

Evening Telegraph

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1870.

SUICIDE OF THE FRENCH MINISTER

A DISPATCH from Washington announces that Prevost-Paradol, the newly-appointed French Minister, committed suicide at one o'clock this morning. The only explanation given of this extraordinary event is that he has been very busily engaged since his arrival in the United States, and that the oppressive heat, combined with his exhausting labors, produced a temporary mental alienation, during which he sought death in the high old Roman fashion. This explanation may be correct, and in support of it the fact is worthy of notice that weather like that to which sweltering American humanity has been subjected during the last few days is more insupportable to newly-arrived and unacclimated foreigners than to our own citizens. We are strongly inclined to believe, however, that no speculations on this sad and delicate subject can be complete which do not take cognizance of the moral causes that were only too well calculated to fill the soul of the departed diplomat with gloom and despondency. No man living, except perhaps Rochefort, who has said more bitter things of Napoleon, and who has cherished a deeper hatred and contempt for his whole character and policy, than Prevost-Paradol. Of all political summations that by which he became the confidential agent of a man on whom he had showered every form of abuse is one of the most remarkable. We know of nothing in the annals of political literature more cutting and contemptuous than the famous "stable-boy" article which is referred to elsewhere.

The mutual concession involved in the appointment of the author of this article by the Napoleonic stable-boy was no doubt more keenly felt by the Minister than the monarch. The latter could console himself with the reflection that the skillful pen which had assailed him would henceforth be devoted to his service, while the former could not forget that this new task involved deep self-abasement. It is but just to the memory of Paradol to assume that in undertaking it he was influenced by the belief that a new era was about to be opened in the empire, and that he would help to liberalize French institutions instead of becoming the slave of a tyrannical system. While he was crossing the ocean, however, new complications suddenly arose that changed the character of his duties here and the face of politics in the land he left behind. A war was suddenly precipitated by the act of the master whom he had so thoroughly despised, against the better judgment, apparently, of Paradol's official friend, Ollivier, and clearly against the open renunciation of Paradol's old preceptor, M. Thiers. The brutal instincts of the stable-boy had once more impelled him to adopt a policy that will entail endless misery upon his beautiful mistress, France, and that may involve himself and all his chosen favorites in hopeless ruin. To a mind keen in its perception of these features of the new complication, and, perhaps, of many others of a still more irritating character, which are only understood by those who are familiar with official secrets, the unanimity of American feeling in behalf of Prussia must have been specially disheartening. Paradol had been a great admirer of this country, and had warmly espoused the cause of the North during the Rebellion, so that he had a just claim upon our kindly regard which was well calculated to insure for himself, personally, an enthusiastic reception in all loyal American circles. He could scarcely fail, in turn, to be deeply depressed by the fact that the people of whom he thought so well instinctively pronounced an adverse judgment upon the late movements of Napoleon. And if the conviction suddenly flashed upon him that the underlying idea of the stable-boy in sending him to America was to trick him into an involuntary use of his presumed personal influence in this country to strengthen a premeditated policy of which he (Paradol) was ignorant at the time he assumed official chains, it is not difficult to understand the intense desire of a gifted and sensitive nature to seek relief from such a position at any cost.

THE CASE OF CONSTABLE McMULLIN.

JOHN McMULLIN is a constable, and he is, moreover, inspired with an exceedingly exalted opinion of his own personal and official importance. Until yesterday he evidently imagined that a constable was a law unto himself, and that he was endowed with all the prerogatives of judge, jury, and prosecuting attorney combined, with a general roving commission as an administrator of public justice according to the lights that had been vouchsafed to him. Constable McMullin, however, was convinced of the very mistaken view he had taken of his own importance as a representative of the legal dignity of this Commonwealth by a fine of \$300 imposed by Judge Paxson for his refusal to obey a writ of habeas corpus, and a commitment to the insubrious confines of the County Prison until he shall find it convenient to pay the money. It appears that a citizen and his wife and children were on their way to the grand jury to testify in a case of burglary, in obedience to a subpoena. They were overtaken by Constable McMullin, however, who arrested the woman on a charge of perjury, and on being

remonstrated with, replied that he did not care for the subpoena, and qualifying his remark with an expletive that belongs to what Charles Reade calls the "dash dialect," and which, by common consent, is banished from polite society. The woman was accordingly taken before an alderman, with considerable rough usage, it is said, and sent to the station-house. The husband stated the particulars of the arrest to the court, and a writ of habeas corpus was forthwith issued commanding McMullin to produce the woman. This he refused to do, and supplemented a recommendation to the Judge and District Attorney to visit the shades below by remarking, "My wishes shall be complied with." The Judge did not agree with Constable McMullin about the expediency of taking the trip suggested, especially during the present altitudinous state of the thermometer, and he also apparently considered the remark as an additional disrespect to the court. The excuse of the Constable that he did not understand the writ was not accepted, the Judge very properly remarking that the offense was a grave one, and that no plea of ignorance would answer, for a constable who did not know the nature of a writ of habeas corpus was not fit to hold the office.

This case embodied a flagrant contempt for the court, and it therefore secured an amount of publicity that otherwise would not have attached to it; but it is not by any means the first instance of officers taking the law into their own hands in utter violation of the rights of citizens. McMullin's remark, "My wishes shall be complied with," was the assertion of an insolent self-sufficiency and a consciousness of a power to give annoyance that is characteristic of too many of the class of petty officials to which he belongs; and while the constables are entitled to the aid not only of the courts but of all good citizens when they are doing their duty, all citizens, no matter how humble they may be, have a right to claim exemption from insult and unlawful arrest at their hands. The refusal of McMullin to obey the writ of habeas corpus and the insolent language he used merited even a greater punishment than he received, but it is probably enough to teach him that we are not quite ready just yet to recognize the higher law of the constabulary, and that the next time he is served with a writ of habeas corpus it will be the part of discretion for him to obey it.

THE FREE PUBLIC BATHS.

THROUGH the exertions of the Bedford street missionary two bathing tanks have been got into operation in the building adjoining the mission house, and they have already been used by a great number of both sexes, who, without such facilities, could never have been induced to pay attention to personal cleanliness. That these baths will exert a potent influence in favor of the moral as well as the physical regeneration of the Bedford street district cannot be doubted, and the missionary regards them as among the most important of his auxiliaries in the work of Christianizing the heathen of that region. But while through individual enterprise and exertion the Bedford street baths have been established, it seems from present appearances that the free public baths on the Delaware and Schuylkill, about which there has been so much talk, are not likely to be of much use to the public during the season when they are most needed. Councils, after discussing the subject until they had exhausted it, finally agreed to appropriate the money necessary, and plans were prepared and adopted, so that there seemed to be every probability that the baths would be provided in time for the hot weather. The summer is more than half over now, however, and still the work is delayed; and thousands of men, women, and children who are unprovided with bathing facilities at home, who cannot afford to pay for baths, and who are prohibited by law from taking a dip in either of our rivers, are deprived of a means of preserving health and comfort that they are justly entitled to. It is not necessary that the bath-houses should be very ornate affairs, and it ought not to require any great expenditure of either time or money to construct substantial wooden sheds that will answer every purpose. There has been ample time since the money for the free public baths was voted by Councils to put them in operation, and the very large and important class who are immediately interested have a right to complain that through the negligence of somebody they are out off from a legitimate enjoyment during the hot weather, as well as from a sanitary agent the value of which cannot be estimated at any pecuniary valuation.

THE Fall Mall Gazette holds out an inducement for A. J. to settle in London. It says—"A correspondent of the Knoxville (Tennessee) Chronicle mentions a rumor that the ex-President Johnson is about to go into the mercantile business and open a wholesale and retail store in Greenville. Another report states that he is coming to Europe. It is, however, considered more likely that he will commence business at Greenville, inasmuch as his former position as President is likely to secure him a large amount of patronage even from those whose sympathies and respect he was unable to command while maintaining his veto messages at the White House." If these anticipations should not be realized, and ex-President Johnson should find business slack at Greenville, we can assure him that there is a very good opening for a really honest grocer in London. If he would really give us good weight, let us have undated articles, and not charge exorbitant prices, we should all rush to his shop, which would be as successful as the Civil Service stores in Long-acre and the Haymarket. We only ask that he may let us know beforehand what it is we are buying. If he has a fancy for selling disgusting compounds, by all means let him do so, only let them be labelled accordingly. When we ask for tea, we really want tea. If we wanted dust, dirt, and shoe-leaves, we would ask for them separately, and mix them ourselves. We might also point out to him that if, on the other hand, he intends to adopt the adulterative system, he will find facilities for carrying it on in this country unsurpassed anywhere else. Unfortunately there is so much competition in the adulterative business that a new-comer has little chance of success. It takes some little time to become a thorough rascal, and to be able to over-adulterate and undersell felt-wraders in England."

OBITUARY.

Lucien Anatole Prevost-Paradol. The death by suicide, at one o'clock this morning, at Washington, of M. Prevost-Paradol, the French Minister, will create a profound sensation not only in this country, but in view of the struggle going on in Europe, throughout the civilized world. Such an event is unprecedented in the history of this country, and perhaps in that of the world. The possible causes which led to the tragedy are discussed elsewhere, and it only remains for us to refer, in this connection, to M. Prevost-Paradol's career. On the 11th instant we published a long and elaborate sketch of his life, but the manner of his death was so sudden and summary that a passing interest demands a repetition of its leading points. Lucien Anatole Prevost-Paradol was the son of a French naval engineer and a talented lady connected with the Comedie Francaise Theatre, and was born at Paris on the 8th of August, 1829. His education was commenced at the College Bourbon, where at an early age he displayed distinguishing abilities, and succeeded in gaining a number of the highest prizes. Afterwards he entered the Ecole Normale, from which he graduated in 1851, securing, when but twenty-two years old, the prize for eloquence from the Academie Francaise for his "Eloge de Bernardin Saint-Pierre." The degree of Doctor in Letters was conferred upon him in 1855 as a qualification for a professorship, and the same year he was appointed to the chair of French Literature at the University of Aix, in Provence.

Having a decided inclination, however, for journalism, he abandoned his professorship in 1856 to become an editorial writer on the Journal des Debats, with which he remained in connection up to the time of his appointment as Minister to the United States, with the exception of a few months in 1860, when he occupied an editorial position on the Presse. At the time he became connected with the Journal des Debats, which was the recognized organ of the Orleanist party, that party was struggling for existence, one writer after another having attempted and failed to keep it afloat by waging as bitter a warfare upon the Napoleonic regime as was possible without subjecting it to fatal attentions from the Government. The new editor's position was therefore one of extreme difficulty, but he entered upon it with such earnestness that his success was complete. With consummate skill he assailed the Government and all its belongings, yet in such an adroit, insinuating way that his attacks were all the more galling, because they were too carefully phrased to present a tangible point for a warning from the Government. He became a contributor also to other journals, especially to the Courrier du Dimanche, a Sunday journal, in which he was given a freer hand, and attracted great attention by the violent and sarcastic vein in which he combated the pretensions of the Government. This sheet was continually under the displeasure of the Government, and was warned eight times, suspended twice, condemned once, and finally, not longer ago than 1866, suppressed for publishing an article by M. Prevost-Paradol entitled "Le Palefrenier" or "Stable-Boy," in which occurred the following remarkable passage:—

"France is a beautiful court lady, beloved by the most gallant men, who has run away to live with a stable boy. She is spoiled, debauched, debased more and more every day. But it can't be helped; she has come to like it, and cannot be wrested from her worthless lover."

His articles in the Journal des Debats also at length became so vexatious that it is said the Government resolved upon its suppression without preferring any specific charges, but simply for "reasons of state." This desperate course was not resorted to, however, as the proprietors preferred a modification of its policy to its annihilation. So for a long time the name of M. Prevost-Paradol ceased to appear at the end of the political articles, his contributions being restricted to literary subjects, but displaying such a high order of ability that there was sufficient demand for the reproduction of the greater portion of them in permanent book form. Indeed, throughout his journalistic career he found time to write several works. The most noticeable of these was a political pamphlet, given to the world in 1860, under the title of "Les Anciens Partis." In this he assailed the Government so recklessly that he was subjected to a prosecution by it, the result of the trial being a month's incarceration and the payment of a fine of one thousand francs. In 1857 he published a work entitled "Du Role de la Famille dans l'Education," which was "crowned" by the French Academy, and on the 7th of April, 1865, he was elected a member of that body, the highest goal to which a literary man in France can attain. In May, 1867, he received still another substantial recognition of his literary standing and abilities by being appointed one of the committee of five members of the Academy to superintend a new edition of the "Historical Dictionary of the French Language." His position as permanent chairman of this committee he resigned just before his departure from Paris.

Although obliged for a time to relax his political efforts in the Journal des Debats, his reputation and fortune as a writer were so well established at the time he was forced into purely literary labors that he gradually resumed his former line of writing, and by the combination of elegance, force, and truth, contributed in no small degree towards bringing about that healthy sentiment in the public opinion of the country which culminated, at the close of 1869, in the elevation of his warm personal friend M. Ollivier to the Premiership. The progress of "liberty under the empire" caused the gradual disintegration of the Orleanist party, and at the same time threw M. Prevost-Paradol into the following of Ollivier, in whose peculiar views on "constitutional liberty" he had professed to acquiesce for some time past. The advent of the Tiers Parti to power found him, professionally at least, in full harmony with it and its leaders, and when M. Ollivier was called to the head of the ministry, he acquiesced in the new order of things, and his name was soon discussed in official circles as that of a suitable person for high office under the constitutional regime. Indeed, in a work published about two years ago, entitled "La Nouvelle France," he had already committed himself to the support of the recent policy of the Emperor, which the course of events was already foreshadowing, and had sketched with his accustomed brilliancy the prospects and destiny of the country, insisting especially upon the point that it was the mission of France to crush the rising power of Prussia, which threatened to trample out the independent States of Europe in its colossal strides. At the elections of 1868 he had presented himself as a candidate for the Corps Legislatif from the sixth circumscription of Paris, but only to sustain a defeat. His political career was therefore still restricted to journalism up to the date of his appointment as Minister to the United

States. Despite the bitterness of his previous assaults upon the empire, his accordance with the views of his friend, M. Ollivier, rendered his entrance into the service of the Emperor under the new regime possible, and perhaps natural if not consistent, and his selection for the mission to the United States was the result of his well-known sentiments towards this country. Having a perfect command of the English language, and having long been familiar with the peculiar institutions of Great Britain, for which he professed the highest admiration, he enjoyed better facilities than most prominent Frenchmen for analyzing and comprehending the nature of our institutions. Throughout the recent war of the Rebellion he was a firm, consistent, and enthusiastic friend of the Union cause, and in the columns of the Journal des Debats frequently gave that cause the effective support of his brilliant and trenchant pen. The tragic death of Mr. Lincoln, especially, called forth the fullness of his sympathy with the Union cause, and in the columns of the Journal des Debats he eulogized the life and character of the martyred President in eloquent words. Although published as early as only a week ago, the closing words of this eulogy will bear repetition here. M. Prevost-Paradol wrote:—

"He could display with some degree of pride aloft and triumphant that Union flag which had been twice entrusted to him, and which he had preserved through so many perils. It is at the moment that he is struck that the unforeseen blood reounds so grievously in the hearts of all honest men in the Old as in the New World. The Romans have held in plous reverence the memory of a certain Fabius Dorse, who, during the siege of Rome by the Gauls, passed slowly through the enemy's lines, carrying with him respectfully the necessary offerings for a sacrifice which was to be offered in a day and at a place fixed. It is in a very similar manner that this honest man has passed his course for more than four years, holding religiously in his hands as a sacred deposit the threatened existence of his country. Less fortunate than Fabius Dorse, he has fallen at the very foot of the altar, and covered it with his blood. But his work was done, and the spectacle of a rescued republic was what he could look upon with consolation when his eyes were closing in death. Moreover, he has not lived alone for his country, since he leaves to every one in the world to whom liberty and justice are dear a great remembrance and a pure example."

M. Prevost-Paradol's appointment as Minister to the United States was first discussed by the French Government soon after M. Ollivier came into power, and in February the appointment was finally decided upon. There were some difficulties in the way, however, and it was not announced officially until the 15th of June. Many of the Paris journals, liberal and imperial alike, abused him and the Government because of it, but from other sources he received warm congratulations and endorsement, the American residents of Paris especially being highly gratified by the selection. On the 2d inst., while Europe was reposing in perfect peace, he left France, and on his arrival at New York, on the 13th, he was startled and doubtless stupefied to find the Continent in the first throes of a terrific struggle—that very struggle which he had predicted two years before. On Saturday last he was formally presented to the President by M. Berthemy, his predecessor at the head of the legation, receiving a hearty welcome, as, indeed, he had already received from all sections and sources in the country. As we write, the particulars of his death have not been received by telegraph from the capital. They will be eagerly awaited, not only in this country but in France. The death, in the course of nature, of such a man as M. Prevost-Paradol is a general misfortune; the death of such a man by his own hand is a circumstance of unusual painfulness. M. Berthemy, his predecessor, has not yet left the country, having intended to sail from New York on Saturday next. His departure will doubtless be delayed by orders from Paris, as the French Emperor cannot afford to be without a responsible and trusted representative at Washington at this critical time.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

For additional Special Notices see the Inside Pages.

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