

Rather too much is being made of the Roman Bank scandals as a battering ram against the Crispi ministry. The pecuniary storm and stress period of the Crispi party is not at all analogous with the Panama corruptions. Political parties in every country send round the hat, and make a whip. Some will not refuse checks for £100, the only mistake being to return them after being solicited. Madame de Stael remarked that one must never too closely examine cookery or politics. Italy is not a land of millionaires, nor has Signor Crispi ever claimed to be rich; he has not dabbled with the moneys of the State; he "flew kites" to keep his party journals afloat, and the priests that lived by their altars. As to the financial *billets doux* of his Signora, she is well known to be a little eccentric. She admitted, office had ruined herself and her husband, as the Presidency of France did poor MacMahon; hence, why she prayed fervently—not an unnatural step—to the Virgin to not confer office again on her husband. How many in the world solicit the Virgin for "pension, post and place" daily! And the bill discounter, Tanlongo, who, in his prison cell, rises every morning at four o'clock to pray to the *Sacré Cœur* to safeguard his honesty. What an *alla podrida* of nasty parochial politics and matter-of-fact piety. The political danger is not in these revelations as droll as the love letters in the case of a breach of promise; it is the possible return of the Marquis di Rudini to power, whose ambition is to smash the triple alliance, and allow Italy to drift. The present must be an anxious moment for the Emperor William; by his brutal haughtiness, he has largely aided to throw England into the arms of Russia, and his two allies commence to feel their situation shaky. France is gradually sidling round to the Anglo-Russo *entente*; leave her evolution to be effected in her own way and manner. It is not a sacrificing of pride that is demanded of her, but to make room for a new, and not unfriendly, arrival—to be content with the moiety instead of the whole of the Czar's love; the more so since they have no monopoly of any of it.

Japan, it is the opinion here, commences to enter upon the threshold of her war difficulties; Fortune would appear to be a shade less sunny in her smiles. French authorities condemned her march, at this season, upon Moukden as a mistake. The Chinese have, like the Russians, a trusted ally in Winter. To transport men accustomed to a spring climate all the year round to live out a Kamkatcha winter, even on rice, and supplied wadded uniforms, would not prevent the iced air from penetrating delicate lungs. If the Chinese soldiers would try and not bolt so much, fewer of them would be killed, and the fighting would be better. The French have no decided views on the Sino-Japanese war as yet. In this they resemble Germany. Both, perhaps, are waiting for the *débâcle* of the great Empire, and then harpoon a few big morsels. Some Japan papers are quoted, praising the French and depicting the "Anglo-Russian alliance" as having for aim to divide China between them, and trusting to the proverbial disinterestedness of France—Tunisia, Siam, Tonkin, the Soudan, etc., to wit, perhaps—to oppose such land-grabbing. French sympathy will follow—like the policy of other nations—French interests. It is not for the advantage of either England or Russia, nor even for Japan, that China should become a drifting mass. In any case, the handle of the broom, to use a de Mony phrase, will be on the side of the Anglo-Russian action. Japan can never expect to penetrate deep into China, and even having captured her arsenals the European powers will not long consent to allow the war to continue on that system of coast line descents. Here the opinion is pretty unanimous: Japan ought now to lend a readier ear to China's propositions of peace, backed as she is by General Winter.

The remains of poor M. de Lesseps were unostentatiously placed in their tomb. The funeral, as it wended its way quietly to Père Lachaise, gave rise neither to regret nor, as was apprehended, to hostility. Death had only made him to be more forgotten than he has been since his "decline and fall." If ever the Panama Canal be made, and its shareholders coin like those of Suez, then will be the moment to resuscitate the memory of the Grand Français. I was looking yesterday at a photo of M. de Lesseps, taken two days before his death. It represented him in dressing gown, wearing a black skull cap, leaning on his arm upon a table, and in profound somnolency; deep, wrinkled, inexpressive features, but the outlines of great energy not quite faded. Close by were two other photos, relating to the opening of the Suez Canal, and the rush of purchasers to subscribe for the first issue of Panama Scrip.

Equally forgotten already is the official interment of President Burdeau. Many are of opinion it was an error to decree a gala funeral—not that he was unworthy of it—to a man of such simple tastes, and who felt only happy in the midst of the souvenirs of his lowly origin, but brilliant self-elevation. Gala funerals generally make the recipients of them to be forgotten more rapidly.

The weather continues to be very gloomy, and the season unhealthy. A few weeks of north pole temperature would please everybody. The Berlin theologian, who fixes the end of the world, not on the "first" but the 23rd of April, 1908, has caused some amusement. Chronologists, like doctors, differ; the Savant of Berlin gives humanity but a lease of 13 years to live; more generous and humane is M. Flammarion, the astronomer, who fixes the death of our planet at the end of 100 millions of years. That's a breathing time for his contemporaries at least. Theologians go in for an end of the world prophesy for themselves, as do scientists to capture an unknown microbe. After all what is fame?

The 108 projects sent in for the proposed 1900 exhibition represent an enormous amount of talent and of ingenuity; of labour also, as the plans exhibited in the buildings on the Champ de Mars but too clearly testify. And only to think the total amount of the prizes for the designs to be accepted is only 50,000 frs. From a hasty glance at the private view there is no one design that satisfies all needs. There are half a dozen out of which the complete and definite model will be designed. The architects were free to demolish the Eiffel Tower, and all the buildings on the Champs de Mars, or utilize them as they pleased. The laid down site included the Champs de Mars—the Frocaden understood—ranging over the river sides to the Palace of Industry. Parisians are only interested in seeing two ends accomplished; the demolition of the Eiffel, and of that other eye-sore, the Palace of Industry. Some competitors clear all the Champs de Mars, despite the enormous cost of removing the Eiffel, others only transform the Palace of Industry. Many projects cut down the Eiffel to the first story, on which they would construct a sphere containing theatres and restaurants, Aerial railways will play a decided part from the Champs Elysees to the Eiffel, and thence to the towers of the Frocaden. Water will be extensively utilized; projects would convert the Champs de Mars, and the lowgrounds of the Frocaden, into lakes for sea fights. Another would throw a rainbow arch from the Eiffel to the Frocaden, and have a gigantic switch back railway thereon. One architect would convert the towers of the Frocaden into volcanoes, permanently vomiting up fireworks with illuminated water fall to represent lava. There is a plan to construct two gigantic elephants at the Eiffel, and employ their trunks for restaurants, and bodies for theatres. The serious projects place the building on the borders of the Seine, with garden hinterlands for the colonies and special countries. So far the display is most hopeful and very original.

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More About the Cut.

PICKING up a copy of THE WEEK yesterday I was much interested in a rare "piece" entitled the "Philosophy of the Cut," which led me to reflection on another aspect of this profound subject, viz.: the Science of the Cut. One may, with large and wise discourse, discover reasons and reasons, and yet be quite unable to do this thing roundly and neatly. There are ways of cutting and other ways. I was walking up Main Street one afternoon, not long ago, when I saw coming towards me, one to whom I felt kindly—in fact, one of the species of friends, which may be denominated Quondam. I was about to smile and bow, when she, with suddenness, turned her face to something of intense interest in a shop window—a saddler's, perhaps—and gazed there until I had passed on. There was an awkwardness and self-consciousness in the movement, that betrayed an ignorance of method, and the countenance of her coiffure was ferocious. But, for the concomitant movement, I would have fancied she had been washing her hair. It had that fly-at-you-expression, which always follows the washing and drying process. I longed for one brief moment to turn back and give her a coaching in the Science of the Cut.

Now I am not one of those who throw themselves psychologically at passing friend or acquaintance, but I