

of the papal chair to Avignon is represented by the chariot being drawn into a forest. A deliverer, however, will come, and make all new and good.

The Purgatorio, Dr. Plumptre says, may be called the confession of Dante; but it is also of universal interest. It gives the history of all human purification by Divine Grace.

WILLIAM CLARK.

PARIS LETTER.

Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs Flourens is a champion Russophile, and, like Senator Jules Simon, claims the Gaul and the Slav to be the foremost civilising nations of the world. He has just written a book to make Russia better known to the French, and the French to Russia, for he confesses and laments that in Russia there are a great many people who continue to hold erroneous ideas about France. As a consolation he adds, there are Russians in Russia who even do not yet understand the Czar. M. Flourens wants the course of true love in the Franco-Russian alliance to run smooth. If the Czar be still misunderstood, that is due to the perfidy of the German press and the epigrams of Bismarck, who said of Alexander III., "He does not know what he wishes, but he wishes well." M. Flourens has had several interviews with the Czar, private as well as official; his character sketch is then "personal and psychologic." He studied the Emperor even before his infancy, and by means of "atavic" documents has been able to fathom his moral and intellectual personality; and examined the action of the influences in which His Majesty lived, moved, and had his being. It is thus that M. Flourens has been able to follow the threads of the leading idea of the Czar's plan, thought and action—that of bringing about an *entente* between Russia and France, for the Czar personally, and no one else, is the founder and achiever of the Franco-Russian alliance. M. Flourens furthermore asserts there is a public opinion in Russia, and also an independent press, and that she has become in Europe the hope of liberal emancipation. He does not ignore the discordant notes in the alliance, but the force of events will silence these—Germany is still denounced as the marplot.

Public opinion in its heart of hearts does not feel that the world has undergone any change since the visit of the Russians to Paris. There seems to be a competition between the double and the triple alliances as to who will cry loudest as the protector of the peace of Europe, ay, of peace from Indus to the Pole. While England joins of course in the chorus, she makes arrangements with Italy against accidental rainy days in the Mediterranean, while preparing to strengthen also her own fleet there, by way of no harm. In the great struggle to uphold general peace which nobody appears to threaten—nothing ought to be left to chance. The Balkans and Morocco are the explosive points. If Spain intends this time to finish for good with the Moors, the European Peace Protection Society will have a hard nut to crack.

The coal strike continues to be still a danger; it is now wholly run by the Socialist deputies. By pushing the unfortunate men into collision with the military, the solution will not be a whit more advanced. The coal proprietors, many of them very humble people, are not federated: they remain with hands in

pocket—like their men. To settle a coal strike then, seems to surpass the wit of man. In the north of France, the strikers being unable to lynch the non-federated miners, who are protected by the military, are inclined to take it out of the soldiers. The Socialist deputies intend to demand that the first thing to be done when parliament meets, is to send the ministers to the guillotine. At Amiens the dyers are still on strike, and swear by all the gods they will end or mend their employers who decline to discuss the points in dispute with the men. The latter offer the manufacturers of cotton velvet, the staple industry of Amiens, to set up and manage dye-works on their premises, and thus abolish their master-dyers. In the meantime Germany is receiving the orders for cotton velvet that Amiens cannot deliver.

Prefect de Police Leprieux is reaping golden opinions, not only by his reforms, but by his courageous execution of the law. He is now dealing with that terrible social ulcer, the hells of Paris, that exist under the name of "clubs." No club can hold on in Paris without gambling, and this explains why all attempts to found an "English club" in Paris have failed. Britishers avoid the fire and brimstone. There are two classes of clubs in Paris, the select, like the Jockey, etc., and the cosmopolitan, where only pigeons are sought, and card sharpers to pluck them. The directors of these establishments are usurers, and their charge is from 200 to 900 per cent. To a player or pigeon down on his luck at the green table, they give for a note of hand so much cash, and so many counters representing certain values. Money in these hells never figures on the table, only counters, and on the conclusion of the night's or rather morning's play the counters are turned into cash. There is a section of the hell, or rather bad-to-do population, that depends for their living on play, whether at club, on the exchange, or by the race course. The director of one of these "clubs" is now in prison for being associated in these compound swindles. He has ruined many once happy and hard-working business men. One of his creatures, anticipating justice, has blown out his brains; others have fled the country. Hardly a day but the journals announce the ruin of people. The Prefect intends closing five of the thieves, clubs at once; in other cases he has given a sublime warning. As it is, he who has the sole right to authorize the founding of a club, so he has the full power to extinguish it. A special police is told off to superintend the play, but as the detectives cannot enter the room where the swindling is going on, their inutility is evident. All the old club police have been changed, and henceforth a detective, in evening dress, will, in the case of certain clubs, have the right to enter every play-room, and note, not the play, but the "game" and the gamblers. Many a parent will invoke a benediction upon the head of the Prefect. He has thousands of cases where the family of the duped prefer to play rather than to have an exposure.

Sardou's new vaudeville *Madame Sans-gene* is as ever a succession of charming scenes, each an anecdote and complete in itself. The upholstery and dresses are magnificent, for the author never fails to catch eyes as well as ears. A passing remark, the prevalent taste, the decided preference of the public for all plays relating to *Napoleonism*. The present vaude

ville deals with the social life of the First Empire. "Madame Sans-gene" is the nickname given by her comrades to Catherine, a laundress, on account of her ever blurring out her mind on all subjects. Catherine was the sweetheart of Lefebvre, who rose from his humble position through all grades to become Marshal, and Duke of Dantzic, the first duke Napoleon created. Catherine became the wife of Lefebvre, fought by his side, was wounded, and in her time kept a canteen. Becoming duchess, her early habit of speaking out her mind continued, and so shocked the court ladies. Two of Napoleon's sisters complained of this and Napoleon called for the Marshal, told him to divorce Catherine, and to marry a princess. "And what answer did you make?" said Catherine, "I would do no such thing." Catherine sought Napoleon, recounted all she and her husband had done to build up his glory; alluded to a once poor artillery officer whose linen she washed, and who decamped without paying her bill of 60 francs. "Show it to me," said the Emperor as he searched his pockets but found he had not money enough to pay the old bill. "Sire, I have waited eighteen years for the payment of my account and I can afford to wait another day," replied Catherine, and so all was made up. There is no plot, no drama; and, above all, the play is not wearisome. It is said that Sardou always advances, or guarantees the funds to stage his plays and meet demands till all the expenses are paid off—generally by the first twenty representations.

The Japs pride themselves upon being the Britons of the Far East. They manage their matrimonial advertisements better than their model; here is one, culled from a Kobe journal: "A young lady desires to marry: she is very handsome, with undulating and cloudy hair; a visage like a rose, a waist flexible as a bamboo, and eyebrows like a crescent; she is sufficiently rich to traverse life hand in hand with a helpmate with whom she could respire the perfume of flowers pending the day and contemplate the stars during the night. She would willingly wed a young man, handsome and educated, and would have much pleasure in sharing with him his tomb." Only Sir Edwin Arnold should accept such an offer. Fancy Romeo and Juliet entombed at the same time.

A. M. Bartissol is the latest philanthropist who has taken up the completion of the Panama Canal. He asserts he has 60 million francs in cash to commence his plan; namely, the utilizing of the two ends of the big ditch already made; the intervening space he would cross by employing the existing railway. He undertakes to assure shippers, to transport their goods from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and *vice versa* at rates less than the all round Cape Horn route can afford; he demands only three years to get ready, etc., etc.

There are forty district post offices in Paris, the moiety of these are undergoing *feminisation*; that is, young ladies are to be employed as clerks. The public has declared itself perfectly satisfied with the experiment of the office in the Rue Lafayette; entirely, save the chef, and the porters, worked by young women. As a unit of public opinion, I can vouch for the correctness of the verdict; they are quicker than the male clerks, sharper at figures, and have geography at their finger ends.

One Simon, a renowned anarchist of Lyons