

railway passengers have been arrested for travelling naked—as yet—nor have any citizens appeared in the streets in bathing tights. Except the “knickers,” cyclists of both sexes try to rid themselves of as many upper garments as possible. As the Parliament was becoming excitable and deaf to the President's bell, and to his glances towards his hat, the Cabinet decided to close the session, which has been on and off at work for nine months—a vacation parturition was then only natural. It prevents, too, all change of Ministry till October next. In the interim the country promises to be kept lively by an agitation for the immediate dissolution of the Chamber. Parties are so balanced that no effective work can be accomplished; all debates, in any case, lose their sweetness in the desert air, as the public displays no interest in them at all.

The condition of Madagascar continues to become worse; the Government swears all is for the best in the best Madagascar words. But private letters and independent press correspondence tell a different story, and the massacres and pillages show that order does not reign yet in Warsaw. The French are only secure so far as their rifles carry. So the Malagasys do not appear desirous of being civilized—against their will. A French expedition is openly talked of. The last, that cost the French army proper 5,000 lives, and the Algerian contingent, Arabs, 2,000, before even they caught sight of an enemy. When the latter became visible, the natives imitated the American coon's appeal to the sporting colonel: “Don't fire, I'll come down!” The insurrection is spreading all through Iremina. It is said to be limited to the “Faharolos.” Unfortunately all the natives belong to that mass of discontented who sack and slay, without distinction, the Europeans, irrespective, too, of creed or nationality. The natives only gave up a portion of their arms, and the militia, formed from native volunteers, bolt with arms and baggage after being enrolled. The French concluded they had only to appear and Madagascar became a paradise. They have now to cope with their Matabele and Mashonas, and so they cease to be pleased at the misfortunes of others. The few people that had pitched their tents on the island are bolting to escape being massacred like so many others. Only the regular army can restore, or rather compel, order. That means an expedition and an enormous outlay. Further, if the island is to serve any useful purpose, railways must be constructed and harbors built. But where find the millions for such public works? The isle promises to be a millstone round the neck of France. The “take” is extremely unpopular, and will be rendered more so by having to conquer it. A journal quietly observes that the latter ought to have preceded the annexation of the island.

The energetic action of England insisting upon all the six Powers running in harness to fix up Crete, has had a most salutary effect so far. It is said that the British Ambassador had a straight and tall talk with the Sultan, to the effect that did he negotiate separately with any power or powers to convert them into guardians of the isle, the British fleet would at once take up position. The ambassador is reported to have also reminded the “Shadow” that England did not want Cyprus, that she was ready to quit when Russia fulfilled her part of the Beaconsfield Bond, to hand over Kars and Batoum to the Porte. England would have no objection to Crete and Cyprus being made a Greek “protectorate,” and that known leaning disconcerts Russian schemes.

The return of Italy to a more “forwards” policy, indicates that some diplomatic plots were hatching. However, as the Anglo-Italian fleets are on the *qui vive*, no surprises are to be expected. A jack-in-the-box mine will be met by a jack-in-the-box of greater counter mine. The French are committing again the blunder of disparaging the Italians because they desire to expand, to grow bigger. All nations now large were at one time small; they augmented by war, theft, and craft, at the expense of weaker neighbours, and often at the expense of each other. Why deprecate in Italians what her rivals have practised? Despite her trials, Italy has a future before her. Her people emigrate, are not afraid to have families; are hard-working and thrifty. France ought to have forgiven much to not place Italy on the side of the Triple Alliance—and its accessories.

The vast strides that England is making in commercial prosperity, deepens the jealousy of a few nations. The royalist organ, the *Soleil*, the Orleanist family's sheet, actually

hints that the time has arrived to cut the wings of that pre-eminence. It is the epoch *collectiveisme*, so the proposition is not behind the age. Coveting your neighbour's goods existed even before the creation of the Decalogue. The English have had plenty of proofs of the necessity of meeting that spirit. She has but to arm up, Zollvereinize her colonies, and be free to select the ally that will best suit her interest—what all allies seek. Her colonies can ship her all the food necessities she may need; she can in return supply all manufacturing colonial wants—so the money will be kept in the family. It is the positive dread of that policy succeeding, which increases the envy, hatred, malice, and all unrighteousness against the “tight little island,” that in trade concedes to all nations all the privileges she herself enjoys.

Since the Germans have announced on authority that Li-Hoang-Tchang, has not been accredited to negotiate commercial treaties, or give orders for ships, cannon, small arms, rails, and locomotives, the bloom is not a little taken off his mission; he is a commercial traveller, of a very big firm—possessing plenty of raw material, but short of money, who is taking stock of the various sources of Western nations. He is now doing France, and will see the French enjoying their National Holiday, their fête, also, of Lanterns. He can estimate too, the value of the Russian alliance by the display of Muscovite flags. Only he must not be too anxious to know why some streets are full of flags, and others, in the rich quarters, show none. He would do well to remember that the far Eastern question has radically changed since Russia bamboozled Germany to join the Franco-Russian alliance, and clip the wings of Japanese triumphs. All that scheming has been seen through; it has photographed itself; it has compelled England to get to her feet, to gird up her loins, and has left no uncertainty as to her resolve to back the gallant Japs when Russia crosses the Rubicon. In any case impartial judges admit that in the end China will fall into line with England and America, in the execution of material wants for the development of China. The Government has retained the entire first story of the Grand Hotel looking upon the Boulevards for the ambassador and his suite; His Excellency will be received on the same plan of attentions as was Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Excepting a specially big mahogany bedstead, no change has been made in the upholstery of the Grand Hotel; more shrubs and flowers, and the removal of every Chinese decoration for fear it might pain his taste—nothing Brummagem for a true Celestial. The French Government will pay the little bill, so Li H. Tchang and his 35 co-travellers need not be anxious about the *Quart d'heure de Rabelais*. The only privacy the ambassador insists on, is to have his own menu prepared in an extemporized native kitchen. He will be dined and wined; will occupy a chair at the Review, and will visit Toulon and a firearms factory. This will occupy him ten days; then the British fleet of 120 ships will welcome him with a broadside. Drumont says the Chinese diplomatists abroad put the finger in the eye of Western statesmen, while the Celestials at home assassinate all Christians to expedite them to Paradise.

There is nothing specially in evidence to mark the present from any previous “Fourteenth of July.” Beyond doubt, more new bunting has been invested in, to replace that discoloured by use. But there is not any addition to the grand total. The Russian flags are as they were. Since England is on the side of the Triple Alliance, the enthusiasm for the Franco-Russian unity has fallen a few points. The true test for a flag fervour is, the banners hung out from the outer walls of private residences. There there is no falling off, because the corresponding commencement was absent. The provincials mustered strong, but not many foreigners. The exodus of the Parisians to escape the hurly-burly was very great. That leaves more room for visitors. But it is odd, not the less, these counter currents of excursion trains. They are not the illuminations, mostly official that attract, nor the street dances organized by publicans, but the review of the army of Paris—under difficulties during Sengalian temperance. The French do sincerely take pride in their soldiers, and the latter have shown they are worthy of that attention. The review is only a big parade and a march past. But it delights and fascinates, and to make the multitude happy for a day is an end worth attaining.

The bicycling world have well reason to be satisfied with