were