

The death of M. Thiers, on the third of September, was undoubtedly a serious blow to the Republican cause, but not a mortal one. It may even turn out of advantage to it; the real grief of the French people, and the simulated regrets of M. Fourtou will not so soon disappear or be forgotten. Even the Orleanist and moderate Imperialist journals felt it necessary to conform to the proprieties. Only such men as the Bonapartist Paul de Cassagnac, or Louis Veuillot of the ultra-clerical *L'Univers* ventured to speak evil of the dead, before his body was at rest in Père la Chaise. It was politic in the Government party to speak with some measure of reserve and self-respect of the veteran statesman. Their game is evidently to exaggerate his value, now that he is no more, as well as to convince France that he has left no Republican behind fit to succeed him. By so doing they may hope to win over some timid souls who yet mistrust M. Gambetta. The *fou furieux* has again been too astute for them, leaving the eulogy on Thiers to M. Jules Simon, and nominating M. Grévy as his successor. How far the demise of the octogenarian chief will injure the cause he had honestly at heart, will appear on the 14th instant.

So many accounts of M. Thiers have appeared in the papers that it is unnecessary here to give any sketch of his life. He was not a stable politician, not a consummate statesman, hardly a second-rate orator. His histories, by which he is best known among us, are turgid and rhetorical in style, and not over truthful in fact or correct in inference. To him events were only valuable as they illustrated a preconceived historical theory, and where they would not fit in, he unhesitatingly ignored them. He was a worshipper of the first Napoleon, and a victim to the ambition of the third. In public life from the fall of Polignac and Charles X. until the rise of the second Empire, he was a self-seeking, ambitious, and unprincipled politician. In office, he was as despotic as Polignac, Napoleon III., or Fourtou; out of it he the blatant champion of liberty. It was in 1870 that a change seems to have passed over his nature; self was lost in fervid patriotism, and he became the idol of France as 'the liberator of the territory.' As President, he was a sincere Republican

for the first time in his life—and the Republic was at once his last and purest love. What he might have done in the future had he been spared can never now be known; but there is reason to believe that he would have governed wisely and well, and that he would have shown the same self-abnegation as he manifested by bowing to the public will in 1873, even to the end.

The Eastern war has entered upon a new phase; but as the scenes are still being shifted, no clear account of the immediate past, or forecast of the future, is possible. Russia, whether through bad generalship or over-weening self-confidence, has committed fearful blunders, and has sorely paid for them at Plevna. It is discovered that, however inferior the Turk may be as a tactician, he has not degenerated as a soldier, and that, under competent generalship, he is a match, in any equal contest, for his foe. The Schipka Pass is still in Russian possession, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of Suleiman Pasha. Osman Pasha, after regaining Plevna, has entrenched himself so strongly as to defy attack after attack from the enemy. Russia and Roumania have suffered to the extent of 25,000 men, put *hors de combat*. The attacks are still continued fitfully, but in every case have ended in a repulse; the Russians now await the arrival of their great *corps d'armée*, the Imperial Guard. On the eastern side, Mehemet Ali was equally vigorous, and, at first, equally successful. The army of the Czarevitch was driven over the Lom and its affluents, and compelled to shelter itself behind the Jantra—an important line of defence. It was even reported that Bjela had been taken by the Turks, which would probably have been the finishing blow to both Russian armies. But fortune has been so fickle as to change once more. The invaders have advanced, and the Pasha has been repulsed, after repeated attacks upon Tzer-covna, and forced back upon the Banica Lom. The Russians, by all accounts, have made a second Plevna, of which they are the masters, and there is no longer any chance of the two Pashas uniting the forces under their command. As for the issue of the war, whatever may be that of the campaign, there can be no doubt.

September 25th, 1877.