

## PARIS LETTER.

Beyond recording the English telegrams from the seat of war, and avowing that all is incomprehensible, the French express no opinion in the Jap-China war. True, France has no trade of any consequence in the Far East, and she cannot afford to fall out with the Celestials. However, the impression commences to crystallize, that they are the Japanese who commenced the war, and that their fast cruisers so sweep the Chinese seas, that they may carry a broom at their mast-head, as did once Admiral Tromp in the English Channel. But if any of the Western Powers decide to indulge in protecting territories and peoples in the extreme East, be assured France will be a volunteer in that philanthropic work. Everywhere, save in Egypt, she succeeds in trampling on the horns of John Bull—West Africa, the Belgian Soudan, Chantaboun, Madagascar, etc., to wit. And why? She knows her own mind, and is resolved to have what she wishes. That policy ever succeeds; it was the programme of Cromwell and Palmerston too. Russia remains mysteriously quiet and England indulges in masterly inactivity, while a war, of no justifiable nature, is allowed to break out, and that may envelop the world in its flames. Be assured, that in the course of events, China will make up for lost time. In the interior, they are British and American traders who suffer by the bickerings of the Yellow race.

Beyond chronicling his warm and triumphal reception in England, the French observe something like silence respecting Emperor William's reception. In private circles the opinion is, that the friendship between the two countries implies preparations against possible rainy days. Every Government is right and at liberty to so act; that forms the basis of the "understanding" between France and Russia. The cold douches that Bismarck administered in his day—with Jules Ferry especially—so English foreign policy, have now been replaced by the more genial sun-baths arranged by the Emperor. The diplomatic atmosphere everywhere—from Morocco to Siam; from the Congo to the Corea—is highly charged with intrigues and diamond-cut-diamond relations. They will continue as long as the bloated armaments for peace will be kept up-to-date.

M. Sardon has been reminded that his Madame Sans-Gene was not the wife of Marshal Lefebvre, but Therese Figueur, daughter of a corn-merchant, born in 1774, and who at the age of 19, took up arms to defend the Girondins, against the Jacobins; and that it was her old uncle, at Avignon, encouraged her to volunteer. Taken prisoner by the army of the Convention, she owed the saving of her life to her very witty and saucy repartees. In time she enlisted in a dragoon regiment, took part in the siege of Toulon, fought in several campaigns, was five times wounded, and had two horses shot under her. She saved the life of her general. In 1815, she was accorded a pension of 200 fr., after 22 years of military service, and married her playmate of school days, at the age of 44; they set up a boarding house; she died at the age of 85, and was interred with military honours. Every one can recall what Voltaire ranks as the most wonderful trait in the military life of Jeanne d'Arc. Louise was asked, how she managed to get on with her soldier comrades, who were aware of her sex; she replied that she always knew how to protect herself: "I remained faithful to the

flag of my regiment," where I enlisted as a simple *dragon*, and not as a *dragon de vertu*," Virginie Ghesquiere, who resembled her brother, as one pea does another, replaced him as a conscript, distinguished herself at Wagram, and took two officers of the English army prisoners in the Peninsular war. She was promoted sergeant for saving the life of her colonel; she was decorated with the Legion of Honor for bravery; Angelique Brulon, was equally brave and was promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant. Marie Schellenick was present at 17 battles; was a sub-lieutenant, and decorated; she received six sabre wounds at Jemmappes, a bullet at Austerlitz, and a cannon ball at Jena; she was cited in an order of the day, for her heroism at Arcola. But the history of France from the Revolution, is full of such episodes. However, another class of women followed the army, as impedimenta. Strozzi, who commanded in Italy, ordered 800 of such camp followers to be thrown into a river. In 1760, Marshal de Broglie ordered the faces of the loose women to be dyed black; scourging, he said, was no use, as they came back. Napoleon adopted the plan of Marshal de Broglie towards the battalions of "femmes inutiles," who joined the army without permission. That was his contagious disease act.

M. Charles Malo, an authoritative military writer, asserts that of the tons of books published, to explain Napoleon's collapse at Waterloo, no satisfactory explanation has yet been given. Passing over what ordinary people conclude to be the explanation, superior skill on the part of Wellington and better fighting on the part of his *braves*, Malo seems to have hit the nail on the head, as to the Emperor's ill luck, when he attributes it, not to physical degeneracy or to mental decline, etc., but to his full consciousness that "the spirit of France was opposed to his resumption of power." In a word, the thanes had fallen away from him. He had lost his grip on the nation. France suffered from "fatigue" in 1815, as she did from "ennui" in 1848. Competent judges concur, that his campaign against the allies in 1814, to cover Paris, and his cracking up the inevitable preparations for war, after he violated his parole by escaping from Elba, and thus out-lawing himself, are among the most brilliant efforts of Napoleon's genius. Whether he wished it or not, he was bound to fight; when the allies at the Congress of Vienna were on the point of declaring war between themselves, they at once ended their squabbles, and within one hour unanimously declared war against Napoleon. The latter had only 128,000 men—this time all French; the foes nearest at hand were the English, with their auxiliaries, 106,000—of whom 36,000 British and the Prussians, 117,000. There were also converging upon Paris, 168,000 Russians from the Northern Rhine, 254,000 Austrians, 60,000 Piedmontese and 40,000 Neapolitans. Napoleon was being "run in;" knew he could not possibly escape. Generals January and February defeated Napoleon in Russia and General Impossible in Belgium.

What a pretty compliment the sister of Admiral Avelane pays France, and intended to kindle the embers of the Russian alliance. That lady, the wife of a Russian functionary, has come all the way from Holy Russia to the artists' village of Barbizon, close to Fontainebleau, in order to be confined, so that the little stranger would be able to be doubly French—born on Gallic soil and already possessing a French heart. The Russian ladies could not confer a greater

service on France than stocking the land with babies and so checking the augmenting depopulation.

The Theatre Francais had, during the Revolution, its up and downs, as startling as the constitution itself. On the 26th Sept., 1791, the King, Queen, their children and Madame Elisabeth, were present at a representation, and were frantically applauded—Louis XVI was hailed by the "gods" as the father of his people. Sixteen months later His Majesty was beheaded. Talma and Mdle. Vestris were playing on one occasion in Voltaire's *Brutus*; this was the conversation exchanged on the stage *sotto voce*: "Talma, your arms are bare!" "I am dressed as a Roman." "Talma, you have no trousers!" "I'm dressed as a Roman." "Nasty pig!" said Vestris, as she gave Talma her hand, bowing to the spectators and both walking away in great anger. During a pit row, the Royalists stood up for the dignity of the stage, which a party wanted to degrade. Among the former was a young man deeply pock-marked, with a flat nose, of gigantic build and stentorian voice; the cry was, to chuck him out; this, after some time, was effected. Arrived at the guard house, he was asked his name; "Danton," was the reply. There were terrible quarrels between the artistes then; in May, 1790, the Abbé Gouttes was presiding one day over the assembly; he was implored to come and make peace in the troupe; he requested a deputy to take his place as president, went to the theatre—the first one he ever entered in his life and sat out the representation of the piece. This would resemble a bishop replacing the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack and quitting the presidency of the House of Lords, to go and occupy a seat in the pit of Drury Lane theatre to calm a dispute between the members of Sir Augustus's troupe.

Is war likely to be a necessity? France has so many conscripts this year that she does not know how to utilize them; she has too many soldiers and the cost of feeding and arming them is excessive. Only a good campaign can thin ranks. Even that solution is already crossed, since a deputy proposes that every man of legal age be compelled to take out a policy of life assurance—the scheme would bring in 100 millions frs. a year, a sum sufficient to build two iron clads—and essay Turpin's 36,000 bullet-gun.

## TWO HISTORY-MAKERS.

Almost any sunny afternoon there may be seen in the fine woods surrounding an ancient estate, near the little German town of Friedrichsruhe, a slightly stooped but still massive figure, slowly pacing back and forth with a firm martial tread, though nearly eighty years have elapsed since that figure was first cradled among the hills of Magdeburg. A huge boar-hound is his sole attendant, and from time to time the animal, as if wishing to keep his presence in mind, pushes his powerful head, not insinuatingly, but forcefully against the rugged hand of his master, and is invariably rewarded with an approving word in German, spoken in a deep bass—the voice of a man accustomed to be obeyed without question. The dog's insistence causes the stroller at last to turn partly around, and as the sunlight falls full on the features we see what a remarkable face it is! Thick, overhanging eyebrows, bushy, straight across the nose, whilst a heavy cropped moustache