

# THE SATURDAY READER.

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FIVE CENTS.

## CONTENTS.

PASSING EVENTS IN EUROPE.	THE "SILENT LAND" (Poetry).
DANTE.	LA RABBITA.
LITERATURE AND LITERARY GOSSIP.	CHOLERA.
LONDON SOCIETY.	A CURIOUS EPITAPH.
LIST OF NEW BOOKS.	PASTIMES.
THE SCARLET FEVER (Poetry).	ACROSTIC—PUZZLES.
TWO CHAPTERS OF LIFE.	ENIGMA—CHARADES.
LINKS WITH THE PAST.	ANAGRAMS.
GREEN MANTLE.	TRANSPOSITIONS.
WILD-BEAR HUNTING IN INDIA.	ARITHMETICAL QUESTIONS.
HOW TO KEEP MIND AND BODY IN HEALTH.	&c. &c. &c.
	ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
	SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.
	WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.

Continued from week to week, the NEW STORY,

"HALF A MILLION OF MONEY,"

written by the author of "Barbara's History" for *All the Year Round*, edited by CHARLES DICKENS.

## PASSING EVENTS IN EUROPE.

IT is much to be feared that Earl Russell, as the new premier of England, will not succeed to the popularity of his predecessor. There will be little change in the *personnel* of the cabinet, except the absence of its late chief; but the magic of the name of Palmerston, and the qualities that made him so great a favourite in and out of Parliament, will no longer bring that support to the Government which, while he lived, was given to the man perhaps more than to the politician or statesman. In talents and knowledge, Lord Russell is far from being the inferior of Lord Palmerston; in fact he is the more accomplished man of the two; but he has not about him that charm which the late premier bore in public and private life, which cannot be described in words, but which all the great men who have influenced the affairs of nations possessed, and which has also been possessed by many who were not great men. Earl Russell is a man of exemplary private character; his amiable qualities have secured him the unbounded love and esteem of his friends and dependants, while his political career, from his youth upwards, has exhibited an unwavering consistency to the principles which he inherited from his ancestors, which he possessed when he first entered Parliament, as a very young man, and which he still professes, now that his course must be well nigh run. His name is indissolubly connected with all the great reforms which have made the last thirty-five years so memorable an era in English history, and in compassing which he has been one of the chief actors. Parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, Negro emancipation, free trade, and every measure calculated to improve the laws and institutions of England, to hasten the march of progress, to add to her greatness, and to advance her welfare, have received his advocacy and support. He may not be what the world calls a great man, but we suspect that posterity in passing judgment upon him will decide that he had as many of the elements that constitute greatness as any English statesman of his day and generation. He may have committed errors throughout his long public life; he may occasionally have been in the wrong, but how often has he been in the right. Does the record of Peel's career, of Palmerston's, of Derby's, of Gladstone's, of Disraeli's present such an example of consistency as his exhibits? But he has one glaring fault; he

is of the Whigs whiggish. England owes much to that party for the last two centuries, during the greater portion of which they have been the zealous friends of progress and reform. But politically and socially their leaders have been, and still are, an oligarchical *clique* who admitted no new men within their circle. They have been much more exclusive in this respect than the Tories who adopted such *parvenus* as Canning, Huskisson, Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, and others, sprung from the people, and whom they elevated to the highest posts in the state when they were in power. The Whig aristocracy patronised men of genius; but they were among them, not of them. Burke and Sheridan could only attain subordinate offices in the Whig governments of their day; and Sydney Smith, after fighting their battles while they were in opposition, was neglected when place and patronage were at their disposal. This, we suspect, will be the rock on which Earl Russell's administration will be shipwrecked. His ministry will be a ministry of lords: and the forbearance that was shown to Lord Palmerston on that head will not be shown to him. He must popularise his cabinet, make it more plebeian, or he must fall. The only new phase in what is called the Fenian movement in Ireland—because it doesn't move *lucens a non lucendo*—is the fact that it has been denounced by Archbishop Cullen, the Pope's Legate, in an Address to the diocese of Dublin, as, "a wicked and most pernicious organization." In France, Louis Napoleon has contrived to make political capital out of the cholera, there being nothing else to serve his purposes, for the time being. He and the Empress have visited the hospitals, a plucky act, for which the patients are reported to be duly grateful. He has also been liberal to them in gifts of money, but considering how he gets the cash, he can afford to be so. He does not believe that the cholera is contagious; and the example he has set will, no doubt, tend to diminish the terror with which the disease is regarded, and so be useful in saving life. There is mischief evidently brewing in Germany. We have always been persuaded that if political freedom ever dawned on the European continent, it will proceed from that country. Slowly, laboriously, but surely, the great German mind is at work, solving the problem of political reformation as it once did that of religious reformation; and when the hour strikes, a Luther will appear on the scene to cleanse the land of its abuses. A people so intellectual cannot, for ever, submit to a servitude so degrading as that in which the Germans are held by their princes and especially their nobles, whose privileges weigh more heavily on the masses than even the tyranny of governments, deriving their evil power from the support of armed hirelings paid from the earnings of those whom they aid in oppressing. Deputies from the minor German States lately assembled at Frankfort, the capital of the German Confederation, to consider some matters supposed to be of importance to the country generally. It was such a meeting as might be held in England, the United States, or Canada, as a matter of course. But there was no attendance of Austrian or Prussian deputies, and notes of the most insulting character were addressed by the governments of these countries to the senate of Frankfort on the subject. The Prussian note is particularly rude and insolent. The Frankfort Senate has behaved with great spirit; but what can that Free Town do against such opponents as the two great German powers? It is to be hoped that the other states of the Confederation will take up the question. If they do not, their claim to independence is a farce, and they will soon find themselves mere ciphers, to be threatened, ordered, and cajoled or silenced, just as the

wishes, interests, or caprices of Austria and Prussia may dictate. But we must trust that the day of reckoning will come, and that oppression will at last call forth the only remedy in such cases, resistance. Germany deserves a better fate than to be at the mercy of a King of Prussia and an Emperor of Austria; above all of such creatures as now fill the thrones of these countries. The young king of Portugal, who is travelling in Italy, has offered his services to effect a reconciliation between the Pope and Victor Emmanuel. As he is a great favourite with His Holiness and the son-in-law of the Italian monarch, he may succeed; but he has a hard task to perform. Greece, to which the world is so largely indebted for so much that constitutes modern civilization, must always be an object of interest to the people of Europe and America. King George seems to labour honestly and zealously to bring order out of the chaos which has been the normal condition of his little kingdom, since it acquired its independence. Brigandage still flourishes, and beards the Government; but better days are in expectation. Edmond About says that the Greek army was invented for the sole purpose of creating generals, and the navy for creating admirals. This abuse, among others, is to be rectified, which may be the more easily accomplished, inasmuch as from the emptiness of the public purse, the pay of the soldiers, sailors, and officers is seldom forthcoming, and must soon cease altogether, if affairs do not mend. The king surrenders to the national necessities one-third of his civil list, and he appears to have secured the services of one able and patriotic man, in the person of his chief minister, M. Kimaundamas. But, it is to be feared that the time for the regeneration of Greece has not yet arrived. A French traveller naively described the inhabitants of Athens, who still under the Turkish yoke, as being "the same *cannaille* that they were in the days of Pericles." and morally, they have not gained much for the last thirty or forty years that they have been their own masters. A crown must have powerful attractions when any sane man would accept the throne of Greece; and the poor young gentleman who has now the misfortune to be king of that classic land, is entitled to the sympathy of the whole world, whether he succeeds or fails in redeeming a country whose glories of the past and miseries of the present are in such sombre contrast, and in which, fallen though it be from its high estate, "all save the spirit of man is divine." It is again reported that Rome will soon be evacuated by the French troops. We cannot perceive the very great importance of this step, unless it be to satisfy the requirements of international comity. The Pope will keep on hand sufficient troops of his own to guard his person from violence, and his remaining territories will be as much under the safeguard of the French eagles, with the small French force now surrounding him, at Paris, as if they were in Rome. It may be doubted, too, if there is not more of sentiment than wisdom in the desire to make the city of the Bruti and the Gracchi the capital of a Kingdom of Italy. The most brilliant portion of Roman history is republican, not monarchical; and the dislike to kings, which even the first Cæsar could not overcome in the Roman mind, may yet linger in that of their descendants. Nay, not only does the ancient republic maintain a stronger hold on the love and veneration of all Italians than does any other era in their annals, but popular tradition everywhere is connected with the glories of Republican Rome. The revival of the kingly power there would sound like an anachronism, and the shades of the great men who made the eternal city illustrious, when to think of the future empire would have been