

The caves snap and the whole house shakes;
 In woodlands, shadow-crossed,
 The heavy timber, groaning, quakes
 Beneath the tides of frost.

The moon to western forest deeps
 Sinks down, and black airs fall
 Upon the land, until there creeps
 A glimmering cold through all:
 In frosty barns with vapors dim
 The cocks alternate crow,
 As lifts the sun a glowless rim
 To frozen hills of snow.

C. L. Cleaveland.

THE STORY OF A SWISS RING-POLITICIAN.

FEW of the thousands of travelers who yearly pass through Geneva, or of the still greater number of readers to whom its name is a household word, know anything of its modern history, or (barring international treaties) have any association with it except as the city of Calvin, the birthplace of Rousseau, the home of the Prisoner of Chillon. Yet, not to speak of its literary glory when Voltaire judged the world from Ferney, and Madame de Staël shot her slender but piercing arrows from the château of Coppet, it has been, in our own day, the scene of events as dramatic and interesting as the adventures of the New York Ring, or Fiske's flight to Jersey City. In the view of its past, the present lot of Geneva is strange enough. Rome peopled by the society of Poker Flat and governed by a vigilance committee would be a caprice of fate hardly more singular than that which gave over the city of Calvin's ordinances and the stiff-necked Protestant oligarchy of the eighteenth century into the hands of a set of clever rascals, arrived at power by means still more demoralizing than "arranging primaries," and whose first measure to fill

their own pockets was to establish a "bank," which was expected to make Homburg an unknown village and to leave Monaco for many years to come in full enjoyment of its pristine quiet. And the strangest part of all is that while "Governor" Dorr, with whose career Fazy's has a good deal in common, died a penniless exile, while Tweed is in prison, and Conolly in parts unknown, the Swiss demagogue is passing a serene old age in the midst of those who were once his "faithful subjects."

But before proceeding to narrate the remarkable ups and downs of Mr. James Fazy's fortunes, we ought briefly to describe the social and political *régime* of the community whose morals and institutions he applied himself, with such success, to improve and reform. The reader will recollect that, towards the close of the last century, there were nearly a hundred-fold as many sovereign states in Europe as there are at present, and that among them was the commonwealth of Geneva. At that time political power was still in the hands of the oligarchy established by Calvin, but it was in many ways a liberal oligarchy, and had opened its doors with alacrity

to the long succession of religious fugitives from France and Savoy, who sought a not always temporary refuge in the "Protestant Rome." This stream of new blood improved the stock—if I may be allowed the expression—with-out at all changing the peculiar Genevese type, and the town constantly grew in repute as a centre of literary culture and political enlightenment, while a few miles off, in Savoy, as a French ambassador wrote home, "thinking was considered a folly, and writing an act of indecency." Taxes were light, trade fairly prosperous, and everybody was contented.

Then the revolutionary armies began their plundering raids, and Geneva was naturally one of the first places to be appropriated to the glory of France. Down to the fall of the empire it was nothing but a departmental town, like some hundreds of others, and the Genevese, preferring their own ideas of liberty to the equality and fraternity of the French school, sulked in their dwellings and bided their time. Then came the Congress of Vienna, where, outside of the French embassy, Geneva everywhere found friends. It was upon this occasion, by the way, that the famous remark was made by Capodistrias, in answer to Talleyrand, that "Geneva was the grain of musk which perfumed all Europe." The little republic desired to join the Swiss Confederation, with which it had often been allied; but the government of that body refused to admit the city on the footing of a canton unless it could bring other territory with it. To effect this, the good offices of the congress were not only desirable but necessary, and the result of its interposition was that the king of Sardinia ceded several Savoyard villages, with a population of sixteen thousand souls. The wise men of the city, belonging to the aristocratic families (Bentham's disciple Dumont was among them), then set to work to frame a constitution for the liberated territory, and to set it a-going. The old distinctions of classes were given up, and perfect equality was established, but the constitution was so

framed as practically to limit the choice of executive officers to members of the old oligarchic families. There was a grand council, with very slight initiatory power but "holding the purse-strings," and a council of state, chosen by it, which formed the government. Every one was a voter who paid taxes to the amount of seventy-five cents yearly, so that no one was shut out except the proletariat. The operation of this arrangement was excellent. The bench and bar were especially capable and high-toned; admirable schools of every description were founded; and the watch manufacture enriched all classes. But the same causes which in America are supposed to prevent gentlemen from attaining office were here slowly but surely tending to drive them from it. As every one was legally as good as everybody else, society was so much the more exclusive. Even the hundred topmost families were divided into coteries, according to their age and fortune, and there was not only a gulf between the aristocracy and the *bourgeoisie*, but the middle-class itself was divided into similar sharply defined sets. The ruling circles, confident in the future, had not, or disdained, the faculty of assimilating new talents and new fortunes, while the other classes cherished so hearty an envy of the set next above them as to be unwilling to recognize, in these relatively favored individuals, the most substantial and serviceable merit. The public mind was so sensitive that a misunderstood remark in conversation, or a bow accidentally omitted, was a political event, and of course, in a community so ripe for agitation as this, agitators did not fail to make their appearance. The extraordinary deficiency of real grievances was counterbalanced by the extraordinary credulity of their audience. All social inequalities and all "*froissemens d'amour propre*" (I prefer a French phrase to the use of the word "soreheadedness") were laid to the charge of the "aristocrats," who, by taking upon themselves, without pay, all sorts of public services, and thus saving the state not merely salaries, but

also doing without the creation of offices to reward their adherents, unquestionably "established caste." So a political association was founded, originally composed of well-meaning citizens who sought to attain by legal means certain petty reforms. But the society grew in a manner to terrify the founders, who were soon swamped by the new element, and in a short time well merited the name given it by its opponents, "*L'hôpital des amours propres blessés.*" The leader of the individuals who had thus captured the society was Mr. James Fazy.

Fazy was born in 1796, and is therefore, perhaps, the oldest of living statesmen. Exiled from France after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the family became, in 1735, naturalized citizens of Geneva, where they had established a large and flourishing business. James received a careful education, and succeeded early to his patrimony. Not, however, finding to his taste the sober, respectable, and probably rather dull life of the other young "aristocrats," he set out for Paris, where he found no difficulty in obtaining society to his liking, and in disposing of his fortune. Then he became a contributor to the once famous republican journal, *National*, and his name was affixed to the proclamation of the radicals in 1830. The unruly classes being cheated out of the fruits of the barricades by the unusual firmness of the bourgeoisie, Fazy recommenced his work of agitation in a paper of his own, called *La Révolution*. But the taking title and still more popular tenets of the new journal not being regarded with favor by the established government, he came to the conclusion that Paris was no longer the place for such enlightened spirits as his own, while his prophetic eye saw a fine opening for his talents in his native town. At first his activity there was peaceable enough, being confined to editing a new paper in the interest of the universal republic. Unfortunately, the believers in the universal republic are not a paying class, so that this second literary enterprise was as unsuccessful as the first, though

from a different reason, and in 1835 the paper ceased to appear. Its conductor seems to have devoted the next few years exclusively to practical politics; and having, in 1841, got well in hand the organization of which we have above spoken, Fazy determined to make a move, to which end he called a mass-meeting in front of the town-hall or state-house. The resignation of the executive council was demanded. (No charges were brought against the honesty or capacity of the members, but it was alleged that they had been in office too long, the true republican principle of rotation having been shamefully disregarded.) The council summoned the militia to its defense, but the middle class was not at all disinclined to humble the "patricians," and so went over to the rioters, leaving the councilors nothing to do but to resign with as much dignity as they could. A new constitution was thus obtained without bloodshed, universal suffrage established, and the councilors were given a salary of two thousand francs, so that the poor man would no longer be kept out of office because unable to afford the expense. So everybody was satisfied except the aristocrats, and even they did not feel *very* sad in contemplating the situation.

But this happy state of contentment was not destined long to last. Universal suffrage by no means justified the expectations of its promoters; for though the bourgeoisie were very ready to snub the hitherto governing class, they were not inclined to put their property at the mercy of Mr. Fazy and his friends; accordingly, the election of 1842 resulted in a strong conservative majority in both councils. This was very annoying, but Mr. Fazy did not despair. He started a new paper, and organized a new insurrection the following year. The workmen barricaded their quarter of the city; but this time the militia did not flinch, and under the skillful leadership of the afterwards celebrated Colonel Dufour put down the rioters, though not without bloodshed. Fazy saw that there was not much chance for the workmen unless they found allies; luckily

these were close at hand. The reader will recollect that in 1815 sixteen thousand Catholics had been added to the severely Protestant state. They had been guaranteed the free exercise of their religion, but, as may be imagined, Catholicism was not encouraged, and they were ready to give their support to any party which would pay for it. For fighting men, however, the insurrection must still rely upon the laborers, and Fazy's good star (he himself was a much better mob-orator and wire-puller than leader when fighting was going on) sent him at this time an able assistant, — not a native or citizen of the town, — named Galeer. The 7th of October, 1846, the insurgents were found to have occupied in force the island in the Rhone opposite the city. The militia charged, and were repulsed with a loss in killed of twenty men, upon which the government resigned; probably because the militia was not inclined to continue the struggle, and because there was no federal army it could summon to its aid. Fazy had this time also been the immediate cause of the rising. A revolution which should bring himself to power was almost a matter of life and death with him, for he was so covered with debts that he would otherwise have no resource but flight. Accordingly he had once called a mass-meeting in the Place Molard, and had used such inflammatory language that an order had been issued for his arrest. Then his friends rose, and he himself, instead of leading them to victory, concealed his precious person in his house, where he spent his time, while waiting, in packing up what valuables he had left, so as to be all ready for escape in case the enterprise should prove unsuccessful. Upon learning that his party was victorious, he proceeded to preside over a new meeting, where he proclaimed himself the hero of the day and the head of a provisional government, and then led his eager followers to expel the defenseless grand council from the Hôtel de Ville.

Fazy was at last in power, but he knew very well that he would not stay there unless radical changes were made in the

mode of electing the government. Manhood suffrage is all very well so long as it chooses the right men to office; when it is inclined to be bumptious it must be held in leading-strings. So Fazy won not a few friends for his government by the enfranchisement of paupers. Then he proceeded, as we say, to gerrymander the election districts. The canton had previously been divided into ten wards, four in the city and six outside. Fazy consolidated these ten into three: the city, the left bank of the river and lake, and the right bank. In the last district (twenty-five thousand inhabitants) the Protestant voters were now completely outnumbered by the Catholics. The second, containing only eight thousand souls, was of little importance, any way. The adverse opinion of the town (twenty-nine thousand) was provided for by the regulation that the whole twelve thousand voters must cast their ballots in the same urn, and within the space of ten hours. The arrangement offered a fine opportunity for fisticuffs, — an opportunity almost never neglected. To increase the power of the mob, an electoral committee or returning-board was established to decide the validity of an election. The president and vice-president of this committee are elected by the grand council, but the other members are drawn by lot from among the citizens present at the opening of the polls, so that regular riots sometimes take place before a single vote has been cast. Everything being thus admirably arranged, the election was held, and this time the result completely satisfied the reformers. Laws were immediately passed abolishing imprisonment for debt (in the interest of individual freedom, not at all of Mr. Fazy) and bestowing various rewards upon the revolutionists as compensation for their distinguished services. Galeer, who appears to have been personally disinterested, received the freedom of the city; Fazy, a fine lot of government land in the midst of the town, upon which he proceeded to erect a hotel and gaming-house. Thus was justified the immemorial device of the city, *Post tenebras, lux!*

Fazy possessed in a remarkable degree the gift of inspiring confidence, and his supporters had elected a council as pliant to his will as was the Corps Législatif to the third Napoleon. For two years, at least, he had no opposition to fear, but his task was none the less a difficult one; for though he could afford to laugh at the wishes of the property-holders, he was expected to realize the utopian promises he had made to the workingmen and the Catholic peasantry. In doing this he displayed a talent which was little short of genius. Fazy was Louis Napoleon and Baron Haussmann in one, and that long before those distinguished individuals had begun their ædific labors. The old walls were torn down, and dozens of new streets laid out; fine *quais* and gardens, an extensive breakwater, a magnificent bridge, were constructed. These various public works did not of course, as such, benefit the workingman, but they furnished plenty of employment for a long series of years, — employment paid at nearly double the market rate. The improvements cost money, indeed, but that made no difference; for with the exception of the proceeds of one or two taxes, which were doubled, — taxes which fell exclusively on property-holders, — the treasury received no more than before. When Mr. Fazy entered the state-house as its master, in 1846, he found sixty thousand dollars in cash, and no debts. When he finally went out, the canton was burdened with four million dollars debt and a regularly recurring deficit. Of this considerable sum, only a portion had been directly expended in public improvements, the remainder having flowed directly, as state charity, into the pockets of the workingmen, and, by certain financial operations which I will presently mention, into those of the dictator and his friends. One of the means by which Fazy obtained popular favor previous to the revolution of 1846 was by promising that under his government the poor man should be able to raise money upon his note as easily as the close-fisted aristocrats themselves. For practical purposes, of course, the poor, in his eyes,

consisted of himself and his colleagues, but the phrase was none the less serviceable as a figure of speech. Arrived at power, he began by seizing the funds of several Protestant foundations, with which he established a bank and a "*caisse hypothécaire*." For a while all went well, but in course of time these institutions fell into the hands of the conservatives, and the president had to look elsewhere for people to advance money and negotiate loans, with a percentage for himself. So he started a "*caisse d'escompte*," in which he invited the "people" to deposit their savings. This plan proved completely successful, but it was at the same time dangerous. For though the laborers, the Catholic peasantry, and the small shop-keepers furnished money in abundance, their revenge, if they found themselves taken in, would undoubtedly be disastrous. Fazy now quarreled with Galeer, who was pecuniarily honest, and at the succeeding election (1851) Galeer's friends formed a third party. Fazy, indeed, easily pulled through, and Galeer now died, as his adherents averred, of a broken heart. At the following trial (1853) they united with the conservatives, and the result of this alliance was the unexpected defeat of the dictator: universal suffrage, carefully arranged as it was, had once more played false! One cause of this was undoubtedly the bad odor into which had fallen the *caisse d'escompte*, where he and his friends had enjoyed unlimited credit, with the natural result. The institution was on the verge of bankruptcy, and only heroic means could save it and prevent the total abandonment of its director at the next election. Fazy was equal to the situation. He went to Paris, and immediately wrote home that he would soon return with millions. The relief in Geneva was great, and the ex-president's partisans were reassured. To avoid, however, the possibility of doubt, Fazy caused to be stationed before the balloting-place a gang of roughs, who forcibly prevented the majority of the opposition from voting. The first act of the new government was to vote the threatened institution a million francs

from the public purse. With a well-trained body of roughs always at hand, and the financial resources of the second empire, in case of need, at his disposal, Fazy felt himself firm in his seat. It was at this time that he set up his gambling establishment; and, not content with practicing a code of morality whose only equal, so far as I know, was that in vogue at Paris after the Reign of Terror, he openly proclaimed it in a public meeting, while his mistress dressed her carriage servants and footmen in the famous — one might almost say sanctified — colors of the city of Geneva.¹

The foreign policy of the late French emperor was not always wise, but it was ever safe and careful. The great object in view was to win new territory (the Germans sometimes called him Annex-ander the Great), and the means to serve this policy were as various as the countries to which it applied. Savoy was to be purchased for blood, Luxemburg for money; the Rhine province was to be conquered out of hand, and the acquisition of the Belgian railways was to lead to the political dependence of the kingdom. Both before and after the annexations of 1860 Napoleon devoted serious attention to the possible "reunion" of Geneva, and for many years agents of his did their best to prepare the soil. Of these Fazy was the chief, and the money he brought back from Paris was destined to found a new bank as a branch of the "Crédit Mobilier." After the change in the proprietorship of Savoy, Geneva was almost completely surrounded by French territory; the sixteen thousand Savoyard peasants had never had any common feeling with the towns-people, and there was a Bonapartist agent at the head of the government, with dictatorial power. In time, the spider of the Tuileries might well hope to see the fly walk into his parlor, without the least overt act on his part. A proclamation by Fazy some fine morning; a *plébescite*, when the Catholic peasants and workingmen would vote solidly, and the rest of the community not at all, — and Europe, Switzerland least of all, in view

of the Neuchâtel affair, would say not a word to such an expression of the popular will.

But the best of plans will miscarry, and it seems to have been Fazy's un-national proclivities, rather than his immorality, revolutionary methods, or pecuniary dishonesty, which finally ruined him. The immediate cause of his Fall (1861) was the financial condition of the state. The taxation per head in Geneva had reached the figure of thirty-five francs, while the highest rate elsewhere in Switzerland was fifteen; money was no longer to be had on any terms, on the credit of the canton, and the imperial purse was hard pressed at the moment. The ex-dictator, however, was not by any means inclined to consider the game lost, and another election occurring in 1864, he once more stood as candidate of the radicals. The conservatives put up Mr. Arthur Chenevière, a well-known and universally respected banker. Since the days of Demosthenes no party struggle has been conducted with more passion or greater bitterness, and the result was the victory of Chenevière by three hundred majority. The rage of the defeated party was, for the moment, without limits, and a procession of armed sons of toil, promenading the streets, casually shot dead five persons. The decision of the majority, however, in well-regulated republics like Geneva, is not beyond appeal; and the returning-board calmly proceeded to count out the conservative candidate, on the ground that repeating had been practiced by his supporters. Unfortunately for the radicals they overlooked the fact that an appeal might lie even from this body, and so went home confident of victory. It is not improbable that if they had seized the state-house and established their government, the federal council would have recognized the accomplished fact as it had done on previous occasions. But as it was, the conservatives appealed, the council reversed the decision of the board, and the city was occupied by federal troops.

This was the political end of Mr. James Fazy. The radicals soon recov-

¹ Red and yellow.

ered, and have since kept the majority in the councils; but the once omnipotent leader has been looked upon in the light of a Jonah, who ought to think himself lucky to be supported at the public expense. One of the dictator's earliest acts had been to draw the college of Geneva, which had existed since the time of Calvin, directly under the control of the state. The wealthy aristocrats of the town, instead of spending their substance in riotous living, had lived simply, and, to a large extent, devoted their lives to letters or to science. It was evident that such men were not at all the proper persons to conduct the education of youth, and the president proceeded to remodel the institution, called it a university, and transferred the power of appointing to chairs from the faculty to the council of state. Several professors were then removed; others avoided removal by resignation. Their places are now mostly filled by non-Genevise, but Mr. Fazy (without giving lectures) is professor of jurisprudence.

The administration has considerably improved. With the dictator fell his

gambling establishment, and the direct encouragement to blacklegs which had characterized his government ceased also. There had gradually formed in Geneva an association not dissimilar to the Camorra, the chief object of which was to extort money at night from pedestrians, under the threat of charging them with certain crimes which cannot be mentioned here. Finally, a man thus accosted resisted, and, in the scuffle which ensued, was killed by the leader of the band. This rascal was caught, tried, and executed, after which the law was reformed by the abolition of capital punishment. Before dying, however, he confessed to having practiced his little game with success upon three hundred individuals. The bad character of the Genevise workmen (as compared with the French and our own) has seriously injured the watch manufacture, the chief industry of the town; but the fortunate legacy of the Duke of Brunswick enables the government still to spend considerable sums on public improvements, among which a magnificent new theatre has already cost four millions of francs, and is yet unfinished.

Arthur Venner.

OPEN LETTERS FROM NEW YORK.

III.

I THINK I notice in the dramas of the metropolis more of a romantic tendency, and an improvement in morality. The influence on the drama of the stranger within the gates is perhaps not enough attended to. The play is aimed, not only in our own metropolis but in others, largely at this leisurely person, lounging about the hotels, in the practice of spending money on his journey more freely than at home, and without the sense of responsibility to a commu-

nity that knows him to weigh him down. The Pink Dominoes, Forbidden Fruits, and spectacular performances flourish best when he is most in town. But at present, owing to the pressure of the times, he is much less in town than usual. This makes a home constituency more of an object. Managers would like to attract the family, and the family must be delicately handled. The ballet and opera bouffe have languished, and you would have found if you had stayed through the piece that the entanglements in Marriage, which had an extremely