

And scarred old Dion as he is to-day,
With all his years gone by and all his deeds.

And now, Eternal Gods, I come to you
Through death, with calm irrevocable tread.
Farewell life's toilsome warfare, like a king,
Great gods, receive me into bliss or woe,
Which e'er your land affordeth; set my throne
Among the company of those who strove
To mount by inner conquest, not by blood,
And who accept and quaff with equal mind
Pleasure or pain, defeat or victory.
I care not to be highest, only peer
Of all the great who are in-gathered there;
If needs my rank be blazoned on my throne,
Inscribe it "Dion, Tyrant of Himself."

Ha! ye have found a sword, 'tis well, for now
I shall lie down to sleep as soldier should,
Wounded in front and by a soldier's blade.
O Syracuse, I thought to carve a rock
Rough and unhewn into a perfect shape;
But lo! 'twas only soft clay that I graved,
And every wind and rain did melt you down
Into the common mud which tyrants love
To smooth into an easy path to power.

Here, youths, I do not flinch, behold my breast,
Shaggy, like front of lion, streaked with gray.
It is your glory to anticipate
Time's tardy slaughter. Come, which will be
great

And first to make himself a name and steep
His weakling hands in Dion's royal blood?
Pray you be quick, I do not fear the pain
But would quit life. Here is my naked heart,
It knocks against the edges of this rib,
But yet not faster than its wont, come youths
Put the sword here and drive it quickly home,
And fix your eyes upon me as I fall,
And mark ye well the grandeur of my death.
For nothing but the red flood bursting forth,
No cry, no groan, no movement of the face
Shall tell you that ye have not slain a god.
Then draw the blade out blunted where it met
The tempered edge of my self-mastery will,
And bear the crimsoned trophy through the
streets,

And show it to the wondering citizens;
That men may know and tell in aftertimes
How Dion lived and died for Syracuse.

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PARIS LETTER.

Big, versus little shops; freedom versus restriction of commerce—that is the question now dividing citizens. The dispute is as old as the hills and generally comes on at the approach of the general elections. The small trader is simply superseded by modern science which groups production and sale to reduce cost, and enables the consumer to reap the benefit. There is no income tax in France because the population will never submit to have their books liable to be examined to check statements of revenue. Such interference with private affairs would raise a whirlwind that would sweep away even the Third Republic. Hence, why householders are taxed on the rents they pay as the basis of fiscal valuation, and the traders simply on the appearance of their business—if it presents a live look, or is flashy or imposing.

In all industries the old and the weak must go to the wall; it is the struggle for the fittest; steam has superseded post horses; gas, oil; electricity, both gas and steam. And further these changes are brought about by the concentration of capital that secures a large out-put cheaply and effects an all round economy in its distribution. The Government is of opinion, that inequality in the matter of taxation in the case of small traders will be redressed by doubling and tripling the

impost on the mammoth shops and co-operative stores—as if an extra million of francs would demolish such gigantic houses as the Bon Marche and the the Louvre. The public are attracted to the large establishments not only on account of greater cheapness and relative superiority of wares, but because there is a greater variety from which to select, thus saving time, while securing reliable delivery. A fraction of a one per centage on the profits of the Brobdignagian shops that turn over their capital three or four times a year, would suffice to meet all exceptional taxes inflicted on them; but that would not alleviate the enemy condition of the small trader. A successful rival must be fought with the elements of his own success, i. e. grouped effort. Many working traders now unite their wares, and thrive by this associated action. The idea of preventing the trader of one department exercising his natural calling in another until the taking out a fresh license, is pure utopia. Imagine a merchant in France having to pay for 86 patents or permits, to sell his products in that number of departments, shires, or counties.

Alcohol, as a beverage or cordial, is excellent when good, this the abstinence world will never admit. It is alcohol that contributes the lion's share of the revenue as indirect taxation. A very large section of public opinion demands that the State should be the monopolist of the alcohol, as it is of tobacco and stamps; it could purify the spirit and so protect the national health; it could dilute it to a fixed strength, and thus raise one-third of the total revenue of the country from this source alone, and thus abolish the most unpopular of the many objectionable taxes. Moralists even avow the step would be the beginning of the end of alcoholism. Both the excise and the doctors agree that good alcohol is beneficial: Say the first, it is the quantity taken which is pernicious; not at all, retort the second, it is the quality, the toxicity, which produces the ravages. It is authoritatively averred that nine-tenths of the alcohol or cognac sold in France is adulterated, and that of the samples of the brandy analyzed by Dr. Heret, head of the Trousseau hospital, and taken alike from the vilest rum hole and the most fashionable cafe—all were either dangerous or bad. Extremes meet; the liqueur glassful of cognac for which the consumer pays 20 sous in a crack cafe on the boulevards, and that purchased by the rag picker in his drink den for two sous, are alike, in point of health-detriment. Only in the soup establishments, where brandy is served with coffee—for these taverns are not drinking-houses, can the least objectionable of the ordinary cognacs be obtained, now that alcohol is prepared chiefly from German potato whiskey, diluted with common pump water, and coloured caramel, Vive Duval!

The flag covers the goods; a fancy bottle and an attractive label, are all that is necessary to enable the vintner to sell his own preparation composed of ethers and colouring, and flavouring mixtures that baffle even science. Professors Riche and Villiers, the eminent toxicologists assert it to be safer to consume ordinary alcohol than manufactured brandy. Reliable cognac can only be had from notable houses and at a high price. It is the blending of rye whiskey with the spirit pre-

pared from grapes, that cognac or brandy is made from. Beet root brandy is not unhealthy, but it has a bad taste; the assassination brand is that fabricated from alcohol intended for varnishes and lamps, and which forms the base of absinthe and vermouth. To sum up this episode of the drink question: if you are not rich enough to be able to buy first-class cognac sign the pledge and subscribe to a temperance newspaper.

I have come to the conclusion that the French having got over the shiver of indignation produced by the Panama scandals, now grin in their sleeves at the fiery discussions in the press and the Chamber. The nation now apparently takes not the slightest business interest in the hurly-burly; it is not indifferent nor unobservant; it is clearly like Tam o'Shanter's landlady, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," till October brings that Day of Judgment for politicians—the general elections. Then the French will show the world, how universal suffrage can cleanse an Augean stable. Nothing is precisely known about the prolongation of the Canal Company's concession; if the Colombian executive refuses, no new society can be formed. M. Wyse states that he holds a treaty for prolonging the concession; if so, he seems to be incapable of utilizing it, as he has not obtained the required 700 million francs; he demands one-half million francs for this new service, and the liquidator replies that he owes him nothing. Doleful descriptions are published of the state of the abandoned plant and material in the Isthmus; both are as rapidly disappearing beneath the rank vegetation, as though they were the ruins of an Aztec city.

Now and then Madame de Genlis, who reared the late Louis Philippe and his sister, wrote nearly a century ago a thumb nail comparison between English and French manners. She observed that the fights, quarrels and seditions among the English people are common daily events, while the French are the mildest and the merriest people in Europe. In England every inhabitant pays two to three times more taxes than in France; in England also the robbers attack and strip every day the inhabitants and travellers in the suburbs of London and upon the highways. It is quite the contrary in France where no thieves are to be met with either in day or night time. The English die frequently of spleen, and suicides are more common with them than with other people. When it is desired to indulge in amusement, and to witness a happy people the English go to France for these, as well as to be cured of consumption.

The distinguished theatrical critic, M. Sarcely, has been doing good work in castigating the dramatists of between 20 and 25 years of age, who bring out their plays of one to three acts, in a theatre for which they have to bear a share in the expenses. The plays are not destitute of talent, but pandering to obscenity and indecency. The audience generally consists of young and fast people. To the credit of the latter, they commence to show they have had enough of that style of amusement. Not one of the nasty productions has the slightest chance of ever being presented at any theatre of note.

In looking over the Municipal Budget of Paris, there are some interesting fig-