

## A FRENCH VIEW OF LORD BROUGHAM.

At the annual public meeting of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, a branch of the French Institute, held on Saturday last, M. Jules Simon read a report on the various essays sent in competition for the prizes offered by the Academy. The feature of the day, however, was an address delivered by M. Mignet upon the career and character of the late Lord Brougham, which occupied the attention of the assemblage for more than an hour and a half, which was listened to throughout with the closest attention. M. Mignet said:—"Lord Brougham was the oldest as he was the most illustrious foreign associate of the Academy. He was Lord High Chancellor of England when, in 1832, the Académie des Sciences, Morals et Politiques was re-established, and he was immediately admitted to its ranks, and with indisputable titles. A celebrated and an intellectual writer, he had since the beginning of the century applied his powerful faculties and his varied talents to the propagation or defence of the noblest and most humane ideas. He had cultivated with an aptitude that was in some degree universal the vast field of social science, after having in his earlier day traversed not without distinction, the field of physical and mathematical sciences.

A great advocate, he pleaded the greatest causes with earnest speech and vigorous dialectics, and he acquired by his eloquence an imperishable renown. A political orator of extraordinary fertility, and not less remarkable for the loftiness of his views than for the brilliancy of his talents, he was placed from 1810 to 1830 at the head of that party in the House of Commons which desired to improve the laws and to extend the public liberties. An enterprising Minister and a reforming Chancellor, he effected in the Government and in the administration of justice those happy changes, equally prudent and just, which he had recommended while in Opposition." The talents and tastes of Lord Brougham were displayed at an early age, and M. Mignet dwelt at some length upon this portion of Brougham's career, recounting many anecdotes which have become familiar to the English public. After alluding to Brougham's advocacy on behalf of Queen Caroline, and to the famous speech demanding the repeal of the well-known Order in Council forbidding neutral vessels from entering French ports, the orator passed to the period when the subject of his address became Lord Chancellor, having in the meantime, during a space of twenty years, displayed inexhaustible activity and eloquence on behalf of the most liberal and generous views of reform. The new Chancellor was described as being—"Not only a Liberal Minister in the Council, a fruitful legislator in Parliament, but also a great magistrate in the High Court of Equity, where he was the supreme judge. No one possessed in a greater

degree the sentiment and the perception of justice. Scarcely had he become installed in the chief seat of the Court of Chancery than he applied himself with honourable promptitude and ardent equity to accelerate the suits which had accumulated from time immemorial, and which formed a congealed mass of litigation. He sat with indefatigable assiduity in his Court, where he was many times found at the dawn of day listening to argument or delivering judgments. His penetrating sagacity and his general knowledge of jurisprudence enabled him to constitute a real Court of Equity. He there at the same time abolished abuses which would have been lucrative to himself, and he suppressed sinecures which were onerous to the State." Brougham's career in the House of Commons and his efforts on behalf of the parliamentary reform were dwelt upon by M. Mignet, who, referring to the celebrated speech in which the orator implored upon his knees the House not again to reject a bill so anxiously desired by all lovers of the country, said, "Certainly the kneeling was out of place." Referring to that later period when Brougham had become somewhat estranged from the leaders of the Whig party, he said, "At this time Lord Brougham was no less admired than he was fortunate, but perhaps he did give way a little to the intoxication of pride, and failed to restrain the intemperance of a mind whose fiery nature was capable of leading to any extravagance."

Passing to a consideration of Brougham's labours—political, philosophical and historical—M. Mignet said, "He loved the English Constitution as an Englishman, he admired it as a publicist. He has ably traced its history, explained its structure, appreciated its influence and pointed out its useful developments."

Always in progress, the Constitution, becoming more and more representative of England and bending to the exigences, had adapted itself to the diverse conditions of a great country, whose ideas it follows, and whose wants it satisfies. Little by little it has thus directed the efforts of all powers and classes within the state to the same end—the growing establishment of all that is right, the increasing respect for public interests, the skillful management of common affairs. Lord Brougham well explained that progressive Constitution which, without changing the form of Government, has perfected its means of action, has rendered loyalty limited in its intervention, the aristocracy limited in its conduct, and the democracy moderate in its pretensions; and which, constructed not by force of logic, but by history, has issued less from the spirit than from the very existence of a people which it has enabled in our days to conduct itself as a republic under a monarchy, to enjoy order, prosperity, and greatness combined with liberty. Lord Brougham dedicated his book upon the Constitution of England to Queen Victoria, under whose long reign that Constitution, faithfully observed in its spirit, has never been evaded in its exercise. Written at the age of