

plet, to say nothing of the citizens in the streets liable to be jellied.

M. Octave Uzzane is a book worm and has been sent to Egypt by the *Figaro* to look around and make a Joshua report of the country so as to bring water to the mouth of the nations, not in possession of the land like the British. M. Uzzane's observations are original. He admits that since the English cleared out Araby Pacha they have materially developed the country and fixed up the finances, thanks to the assistance of France. That will be news to Lord Cromer who is said to be a most humorous man with all whom he comes in contact, the Khedive excepted, whom Lord Cromer apparently never visits without bringing the birch with him. The correspondent does not believe the English have the slightest intention of evacuating the country; every year they remain clinches their permanent grip more and more. He recommends France to take a leap in the dark and compel John Bull to retire. It is the first time that solution has been proposed; there is nothing to prevent France trying it—save the consequences. One power can declare a war but it requires two to make peace.

The weather at last commences to supply proof that the end of the world, by refrigeration, as some philosophers predict, is not yet at hand. The sun, in addition to shining and smiling, radiates heat. Gardners commence to part with their sepulchral looks—I am aware of three who acted as coal porters during the winter—and farmers are less droopy. Coals have fallen in price and wheat has an upward tendency, which is better than to be on the down grade. Merchants and traders discount the signing of peace between China and Japan. It is no harm to hope for that result, especially if it will open up the Chinese Empire to trade. The Son of Heaven would be wrong to expect that even when he fixes up the quarrel with his cousin, the Mikado, the Western powers will remain silent onlookers, should he resume the old tactics of boycotting foreign devils. The prestige of China is destroyed. Only in commercial and industrial efforts can she expect to win forbearance and to merit success; her resuscitation is at that price. Dismemberment, henceforth, throws its shadow across her chamber door.

The Communists of all shades, and their name is legion, celebrated the "18th of March, 1870"—birthday of their plan for the regeneration of France, especially by "fire"—which purifies everything—with plenty of gaiety. There was nothing fee-faw-fummish to make even a squeamish monarchist or a bloated capitalist uneasy. The troops were not consigned to their barracks, nor were extra squads of police held in leash. The anniversary meetings were numerous. The "upper ten" communists feasted and *fêted* in hotels, but the rank and file were invited to come to meetings and to bring their own creature comforts with them—that avoided discussion of bills of fare. Picnic people never start into insurrection. The trysting places—inside, of course—displayed fewer red and no black flags; instead, the walls were ornamented with the names of the heroes of the Commune who died for the cause. Some of the survivors have feathered their nests; one is a millionaire in America, another is Senator, some are deputies, one even is a French Ambassador. All the guests drank, but not in solemn silence, to the 35,000 Communists mowed down by Thiers, MacMahon, etc., etc. Plenty of poetry was recited, short plays acted, and on the stroke of midnight, with Cinderella punctuality at all the meetings, the *carmagnole* was sung—quite a jolly jig air and then danced to. The meetings formally voted resolutions condemning the presence of the French fleet at Kiel. Deputy Janies, the very able leader of the socialists and a born orator, seized the occasion at one of the midnight picnics, to declare that the socialists had no confidence in the promised reforms of the Government; the *proletariat* will construct itself, step by step, the ladder that will assure its accession to supreme power.

Coquelin, the actor, had been cast in his suit with the Comédié Française theatre and has to pay costs, plus a fine of 500 frs. for every time he plays without the consent of the Comédié Française. He acts all the same at Sarah Bernhardt's theatre and his fee, 500 frs., is seized every evening he is on duty and lodged in court till his appeal be heard. The latter has no chance of success, because it is really the state that prosecutes Coquelin for breach of contract.

Bad business in all professions in many countries appear to synchronize. There is one that merits more than a passing notice, that of the theatre. The poor actors appear to have no law, and less justice on their side, and it is to be hoped that the Emperor of Germany, who has taken the matter up, will succeed in his projected reforms for the evils are also common to France, and the remedy as needed. No artist can be engaged at a theatre, save by the services of a theatrical agent, who has the first bite out of the actors wages. Even should the latter contract an engagement directly with a manager, he must pay the agent, whom he does not even know, all the same. And that fee is deducted even should the manager become bankrupt after a few representations. Henceforth, in Germany, no manager will be allowed to open a theatre or engage a troupe unless he gives solid security for the rent, gas, and salaries of his artists. There is yet another iniquity to remove; artists, whether German or French, if engaged for a month, can be dismissed summarily at the end of a fortnight, without any compensation. It is to be hoped that a deputation from the sock and buskin world will wait on Premier Ribot, and claim his help, to apply the principle of "equality" between two high contracting parties to be established. In the height of the season, an actor may be sent adrift from an Antwerp theatre, for the abuse exists in Belgium, and by the end of the season may find himself stranded at Marseilles, having wandered over France seeking employment. Emperor William ought to issue a sumptuary decree, regulating the stock of wardrobe glories of an actress; the gaudy costumes cover often defective talent, for fine feathers do not make fine birds. Sardou has made bankruptcy permanent in theatres by his scenes, fitted up and out with artistic upholstery, and dresses to match ruinous staging.

The cab fare difficulty does not yet appear to be resolved; the drivers dislike the experiment of one franc per first 15 minutes. Then the horo-mile measure is not yet the one thing needful, it lacks simplicity and surety, and will require a calculating boy to work the clock machinery. Each apparatus costs nearly 100 frs.; that for the 5,000 cabs of the "general" company's vehicles, means an expenditure of half a million of francs, and result, uncertain.

The pictures that are now most admired, and that fetch the artists most money, are those whose subject is a group of celebrities, in their best known attitudes. After all the greatest study of mankind is man, save woman. A young painter had next to finished, for the coming Salon, a group of the leading "Ladies of the Republic." There was much negotiation employed to engage them to consent to be painted together. At last a triangular duel ensued between three of the beauties, and the artistic party was broken up. But the painter will not suffer any loss; each of the dissidents has offered to pay his bill, on condition that he will destroy the canvass. Such iconoclasm was never known since Mrs. Mackay, wife of the Silver King, burned her portrait, as painted by Meissonnier, or since Mr. Whistler washed off the head of his Lady Eden.

Mashers had better beware of mantraps in Paris. One, quite a won't-go-home-till-morning swell, had a row with a cabman a few days ago, at 2 a.m. A policeman was called to decide, but feeling unable to give a Solomon decision, invited both of them to follow him to the Commissary of Police. The latter was none other but M. Goron, the ex-chief of the detectives. He heard the case for both sides. "I think I have seen you before at the Central Police Office," said he to the Masher, with the gold eye glass, kid gloves, and smelling of musk and insolence. "Impossible," replied the Masher. "Your address?" "At Colombes." "Have you any identity papers on you?" "None." "Then I arrest you till I ascertain who you are." M. Goron drove to Colombes; found the Masher had a splendid apartment, etc., but discovered a vast correspondence; the Masher was the head centre of a society of forgers, swindlers of stolen values, etc. Goron then brought the Masher to have his head and ankle bones measured; his identity was soon established; he was a recidivist, had put in three years in prison, and had been sentenced eight times for thefts. Important arrests in the capitals of the world will follow that "find."

The Telegraph-Cable Commission has been "two years at work," studying how to cut out English companies. Result of its labours, recommending the laying of a 30 mile cable at Obock! And when the cable, Marseilles to Tonkin, direct?