

Parisian Affairs.

FLYING is better than "plucking" pigeons—the former is a new amusement for citizens who were treated on Sunday morning last to the spectacle of 62,000 birds being set free from their osier cribs between 4 and 10.30 o'clock. There were seventeen flocks liberated from the base of the Eiffel Tower, arranged according to regions; the birds having the longest distance to fly over, to the frontiers of Spain, to Holland and Marseilles, were first set at liberty; the last birds of freedom were those belonging to the region of Paris. All the birds had been sent by rail to Paris where volunteer ladies and gentlemen received and cared for them with grains and water till set free to fly back to their nests. There was a great gathering of the curious despite the early hours. President Faure arrived at seven o'clock, but he rises with the lark. The baskets of birds were classified according to the 17 geographical regions, and intervals of 28 to 15 minutes elapsed between each big flight. When the birds arrived home the hour of their reaching their nests was immediately telegraphed back to Paris to the office of *Le Petit Journal* that had organized the whole spectacle. The quickest flight was that of a pigeon which arrived in Abbeville, a distance of 99 miles in 118 minutes. Some birds flew a distance of 350 miles; the shortest flight was 30 miles—to Fontainebleau—and was done in 73 minutes. It took a pigeon 5 hours 56 minutes to fly to Lyons, 3 hours 32 minutes to reach Brussels and 15 hours 24 minutes to arrive at Bayonne, the frontier of Spain. The average flying speed was 40 miles an hour. No reports have reached town of missing birds.

Perhaps the most singular part of the sport was the setting free of the birds; after all had been fed and watered—they were heavy drinkers. The birds flew up skywards till they recalled a flock of swallows; they then surveyed space in gyrating, and having boxed their compass, laid down their charts to a feather, and slid downwards home. Very many press men, in order to be at the start—4 a.m.—sat up all night—those who do not go to bed are always early risers—then what signifies two hours later than ordinary bed hours? The night was lovely, recalling a Neapolitan sky and the softest of refreshing zephyrs. The pressmen passed the small hours in "extra parliamentary utterances," or wrote a dispatch, to be encased in a quill, wishing an editor hundreds of miles away "the top of the morning." Then a crate was found with pigeons belonging to the town required, the quill was soon attached to the tail and in a short time the carrier was in mid air and winging back to home and duty. However, a more interesting side of the sport or experiment will be the liberating of some hundreds of carrier pigeons in the ocean, off the west of France, at various distances up to 400 miles. A special steamer has been chartered. The points to settle are, can the pigeon be as sure of its home route over sea as over land, and how far the bird can fly without seeking rest? Many carrier pigeons have to rest when flying home.

The French are glad the Kiel fêtes are terminated, the whole affair was against their stomach and the populace will keep a milk tooth against ministers for sending the war ships to huzza Emperor William, and so let down Alsace and Lorraine. For the Germans there is no Alsatian question. It must have been a Teuton who indulged in the questionable joke of hanging a wreath on the railing of the equestrian statue to Louis XIV in the Place des Victoires as the "restorer of Alsace to France!" Turenne's body—which has never decomposed and was never embalmed—might indulge in a few twitches of merriment at that compliment to his Palatinate humanity. Nor are the French grateful to Russia who was the means of dragging them into the Kiel business. Indeed there is a very remarkable "drop" in enthusiasm for the Franco-Russian alliance, and the journals opposed to that coöperative diplomacy are very outspoken. The matter will be fairly tested if the French subscribe to the Russian concession to raise the 250 million francs to buy the Japs out of Port Arthur, the better to facilitate the Russian foothold in China. There appears to be something like a hitch in the loan negotiations with China.

The advent of the Marquis of Salisbury to power, is a kind of bolt from the blue for the French; for them, he is another Palmerston, and will have no half measures. He is a man, they say, who knows what he wants and is resolved to have it. The duel between himself and M. Hanotaux

will be interesting to follow. The French admit the coalition ministry consists of very able and decided men, that will not allow the grass to grow under their feet, and who will rapidly make the foreign policy of England anything but a *negligable quantité*. It has come at an awkward moment, when England is decided to reform, strengthen and expand her defensive forces, and last, but not least, she has the triple alliance to fall back upon. France has admitted to be formally allied with the hereditary enemy of England—Russia; that justifies England's action to ally herself, if necessary, with the hereditary enemy of France—Germany. It is Turkey and China that will be first tested and tapped, to see what there is in the Franco-Russian alliance, about which the sceptics are still sceptical. Japan becomes now a formidable factor in the diplomacy of England in the far East. Perhaps the coming events will compel the reduction of armaments, for it is needless to say public opinion only views as hypocricies all the fustian and cuckoo repetitions about place. Fewer cannons, less magazine rifles, reduced stocks of explosives and missiles, only that will convince the taxpayer. Brief: foreign questions pending are expected to receive a rapid solution one way or the other. So much the better.

The proposal to exhibit a model of the "first exhibition ever held in the world," and that is claimed to have taken place in Paris, as the *clou*, the only one as yet found, for the 1900 Fair, does not catch on. The exhibition the French claim as the parent type was simply a three days fair of French manufactures, organized by Napoleon. The first exhibition, internationally understood and the only one *à propos*, was that invented by the Prince Consort, and opened in London in 1851. Honour to whom honour is due.

What is poetry coming to? A grinder of stanzas describes a smile to be "the moustache of the soul"—the composer is not a capillary artist. How will ladies like showing such mustaches? True, the poet's countrymen have, in some instances, disagreeable hirsutes on upper lips and on cheeks—they look anything but soul-suggesting or smiling.

The marriage of Alexander Dumas *filis*, at the ripe age of 71, to Madame Régnier, widow of the actor, has taken many by surprise, the more so as his wife, a Russian lady, but palsied since years, is not a year dead. It is an "intellectual love match." Madame Régnier is a most accomplished lady, and has been a literary *Ægeria* for Dumas. He never wrote a play without consulting her; she acted up to the rôle of her mythological namesake, for she ever prophesied that Dumas would become famous.

The 14th of July fêtes this year promise to have more life than hitherto; the local committees in the wards of the city are receiving plenty of contributions to secure that "all will go merry as a marriage bell." Z.

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Letters to the Editor.

THE CANADIAN FLAG.

SIR,—You have already received so many letters on the Canadian flag question that I trust an additional one will not burden you much.

I wish to add a voice in favour of the maple leaf, but in addition to the leaf would propose the use of the seed vessels also. I would suggest a single, large, vigorous leaf as the main feature, and for the fitting representation of



the provinces, a seed vessel for each, bearing as it does the germ of life winged like Mercury's sandals suggestive of the healthy and progressive spirit of the land of the Maple Leaf.

R: HOLMES.

Upper Canada College, July 3, 1895.

THE NEW CANADIAN FLAG.

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure the various letters which have appeared in your paper, as they show that a real interest is being excited on the subject of a new design for