

# Daily Evening Bulletin

GIBSON PEACOCK, Editor.

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## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

### LETTER FROM PARIS.

**The Napoleon Fete.—The General Amnesty.—The Ceremonies of the Fifteenth of August.—The First Napoleon.—Change of French Sentiment.**

(Correspondence of the Phila. Evening Bulletin.)  
Paris, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 1869.—The imperial government has inaugurated its new Constitution by a very wise and benevolent act. It has accorded a general amnesty, of the most complete and unconditional character, to all political offenders and offenses of the press, as well as everything connected with the late riots in Paris and elsewhere, thereby saying: "Let bygones be bygones," and doing much towards making an entire reconciliation between itself and the nation. The amnesty is extended to a great many other categories of offenses, and, indeed, to everything one would desire almost to see amended, as well as to a very large number of military offenses. In fact, it is a very sweeping and generous measure, and will go far to heal many heart-burnings. Even Mr. Rochefort himself felt compelled to "draw it mildly," now that he is relieved of his three or four years' imprisonment.

The above was the grand incident of the fete of Sunday last, and quite threw everything else into the shade," which is saying a good deal, considering the quantity of gas which was expended. In all other respects the festivity went off in the usual manner, without anything to distinguish either the secular or religious portion of it from the now three-toid tale of the past twenty years. Salvoes of cannon were heard at daybreak, and an official *Te Deum* of great pomp and imposing effect, and attended by all the chief officers of the imperial household, was celebrated at one o'clock, at Notre Dame, the Archbishop of Paris officiating in person at the High Altar. These ceremonies were followed in the ordinary routine, by open patriotic performances for the people at the Barriere du Tone and on the Champ de Mars, and by gratuitous representations in all the principal theatres, before the doors of which the populace began to station itself not very long after six o'clock in the morning. The sight of one of these gratuitous entertainments is very well worth seeing once in a while, and I would advise any stranger who wishes to study the physiognomy of the Parisian population to make the effort which is necessary to be present. The pieces chosen for the occasion, whether musical or dramatic, are generally quite of a high description; and it is interesting to remark with what intelligence and acuteness, and even taste, they are appreciated by an audience composed almost entirely of the laboring classes, and how necessary the actors find it to exert themselves quite as much as though playing to an assembly of more cultivated character. The "points" of a piece are seized, and a false note detected in a singer, or musician with unerring instinct; and then, above all, it is a pleasure to witness with what real enjoyment the audience partake of the rare treat and gratification to them of being in a first-rate theatre, and seeing or hearing really good acting or music. But the task of "getting in" is no easy one, and demands a sacrifice of time, labor and patience which I never had the courage or inclination to go through a second time.

The evening exhibition, when the weather is fine, is always the best and most beautiful of a Paris fete, when variegated lamps, gas and the electric light turn night into day. To be sure, it is always the same thing over again; and that can be said of it, it is still the same fete, only *serio d'une autre facon*, as the cookery books say of a dish disguised in some other way. Even more variety itself becomes, however, difficult at last, over so long a succession of repetition, and does not allow of much more than a change of the same decorations from one locality to another—on the Place de la Concorde to the Champs Elysees, or from the latter again to the Place de l'Etoile, or the Trocadero.—The grand display of fireworks which closed the day's entertainments, took place on Sunday, on the Trocadero, in presence of an immense assemblage; and if the stupendous height of steps (called the *escalier du Trocadero*)—which cost so large a sum, and about which Baron Haussmann has been so unmercifully badgered, on the ground of its needless and want of utility—be good for nothing else, it must be allowed that it is at least admirably suited for a pyrotechnic exhibition: though it must also be confessed the *salte de spectacle* in this instance cost rather dear.

The Parisians, however, with the exception of the working-classes, are, I think, becoming notoriously weary of their fete. The upper classes are always, of course, all gone long before it takes place; and the bourgeois population pour "out" of Paris on the 15th of August almost as fast as the provincials pour "into" it. Vast numbers of the former retire to spend the day in the environs; and the latter come to Paris at this time for the examinations of the colleges and the distribution of prizes, and to take their children home for the holidays. These all stay over the fete to amuse the young folks, and, with a certain influx of strangers, fill the hotels. But in other respects the "people" have their fete pretty much to themselves, enjoy it greatly, and conduct themselves with the most praiseworthy propriety, good humor and sobriety.

It is somewhat remarkable that, after all the official allusion (always excepting, of course, the decree of amnesty) which has been made to this fete, as being the centenary of the birth of Napoleon I., is contained in the circular addressed by M. Duvigney, the Minister of Public Worship, to the French bishops on the subject. When writing to invite the prelates to unite in the observance of the day, the Minister reminds them that a "century will have passed over since the birth of the illustrious founder of the Napoleonic dynasty," and expresses his benevolent wish that the circumstance will "add to the patriotic character of the approaching solemnity," and that the "glorious achievements of the first Emperor will be joined with profound gratitude towards the inheritor of his name and traditions." Now, it may appear somewhat presumptuous in a stranger to express such an opinion, but I venture to think

that a considerable change is coming over the national mind in France with respect to the first Napoleon, and that the "traditions" of his reign and times, above alluded to, are no longer cherished as they once were. I believe that the "legendary" Napoleon is, to a certain degree, fading away, and the "real" Napoleon beginning to stand out in fuller relief. Certainly his memory is hated by the Republican party now as much as he hated them in his lifetime. Nor is this to be wondered at. Napoleon I. represented emphatically two principles—War and Despotism:—and both these stand now in the most absolute antagonism to the spirit of the times and to the modern mind. The French nation begin really to repudiate war as an evil; they have had enough both of it and of despotism, and have just practically declared themselves against the political traditions of the imperial regime. No doubt, the most ignorant portion of the empire still cling to Napoleon I. as a good and holy man, and in their cottages. But the middle and upper classes, and also those who have, as far as education spreads, are becoming emancipated from such influences; and have been taught by the writings of men like M. Villain, M. D'Haussonville, M. Lamfrey and others, to appreciate what Napoleon I. did for the people of France more correctly, and to desire nothing so little as a return to the practices or traditions of the Napoleonic epoch, with its wars, conscriptions and tyranny. I have written for some time the progress of this change of sentiment, and I am very much mistaken if it will not ere long invade the cottage as well as higher dwellings, and give the lie at last even to Beranger, when he writes that "L'humble toit dans cinquante ans Ne verra plus d'arche historique."

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Black Crook spectacle, sensation drama, opera bouffe, English burlesque. These forms of the theatrical art, which have been for three years past held possession of the American stage, and debauched the taste of the public to such a degree that first-rate plays are not only not received, but the actors who prize their art too highly to stoop to the degradation of yielding to the popular demand, played constantly to empty benches. In a healthy country these forms of the people are sick of the glitter and emptiness of the past, and paint with the unreal realism of sensation, and with the obscenity of French come to all these have their own reality, and have passed away, never, we hope, to return to favor. English burlesque, the stupidest and shallowest of them all, remains, but in this shape, and have just practically declared themselves against the political traditions of the imperial regime. No doubt, the most ignorant portion of the empire still cling to Napoleon I. as a good and holy man, and in their cottages. But the middle and upper classes, and also those who have, as far as education spreads, are becoming emancipated from such influences; and have been taught by the writings of men like M. Villain, M. D'Haussonville, M. Lamfrey and others, to appreciate what Napoleon I. did for the people of France more correctly, and to desire nothing so little as a return to the practices or traditions of the Napoleonic epoch, with its wars, conscriptions and tyranny. I have written for some time the progress of this change of sentiment, and I am very much mistaken if it will not ere long invade the cottage as well as higher dwellings, and give the lie at last even to Beranger, when he writes that "L'humble toit dans cinquante ans Ne verra plus d'arche historique."

Things in Virginia.—(Correspondence of the Phila. Evening Bulletin.)—London Correspondence, August 28th, 1869.—It is well that Richard Grant White occupies the "remotest rural districts" in the dreary picture of "The Unsociableness of Society" which he draws in the August *Galaxy*; for here, in this delightful London valley, "fair as the garden of the Lord" to my city-wearied eyes, is to be found society in which refinement, culture and sociability are charmingly blended. It is largely settled by members of the Society of Friends, and as they were never corrupted or converted by the system of slavery, it has preserved more faithfully than other portions of the Old Dominion from the ravages of war, and society has resumed its accustomed tone and gaiety. The young ladies have generally been educated at the best schools the country affords, and are intelligent, beautiful and accomplished, and with complexions Philadelphia belles here are naturally somewhat different from what they are in the city, and an evening company commences to assemble in the afternoon and supper is had at 8, instead of 11 or 12 o'clock. And such suppers! My pen cannot do them justice; but they differ so much from the standing *jeu d'esprit* in the other parts of the country, that you may rest assured that no rustic's paper differs from the heated and depressing air of the ball-room. Calling, too, is different here. You ride a horse in one afternoon, and then croquet, a rambunctious walk or a talk beneath the trees, with which all houses here are surrounded, repair to the house for supper and to spend the evening. If you are any distance from a city, you are expected to stay all night; and then, arising refreshed in the morning, walk or chat with the ladies, and partake of a delicious breakfast and to the west in the carriage, separating from the celebrated Shenandoah Valley, while to the south can be distinctly seen the Bull Run Mountains.

I think that, with the exception, the most loyal part of Virginia, at least so far as the white population is concerned. Many of the young men escaped North and joined the National army. Nearly all the people I meet here, and always have been, loyal. I could, of course, find plenty of "rebels," but I have no "hankering" for their society. The Union people unhesitatingly characterize the triumph of the Walker ticket, as a rebel victory, and most I have conversed with would rather remain unconnected than have the State government put back into the hands of the men who inaugurated the rebellion. Quite a number, though, of those always staunch Union men supported the Walker ticket, and such were largely led astray by the treasury of the new *New York Tribune*, which has never failed to grossly misrepresent the radical party of the South, and has been a pliant but powerful instrument for evil in the hands of the man over whom Greeley now blubbers so disgustingly. Poor Greeley! he seems destined to sink in history to the lamentable level of Seaward, and others who once deserved the highest praise from the friends of liberty; and the *Tribune* goes down with him. I have only this to say in regard to Virginia politics. If the iron-clad vote is not required by the majority of the new Legislature, as it is, no doubt, to rebel as any that sat in Richmond during the war; if it is enforced, the Legislature will be loyal, and the rebels can blame no one but themselves, as they defiantly nominated men who could not take it for the very purpose of showing their contempt for Congress.

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The only thing which threw a blank over the fete was the death of Marshal Niel, which took place the day before. The Emperor was unable, after all, on account of his rheumatism, to go to Chalons, but sent the Prince Imperial to the front, and distribute decorations to the soldiers in his name.

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