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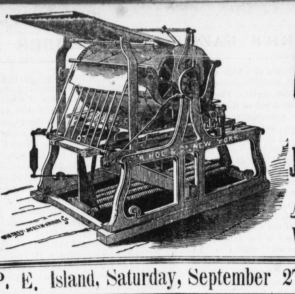

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## A CHAPTER OF THE HISTORY OF THE LATE WAR.

*(From the European Times.)*

After the lapse of many centuries, Nineveh has lately been disinterred by Mr. Layard from its shroud of sand, and we know something about the actual city. Herculaneum and Pompeii, recovered from their lava grave, tell us what was the home-life of the old Romans of the Empire. Horace Walpole's letters, published long after the events to which they relate, threw new and strange light upon what was before supposed to have been the history of England in the times of George the Second. But our impatience is not always so severely taxed. The secrets of courts and the mysteries and intrigues of cabinets and statesmen are still only to be guessed at. But, barring such points, we have an opinion that persons, possessed of an ordinary degree of sagacity, can read history from its facts, without waiting until the writers of it have turned it into fables for the credulous and simple. At all events, the great features of it have a physiognomy which may be understood by common sense with a Lavater-like precision. We will try our hand to-day on a chapter of it, which has often and much occupied our thoughts. It will,for instance, we may suppose, in all probability, be said of the present times by some future Hume, Clarendon, Goldsmith, Alison, or Macaulay that the late war, between Russia on the one hand, and France and England on the other, was brought to a conclusion in the March 1856. Thus will the dupes of diplomatic jargon write, and thus will idiots believe. But we venture to contradict them by anticipation, and to assert that, as far as France was concerned, the war ended on the 8th of September, 1855. On that day, it reached its conclusion *de facto*, if not *de jure*. Let us consider how this was managed. After the result of that bloody day, Pelissier, the French general, found himself at the head of an army which he might have led triumphantly and victoriously to any given point on the face of the earth. But he did not move. He threw away all the fruits of victory. He even threw away all his own laurels, by allowing himself to be shut up and besieged in a narrow strip of the Crimea by the fragments of the routed garrison of Sebastopol. History has no precedent for such a disgraceful issue, except, perhaps, in the fate of the Athenian army under the ill-starred Nicias before the walls of Syracuse of old. How was it? Why was it? Were all the energies of the fire-eater and Arab-smokers of Africa crushed at once and in an instant by a paralysis of fear? Was the soldier of fortune, who had carved out his way to distinction with his own good sword, suddenly transmuted by some strange miracle into a wretched and pitiable coward? To this explanation we have a sufficient answer in the fact, that he remained at the head of the French army. The slightest symptoms of irresolution would have brought him home. There was, then, we opine, no cowardice in the matter. But we verily believe that there was treachery, not on the part of Pelissier, but of his master in Paris. We arrive at our verdict by circumstantial evidence. But it is often the best. Let us consider it in this case. When the Malakhoff was so gloriously stormed by the French on the 8th of September, the English, under that tame man, Codrington, being at the same time most disgracefully repulsed from the Redan, Louis Napoleon had "killed two birds with one stone." He had avenged Moscow on the Russians and taken the shine out of the Waterloo redcoats. He had, therefore, done enough for himself, and he is not the man to do any thing for any body else. Hence we are convinced, we should not be more so, if it were written in a book before us, that from that very day negociations were commenced by him with Russia, either directly *per se*, or indirectly *per alios*, that is, the Austrians. This being admitted, we comprehend at once the suspicious conduct of Pelissier, but not otherwise. Without this reading, it is an impenetrable mystery to us. He had his orders *non quidis movere*, not to give any further annoyance to his master's possible friend, the Czar. Hence, too, his abandonment of Kars, which was to be a sop to the pride of Russia, in the shape of a set-off for the capture of the southern side of Sebastopol. But, acquitting the French general of anything like cowardice, we still rather wonder at the want of self-respect which would allow him to remain for a single day at the head of an army which was not to win, but to be the tarnishing of his fame and the blighting of all his former glories, in short, redneed to the condition of a muzzled hero, running mute. Only fancy the first Napoleon, or Marlborough, or Wellington at the head of the army which did nothing under Pelissier and Codrington! What a whirlwind of chivalry would have swept over Russia, and changed the destinies of the world! But, to go back to the negotiations which, as we suppose, were entered upon between France and Russia immediately after the 8th of September. As soon as they had ripened into maturity, England was called upon to sign them as a meek ally or a junior partner, on the penalty of being left to carry on the war alone. And so was the fable turned into a life thing, and acted on the world's wide stage before the eyes of men. England used the cat's paw, and the monkey got the chesnuts; and Napoleon was admitted into the confraternity of continental despots, and that was all that he had struggled for and all that he wanted. He has got his "Open Sesame,"—his imperial and royal diploma, and is admitted into the inner circle, of which the other members are the potentates, of Russia, Prussia, Austria, Naples, and now of Spain.

In a thunderstorm which broke over the village of Berghinfeld, on the road Wurstburg, in Rhenish Bavaria, a few days ago, the lightning set fire to a barn filled with forage, and the flames spread so rapidly that they destroyed not fewer than 130 houses before they could be extinguished.