

## PARIS LETTER.

France is to have a new faculty—that for the profession of pure socialism. It appears that the existing colleges are all infected with bourgeoisie, that is, with the ideas of the middle classes. It is a pity that the College of France has not a chair for professing every newism the moment it is started. Professor Rosny looks after Buddhism and the Mahatmas, and Pierre Lafitte after Positivism. There was really room for a professorship of social sciences, if only to keep the lecturer on political economy, M. Leroy-Beaulieu, up to date. Had Renan been alive, his practical-joking temperament might have anticipated the socialists. However, the latter have now taken the field by establishing a school of their own. There are at least in France five distinct clans of socialists, and each of the leaders is to be a professor in the new academy for the amelioration of the out-of-joint times. All the doctrines are dissimilar, but the students are not bound to sit under a Gamaliel whose wisdom they dislike. Only revolutionary socialism will in any case be taught. The anarchists are really the most advanced revolutionary socialists at present in the field.

The *Debats* deplores that the newest Mahdi, Rabah, is likely to occupy the shores of Lake Tchad and so put an end to the projected railway from Paris, *via* Algiers, to that unknown and hence most interesting region. Rabah's point of the sword or the Koran march will clearly be at the expense of the latest land-grabs of France and her tribal allies. Then she has also to look after Touat, which the Sultan of Morocco claims to be his hinterland. Africa is becoming the most lively quarter of the globe, and the Soudan promises to be a veritable cockpit for pioneer civilizers.

The most amusing of political writers is by far and away M. Flourens, who was at one time Minister of Foreign Affairs. He is the most frantic Russophile and Anglophobe and his influence one way or the other is not of much importance. His latest eccentricity is that Russia and France should take Islam under their wings, and by so doing they would wipe out England. That day-dream accomplished, not a power in the world dare make a move without being authorized by France. It is always *Delenda est Britannia*! By then, the *delenda* might be nearer for France. It would be well to ask the Porte what it thinks of such god-fathers. Russia has been ever willing to take Turkey—which is Islamism—but not under the wing. It is said that the quick despatch of the same number of war vessels by England to the Mediterranean, to respond to the Russian demonstration, has not only reduced the hostility in Egypt against the British occupation, but has opened the eyes of the Sultan and fortified his nerves. Constantinople does not want to be Russified, nor Alexandria Frenchified. The Sultan has always a trump card to play against Russia. By the revised Black Sea treaty he can allow a fleet friendly to Turkey, to enter the Dardanelles and scour that sea.

It is said that the good offices of England are being employed to arrange the Riff difficulty between Spain and Muley Hassan. If so, there will be one danger less. The French view the crusade in England for a special naval money grant of 250 million frs. as a bait to induce France to knock her head against iron-

clads, and to raise a panic, and so enable England to seize instantaneously, by paying the contract price, the some thirty-two war vessels private dockyards in Great Britain are now building for foreign powers. This is, at least, *ben trovato*.

M. Bernard is a veritable glutton in his appetite for pretenders to the French throne, that, even the Pope himself has discovered will not pay. M. Bernard says, now that so much is being written about the natural children of Napoleon I.—who had nearly as many as a certain Polish king—it is more profitable to look after the illegitimate son of Napoleon IV., better known as the Prince Imperial. The old story of Mary Watkins and the Prince is rehashed. What is true is not new, and what is new—you can judge. The boy is now being looked after by the Princesse Mathilde, whose hand is ever open as the day to charity. She has placed him in a lyceum, and it is to see the boy that the ex-Empress comes so frequently to France. She encounters him in the Bois de Boulogne, no doubt in the "Widows' Alley." The police have all the facts and all the visitings are noted.

The annual meeting of the French Young Men's Christian Association has just been held under the Presidency of Professor Waddington. The new palatial structure is the gift of a rich American commission merchant who made his "pile" in Paris, as a token of gratitude to France for sending aid to help Americans to win their independence. It is a very magnificent building and splendidly organized and doing excellent Christian work. The very energetic and able secretary stated that of the members who take their meals in the establishment, the three-fourths are abstainers from drink.

Old M. de Lesseps has entered on his 89th year. He is in Paris and is said to be rapidly regaining strength and lucidity. He can receive friends, and chats and tries his hand at a quiet rubber. It is to be hoped he will not try any Isthmian game, that might produce a relapse. His recovery is wonderful, and it is to be hoped will be permanent. Then the health of Dr. Herz is improving, but far from coming up to the Bow street ideal. He is threatened also with another wasting malady—his money is running out; if so, he will soon possess no more interest.

At no period was suffering and misery so general in Paris as the present. It is not that wages are so very low—the living wage is but an ideal, a Tantalus—but not even the low wage is to be earned. The hardship among needlewomen is especially painful, because their work is of a spasmodic character. To keep body and soul together, M. d'Haussonville says, a work girl must earn between 850 to 1,200 fr. per year. Also, in an artisan's family, it is necessary to count one-half the income to support the wife, and for every child one-third. A single woman may have slack seasons, representing from 60 to 150 days; her expenses are generally one-third more than what she earns. At shirt-making—stitching a shroud as well as a shirt—not more than 600 fr. are earned in a year. Of this sum 271 fr. defray rent, clothing and firing. The rest is for subsistence. What is the latter—limited to an outlay of 18 sous per day? Here is a daily true bill: bread, 4 sous; milk, 2; mutton cutlet, 5; wine, 2; coal, 1; vegetables, 2; butter, 2; total, 18 sous. If the winter sets

in cold and no work be forthcoming, it is hunger, disease, death. She has only the other resource, which is still worse—it kills the soul.

The Superior Council of Education has had a happy idea, that of imparting uniformity and method to the songs executed in the primary schools of France. A prize of 500 fr. is offered to the composer of 40 suitable pieces of poetry to fit in to airs already selected. The competition remains open till the end of next June, and the publisher is the well-known firm of Hachette & Co. A model stanza is supplied with each air, to guide the song writer. The songs are not to be at all trivial, the words and ideas must suit the capacities of the children, and appeal to their best sentiments and elevated feelings—such as those referring to God—*a la bonheur*!—nature, country, noble deeds and great men. Play ground songs are to be in character.

From the 1st of December the postmen commence to apply for their New Year's boxes. They are the earliest in the field of the not-to-be-forgotten classes, and the most deserving to be remembered. Each postal district selects the most popular and bland of its letter carriers to make a house-to-house collection. The gifts vary from one to sixty francs. About the 30th December the grand divide takes place. Each postman's share is now not more than 400 fr.; it was 500. The men who distribute the newspapers, circulars, book parcels, etc., mostly young and all probationers, have no claim on the letter-carriers' tips. They are free to solicit the smallest contribution, but not till the *hommes des lettres* have secured their harvest. The public complain bitterly that since the adoption of the postal card, that form of open communication has become the channel for extensive defamation and calumny by, of course, anonymous correspondents. What does Zola think of this phase of anonymity? A man is attacked in his honor, his commercial standing, his conjugal happiness. The post-office does its best not to deliver such missives, so that house-porters and others cannot read the calumny, and by condemning it spread it the more. Some men refuse to give an annual tip to the postmen if they have delivered such cards to their address in the year. A leading public man, when he received these card slanders, immediately composed the exact contrary and addressed them to himself. It was thus he depicted himself as hand-and-glove with the Prefect de Police, ministers, leading bankers and even the private secretary of the Prince of Wales. The venomous pasteboard was thus hooted at and attributed to all the jealousies. A few years ago a newly married man received a peculiar open letter, marked private and important, reflecting on the chastity of his bride. He called on the chief of the detectives, they traced the purchaser of the paper, had a search warrant and found the rough draft of the letter. A duel followed and the next morning the calumniator had a ball in his head.

Two up-to-date scientific curiosities: The arrival of the season of shooting stars, that is, the fragments of the Biella comet, that some years ago came into collision with some star in interplanetary space, and the fragments have been for years whisking round our earth. The comet, though having a diameter equal to that of our earth's, say 8,000 miles, was not composed of more than eight tons of solid matter.