

A Hitherto Unnoticed Image of Francis de Castelnau

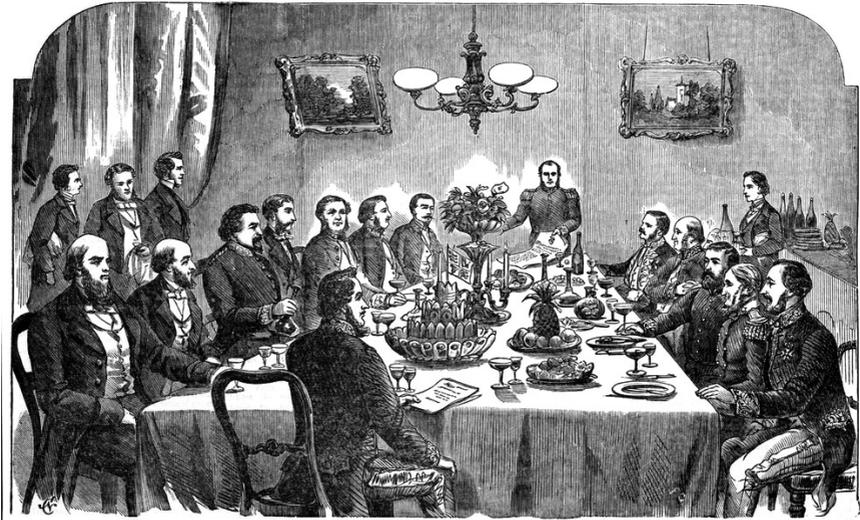
French Consul General in Melbourne 1863–1877

Wallace Kirsop

Up till now accounts of Francis de Castelnau—including the ones I contributed to *French Lives in Australia* in 2015 and to the fourth volume of Charles Stitz's *Australian Book Collectors* in 2016—have used a drawing that appeared in *L'illustration* in 1847 to depict the naturalist-explorer, then recently returned from his expedition to the Amazon. However, n° 100 of *The La Trobe Journal*, published in September 2017, contained a brief article by John Arnold and Jock Murphy on the successful joint purchase in 1984 by the Baillieu Library and the State Library of Victoria of the former Ploos van Amstel collection of nineteenth-century illustrated Australian newspapers. Appropriately one of the images used in the article shows J. W. Ploos van Amstel, Consul for the Netherlands, in a prominent role at a banquet held in July 1863 to mark the departure of A. Truy, France's consular representative in Melbourne between Chabrillan and Castelnau. The latter was present and is depicted in the wood engraving—after a drawing by no less an artist than Nicholas Chevalier—seated at the table with the other consuls in their full-dress uniforms. The whole scene is presented herewith together with an enlargement of Castelnau. I am grateful to the State Library of Victoria for permission to reproduce this material. As usually happens Castelnau's name is misspelt. A report in *The Argus* on 11 July 1863 indicates that the function was held at Scott's Hotel. The following article from *The Leader* on 18 July 1863 gives a more substantial account of the occasion.

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FAREWELL BANQUET TO THE FRENCH CONSUL



BLANCHARD. MICHAELIS. RENTSCH. LEISSIGNOL. GRAHAM. SCHLOSTEIN. TRUY. WERE (chairman). CASTELNEAU. DAMYON. HENTY. COOPER. BECKX.
 PLOOS VAN AMSTEL (vice-chairman).

Farewell Banquet to the French Consul, State Library of Victoria.

FAREWELL BANQUET TO THE FRENCH CONSUL

On Thursday, the 9th of July, the Consular corps gave a farewell dinner to M. A. Truy, Vice-Consul for France, who is shortly to take his departure from Melbourne for Lima. Amongst those present were the Consul-General for France, Count de Castelneau, and his *chancelier*, M. Leissignol; Mr Were, Consul for Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Consul-General for Portugal; Mr Blanchard, Consul for America; Mr Ploos Van Amstel, Consul for the Netherlands; Mr Beckx, Consul for Belgium; James Graham, Consul for Italy; Mr Rentsch, Consul for Switzerland; Mr Cooper, Consul for Portugal; Mr Schlostein, Consul for Hamburg; Mr Damyon, Vice-Consul for Russia; Mr A. Henty, Vice-Consul for Sweden and Norway; and Mr Michaelis, Acting-Consul for Prussia. Mr Were, Consul for Denmark, presided, and the vice-chair was occupied by Mr Ploos Van Amstel, Consul for the Netherlands. After the cloth was removed, Mr Were proposed the "Queen of England," and

“The Foreign Powers represented that evening,” which toasts were drunk with all honors. In proposing the health of his Excellency, the Governor, he observed that the Consuls regretted the forthcoming departure of a Governor who had always been ready to give them his cordial and courteous assistance whenever the interests of the countries they represented required the same. The toast was enthusiastically responded to. He then proposed the health of M. Truy, the guest of the evening. He said that the intercourse between their colleague and themselves, as well in official matters as privately, had always been of the most pleasant description, and they all regretted that they had to part with a brother consul to whom they felt much attached. He sincerely wished M. Truy prosperity in the country to which he was appointed, and that his appointment might lead to that preferment to which he was so fully entitled. The sentiments of respect which all his colleagues fully shared they had embodied in an address, which he said he then had the honor to present to M. Truy.

Mr WERE then read the following address:—

“DEAR SIR,—We have asked for this opportunity to meet you, before your departure from this colony, to express our regret at the termination of our official intercourse. We have to testify, however, to the satisfaction which has always been felt whenever our respective duties have brought us together. We believe it right, in justice to you, to state that you have ever been most courteous in affording us full information and co-operation upon all questions brought under the notice of the Consular Corps, and we are assured that in you his Imperial Majesty has had a faithful and intelligent representative of his interests in the colony of Victoria. We are happy to learn that your removal from this city is likely to lead to your preferment, and your brother consuls in bidding farewell to yourself and Madame Truy, do so with the best wishes for the future happiness and prosperity of yourself and family.”

M. TRUY, in reply, said he was much affected by the kind sympathy and friendly feelings he had met with at the hands of his brother consuls. He deeply felt the honor conferred upon him on this occasion, and expressed his regret at leaving a colony where he had been so kindly received.

Mr PLOOS VAN AMSTEL then rose and said he had much pleasure in proposing “The health of the Consul-General for France, Count de Castelneau,” as it afforded him an opportunity of introducing to his

colleagues a man, who, by the services he had rendered to his country, as well as to the scientific world, had earned great reputation and general esteem. He now bid the Count welcome as a member of the Consular Corps in the colony, and though they all deeply regretted the departure of his intelligent and amiable predecessor, it was gratifying to notice that a Consul-General and a man of the reputation of Count de Castelnau had been appointed to fulfil the duties of a representative of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of France in Victoria, as it showed that the colony was held in high estimation, and that its important predominant position in the southern hemisphere was duly acknowledged by one of the first powers of Europe. He trusted that Count de Castelnau would entertain towards them the same friendly feelings and co-operate with them on the same friendly terms as his predecessor; and he begged to assure him that he would always find the consular body ready to grant him their assistance and co-operation.

Count de CASTELNEAU, in thanking the members of the Consular Corps for the kind way in which they had responded to the toast, expressed his gratification at the hearty reception he had met with, and the kind feelings his brother consuls entertained towards him.

Mr RENTSCH then rose, and after having referred to the service M. Truy had rendered in his capacity as Vice-Consul, not only to his country, but also to his countrymen residing here, proposed “La belle France”, which country was represented by such efficient officers abroad. Several other toasts having followed, the company separated at a late hour.



Francis de Castelnau, State Library of Victoria.