

years when even Chauvinists became tired of the toy. Later the Municipal Council recognized its blunder and would no longer contribute to the military chest of the school boy soldiers; arms and accoutrements were returned to the arsenals and now are to be auctioned off: 10,000 stand of small muskets with bayonets, belts, fifes, drums, swords, etc. The lot will be knocked down for a song. *Sic transit gloria!* Another institution is being discussed and is making way, that of obligatory military service. There is a very large minority opposed to the creed of the nation armed. Thiers was of the number and so are several generals. It is suggested to return to the ancient system, and having a standing army of enlisted men—in a word to permit, as under the Second Empire, every conscript who may be drawn for the service to purchase his exemption by presenting a substitute—the latter was easily obtainable in the market—the price was 3,000 frs. It would be a great mistake to conclude that the French like soldiering; the re-engagements are relatively very few despite the inducements held out. The majority of the conscripts have private means, situations, trades, or industries. After putting in their three years' military service—one year if graduating for a profession—they are only too glad to return to civic life, marry, and settle down. But they not the less belong to the army of the reserve. M. Max Lebandy, is a millionaire, serving his three years as a private in a cavalry regiment and in his off moments sending cheques for 100,000 to 10,000 frs. to the leading charities. Be assured he will display no eagerness to return to barrack life when he becomes entitled to his time-discharge.

Public opinion, in the very troubled situation of Europe, is unanimous about one thing—the getting rid of the worthless Prince Ferdinand and sending him permanently to pitch his tent at Carlsbad, the watering place where he hatches his intrigues. He has proved to be the most mean, false, and worthless prince of modern times. But Bulgaria may not fall, notwithstanding, under the heel of another Kaulbars. Austria is making her arrangements against that eventuality. The accession of Roumania as the declared ally of Austria is accepted as proof that Austria and England have to come to a working understanding about the Balkans. For a long time the Servian army is bound by treaty to side with Austria. Turkey, it may be granted, will not facilitate the march of the Russians on Constantinople, and they were the Roumanians who saved the Russians from destruction at Plevna. Roumania wants back her Alsace, too, from Russia—the latter has quite a congeries of Alsaces to render—from Japan to the Balkans up to Sweden. If she gave back Kars and Batoum she would be in a better position to represent the virtue of the clauses of the Berlin treaty. But big powers ever hold what they grip.

The French press continues to smother Lord Salisbury with flowers for his proverbial common sense, fair play, and similar etceteras. It may be concluded that will not prevent his Cabinet—whose mere arrival at power has already done such an amount of good—by enabling England to recover from the several diplomatic let downs she has had of late to undergo. The French have a holy dread lest England joins the triple alliance; then give her no occasion for doing so. They have another fear that Anglo-Russian complications may at any moment drag them into a war. The whole Cabinet, invited to welcome Emperor William at Osborne, is viewed as a high political fact and intended for all whom it may concern. Fact also to note: people are not at all so frightened about the coming war—a necessary evil. Providence ordains everything.

The persistent rain is washing the last drop of courage out of farmers; the quality of their grain crops where still on foot has been injured, that added to a reduced quantity and low prices mean misery. Then the potato blight is reported to be taken advantage of wet weather. The Parisians are in full sympathy with the farmers in abusing the weather; the last five Sundays in succession have been wet, this means, confining them to the house. Being the fête of Montmorency, I sailed down to that gay suburb on Sunday last; the day was fine between the tropical showers, whose drops fell on your like small hammers. Montmorency is famous for its cherries, according to legend, but its supplies of asses and nags for equestrians remains a concrete fact. The day was too uncertain for either horse or ass manship. It was the most dismal of sights to witness girls from Paris, in groups of three having their donkeys—that would not go no matter

how the attendant lad walloped them. And there the poor girls had to sit under the downpour, their balloon dress sleeves and costumes presenting in a single minute the picture of having been pulled out of a pond. The asses were wicked; as the big drops came down they contracted their lips, raised their teeth and gums in the air to catch the cooling rain; to express their delight at that cheap refreshment, the animals then executed a braying chorus that dancers in the music rooms close by applauded and demanded a *bis*.

The French cannot but feel pained and soured at the cycle of rejoicings in Germany, in honour of the silver wedding of the once disunited Teutons in 1870-71, by their victories and the foundation of the Empire. You cannot expect a nation to conform to the wishes of a neighbouring nation, nor of a victor to ask a vanquished what would be most agreeable to him. The German soldiers of the battles of 1870-71, visit as civilians, the scenes of the war and the graves of their fallen companions, they decorate these resting places, and pay the same pious honour to the spots where French soldiers are interred.

Anarchy is not quite killed, nor is the way to make bombs forgotten, as the outrage at Aniche testifies. M. Villemin is 70 years of age, and director of the rich coal mine of Aniche, near Douai, which employs 4,000 miners. The director was originally a poor labouring lad in the mine, and rose step by step by his intelligence in the course of 50 years, to be its director. To fête his golden wedding, the hands, save 23, subscribed 2 and 4 sous each, to present him with a memorial silver vase, and an humble banquet was organized, at which the gift was to be presented. Last Sunday afternoon a thanksgiving service was celebrated, after which M. Villemin, surrounded by the Board of Directors, proceeded to march at the head of the procession to the banqueting room. A dismissed workman, aged 26—but all had been amnestied in honour of the wedding event, and whose father and brothers were in the procession—stepped forward, fired four revolver shots at M. Villemin, and the four balls lodged in his neck, head, and back. But next to simultaneously, a formidable explosion took place: the murderer had thrown a bomb on the ground; its explosion rent him—he lived twenty-five minutes—and wounded eleven persons. The glass of the windows in the vicinity was shattered, and portions of clothing were driven on the roofs of the houses. The unfortunate director still lives. His murderer was well known to be a leading anarchist.

An illustration of the independence of the press: There are 16 pictorial journals in Paris, and each of them gave a pre-Raphælite sketch of the murder of Stambuloff, taken by their own artist. Now every sketch is as different from the other, as widely as the Poles. One thing is clear, no paper can accuse its *confrère* of piracy.

M. Boissonade, who has done a good deal to establish the law system of the Westerns in Japan, has read an interesting paper on New Japan before the Academy of Moral and Political Science. The Japs, by pure patriotism—what the Chinese lack—made every sacrifice to work out their own regeneration; they replaced paper money by a metallic currency. They have all the financial systems of Westerns; their income tax is *degressive*: it strikes capital and revenue alike, commencing by a poundage of three per cent. and ending with a one-half per cent. They are controllers elected by the people, who decide contested cases of taxation. Japan, by her frugality and systematic attention to her finances, has been able to meet the expenses of the Sino-Japanese war, without borrowing a yen—not even from that surprising money-lender, Russia. It is at the University of Tokio, all the students for the professions are prepared, including astronomers and agriculturists. M. Boissonade remarks, the Japanese—like the English—speak little but act a great deal; they have a great power for assimilating knowledge and study for patriotism's sake. They are the evils resulting from luxury that the Japs have most to dread.

A man has just died, leaving all his wealth to his mistress; but as he signed his name "Nebuchadnezzar," for a whim, the testament has been broken, and having no relatives, the wealth goes to the poor.

The grave and well informed, otherwise *Débats*, alludes to "Sir William Harcourt" as "the new English Chancellor of the Exchequer." That ought to afford him a laugh, and so, happiness.