

[Correspondence of the N. Y. Post.]

THE MINIATURE PHASES OF
PARISIAN LIFE.

The impression made on the mind by the visible world of Paris is that of a widespread, charming littleness. I do not associate with this term any of the contemptible, or wish it understood as denoting an absence of grandeur in Paris. I employ the term to convey an idea of the effect produced by an infinity of attractive objects, as well as by certain economical features of a Parisian existence, due to a skilful "struggle for life" by a community determined to have a good time of it. Paris, in its grand totality, is at once a vast, brilliant bazaar, and a complicated, polished, social mosaic—each group, according to Proudhon, each monad, according to Leibnitz, each thing, according to material conceptions, being a speck of color or form harmoniously arranged, and striking into effect. Some of the social details of this great mosaic I propose to look at microscopically.

My theme is, accordingly, *the little* in Paris. I will begin with a brief analysis of the Parisian shop. The first floor of almost every house in Paris is devoted to shops. We will not stop to admire objects displayed in the shop windows—the bazaar element of Paris—but consider the shop as a little institution by itself. The Parisian shopkeeper carries on business on a small scale; the moment he gets a small capital—his own savings, (which is rare,) an inheritance, or his wife's *dot*—he rents a small shop and fills it with small wares, and is small enough to make his wife his clerk; the result of which is to render her small through fingering money, while her husband becomes an idler and a small spendthrift at a small *café*. His enterprise is small, his profits small, and when he fails the loss is small to his creditors; his competitors would get rid of a small nuisance, and strangers of being cheated in a small way, if there were not innumerable *remplacants* ready to step into his small shoes. There is not much to be said, morally, in favor of the Parisian shop.

People in Paris live in a small compass. French living is the perfection of the science of social economy. Private apartments and hotels are full of small things. You pay a small price for a small room, increasing your rent proportionately for a suite; the standard of luxury and the ratio of price always corresponding to habits and ambition. Imagine an apartment on the usual bachelor scale—it contains every article necessary for comfort *en petit*. You will have a small washbowl and pitcher with a little water in it, a small table and bureau with small drawers, a small bed, just a little too short, a small patch of carpet, all in as small a space as you can dexterously turn round in—very neat, very orderly, and no small gratification to a man with a small purse. The only exceptions I can make to this general rule are two large ones connected with my small hotel; first, an enormous landlady with a good big heart, and second, its title—Hotel of the *Universe*!

We will say nothing about pictures 60 feet long, by Horace Vernet—that is a Government affair. As it is, his canvas is filled with small figures. French amateurs generally love small art. Picture-buyers prize small paintings, for which they sometimes, I think, pay over-large prices. But let that pass—they love a small idea well done. It may be a man drinking, dancing or fiddling; a woman sweeping, holding a coffee-tray, trying a shoe, or peeping through a keyhole. In landscape, French taste delights in a bush, a puddle, some chickens, and a row of small-top trees topped of all their large branches. In sculpture they are fond of statuettes; they reduce the antique, and manufacture small caricatures to perfection. Little bronze and plaster casts of the various "Venuses" abound—very few Dianas and Minervas. Petty sculpture, representing judges as monkeys, Englishmen as bullfrogs, emaciated moneyless artists and *litterateurs*—the exaggerated in all shapes—together with miniature saints, virgins and crucified Christs, meet the eye on all sides.

This taste for the little in art is perhaps most apparent in the ornamentation of public structures. The Louvre, for instance, is covered with small statues, columns and friezes, with flowers, garlands, Cupids and allegorical figures arranged in most complicated groupings, all very puzzling and at the same time very pleasing in the grand effect of this magnificent edifice. The large ideas (after the main design) in this phantasmagoria of sculpture are majestic caryatides of females supporting the small pediments of its roof—very

significant symbols in relation to the woman question.

Than the Parisians no people in the world are more easily "pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw." Traverse the broad avenue of the Champs Elysees dotted with booths, and observe the little groups of old men and children pitching little quoits, shooting little guns, ascertaining how little they weigh by small scales, whirling around in petty boats and on flying hobby-horses, gambling for little cakes, bonbons and crockery. Enter a *café chantant* with a stage before you, displaying a miniature parlor blazing with small jets of gas and filled with *petit* women in full dress, singing for your amusement at the cost of *un petite verre* of cordial. Contemplate the little in other directions. Go to the theatres and study pieces composed of a little dialogue and a little singing, a multiplicity of comic situations, subtleties of expression and striking tableaux. Examine French literature, where the same peculiarity is manifest. Many of the best thoughts of the French mind are expressed in a small compass. The works of Joubert, Vauvenargues, Rochefoucauld, La Bruyere and Pascal form collections of thought crystallized into small intellectual brilliants of rarest quality.

The little is apparent in a great many other directions. French politeness, for instance, consists of little attentions, little ceremonies; conversation of epigrams and exclamations. Families are small in number, suited to the space they move in. The soil is divided into small farms. Gardens are laid out in small beds and tortuous footpaths. The army is made up of small men, and the country of numerous small departments, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Let no one imagine that this widespread littleness indicates, as I remarked above, an absence of grandeur in Paris. On the contrary, this great social mosaic, formed out of little specks, each with its own tint and boundary line, is as impressive in its concrete as in its elementary form. Paris, it is said, rules France. Paris, accordingly, represents France *en grand*.

History shows us what Frenchmen are when disciplined, and what they are when emancipated from discipline; their military successes and their revolutions furnish ample illustrations. They are very plastic so long as they can possibly adjust themselves to each other—terrible when they recoil and stand upon their individuality. The little tempest of excitement which the most polished Frenchman exhibits, when provoked, is significant; it is the key-note of the horrors of the French revolution. How all these sandy particles of French humanity, these little sparkling *egos*, the greatest compounds of sensibility and susceptibility extant, cohere and form a nation, is a marvel. A clue to the unravelling of this mystery is only to be found in a study of *the little* in the world of Paris.

THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN TELE-
GRAPH.

PROGRESS OF THE EXPEDITION.

The Cincinnati *Commercial* has the following letter descriptive of the telegraph expedition:

"The expedition is divided into three parties. 'The Upper Youkan River Exploring Party,' 'The Lower Youkan River Party,' and the 'Siberian Exploring Party.' The first is under the direction of Major Pope, and has already left for Vancouver's Island and Frazer river. It will number twenty-five men, and will explore all the country between the head of Frazer river and the mouth of Youkan river, wherever the mouth is. The second party, numbering ten men, is under command of Mr. Kennicott, and will be landed in Norton's Sound, east of Behring's Straits, to ascend the Lower Youkan, and meet Pope's party. The third party, to number about thirty, including the engineer corps, is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hyde, and will probably land somewhere in the Gulf of Anadir, southwest of Behring's Straits. It is to explore the country from that point around Okhotsk Sea to the mouth of the Amoor river. It is with this party that I am going. The Colonel (Bulkley) will go up with us, but will not accompany us into the interior.

Numerous side parties are to be detached from ours to thoroughly develop the whole country, so that when we settle down for the winter, next winter, our party will not exceed six or eight men, including Colonel Hyde, Laborne, our interpreter, Robinson, Lewis, Belinge and myself.

The whole expedition has a military

organization, and all its officers are regularly commissioned by the company. We all wear a uniform of dark blue, according to army regulations, with appropriate buttons and shoulder straps of our own. The director-in-chief's strap is a silver globe in the centre, on a dark blue velvet ground, with silver flashes of lightning darting toward either end; lieutenant-colonel, the same, except that half the globe is on each end of the strap, and the lightning converges toward the centre; major, the same of gold; captain, a silver cable on a dark blue ground, with a triple knot at each end of the strap and two strands across; first lieutenant ditto, with one strand across the strap; second lieutenant, ditto, without the strand. The uniforms are very handsome. The colonel thinks best that the party be handsomely uniformed to sustain among the Russians the dignity of the United States and of the Collins Overland Telegraph.

Our party will probably leave next week on the steamer George S. Wright for Victoria, Sitka, and the Gulf of Anadir. Some of the party will, perhaps, go up on the bark Palmetto, which belongs to us, and which the Wright will tow. We now have a fleet of five vessels of our own—the steamer Wright, the small propeller Lizzie Horner, bark Clara Bell, schooner Milton Badger, and barque Palmetto. The fleet is to be under the command of Captain C. M. Scammon, formerly of the steam cutter Shubrick, who will be chief naval officer of the expedition. Our party will probably spend next winter somewhere in the vicinity of Penjinsk Bay, on Okhotsk Sea, where we shall make ourselves as comfortable as possible. We have a selected library of nearly a hundred choice books, which will make the long, cold winter endurable. We have in the party two fine German and French scholars, and our interpreter, who speaks ten languages, including German, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian.

Our party is in high favor with the Russian government, and we expect to meet with distinguished consideration when we reach Nikolajevsk, at the mouth of the Amoor.

The Russian government sends a mail every two weeks from St. Petersburg to Nikolajevsk, at the mouth of the Amoor, and letters can be sent us that way. They will have to be addressed to the American Minister at St. Petersburg, who will forward them to us. This is the only possible chance for our getting letters within a year."

RUSSIA.—GREAT DEFEAT IN
CENTRAL ASIA.

The progress of the Russian arms in Central Asia has just received a serious check. Hitherto everything had favored the progress of General Endokimoff, whose successes were as much due to the exertions of Prince Gortschakoff as to the military talents of the generals of the Czar. Having made friends of the important population belonging to the Khanat of Khokan call-Kaissaks, General Endokimoff carried his army of 40,000 or 50,000 infantry, with a proportionate force of cavalry and artillery, into these districts of Central Asia, knowing well how far he could count upon this people. By this means, on the side of Lake Aral, the Russians, without striking a blow, obtained possession of the fortress of Ak-Mekjid, a place of great strategic importance, near the mouth of the Sir-Daria. They claimed the fortress as having been sold to them by the late Khan of Khokan, Koadair Khan, now an exile at Bokhara. On the side of Turkistan the Russians, after a fifteen days' march, advanced to Hodja-Abmed, the Tesak of the Russians, and thence, after another march of six days, they reached the fortress of Tchinkett, otherwise known as Tournkat, a place only three or four days' march from Tachkend. This progress of the Russians, made without firing a shot, was altogether due to the assistance and countenance of the Kaissaks, who, partly on account of their Russianized habits, and partly owing to their wealth in cattle, which causes them to desire the protection of the Russians, thus lend all the aid in their power to their projects of domination. The great object of the late march of the Russians has been to obtain possession of the town of Tachkend, as occupying a point strategically the most favorable to their views, being on one side the key to the Khanat of Khokan, and on the other seriously threatening the Khanat of Bokhara, if the latter ventured to offer any assistance to the former. General Endokimoff, after his march of twenty-one days, was able to arrive almost at the gates of Tchinkett,

and he attempted to obtain possession of the place with the view of the future occupation of Tachkend. He imagined, it would seem, that the Khokanese commander would at once open the gates, and little anticipated that in place of an easy conquest he would find the Regent of Khokan, the Emir Mera-Ali-Khanli, at the head of a numerous force, ready to oppose him. The Russian General, seeing the town in a perfect state of defence, with a battery of fifty cannon, gave up all idea of attacking it, and gave battle instead to the Emir. The conflict was a bloody one, and ended in the defeat of the Russians, who were compelled to fall back upon Hodja Ahmed with a precipitancy which amounted to a flight. The Khokanese had about 1,000 killed and wounded, and the Russians, it is said, about four times that number. No doubt General Endokimoff will endeavor at the earliest opportunity to retrieve this disaster, but it will be difficult for him to take Tchinkett, not only on account of the strength of the place, but of the spirit of the inhabitants, which is now thoroughly aroused. The Regent is thoroughly aware of the importance of the post, and has mustered an army of 150,000 highly efficient troops for its defence. It is now certain that the Khan of Bokhara has not only sent a sum of money to the assistance of Khokan, but is at the head of a large army of observation on the frontier, in the neighborhood of Samarcand.

A NEW AND VALUABLE BREECH-LOADER.—Mr. E. S. Allin, master armorer in this city, has invented a new breech-loading musket, which probably combines more excellences and fewer defects than any other musket of that stamp. One of the most serious troubles in most of the breech-loaders has been the liability of the charge to recoil, but this is effectually obviated in Mr. Allin's musket. Another advantage peculiar to this musket, and one of the very first importance to the government, is the fact that the Springfield rifled muskets—of which some 800,000 are at the different arsenals in the country, some 325,000 being at the arsenal here—can be converted into breech-loaders with comparatively trifling labor and expense. Mr. Allin's arm has been pretty severely tested by himself and others, and has satisfactorily stood all the tests to which it has been subjected. Major Laidley, superintendent of the ordnance department at Washington, and Col. Berdan, of sharp-shooting fame, have examined it and speak of it in unqualified terms of approval. Gen. Dyer has ordered 5,000 muskets of the old model to be changed into breech-loaders after Mr. Allin's plan at once, and the necessary machinery for making the change is now being prepared. —[Springfield Republican.]

ONE OF JEFF. DAVIS'S SLAVES IN THE DRY GOODS MARKET.—The Cincinnati *Gazette*, in its dry goods market report, says:—Among the buyers from the South there came an ex-slave of Jefferson Davis, who purchased quite freely for his store at Davis's Bend, Miss., formerly the plantation of his master, and thus, while the traitor master is held a State prisoner in Fortress Monroe, his former property and chattel, in company, with his two sons, late honorably discharged from the gunboat service, is selling goods as a freedman. His name is Montgomery; he is fifty-three years of age, and is as good a representative of the intelligent black man as can be found. He was Jeff's slave over twenty years, and served him as a carpenter and machinist on his and his brother's plantation of two thousand acres. The entire two thousand acres, he informs us, are being cultivated in cotton by his former fellow-bondmen, who, he says, are working industriously, and more effectually than under the former rule.

THE COST OF THE ARMSTRONG GUNS.—A return has just been furnished to Parliament by the Marquis of Huntington, showing that the expenses incurred on all classes of Armstrong guns, their fittings, projectiles etc., including the 100 pounder smooth-bore guns, since the date of the return furnished to Monsell's Committee in May, 1863, amount to £235,418 0s. 8d. The changes and alterations in the same period have cost £15,527 2s. 4d., while the extra cost in providing projectiles, etc., in consequence of alterations, has been £5,032 4s. 2d.

FIVE NOBLEMEN—the Marquis of Bredalbane, the Dukes of Argyll, Athol, Sutherland and Buccleuch—are said to own one-fourth of the land in Scotland.