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The Press.
VOL. I—NO. 110. PHILADELPHIA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1857. TWO CENTS.

The Press.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1857.

PEEL UPON PALMERSTON.

The infusion of democratic principles into the effete and aristocratic institutions of the old European sovereignties, though gradual, has been sufficiently apparent. Steam, after all, is a great revolutionary agent. It enables American citizens to run from New York to Liverpool in ten or twelve days—to fly along the 200 miles to London in five hours—to rush from London to Paris between breakfast at 9, and dinner at 7 o'clock—to traverse Europe with equal rapidity, and every where to exhibit the go-ahead action of free and independent men, who choose their Chief Magistrate from among themselves, and acknowledge only one supreme majesty all over their great land, namely the Majesty of the Constitution, protected by the Law.

Now and then, (and the instances are not so rare as to be wondered at), we find the American free-and-easy manner of speaking of public men and public things, followed by British politicians. There was a time when it would have been a sort of *petty treason* against the dignity of Parliament for one Member of the House of Commons to speak his mind about and against another—and he a Cabinet Minister. Had he done so, the cry of "Fair Play" would have been raised, and conventional people, turning up the whites of their virtuous eyes, would have said "How dreadful! to attack a man behind his back, when you might have met him face to face on the floor of the House of Commons, and received a reply within five minutes after you made the attack." True enough; but a thing of this sort is *not* fair play. Sir ROBERT PEEL, for example, at a public dinner in his own borough, at Tamworth, has been freely commenting upon the conduct or misconduct, the character or want of character, of that jauntiest of all public men, HENRY VISCOUNT PALMERSTON. As there were newspaper reporters to take down his speech, it really was delivered to the Tamworth voters, but generally to the world, and particularly to PALMERSTON himself. Not a tithe of such a speech would he have been allowed to utter in Parliament. Before he had *reached the terminus of his sixth sentence*, he would either have been coughed down by some of the Ministerial myrmidons, or have had his words drowned in cries of "Order, order" from some of the ancient fat-headed legislators who, themselves unable to utter two consecutive sentences clearly thought and intelligibly expressed, have a cruel delight in watching for holes in other persons' coats, in order to enlarge them. The House of Commons, assuredly, in the case of PEEL *versus* PALMERSTON, the plaintiff would have been non-suited. In the Court of Common Sense, the result would have been, and is, wholly different. Seated on the Treasury benches, with his working majority to cheer him through, PALMERSTON would have poohpoohed PEEL. At Tamworth, where PEEL is *paramount*, the result would be otherwise.

Some of our readers may be curious to know what manner of man *this* Sir ROBERT PEEL may be. He is the eldest son of the late Sir ROBERT, the man who granted Catholic Emancipation and Free Trade—wholly against his will. He is now about thirty-five years old, and had some experience, in the diplomatic line, from 1844 to 1850, when he succeeded to his father's title and vast wealth. At the same time, he was elected M. P. for Tamworth, (a borough chiefly owned by himself,) which his father had represented for twenty years. He is brother-in-law to the present Duke of Wellington, and is otherwise connected with the highest nobility of England. He is a smart, clever, garrulous young man, utterly fearless, and so uncertain a politician that, however he may *speak* on a subject, no one is sure of him until he *votes*. Eccentric, dashing, and hasty, the general impression is that he has got what the Scotch call "a bee in his bonnet." At all events, he is odd, clever, and capricious.

Some cause, never ascertained by the public, induced PALMERSTON, *nearly three years ago*, to make this young man a junior Lord of the Admiralty—his principal qualification for such a place probably was the fact of having narrowly escaped shipwreck in the Gulf of Spezzia, a short time previous. As a member of the Administration, he was muzzled, to a certain extent, and committed no oratorical escapade, for some time. Last year, being a man of vast wealth, able to spare the expense, he was sent to Moscow as secretary of Lord GRANVILLE's special mission to attend the coronation of the Czar. He spent his money freely, but, some time after his return, being called upon to speak at a public dinner, astonished his auditors by giving a ludicrous account of his adventures in Russia, ridiculed the Prince DE LIGNE, laughed at Admiral NAPIER, accused the Count DE MORNY of being a swindling speculator on the Bourse at Paris, and wound up by plainly intimating that Russia, where he had to pay $1,500 for one dinner for himself and two servants, was an extended den of robbery.

Of course, such declarations as these, published not only in England, but all over Europe, created a great sensation. They led, we believe, to Sir ROBERT's resignation of office, on the principle of a well-bred dog voluntarily quitting a house by the door, when he saw preparations on foot for kicking him out of the window.

It may be presumed that Sir ROBERT PEEL has some cause for dissatisfaction with Lord PALMERSTON. If so, he works it out thus. He commented in a facetious speech, surcharged with bile, upon PALMERSTON's political short-comings. First, as respects the revolt in India, which the Administration, for a long time, insisted was only "one of the periodical *émeutes* which occasionally excite the people of India." Now, said PEEL, this so-called *émeute* that had taken place had shaken the Anglo-Indian empire from one end to the other, and in three months it cost the lives of more officers than perished during a similar period in the hardest months of the Crimean war. *No loss than two hundred and seventy* officers had either been massacred or had died, or had fallen in the field—two hundred and seventy in three months. That was certainly a greater proportionate loss than during the severest trials in the Crimea. After the suddenness of the blow, the Government resolved to send 40,000 armed men to India, and never in the history of the world did any country send 40,000 men and maintain them ten thousand miles away from her shores. But here, adds PEEL, comes blame to the Government. "They sent these troops by way of the Cape, and surely every one knew who had common sense that the best route to take would have been across Egypt. They had the means, and yet they did not adopt it." A few battalions went from England to Calcutta, *via* Malta and Egypt, *in seven weeks; the time occupied* by the passage round the Cape of Good Hope would be 130 for sailing vessels, and 75 to 85 days for steamers. None of the troops thus sent round had reached in time to share in the assault on Delhi or the relief of Lucknow.

This is a strong complaint. More followed. PEEL declared that LORD PALMERSTON was humbugging the people—that the corporation of London was composed of a set of fawning sycophants—that the Duke of Cambridge had not earned the honors that have been heaped upon him—and that the speeches delivered during the recess have, for the most part, been slavish and slavering effusions on the Prime Minister. On one of these speeches, PEEL delivered the following amusing comment:

"Another gentleman addressed his constituents at a county meeting. He is a very warm supporter of the Government, and he, said he, was not a friend of Lord Palmerston's only, but he was then. He said, 'Lord Palmerston, gentlemen, is one of the greatest men in England; he gets up at six every morning, and writes till twelve—(all this was in the papers)—I know it, he said; oh, I know it. He goes out shooting—more of course for exercise than amusement. I know it; and while shooting he receives the Government despatches, takes off his hat, steps aside, and writes the answers while Ponto is looking up partridges. (Loud laughter.) He writes till twelve at night, and then goes to bed.'" (Applause)

Further, PEEL said that it was PALMERSTON's way to stand by those whom he had appointed, and that, therefore, he had praised Lord CANNING, the incapable Viceroy of India. Why, PEEL asked, "why had not HAVELOCK, NEILL, and NICHOLSON been praised? Look what the British troops had done. Had Lord CANNING anything to do with the capture of Cawnpore, the storming of Delhi, or the relief of Lucknow?"

Lastly—and this was perhaps the unkindest cut of any, seeing that his Royal Highness had not *greatly* distinguished himself in the Crimea, though he is cousin to Queen VICTORIA—he laughed at the folly of the city of London giving, and the Duke of Cambridge presumptuously receiving, a sword, on the blit of which was engraved the *baton* of Field-Marshal, a rank he has not yet received, though it was conferred upon Prince ALBERT at the mature age of—twenty years!

Altogether, there can be no doubt that Sir ROBERT PEEL, though he is a baronet, and was a Minister of State, is a good democrat at heart. None but a democrat would *dare* speak such taunting truths as he has spoken of PALMERSTON, and other people in high places. Utterly fearless, he has thrown down the gauntlet, and, if PALMERSTON retain any of his old spirit, he will take it up in the House of Commons. Were the present Sir ROBERT PEEL endowed with half the common sense of his late father, he might organize an independent political party, united in opposition to the autocracy of Lord PALMERSTON, the most Protean politician of the age.

LITERARY CRITICISM.

HISTORY OF SECRET SOCIETIES, AND OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF FRANCE, FROM 1830 TO 1848: Containing Sketches of Louis Philippe and the Revolution of February; together with Portraits, Conspiracies, and unpublished Facts. By LUCIEN DE LA HODDE. Translated from the Paris edition of 1850, by an American. Vol. 2, 8vo., pp. 479. *J. B. Lippincott & Co.*, Philadelphia.

Having a sort of liking for a declarative title-page, because it often indicates the contents and purpose of a book, we give this volume the benefit of our fancy. Monsieur de la Hodde is doubly fortunate: first, in an excellent subject, which he treats as one having full knowledge; and, next, in a *translator*. Not only a good linguist has been engaged here, in putting the book into reading form for the American public, but a man of taste and judgment, who evidently can become an *original writer of high mark, whenever it pleases* him to throw his mind to the effort. This book, analytically speaking, is rather a *translation* than a *translation*, so well is it "done into English," as the old Shakspeare phrase used to say.

It is encouraged as it originally was by the example of our own achievement of Independence, the history of the French Republic, since 1789, has ever been a study to the American mind. We have ever felt a warm sympathy with those who have endeavored to vindicate the right, and have regarded the French struggle for freedom with peculiar favor. The Republic, it is true, did not last long—but even in the Empire there was a dash of republican principle. Under the Bourbons, restored by British gold and bayonets, there was no lack of republican feeling—suppressed, it is true, but, like the old Greek fire, unquenched and unquenchable. In 1830, it threw itself into action, and, after having expelled Charles X., committed the mistake of permitting such an anomaly as a "Citizen-King." Then followed eighteen years of conspiracies, plots, agitations—ending in the Republic of 1848. How *that* fell, all the world knows; what it is to end in, (for the Empire is unstable,) who can predict?

The book before us, singularly full and communicative, informs in detail, of all the secret societies formed by the Republicans in Paris, from the accession of Louis Philippe to his miserable exit, as Mr. John Smith. The writer has evidently been behind the scenes. No one but a participator could be half so explicit. Personal knowledge alone could have enabled him to give the lifelike sketches of character which so graphically illustrate the subject. In a word, in this M. de la Hodde we have a man fully master of his subject and perfectly able, as a writer, to do complete justice to it. He is a monarchist, in principle, with undisguised contempt alike for Louis Philippe and the Republican leaders of 1848. He respects the Bourbons, and regrets them. He admires the genius of Napoleon.

Paris, he says, not France, makes the Revolutions, for "it is only Paris, and always Paris, that, at signal given, by no matter whom, and against no matter what, rushes into the streets, intoxicates itself with powder and blood, and stops only when every thing is overthrown, pavements, positions, and power." Therefore, he adds, "it has become a question of the greatest importance to ascertain how long the worthy people of the capital, the inhabitants of the provinces, and the States of Europe, are to be held at the mercy of these workshops of insurrection, which lie in the suburbs of Paris." Of course, then, this same Paris is the centre, the cradle, of continuous plots and conspiracies—bottless all, since they have effected no more than the restoration of "the Empire."

What a long catalogue of these combinations—yet never so secret that the Government did not know the plans and the planners! Who are the plotters? The youth of the schools, the imbeciles, the gypsies, the sovereign people, the fly-catchers, the disaffected, the political refugees, and the bandits.

What were the plots between 1830 and 1848? The Carbonari, aiming at the fall of the Bourbons, led the way to the accession of the Duke of Orleans. Once that he wason the throne, a succession of plots followed, and ended, at last, in—Louis Napoleon! He, in turn, is assailed by conspiracies.

We do not pretend to follow M. de la Hodde through his book, but may quote some of his daguerreotypes. Here is

LEDRU-ROLLIN.

M. Ledru-Rollin is generally thought to be a furious revolutionist, ferocious and indomitable, while, in fact, he is merely a man of sanguine temperament, a lover of noise, fame, and enjoyment. He is a miniature edition of the irregular and gluttonous Mirabeau. The *Reform* one day, wanting a standard-bearer, and especially some one to advance the needful, settling upon a scion of the Republican party; and as Madam Ledru-Rollin, an enthusiastic Irish woman, who had married her husband from political inclination, urged him forward in no ungracious, confiliant position, he yielded to the double pressure as well as to his own impulses, and rushed at all hazards into a revolutionary career. The history of a man stumbling headlong down a mountain's side towards unknown precipices was for the moment, the result. It was in vain that he cast a piteous look amidst the darkness and dangers that surrounded him, for the impulse had been given, and founder on he must, shutting his eyes in fear, not to see, and uttering loud cries to drown his fears.

In the Chamber of Deputies he endeavored to make himself terrible, roaring and panting in the most rarified atmosphere of democratic opinion. The auditor would listen to him for a moment with curiosity, and then shrug his shoulders. He gave forth emphatic harangues, of which the press never published two words, always excepting the *Reform*, which, it was well understood, received a *consideration for singing his praises*. But the adulterated incense of the hungry journal blinded the eyes of the poor orator; every swing of the censer hit him a stunning blow. He sold his place as advocate at the Court of Cassation in order to defray the expenses of his artifically acquired glory. The proceeds of the sale were soon swallowed up in all sorts of political gulfs. He then had recourse to speculations in land; but these proved a failure, and consumed the rest of his fortune. To avoid entrenching upon *the fortune of his wife*, he gave his signature to the usurers and gambled in the stocks, making use for this purpose of the services of the respectable M. Grandmenil. It was on account of this irregular mode of life that his rival, M. Marrast, let fly a well-barbed arrow at him, the arrow being sent back to the *Marquis of the Republic*, tipt with poison, and thus tapping the gall-bladders of both of these magnanimous democrats.

The *National* attacked him not only as a speculator *overwhelmed with debts*, but ever as a patrioctic notability; chuckling with malicious glee over the sire of the *Captain*, and the empty rhetoric of the *Tribune*. With the men of the *National*, this great man was nothing less than a mere intriguer, seeking *for his own personal advantage, to ruin* a rival newspaper.

Here are companion sketches:

M. PROUDHON.

M. Proudhon is a man of thirty-five years of age, of a robust constitution, and with a large head firmly set upon his shoulders; his prevailing trait being a strange sort of avidity, consisting of half and half of the energies of the bull and the greediness of the ostrich. His greediness, however, counts in the devouring of adversaries' arguments and objections. Unpolished, negligent in his dress, and laboring as he goes along with a heavy, awkward gait, his gaze is always peering through a *pair of lunettes, and wandering off in search of* paradoxes and economis humbugs. Venus herself might brush by him without his seeing her. The true riches of this wretched world, such as women, works of art, and magnificence of all kinds, he values about as much as he does the heavy prose of the poor M. Pierre Leroux. He is original, mystic, gross, and murderous. He is a greasy monk, a German philosopher, an unkempt boor, a sectarian, but proud withal, and infatuated beyond all conception. He delves into science like an ancient Benedictine; he wields fulminating doctrines like his friends Fuenrbach, Maurer, and the brothers Bauer; he launches forth audacious truths like the peasant of the Danube, and would, like Omar, destroy the faith of his rivals by fire and sword. He would set fire to the temple of Ephesus if Erostratus had not got the start of him.

LOUIS BLANC.

The person of M. Louis Blanc consists of two large black eyes, miraculously underscored by a pair of thick lips, and fixed upon a body about the height of an hostler's boot. It is an eternal source of despair with this great man to find that his glory is shut up in an envelope not more than four feet eight inches in height. He has, however, the most refined manners, the most aristocratic distinction, and knows very well how to put on the insipid smile of dealers in court holy-water. On witnessing his gentle elegance, mixed always with a certain degree of personality, one suspects a character not exactly symmetrical, and that within that little body there lies a little man. A workingman, on hearing him make a speech once, said to a comrade: "That's a malicious little fellow, that!" And I am of the workingman's opinion: M. Louis Blanc has never shown anything else but malice. Since the production of his *History of Ten Years*, which gave him a pretty high stand in radicalism, he has carefully abstained from becoming connected with any coterie, well knowing that the entrance into one would close the doors against him of all the others. The men of the *Reform* displeased him by their vulgarity, and those of the *National*, by their aristocratic bourgeois pretensions; but, whenever one of his volumes was to make its appearance, he had a very affectionate shake of the hand for both. The tactics of this little man were to raise himself by means of the papers, but without connivance with them. His plan was to dazzle the upper classes by his brilliant works, and the lower classes by appearances of communism; and his object was, anything or everything, so that he was not confounded among the crowd. As M. de Lamartine prevented M. Victor Hugo at that time from sleeping, so M. Thiers gave wakeful nights to M. Louis Blanc; he was passionately jealous of the historical, oratorical, and statesman-like abilities of that celebrated conservative. Like the foolish serpent in the fable, he gnawed away upon the steel of the bourgeoisie, merely because M. Thiers was the personification of that capital force of modern society. The intercourses of M. Louis Blanc with the people having been limited to a few interviews with the more learned of the workingmen, who called upon him with congratulations for his historical and social doctrines, and his reserve with regard to the papers having kept him removed from an active part in intrigues, he could not well have, nor indeed had he, any direct influence in the events of February.

After perusing this book, one reflection is awakened by it—What have all the secret plottings really done for France? Were Louis XVIII. and Charles X. better for that country than Napoleon? Was Louis Philippe an improvement on the Bourbons? Is Louis Napoleon a better man for France than the poor Citizen-King? We think not, though we have never fallen into the common practice of underrating his undoubted ability—of declaring, in effect, that because he indulged in some of the excesses which youth, station, and wealth exposed