FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

LETTERS FROM PARIS.

(Correspondence of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.)

PARIS, Tuesday, April 5th, 1870.—The constitutional machinery works on the contrary, its getting out of gear, and threatens to bring on a state of lethargic confusion, which is far from being without peril, and of which it is impossible to foresee the result. The *Senatus-Consultum*, of which I sent you a sketch last week, is turning out to be a very awkward and somewhat clumsy piece of business, and has frightened not the new ministers in a position, and intend them to take a resolution which may be productive of very serious consequences. Meetings have been held by the different parties in the Chamber, at which great confusion and difference of opinion have prevailed, and no definite conclusions have been arrived at; while yesterday a very critical debate began in the Chamber itself and has been adjourned to this day, without as yet showing very clearly what is likely to be its issue. You will ask what all this is about; and to say the truth, the matter is extremely complicated, and not easy to render intelligible without going into details of a very wearisome and technical nature, such as French Constitutions and French Constitution-makers always seem to delight in puzzling themselves with, as well as the whole world besides. But I will endeavor to elucidate just one or two of the principal points which are creating the present hitch.

In the first place, then, it seems suddenly to have occurred to every one that here we have the French Senate, a non-elected and non-representative body—men who are mere nominees and pensioners of the Emperor—about to discuss and settle the most vital interests of the French people and nation, while the really representative Chamber, or that which ought to be such, sits close by without having a word to say in the business. You will allow that this was rather a trying position for representatives of the people to enjoy patiently and in silence. Indeed it was felt to be so much so that there was even a whisper of an intention, on the part of the Government, to adjourn the sittings of the Corps Legislatif altogether, for a considerable period, until the matters in hand were settled in their absence. But this only increased the irritation which was beginning to be felt, and led to rumors of intended interpellations as to what was about to be done in the Senate, which were met by counter-rumors that the Ministers would make the rejection of all such interference a Cabinet question, and would throw up their portfolios if the intention were persevered in. Well, this was one point which has been creating embarrassment of late. Then again, there was one particular article in the new Constitution, proposed by Ministers, which was viewed with dissatisfaction and even distrust by a very large portion of the liberal party of all shades. This was the Fifth Article of the *Senatus-Consultum* itself, by which it is declared that "the Constitution" (as now modified by the plebiscite) "could only be modified by the people, *on the proposition of the Emperor*." Now the last words, which I have underlined, are certainly at once remarkable and suspicious; and explain why the Left and most liberal portion of the Chamber should have taken up at present the anomalous attitude of being the very party which most vehemently opposes the doctrine of *Plebiscite*, or appeals directly to the people. Why, you may ask, claim M. Picard, Jules Favre and others, "do you think we don't know what *Plebiscite* is on the proposition of the Emperor means?" "Were not some of you in prison," asked M. Picard, addressing the Ministers, "when the *Plebiscite* which followed the coup d'état here was concocted?" The *Plebiscite*, he said, under such circumstances was only a despotism and a hypocrisy to clothe the despotism of its liberties. And it must be confessed that the uses which the Napoleons, big and little, have heretofore made of this piece of political machinery are not quite of a nature to induce the country to leave it in their hands with confidence in so absolute a form as that now contemplated by the *Senatus-Consultum*. The very fact that the Emperor is known to cling very tenaciously to this last relic of "personal power" in the shape of a direct "appeal to the people," creates the suspicion of a desire on his part to retain a weapon by which he might retake all that he has of late given up. With the government in his hands and the army at his back, we all know pretty well what even now the result of an "appeal to the people" by a "oui" or a "non" might be made to appear to be. Even the Marquis d'Audiffret, an habitual supporter of the Ministry, expressed strongly "his deep regret at seeing this privilege of an *appel au peuple* reserved to the person of the sovereign only." M. Ollivier spoke well and eloquently, yesterday, as he always does; but I do not think he quite succeeded in reconciling the constitutional party, especially as he announced that the Ministers and the Emperor had decided that, if the Senate agreed with them, the whole of the measures at present projected should be submitted to a *Plebiscite* before they should be considered as finally ratified. All this is very complicated and difficult, and, I fear, you will also think very tiresome. But Frenchmen will go on perpetually discussing the very first principles of government over and over again.

The demand of explanations as to "what the Government was doing or proposing to do in the Upper House" was brought on yesterday in the Corps Legislatif by M. Grevy, or the Left, and the debates turned mainly on the point which I have above noticed. Ministers hope to-day that an order of the day will be voted expressive of confidence, and leaving them time and liberty to carry out their intentions. But, as I began by saying, things do not run smoothly, and M. Ollivier has still much to contend against before he gets his administration into working order.

The affair of the Creuzot mines and iron works still continues to give trouble. No one seems to know precisely from what cause the discontent of the miners originated at first, and we are especially assured that there is no "strike for increase of wages." Yet the mines are completely at a stand-still, and M. Schneider, the President, of the Corps Legislatif, who is Chief Manager and Director, is declared at Creuzot not to be return to his duties in the Chamber. It would seem that the entire population of that district has been more or less contaminated by ultra-democratical and socialist doctrines, which have rendered them disaffected to their employers.

Prince Pierre Bonaparte, as you will doubtless hear, is expected to sail shortly for America. He certainly stands in danger of assassination if he remains in Europe. The verdict of acquittal is now generally regarded as having been inspired by feelings of disgust against the violence exhibited at the trial by the friends of the victim.

PARIS, Friday, April 8th, 1870.—Nothing is talked of but the magnificent speech delivered by Gambetta in favor of a Republic on Friday last. There were a good number of Republicans present in the Chamber, and not a few among them found it difficult to restrain their manifestations of assent to the splendid eloquence with which the French orator set forth the majesty of their own institutions. Never perhaps were the dignity of the "nation, sovereignty," the "right divine" of the "people" and of "universal suffrage," vindicated in language more worthy of such themes; never were the pettiness, frivolity and childishness of courts and dynasties more ruthlessly and vigorously demonstrated. M. Gambetta rose to the highest pitch of eloquence, and seemed to transfix the attention of the Chamber, when he declared that "under every other form of government, except a republic, universal suffrage was nothing but a mockery and a lie;" that "the national sovereignty alone must be acknowledged to be all powerful," and that "they, the deputies, were clothed with the mandate, not of a dynasty, but of the people." The right of the nation, he declared, was always, and under all circumstances, to have the "last word" in everything that concerned its interests; and whatever power presumed to interfere with, or hold in check, the national will, violated that right. Universal suffrage, which expressed the sovereignty of the nation, was absolutely "incompatible with the monarchical principle." I quote a few expressions here and there, just to show you the general drift of the discourse, which was nothing less, in fact, than a reopening of the first principles of government, and a direct appeal to the French people to reconsider anew, now that they were once more in a position to do so, their choice between the Empire and a Republic. But the most astonishing feature of the whole was that the entire Chamber, the Right and Right Centre just as much as the Left and Left Centre, listened, as it were, spellbound, to this direct attack upon the existing institutions of the country and the Empire. There was not an interruption, scarcely a murmur, from beginning to end. Partly by his eloquence, partly by the solid force of his reasoning and principles, partly also, no doubt, by the weight of public opinion behind him, M. Gambetta compelled the Chamber to go along with him and listen to him, not only with patience, but admiration. Almost every newspaper, of whatever opinion, joins in the universal note of praise. And this language, and this approbation of it, will be read from one end of France to the other. I almost tremble when I think what may be the consequences and how it may unsettle things again, just as they are becoming consolidated, in a country so excitable and changeable as this. For one cannot conceal from oneself that there is still, and perhaps always will be, one fatal drawback to M. Gambetta's conclusions. Yes, he did indeed demonstrate, with triumphant and matchless eloquence, the superiority of republican institutions; and the maxim that "political philosophy demanded that the people should be considered as the exclusive source of all power and all rights." But, then, one was compelled to own that the French people were not the American people, and to ask whether the former really were or ever would be ripe for and capable of the exercise of such rights, and such powers, and such duties, as their element advocate claimed for them. Alas! one cannot but remember that as yet they had not learnt to choose even their own Mayors; and would, I fear, make a sad mess of choosing a President. They never had a chance of doing so freely and unimpeded but once; and what they did then has not left a high idea of their judgment or discretion. They might have chosen General Cavaignac, a thoroughly patriotic and honest man, who would have kept their Republic when they got it. Instead of which, with their usual levity and fickleness and thorough want of political perception, they threw themselves into the arms of a Prince who was neither very patriotic nor over honest, and who treated them perhaps as they deserved. And now they are tired of him, and want to begin again; and M. Gambetta's speech, if I mistake not, will go a long way to re-awaken republican ardor.

As far as the vote of the Chamber goes, the Ministry is safe enough. M. Ollivier has declared that he will resign his portfolio, or rather the new parliamentary Constitution, is to be submitted to a *plebiscite*, and the Chamber has sanctioned that declaration by a majority of 227 to 45. So *plebiscite* there will undoubtedly be. But no one seems to put any faith in it, or to expect that it will really consolidate again the old basis of the autocratic Empire, which has been so rudely overthrown. As M. Gambetta told the Chamber, if the people say "No" to the question put to them, the *plebiscite* will be a revolution; if "Yes," it will be a fiction; in neither case, therefore, can the formality be of much avail. The Emperor is said to insist upon it with his usual tenacity, and thereby only creates the suspicion that his real motive (as on former occasions) is to use the "ingenious process," as M. Gambetta calls it, not so much in order to ascertain the will of the people, as to be able at any time to impose his own. To sum up, everything is very much at sixes and sevens just now. Between *plebiscites* and new constitutions and such dangerous specches as that of Gambetta the heads of the French people, which are never over well-balanced, stand a chance of being completely. Were any awkward political turned "incidents" to arise just at this critical moment the consequences might be very serious. M. Emile Ollivier has just been elected a member of the French Academy, in the place of M. de Lamartine. The celebrated writer of the Girondins, M. Jules Jaqin, has been elected with him.

Americans will have heard with regret of the serious illness of Count Stackleberg, the Russian Minister here, so long resident in the same capacity in the United States. I am happy to learn this morning that his malady, a sloughing carbuncle, no longer affords ground of uneasiness to his many friends.

Prince Pierre Bonaparte drove in an open carriage down the Boulevard the other day. But the "demonstration," if, it were intended for such, produced no effect, for the population took no notice of him.

—A fellow on trial in New Haven for barn-burning is named Adam Foxtrot. He is a fellow.

OUR POINTVILLE LETTER.

A Series of Crimes Bad Catastrophes—Murders and Attempted Murders—A Reign of Lawless in Schuylkill County.

(Correspondence of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.)

POTTSVILLE, April 18, 1870.—The peculiar situation of this place assures it of at least one advantage over its lawless neighbors; and that is—perfect immunity from freebets. Nothing short of a universal deluge will ever set Pottsville afloat. But it is lucky for the city and its vicinity that the recurrence of such a catastrophe is expressly prophesied against, for I know of no better spot for one to begin. Two years, two murders (at least) accomplished, and half-a-dozen more attempted, make up the published record of higher-grade crimes for the week just ended. A colliery stable and the bender of the Silliman Colliery, at Mahanoy City—the latter making certain a long suspension at one operation—at least, are the extent of the fires—both incendiary. A report was indeed current, during the high wind of Friday evening, that Mahanoy City was in flames, a catastrophe which, under such circumstances, could not but be fatal to that wooden town; but the rumor proved false.

The most important murder was that of Patrick Burns, clerk and superintendent at the colliery of F. DeCocarez & Co. Burns, notwithstanding his name, was an American born, and had in some unknown way given offence to some of the rough characters with whom he had to deal. About a month ago, he was assaulted in his own house and badly beaten; and about two weeks ago he handed his revolver to Mr. DeCocarez, and requested him to bring it to Pottsville and procure cartridges to fit it, as he feared certain persons, whom he named, would kill him, if they had a chance. His fears were only too well founded. On Friday morning, as he was walking up to the colliery, he was shot from behind a tree, apparently with a rifle or musket, two balls passing entirely through his head. He was then dragged four or five yards into the bushes beside the road, and left. When found, a few hours after, he was dead. There is no clue to the murderer or murderers that would lead in a court of justice though his Honor Judge Pershing, of course, probably have little difficulty in identifying them.

In the next case, his Honor's jury would certainly return a verdict of "served him right," without leaving their seats. Three strikers, named Dixon, Williams, and another whose name I have not learned, went on a drunk on Tuesday night last, and kept it up until Wednesday morning, when they undertook to present Bast's workmen, at Big Mine Run, near Ashland, from going to work. Among others, they attacked an honest Dutchman, named Henry Bold, knocked him down, and were, apparently, about drawing their revolvers to finish him, when his son Frederick, who was twenty or thirty yards in advance, came to his rescue with a grubbing-hoe, and used it to such good effect that he and his father were soon left masters of the situation. Dixon was subsequently arrested and lodged in the the county prison; Williams died on Friday, and the third man is still missing, but is supposed to be dead also. The Buhls gave themselves up, entered bail in the sum of $2,000 to answer any charges that might be brought against them, and went their way. Future assailants will do well to ascertain if there are grubbing-hoes handy before attacking these plucky Teutons.

How much a man can endure without being killed was the subject of an interesting experiment at the "patch" connected with Atlins Bros.' furnace colliery, near Shenandoah City, on last Thursday evening. Mrs. James Harvey had reason to suspect that one of her boarders was connected with the "Molly Maguires," a secret society of cut-throats, whose mission on earth—for all things have their uses—is to irritate the people of Schuylkill county into forming a Vigilance Committee to sweep all such vermin off the face of the earth—at least three feet. The suspected party promptly admitted the soft impeachment, and was so promptly invited to leave by the irate lady, who said she never had boarded a "Molly," and never would. At this the "Mollies" in turn became indignant, and Thursday evening found one of them called at Mr. Harvey's to remonstrate against the further use of such language. Harvey and a boarder named Hugh Gallagher, sitting on the porch when the party came up, for it was not yet dark, and the evening was pleasant. What was the first argument advanced has not transpired, but the discussion is represented as having been quite animated. Mr. Poole, after receiving a bullet in his leg and having his brains nearly knocked out with a billy, withdrew from the contest by rolling off the porch and dropping into the cellar, where the "Mollies" lost him. The accused Mrs. Harvey of knowing his whereabouts, and on her denying it, cut her head open with a billy. It is to be hoped she will entertain a better opinion of the "Mollies" in future. Harvey was then dragged off the porch and into the bushes, where he was pounded with billies, hacked with knives and hacked with billies—over a hundred cuts being fired into and around him. They left him for dead, and his friends picked him up and went for the doctor; but no doctor could be induced to risk his neck in that vicinity until after daylight, next morning. Only one did come he found Harvey a mass of wounds from head to foot, but still living; and at last accounts he was living yet, notwithstanding the *Journal* killed him, this morning. "No arrests were made."

Neither was the man arrested who, at Girardville, one night about a week ago, stepped up to a stranger as he stood quietly at a corner of the principal street in town, and drawing a revolver, fired at him with as much nonchalance as if it was quite an everyday affair. And so it was; for such things have grown so common in Girardville that nobody thinks it worth his while to report them, and I only gleaned the facts in the case by happening to meet a communicative friend from that locality. The ball, after passing through the man's hand, glanced from a vest button, and did no further harm. He did not know his assailant, but thought he could have identified the features if he had not been afraid to say anything.

But the engineer who, in self-defence, shot a man in the hip yesterday, at Tuscarora, was brought to town by the first train this morning and bundled into jail as quickly as possible. He evidently does not belong to the "Molly Maguires."

These are the murderous assaults that have come to light within a week. How many there are that never have never heard of in town it is impossible to estimate; for unless the injured man dies, nobody considers the assault worth reporting, and it is only by accident that it finds its way into the papers. The Girardville case strikes me as particularly easy. Imagine how you would feel if, some fine night, you should step out on the pave of Chestnut street, and while gazing at the show-window over the way, a half-drunken individual suddenly pokes a revolver into your face and fires—knowing well that, even if some lucky accident should save your life, you would not dare to prosecute him. If there is anything that will scare a man out of his seven senses quicker than that, I have not yet discovered it. WICO.

—A flagman on the Erie road, near Wellsburg, went out to flag a train, and sat down on the track, went to sleep, and the train cut his head off. Such things are, of course, unpleasant to the victims, but it may learn flagmen to keep awake when on duty. A man is not to enjoy himself better without his head off.

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