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ANGLO-FRENCH ALLIANCE AND ORSINI.

WE doubt if any event of the last forty years, excited so much surprise on the European continent, as the Anglo-French alliance during the Russian war, and not surprise only, but chagrin and indignation. All the traditions of European diplomacy had declared such a union impossible; and it was probably the very last contingency to enter into the calculations either of the *réactionnaires* or the radicals. The former had always looked upon England as their firmest barrier against the onslaughts of French democracy, not because the political tendencies of the two countries were widely different, but because the two nations hated each other with that intense hatred which nothing but 'an ancient grudge' can inspire. France had, they calculated, suffered too much ever to forget, and England had inflicted too much injury ever to hope to be forgiven. Their wars had not, like those of the continent, been wars of diplomatists and generals, in which the people looked on in fear or curiosity, while the legions of the Emperor or the Grand Monarch defiled past their doors, to suffer defeats which inspired the peasant with no regret, or win victories which brought him neither relief nor rejoicing. Anglo-French wars were often, it is true, undertaken for the attainment of objects not visible to the eye of the masses; but the people of the two countries entered upon them with a hearty personal animosity which never sought to disguise itself. Each was to the other what the Turks were to the Hungarians, the Tartars to the Russians, the Moors to the Spaniards, and we were going to say, the British to the Americans — that article of prime necessity without which national life seems to move sluggishly, and in hatred of which so much fervid and turbulent patriotism finds vent — 'a natural enemy.' From the birth of the two nations down to 1850, they had never united for a common object, or in obedience to a fellow-feeling, except in the Crusades, and no allusion to this famous religious experience was very likely in the middle of the nineteenth

century to cause Jacques Bonhomme to inclose the portly person of John Bull in a fraternal *accolade*. In the long interval which has since elapsed, how many 'wars of giants' have they waged, on how many bloody fields have they met, and how many hundreds of millions of treasure has each expended from his hard earnings, in the fell desire to harass, cripple, and destroy his rival? There was nothing in short, which, when Louis Napoleon ascended the throne, history did not make it seem safer to predict, than a union in arms, in a common cause, of the foes of Agincourt, and Fontenoy, and Waterloo.

The liberals of every shade, from the moderate conservatives of Berlin to the most sanguinary reds of Leicester Square, felt themselves equally justified in scouting the idea as an impossibility. England had for thirty years been known as the fast friend of parliamentary government, not only at home, but all over the world. She had conferred it on her colonies, exacted it from her *protégés*, and done all that bullying, and wheedling, and intriguing, and arguing could do, to persuade mankind that it was the one great political elixir, before whose potent influence all sores and ulcers disappeared from the body politic in the twinkling of an eye. She had never even been willing to admit that exceptions might exist to the propriety of its application, or that it did not retain its virtues in any climate. The language of the English press and of the English legislature, had led every body on the continent to believe that it was an axiom in English politics, that the monarch who refused to bestow it on his people, was a knave or a fool, and the people who did not demand it, and if need be, fight for it, were asses or slaves. From 1820 to 1848, there was hardly a speech delivered on questions of foreign politics in either House of Parliament, hardly a line written in the London editorial bureaux, in which this lesson was not inculcated. Was it from this quarter that a frank and friendly recognition was to be looked for of the most unscrupulous, most determined, and most faithless enemy which parliamentary government has ever encountered? And was Lord Palmerston, who was cradled in parliamentary traditions, who has grown gray in parliamentary strife, whose laurels have been won in its conflicts, and whose strongest claim to the admiration of his countrymen is his English readiness in debate, his English respect for majorities, his hearty English appreciation of the tonic efficacy of election tumult and uproar — not the last man whom the world would have expected to sacrifice his place in the cabinet to a desire to congratulate the conspirator of the Second of December upon having kicked parliament out of doors?

Moreover, there was nothing for which England took more credit to herself, than the respect of her people for the law, and nothing she professed to honor more in others. The duty of obeying it, till changed, was one of the earliest lessons in her political catechism. She had, in all periods of her history, been more than usually vehement in her denunciations of military violations of it above all. She had never lost an opportunity of placing on armed

interference with the ordinary course of justice, the stamp of public execration. Precautions against it have always been the first fruits of her revolutions, and all her great *acta publica* bristle with declarations of its enormity, and penalties on its perpetrators. And yet Louis Napoleon had been guilty of worse crimes against law, than those for which Charles lost his life, and James his crown. They suffered for violating liberties which had never been defined, and a constitution which they had never recognized. He abrogated a constitution he had sworn to maintain, and turned a court of justice into the street, which, in legal form and for proved guilt, had solemnly convicted him of treason. An alliance between France and England seemed under any circumstances improbable; but between England and the France of Napoleon the Third it seemed a monstrosity.

It was brought about by the operation of two influences: one was Louis Napoleon's exceeding suavity and deference, and the other the brilliant openings for English capital which his *regime* seemed to offer. He had resided long in England, had studied the country closely, and thoroughly appreciated both her strong and weak points. He recognized in her the only antagonist in Europe whom France, in the zenith of her military splendor, could neither intimidate nor subdue, and was fully aware that the man must have more than his uncle's genius and twice his uncle's resources, who should desire her enmity or despise her friendship. The Queen of England was the only member of the European family of monarchs who would heartily acknowledge that popular choice was as good a title to legitimacy as hereditary descent; and there was no monarch in the world whose recognition would do so much to supply the place of heraldry and history. To be sure it would have been greater and grander to have relied solely on his seven millions of votes, and claimed for his royalty a loftier and nobler confirmation than lapse of ages or sacramental chrism; but no one is always great any more than always wise. Every man has his weakness, and a desire to be admitted to the royal family on equal footing, and for this purpose 'to be well introduced,' seems to have been Louis Napoleon's. However it be, he never ceased, from the moment of his accession to the throne, to give the frankest and most unmistakable proofs of his desire to be on terms of cordial intimacy with his neighbor. The English government had the intrigues, the falsehood, the chicanery, and deceit of the Orleans dynasty still fresh in their memories; and the dangerous uncertainty and vacillation of the republic, was of still more recent date. To have to deal with a power which was not only all smiles, but whose smiles werereal — which promised readily, and yet could keep its promises, was a bait too novel and too tempting to be rejected.

Enormous investments of English capital were made in French securities during the reign of Louis Philippe. There was hardly a public work of importance in the whole country which did not owe its existence in great part to those bugbears of all honest French-

men—‘English guineas.’ The resources still undeveloped, and which promised a handsome percentage for all outlay, were great, and combined with their near neighborhood to the head-quarters of British capital, and the consequent facilities for personal inquiry and supervision on the part of stockholders, they offered a tempting field to the energies of British capitalists. The storms of the revolutionary period which followed 1848 had inflicted serious injury on these gentlemen. The depreciation in value of every species of property, which was the natural consequence of the uncertainty of the political future, during the republican *regime*, had fallen no less heavily on them than on the natives, and they shared to the fullest extent the hostility with which the *bourgeoisie* regarded the new order of things, and were secretly fully as anxious for the establishment of ‘a strong government.’

There was hardly one of their dreams which Louis Napoleon did not promise to fulfil. The policy he traced out at the very dawn of the empire was the one of all others to meet the wants of a timid trader: unbounded facilities for speculation, with absolute repression of all movements, political or other, which might exercise the slightest influence on stocks or other securities, and no less guarantee for the safety of property than five hundred thousand bayonets, of which he had already proved himself capable of making a remorseless and unscrupulous use. Nor did the new government confine itself to bare guarantee of the security of vested rights. It declared it to be a part of its mission to foster and stimulate enterprise, so as to place France in the front rank of the army of commerce, and for this purpose began to make a lavish use of all the resources, both material and moral, of the state. It is no part of our present purpose to chronicle the prodigious commercial activity which marked the first three or four years of the present Emperor’s reign. A monster corporation was organized for absorbing all the savings of the community, and employing them, under the sanction and with the aid of the government, in every known species of speculation. Subventions were granted with reckless profusion to rail-road and steam-boat companies, and any other sort of company whose existence bore the faintest appearance of testimony to the general prosperity. ‘Concessions’ of rail-roads were showered upon the heads of eager capitalists, and among the most eager were the wealthiest and canniest men of ‘the city.’ The London *Times*, which for a month or two after the *coup d’état*, remained faithful in its allegiance to law and justice and humanity, and fired broadsides which startled the usurper on his throne, speedily gave way before the volleys of scrip, coupons, and bonds which it received in return, struck its colors and converted itself into his cordial friend and admirer. In the autumn of 1853, before the grass had grown on the bloody graves of those who fell two years before in uttering France’s last protest against, not simply the destruction of her liberties, but against one of the worst outrages ever perpetrated upon the good faith of the world, there was not a man or journal of influence or position in the

whole British empire who dared to say that Louis Napoleon was not worthy, not merely of English civility, but of English sympathy and good wishes. Each month saw the adulation increase and the delusion deepen. When the Russian war broke out, the English army followed Marshal St. Arnaud to the field, rather as an auxiliary corps than as the representative of the victors of Vittoria and of Waterloo, and accepted the position of inferiority which was assigned it, at once, and without a word of complaint from the authorities at home. The two armies went into action at Alma with equal numbers; to the English was assigned the duty of the front attack, where most danger lay and most loss was to be endured; the French reserved to themselves the pleasanter task of surprising the enemy's flank by climbing precipitous heights unimpeded, and have ever since worn the laurels plucked on that bloody field. During the siege operations, the English were placed without remonstrance on the right wing, the point farthest from the sea, and most exposed to a flank attack from the enemy. We all know the results. We know that France came out of the war with fresh lustre and strengthened *prestige*, and the British with the bewildering sensation of having fought very hard and been kicked for their pains. The army went home intensely dissatisfied with the part they had been permitted to play in the conflict, and their feeling communicated itself to the whole country, and was aggravated by the tone of the French press in commenting upon the events of the war. The publication of the Baron de Bazancourt's volume; the omission of all mention of the English army at the banquet given to the Crimean heroes at Marseilles; and a variety of other minor incidents, small in themselves, but important in view of the actual temper of the public, gave the existing irritation on the part of the British a chronic character. Lord Palmerston, and the *Times*, and the capitalists, however, clung to the alliance, though the doubtful operations by which it was found necessary to sustain the national credit during the financial panic of last winter, somewhat damaged the commercial character of the empire. But a crisis of some sort was clearly at hand. The train was laid, and Orsini's attempt fired it, and blew Palmerston, the alliance, Count Persigny, and a great quantity of other valuables, into the air.

It is a great mistake to suppose that it was either the language of the army, or of Count de Persigny, *per se*, which created the recent extraordinary effervescence of anti-Gallic feeling in England. Provocations as great, and menaces much more insulting because more deliberate, have been offered before now, without giving rise to any thing more exciting than a diplomatic correspondence. In his ordinary moods, John Bull would have vented his ire upon the braggarts by a letter to the *Times*, and then let the matter slip from his memory. But the Crimean war had left its sting, and the very same causes which led the French colonels and the French ambassadors to forget themselves, roused the British public into frenzy. Bernard's trial was the last act in a drama, the first scene of which was laid on the banks of the Alma.

The Orsini conspiracy, or rather the effects it produced on the policy of the French Government, drove the English public into speaking out frankly what they had long secretly felt. The studied contempt with which Count de Persigny treated the humble congratulations of the London Corporation on his master's escape, and the savage menaces which, in defiance of all good discipline, the army was allowed to utter through the columns of the *Moniteur*, showed them what they refused to believe three years previously — that no amount of flattery, conciliation, or subserviency can establish between the two countries any thing more solid than an alliance of governments, and that a lasting union between two nations of such pretensions and such antecedents, and marked by such differences of character and institutions, can never be based on an assumption of their equality. Nor had the empire fulfilled any of the hopes it had excited at its inauguration. Seven years of experiment had resulted in a yearly deficit in the revenue, in a yearly increase in the civil list, in the continued denial of liberty of speech, in the destruction of the last shreds of freedom of election, in a police and passport system of greater stringency than ever. Nothing which was promised in 1852 was forthcoming. The Emperor informed the Chambers in that year, that liberty did not form the pedestal of the political column: it crowned it. The column has been going up rapidly ever since, and the materials have been all supplied from the great quarry of the *Idée Napoléoniennes*, but it has been so constructed, that any other capital than slavery would now constitute an architectural deformity. As a commercial speculation, the failure of the imperial *regime* has been equally signal. Business is at a stand-still throughout the country; the *Crédit Mobilier* maintains its footing only through government support; the Bank of France was saved from stoppage and the commercial panic averted, by the exertions of the police. 'A run' would have been deemed an expression of want of confidence in the Government, and punished as seditious. Better be bankrupt, and say nothing about it, than try to pay your way and go to jail. Stocks of all kinds have sunk so low, and return so little, under the influence of the general feeling of insecurity and uncertainty, that most Englishmen are satisfied, that as far as trade is concerned, the boisterous weather of republicanism is preferable to the horrible calms which precede the hurricanes of despotism. The admiration of the world has been often challenged for the broad democratic platform on which his majesty's throne rests. Few men have put on the crown and the assumed golden bees, at the bidding of seven millions of free citizens. The first of Orsini's bombs dispelled the delusion. He who reigned by the national will, was forced, because two foreigners attempted his life, to apportion France into military districts, and garrison each by a *corps d'armée* on war footing, under the command of a marshal, and place the civil government of Paris in the hands of an African *sabreur*. Orsini certainly failed to kill the Emperor, but he slew the empire,

in destroying the faith of England and of the world, in its moral strength.

With this dissipation of political delusions, has passed away that obliquity of vision on the part of the public, both in France and England, which enabled the usurper to hide unscrupulousness and perjury, by the exhibition of courage and success. The reflections which Orsini's death inspired, must, we feel certain, have had a large share in opening the ears of the world to the accents of justice and truth. The contrast between the career of him who died on the scaffold, and that of his accuser who sat on the throne, was in itself a great moral lesson. Both began life in much the same position; both entered on the world with the unconquerable determination to carry out the object nearest their hearts; both passed their prime either in prison or in exile; both were adventurers, and both conspirators; both, ten years ago, would have been spoken of by European governments as vagabonds, of equal pretensions to the pillory or the whipping-post. Each pursued his ends with singleness of purpose to the last; one has died on the scaffold, and the other signed the warrant for his execution. And yet there is no one who sits down calmly, and applies to their history the immutable standard of truth and right, without feeling that if one be a villain and the other a hero, the prize was due to Orsini, and the judgment should be passed on Napoleon. Orsini sacrificed himself, family and friends, home and happiness, to the furtherance of an idea which may be called visionary, but which no man can condemn. The Italian who lives for the liberation of Italy, and ends by dying for it, may possibly be a fool, but his folly is of that extreme sort, that it needs but a tinge of success to change it into the highest sort of wisdom. The leading feature in Orsini's career was self-abnegation. His own comfort, convenience, or safety were the last elements which ever entered into his calculations. There is not an American or an Englishman in existence, whose proudest boast and glory it would not be to have had a father, or grand-father, or ancestor ever so remote, who had done and dared, for America or England, all that this forlorn, persecuted 'Carbonaro' dared and did for Italy, up to the attempt on Napoleon. The Emperor has displayed equal determination, equal endurance, equal enthusiasm, but neither love for his own country nor the human race in general nerved his arm nor steeled his courage. His object, from first to last, has been avowedly his own elevation to the throne, and the enjoyment of the salary appertaining to that position; and he has never been guilty of the petty meanness of pretending that he had any other aim in view. He did not even put forward the claim of hereditary right, to justify the preliminary perjury and massacre of the Second of December, as in that case it would have been unnecessary to appeal to the people for election, and the *coup d'état* would have been but a legitimate re-seizure of stolen goods. He conspired, he fought, he broke his oath, because he desired to be Emperor; and he killed

Orsini, because he wishes to remain Emperor. Orsini conspired, and fought, and sought to assassinate, that twenty millions might be free. The last act in his sad story was the only blemish upon a life of singular loyalty to honest convictions; but if the *coup d'état*, the breach of the presidential oath, and the bloodshed which followed it, be justifiable in consideration of the end they had in view, so also was the attempt of the twenty-first of January; for, *per se*, both acts were equally heinous. Any argument which exculpates Louis Napoleon, excuses Orsini. Their cases, then, differ only in the aims of the men, and the result of their endeavors; and the issue once narrowed down to these two points, and the parties brought face to face, the one in the position of judge, and the other of executioner, every good instinct of the human heart rises in execration at the spectacle. Both are scoundrels, if you will; both may come in the jurist's classification, under the category of *hostes humani generis*; but any alliance, or other political arrangement which rests on the assumption, that the one of two such men deserves the hand of sympathy and friendship, while the other has met his deserts on the block, is such a crazy fabric, that it needs only to be examined to be overturned.

The result of this latest attempt to maintain a hearty and active friendship between two countries, whose domestic policy and institutions are so totally opposed as those of England and France, has a warning in it, which it is to be hoped will not be forgotten. How vain it is for England to hope to escape serious misconception, as to the operation of the simplest portion of her political machinery, has been evidenced by the way in which the result of Bernard's trial has been received in France; and the vote of the House of Commons on the Conspiracy Bill, proves the serious inconveniences of being on such terms with any despotic power, as to render the introduction of such a measure, at its request, at all obligatory. The fact is, that a general alliance or agreement to adhere to any other state through thick and thin, or intercourse so intimate as to involve such an alliance as an almost unavoidable consequence, is something which every free country should avoid. All governments have a right to expect civility, and such good offices as humanity or politeness dictate, or the interests of science or commerce may require at the hands of their neighbors; but nothing more. More than this entails a tacit approval by one of a thousand things in the domestic policy of the other, which at home would be condemned as wicked and indefensible, and it entails deviations from its own foreign policy, which nothing but the interests of its people or those of pure justice, can warrant.

A free people cannot enter into a hearty alliance with a despot, without effecting some sort of compromise between his principles and theirs, and all such compromises are immoral. England would certainly before now have satisfied public justice, by dealing out retribution on Naples, if she had not been compelled to respect in the person of King Bomba the principle which sits enthroned

in France, in the person of Louis Napoleon; and the stand she is now taking on the slave-trade, is terribly damaged by the concessions which the alliance has compelled her to make to the French 'free emigration' scheme. The yoke between her and the Emperor was one of the most unequal the world ever saw; and there is no friend of free institutions who must not rejoice in its severance. The sturdy oak of English freedom can never be other than hampered by the intrusion of a pretentious French poplar into its branches. It stands best alone. Whatever the spread of English laws, and ideas, and influence can do to make mankind freer and wiser and happier, can be done most effectually, when it has not to accommodate itself to dynastic prejudices or necessities; and if Louis Napoleon's policy be for the good and glory of France, it is but fair that he should win his guerdon or meet his doom, single-handed, and on his own merits.

THE MESSENGER AT NIGHT.

BY R. H. STODDARD.

A FACE at the window,
A tap on the pane:
Who is it that wants me,
To-night in the rain?

I have lighted my chamber,
And brought out my wine,
For a score of good fellows
Were coming to dine.

The dastards have failed me,
And sent in the rain
The man at the window,
To tap on the pane!

I hear the rain patter,
I hear the wind blow:
I hate the wild weather,
And yet I must go!

I could moan like the wind now,
And weep like the rain,
But the thing at the window
Is tapping again!

It beckons, I follow:
Good-by to the light!
I am going, oh! whither?
Out into the night!