

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine — Volume 55, No. 341, March, 1844 eBook

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine — Volume 55, No. 341, March, 1844

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine — Volume 55, No. 341, March, 1844 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	10
Page 1.....	11
Page 2.....	12
Page 3.....	13
Page 4.....	14
Page 5.....	16
Page 6.....	17
Page 7.....	18
Page 8.....	19
Page 9.....	20
Page 10.....	21
Page 11.....	22
Page 12.....	23
Page 13.....	24
Page 14.....	25
Page 15.....	26
Page 16.....	27
Page 17.....	29
Page 18.....	30
Page 19.....	31
Page 20.....	32
Page 21.....	33
Page 22.....	34

Page 23.....	35
Page 24.....	36
Page 25.....	37
Page 26.....	38
Page 27.....	39
Page 28.....	40
Page 29.....	41
Page 30.....	43
Page 31.....	44
Page 32.....	45
Page 33.....	47
Page 34.....	48
Page 35.....	49
Page 36.....	50
Page 37.....	52
Page 38.....	53
Page 39.....	54
Page 40.....	55
Page 41.....	56
Page 42.....	58
Page 43.....	59
Page 44.....	60
Page 45.....	61
Page 46.....	62
Page 47.....	63
Page 48.....	64

Page 49.....	66
Page 50.....	67
Page 51.....	68
Page 52.....	69
Page 53.....	71
Page 54.....	73
Page 55.....	75
Page 56.....	76
Page 57.....	77
Page 58.....	78
Page 59.....	79
Page 60.....	80
Page 61.....	81
Page 62.....	82
Page 63.....	84
Page 64.....	86
Page 65.....	88
Page 66.....	90
Page 67.....	91
Page 68.....	93
Page 69.....	94
Page 70.....	95
Page 71.....	96
Page 72.....	97
Page 73.....	98
Page 74.....	99

Page 75.....	100
Page 76.....	101
Page 77.....	102
Page 78.....	103
Page 79.....	104
Page 80.....	105
Page 81.....	106
Page 82.....	107
Page 83.....	108
Page 84.....	109
Page 85.....	110
Page 86.....	111
Page 87.....	112
Page 88.....	113
Page 89.....	114
Page 90.....	115
Page 91.....	116
Page 92.....	118
Page 93.....	120
Page 94.....	122
Page 95.....	124
Page 96.....	126
Page 97.....	128
Page 98.....	129
Page 99.....	130
Page 100.....	132

Page 101.....	134
Page 102.....	136
Page 103.....	138
Page 104.....	140
Page 105.....	142
Page 106.....	144
Page 107.....	146
Page 108.....	148
Page 109.....	149
Page 110.....	150
Page 111.....	151
Page 112.....	153
Page 113.....	155
Page 114.....	157
Page 115.....	159
Page 116.....	160
Page 117.....	161
Page 118.....	162
Page 119.....	164
Page 120.....	166
Page 121.....	168
Page 122.....	170
Page 123.....	172
Page 124.....	173
Page 125.....	174
Page 126.....	175

Page 127.....	176
Page 128.....	177
Page 129.....	178
Page 130.....	180
Page 131.....	181
Page 132.....	183
Page 133.....	184
Page 134.....	185
Page 135.....	186
Page 136.....	187
Page 137.....	188
Page 138.....	189
Page 139.....	190
Page 140.....	191
Page 141.....	192
Page 142.....	193
Page 143.....	195
Page 144.....	196
Page 145.....	197
Page 146.....	198
Page 147.....	199
Page 148.....	200
Page 149.....	201
Page 150.....	203
Page 151.....	204
Page 152.....	205

Page 153.....	207
Page 154.....	209
Page 155.....	211
Page 156.....	214
Page 157.....	216
Page 158.....	217
Page 159.....	218
Page 160.....	219
Page 161.....	220
Page 162.....	221
Page 163.....	222
Page 164.....	223
Page 165.....	224
Page 166.....	225
Page 167.....	226
Page 168.....	227
Page 169.....	228
Page 170.....	229
Page 171.....	230
Page 172.....	231
Page 173.....	232
Page 174.....	234
Page 175.....	235
Page 176.....	236
Page 177.....	237
Page 178.....	238

Page 179.....	239
-------------------------------	---------------------

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
ETHIOPIA[1]		1
A WORD OR TWO OF THE OPERA- TIVE CLASSES.		32
THE PIRATES OF SEGNA.		42
PART I.		42
CHAPTER I.—THE STUDIO.		42
CHAPTER II.		48
CHAPTER III.		58
CHAPTER IV.		65
COLONEL DAVIDSON'S TRAVELS IN INDIA.[5]		71
BELFRONT CASTLE.		90
DUMAS IN HIS CURRICLE.		108
MARSTON; OR, THE MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN.		129
PART IX.		129
A ROMAN IDYL.		153
GOETHE		154
HYMN OF A HERMIT.		155
THE LUCKLESS LOVER		156
FREE TRADE AND PROTECTION		157

Page 1

ETHIOPIA[1]

[1] *The Highlands of Ethiopia*. by Major W. Cornwallis Harris, H.E.
I.C. Engineers. 3 vols.

From the various circumstances of our day, the impression is powerfully made upon intelligent men in Europe, that some extraordinary change is about to take place in the general condition of mankind. A new ardour of human intercourse seems to be spreading through all nations. Europe has laid aside her perpetual wars, and seems to be assuming a *habit* of peace. Even France, hitherto the most belligerent of European nations, is evidently abandoning the passion for conquest, and beginning to exert her fine powers in the cultivation of commerce. All the nations of Europe are either following her example, or sending out colonies of greater or less magnitude, to fill the wild portions of the world. Regions hitherto utterly neglected, and even scarcely known, are becoming objects of enlightened regard; and mankind, in every quarter, is approaching, with greater or less speed, to that combined interest and mutual intercourse, which are the first steps to the true possession of the globe.

But, we say it with the gratification of Englishmen, proud of their country's fame, and still prouder of its principles—that the lead in this noblest of all human victories, has been clearly taken by England. It is she who pre-eminently stimulates the voyage, and plants the colony, and establishes the commerce, and civilizes the people. And all this has been done in a manner so little due to popular caprice or national ambition, to the mere will of a sovereign, or the popular thirst of possession, that it invests the whole process with a sense of unequalled security. Resembling the work of nature in the simplicity of its growth, it will probably also resemble the work of nature in the permanence of its existence. It is not an exotic, fixed in an unsuitable soil by capricious planting; but a seed self-sown, nurtured by the common air and dews, assimilated to the climate, and striking its roots deep in the ground which it has thus, by its own instincts, chosen. The necessities of British commerce, the urgency of English protection, and the overflow of British population, have been the great acting causes of our national efforts; and as those are causes which regulate themselves, their results are as regular and unshaken, as they are natural and extensive. But England has also had a higher motive. She has unquestionably mingled a spirit of benevolence largely with her general exertions. She has laboured to communicate freedom, law, a feeling of property, and a consciousness of the moral debt due by man to the Great Disposer of all, wherever she has had the power in her hands. No people have ever been the worse for her, and all have been the better, in proportion to their following her example. Wherever she goes, oppression decays, the safety of person and property begins to be felt, the sword is sheathed, the pen and the ploughshare commence alike to reclaim the mental and the physical soil, and civilization comes, like the dawn, however slowly advancing, to prepare the heart of the barbarian for the burst of light, in the rising of Christianity upon his eyes.

Page 2

The formation of a new route between India and Europe by the Red Sea—a route, though well known to the ancient world, yet wholly incapable of adoption by any but an Arab horseman, from the perpetual tumults of the country—compelled England to look for a resting-place and depot for her steam-ships at the mouth of the Red Sea. Aden, a desolated port, was the spot fixed on; and the steam-vessels touching there were enabled to prepare themselves for the continuance of their voyage. We shall subsequently see how strikingly British protection has changed the desolateness of this corner of the Arab wilderness, how extensively it has become a place of commerce, and how effectually it will yet furnish the means of increasing our knowledge of the interior of the great Arabian peninsula.

It is remarkable that Africa, one of the largest and most fertile portions of the globe, remains one of the least known. Furnishing materials of commerce which have been objects of universal desire since the deluge—gold, gems, ivory, fragrant gums, and spices—it has still remained almost untraversed by the European foot, except along its coast. It has been circumnavigated by the ships of every European nation, its slave-trade has divided its profits and its pollutions among the chief nations of the eastern and western worlds; and yet, to this hour, there are regions of Africa, probably amounting to half its bulk, and possessing kingdoms of the size of France and Spain, of which Europe has no more heard than of the kingdoms of the planet Jupiter. The extent of Africa is enormous:—5000 miles in length, 4600 in breadth, it forms nearly a square of 13,430,000 square miles! the chief part solid ground; for we know of no Mediterranean to break its continuity—no mighty reservoir for the waters of its hills—and scarcely more than the Niger and the Nile for the means of penetrating any large portion of this huge continent.

The population naturally divides itself into two portions, connected with the character of its surface—the countries to the north and the south of the mountains of Kong and the Jebel-al-Komr. To the north of this line of demarcation, are the kingdoms of the foreign conquerors, who have driven the original natives to the mountains, or have subjected them as slaves. This is the Mahometan land. To the south of this line dwells the Negro, in a region a large portion of which is too fiery for European life. This is Central Africa; distinguished from all the earth by the unspeakable mixture of squalidness and magnificence, simplicity of life yet fury of passion, savage ignorance of its religious notions yet fearful worship of evil powers, its homage to magic, and desperate belief in spells, incantations and the *fetish*. The configuration of the country, so far as it can be conjectured, assists this primeval barbarism. Divided by natural barriers of hill, chasm, or river, into isolated states, they act under a general impulse

Page 3

of hostility and disunion. If they make peace, it is only for purposes of plunder; and, if they plunder, it is only to make slaves. The very fertility of the soil, at once rendering them indolent and luxurious, excites their passions, and the land is a scene alike of profligacy and profusion. To the south of this vast region lies a third—the land of the Caffre, occupying the eastern coast, and, with the Betjouana and the Hottentot, forming the population of the most promising portion of the continent. But here another and more enterprising race have fixed themselves; and the great English colony of the Cape, with its dependent settlements, has begun the first real conquest of African barbarism. Whether Aden may not act on the opposite coasts of the Red Sea, and Abyssinia become once more a Christian land; or whether even some impulse may not divinely come from Africa itself, are questions belonging to the future. But there can scarcely be a doubt, that the existence of a great English viceroyalty in the most prominent position of South Africa, the advantages of its government, the intelligence of its people, their advancement in the arts essential to comfort, and the interest of their protection, their industry, and their example, must, year by year, operate in awaking even the negro to a feeling of his own powers, of the enjoyment of his natural faculties, and of that rivalry which stimulates the skill of man to reach perfection.

The name of Africa, which, in the Punic tongue, signifies “ears of corn,” was originally applied only to the northern portion, lying between the Great Desert and the shore, and now held by the pashalics of Tunis and Tripoli. They were then the granary of Rome. The name Lybia was derived from the Hebrew *Leb*, (heat,) and was sometimes partially extended to the continent, but was geographically limited to the provinces between the Great Syrtis and Egypt. The name Ethiopia is evidently Greek, (burning, or black, visage.)

There is strong reason to believe that the Portuguese boast of the sixteenth century—the circumnavigation of Africa—was anticipated by the Phoenician sailors two thousand years and more. We have the testimony of Herodotus, that Necho, king of Egypt, having failed in an attempt to connect the Nile with the Red Sea by a canal, determine to try whether another route might not be within his reach, and sent Phoenician vessels from the Red Sea, with orders to sail round Africa, and return by the Mediterranean. It is not improbable that, from being unacquainted with the depth to which it penetrates the south, he had expected the voyage to be a brief one. It seems evident that the navigators themselves did not conceive that it could extend beyond the equator, from their surprise at seeing the sun rise on their *right hand*. The narrative tells us—“The Phoenicians, taking their course from the Red Sea, entered into the Southern Ocean on the approach of autumn; they

Page 4

landed in Lybia, planted corn, and remained till the harvest. They then sailed again. After having thus spent two years, they passed the Columns of Hercules in the third, and returned to Egypt." Herodotus doubted their story—"Their relation," says the honest old Greek, "may obtain belief from others, but to me it seems incredible; for they affirmed, that, having sailed round Africa, they *had the sun on their right hand*. Thus was Africa for the first time known."

Thus the very circumstance which the old historian regarded as throwing doubt on the discovery, is now one of the strongest corroborations of its truth.[2] There appear to have been several attempts to sail along the west coast, by ancient expeditions; but to the Portuguese is due the modern honour of having first sailed round the Cape. From 1412, the Portuguese, under a race of adventurous princes, had extended their discoveries; but it occupied them sixty years to reach the Line, and nearly thirty years more to reach the Cape, which they first called Cabo Tormentoso, (Stormy Cape.) But the king gave it the more lucky, though the less poetical, title which it now bears.

[2] Reunell, p. 682.

The triumph of Columbus, in his discovery of the New World in 1493, raised the emulation of the Portuguese, then regarded as the first navigators in the world; yet it was not until four years after, that their expedition was sent, to equalize the stupendous accession to the Spanish domains, by the possession of the East. In July 1497, Gama sailed, reached Calicut May 2, 1498, and returned to Portugal, covered with well-earned renown, after a voyage of upwards of two years.

Having given this brief outline of the divisions and character of the mighty continent, which seemed important to the better understanding of the immediate subject, we revert to the intelligent and animated volumes of Captain (now Major) Harris.

A letter from the Bombay government, 29th April 1841, gave him this distinguished credential:—

"*Sir*—I am directed to inform you that the Honourable the Governor in Council, having formed a very high estimate of your talents and acquirements, and of the spirit of enterprise and decision, united with prudence and discretion, exhibited in your recently published travels through the territories of the Maselakatze to the Tropic of Capricorn, has been pleased to select you to conduct the mission which the British Government has resolved to send to Sahela Selasse, the king of Shoa, in Southern Abyssinia, whose capital, Ankober, is supposed to be about four hundred miles inland from the port of Tajura, on the African coast."

[Then followed the mention of the vessels appointed to carry the mission.]

(Signed) "J.P. *Willoughby*,"

"Secretary to Government."

The persons comprising the mission were Major W.C. Harris, Bombay Engineers, Captain Douglas Graham, Bombay army, principal assistant, with others, naturalists, draftsmen, &c., and an escort of two sergeants and fifteen rank and file, volunteers from H.M. 6th foot and the Bombay Artillery.

Page 5

On the afternoon of a sultry day in April, Major Harris, with his gallant and scientific associates, embarked on board the East India Company's steam ship Auckland, in the harbour of Bombay, on their voyage to the kingdom of Shoa in Southern Abyssinia, in the year 1841. The steam frigate pursued her way prosperously through the waters, and on the ninth day was within sight of Cape Aden, after a voyage of 1680 miles. The Cape, named by the natives, Jebel Shemshan, rises nearly 1800 feet above the ocean, is frequently capped with clouds, a wild and fissured mass of rock, and evidently intended by nature for one of those great beacons which announce the approach to an inland sea. On rounding the Cape, the British eye was delighted with the sight of the Red Sea squadron, riding at anchor within the noble bay. The arrival of the frigate also caused a sensation on the shore; and Major Harris happily describes the feelings with which a new arrival is hailed by the British garrison on that dreary spot, their only excitement being the periodical visits of the packets between Suez and Bombay. In the dead of the night a blue light shoots up in the offing. It is answered by the illumination of the block ship, then the thunder of her guns is heard, then, as she nears the shore, the flapping of her paddles is heard through the silence, then the spectral lantern appears at the mast-head, and then she rushes to her anchorage, leaving in her wake a long phosphoric train.

Wherever England drops an anchor a new scene of existence has begun. At Aden, the supply of coals for the steam-ships has introduced a new trade; gangs of brawny Seedies, negroes from the Zanzibar coast, but fortunately enfranchised, make a livelihood by transferring the coal from the depots on shore to the steamers. Though the most unmusical race in the world, they can do nothing without music, but it is music of their own—a tambourine beaten with the thigh-bone of a calf; but their giant frames go through prodigious labour, carry immense sacks, and drink prodigious draughts to wash the coal-dust down. Such is the furious excitement with which they rush into this repulsive operation, that Major Harris thinks that for every hundred tons of coal thus embarked, at least one life is sacrificed; those strong savages, at once inflamed by drink, and overcome with toil, throwing themselves down on the dust or the sand, to rise no more. This shows the advantage of English philosophy: our coal-heavers in the Thames toil as much, are nearly as naked, nearly as black, and probably drink more; but we never hear of their dying in a fit of rapture in the embrace of a coal-sack. When the day is done, drunk or sober, washed or unwashed, they go home to their wives, sleep untroubled by the cares of kings, and return to fresh dust, drink, and dirt, next morning.

Page 6

The coast of Arabia has no claims to the picturesque: all its charms, like those of the oyster, lie within the roughest of possible shells. Its first aspect resembles heaps of the cinders of a glass-house—a building whose heat seems to be fully realized by the temperature of this fearful place. England has a resident there, Captain Haynes, named as political agent. That any human being, who could exist in any other place, would remain in Aden, is one of the wonders of human nature. An officer, of course, must go wherever he is sent; but such is the innate love for a post, that if this gallant and intelligent person were roasted to death, as might happen in one of the coolest days of the Ethiopian summer, there would be a thousand applications before a month was over, to the Foreign Office, for the honour of being carbonaded on the rocks of Aden.

The promontory has all the marks of volcanic eruption, and is actually recorded, by an Arab historian of the tenth century, to have been thrown up about that period. "Its sound, like the rumbling of thunder, might then be heard many miles, and from its entrails vomited forth red-hot stones, with a flood of liquid fire." The crater of the extinguished volcano is still visible, though shattered and powdered down by the tread under which Alps and Appennines themselves crumble away—that of Time. The only point on which we are sceptical is the late origin of the promontory. Nothing beyond a sandhill or a heap of ashes has been produced on the face of nature since the memory of man. That a rock, or rather a mountain chain, with a peak 1800 feet high, should have been produced at any time within the last four thousand years, altogether tasks our credulity. The powers of nature are now otherwise employed than in rough-hewing the surface of the globe. She has been long since, like the sculptor, employed in polishing and finishing—the features were hewn out long ago. Her master-hand has ever since been employed in smoothing them.

Aden's reputation for barrenness is an old one—"Aden," says Ben Batuta of Tangiers, "is situate upon the sea-shore; a large city without either seed, water, or tree." This was written five hundred years ago; yet the ruins of fortifications and watch-towers along the rocks, show that even this human oven was the object of cupidity in earlier times; and the British guns, bristling among the precipices, show that the desire is undecayed even in our philosophic age.

Yet the Arab imagination has created its wonders even in this repulsive scene; and the generation of monkeys which tenant the higher portion of the rocks, are declared by Arab tradition to be the remnant of the once powerful tribe of Ad, changed into apes by the displeasure of Heaven, when "the King of the World," Sheddad, renowned in eastern story, presumptuously dared to form a garden which should rival Paradise. The prophet Hud remonstrated; but his remonstrances went for nothing, and the indignant

Page 7

monarch and his courtiers suddenly found their visages simious, their tongues chattering, and their lower portions furnished with tails—a species of transformation, which, so far as regards visage and tongue, is supposed to be not unfrequent among courtiers to this day. But this showy tradition goes further still. The Bostan al Irem (Garden of Paradise) is believed still to exist in the deserts of Aden; though geographers differ on its position. It still retains its domes and bowers—both of indescribable beauty; its crystal fountains, and its walks strewn with pearls for sand. It is true, that no living man can absolutely aver that he has seen this place of wonders; but that is a mere result of our very wicked age. This has not been always the case; for Abdallah Ibn Aboo Kelaba passed a night in its palace in the reign of Moowiyah, the prince of the Faithful. Lucky the man who shall next find it, but unlucky the world when he does; for then the day of the general conflagration will be at hand. In the mean time, it remains, like the top of Mount Meru, covered with clouds, or, like the inside of a Chinese puzzle, a work of unrivaled art, conceivable but intangible by man.

In this pleasant mingling of fact, visible to his shrewd eye, and fiction drawn from ancient fancy, Major Harris leads us on. But Aden is not yet exhausted of wonders—an island in its bay, Seerah, (the fortified black isle,) is pronounced to have been the refuge of Cain on the murder of Abel; and its volcanic and barren chaos is no unequal competitor for the honour with the rocks of the Caucasus.

But England, which changes every thing, is changing all this. Within the next generation, the railway will run down the romances of Nutrib; a cotton manufactory will send up its smokes to blot out the celestial blue by day, and shoot forth its sullen illumination by night, over the anointed soil; the minstrel will turn policeman, and the sheik be a justice of peace; political economy will have its itinerant lecturers, enlightening the Bedouins on the principles of rent and taxes; the city will have a lord mayor and corporation of the deepest black; the volcano will be planted with villas; turnpikes will measure out the sands; a hotel will flourish on the summit of Jebel Shemshan; and Aden will differ from Liverpool in nothing but being two thousand miles further from the smoke and multitudes of London.

The Arab is still the prominent person among the native population of this territory. Major Harris describes him well. The bronzed and sunburnt visage, surrounded by long matted locks of raven hair; the slender but wiry and active frame, and the energetic gait and manner, proclaimed the untamable descendant of Ishmael. He nimbly mounts the crupper of his now unladen dromedary, and at a trot moves down the bazar. A checked kerchief round his brows, and a kilt of dark blue calico round his frame, comprise his slender costume. His arms have been deposited outside the Turkish wall;

Page 8

and as he looks back, his meagre, ferocious aspect, flanked by that tangled web of hair, stamps him the roving tenant of the desert. It is curious to find in this remote country a custom similar to that of the fiery cross, which in old times summoned the Celtic tribes to arms. On the alarm of invasion, a branch, torn by the priest from the *nebek*, (a tree bearing a fruit like the Siberian crab,) is lighted in the fire, the flame is then quenched in the blood of a newly slaughtered ram. It is then sent forth with a messenger to the nearest clan. Thus, great numbers are assembled with remarkable promptitude. In the invasion under Ibrahim Pasha, sixteen thousand of these wild warriors were assembled from one tribe. They crept into the Egyptian camp by night, and, using only their daggers, made such formidable slaughter, that the Pasha was glad to escape by a precipitate retreat.

The Jews form an important part of the population, as artizans and manufacturers. Feeling the natural veneration for the Chosen People in all their misfortunes, and convinced that the time will come when those misfortunes will be obliterated, it is highly gratifying to find, that even in this place of their ancient sufferings, they are beginning to feel the benefit of British protection. Hitherto, through their indefatigable industry, having acquired opulence in Arabia as elsewhere, they were afraid either to display or to enjoy it; but now, under the protection of the British flag, they not merely enjoy their wealth, but they publicly practise the rights of their religion. Stone slabs with Hebrew inscriptions mark the place of their dead. They have schools for the education of their children; and their men and women, arrayed in their holiday apparel, sit fearlessly in the synagogue, and listen to the reading of the law and the prophets, as of old. It is a great source of gratification to the philanthropist to find, that wherever England extends her power, industry, commerce, and peace are the natural result. Aden, barren as the soil is, is evidently approaching to a prosperity which it never possessed even in its most flourishing days. Emigrants from Yemen and from both shores of the Red Sea, are daily crowding within the walls, through the security which they offer against native oppression. In the short space of three years, the population has risen to twenty thousand souls. Substantial dwellings are rising up in every quarter, and at all the adjacent ports hundreds of native merchants are only waiting the erection of permanent fortifications, in token of our intending to remain, to flock under the guns with their families and wealth. The opinion of this intelligent writer is, that Aden, as a free port, whilst she pours wealth into a now impoverished land, must ere long become the queen of the adjacent seas, and rank amongst the most useful dependencies of the British crown.

Page 9

The mission having remained some time at Aden, to purchase horses and stores, sailed on the 15th May; and, on losing sight of Aden, the members of the mission characteristically took the "Pilgrims' vow" not to shave until their return. On the 17th they opened the town of Tajura, on the verge of a broad expanse of blue water, over which a gossamerlike fleet of fishing catamarans already plied their craft. Their pilot, an old Arab, was a man of fun, and the specimens of his tongue are good. In some reference to the anchorage, he said, "Now if we only had two-fathom Ali here, you would not have all these difficulties. When they want to lay out an anchor, they have nothing to do but to hand it over to Ali, and he walks away with it into six or eight feet without any ado. I went once upon a time in the dark to grope for a berth on board of his buggalow, and, stumbling over some one's toes, enquired to whom they belonged. 'To Ali,' was the reply. 'And whose knees are these?' said I, after walking half across the deck. 'Ali's.' 'And this head in the scuppers, pray whose is it?' 'Ali's; what do you want with it?' 'Ali again!' I exclaimed; 'then I must even look for stowage elsewhere.'"

The sight of a shark in the harbour let loose the old jester again. "A friend of mine," said he, "pilot of a vessel almost as fast a sailer as my own, which is acknowledged to be the best in these seas, was bound to Mocha with camels on board. When off the high table-land betwixt the Bay of Tajura and the Red Sea, one of the beasts dying, was hove overboard. Up came a shark ten times the size of that fellow there, and swallowed the camel, leaving only his hinder legs sticking out of his jaws; but before he had time to think where he was to find stowage for it, up came another tremendous fellow and bolted the shark, camel, legs, and all."

In return for this anecdote, the major gave him the story of the two Kilkenny cats in the saw-pit, which fought, until nothing remained of either but the tail and a bit of the flue. The old pilot doubted. "How can that be?" said he, revolving the business seriously in his mind. "As for the story I have told you, it is as true as the Koran."

After a short stay and presentation to the Sultan of Tajura, a slave-port, with a miserable old man for its master, the mission once more set forth for Shoa; yet even here we glean a specimen of Arab speech. "Trees attain not to their growth in a single day," said an Arab, when remonstrating with the sultan on his inordinate love of lucre. "Take the tree as your text, and learn that property is to be gathered only by slow degrees." "True," said the old miser; "but, sheik, you must have lost sight of the fact, that my leaves are already withered, and that, if I would be rich, I have not a moment to lose."

Page 10

The packing up for the journey was a new source of trouble; every camel-driver found fault with his load. However, at length every article was stowed, except a hand-organ and a few stand of arms. At length, a great hulking savage offered to take the arms, provided they were cut in two to suit the back of his animals. We have then another instance of Arab drollery. "You are a tall man," said the old pilot; "suppose we shorten you by the legs." "No, no," said the barbarian, "I am flesh and blood, and shall be spoiled." "So will the contents of these cases, you offspring of an ass," said the old man, "if you divide them."

The progress to the interior from the port of Tajura, led them over immense ranges of basaltic cliffs, where the heat of the sun was felt with an intensity scarcely conceivable by European feelings. In this land of fire, the road skirting the base of a barren range covered with heaps of lava blocks, and its foot marked by piles of stones, the memorials of deeds of blood, the lofty conical peak of Jebel Seearo rose in sight, and not long afterwards the far-famed Lake Assad, surrounded by its dancing mirage, was seen sparkling at its base.

The first glimpse of this phenomenon, "though curious, was far from pleasing"—"an elliptical basin, seven miles in its transverse axis, filled half with smooth water of the deepest cerulean hue, and half with a sheet of glittering snow-white salt, girded on three sides by huge hot-looking mountains, that dip their basins into its very bowl, and on the fourth by crude, half-formed rocks of lava, broken and divided by chasms. No sound broke on the ear, not a ripple played on the water. The molten surface of the lake lay like burnished steel, the fierce sky was without a cloud, and the angry sun, like a ball of metal at a white heat, rode in full blaze."

It is scarcely wonderful, that among a people devoted to superstition, those terrible passes and sultry hollows should be marked as the haunts of the powers of evil. Adyli, a deep mysterious cavern at the extremity of one of those melancholy plains, is believed to be the especial abode of gins and *afreets*, whose voices are heard in the night, and who carry off the traveller to devour him without remorse. A late instance was mentioned of a man who was compelled by the weariness of his camel to fall behind the caravan, and who left no remnants behind him but his spear and shield. Major Harris well describes this spot as one which, from its desolate position, might be believed to be the last stage of the habitable world. "A close mephitic stench, impeding respiration, arose from the saline exhalations of the stagnant lake. A frightful glare from the white salt and limestone hillocks threatened extinction to the vision, and a sickening heaviness in the loaded atmosphere was enhanced rather than alleviated by the fiery breath of the north-westerly wind, which blew without interruption during the day. The air was inflamed, the sky

Page 11

sparkled, and columns of burning sand, which at quick intervals towered high into the atmosphere, became so illumined as to appear like tall pillars of fire. Crowds of horses, mules, and camels, tormented to madness by the poisonous gad-fly, flocked to share the only bush; and, disputing with their heels the slender shelter it afforded, compelled several of the party to seek refuge in caves formed below by fallen masses of volcanic rock, heated to the temperature of a potter's kiln, and fairly baking up the marrow in the bones." The heat in this place, with the thermometer under the shade of cloaks and umbrellas, was at 126 deg.. It is only surprising how any of the party survived. Certainly if Abyssinia is to be approached only by this road, the prospect of an intercourse with it from the east, appears among the most improbable things of this world.

One of the advantages of continental travel has been long since said to be, its teaching us how many comfortable things we enjoy at home; and it appears that no Englishman can comprehend the value of that despised fluid, fresh water, until he has left the precincts of his own fortunate land: but it is in Africa, and peculiarly on this Abyssinian high-road, that the value of a draught of spring water is to be especially estimated. "Since leaving the shores of India," says Major Harris, "the party had gradually been in training towards a disregard of dirty water. On board a ship of any description, the fluid is seldom very clear or very plentiful. At Cape Aden, there was little perceptible difference between the sea water and the land water. At Tajura, the beverage obtainable was far from being improved in quality by the taint of the new skins in which it was transferred from the only well; and now, in the very heart of the scorching Tehama, where a copious draught of pure water seemed absolutely indispensable every five minutes, the mixture was the very acme of abomination. Fresh hides stript from the he-goat, besmeared inside as well as out with old tallow and strong bark tan, filled from an impure well at Sagallo, tossed and tumbled during two days and nights under a distilling heat," formed a drink which we should conclude to be little short of poison. However, the human throat learns to accommodate itself to every thing in time, and the time came when even this abomination was longed for.

But the worst was not yet come. It was midnight when the party commenced the steep ascent of the south-eastern boundary of the lake, a ridge of volcanic rocks. "The north-east wind had scarcely diminished its parching fierceness, and in hot suffocating gusts swept over the glittering expanse of water and salt, where the moon shone brightly; each deadly puff succeeded by the stillness that foretells a tropical hurricane. The prospect around was wild—beetling, basaltic cones, and jagged slabs of shattered lava."

Page 12

The path itself was formidable, winding along the crest of the ridge over sheets of broken lava, with scarcely more than sufficient width to admit of the progress in single file. "The horrors of this dismal night set all description at defiance." The hope of water, though at the distance of sixteen miles, excited them for a while; but at length even this excitement failed. And "owing to the heat, fasting, and privation, the limbs of the weaker refused the task, and after the first two miles they dropped fast into the rear. Under the fiery blast of the midnight sirocco the cry for water, uttered feebly and with difficulty by numbers of parched throats, now became incessant; and the supply for the whole party falling short of a gallon and a half, it was not long to be answered. A tiny sip of diluted vinegar for a moment assuaged the burning thirst which raged in the vitals; but its effects were transient, and, after struggling a few steps, they sank again, declaring their days to be numbered, and their resolution to rise up no more. Dogs incontinently expired upon the road, horses and mules that once lay down were abandoned to their fate; while the lion-hearted soldier, who had braved death at the cannon's mouth, subdued and unmanned by thirst, lay gasping by the wayside, hailing approaching dissolution with delight, as the termination of tortures which were no longer to be endured. As another day dawned, and the "round red sun" again rose over the lake of salt, the courage even of those who had borne up against this fiery trial began to flag: "a dimness came before the drowsy eyes, giddiness seized the brain, and the hope held out by the guides, of water in advance, seemed like the delusion of a dream."

In this crisis, at which our chief wonder is, that Major Harris and his explorers were ever heard of again, or had left any memorials of themselves but their bones, a wild Bedouin was seen, "like a delivering angel," hurrying forward with a large skin, filled with muddy water. This well-timed supply was divided among the fainting people: a quantity was poured over the face and down the throat of each; and at a late hour, "ghastly, haggard, and exhausted, like men who had escaped from the jaws of death, the whole had contrived to straggle into a camp, which, but for the foresight and firmness of the son of Ali Abi, (who had sent the water,) few individuals would have reached alive."

After traversing this terrible desert of fifty miles—a barrier to all general and commercial intercourse, which we should think impassable, however it might be overcome by a small party of bold and hardy men, well led, furnished with every supply, water excepted, which could sustain them through its horrors, (and which yet, through that single want, had nearly perished)—they pursued a long and difficult march through a dreary country, scantily peopled, dotted with robber clans, and exhibiting impediments of all kinds in the knavery and villany of the native authorities; until they reached the borders of Abyssinia. We had by no means been aware that volcanoes had made so large a share of this portion of Africa. The whole border seems to be volcanic, and to retain in its blasted and broken surface, evidence of its having been, in remote ages, perhaps in the earliest, the scene of most intense and general volcanic action.

Page 13

In Major Harris's animated description—"singular and interesting indeed is the wild scenery in the vicinity of the treacherous oasis of Sultelli. A field of extinct volcanic cones, vomited out of the entrails of the earth, and each encircled by a black belt of vitrified lava, environs it on three sides; and of these Mount Abida, three thousand feet in height, whose cup, enveloped in clouds, stretches some two and a half miles in *diameter*, would seem to be the parent. Beyond, the still loftier crater of Aiulloo, the ancient landmark of the now-decayed empire of Ethiopia, is visible in dim perspective; and, looming hazily in the extreme distance, is the great blue Abyssinian range."

In any part of Africa a river of tolerable magnitude is an object of the most anxious interest; and the approach to the Hawash, the boundary river of the kingdom of Shoa, was looked to with eager speculation. At length the height was reached from which was obtained "an exhilarating prospect over the dark, lone valley of the long looked-for Hawash. The course of the river was marked by a dense belt of trees and verdure, stretching towards the base of the great mountain range, of which the cloud-capped cone, which frowns over the capital of Shoa, forms the most conspicuous feature." The mission now began to exalt:—"Though still far distant, the ultimate destination of the embassy appeared almost to have been gained, and none had an idea of the length of time that must elapse before his foot should press the soil of Ankober." A day of intense heat was as usual followed by a heavy fall of rain, which, owing to the unaccommodating arrangement of striking the tents at sunset, thoroughly drenched the whole party.

The new difficulty was, how to cross the Hawash, "second of the rivers of Abyssinia, and rising in the very heart of Ethipoia, at an elevation of 8000 feet above the sea. It is fed by niggardly tributaries from the high bulwarks of Shoa and Efat, and flows, like a great artery, through the arid plains of the Adaiel, green and wooded throughout its long course, and finally absorbed in the lagoons of Aussa. The canopy of fleecy clouds, which, as mid-day dawned, hung thick and heavy over the lofty blue peaks beyond, gave sad presage of the deluge that was pouring between its verdant banks from the higher regions of the source."

The party now descended to enjoy the real luxuries of shade and water, in a region where they had hitherto seen nothing but salt and lava. At first thinly wooded, they found the soil covered with tall rank grass, from which, however, the perpetual incursions of the robber tribes scare the flocks and herds. Deeper down, they entered among gum-bearing acacias and fruit-trees. "Guinea-fowl rose before them, groves of tamarisk, ringing to the voice of the bell-bird, flanked every open glade, and the fractured branches of the noble trees gave proof of the presence of the most ponderous of the mammalia."

Page 14

Forcing their way, with some difficulty, through this jungle, they obtained their first near view of the river, a “deep volume of turbid water,” covered with drift wood, and rolling, at the rate of three miles an hour, between clayey walls twenty-five feet in height. The breadth fell short of sixty yards, but the flood was not yet at its maximum. Willows, drooping over the stream, were festooned with recent drift, hanging many feet above the level of the banks; and it was evident that the waters had lately been out, to the overflowing of the country for many miles. The river, now upwards of 2200 feet above the level of the ocean forms, in this quarter, the nominal boundary of the kingdom of Shoa.

They were now on “the spot which exhibited the forest life of Africa.” In a lake adjoining the river, the hippopotamus “rolled his unwieldy carcass to the surface, and floating crocodiles, protruding his snout to blow a snort that might be heard at the distance of a mile.” An unfortunate donkey, which had been partly drowned and partly strangled, was thrown out of the camp. No sooner had night fallen, than this prey roused the appetites of the whole forest, the howl and growl of wild beasts was heard at their banquet on the donkey throughout the night. Lightning played over the woods; the “violent snapping of the branches proclaimed the nocturnal movements of the elephant and hippopotamus;” the loud roar and startling snort were constantly heard; and by morning every vestige of the dead animal, even to the skull, had disappeared.

Africa, in all its provinces, is the scene of the boldest field sports in the world—India and its tigers, perhaps, excepted. But Africa excels even India in the variety and multitude of its mighty savages—lions, elephants, panthers, and hippopotami; the sands, the forests, the jungles, the rivers, the marshes, every thing and place abounds with brute life, on the largest, the boldest, and the fiercest scale. Africa, with the human race on the lowest grade, has the brute on the highest, and its true name is the great kingdom of savage nature.

A two-ounce ball had been lodged in the forehead of hippopotamus on the evening of reaching the Hawash; but the animal having dived, the natives, in some jealousy of the skill of the British rifle, declared that it had not been mortally struck. The next dawn, however, decided the question, for the “freckled pink sides of a dead hippopotamus were to be seen high above the surface, as the distended carcass floated like a monstrous buoy at anchor.” Hawsers were carried out with all diligence, and the “colossus” was towed ashore amidst the acclamations of the whole caravan. Then came a native scene. A tribe of savages, who had waited, squatting, to see the arrival of the monster, threw aside their bows and arrows, and, stripping its thick hide from the ribs, attacked it with the vigour of an African horde. Donkeys and women were laden with incredible despatch, and, “staggering under huge flaps of meat,” the savages went their way.

Page 15

The soil now became swampy, yet only the more filled with animal existence. *Le ado*, (the White Water,) a lake which they skirted, of two miles' diameter, was the haunt of countless wild-fowl, geese, mallards, teal, herons, flamingoes. A party of Bedouin women deposed to having seen another "party" of elephants taking a bath in the spot half an hour before, and the prints of their huge feet in the moist sands corroborated the testimony. Hideously withered women followed the march of the mission, carrying curds, and covered over with marsh-flies. Above, vast flights of locusts, which had stripped the coast, were pouring in towards Abyssinia. "They quite darkened the air" where the caravan halted; and above them again were a host of adjutant birds, sometimes bursting down through the mass, and then stooping to the ground, and stalking along to devour the killed and wounded. This is the land, too, of the hurricane. Nature is queen or tyrant here; the thunder tears the sensorium; the lightning burns out the eyes; the rain is a cataract; the hail is a continued volley of ice; the clouds stoop to earth, and bury the daylight like a shroud; the rivers become torrents; the dry plain becomes first a swamp, and then a sea. Tents and tarpaulins are useless to keep out the deluge from above, or are beaten down by its weight on the heads of the unfortunates who trust to them for shelter, until at length the caravan, stripped of all covering, has no resource but to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, and, shivering and shelterless, wait until the hurricane has howled itself away.

At length they reached the city of Furri, loaded, for the thirty-fifth time, with the baggage of the British embassy. The caravan, escorted by a detachment of three hundred matchlock men, with flutes playing, and muskets echoing, and the heads of the warriors decorated with white plumes, on the 16th July entered the frontier town of the kingdom of Efat. Clusters of conical-roofed houses, covering the sides of twin hills, here presented the first permanent habitations that had greeted the eye since leaving the sea-coast—rude and ungainly, but right welcome signs of transition from depopulated waste to the abodes of man. The African seems a robber by nature, and the sight of the bales and boxes excited the national propensity in a most violent degree. Even the royal ministers and courtiers seem to have felt a passion for looking into those prohibited treasures, which evidently tempted their virtue in a most perilous degree. Meanwhile a special messenger arrived, bearing reiterated compliments from the Negoos, (king,) with a horse and a mule from the royal stud, attired in the peculiar trappings which belong to majesty. Those animals awoke all the loyal curiosity of the people. At the sight women and girls, enveloped in blood-red shifts, who had thronged to stare at the strangers, burst into a scream of acclamation. A group of hooded widows

Page 16

thrust their fingers into their ears and joined in the clamour. The escort and camel-drivers placed no bounds to their hilarity. A fat ox, that had been promised, was turned loose among the spectators, pursued by fifty savages with their gleaming *creeses*, and hamstrung by a dexterous blow, which threw it bellowing to the earth in the height of its mad career, and tribes of lean curs commenced an indiscriminate engagement over the garbage.

The neighbouring nations look upon the population of this province with great contempt. They say that their tongues are long for lying, their arms are long for stealing, and their legs are long for running away.

The mission now approached another region, perhaps the finest in Africa. Every change in the climate and soil in Africa is in extremes, and barrenness and unbounded fertility lie side by side.

“As if by the touch of the magician’s wand, the scene now passes, in an instant, from parched wastes to the green, and lovely islands of Abyssinia, presenting one scene of rich and thriving cultivation. The baggage having at length been consigned to the shoulders of six hundred grumbling Moslem porters—for here the camel, from the steepness of the hills, was useless—and forming a line, which extended upwards of a mile, the embassy, on the morning of the 17th, commenced the ascent of the Abyssinian Alps; the flutes again played, the wild warriors of the escort again chanted their songs. It was a cool and lovely morning, and an invigorating breeze played over the mountains’ side, on which, now less than ten degrees from the equator, flourished the vegetation of northern climes. The rough and stony road wound on, by a steep ascent, over hill and dale, now skirting some precipitous ascent, now dipping into the basin of some verdant hollow, where it suddenly emerged into a succession of shady lanes, bounded by flowering hedgerows.”

All this is so like England, and so unlike Africa, that we should suspect the major’s memory to have been as active at least as his observation. But the work contains so much internal evidence of accuracy, independently of the confidence attached to the character of the intelligent writer himself, that we must believe the heart of Ethiopia to possess scenes that would be worthy of the heart of our own fresh and flower-bearing island. The scene which follows is quite Arcadian.

“The wild rose, the fern, the lantana, and the honeysuckle, smiled round a succession of highly cultivated terraces, and on every eminence, stood a cluster of conically thatched houses, environed by green hedges, and partially embowered amid dark trees. As the troop passed on, the peasant abandoned his occupation to gaze at the novel procession; while merry groups of hooded women, decked in scarlet and crimson left

their avocations in the hut to welcome the king's guests with a shrill *ziroleet*, which ran from every hand. Birds warbled among

Page 17

the groves. At various turns of the road the prospect was rugged, wild, and beautiful. The first Christian village was soon revealed on the summit of a height. Three principal ranges of hills were next crossed in succession. Lastly, the view opened upon the wooded site of Ankober occupying a central position in a horseshoe crescent of mountains, still high above which enclose a magnificent amphitheatre of ten miles in diameter. This is clothed throughout with a splendid vigorous, and varied vegetation."

The embassy now halted, waiting for permission to enter the capital, and taking up their quarters in a town three thousand feet above Furri, on the frontier. The escort of the troop fired a salute on entering, and, as they marched along, performed the war dance. A veteran capered before the ranks with a drawn sword between his teeth, and the martial song was chorused by three hundred Christian throats. The prospect from this elevated point naturally struck the travellers with astonishment and admiration. The site of the town is only one of the thousand cones into which the mountain side is broken as it approaches the plain. The prospect over the plain was boundless, and countless villages met the eye upon the mountain slope. Wherever the plough could go, all was cultivated. Wheat, barley, Indian corn, beans, peas, cotton, and oil plant, thrive luxuriantly round every hamlet. The regularly marked fields mounted in terraces to the height of three or four thousand feet, becoming, in their boundaries, more and more indistinct, until totally lost in the shadowy green side of Mamrat (the Mother of Grace.)

This mountain is a wonder, shrouded in clouds whilst all was sunshine below. It is clothed with a dense forest, and ascends to an elevation of 13,000 feet above the sea. Here are collected, for security, the treasures of the monarch which have been amassing since the re-establishment of the kingdom, one hundred and fifty years since.

After remaining some time in the market-place, the governor of the town appeared, and conducted the mission to the house of an old Moslem woman, where they were to lodge for the night. The names of the three daughters, Major Harris observes, were worthy of the days of Prince Cherry and Fair Star. They were Eve, Sweet Limes, and Sunbeam. The ladies vacated the house with great good-humour; but it was low, intolerably filthy, and without bedding or food. The unfortunate mission had thus to spend a night, probably unequaled by their sufferings in the open field. Though so near the equator, they felt the cold severely; rain set in with great violence, pouring through the roof, and entering into the threshold. A fire was indispensable, yet they were nearly suffocated with smoke; they were devoured with insects, and in this torment and fever tossed till dawn. At the arrival of morning they received the disappointing message, that the king could not yet visit his capital, but that they might either seek him among the mountains, or wait for him where they were.

Page 18

Major Harris imputes this disappointment to the accidental opening of one of the boxes of presents. Royal cupidity had been so strongly excited by the conjectures of their contents, that the king had evidently been anxious, in the first instance, to hasten their delivery as much as possible. Gold and jewels were probably uppermost in the royal conceptions; but the box happening to contain only the leathern buckets belonging to the “galloper guns,” the spectators were loud in their derision. “These,” they exclaimed, “are but a poor people! What is their nation compared with the Amhara? for behold, in this trash, specimens of the offerings brought from their boasted land to the footstool of the mightiest of monarchs.”

The rainy season was now setting in, and the situation of the embassy became more comfortless from day to day. Notes were written, and answers received from the monarch, but the royal interview was still postponed, partly by the artifice of the knavish governors, who kept a longing eye on the presents, and partly by the barbarian etiquette of showing the natives the scorn with which their king was entitled to treat all the nations of the world.

The residence of the mission in this comfortless place, however, gave a opportunity of acquiring considerable knowledge of the habits and commerce of the interior. The chief traffic is in slaves, but coffee is exported extensively from Hurrna, and large caravans three times in the year visit the ports, Zeyla and Barbara, laden with ivory, ostrich feathers, ghee, saffrons, gums, and myrrh. In return are brought blue and white calicoes, Indian piece goods, Indian prints, silks, and shawls, red cotton yarn, silk threads, beads, frankincense, copper wire, and zinc.

A fortnight rolled away painfully in this detestable place, which was named Alio Amba, when a summons came from the monarch in these formal words:—“Tarry not by day, neither stay ye by night; for the heart of the father longeth to see his children, and let him not be disappointed.”

They now ascended through a country of romantic beauty, to Machalwan, the place appointed for the interview. The Abyssinian in charge of the embassy, was now sent forward to obtain permission to fire a salute of twenty-one guns on the arrival of the troop at the royal residence. This request seemed to have alarmed his majesty in no slight degree. The most romantic reports of the ordnance had gone before them. It was currently believed that their discharge was sufficient to set fire to the ground, to shiver rocks, and to dismantle mountain fastnesses. Men were said to have arrived, with “copper legs,” who served those tremendous engines; and in alarm for the safety of his palace, capital, and treasures, the suspicious monarch still peremptorily insisted on withholding the desired license, until he should have seen the battery “with his own eyes.” It rained incessantly during the night which preceded the day of presentation, and

Page 19

until the morning broke; when a great volume of white mist rose from the deep valleys, and drifted like a scene-curtain across the summit of the giant Mamrat. The whole troop now began to ascend the mountain; and, as they approached within sight of the stockaded palace, the escort commenced to fire their matchlocks. The view here is described as very lovely, and giving some conception of European variety of vegetation, with tropical luxuriance. Farm-houses, rich fields, foaming cascades, and bright green meadows covered with flowers, met the eye on every side; and above all towered the great Abyssinian range, some thousand feet perpendicularly overhead, with its summits crested with clouds. The crowd of spectators was immense, and were repelled only by strokes of the bamboo. At length a large tent was pitched for the reception of the embassy, the floor was strewn with heath, myrtles, and other aromatic shrubs; and the weather having cleared up, "the mission, radiant with plumes and gold embroidery, moved on." As they reached the precincts of the palace, the artillery fired a salute, which equally awed and astonished the multitude, the discharge being followed by universal shouts in the native tongue of—"Wonderful English! Well done, well done!"

After several further stoppages, they entered the reception hall. It was circular, and showy. The lofty walls glittered with a profusion of silver ornaments, emblazoned shields, matchlocks, and double-barreled guns. Persian carpets and rugs of all sizes, colours, and patterns, covered the floors; and crowds of governors, chiefs, and officers of the court, in their holiday attire, stood in a posture of respect, uncovered to the girdle. Two wide alcoves receded on either side, in one of which blazed a cheerful wood fire, engrossed by indolent cats; while in the other, on a flowered satin ottoman, surrounded by withered slaves and juvenile pages, and supported by gay velvet cushions, lay "His most Christian majesty, Sahela Selasse!" The Dech Agulari (state doorkeeper,) as master of the ceremonies, stood with a rod of green rushes to preserve the exact distance of approach to royalty; and as the British entered and made their bows, pointed them to chairs, which done, it was commanded that all should be covered.

The monarch was not unworthy of figuring in this pomp. Forty summers, of which eight-and-twenty had been passed on the throne, had slightly furrowed his forehead, and grizzled a full bushy head of hair, arranged in elaborate curls. But, though wanting the left eye, "the expression of his manly features, open, pleasing, and commanding, did not belie the character for impartial justice which he had obtained far and wide; even the robber tribes of the low country calling him a fine balance of gold."

Page 20

After the delivery of the ambassadorial letters, the exhibition commenced, which had so long been the envy of the courtiers, and probably the conversation of the kingdom. The presents were displayed. A rich Brussels carpet, which completely covered the hall, Cashmere shawls, and embroidered Delhi scarfs of resplendent hues, excited universal admiration. The finer specimens were handed to the king. As the various presents succeeded, the delight increased. A group of Chinese dancing figures, produced bursts of merriment; and when the European escort, in full uniform, with the sergeant at their head, marched into the hall, paced in front of the throne, and performed the manual and platoon exercises, amid ornamented clocks chiming, and musical boxes playing "God save the Queen," his majesty appeared quite entranced. "But many and bright were the smiles that lighted up the royal features, as three hundred muskets, with bayonets fixed, were piled in front of the royal footstool. A buzz of mingled wonder and applause arose from the crowded courtiers; and the monarch's satisfaction now filled to overflowing. 'God will reward you,' he exclaimed—"for I cannot!"

But a more serious and a more striking display was still to follow. The artillery were to exhibit their powers; and the crowd rushed out, and scattered over the hill to see its practice. A sheet was attached to the opposite face of the ravine, the valley rang to the roar of the guns; and as the white cloth flew in shreds to the wind, under a rapid discharge of round shot, canister, and grape, amid the crumbling of the rock, and the rush of falling stones, shouts of admiration rang from hill to hill. This eventful evening was closed by testimonies of the king's satisfaction, in the shape of a huge pepper pie from the royal kitchen, with his commands that his children might feast; and a visit from the royal confessor, a dwarf enveloped in robes and turbans, and armed with silver cross and crosier. Seating himself in a chair, he delivered a speech, which affords as good a specimen of court oratory as any thing that we remember; and also shows the powerful effect of the presents on the courtly sensibilities. The speech was as follows:

"Forty years have rolled away since Asfa Woosen, on whose memory be peace! grandsire to our beloved monarch, saw in a dream that the red men were bringing into his kingdom, curious and beautiful commodities from countries beyond the great sea. The astrologers, on being commanded to give an interpretation thereof, predicted with one accord, that foreigners from the land of Egypt would come into Abyssinia during his majesty's most illustrious reign; and that yet more and wealthier would follow in that of his son, and of his son's son, who should sit next upon the throne. Praise be unto God, that the dream and its interpretation have now been fulfilled! Our eyes, though they be old, have never beheld wonders until this day; and

Page 21

during the reign over Shoa of seven successive kings, no such miracles as these have been wrought in Ethiopia!!”

The embassy were now fixed under the protection of the monarch; and they were invited to join in the various displays and festivals of the new year, which the Abyssinians begin on the 10th of September. Of these, the cavalry review was by far the most showy, as well as the most suited to the gratification of the British officers. Some parts of this display seemed to have been borrowed from the days of European knighthood. The king’s master of the horse advanced at the head of his squadrons of picked household cavalry, “the flower of the Christian lances.” Ayto Melkoo, their leader, was arrayed in a party-coloured vest, surmounted by a crimson Arab fleece, handsomely studded with silver jets. A gilt embossed gauntlet encircled his right arm, from the wrist to the elbow; his targe and horse trappings glittered with a profusion of silver crosses and devices, and he looked a stately and martial figure, curveting at the head of his well-appointed lancers.

This warrior, advancing with his line, galloped up in front, and made a speech in the manner of old heroic times, vaunting his past prowess and his present loyalty, his troopers accompanying the more successful parts of his speech by striking the lance upon the targe. At the close, he threw his spears upon the ground, unsheathed his two-edged falchion, gave a howl, which was answered by a roar from his horsemen, and a discharge of fire-arms; and the whole made a dash, and charged across the parade.

At the royal command, the British now fired a salute of twenty-one guns, to the great wonder and astonishment of the wild Galla and the multitude of spectators. Thirteen governors, (of provinces, we presume,) clothed in the skins of lions and leopards and covered with silver chains, cuirasses, and gauntlets, emblems of their gallantry in the field, next passed before the king, each at the head of his troop, and each making a harangue. Abyssinia must be a very oratorical country. Last of all, came the tall, martial figure of Abegoz Moreteh, chief of the tributary Galla of the south, at the head of his legion, three thousand in number: this “sea of wild horsemen” moved in advance, to the sound of kettle-drums, their arms and decorations flashing in the sun, and their ample white robes and long sable hair streaming in the breeze. At the war-hoop of their leader, “with the rush of a hurricane the moving forest of lances disappeared under a cloud of dust.” From *eight to ten thousand* cavalry were in the field; and the spectacle, which lasted from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon, was “exceedingly wild and impressive.” But the most impressive display of all was to be supplied by the British. With fire-arms the people were acquainted already. The “brass galloper,” though viewed with “wonderful respect,” was still only an engine on a larger scale than those to which they

Page 22

were familiarized. But the rocket was a formidable and splendid novelty. Night had now thrown her mantle round the field, and, by the king's command, the rocket practice began; the first brilliant rush into the air was matter of amazement to all. When the rocket started with a roar from its bed, men, women, and children fell on their faces—horses and mules broke from their tethers—and the warriors who had any heart remaining shouted aloud. The Galla tribes, who witnessed the explosion, ascribed the phenomenon to “potent medicines,” and declared, that since the Gyptzis (British) could, at pleasure, produce comets in the sky and rain fire down heaven, there was nothing for them but submission to the king's command.

The review was followed, at some interval of time, by a more substantial display. Thrice in the year the king summons his rude militia for an inroad into some of the neighbouring lands; and, as he was particularly anxious to have the presence of the embassy on this occasion, and as they conceived it to offer the best opportunity of seeing the country, they accordingly accepted the invitation. As it is to be presumed that they had no intention of taking any personal part in this marauding expedition, we are not disposed to criticise their acquiescence; otherwise there could be no doubt whatever, that they had no right to assist the king of Shoa in his foray on his neighbours, more than they would have had a right to assist his neighbours in their attacks upon the king of Shoa.

The march was peculiar, and even pompous, in its kind. It was extraordinary to see it preceded by a copy of the Holy Scriptures, under a canopy of scarlet cloth, and borne on a mule; but, it must be owned, accompanied by the “Ark of the cathedral of St Michael,” which works miracles, and is regarded as a pledge of victory. Then came the king on a specially caparisoned mule, surrounded by his guard of shield-bearers, and flanked by matchlock-men; then came forty damsels, royal cooks, painted with ochre, and muffled in crimson-striped robes of cotton—a troop rigorously guarded by attendants with long white wands. Beyond these, as far as the eye could penetrate the clouds of dust, every hill and valley teemed with horsemen, camp-followers, sumpter-mules, and men carrying sheaves of spears, and leading caparisoned horses, all mixed in the most picturesque confusion. After a march of fifteen miles, the female cooks halted, like a flight of flamingoes, in a pretty, secluded valley. It was evident that the day's march was now at an end, and the army halted to bivouac for the night. In the centre of this straggling camp, which could not be less than five miles in diameter, was raised a suite of royal tents, consisting of a gay party-coloured marquee of Turkish manufacture, surrounded by twelve ample awnings of black serge, over which floated five crimson pennons, surmounted respectively by silver globes. There was something of African, or perhaps European, pomp in this proceeding. Until the royal tents were enclosed from the vulgar eye, the Negoos, ascending an adjacent eminence with his chiefs and an escort of picked warriors, remained seated on cushioned *alga*, and under the crimson canopy of the state umbrella.

Page 23

When night fell, rockets were fired by the royal command, “to instil terror into the breasts of the Galla hordes;” and the peak which ran near the headquarters, was chosen as the most central spot for the display. The effect, brilliant every where, was here all that even Majesty could have desired. The “fire-rainers” (the picturesque name which, we presume, Major Harris has adopted from the natives) produced delight, wonder, and terror, in all their degrees; and if the Galla nation were present, they must, to a man, have solicited chains, rather than be roasted alive by those flying monsters, which the people seem to have taken for the works of magic, if not magicians themselves. The display was followed by a repast in the old heroic style, and which will not be forgotten, should Abyssinia ever give the world a sable Homer.

“The chiefs and nobles sat down to their feast in the royal pavilion, where hydromel, beer, and raw flesh were in regal profusion!! After supper, speeches were made in the Homeric style, boasting of what the warriors had done, and intended to do. A fragment of one of the speeches; addressed to the English as the party broke up, gives a fair idea of Abyssinian table eloquence, ‘You are the adorners,’ (the orator had been decorated with a scarlet cloak;) ‘you have given me scarlet broadcloth, and behold I have reserved the gift for this day. This garment will bring me success; for the Pagan who sees a crimson cloak on the shoulders of the Amhara,’ (Abyssinian,) ‘believing him to be a warrior of distinguished valour, will take, like an ass, to his heels, and be speared without the smallest danger.’”

The march, and the foray into the country of one of the Galla tribes, are admirably told, and perhaps are among the best descriptions in the volumes—exact without being tedious, and deeply coloured without exaggeration. But we must hasten to other things. This was the monarch’s eighty-fourth foray; and on this we may conceive something of the horrors of barbarian life, and of the tremendous evils which nations have escaped whose laws and principles tame down the original evil of man.

We are glad to find that the embassy refused to take any share in this horrible work, though they fell into some disrepute with the troops, and even with the monarch, for their remissness. The king had even reserved an unlucky Galla in a tree, to be shot by his guests. But this they declined, first, on the pretext of its being the Sabbath, and next, more distinctly on the ground, that—“no public body was authorized by the law of nations, to draw a sword offensively in any country not at war with its own.” They then offered the compromise, “that an elephant was esteemed equivalent to forty Gallas, and a wild buffalo to five, and that they were ready to shoot as many of both as his Majesty pleased.” But the embassy did more effectual things; the sick and wounded received relief from them to the extent of their means, and they even prevailed on the king to liberate all his prisoners. The troops in the foray amounted to about 20,000.

Page 24

On the return of this destroying expedition, which seems to have turned a very fine country into a desert, the king made a kind of triumphal entry into his capital. His costume was splendidly savage. A lion's skin over his shoulders, richly ornamented, and half concealing beneath its folds an embroidered green mantle of Indian manufacture; on his right shoulder were three chains of gold, as emblems of the Holy Trinity,(!) and the fresh-plucked bough of asparagus, which denoted his recent exploit, rose from the centre of an embossed coronet of silver on his brow. His dappled war-horse, in housings of blue and yellow, was led beside him; and in front his "champion" rode a coal-black charger, bearing the royal shield of massive silver, with the cross upon it, and dressed in a panther's hide. The two chief officers of his army rode either side of the crimson umbrella; at the palace gates, a deputation of priests in white robes received the conqueror with a benediction and a volley of musketry announced his arrival. The leader of the royal matchlock-men performed a war dance before the Ark as it was borne along, and in the inner court the principal warriors, each carrying some human fragment on his lance, flung then on the ground before the royal footstool, and shouted their war praise.

The embassy at length attained personal distinction by the death of an elephant, which one of the party brought to the ground by a two-ounce ball. The "warriors" were all in astonishment at this feat, to which all had predicted the most disastrous termination; and "Boroo, the brave chief of the Soopa," exclaimed in his delight, "The world was made for you, and no one else has any business in it!"

The chief object of the embassy was still to be accomplished—the formation of something that approached to a treaty of commerce. Beads, cutlery, and trinkets, had been received from the coast; but the beggary of the nobles for those things was perpetual and intolerable. They called those ornaments pleasing things, and the cry was constant, "show me pleasing things," "give me delighting things," "adorn me from head to foot." It is scarcely surprising that the natives should be enamoured of European commodities; for, though an old commerce had subsisted with Arabia, the supplies brought by the English were of the most exciting kind. Detonating caps were in great request; treble strong canister powder was also much in demand. Yet there was some ingenuity amongst themselves; for a young fellow was taken up for making dollars of pewter. Every spot and letter had been closely represented with punch and file. "Tell me," said the king, on the case of this culprit being mentioned to him, "how is that machine made which in your country pours out the silver crowns like a shower of rain?" The hand corn-mills, presented by the British Government, had been erected within the palace walls, and slaves were turning the wheels with unceasing diligence. "Demetrius, the Armenian, made a machine to grind corn," exclaimed his majesty in a transport of delight, as the flour streamed upon the floor; "and though it cost the people a year of hard labour to construct, it was useless when finished, because the priest declared it to be the devil's work, and cursed the bread. But, may the Sahela Selasse die—these engines are the work of clever hands."

Page 25

The monarch, elated with his knowledge, now determined to build a bridge, which in three days was completed; and, as was predicted by the quiet English spectators, in three hours fell down on the very first fresh produced by the annual rains.

Weaving excepted, the people manufactured nothing; but British commerce has long been known, though evidently of the coarsest kind. At length, on his majesty's being told that five thousand looms would bring him more wealth than ten thousand soldiers, he gradually consented to form a commercial treaty. The crown had hitherto appropriated the property of strangers dying in the country. The purchase or display of costly goods by the subject had been interdicted, and a maxim exhibiting the whole jealousy of savage life had been established, that the stranger who once entered was never to depart from Abyssinia. By the articles of the commercial treaty, all those barbarous prohibitions have been abolished.

As the monarch returned the deed, he made a short speech sufficiently able and appropriate: "You have loaded me with costly presents, the raiment that I wear, the throne on which I sit, the curiosities in my store-houses, and the muskets which hang round my great hall—all are from your country. What have I to give in return for such wealth? My kingdom is as nothing."

The hereditary provinces at this day subject to the King of Shoa, are comprised in a rectangular domain of 150 by 90 miles; an area traversed by five systems of mountains, of which the culminating point divides the basin of the Nile from that of the Hawash. The Christian population of Shoa and Efat are estimated at a million; and the Moslem and Pagan population at a million and a half. The royal revenues are said to amount to 80,000 or 90,000 German crowns, arising chiefly from import duties in slaves, merchandise, and salt. As the annual expenses of the state do not exceed 10,000 dollars; it is presumed that the king, during his thirty years' reign, has amassed much treasure, which is regularly deposited under ground.

We recommend the enquirers into the truth of Herodotus, to examine the curious illustrations stated in these volumes; and, among the rest, the kingdom of pigmies. The geographer will find ample interest in tracing the course of the Gochob, a sort of central Nile; and the naturalist, botanist, and entomologist, will find abundant information in the very interesting and complete appendices on those subjects. The history of the Christian missions of early ages is an excellent chapter, and the general statistics of religion.

Page 26

The practical religion of the Abyssinian Christian is of the very lowest degree of formality. Fasts, penances, and excommunications, form the chief discipline; but the penitent can always provide a substitute for the two former, and the latter is always to be averted by money. Spiritual offences, however, are rare; for murder and sacrilege alone give umbrage to the easy conscience of the natives of Shoa. Abstinence and largesses of money are equivalent to wiping away every sin. Their creed advises the invocation of saints, confession to the priest, and faith in charms and amulets. Prayers for the dead, and absolution, are indispensable; and, as a more summary mode of relieving the burdens of the flesh, it is pronounced, that all sins are forgiven from the moment that the kiss of the pilgrim is imprinted on the stones of Jerusalem, and that even kissing the hand of a priest purifies the body from all sin. A creed of this order, which makes spiritual safety dependent, not upon personal purification of mind and divine mercy, but upon forms which are unconnected with either, and which even can be executed by a substitute, of course excludes the necessity for morals of any kind. All is corruption—"Born amid falsehood and deceit, cradled in bloodshed, and nursed in the arms of idleness and debauchery, the national character almost defies the missionary."

There are some strange remnants of Judaism still lingering amongst the tribes of these highland regions. The Galla have a tradition, that their whole nation will one day be called on to march, *en masse*, and reconquer Palestine for the return of the Jews. The king of Shoa regards himself as a direct descendant of the house of Solomon, calls himself king of Israel, and the national standard bears the motto, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed." They believe the 45th Psalm to be a prophecy of Queen Mageda's visit to Jerusalem; whither she was attended by a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre. The Jewish prohibitions against the flesh of unclean animals, are observed by the Abyssinians. The sinew which shrank, and the eating of which was prohibited to the Israelite, is also prohibited in Shoa. The Jewish Sabbath is strictly observed. The Abyssinians are said, by Ludolf, to be the greatest fasters in the world. The Wednesdays and Fridays are fasts; the forty days before Easter are rigidly observed as a fast; and from the Thursday preceding Easter till the Sunday, no morsel of meat is to enter the lips, and the prohibition against drink is equally rigorous. St Michael and the Virgin Mary are venerated in the highest degree; St Michael as the leader of the hosts of heaven, and the latter as the chief of all saints, and queen of heaven and earth, and both as the great intercessors of mankind.

Page 27

Like the Jews of old, the Abyssinians weep and lament on all occasions of death; and the shriek ascends to the sky, as if the soul could be recalled from the world of spirits. As with the Jews, the most inferior garments are employed as the weeds of woe; and the skin torn from the temples, and scarified on the cheeks and breast, proclaims the last extremity of grief. As the Rabbins believe that angels were the governors of all sublunary things, the Abyssinians adopt this belief: carrying it even further, they confidently implore their assistance in all concerns, and invoke and adore them in a higher degree than the Creator. The clergy enjoy the price of deathbed confession; and the churchyard is sternly denied to all who die without the rite, or whose relations refuse the fee and the funeral feast. Eight pieces of salt are the price of wafting a poor man's soul to the place of rest, and the feast for the dead places him in a state of happiness, according to the cost of the entertainment. For the rich, money procures the attendance of priests, who absolve, and pray continually day and night. The anniversaries of the deaths of the six kings of Shoa are held with great ceremony in the capital; and once every twelvemonth, before a splendid feast, their souls are absolved from all sin.

Major Harris expresses himself ardently and eloquently on the hopes of commerce which might be maintained by Great Britain with this little-known but productive part of the world. It is notorious that gold and gold dust, ivory, ostrich feathers, peltries, spices, wax, and precious gums, form a part of the lading of every slave caravan; notwithstanding that the tediousness of the transport, and the penuriousness of the Indian and Arab merchant, offer but a small compensation for their labour. No quarter of the globe abounds to a greater extent in vegetable and mineral productions than tropical Africa; and in the populous, fertile, and salubrious portions lying immediately north of the equator, the very highest capabilities are presented for the employment of British capital. Coal has already been found; cotton, of a quality unrivaled in the whole world, is every where a weed, and might be cultivated to any extent. The coffee which is sold in Arabia as the produce of Mocha, is chiefly of wild African growth; and that species of the tea plant which is used by the lower orders of the Chinese, flourishes so widely, and with so little care, that the climate would doubtless be found well adapted for the higher-flavoured and more delicate species. If, at a very moderate calculation, a sum falling very little short of a hundred thousand pounds sterling, can be annually invested in European goods, to supply the wants of some of the poorer tribes adjacent to Abyssinia, what important results might not be anticipated from well-directed efforts, adopting the natural means of communication in Africa?

Page 28

Another winter passed—a dreary time for the mission in Ankober. Torrents rushed down the mountains, every footpath had been converted into a stream, and every valley into a morass. The season was peculiarly tempestuous; the heavy white clouds constantly hung on the mountain pinnacles, and the torrents swelled the Hawash to such an extent, that the land for many miles on both sides was inundated. There must have been some difficulty in spending the time of this solitary confinement among the hills; but the author was well employed in writing his volumes, and engineers were employed in erecting a Gothic hall, to the great delight of his Abyssinian majesty. He would allow them to do every thing except paint his portrait—the national idea being, that whoever takes a likeness, immediately becomes invested with power over the original. “You are writing a book,” he said. “I know this, because I never enquire what you are doing that they do not tell me you are using a pen, or gazing at the heavens. That is a good thing, and it pleases me. You will speak favourably of myself; but you shall not insert my portrait, as you have done that of the King of Zingero.”

The English had new wonders for him; they shaped planks out of trees in a fashion new to the Abyssinians, who waste a tree on every plank. “You English are indeed a strange people,” said the king, as he saw the first plank formed in this economical style. “I do not understand your stories of the roads dug under rivers, nor of the carriages that gallop without horses; but you are a strong people, and employ wonderful inventions.”

At length the Gothic hall was complete. It may be presumed that nothing like it was ever seen in Abyssinia before; for the mission not merely built, but furnished it with couches, ottomans, chairs, tables, and curtains; doubtless a very showy affair, though we cannot exactly comprehend the author’s expression of its being furnished after the manner of an English cottage ornee. The king, however, was delighted with it. “I shall turn it into a chapel,” said his majesty, patting his chief ecclesiastic on the back. “What say you to that plan, my father?” As a last finishing touch, were suspended in the centre hall a series of large coloured engravings, representing the chase of the tiger in all its various phases. The domestication of the elephant, and its employment in war or in the pageant, had ever proved a stumbling block to the king; but the appearance of the hugest of beasts in his hunting harness struck the chord of a new idea. “I will have a number caught on the Roby,” he exclaimed, “that you may tame then, and that I too may ride on an elephant before I die!”

Another of those fearful displays of barbarian plunder and havoc took place at the end of September. Twenty thousand warriors, headed by the king, made an inroad on the Galla. Those unfortunate people were so little prepared, that they seem to have been slaughtered without resistance. Between four and five thousand were butchered, and forty-three thousand head of cattle were driven off. A thousand captives, chiefly women and children, were marched in triumph to the capital; but they were soon liberated, apparently on the remonstrance of the British mission.

Page 29

But a terrible disaster was to befall the palace and the people. The dweller amongst mountains must be always exposed to their dilapidation; and a season of unusual rain, continuing to a much later period than usual, produced an earth-avalanche.

“As the evening of an eventful night (Dec. 6th) closed in, not a single breath of wind disturbed the thick fog which brooded over the mountain. A sensible difference was perceptible in the atmosphere; but the rain again began to descend, and for hours pelted like the discharge of a waterspout. Towards morning, a violent thunder storm careered along the crest of the range, and every rock and cranny re-echoed from the crash of the thunder. Deep darkness again settled on the mountains, and a heavy rumbling noise, like the passage of artillery wheels, as followed by the shrill cry of despair. The earth, saturated with moisture, had slidden from their steep slopes, houses and cottages were engulfed in the debris, or shattered to fragments by the descending masses, and daylight presented a strange scene of ruin. Perched on the apex of the conical peak, the palace buildings were now stripped of their palisades, or overwhelmed: the roads along the hill were completely obliterated. The desolation had spread for miles along the great range: houses, with their inmates, had been hurried away.”

Before the mission took its departure, it did honour to the character of its country by one act which alone would have been worth its time and trouble. The horrid policy of African despotism condemns all the brothers of the throne to the dungeon, from the moment of the royal accession. The king had exhibited qualities of a very unexpected order in an African despot, and, under the guidance of the mission, had made some advances to justice, and even to clemency. At this period, he was suddenly seized with an alarming spasmodic disorder, and he apprehended that his constitution, enfeebled by the habits of his life, was likely to give way. On his recovery being despaired of by both priests and physicians, he suddenly sent for the British mission.

“‘My children,’ said his majesty in a sepulchral voice, as he extended his burning hand towards them, ‘behold I am sore stricken. Last night they believed me dead, and the voice of mourning had arisen within the palace walls; but God hath spared me until now.’”

It seems to be the custom for the king’s physician to taste the draught prescribed for him, and an attempt being made to do this by the British, the sick monarch generously forbade it.

“‘What need is there now of this?’ he exclaimed reproachfully. ‘Do I not know that you would administer to Sahela Selasse nothing that could do him mischief?’”

The reader will probably remember an almost similar act of confidence of Alexander the Great in his physician. An opportunity was now taken of urging him to an act of

humanity, however strongly opposed to the habits of the country, and to the interests of the man. It was represented to him that his uncles and brothers had been immured in a dungeon during the thirty years of his reign, and that no act could be more honourable to himself, or acceptable to Heaven, than the extinction of this barbarous custom.

Page 30

“‘And I will release them,’ returned the monarch, after a moment’s debate within himself. ‘By the Holy Eucharist I swear, and by the Church of the Holy Trinity in Koora Gadel, that if Sahela Selasse arise from this bed of sickness, all of whom you speak shall be restored to the enjoyment of liberty.’”

Fortunately he did arise from that bed of sickness, and he honourably determined to keep his promise. The royal captives were seven, and the British mission were summoned to see their introduction into the presence. They had been so exhausted by long captivity, that at first they seemed scarcely to comprehend freedom. They had been manacled, and spent their time in the fabrication of harps and combs, of which they brought specimens to lay at the feet of their monarch. This touching interview concluded with a speech of the king to the embassy—

“‘My children, you will write all that you have seen to your country, and will say to the British Queen, that, though far behind the nations of the White Men, from whom Ethiopia first received her religion, there yet remains a spark of Christian love in the breast of the King of Shoa.’”

We have thus given a rapid and bird's-eye view of a work, which we regard as rivaling in interest and importance any “book of travels” of this century. The name of Abyssinia was scarcely more than a recollection, connected with the adventurous ramblings of Bruce, for the romantic purpose of discovering the source of the Nile. His narrative had also been wholly profitless—attracting public curiosity in a remarkable degree at he time, no direct foundation of European intercourse was laid, and no movement of European traffic followed. But giving Bruce all the credit, which was so long denied him, for fidelity to fact, and for the spirit of bold adventure which he exhibited in penetrating a land of violence and barbarism, the mission of Major Harris at once establishes its object on more substantial grounds. It is not a private adventure, but a public act, rendered natural by the circumstances of British neighbourhood, and important for the opening of Abyssinia and central Africa to the greatest civilizer which the world has ever seen—the commerce of England. There are still obvious difficulties of transit, between the coast and the capital, by the ordinary route. But if the navigation of the Gochob, or the route from Tajura, should once be secured, the trade will have commenced, which in the course of a few years will change the face of Abyssinia; limit, if not extinguish, that disgrace of human nature—the slave trade; and, if not reform, at least enlighten, the clouded Christianity of the people.

As the author was commissioned, not merely as a discoverer, but a diplomatist, it is to be presumed that on many interesting points he writes under the restraints of diplomatic reserve. But he has told us enough to excite our strong interest in the beauty, the fertility, and the capabilities of the country which he describes; and more than enough to show, that it is almost a British duty to give the aid of our science, our inventions, and our principles, to a monarch and a people evidently prepared for rising in the scale of nations.

Page 31

We have a kind of impression, that some general improvement is about to take place in the more neglected portions of the world, and that England is honoured to be the chief agent in the great work. Africa, which has been under a *ban* for so many thousand years, may be on the eve of relief from the misery, lawlessness, and impurity of barbarism; and we are strongly inclined to look upon this establishment of British feeling, and intercourse in Abyssinia, as the commencement of that proud and fortunate change. All attempts to enter Africa by the western coast have failed. The heat, the swamps, the rank vegetation, and the unhealthy atmosphere, have proved insurmountable barriers. The north is fenced by a line of burning wilderness. But the east is open, free, fertile, and beautiful. A British factory in Abyssinia would be not merely a source of infinite comfort to the people, by the communication of European conveniences and manufactures, but a source of light. British example would teach obedience and loyalty to the laws, subordination on the part of the people, and mercy on that of the sovereign.

But we have also another object, sufficiently important to determine our Government in looking to the increase of our connexion with Eastern Africa. It is certainly a minor one, but one which no rational Government can undervalue. The policy of the present French King is directed eminently to the extension of commercial influence in all countries. To this policy, none can make objection. It is the duty of a monarch to develop all the resources of his country; and while France exerts herself only in the rivalry of peace, her advance is an advance of all nations. But her extreme attention, of late years, to Africa, ought to open our eyes to the necessity of exertion in that boundless quarter. On the western coast, she had long fixed a lazy grasp; but that grasp is now becoming vigorous, and extending hour by hour. Her flag flies at Golam, 250 miles up the Senegal. She has a settlement at Gori; she has lately established a settlement at the mouth of the Assinee, another at the mouth of the Gaboon, and is on the point of establishing another in the Bight of Benin; when she will command all Western Africa.

She is not less active on the eastern shore. At Massawah, on the coast of Abyssinia, she is fast monopolizing the trade in gold and spices. She has purchased Edh, and is endeavouring to purchase Brava. Her attention to *Northern Abyssinia* is matter of notoriety, and we must regard this system, not so much with regard to advantages which such possessions might give to ourselves, as to their prejudice to us in falling into rival hands. The possession of Algeria should direct the eye of Europe to the ulterior objects of France; the first change of masters in Egypt, must be looked to with national anxiety; and the transmission of the great routes of Africa into her hands, must be guarded against with a vigilance worthy of the interests of England and Europe.

Page 32

If the river shall be found navigable to any extent, what an opening is thus presented to both the Merchant and the philanthropist; a soil surpassed by none in the world, a climate varying only 1° in the mean temperature of summer and winter, and presenting an average of $55-1/2^{\circ}$, and a population who could hardly fail to feel the advantages of commerce and civilization. From such a point as Aden offers, access is promised to the very heart of Africa, and thence to the sources of the mighty rivers which find an outlet on the western side of the continent; thus not merely benefiting the British merchant in a remarkable degree, but rapidly abolishing the slave trade, by giving employment to the people, wealth to the native trader, and a new direction to the powers of the country and the mind of its unhappy population.

On the whole consideration of the subject, we feel convinced, that Eastern Africa is the safe and the natural point for British enterprise; that it is the most direct and effective point for the extinction of the cruel traffic in human flesh; and that it is the most promising and productive point for the establishment of that substantial connexion with the governments of the interior, which alone can be regarded as worth the attention of the statesman.

Insignificant stations on the coast, to carry on a peddling traffic, are beneath a manly and comprehensive policy. We must penetrate the mountains, ascend the rivers, and reach the seats of sovereignty. We must, by a large and generous self-interest, combine the good, the knowledge, and the virtue of the population with our own; and we must lay the foundation of our permanent influence over this fourth of the globe, by showing that we are the fittest to communicate the benefits, and establish the example of civilized society.

To those who desire to go into more minute details, we recommend an accompanying volume by the missionaries Isenberg and Krapf—the latter of whom acted as interpreter to the embassy. A capital geographical memoir is also given by Mr M'Queen, the well-known African geographer.

On the whole, it is highly gratifying to our respect for British soldiership; to see works of this rank proceeding from our military men. They have great opportunities, and may thus render national services in peace, not less important than their enterprise in war. The East India Company offers inducements of the most important order, to the accomplishment and scientific activity of its officers; and Major Harris must feel the distinction of having been selected for a mission of such interest, as well as the high gratification of having conducted it to so benevolent, solid, and satisfactory a close.

* * * * *

A WORD OR TWO OF THE OPERA-TIVE CLASSES.

BY LORGNON.

“Vai, ch’avete gl’intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s’asconde,
Sotto queste coperte, alte e profonde!”—BERNI.

Page 33

In the course of social transition, professions, like dogs, have their day. A calling honourable in one century, becomes infamous in the next; and vocations grow obsolete, like the fashioning of our garments or figures of speech. In barbarous communities, the strong man is king:—

“Le premier roi fut un soldat heureux.”

Where human statute is beginning to prize the general weal, the legist is of high account, and the priest paramount. Higher civilization engenders the influence of the man of letters, the artist, the dramatist, the wit, the poet, and the orator. Or when, with a wisdom surpassing the philosophy of the schools, we tumble down to prose, and assume the leathern apron of the utilitarian—the civil engineer, or operative chemist, starts up into a colossus. Sir Humphrey Davy, and Sir Isambert Brunel, are the true knights of modern chivalry; and Sir Walter—our Sir Walter—never showed himself more shrewd than in his exclamation to Moore—“Ah, Tam!—it’s lucky, man, we cam’ sae soon!” Great as was his influence, equaling that of the other two great Sir Walters, Manny and Raleigh, in their several epochs of valour and enterprise, it is likely enough, that, if born a century later, the MSS. of the Scotch novels would have been chiefly valuable to light the furnace of some factory!

So much in exposition of the fact, that, so long as the world possessed only three of what we choose to call quarters, an executioner was an officer of state; and that, now it possesses five, the female of highest renown, and greatest power of self-enrichment, is the *danseuse*, or opera-dancer!

Many intermediary callings have disappeared. The domestic chaplain of a lordly household is now nearly as superfluous as its archers or falconers; and the court calendars of former reigns record a variety of places and perquisites, which, did they still exist, would be unpalatable to modern courtiers, though compelled to earn their daily cakes, however dirty. Just as the last golden pippin of the house of Crenie was preserved in wax for the edification of posterity, a watchman has been deposited, with his staff and lantern, in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, or the Museum of the Zoological, or United Service Club, or some other of your grand national collections, as a specimen of the extinct Dogberry or Charley of the eighteenth century; and in process of time, as much and more also will probably be done to a parish beadle, a theatrical manager, a lord chamberlain—and other public functionaries whom it might not be altogether safe to enumerate.

Among them, however, there is really some satisfaction in hinting at the hangman!—For, hear it, ye sanguinary *manes* of our ancestors:—“*Les bourreaux s’en vont!*” Executioners are departing! We shall shortly have to commemorate in our obituaries, and signalize by the hands of our novelists—“the last of the Jack Ketches.” In these days of ultra-philanthropy, the hangman scarcely finds salt to his porridge, or porridge to salt.

Page 34

Exempli gratia. In the course of last year, a patient of the lower class was admitted into the lunatic ward of the public hospital at Marseilles, whose malady seemed the result of religious depression. In that supposition, the usual means of relief were resorted to, and he was at length discharged as convalescent; when, to attest the perfectness of his cure, he went and hanged himself! A *proces verbal* was, as usual, made out, and the supposed fanatic proved to be the ex-executioner of Lyons! Tender-hearted people instantly ascribed his melancholy to qualms of conscience. But it appeared in evidence, that, since the accession of the citizen king, the trade of the hangman had become a dead failure; and the disconsolate bankrupt was accordingly forced to take French leave of a world wherein *bourreaux* can no longer turn an honest penny!

Yet, less than three centuries ago, his predecessors were men of mark and consideration. Our own King Hal took more heed of his executioner than of half the counties over whose necks his axe was suspended; while Louis XI., a *legitimate* sovereign of France, used to dip in the dish with Tristan Hermite and Olivier le Dain. A few reigns later, and the hangman of the French metropolis (who shares with its diocesan the honour of being styled “Monsieur de Paris”) was respected as the most accomplished in Europe. The treasons of its civil wars had created so many executions, that a Gascon, wishing to prove that his father had been beheaded as a nobleman, instead of hanged like a dog or a citizen, asserted the decollation to have been so expertly executed *en Greve*, that the sufferer was unconscious of his end. “Shake yourself,” exclaimed the executioner; and, on his lordship’s making the attempt, his head rolled into the dust.

This adroitness was the result of competition. In that day there were degrees of hangmen, and promotion might be accomplished. Not only had the king his executioner, and the Lorraines theirs—the court and the city—the abbot of St Germain des Pres—the abbot of this, and the abbot of that—but various communities and Signories, having right of life and death over their vassals, kept an executioner for purposes of domestic torture, as they kept a seneschal to carve their meats; or as people now keep a *chef* or a *maitre d’hotel*. In those excellent olden times of Europe, hangmen, doubtless, carried about written characters from lord to lord, certifying their experience with rope and axe—branding-iron and thong. So long as the Inquisition afforded constant work for able hands, a good hangman out of place must have been a treasure! Had there been register-offices or newspaper advertisements, there probably would have appeared—

Page 35

“WANTS A SITUATION—An able-bodied, middle-aged man, without encumbrance, who can have an undeniable character from his last situation, as headsman, hangman, and general executioner. He is accustomed to the use of thumbikins and the most approved and fashionable modes of torture; and officiated for many years as superintendent of the wheel of a foreign prince, renowned for the neatness of his rack. Drawing and quartering in all their branches. Pressing to death performed in the most economical style. Impalement in the Turkish manner; and the pile, as practised by the best Smithfield hands, &c. &c. &c.”

Independent, indeed, of the high prosperity and vast perquisites of such posts as executioner of the Tower of London or the Greve of Paris, there was honour and satisfaction in the office. A royal master knew when he was well served. Henry III. stood by, in his chateau of Blois, to see, not only the heads severed from the dead bodies of the Duke and Cardinal de Guise, but their *flesh cut into small pieces*, preparatory to being burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds. “His majesty,” says an eyewitness, “stood in a pool of blood to witness the hacking of the bodies.”

This Italian *gusto* for the smell of blood, appears to have been introduced into the palaces of France from those of Italy by alliance with the Medici—those ennobled pawnbrokers of the middle ages, whose *parvenu* taste engendered the fantastic gilding of the *renaissance*, which they naturalized in the Tuileries and at Fontainebleau, in common with the stiletto and acqua tofana of their poisoners, and the fatalism of their judicial astrology.

But enough of Catharine de Medicis and her sanguinary son—enough of Henry Tudor and his savage daughters—enough of the monstrous professions flourishing in their age of monstrosities. And turn we for relief to the exquisite vocation completing the antithesis—the vocation whose execution is that of *pas de zephyrs*, and the tortures of whose infliction are the tortures of the tender heart!

The calling of the *danseuse*, we repeat, is among the most lucrative of modern times, and nearly the most influential. The names of Taglioni and Elssler are as European, nay, as universal, as those of Wellington and Talleyrand-Metternich or Thiers; and modern statesmanship and modern diplomacy show pale beside the Machiavelism of the *coulisses*.

With what pomp of phraseology are the triumphs and movements of these *danseuses* announced, by the self-same journal which despatches, with a stroke of the pen, the submission of a province or revolution of a kingdom! One poor halfpenny-worth, or half a line, suffices for the death of a sultana; while fiery columns precede the departure and arrival of the steamer honoured by conveying across the Atlantic some ethereal being, whose light fantastic toe is to give the law to the United States. Her appearance in the Ecclesiastic States, on the other hand, is announced in Roman capitals; and her triumphal entry into St Petersburg received with regiments of notes of admiration!!!

Page 36

Were Taglioni, by the malediction of Providence, to break her leg, what corner of the civilized earth but would sympathize in the casualty? Or were Elssler epidemically carried off, on the same day with the Pope, the Archbishop of Dublin, a chancellor of an university, an historiographer, or astronomer-royal—which would be most cared for by society at large, or to which would the public journals distribute the larger share of their dolefuls?

Nor is it alone the levities of Europe which have encompassed with a gaseous atmosphere of enthusiasm these idols of the day. We appeal to our sober, plodding, painstaking brother Jonathan. We move for returns of the sums he has expended on his beloved Fanny, and for notes of the honours conferred upon her, not only on the boards of his theatres and in the publicity of his causeways, but amid the august nationalities of his senate! “Fanny Elssler in Congress” has become as historical as the name of Washington! As if for the purpose of proving that extremes meet, the democrats of the New World were demonstrating the wildest infatuation in favour of one dancer, while the great autocrat of the Old was exhibiting a similar fervour in honour of another. La Gitana became all but presidentess of the Transatlantic republic; La Bayadere depolarized the tyrant of the Poles! But, above all, the Empress of Russia—albeit, the lightest of sovereigns and coldest of women—was carried so far by her enthusiasm as to fasten a bracelet of gems on the fair arm of Taglioni; while the Queen-Dowager of England conferred a similar honour on the Neapolitan dancer Cerito!

Now, what queen or princess, we should like to know, has lavished necklace, or bracelet, or one poor pitiful brooch, on Miss Edgeworth or Miss Aitkin, Mrs Somerville or Joanna Baillie, or any other of the female illustrations of the age, saving these aerial machines which have achieved such enviable supremacy? Mrs Marcet, who has taught the young idea of our three kingdoms how to shoot; Miss Martineau, who has engrafted new ones on our oldest crab-stocks, might travel from Dan to Beersheba without having a fatted calf or a fatted capon killed for them, at the public expense. But let Taglioni take the road, and what clapping of hands—what gratulation—what curiosity—what expansion of delight!

The only wonder of all this is, that we should wonder about the matter. Dancing constitutes that desideratum of the learned of all ages—an universal language. Music, which many esteem much, is nearly as nationalized in its rhythm as dialect in its words; whereas the organs of sight are cosmopolitan. The eye of man and the foot of the dancer include between them all nations and languages. The poetry of motion is interpreted by the lexicon of instinct; and the unimpregnable grace of a Taglioni becomes omnipotent and catholic as that of

“The statue that enchants the world!”

Who can doubt that the names of these sorceresses of our time will reach posterity, as those of the Aspasia and Lauras of antiquity have reached our own—as having held

philosophers by the beard, and trampled on the necks of the conquerors of mankind—as being those for whom Solon legislated, and to whom Pericles succumbed?

Page 37

Pausanias tells us of the stately tomb of the frail Pythonice in the Vica Sacra; and we know that Phryne offered to rebuild the walls of Thebes, by Alexander overthrown. And surely, if modern guide-books instruct us to weep in the cemetery of Pere la Chaise over the grave of Fanny Bias, history will say a word or two in honour of Cerito, who proposed through the newspapers, last season, an alliance offensive and defensive with no less a man than Peter Borthwick, Esq. M.P., (*Arcades ambo!*) to relieve the distress of the manufacturing classes of Great Britain! It is true such heroines can afford to be generous; for what lord chancellor or archbishop of modern times commands a revenue half as considerable?

Why, therefore—O Public! why, we beseech thee, seeing that the influence of the operative class is fairly understood, and undeniably established among us—why not at once elevate choriography to the rank of one of the fine arts?—Why not concentrate, define, and qualify the calling, by a public academy?—since all hearts and eyes are amenable to the charm of exquisite dancing, why vex ourselves by the sight of what is bad, when better may be achieved? Be wise, O Pubic, and consider! Establish a professor's chair for the improvement of pirouetters. We have hundreds of professor's chairs, quite as unavailable to the advancement of the interests of humanity, and wholly unavailable to its pleasures. Neither painters nor musicians acquire as much popularity as dancers, or amass an equal fortune. Why should they be more highly protected by the state?

To disdain this exquisite art, is a proof of barbarism. The nations of the East may cause their dances to be performed by slaves; but two of the greatest kings of ancient and modern times, the kings after God's own heart and man's own heart—David and Louis le Grand—were excellent dancers, the one before the ark, the other before his subjects.

Never, perhaps, did the art of dancing attain such eminent honours in the eyes of mankind, as during the *siecle dore* of the latter monarch. At an epoch boasting of Moliere and Racine, Bossuet and Fenelon, Boileau and La Fontaine, Colbert and Perrault, (the fairy talisman of politics and architecture,) the court of Versailles could imagine no manifestation of regality more august, or more exquisite, than that of getting up a royal ballet; and the father of his people, Louis XIV., was, in his youth, its *coulon*.

How amusing are the descriptions of these *entrees de ballet*, circumstantially bequeathed us by the memoirs of the regency of Anne of Austria! The cardinal himself took part in them; but the chief performers were the young King, his brother Gaston d'Orleans, and the maids of honour, figuring as Apollo and the Muses, or Hamadryads adoring some sylvan divinity. Who has not sympathized in the joy of Madame de Sevigne, at seeing her fair daughter exhibit among the *coryphees*!

Page 38

Who has not felt interested in the *jetees* and *pas de bourrees* of the *ancien regime*, when accomplished at court by Condes, Contis, Montpensiers, Montmorencys, Rohans, Guises! The Marquis de Dangeau first recommended himself to the favour of the royal master whose courts he was destined to journalize for posterity, by the skill of his *pas de basques*; and long before the all but conjugal influence of the lovely La Valliere commenced over the heart of the *grand monarque*, his early love, and more especially his passion for the beautiful niece of the Cardinal, may be traced to the rehearsals and *rondes de jambes* of Maitz and Fontainbleau.

The reign of Madame de Maintenon (*la raison meme*) over his affections, declared itself by the sudden transfer of a ballet-opera, expressly composed by Rameau and Quinault for the beauties of the court, to the public theatre of the Palais Royal. No more noble figurantes at Versailles! Louis le Pirouettiste's occupation was gone; and the *maitre des ballets du roi* arrayed himself in sackcloth and ashes. But, lo! the glories of his throne took wing with the loves and graces; ballets and victories being effaced on the same page from the annals of his reign.

During the minority of Louis XV., the same royal dansomania was renewed. The regent, Duke of Orleans, entertained the same notions of kingly education, on this head, as his predecessor the cardinal; and Louis *le Bien-aime*, like his great-grandfather before him, was the best dancer of his realm. Such dancing as it was! such exquisite footing! In the upper story of the grand gallery at Versailles, hang several pictures representing these court ballets; Cupids in coatees of pink lustring, with silver lace and tinsel wings, wearing full-bottomed wigs and the riband of the St Esprit; or Venuses in hoops and powder, whose *minauderies* might afford a lesson to the divinities of our own day for the benefit of the omnibus box.

Some of these groups, by Mignard, Boucher, and their imitators, are charming studies as *tableaux de genre*. But in nothing, by the way, are they more remarkable than in their *decency*. The nudities of the present times appear to have been undreamed of in the philosophy of Versailles. That simple-hearted, though strong-minded American writer, Miss Sedgwick, who has published an account of her consternation as she sat with Mrs Jameson in the stalls of our Italian opera, might have witnessed the royal performance unabashed. On being told, as she gazed upon the intrepid self-exposure of Taglioni, "*qu'il fallait etre sage pour danser comme ca*," Miss S. observes, that it requires to be more or less than woman, and proposes to divide the human species into men, women, and OPERA-DANCERS, little suspecting that half her readers translate such a classification into "men, women, and ANGELS;" or that they would see herself and her sister moralist go down in the *President* without a pang, provided Elssler and Taglioni were saved from the deep!

Page 39

Natural enough! we repeat it—natural enough! To create a good dancer, requires the rarest combination of physical and mental endowments. Graceful as the forms transmitted to us by the pottery of Etruria and the frescoes of Herculaneum, she must unite with the strength of an athlete, the genius of a first-rate actress. That even moderate dancing demands immoderate abilities, is attested by the exhibition of human ungainliness disfiguring all the court balls of Europe. There may be seen the representatives of the highest nobility, tutored by the highest education, shuffling over the polished floor with stiffened arms and bewildered legs—often out of time—always out of place—as if acting under the influence of a galvanic battery. Not one in ten of them rises even to mediocrity as a dancer. A few degrees lower in the social scale, and it would be not one in twenty. Amid the shoving, shouldering, shuffling mob of dancers in an ordinary ball-room, the absence of all grace amounts even to the ludicrous. Forty years long have people been dancing the quadrilles now in vogue, which consist of six favourite country-dances, fashionable in Paris at the close of the last century, and then singly known by the names they still retain—“La Poule, L’Ete, Le Pantalon, Le Trenis,” &c. &c. To avoid the monotony of dancing each in succession, for hours at a time, down a file of forty couple, it was arranged that every eight couple should form a square, and perform the favourite dances, in succession, with the same partner—a considerable relief to the monotony of the ball-room. Yet, after all this experience, if poor Monsieur le Trenis (after whom one of the figures was named, and who, during the consulate, died dancing-mad in a public lunatic asylum) could rise, sane, from the dead, it would be enough to drive him mad again to see how little had been acquired, in the way of practice, since his decease. The processes and varieties of the ball-room are just where he left then on his exit!

Previous to the introduction of quadrilles and country dances or *contredanses*, the inaptitude of nine-tenths of mankind for dancing was still more eminently demonstrated in the murders of the minuet. For (as Morall, the dancing-master of Marie Antoinette, used passionately to exclaim)—*que de choses dans un minuet!* What worlds of modest dignity—of alternate amenity and scorn! The minuet has all the tender coquetry of the bolero, divested of its licentious fervour. With the minuet and the hoop, indeed, disappeared that powerful circumvallation of female virtue, rendering superfluous the annual publication of a dozen codes of ethics, addressed to the “wives of England” and their daughters. All was comprehended in the *pas grave*. That noble and right Aulic dance was expressly invented in deference to the precariousness of powdered heads; and its calm sobrieties, once banished from the ball-room, revolutionary *boulangeres* succeeded—and chaos was come again! The stately *pavon* had possession of the English court, with ruffs and farthingales, in the reign of Elizabeth. With the Stuarts came the wild courante or corante—

Page 40

“Hair loosely flowing, robes as free”—

and if the House of Hanover, and minuets, reformed for a time the irregularities of St James's—what are we to expect now that waltzes, galops, and the eccentricities of the cotillon have possession of the social stage? WHAT NEXT? as the pamphlets say—“What will the lords do?”—what the ladies?

Thus much in proof, that the boss of pirouettiveness is strangely wanting in human conformation, and that there is consequently all the excuse of ignorance for the wild enthusiasm lavished by London on the operative class. Ten guineas per night—five hundred for the season—is the price exacted for a first-rate opera-box; and as the exclusives usually arrive at the close of the opera, or, if earlier, keep up a perpetual babble during its performance, they clearly come for the dancing.—“*On voit l'opera, et l'on ecoute le ballet*,” used to be said of the Academie de Musique. But it might be asserted now, with fully as much truth, of the Queen's Theatre, where the evolutions of Carlotta Grisi, Elssler, and Cerito, keep the audience in a state of breathless attention denied to Shakspeare.

In two out of these instances, it may be advanced that they are consummate actresses as well as graceful and active dancers. Elssler's comedy is almost as piquant as that of Mademoiselle Mars. Nor is the ballet unsusceptible of a still higher order of histrionic display. We never remember to have seen a stronger *levee en masse* of cambric handkerchiefs in honour of O'Neill's *Mrs Haller*, or Siddons's *Isabella*, than of the ballet of “Nina;” while the affecting death-dance in “Masaniello” is still fresh in the memory of the admirers of Pauline Leroux. We have heard of swoons and hysterics along the more impressionable audiences of La Scala, during the performance of the ballet of “La Vestale;” and have witnessed with admiration the striking effect of the fascinative scene in “Faust.”

Of late years, the union of Italian blood and a French education has been found indispensable to create a *danseuse*—“Sangue Napolitano in scuola Parigiana;”—and Vesuvius is the Olympus of all our recent divinities. Formerly, a Spanish origin was the most successful. The first dancer who possessed herself of European notoriety was La Camargo, whose portraits, at the close of a century, are still popular in France, where she has been made the heroine of several recent dramas. To her reign, succeeded that of the Gruinards and Duthes—in honour of whose bright eyes, a variety of noblemen saw the inside both of Fort St Eveque and St Pelagie; the opera being at that time a fertile source of *lettres de cachet*. To obtain admittance to the private theatricals of the former dancer, in her magnificent hotel in the Chaussee d'Antin, the ladies of fashion and of the court had recourse to the meanest artifices; while the latter has obtained historical renown, by having

Page 41

excited the jealousy, or rather envy, of Marie Antoinette. Mademoiselle Duthe appeared at the fetes of Longchamps, in the Bois de Boulogne, in a gorgeous chariot drawn by six milk-white steeds, with red morocco harness, richly ornamented with cut steel; and thus accomplished the object of incurring the resentment of the court, from the prodigality of one of whose married princes these splendours were supposed to emanate—splendours exceeding those of the Rhodopes of old.

But the greatest triumph ever achieved by *danseuse*, was that of Bigottini! The Allied sovereigns, after vanquishing the victor of modern Europe, were by *her* vanquished in their turn. At her feet, fresh trembling from an *entre-chat*, did

“Fiery French and furious Hun”

lay down their arms! The Allied armies appeared to have entered Paris only to become the slaves of Bigottini!

In our own country, devotees of the *danseuse* have done more, by promoting her to the decencies of the domestic fireside. In our own country, also, even Punch was once purchased by an eccentric nobleman for the diversion of his private life. But as Demosthenes observed of the cost of such a pleasure, “that is buying repentance too dear!”

We are perhaps offending the gravity of certain of our readers by the extent of this notice; albeit, we have striven to propitiate their prejudices by the peculiar combination and juxtaposition of professions, selected for consideration. But we are not acting unadvisedly. Close its eyes as it may, the public cannot but perceive, that the legitimate drama is banished by want of encouragement from the national theatres, and that the ballet is brandishing her cap and bells triumphantly in its room.

Such changes are never the result of accident. The supply is created by the demand. It is because we prefer the Sylphide to Juliet, that the Sylphide figures before us. Shakspeare was played to empty benches; the Peri and Gisele fill the houses.

We repeat, therefore, since such is the bent of public appetite, let it be gratified in the least objectionable way. Let us have a royal academy of dancing. We shall easily find some Earl of Westmoreland to compose its ballets, and lady patronesses to give an annual ball for the benefit of the institution. Do not let some eighty thousand a-year be lost to the country. An idol is as easily carved out of one block of wood as another. Let us make unto ourselves goddesses out of the haberdashers’ shops of Oxford Street; and qualify the youthful caprices of Whitechapel to command the homage of Congress, and of the great autocrat of all the Russias. Properly instructed, little Sukey Smith may still obtain an enameled brooch or bracelet from her Majesty the Queen-Dowager! Let

us “people this whole isle with sylphs!” Let Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden flourish; but —thanks to Great Britain pirouettes!—the art of giving ten guineas for a couple of hours spent in an opera-box, will then become less criminal; and we shall have no fear of the influence of some Herodias’s daughter in our domestic life, when we see the Cracovienne announced in the bills “by Miss Mary Thomson.” The charm will be destroyed. The unfrequented *coulisses*, like Dodona, will cease to give forth oracles.

Page 42

Under the influence of an “establishment,” we shall have to record of opera-dancers as of other professions, that “the goddesses are departing!” The *danse a roulades* of Fanny Elssler will be voted vulgar, when attempted by a Buggins. Let Mr Bunn look to himself. He may yet survive his immortality. We foresee a day in which he will be no longer styled Alfred the Great. With the aid of George Robins, and other illustrious persons interested in the destinies of theatrical property, we do not despond of hearing attached to “a bill for the legalization of the Royal and National Academy of Dancing of the United Kingdom,” the satisfactory decree of “LA REINE LE VEUT!”

* * * * *

THE PIRATES OF SEGNA.

A TALE OF VENICE AND THE ADRIATIC. IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.—THE STUDIO.

It was on a bright afternoon in spring, and very near the close of the sixteenth century, that a handsome youth, of slender form and patrician aspect, was seated and drawing before an easel in the studio of the aged cavaliere Giovanni Contarini—the last able and distinguished painter of the long-declining school of Titian. The studio was a spacious and lofty saloon, commanding a cheerful view over the grand canal. Full curtains of crimson damask partially shrouded the lofty windows, intercepting the superabundant light, and diffusing tints resembling the ruddy, soft, and melancholy hues of autumnal foliage; while these hues were further deepened by a richly carved ceiling of ebony, which, not reflecting but absorbing light, allayed the sunny radiance beneath, and imparted a sombre yet brilliant effect to the pictured walls, and glossy draperies, of the spacious apartment. Above the rich and lofty mantelpiece hung one of the last portraits of himself painted by the venerable Titian, and on the dark pannels around were suspended portraits of great men and lovely women by the gifted hands of Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Paris Bordone, and Tintoretto. Regardless, however, of all around him, and almost breathless with eagerness and impatience, the student pursued his object, and with rapid and vigorous strokes had half completed his sketch—totally unconcious the while that some one had opened the folding-doors, crossed the saloon, and now stood behind his chair.

“But tell me, Antonello mio!” exclaimed old Contarini, after gazing awhile in mute astonishment at the sketch before him; “tell me, in the name of wonder, what kind of face do you mean to draw around that lean and withered nose and that horribly wrinkled mouth?”

Page 43

Antonio, however, was so unconscious of the “world without,” that he started not at this sudden interruption of the previous stillness. Regardless, too, of the serious and indeed reproving tone of the old man’s voice, he hastily replied without averting his gaze from the canvass. “Hush, maestro! I beseech you. Question me not, for Heaven’s sake! I cannot spare a word in reply. The original,” continued he, after a brief interval of close attention to his object, and drawing as he spoke; “the original is still firmly fixed in my memory. I see its sharp outlines clear within me, and, as you well know and oft have told me, a feature lost is lost for ever. Alas! alas! those lines and angles around the mouth are already fading into shadow.”

After he had thrown out these words, from time to time, like interjections, and with Venetian rapidity of utterance, nothing was audible in the saloon for some minutes but the young artist’s sharp and rapid strokes upon the canvass.

“No more of this, Antonio!” at length exclaimed the old painter with energy, after gazing for some time at the gradual appearance of an old woman’s lean and wrinkled features, dried up and yellow as if one of the dead, and yet lighted up by a pair of dark deep-set eyes, which seemed to blaze with supernatural life and lustre. At each touch of the artist, this mummy-like and unearthly visage was brought out into sharper and more disgusting relief, when Contarini, no longer able to control his indignation, dashed the charcoal from his pupil’s hand. “Apage, Satanas!” he shouted, “thy talent hath a devil in it. I see his very hoof-print in that horrible design.”

Startled by this unexpected violence, the young artist turned round, and beheld with amazement the usually benign features of his venerable teacher flashing upon him with irrepressible anger, which was the more impressive because the Cavaliere had just returned from a visit to the Doge, and was richly attired in the imposing patrician costume of the period. Around his neck was the golden chain hung there by the imperial hands of Rodolph the Second, and he wore the richly enameled barret, and lofty heron’s plume, which the same picture-loving emperor had placed upon his head when he knighted him as a reward for the noble pictures he had painted in Germany. There was a true and fine air of nobility in his lofty form and well-marked features—a character of matured thought and intellectual power in the expansive brow, and in the firm gaze of his large dark eyes, as yet undimmed by age—with evidence of decision and self-respect, and habitual composure in the finely formed mouth and chin. Thus splendidly arrayed, and thus dignified in form, features, and expression, this distinguished man recalled so powerfully to the memory of his imaginative pupil the high-minded doges of the heroic period of Venice, and the imposing portraits of Titian’s senators, that, with a deep sense of his own moral inferiority, he obeyed in silence, and with starting tears removed the offending sketch. Then placing before him a small picture of a weeping and lovely Magdalen by Contarini, which he had undertaken to copy, he began the sketch, patiently awaiting a voluntary explanation of this unwonted vehemence in his beloved teacher, who, seated in his armchair, leaned his head upon his hand and seemed lost in thought.

Page 44

And now again for some time was the deep stillness of the studio interrupted only by the strokes of Antonio's charcoal, which, unlike his rapid and feverish efforts when sketching the old woman, were now subdued and tranquil. As he gazed into the upraised and pleading eyes of the beautiful Magdalen, his excitement gradually yielded to the pacifying influence of her mute and eloquent sorrow. This salutary change escaped not the observation of Contarini, whose benevolent features softened as he gazed upon these tokens of a better spirit in his pupil.

"I rejoice to see, Antonio," he began, "that you already feel, how ever imperfectly, the soothing and hallowed influence of the Beautiful in Art and Nature, and the peril to soul and body of delighting in imaginary forms of horror. If you indulge these cravings of a distempered fancy, you will sink to the base level of those Flemish artists who delight in painting witches and demons, and in all fabulous and monstrous forms. You, who are nobly born, devoted to poetry and fine art, and possess manifest power in portraiture, should aim at the Heroic in painting. Make this your first and steadfast purpose. Devote to it your life and soul; and, should the power to reach this elevation be wanting, you may still achieve the Beautiful, and paint lovely women in lovely attitudes. But tell me, Antonello!" continued he, resuming his wonted kindness, "how came that horrid visage across thy path, or rather across thy fancy? for surely no such original exists. Say, didst thou see it living, or was it the growth of those distempered dreams to which painters, more than other men, are subject?"

"No, padre mio! it was no dream," eagerly answered his pupil. "Yesterday I went in our gondola, as is my wont on festivals, to the beautiful church of San Moyses, which I love for its oriental and singular architecture. When near the church I heard a melodious voice calling to Jacopo, my gondolier, the only boatman in sight, and begging a conveyance across the canal. Issuing from the cabin, I saw a tall figure, closely veiled, standing on the steps of the palace facing the church and occupied by the Archduke's ambassador. Approaching the steps, Jacopo placed a plank for the stranger; but, as she stepped out to reach it, a sudden gust caught her large loose mantle, which, clinging to her shape, displayed for a moment a form of such majestic and luxuriant fulness—such perfect and glorious symmetry, as no man, still less an artist, could look on unmoved. In trembling and indescribable impatience, I awaited the raising of her veil. Another gust, and a slight stumble as she bounded rather than stepped into the boat, befriended me; the partial shifting of her veil, which she hastily replaced, permitted a glimpse of her features—brief, indeed, but never to be forgotten. Yes, father! the face which surmounted that goddess-like and splendid person, was the horrid visage I have sketched, lean and yellow,

Page 45

drawn up into innumerable wrinkles, and with black eyes of intolerable brightness, blazing out of deep and faded sockets. Staggered by this unearthly contrast, I fell back upon the bench of the gondola, and gazed in silent horror at the stranger, who answered not the blunt questions of Jacopo; and, as if ashamed of her astounding ugliness, sat motionless and shrouded from head to foot in her capacious mantle. I followed her into the church; but, unable to hold out during the mass, I left her there and hastily returned to sketch this sublime example of the hideous before any of its points had faded from my memory. Forgive me, father, for yielding to an impulse so strong as to overwhelm all power of resistance. Yet why should I abandon this rare opportunity of displaying any skill I may have gained from so gifted a teacher? Pictures of Madonnas and of lovely women so abound in all our palaces, that a young artist can only rise above the common level by representing something extraordinary, something rarely or never seen in life."

Contarini gazed with sorrowing and affectionate interest upon the flushed features of his pupil, again excited as before by his own description of the mysterious stranger. One less acquainted with human nature, would have mistaken the flashing eyes and animated features of the youthful artist for the sure tokens of conscious and advancing talent; but the aged painter, whose practised eye was not dazzled by the soft harmony of features which gave a character of feminine beauty to Antonio, saw in the excitement which failed to give a more intellectual character to his countenance, sad evidence of a soul too feeble and infirm of purpose to achieve eminence in any thing, and with growing alarm he inferred a predisposition to mental disease from those morbid and uncontrolled impulses, which delighted in portraying objects revolting to all men of sound and healthy feelings.

He arose in evident emotion, and after pacing the studio some time in silence, he approached Antonio, who, yielding to his eccentric longings, had seized the sketch of the old woman's head, and was gazing on it with evident delight. "Give me the sketch, Antonio!" resumed the painter in his kindest tone, "'Tis finished, and the hunter cares not for the hunted beast when stricken. What wouldst thou with it?" "What would I, maestro?" exclaimed the alarmed youth, hastily removing his sketch from the extended hand of the painter, "Finish the subject of course, and place this wonderful old head upon the magnificent form to which it belongs."

"But, saidst thou not, Antonio, that the poor creature in the gondola hastily concealed her features when accident revealed them, as if ashamed of her unnatural ugliness? And canst thou be so heartless as to publish to the world that strange deformity she is doomed to bear through life, and which she is evidently anxious to conceal? Wouldst thou add another pang to the existence of one to whom life

Page 46

is worse than death, and whose eternal veil is but a foretaste of the winding-sheet and the grave? Thou wilt not, canst not, my Antonio, make such unheard-of misery thy stepping-stone to fame and fortune." This impassioned appeal to all his better feelings at length reached the heart of Antonio. For a short time he continued to withhold the drawing; but his kindly nature triumphed. Tearing his sketch into fragments, he threw himself into the extended arms of his beloved teacher, who with deep emotion placed his trembling hand on the curling locks of his pupil, and implored the blessing of Heaven on his better feelings and purposes.

With a view to improve the impression he had made, the painter led Antonio round the studio, and sought to fix his attention upon several portraits of lovely women which adorned it. "Here," said he, "are heads worthy to crown that striking figure in the gondola. Behold that all-surpassing portrait by Giorgione, of such beauty as painters and poets may dream of but never find, and yet not superhuman in its type. Too impassioned for an angel; too brilliant for a Madonna; and with too much of thought and character for a Venus—she is merely *woman*. Belonging to no special rank or class in society, and neither classical nor ideal, she personifies all that is most lovely in her sex; and, whether found in a palace or a cottage, would delight and astonish all beholders. This rarely gifted woman was the daughter of Palma Vecchio, and the beloved of Giorgione, one of the handsomest men of his time; but her sympathies were not for him, and he died of grief and despair in his prime. She was the favourite model of Titian and his school, and the type that more or less prevails in many celebrated pictures.

"How different and yet how beautiful of its kind, is that portrait of a Doge's daughter, by Paris Bordone! Less dazzling and luxuriant in her beauty than Palma's daughter, she is in all respects intensely aristocratic. In complexion not rich and glowing, but of a transparent and pearly lustre, through which the course of each blue vein is visible. In shape and features not full and beautifully rounded, but somewhat taller and of more delicate symmetry. In look and attitude not open, frank, and natural; but astute, refined, courteous, and winning to a degree attainable only by aristocratic training and the habits of high society. In apparel, neither national nor picturesque, but attired with studied elegance. Rich rows of pearls wind through her braided hair, in colour gold, in texture soft as silk. A band of gold forms the girdle of her ruby-coloured velvet robe, which descends to the wrist, and there reveals the small white hand and tapering fingers of patrician beauty. All this may captivate the fastidious noble; but, to men less artificial in their tastes and habits, could such a woman be better than a statue—and could love, the strongest of human passions, be ever more to her than a short-lived and amusing pastime?

Page 47

“From these immortal portraits, my Antonio, you may learn that *colour* was the grand secret of the great Venetian painters. *Their* pale forms are never white, nor their blooming cheeks rose-colour, but the true colour of life—mellow, rich, and glowing; both men and women strictly true to nature, and looking as if they could turn pale with anger or blush with tender passion. From these great men can best be learned how much charm may be conveyed by *colour*, and what life and glow, what passion, grace, and beauty it gives to *form*.

“But I weary thee, Antonio; and after such excitement thou hast need of repose. Tomorrow, let me see thee early.”

The exhausted youth gladly departed from a scene of so much trial; and, hastening to his gondola, sought refreshment in an excursion to the Lido. Returning after nightfall, he landed on the Place of St Mark’s, and wandered through its cool arcades until they were deserted. In vain, however, did he strive to banish the graceful form and grisly features of the stranger. The strong impression he had received became so vivid and absorbing, that at every turn he thought he saw her gazing at him as if in mockery, and lighting up the deep shadows beneath the arches with her glowing orbs, which seemed to his disordered fancy to emit sparks and flashes of fire. No longer able to resist the impulse, forgetting alike the paternal admonitions of the old painter, and the promises so sincerely given, he quitted the piazza and hastened to the palace of his father, the Proveditore Marcello, then absent on state affairs in the Levant.

Retiring to his own apartment, he fixed an easel with impetuous haste, and by lamp-light again began to sketch the Medusa head of the old woman. Yielding himself up to this new frenzy, he succeeded beyond his hopes; a supernatural power seemed to guide his hand, and soon after midnight he had drawn to the life not only the appalling head, but the commanding and beautiful person, of the mysterious personage in the gondola. After gazing awhile upon his work with triumphant delight, he retired to bed; but slept not until long after sunrise, and then the extraordinary incidents of the past day haunted his feverish dreams. A female form, youthful and of surpassing beauty, hovered around his couch, but ever changing in appearance. At first her head was invisible and veiled in mist, from which, at intervals, flashed features of resplendent loveliness, and eyes of heavenly blue, which beamed upon him with thrilling tenderness; and then the mist dispersed, and the beauteous phantom stooped down to kiss his cheek, when suddenly her blooming face darkened and withered into the death-like visage of that fearful stranger, and her long bright hair was converted into hissing serpents. Starting with a scream of horror from his troubled and exhausting slumbers, he again sought refuge in his gondola, but returned, alas! to make his sketch into a picture, which the hues of

Page 48

life made still more hideous and repulsive. After several days thus occupied, he sketched in various attitudes the imposing figure of the old woman, and endeavoured to fit this beautiful Torso with a head not unworthy of it. But herein, after many attempts, he failed. His excitement, so long indulged, had risen into fever. His diseased fancy controlled his pencil, and blended with features of the highest order of beauty so many touches of the old woman's ghastly visage, that he threw down his pencil, and abandoned all further efforts in despair.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAVERN.

The shores of Austrian Dalmatia south of the port of Fiume, are of so rugged and dangerous a nature, that although broken into numerous creeks and bays, there are but few places where vessels, even of small dimensions, dare to approach them, or indeed where it is possible to effect a landing. A long experience of the coast, and of the adjacent labyrinth of islands which block up the gulf of Carnero, is necessary in order to accomplish in safety the navigation of the shallow rocky sea; and even when the mariner succeeds in setting foot on land, he not unfrequently finds his progress into the interior barred by precipices steep as walls, roaring torrents, and yawning ravines.

It was on a mild evening of early spring, and a few days after the incidents recorded in the preceding chapter, that a group of wild-looking figures was assembled on the Dalmatian shore, opposite the island of Veglia. The sun was setting, and the beach was so overshadowed by the beetling summits of the high chalky cliffs, that it would have been difficult to discover much of the appearance of the persons in question, but for an occasional streak of light that shot out of a narrow ravine opening among the rocks in rear of the party, and lit up some dark-bearded visage, or flashed on the bright barrel of a long musket. High above the ravine, and standing out against the red stormy-looking sky behind it, the outline of a fortress was visible, and in the hollow beneath might be distinguished the small closely-built mass of houses known as the town of Segna.

This castle, which, by natural even more than artificial defences, was deemed impregnable, especially on its sea face, was the stronghold of a handful of hardy and desperate adventurers, who, although their numbers never exceeded seven hundred men, had yet, for many years preceding the date of this narrative, made themselves a name dreaded throughout the whole Adriatic. The inhabitants of the innumerable Dalmatian islands, the subjects of the Grand Turk, the people of Ancona—all, in short, who inhabited the shores of the Adriatic, and were interested in its commerce, or in the countless merchant vessels that skimmed over its waters—trembled and turned pale

when the name of these daring freebooters was mentioned in their hearing. In vain was it that the Sultan, who in his sublimity scarcely deigned

Page 49

to know the names of some of the great European powers, had caused his pachas to take the field with strong armaments for the extermination of this nest of pirates. These expeditions were certainly not disadvantageous to the Porte, which seized the opportunity of annexing to its dominions some large slices of Hungarian and Venetian territory; but their ostensible object remained unaccomplished, and the proverbial salutation of the time, "God save you from the Uzcoques!" was still on the lips of every one.

The word "Uzcoque," by which this dreaded people was known, had grown into a sound of mourning and panic to the inhabitants of the shores and islands of the Adriatic. At the utterance of that fearful name, young girls crowded together like frightened doves; the child hid its terrified face in its mother's lap; the eyes of the matron overflowed with tears as the images of murdered sons and outraged daughters passed before her mind's eye, and, like Banquo's ghost, filled the vacant seats at the table; while the men gazed anxiously out, expecting to see their granaries and store-houses in flames. Nor were the seaman's apprehensions less lively, when night surprised him with some valuable cargo in the neighbourhood of the pirates' haunts. Every rock, each tree, and bush became an object of dread; the very ripple of the waves on the shingle a sound of alarm. To his terrified fancy, a few leafless and projecting branches assumed the appearance of muskets, a point of rock became the prow of one of those light, sharp-built boats in which the Uzcoques were wont to dart like seabirds upon their prey; and, invoking his patron saint, the frightened sailor crossed himself, and with a turn of the rudder brought his vessel yet nearer to the Venetian galleys that escorted the convoy.

At the cry "Uzcoque" the slender active Albanian grasped his fire-lock, with rage and hatred expressed on his bearded countenance: the phlegmatic Turk sprang in unwonted haste from his carpet; his pipe and coffee were neglected, his women and treasures secured in the harem, while he shouted for the Martellozzi,^[3] and slipping them like dogs from a leash, sent them to the encounter of their foes on the devastated plains of Cardavia. In the despatches from Madrid, from the ministers of that monarch on whose dominions the sun never set, to his ambassadors, the name of these seven hundred outlaws occupied a frequent and prominent place. But by none were the Uzcoques more feared and detested than by the greyheaded doge and senators of the Ocean Queen, the sea-born city, before whose cathedral the colours of three kingdoms fluttered from their crimson flagstaffs; and the few young Venetians in whose breasts the remembrance of their heroic ancestors yet lived, blushed for their country's degradation when they beheld her rulers braved and insulted by a band of sea-robbers.

Page 50

[3] The Turks, finding their own troops not well adapted to the irregular and desperate kind of warfare waged by the Uzcoques, and also unable to compete with them in the rapidity of their movements, formed a corps expressly for the pursuit of the freebooters, which was composed of men as wild and desperate as themselves. With these *Martellossi*, as they were called, the Uzcoques had frequent and sanguinary conflicts. Minucci says of the Martellossi, in his *Historia degli Uscochi*, that they were “*Scelerati barbari anco ‘ordine de’ medesime Scochi.*”

To this band belonged the wild figures, whose appearance on the shore has been noticed, and who were busily employed in rummaging a number of sacks and packages which lay scattered on the ground. They pursued their occupation in profound silence, except when the discovery of some object of unusual value elicited an exclamation of delight, or a disappointment brought a grumbling curse to their lips. They seemed carefully to avoid noise, lest it should draw down upon them the observation of the castle that frowned above their heads, and at the embrasures and windows of which they cast frequent and frightened glances, although the darkness of the ravine, at the entrance of which they had stationed themselves, and the rapidly deepening twilight, rendered it almost impossible to discover them.

“By the beard of the prophet, Hassan!” exclaimed in a suppressed tone a young Turk, who lay bound hand and foot at a short distance from the pirates, “why do these mangy curs keep us lying so long on the wet grass? Why do they not seek their kennel up yonder?”

The person addressed was a little, round, oily-looking Turk, a Levant merchant, whose traffic had called him to one of the neighbouring islands, and who had been laid hold of on his passage by the Uzcoques. He was sitting up, being less strictly manacled than his more youthful and energetic-looking companion; and his comical countenance wore a most desponding expression, as, in reply to the question put to him, he shook his head slowly from side to side, at the same time gravely stroking his beard.

“By Allah!” exclaimed the young man impatiently, as he saw the pirates rummaging more eagerly than ever, and now and then concealing something of value under their cloaks, “could not the greedy knaves wait till they got home before they shared the plunder? May their fathers’ souls burn!”

“What saith the sage Oghuz?” quoth old Hassan slowly, “As people grow rich their maw widens.”

“Silence, unbelieving hound!” exclaimed a harsh voice behind him, and a thump between the shoulders warned the old Turk to keep his proverbs for a more fitting season. The pirate was about to repeat the blow, when suddenly his hand fell, and the curses died away upon his lips.

Page 51

The clouds that had hitherto veiled the setting sun had suddenly broken, and a broad stream of golden light poured down the ravine, flashing upon the roofs and gables of the town, and making the castle appear like a huge and magnificent lantern. The ravine was lighted up as though by enchantment, and the unexpected illumination caused an alarm among the group of pirates, not unlike that of an owl into whose gloomy roosting-place a torch is suddenly intruded. Terror was depicted upon their countenances as they gazed up at the castle. For a moment all was still and hushed as the grave, and the Uzcoques scarcely seemed to breathe as they drew their greedy hands in silent haste out of the sacks; then, suddenly recovering from their stupefaction, they snatched up their muskets and crowded into a dark cavern in the rock, which the beams of the setting sun had now for the first time rendered visible, without, however, lighting up its deep and dark recesses. In their haste and alarm, more than one of the freebooters had his tattered mantle caught by the thorny arms of some of the bushes scattered over the shore, and turned in terror, thinking himself in the grasp of a foe. A few only had the presence of mind to throw their cloaks over the varied and glittering plunder that lay scattered about on the ground; and strange was the contrast of the sparkling jewellery, the rich stuffs, and embroidered robes, strewn on the beach, with the mean and filthy garments that partially concealed them, and the wild and squalid figures of their present possessors.

A number of the Uzcoques now threw themselves with brutal violence upon the two prisoners, muffled their heads in cloaks to prevent their crying out, and carried them with the speed of light into the cave, in the innermost recess of which they bestowed them. They then rejoined their companions, who were grouped together at the entrance of the cavern like a herd of frightened deer, and gazing anxiously up at the castle. After the lapse of a very few minutes, the bright glow again faded away, the fortress reassumed its black and frowning aspect, the roofs of Segna relapsed into their dull grey hue, and shadows, deeper than before, covered the ravine.

Reviving under the influence of the darkness, so congenial to their habits and occupations, the Uzcoques began to recover from their alarm, and the murmur of voices was again heard as they seized the sacks, and hastily filled them with the various objects lying on the beach. Every thing being collected, the pirates commenced toiling their way up the steep mountain path leading to the castle, with the exception of a few who still lingered at the entrance of the cavern, and whom the prisoners could hear disputing about some point on which there seemed to exist much difference of opinion.

“Hell and the devil!” at last exclaimed an impatient voice, in a louder tone than had yet been employed. “There’s little chance that we have not been seen from the castle; for the warder would expect us back about this time, and doubtless was on the look-out. These Turkish hounds have seen every thing, and might easily betray us. Let us leave them here till to-morrow, till I have spoken to the warder, and arranged that they be sent on at once to Gradiska without coming to speech of the captain. I will join the escort myself to make it still surer.”

Page 52

After some slight opposition on the part of the others, this proposal was adopted, and the remaining pirates took their departure. The sound of their footsteps along the rocky path had scarcely died away on the ears of the anxiously listening captives, when loud acclamations and cries of joy announced the arrival of the first detachment at the castle. The heavy gates of the fortress were opened with much din and rattle; after a short space they were again slammed to, the portcullis fell, and then no further sound broke the deep silence that reigned in the ravine.

The collection of the plunder, the discussion among the pirates, and their departure, had passed so rapidly, that the young Turk had scarcely had time to recover from the giddy, half-stunned state into which the rough usage he had received had thrown him, when he found himself alone with his old fellow-captive.

"Well, Hassan," said he at last, in a voice of suppressed fury, "what think you of all this?"

The old man made no verbal reply, but merely stroked his beard, shrugged his shoulders, and opened his eyes wider than before, as much as to say, "I don't think at all; what do you think?"

"It is not the prospect of passing the night in this damp hole, bound hand and foot, that chafes me to madness, and makes my very blood boil in my veins," resumed the young man after a pause. "That is a small matter, but"—

"A small matter!" interrupted Hassan with unusual vivacity. "That is, because you have forgotten the most dreadful part of our position. Bound hand and foot as we are, we can expect nothing less than to fall, ere cock-crow, into the power of Satan."

"Of Satan!" repeated the other. "Has terror turned thy brain?"

"Of a truth, the Evil One has already tied the three fatal nooses which he hangs over the head of the sleeping believer," replied the old Mahometan in a lachrymose tone. "He who awakes and forthwith invokes the holy name of Allah, is thereby delivered from the first noose; by performing his ablutions, the second becomes loosened; and by fervent prayer he unties the third. Our bonds render it impossible for us to wash, and the second noose, therefore, will remain suspended over our devoted heads."

"Runs it so in the Koran, old man?" asked the youth.

"In the Koran! What Mussulman are you? It is the hundred and forty-ninth passage of the Suna."

"The Suna!" repeated the other, in a tone of indifference. "If that is all, it will not break my slumbers."

“Allah protect me!” exclaimed the old man, as he made an attempt to pluck out his beard, which the shackles on his wrists rendered ineffectual. “Allah protect me! Is it not enough that I have fallen into captivity? Am I also doomed to pass the night under the same roof with an unbeliever, even as the Nazarenes are?”

“May the bolt of Heaven fall on thy lying tongue!” exclaimed the youth in great wrath. “I an unbeliever! I, Ibrahim, the adopted son of Hassan, pacha of Bosnia!”

Page 53

In deepest humility did the old merchant bow his head, and endeavour to lay hold of the hem of the young man's crimson caftan, in order to carry it to his lips.

"Enough! enough!" said Ibrahim, whose good temper had returned. "You spoke in haste and ignorance. I am well pleased when I break no commandment of the Koran; and trouble my head little about the sayings of those babbling greybeards, the twelve holy Imaums."

"But the nooses," expostulated Hassan, not a little scandalized by his companion's words.

"You have nothing to do but to sleep all night without awaking," replied the young Turk laughing. "Then you will have no need either to wash or pray."

The superstitious old man turned his face to the wall in consternation and anguish of spirit.

"This night have I seen with my own eyes what we have hitherto refused to believe," resumed Ibrahim after a pause, and in a tone of indignation that echoed through the cavern. "I am now convinced that the shameless scoundrels do not rob on their own account, since they are obliged to pilfer and conceal a part of their plunder in order to get a profit from their misdeeds. Marked you not, Hassan, how they trembled when the sun lit up the ravine, lest their tricks should be espied by some sentry on the battlements; and how their panic fear made them carry every thing up to the castle?"

The old Turk bowed his head assentingly.

"Glory be to God and the Sultan!" continued the youth. "Before the bright countenance of the prophet's vicegerent, who reigneth in Stamboul, no misdeed can remain hidden that occurs in the remotest corner of his vast dominions. Nay, much of what happens in the land of the Giaour is also manifest to his penetrating vision. Witness the veil of turpitude and cunning which has long been seen through by the clear eyes of our holy mollahs, and of the council at the Seraglio, and which has just now been torn away from before me, like a mist dispersing in the sunshine of truth. Truly spoke the Christian maiden, whom but a few weeks back I took captive in a fight with the Uzcoques, but who was shortly after rescued by another band of those raging fiends."

"Saw you the maiden," exclaimed Hassan, "the good maiden that accompanies the pirates, like an angel walking among demons?"

"What know you of the Houri?" eagerly demanded the youth, in vain endeavouring to raise his head from the damp stones.

"That it was the hand of Allah that rescued her from you," replied the other. He chastiseth his creatures with rods, but even in his chastisement is mercy. "How many



more had not the dogs and the ravens devoured, had the Christian maiden been taken from among the Uzcoques? She belongs to them, she is the daughter of their leader, the terrible Dansowich, beside whom she is ever to be found, instilling the musk and amber of mildness into his fierce soul, and pouring healing into the wounds he makes. I know her not, but often have I heard the Christians, with whom my traffic brought me acquainted, include her in the prayers they addressed to their God."

Page 54

"Her eyes were as brilliant stars, and they blinded my very soul," exclaimed Ibrahim impetuously; "the honey of her words dropped like balm into my heart! As the sound of bubbling fountains, and the rustle of flowery groves to the parched wanderer in the desert, fell her sweet voice upon my ear. So gentle and musical were its tones, that I thought not of their meaning, and it is only to-day that I understand them."

"I know not," quoth Hassan, "what you may have seen; but doubtless, Satan, who wished to inspire you with an unholy desire for a Nazarene woman, began by blinding you. According to all I have heard, the Uzcoque maiden is good and compassionate, but as ugly as night."

"Ugly!" cried Ibrahim, "Then there must be two of them; for the one I saw was blooming as the spring, her eyes like the morning star, and her cheeks of velvet. Oh, that I could again behold her! In that hope it was that I pressed so rashly forward in the fight, and was made prisoner; but yet have I not beheld the pearl of mine eyes."

"She cannot be amongst them," said Hassan; "and thence comes it that the pirates have this year committed greater cruelties than ever, and done deeds that cry out to Allah for vengeance."

"Instead of her silver tones," continued Ibrahim, "I hear the shrieks of the tortured; instead of her words of peace and blessing, the curses of the murderer."

"But what did the maiden tell you?" enquired Hassan, who was getting impatient at the transports of the enamoured youth.

"Her words flowed like a clear stream out of the well of truth. It is not the Uzcoques alone," said she, "who are to blame for the horrors that"—

"Hark!" interrupted the old Turk.

A clamour of voices and splashing of oars became audible, a keel grated on the beach, and then hurried footsteps were heard in the ravine.

"It is another vessel with Uzcoques!" exclaimed Ibrahim; "but these are not laden with plunder, their movements are too rapid."

As he spoke, the tumult and murmur of voices and trampling of feet increased, and above all a noise like distant musketry was heard.

"Holy Virgin!" suddenly exclaimed a clear and feminine voice, apparently close to the mouth of the cavern. "They are already at the castle—the gates, no doubt, are shut, the drawbridge raised. Before they could come down it would be too late."

The young Turk started.

“It is she, Hassan!” he exclaimed. “It is Strasolda, the Christian maiden!”

“Oh, my father!” cried the same voice in tones of heart-rending anguish. “How shall we deliver thee? Alas! alas! who can tell the tortures they will make thee suffer in their dreadful dungeons?”

The noise of the musketry became more and more distinct. Some of the newly arrived Uzcoques who had hurried up the winding path, were soon heard clamouring furiously for admittance at the castle gates.

Page 55

"They will be too late!" exclaimed the maiden, wringing her hands in despair. The next moment a sudden thought seemed to flash across her mind, lending her fresh hope and energy.

"Gracious Heaven!" she exclaimed in joyful tones. "Have we not here the cave, from which, invoked by fire, the storm and the hurricane, the north wind and the tempest, come forth and shatter the most stately vessels against our iron-bound coast.[4] Up, Uzcoques, and fire the cavern! Let the elements do battle for us. Perchance by their aid the bark of your leader Dansowich may yet escape its foes and reach the haven."

[4] In Minucci's History of the Uzcoques, continued by Paola Sarpi, we find the following:—"Segna, through its position on a cragged rock, was unapproachable by carts or horses, and consequently by artillery. The harbour appertaining to it, however, was tolerably good, but exceedingly difficult of access on account of the north wind, (vento di Buora,) which blew almost incessantly in the channel leading to it. According to popular belief, the Segnarese had the power of causing this wind to blow at will, by merely kindling a fire in a certain hollow of the cliffs. The mysterious operation of this fire was to heat the veins of the earth, which then, through pain or fury, sent out the raging hurricanes that rendered those narrow seas in the highest degree dangerous, and indeed untenable."

Immediately after these words, which made the two Moslems quail, the pirate's daughter hastily entered the cavern with a blazing torch, the flashes of which awakened from slumber into life and glow the various tints of mosses, lichens, and stalactites innumerable that studded the ample vault. In this flitting and singular illumination, the appearance of the Uzcoque maiden was awful. Above the common stature of woman, and finely formed, she was attired in a white woollen garment, carelessly adjusted and confined at the waist by broad red girdle, from which it fell in long and graceful folds to her feet. Her face was a perfect oval; her features of regular and striking beauty; her complexion, naturally of that clear rich brown, which lends more lustre to the eyes than the purest red and white, was now ghastly with intense alarm; and this death-like paleness imparted a more prominent and commanding character to her well-defined, jet-black brows, and the full, dark, humid eyes, which gleamed like brilliants through their long lashes. Heavy tresses of raven hair, escaping beneath her turban-like head-dress, streamed out like a sable banner as she rushed into the cavern, then fell and flowed in waving luxuriance over neck and shoulders to her girdle. The Turks in the interior of the cavern, gazed in speechless wonder at this beautiful apparition standing erect in the strong red light. Waving her torch with energetic and graceful action, she appeared like an antique sybil at the moment of inspiration, or some Arabian enchantress preparing for an incantation. Their admiration, however, yielded to alarm, when they beheld her dash the torch upon the ground, and her attendants pile upon it straw and fagots, which blazed up instantly to the cavern roof, emitting volumes of smoke that made the captives invisible, and by its suffocating influence deprived them ere long of all power of utterance.

Page 56

The evening was serene and still, with scarcely a breath of wind stirring, and the flames blazed upward to the cavern roof; only now and then a light breeze from the sea wafted them on one side, and, at the same time, dispersing the smoke, gave the Turks a momentary glimpse of the maiden, standing with uplifted hands, expectation, anxiety, and grief, depicted on her speaking countenance, as she invoked the spirit of the storm, while around her stood the few remaining Uzcoques, with sorrowing and downcast faces.

"They come not!" she exclaimed after a pause, during which the fire began to burn low for lack of fuel, and the noise of the musketry diminished and finally ceased.

"Uzcoques!" she cried in a louder voice, and with inspiration in her thrilling tones—"Take heed and warning, for your hour is come. Your crags and caverns, your rocky shores and howling storms, refuse you further service!"

She paused, and at that moment was heard the rush of a rapidly approaching boat.

"Speak not, ye messengers of evil!" exclaimed Strasolda in piercing accents. "Utter not a word. You have left Dansowich in the hands of the Venetians."

There was no reply to her half frantic exclamation, and the deep silence was only broken by the footsteps of the new-comers, as with dejected looks they joined their companions. Just then some damp branches that had lain smouldering and smoking on the fire, burned brightly up, and by their light Ibrahim and Hassan beheld the maiden kneeling in the midst of the pirates, her tearful face covered by her fair and slender fingers. The next moment she raised her head and gazed into the cavern.

As she did so, the sorrowful expression of her features changed, and her countenance was lighted up with a look of rapture, while a loud cry burst from her lips. Through the opening in the smoke, the prisoners became visible to her as they lay motionless in the interior of the cave, the light from the flames glowing on their red garments, and giving them the appearance of two statues of fire. In the handsome countenance of one of the figures thus suddenly revealed to her, Strasolda recognized the young Moslem, whose prisoner she had been, and whose noble person and bearing, courteous manners, and gentle treatment, had more than once since the day of her captivity, occupied the thoughts and fancy of the Uzcoque maiden. Unaware of Ibrahim's capture, Strasolda did not for an instant suppose that she beheld him in flesh and blood before her. To her excited and superstitious imagination, the figures of the Turks appeared formed out of fire itself, and she doubted not that the spirits of the cave had chosen this means of presenting to her, as in a prophetic mirror, a shadowy fore-knowledge of future and more favourable events.

Page 57

While she yet gazed eagerly on what she deemed a supernatural appearance, the rent in the veil of smoke suddenly closed, the flame sank down, and again all was gloom and darkness in the cavern. The thick stifling vapour of the damp wood, augmenting as the flame diminished, was now so overpowering that the Turks were in imminent danger of suffocation. In their extremity, making a violent effort, their pent up voices found vent in a cry of such startling wildness, that the Uzcoques, struck with terror, sprang back from the mouth of the cave, hurrying the maiden with them. The cry was not repeated, for the Turks had lost all consciousness from the stifling effects of the smoke.

“Banish your fears, Uzcoques!” exclaimed Strasolda, staying the fugitives. “The voice that to you is a sound of dismay, gives me hope and confidence. I see the golden crescent rising in irresistible might, and shedding its rays over all the lands of the earth. Happy they on whom it casts its mild and favouring beams, and truer far the safeguard it affords to those who serve it, than that which is found beneath the shadow of the cross. Better the sharp cimeter and plighted word of the Moslem, than the fair promises of the lying Christian, who, in the hour of peril, abandons those by whose courage he has profited. But enough!” cried she in an altered tone. “Our first duty is to rescue my father from the hands of the Venetians. Go not into Segna. There are traitors there who might reveal what we most wish kept secret. The Venetians know not the person of Dansowich, and that may save him if no time be lost in plotting his deliverance. Let none even of our own people hear of his captivity. Now to the castle!”

She led the way, and in silence and sadness the pirates followed the daughter of their captive chief.

The fire was quite out, the smoke had cleared away, the moon poured its silvery light into the cavern, and the stillness was unbroken, save by the ripple of the waves on the beach, when Ibrahim recovered from the state of insensibility into which he had been thrown by the suffocating influence of the smoke, and heard his companion snoring at his side. For some time the young Turk lay, revolving in his mind the eventful scene he had witnessed, and the strange and startling circumstances that had come to his knowledge during the few preceding hours. The capture of Dansowich was an event of much importance; nor was there less weight in the discovery Ibrahim had made of the dependence of the Uzcoques upon a higher power, which, in secret, aided and profited by their depredations. Although Austria had been frequently accused of abetting the piracies of the Uzcoques, the charge had never been clearly proved, and to many appeared too improbable to obtain credence. Ibrahim had hitherto been among the incredulous; but what he had this day seen and heard, removed every doubt, and fully convinced him of the justice of those imputations.

Page 58

Turning in disgust from the contemplation of the labyrinth of crime and treachery to which he had seized the clue; the young Moslem sought and found a far pleasanter subject of reflection in the remembrance of the maiden, whose transcendent beauty and touching devotion to her captive parent, shone out the more brightly from their contrast with the vice and degradation by which she was surrounded. With much interest did he endeavour to solve the problem, and explain what appeared almost miraculous, how so fair a creature—such a masterpiece of Heaven's handiwork—could have passed her childhood and youth amongst the refuse of humanity assembled on the island, and yet have retained the spotless purity which was apparent in every look and gesture. But, however interesting these reflections were to the enamoured Ibrahim, his recent fatigues had been too great for nature not to assert her claims, and the wearied body finished by triumphing over the rebellious restlessness of the excited spirit. The graceful form of Strasolda, and the wild figures of the Uzcoques, swam more and more indistinctly before his closing eyes, until he sank at last into a deep and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWELS.

The tribe of the Uzcoques, or Scochi, derived their name from *scoco*, a refugee or fugitive, a word bearing reference to their origin. Towards the commencement of the sixteenth century, a band of hardy and warlike men abandoned the the provinces of Southern Hungary, Bulgaria, and Servia, and took refuge in Dalmatia from the tyranny and ill usage of the Turks, who had overrun the first-named provinces. Accompanied by their wives and families, and recruiting their numbers as they went along, they at last reached the fortress of Clissa, situated in the mountains, a few miles from the old Roman town of Spalatro. There, with the permission of its owner, Pietro Crosichio, they established themselves, forming one of the outposts of Christendom, and thence carried on a war of extermination against the Turks, to whom they did a degree of injury that would appear quite incommensurate with the smallness of their numbers. The name of Uzcoque soon became known throughout the Adriatic as the synonyme of a gallant warrior, till at length the Turks, driven nearly frantic by the exploits of this handful of brave men, fitted out a strong expedition and laid siege to Clissa, with the double object of getting rid of a troublesome foe, and of advancing another step into Christian Europe.

The different powers who had benefited greatly, although indirectly, by the enterprising valour of the Uzcoques, neglected to give them the smallest assistance in their hour of peril. After an heroic defence, Clissa fell into the hands of the Turks, and a scanty and disheartened remnant of its brave defenders fled northward to seek some new place of refuge. This they found in the fortress of Segna, then belonging

Page 59

to a Count Frangipani, who allowed them to occupy it; and, at the same time, Ferdinand the First of Austria bethought himself, although somewhat tardily, that the Uzcoques had deserved better at his hands, and at those of other Christian princes, than to be left to their own resources when assailed by the overwhelming power of the Porte. As a sort of atonement, he took them formally into his pay, to assist him in his wars against the infidel. But from this day forward the Uzcoques gradually declined in valour and in moral worth. From a race of heroes they degenerated into a horde of mercenary adventurers, and finally, of cruel and cowardly pirates. Their primitive customs and simple virtues were exchanged for the vices of refugees and criminals from Venice and other neighbouring states, who came in crowds to fill up the frequent vacancies occurring in their ranks.

At length the military value of the Uzcoques being much impaired, and their services also less required, Austria became irregular in her payments, and at last entirely discontinued them. The barren mountains round Segna produced nothing, and the unfortunate Uzcoques were in danger of dying of hunger. This they felt by no means inclined to do, and ere long complaints began to be made of piracies and depredations committed by the Segnarese on the vessels and territory of Venice. For some time no application on the subject was made to Austria, and when made it was found to be of little avail.

At the period to which this narrative refers, Austria had already formed those designs upon her southern neighbour, which in more modern times she has carried out with complete success. The fertile plains of Northern Italy, the convenient ports on the Adriatic, the rich commerce with the Levant, were tempting baits to what was then the most ambitious power in Europe; and with an undeviating steadiness did she follow up the policy which promised to place such desirable acquisitions within her grasp. Venice, whose power and importance were already on the decline, was the state against which her most strenuous efforts were directed; and nothing that could injure the trade, or lower the dignity and importance of the republic, was omitted by the Austrian Machiavels of the day. Insignificant as such a means of annoyance may appear, the band of Uzcoques was one of the prime engines employed to undermine the bulwarks of Venetian independence. Through her commerce had Venice achieved her greatness, and through her commerce was she to be assailed and overthrown. Whilst the Venetians, for the sake of their trade, had formed alliances with the Turks, the Austrians, professing great religious zeal, and hatred of the infidels, as well as a dread of further encroachments upon European territory, did all in their power to ruin the traffic and break the connexion between the republic and the Porte. The Uzcoques, who, although asserting a sort of independence, still dwelt on Austrian territory, and were reckoned as

Page 60

Austrian subjects, were secretly encouraged in the piracies which they committed indiscriminately against Turkish and Venetian vessels. These acts of piracy usually took place in the night, and could rarely be brought home to their perpetrators, although there could be no moral doubt as to the identity of the latter; but, even when proved, it was found impossible to obtain any substantial redress. At the time now referred to, the evil was at its height. Nominally peace both with Venice and the Porte, Austria, nevertheless, stimulated the Uzcoques to aggressions upon the subjects of both. The Archduke Ferdinand, a well-intentioned and virtuous prince, but young and inexperienced, was completely led and deceived by the wily and unprincipled politicians who governed in his name. He was kept entirely in the dark as to the real character of the Segnarese, and thus prevented from giving credence to the frequent complaints made against them by neighbouring states. His corrupt ministers, moreover, not content with making the pirates instrumental in this tortuous policy, were not ashamed to squeeze from them a portion of their illicit gains; and a lion's share of the spoil found its way into the coffers of the archducal counsellors, who welcomed the golden Pactolus, utterly regardless of the foul channel through which it flowed. The Uzcoques, on their part, who were no longer the race of brave and hardy soldiers they had been some half century before, clung to the protection of Austria, conscious that, in their degenerate state, and with their diminished numbers, they must soon fall a prey to their numerous foes, should that protection be withdrawn. Thus, although inwardly chafing at being compelled to disgorge a large part of the hard-won booty for which they frequently periled their lives, they did not dare to withhold the tribute, nor to omit the rich presents which they were in the habit of making to certain influential persons about the archducal court. In return, the ports of Austria on the Adriatic, were open to them to build and repair vessels, or obtain supplies of provisions; every species of indirect assistance was afforded them, and more than once, when some of their number had fallen into the hands of the Venetians, their release, as subjects of Austria, had been demanded and obtained by the authorities at Gradiska. On the other hand, the claims of Venice for satisfaction, when some of her richly laden merchant-ships had been captured or pillaged, were slightly attended to, the applicants put off from day to day, and from year to year, with promises and excuses, until the weak and cowardly republic, seeing that no satisfaction was to be obtained by peaceable means, and being in no state to declare war against her powerful neighbour, usually ended the matter by ceasing to advance claims, the prosecution of which only tended to her further humiliation.

Page 61

It was Easter Sunday in the town of Gradiska. The strict religious ceremonies with which the Passion week was commemorated at the court of the youthful but pious Archduke Ferdinand were at an end; the black hangings disappeared from the church walls, and the bells rang out a merry peal in joyful commemoration of the Saviour's resurrection. The nobles and ladies of the court, wearied with the vigils and fasting which the religious zeal of the time rendered imperative, betook themselves with lightened hearts to their apartments, the elder portion to repose, the younger ones to prepare for the brilliant festival and ball which the following day was to witness.

In a richly furnished apartment of the castle, the young and handsome wife of one of the archducal counsellors was pacing up and down, her full and voluptuous form reflected on every side by the tall Venetian mirrors that covered the walls of the apartment. The lady was apparently in no gentle mood; her step was hurried and impatient, her face flushed, her lips peevishly compressed, and her irritation seemed to increase each time that she passed before a table on which were displayed a number of jewel-boxes and caskets, all open, and nearly all empty. Since the Easter festival of the preceding year, the caprices and necessities of this spendthrift beauty had abstracted one by one the rich kernels from these now worthless husks, and the recollection of the follies, or worse, in which their value had been squandered, now came to aggravate the vexation which the want of the jewels occasioned her. So absorbed was she in the consideration of her annoyances and perplexities, that for some time she took no notice of the presence of a young and graceful female in plain attire, who stood apparently in deep thought in the embrasure of one of the windows. The maiden had her back turned to the room; but the admirable contours of her fine figure, and the rich luxuriance of the jet-black locks that flowed over her shoulders, gave promise of a perfection that was not belied, when, on an exclamation of impatience from her mistress, she suddenly turned round, and revealed the beauteous features of Dansowich's daughter. She it was who formed the usual medium of communication between the pirates and their archducal allies; and during her frequent sojourns at Gradiska, she assumed the character of attendant on the counsellor's lady.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the court dame, stamping her foot violently on the polished floor. "What can detain the knaves? Say, girl! where can they be lingering?"

Strasolda made no reply to this impetuous enquiry. She was no longer the excited and impetuous Uzcoque heroine, invoking the spirit of the storm amidst the precipices and caverns of her native shores. A total change had come over her. Her look was subdued, her cheek pale, her eyes red and swollen with weeping. She cast an humble and sorrowful glance at the lady, and a tear trembled on her long dark lashes.

Page 62

"Why come they not?" repeated the angry dame in a voice half-choked with passion. "By all the saints!" she continued, with a furious look at Strasolda, "I believe thy father, Dansowich, to be the cause of this delay; for well I know it is with small good-will he pays the tribute. But if the thieving knaves thus play me false, if the Easter gift is wanting, and for lack of jewels I am compelled to plead sickness, and pass to-morrow in my apartment, instead of, as heretofore, eclipsing every rival by the splendour of my jewels, rest assured, maiden, that thy robber friends shall pay dearly for their neglect. A word from me, and thy father, brethren, and kinsmen grace the gallows, and their foul eyrie is leveled with dust."

Strasolda pressed her hands upon her heart, and burst into a flood of tears. Then throwing herself at the lady's feet—

"That word you will never have the cruelty to utter," cried she. "Bethink you, noble lady, of the perils to which they are exposed. The bravest cannot command success, and you know not yet whether their last expedition may not have been unprosperous."

"I!" replied her irritated mistress. "How should I be privy to their proceedings? But *you* ought to be able to give some tidings: Wherefore did you not accompany your father this last voyage?"

"I told you, lady," answered Strasolda, "that I was busied with plans for the deliverance of the Uzcoques now held captive in Venice. I have brothers amongst those unfortunate prisoners, and it is the uncertainty of their fate which thus afflicts me."

The maiden gazed tearfully and imploringly at the angry lady. It was not without good reason that she concealed from her the fact of her father's captivity. The stern and inflexible Dansowich had ever viewed with an eye of disapproval the connexion between his people and the counsellors at Gradiska; and the latter, aware of this, would not have been likely to take much pains for the release of one who was unfavourable to their interests. It was only, therefore, by representing the captive Uzcoques as less nearly connected with her, that Strasolda could hope for aid to rescue them from the hands of the Venetians.

"So much the more should you desire the arrival of the tribute!" exclaimed the lady. "Did I not, at your request, make interest with our ambassador at Venice, that he should insist upon the surrender of the Uzcoques as Austrian subjects? Assuredly the feeble signoria will not venture to refuse compliance. A casket of jewels is but a paltry guerdon for such service, and yet even that is not forthcoming. But it is not too late to alter what has been done. If I say the word, the prisoners linger in the damp and fetid dungeons of the republic, until they welcome death as a blessing."

"Alas, alas!" sobbed Strasolda; "have you the heart thus to add to my sorrow? Is it not enough to know those I love in captivity, to behold my people, once so noble and heroic,

degraded to the very refuse of humanity despised and detested of all men, having their dwelling on a barren rock, and earning by crime and bloodshed a precarious existence and doubtful freedom? Is it not enough”—

Page 63

"Hush!" interrupted the lady in a quick sharp whisper, raising her finger, and glancing towards the door of the apartment. There was a noise as of stealthy footsteps in the corridor. Strasolda sprang from the kneeling posture which she had maintained during her conversation with her mistress, and resumed her station in the recess of a window, while the counsellor's lady snatched up a rich shawl from a damask covered ottoman, and threw it over the caskets spread out upon the table. Scarcely were these arrangements completed, when the door was partially opened, and a wild sunburnt and bearded countenance showed itself at the aperture.

"Heaven and the saints be praised!" exclaimed the lady. "They are come at last. In with you, Jurissa Caiduch: there is no one but Strasolda here."

The person thus addressed, was a strongly built and active man, rather under the middle size, muffled in a coarse brown cloak, which was drawn over the lower part of his face, apparently with a view to concealment. A broad-brimmed felt hat was slouched over his small black eyes, which glittered through its shadow like those of a snake, never fixing themselves on an object, but casting restless and suspicious glances, as though apprehensive of danger or treachery. Gliding into the room, and closing the door noiselessly behind him, he approached the table, and placed upon it a tolerably large casket, which he produced from under his cloak; then retreating a step or two, he removed his hat, and stood in an attitude of silent respect, his eyes still gleaming, however, with their habitual expression of mistrust and cunning.

Without uttering a word, the lady seized the casket, and impatiently forced open its delicate silver lock. A cry of joyful surprise burst from her lips on beholding the rich contents of the jewel-case. Diamond chains, golden girdles and bracelets, combs and hair ornaments studded with orient pearls, passed in rapid succession through the white and eager fingers of the gratified dame, who seemed to lack words to express her pleasure and astonishment at the sight of such costly gems. At last she turned to the bearer.

"Of a truth, Jurissa" cried she, "you are unusually liberal this time, and you must have great need of the good offices of myself and Father Cipriano, to be willing to purchase our influence with the archduke at so high a price."

"Our last expedition was a successful one, noble lady," replied the Uzcoque. "The tender-hearted Strasolda," added he with a spiteful glance at the maiden, who still kept her station by the window, "that guardian angel, who so often steps between us and our prey, was absent, and we had no need to stay our hands."

As he spoke, the door was again hastily opened as softly as before, but somewhat wider, and the burly figure of a monk entered the room. This was no other than the Father Cipriano Guido Lucchese, whom the lady had alluded to, and who, by his pleadings at the papal court, in favour of the Uzcoques, had earned himself the

honourable cognomen of Ambassador de Ladri, or the Thieves' Envoy. He had expiated his discreditable intercession by a sojourn in the prisons of the Inquisition, which did not, however, present his being in high favour with the Archduke Ferdinand, at whose court he filled the triple office of theologian, confessor, and privy counsellor.

Page 64

The sleek and unctuous physiognomy of the monk wore an expression of unusual care and anxiety. Without bestowing a salutation or a look upon the lady whose apartment he thus unceremoniously entered, he addressed himself at once to the Uzcoque Jurissa.

“Away with you!” cried he. “Out of the palace; and quietly, too, as your own shadow. Thumbscrews are waiting for you if you linger.”

Strasolda gazed in alarm at Father Cipriano. Jurissa thrust his right hand under his cloak, and seemed to clutch some weapon. Even the counsellor’s dame for a moment turned her eyes from the jewels she was admiring to the anxious countenance of the padre.

“Your last exploit will bring you into trouble,” continued the latter to Jurissa. “You have gone beyond all bounds; and a special ambassador has arrived here from Venice.”

“Well!” replied the Uzcoque surlily, “was not the sack of doubloons sufficient fee to keep you at your post?”

“I have but just left it,” answered the monk, “and you may thank me if the storm is averted for the moment, although it must burst ere long. Before the ambassador could obtain his audience, I hurried to the archduke, and chanted the old ditty; told him you were the Maccabees of the century—the bulwarks of Christendom: that without you the Turks would long since have been in Gradiska—that the Venetians, through fear and lust of gain, were hand and glove with the followers of Mahomet—and that it was their own fault if you had to strike through them to get at the infidel: that they cared little about religion, so long as the convenience of their traffic was not interfered with—and that it would be a sin and a shame to deprive himself of such valiant defenders for the sake of obliging the republic. This, and much more, did I say to his highness, Signor Jurissa,” concluded the fat priest, wiping away the perspiration which his eagerness and volubility had caused to start out on his brow; “and, in good truth, I think your paltry bag of doubloons but poor reward for the pains I took, and the zeal I have shown in your defence.”

“And wherein consists the danger, then,” interrupted Jurissa, “since your eloquence has sped so well on our behalf?”

“You do not hear me out, my son,” replied the priest. “The greybeards at Venice have chosen an envoy who is right well informed of your small numbers, bad equipment, and cowardice in broad daylight. Nay, man, never grind your teeth. I do but repeat the ambassador’s words; for I had stationed myself in an adjoining room, and heard all that passed between him and the archduke. He said, moreover, that, far from being of use as a bulwark against Turkish encroachments, it was you who had afforded to the infidels a pretext to wrest more than one rich province from Christian potentates. All this



seemed to make some impression upon the archduke, and to plant suspicions in his mind which bode no good to you and your race. For the present, the capture of those two Turks, one of whom is a person of rank, is testimony in your favour with his highness, to whom the crescent is an abomination. Could he follow his own inclinations, he would, I fully believe, start a new crusade against the followers of Mahoun. But come, Jurissa, this is no time for gossip. You must not be seen in Gradiska. Away with you!"

Page 65

“And the Venetian,” cried Jurissa, “what is his name?”

“It is the Proveditore Marcello, who has lately returned from a long absence in the East.”

The Uzcoque started. The name seemed to have some potent and mysterious effect upon him, and he stood for a few moments with his eyes fixed upon the ground, apparently forgetful of the necessity for his immediate departure. The priest took him by the arm, and drew him towards the door, which he was about to open, when Jurissa shook off his grasp and hastily approached the counsellor’s wife, who had thrown herself into a large gilded chair before one of the pier-glasses, and was busily engaged in trying on the ornaments that had just been brought her.

“Have a care, noble lady!” cried the Uzcoque. “You will do well to let a couple of weeks elapse before you appear in public with those pretty gauds. At any rate, wear them not at to-morrow’s ball, lest, perchance, they find an owner. Beware, lady, of the Proveditore Marcello!”

With a look of peculiar meaning he left the room, accompanied by Father Cipriano. But his warning fell faintly upon the lady’s ear, who, though she heard the words, was far too much engrossed in arranging and admiring the costly gems so lately become her own, to give much heed to their import. She remained before her mirror, loading her white neck and arms with chains and jewels, and interweaving diamonds and pearls in her tresses, regardless of the grief of Strasolda who sat in tears and sadness, deploring her father’s increasing peril, and the cloud that menaced the future fortunes of her people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BALL.

The ancient burg, or castle, of Gradiska had been originally on a larger scale, but, at this period, consisted only of a centre, flanked at right angles by two wings ending in square towers, large, grey, and massive, and embattled, with overhanging galleries for sentinels to pace along, while similar galleries, on a smaller scale, extended along the entire front and wings of the castle. The central edifice contained, on the ground-floor, numerous apartments and offices for menials; above which arose a spacious saloon and other lofty apartments, lighted by windows high above the flooring, and terminating in the round-headed arches so commonly seen in the castellated mansions of northern Italy. In this palatial hall preparation had been busy for the ball, to which the wife of the archducal counsellor so impatiently looked forward, as an opportunity to eclipse all rivals by the splendour of her jewels. The hour of reception by the archduke had arrived. The exterior of the spacious edifice was illuminated from end to end by numerous torches, and the capacious staircase was lighted by a double rank of torch-

bearers, in splendid apparel. In the interior of the vast apartment huge waxen tapers were fixed above the *chevron*, or zig-zag moulding,

Page 66

which ran round the walls, and connected the casement of each window. Large crystal lamps, pendant from the point of each inverted pinnacle on the lofty roof, diffused a flood of brilliant light, and imparted life and colour to the rich tapestries, portraying stirring scenes from the Crusades, which covered the walls from floor to window. Complete suits of armour, exhibiting every known device of harness, and numerous weapons, fancifully arranged, decorated the spaces between the windows. And now began to appear, in this scene of splendour, groups of knights and nobles, arrayed in velvet and cloth of gold, and attending upon fair dames, sparkling with jewels, and bearing nodding plumes upon their braided hair. Conspicuous amidst these, and towering above all in stature, appeared the haughty mistress of Strasolda, attired in a robe of dark green velvet, which well relieved the fairness of her complexion, and displaying upon her finely moulded neck and arms a collar and bracelets of large and lustrous oriental pearls. Her fingers were bedecked with costly rings, and upon her head she wore an ornament of singular device, which soon attracted universal attention. Above the rim of a golden comb, richly chased and studded with brilliants, arose a peacock with expanded tail. The body was of chased gold in imitation of feathers, the arching neck was mosaic work of precious stones, the eyes were sparkling diamonds of the purest water, and the feathers of the tail glittered with emeralds, rubies, and sapphires of singular beauty and lustre. So great was the curiosity excited by the dazzling splendour of these jewels, that the fair wearer was followed round the room by a train of ladies, anxious to observe at leisure a display of ornaments so extraordinary, and whispering to sympathizing ears conjectures not over charitable to the counsellor's wife. When, at length, she had seated herself upon one of the sofas which lined the walls, a circle of admiring gazers was formed, whose numbers were rapidly increased by the attendant cavaliers. While the lady was enjoying her triumph, a bustle at the entrance of the hall turned every head in that direction, when the cause appeared in the person of the young archduke, who entered in full costume, followed by a group of courtiers, and accompanied by a Venetian cavalier, of tall and commanding person, with whom he appeared to be in earnest discourse. The stranger was a large-boned, spare, and powerful man, of middle age, and attired in a black vest and pantaloons of woven silk, with a short cloak, of the same hue. The golden hilt of his rapier, and a gold chain and medallion round his neck, were his only ornaments. His features were large, regular, and grand, and the gaze of his full dark eyes serene, yet firm and potent; his complexion pale, and contrasting strongly with a dark beard which circled his visage like a frame. His high and massive forehead, and well closed lips, had a character of thought and decision, while his

Page 67

mien and tread were those of one long accustomed to authority. He seemed a man born after his time, and worthy to have lived and acted in the high and palmy days of Venice. After attending the archduke to the steps of the dais at the upper end of the hall, he made his bow, and began to pace the floor in seeming abstraction from the gay scene around him. Arrested in his progress by the numerous groups which, after saluting the archduke, had again collected around the counsellor's lady, he paused in returning consciousness; and, looking for the cause of such unwonted attraction, was enabled, by his lofty stature, to obtain a glimpse of the jewelled lady within the circle. Her features were unknown to him; but when his careless gaze fell upon the rare ornament which crowned her redundant tresses, his countenance became suddenly darkened by some strong emotion. Again, he looked more earnestly, and with increasing wonder and curiosity. Controlling, by a sudden effort, all outward evidence of feeling, he watched his opportunity, and at length penetrating within the crowd, stood for some moments before the object of attraction, and gazed, as if admiringly, upon her various adornments in succession; then, bowing gracefully, he addressed to her some words of compliment upon the splendour and value of the dazzling bird upon her head. "Fair lady," he continued, "I have a daughter whom I fondly love, and fain would I bestow upon her youthful beauty such ornaments as yours. But say, I pray you, where can the cunning hand be found which fashions such glorious birds? Was it in Venice or Vienna that you bought this masterpiece of art?" Unsuspicious of evil, and bridling at gratified vanity at this attention from a stranger of such distinguished mien, the spoil-bedecked fair one replied to him as she had done to others.

"I bought this ornament, some weeks back, in Venice, at the store of a Greek trader from the Levant."

"Ha!" exclaimed the stranger; "and where dwelt this Greek, that I may see and ask him for another such?"

The conscious lady, embarrassed by such close questioning, and somewhat alarmed by the kindling glances of the questioner, replied in haste—"Nay, signor, now I remember better, it was not a Greek I bought these gauds, but of a trading Jew, who walks the Merceria with a box of jewellery."

"Just now, methinks, you said a Greek, fair lady; and now you say a Jew. What next? Why not a Moslem, or perchance *an Uzcoque*?"

At this ominous conclusion, which the stranger muttered in tones of marked significance, the alarmed culprit started to her feet; and her fierce temper getting the better of her prudence, she boldly faced the cavalier, exclaiming, in a louder key than beseemed a courtier's wife—

“And who are you, signor, that dare thus question the lady of an archducal counsellor?”

“Lady!” he sternly answered, “here I am known to none save your husband’s master; but in Venice men call me the Proveditore Marcello.”

Page 68

And now flashed upon the indignant signora a fearful reminiscence of Jurissa's unheeded and forgotten warning, to hide her jewels for a time, and to beware of the Proveditore Marcello. In utter dismay, and nearly fainting with alarm, she sank upon the sofa, and her eyes expanded into the wide stare of terror as she gazed at the menacing visage of the Venetian noble. Unwilling to expose the conscience-stricken woman before so numerous an assemblage, he seated himself beside her, and in tones inaudible to others thus whispered in her ear—"Lady! but eight days back the jewels that you wear were mine. That peacock was my own design, and made for my daughter by a cunning artificer in Candia. Its like exists not in the world; for the mould was made by my order, and broken as soon as used. 'Twas mine until the base Uzcoques plundered my baggage. How thus quickly it passed from them to you, is as well known to me as to yourself. But mark me, lady! if all these jewels are not delivered at my apartments in the west wing of the castle ere midnight, I will denounce your husband and his colleagues as long-suspected and now-proved partakers with the Pirates of Segna. And, should redress be denied me here, the ambassador of Venice shall report this infamous collusion before a higher tribunal in Vienna."

Struck dumb by this terrible denunciation, the fair culprit gasped for breath, and her evident distress having been watched in growing wonder by the assembled ladies and cavaliers, the latter began to mutter threats of vengeance. One of them now stepped forward, and, grasping the hilt of his rapier, accused the Venetian of having insulted the wife of a nobleman high in the councils of the archduke, when the Proveditore, looking down upon the courtier with that riveted and intensely piercing gaze which staggers the beholder like a sudden blow, and may still be noted in many of Titian's portraits, answered with brief and startling emphasis—

"Signor! you do me grievous wrong. 'Tis I, and not the lady, who am the injured party."

Awed by his gathering brow, and the settled, stern, unsparing resolution which flashed from every feature, and indicated a man confident in his own resources, the courtiers did involuntary homage to his loftier spirit, and gave way. The proud Venetian strode through the yielding circle and quitted the hall, while the counsellor's wife, pleading illness and fatigue in reply to the pointed and numerous questions of surrounding friends and enemies, summoned her husband to attend her, and retired to her apartments.

Page 69

Meanwhile the young Moslem and his companion in misfortune, who had been brought prisoners to Gradiska, were confined in one of the massive towers which flanked the castle. They had arrived not long before the commencement of the festival, and when going under guard along a corridor in the east wing, Ibrahim passed the open door of an apartment in which Strasolda was adjusting the rich jewels of the counsellor's lady before her appearance in the ball-room. Startled by the approaching tramp of armed men, the Uzcoque maiden raised her eyes, and beheld the noble and well-remembered features of the young Turk, whose captive she had been, and whose image had so strangely reappeared to her through the flitting cloud of smoke in the cavern. "Mother of Heaven!" she exclaimed, covering her eyes with her hands; "do I again behold that Moslem youth, ever appearing when least expected?" Again she gazed; but the prisoners, hurried onward by their guards, had proceeded to the end of the corridor, where a narrow winding staircase, fashioned in the immense thickness of the tower wall, led to their appointed prison, a large square apartment, the sides of which were paneled to a considerable height, and imperfectly lighted by small windows, or rather embrasures, perforating a wall many feet in thickness. Here they were left to their reflections, and to what comfort they could derive from a lamp and a supply of provisions. Hassan, wearied with his journey, hastily swallowed his supper, and, stretching himself upon a paillasse, soon forgot his calamities in sound repose. Ibrahim, more vigilant and less apprehensive of future evil, as the Turks and Austrians were then at peace, paced awhile along the floor of his spacious prison, musing on the peerless charms of the Uzcoque maiden. From time to time he gazed upon the walls and windows as if calculating the chances of escape, when gradually the peculiar and regular design of the paneling caught and fixed his attention. It was divided by prominent mouldings into oblong squares, from the centres of which projected large diamond-shaped bosses of carved oak. This peculiarity at length roused into action some reminiscences of the early life and adventures of his beloved patron, the pacha of Bosnia, to the recital of which he had often, in his boyhood, listened with eager delight. These recollections, at first shadowy and indistinct, became gradually more vivid and accurate, until finally the full conviction flashed upon him that his benefactor, when taken prisoner in his youth by the Austrians, had been confined in this very tower and room, and, by a singular discovery, had been enabled to liberate himself and his fellow-prisoners. The pacha, then a subordinate in rank, in endeavouring to reach the level of one of the embrasures, had mounted upon the shoulders of a comrade, and was supporting himself by a firm grasp of the large boss in the centre of the panel, when suddenly he felt it turning round in his hand. Surprised to find it not a fixture,

Page 70

he pulled it towards him, and found that it slowly yielded to the impulse. Drawing it out of the socket, he saw it followed by an iron chain, which for a time resisted all his efforts, but at length gave way, and he heard a grating sound like the drawing of a rusty bolt. Suddenly the entire pannel shook, and then the lower end started back sufficiently to betray a recess in the wall. Hastily descending on his comrade's shoulders, and pushing back the pannel, he discovered that it was supported by hinges, and was doubtless intended to conceal a secret issue from the castle, which he soon ascertained, and effected his escape. These facts were all that the memory of Ibrahim could supply; but they were enough to guide him in his search, and he immediately proceeded to sound the pannels in succession with his fist. Commencing with the southern or outer wall, which he supposed more massive and more likely to contain a secret passage, he sounded each pannel, and perceiving in the corner one more reverberation than in the others, he roused Hassan from his slumbers. "Hassan! Hassan!" he exclaimed, "Arouse thee, man! and listen to good tidings." The awakened sleeper gazed with half-opened eyes upon his excited companion, and would have dropped to sleep again had not a few words of explanation and the hope of escape fully roused him. Having with some difficulty perched his rotund person upon the ample shoulders of Ibrahim, he followed his directions and grasped the wooden boss, which, to the inexpressible delight of both, yielded, as it had done forty years before to the captive Turk, and displayed the iron chain. Bidding Hassan replace the boss, Ibrahim determined to postpone his attempt until the festival had collected all the guards and menials into the central edifice and its approaches. An hour before midnight, when the young Moslem expected the revelry would be at its height, Hassan again mounted upon his shoulders, and after many strenuous efforts, at length succeeded in drawing up the bolt. The pannel receded some inches, and Ibrahim raising it still further, seized the lamp and entered a small oblong recess in the wall, which was not less than ten or twelve feet in thickness. Perceiving no outlet, he examined the wooden flooring, and soon discovered a trap, which, when raised by the ring attached, exposed to view a steep and narrow descending staircase, leading apparently to some sally-port beyond the castle ditch. After carefully trimming his lamp, he was about to lead the way into this dark abyss, when a sound, sharp and sudden, as of something falling in the adjacent prison, caught his ear. Retracing his steps, he re-entered the apartment, where, after a brief search, he found beneath one of the embrasures a paper folded round a large pebble. Hastily opening it, the following lines, written in the *lingua Franca* so common in the Levant, were visible.

"Moslem! If thy soul belie not thy noble form and features, thou wilt not withhold thine aid from a bereaved and sorrowing daughter. Before to-morrow's sunset thou wilt be free, for Austria wars not with the Turk. Then straight repair to Venice, and there await the Battle of the Bridge. Take thy stand beneath the portal of St Barbara, and follow the man who whispers in thine ear,

Page 71

“STRASOLDA.”

“Mashallah!” shouted the enraptured youth, “these lines are from the Uzcoque maiden; and by the gates of Paradise I’ll do her bidding, though it perils life.”

For a time he was tempted to follow her guidance implicitly, and await the promised release from the authorities of Gradiska; recollecting, however, the proverbial slowness of Austrian counsellors, and too restless and ardent to endure suspense, he resumed his purpose of exploring the secret passage. After he had secured the pannel and replaced the boss, he bade Hassan follow him and began to descend. The staircase ended in a small passage round an angle, beyond which he discovered a similar descent, followed by another angle and staircase, proving that this secret issue from the castle penetrated through each of the four massive walls which formed the tower. At length their further progress was stopped by a door, originally strong and plated with iron, but now so much decayed, that although fastened by bolts without, the joint strength of the two captives forced it from its hinges. They now entered a vaulted passage of hewn stone, low and narrow, and with no visible termination. As they advanced, the long pent-up and dank unwholesome vapours made it difficult to breathe, and compelled Ibrahim to pause repeatedly and trim his lamp, which burned so dimly in this oppressive atmosphere as to be nearly extinguished. After a while the path began to slope upwards, and ere long they distinguished moonlight faintly streaming through a tangled mass of ivy which concealed the remains of an iron grating, broken probably in his patron’s successful attempt to escape by this secret passage from the prison above. Gazing through the aperture, they perceived not many feet below what had once been the castle ditch, now dry, and forming a portion of the archduke’s gardens. With a joyous heart and an elastic bound, Ibrahim reached the soft turf beneath. The more timid and helpless Hassan lowered himself by clinging to a remaining iron bar, and with the aid of his companion was soon on his feet, enjoying, with many thanks to Allah, the fresh air of heaven and the consciousness of escape from captivity. The gates of the palace gardens being unguarded during the festival, the liberated prisoners reached the coast without an obstacle, compelled a fisherman to take them in his bark across the Adriatic, and land them on the Lido, which forms the outward limit of the port of Venice. Then making free with an unwatched gondola, they sped across the bay, and were soon in safety, beneath the roof of a Turkish trader and correspondent of Hassan.

Before their escape was discovered on the following morning, the indignant Proveditore had departed for Venice, and Strasolda had disappeared.

* * * * *

COLONEL DAVIDSON’S TRAVELS IN INDIA.[5]

Page 72

[5] *Diary of Travels and Adventures in Upper India*, from Bareilly, in Rohilcund, to Hurdwar and Nahun, in the Himalaya Mountains; with a Tour in Bundelcund, a Sporting Excursion in the Kingdom of Oude, and a Voyage down the Ganges. By C.J.C. DAVIDSON, Esq., late Lieut.-Col. of Engineers, Bengal.

The appearance of this work was heralded some three months since, as divers of our readers may possibly remember, by a species of puff-preliminary, for which even the annals of Great Marlborough Street afforded no precedent—being nothing less than the appearance of Mr Colburn, *in propria persona*, at the bar of the police-office adjoining his premises, to answer the complaint of the gallant and irate author for what he was pleased to consider the unwarrantable detention of the MS. from which his narrative had been printed. It was alleged, in extenuation, that “the gallant colonel’s MS. was so nearly undecipherable, that Mr Colburn had been put to considerable expense in revising the press;”—and a mysterious and curiosity-provoking hint was further thrown out, that “it was the custom of the trade, that, until a work was published, the MS. should not be parted with by the publisher, as it might turn out that some part of it was libellous, and in such case the publisher must produce the MS.” In the end the gallant colonel (whom the newspaper reports described as “very much excited,”) took nothing by his motion in regard to the recovery of the MS.; but though in this respect he may have been somewhat scurvily treated, we cannot equally sympathize with his complaints of the work not having been duly *advertised*; for surely all the little “neatly turned paragraphs” that ever proceeded from Mr Colburn’s laboratory, could not have been so effectual as the method struck out by the impromptu genius of the colonel himself, in intimating to the public that something quite out of the common way might be expected from the forthcoming production thus brought before its notice.

And verily those who have been prepared for a queer volume, will not be disappointed in the diary of our choleric and corpulent colonel. If ever the assurance, which seems to be regarded as indispensable in the preface to works of this class, that the author “wrote the following pages purely for his own amusement,” bore the stamp of unequivocal truth, it is in the present instance; and, notwithstanding the asseverations of Mr Colburn and his literary employes, it is difficult to conceive that any revision whatever can have been bestowed on the rough notes of the writer, since they were first hastily committed to paper amidst the scenes which they describe. The style is as rambling and unconnected as the incidents to which it refers; but wherever the author’s devious footsteps lead us, from the jungles of Bundelcund to the holy ghats of Hurdwar, the principal figure is always that of the colonel himself, who, in the portly magnificence

Page 73

of twenty stone minus two pounds, fills up the whole foreground with himself and his accessories of servants, elephant, stud, Nagoree cows, and other component parts of the *suwarree* or suite of a *Qui-hye*, who can afford to make himself comfortable after the fashion of the country. The quantity (sometimes not trifling) and quality of his meals, the consequent state of his digestion, and his endless rows on the score of accommodations and forage with thannadars, darogahs, kutwals, and all the other designations for Hindoo and Hindoostani jacks-in-office, (for to Feringhi society he appears to have been not very partial,) may doubtless have been points of peculiar interest to the colonel himself, but are not likely to engage the attention of the world in general, and had better have been omitted in the revision of the diary, instead of being chronicled, as they are on all occasions, with wearisome minuteness of detail. But with all these drawbacks, a man who, as he says of himself, “has dwelt in India twenty-five years, and traversed it from the snowy range to Bombay on the west, must have seen something of the country, and may be supposed to know something of the natives”—among whom, by the way, he seems to have mingled more familiarly than most Feringhis; and in spite of all the egotism and rigmarole with which his pages abound, the rambles of this “stout gentleman” through Upper India, and some other parts of the country not much visited by Europeans, present us with a good deal of plain sense and sterling matter, viewed, it is true, with the eccentric eye of a humorist, and frequently couched in very odd phraseology; but not the less true on that account. His opinions on all men and all things are expressed with the same honesty and candour with which he narrates the various scrapes in which he was involved, while pushing right a-head like an elephant through a jungle;—and though laughing at him quite as often as with him, we have found the colonel, on the whole, far from an unpleasant travelling companion.

Bareilly, on the frontiers of Oude and Rohilcund, was the colonel's starting-point;—and thence on St Patrick's day[6] he set forward for Hurdwar, at the head of a retinue, the members of which, both quadruped and biped, he enumerates seriatim, giving the *pas* to the former—a precedence perhaps well merited by steeds up to such a welter weight under the climate of India, over such a set of unredeemed and thriftless knaves as he describes his native attendants. Accordingly, he gives the names and pedigrees of the whole stud, from “the buggy mare Maiden-head and my wicked little favourite Fish-Guts,” up to “my favourite brood-mare Fair Amelia, purchased at a prize sale on the frontier, and bred by the king of Bokhara, with his royal stamp on her near flank—stands nearly fifteen and a half hands high, with magnificent action and great show of blood—had, when taken, four gold rings in her nostrils, now removed and replaced

Page 74

by silver, which will be stolen by her groom one by one.” His first day’s march was to Futtehgunge, (“the mart of victory,” being the scene of the memorable battle in 1774, in which the English, as the bought allies of the Nawab Shoojah-ed-dowlah, defeated and slew the gallant Rohilla chief, Hafez-Rehmut;) and here he oracularly announced a discovery in gastronomy, of which it would be unpardonable not to give our readers the benefit. “I used my farourite condiment, tomata sauce, with my beef; and *to all who are ignorant* of this delicious vegetable I may venture to recommend its sauce, as at once both wholesome and savoury, if eaten with anything but cranberry tart or apple pie!” It is melancholy to reflect how often the best efforts of genius are anticipated and rendered of no avail. The colonel, when he penned this sentence with a heart overflowing with Epicurean philanthropy, was evidently unconscious that “chops and tomata sauce” were already familiar to the British public from the immortal researches of Mr Pickwick!

[6] The year is not specified; but as the Ramazan is subsequently said to have ended March 25, it must have been in the year of the Hejra 1245, ansering to A.D. 1830.

Rampore, in the territory of which the colonel now found himself, is still a semi-independent state, the Nawab of which has a revenue of sixteen lacs of rupees, (L160,000,) while the city, being without the pale of English law, is “a city of refuge, a very Goshen of robbers, ... the streets are crowded with a mob of very handsome, idle, lounging fellows, having generally the fullest and finest jet-black beards and black mustaches in the world. Many of these were handsomely dressed, and many (which struck me as a very curious fact) appeared clean!” These were the Pathans and Rohillas, partly descended from the original Moslem conquerors of India, and partly from those who have more recently migrated from Affghanistan and the adjoining countries. The most athletic and warlike race among the Indian Mahommedans, and too proud of their blood to exercise any profession but that of arms, they are found in every town throughout Upper India, swaggering about with sword, shield, and matchlock, in the retinues of the native princes, and ready to join any enterprise, or flock to the standard of any invader, through whose means any prospect is afforded of shaking off the Feringhi yoke, and resuming their ancient predominance in the country which their forefathers won by their swords from the idolaters. “They hate us with the most intense bitterness, and can any one be surprised at it? We have taken their broad lands foot by foot.” Few if any of these turbulent spirits are found in our European regular native army; their dislike to the cumbrous accoutrements and awkward European saddles operating equally, perhaps, with the severity of the drill and discipline to deter them; but they form the strength of the various corps of irregular horse—a

Page 75

force which, of late years, has most judiciously been greatly increased in numbers, and the uniform dashing bravery of which in the field, strongly contrasts with the misconduct of one at least of the regular native cavalry regiments in the late Affghan war. "I have seen," (says the colonel,) "a lineal descendant of Pathan Nawab's serving in the ranks of Hearsay's horse, as a common trooper on twenty rupees a-month, out of which he had merely to buy and feed his horse, procure clothes, arms, and harness, and sustain his hereditary dignity! By his commander and his fellow-soldiers he was always addressed by his title of Nawab Sahib!"

The small-pox was committing dreadful ravages in Rampore and its neighbourhood; and though vaccination was performed gratis at Bareilly, the fatalist prejudices of the natives, even of those of rank and education, prevented them from availing themselves of the boon. All the instances of the colonel, in behalf of a charming little girl, four years old, whose mother and sister had already taken the infection, could get from her father nothing more than a promise "to think of it! If it's her fate——" said he. "'You fool!' said I, in my civil way," (and the colonel's *brusquerie* was here, at least, not misplaced,) "'if a man throws himself into the fire or a well, or in the path of a tiger, is he without blame?'" Such apathy seems almost unaccountable to English minds; but it may find a parallel in Lady Chatterton's story of the Irish parents, [7] who, after refusing to spend fourpence in nourishment for a dying child, came in deep grief after its death to their employer, to solicit an advance of thirty shillings to *wake the corpse*! Perhaps some ingenious systematists might hence deduce a fresh argument in favour of the alleged oriental origin of the Irish.

[7] Rambles in the South of Ireland; ii. 143.

The colonel's next stage was to Moradabad, another Pathan city, but under the *raj* of the Company, where, in a visit to a native original, named Meer Mahommed, he was greatly delighted by his new friend's introduction of the English word *swap* into a sentence of Hindoostani. And on the 25th he reached Dhampore, where the welcome proclamation, "that the new moon had been seen," terminated the fast of the Ramazan, to the uncontrollable joy of the Mussulmans, who would have been subjected to another day's abstinence if it had not been perceived till the succeeding evening. The colonel, however, slyly remarks, that "it was very odd that the *Hindoos* could not see the new moon," and hints that their imperfection of vision was shared by himself, but it was otherwise decided by the Faithful; and he proceeded, amid the noisy rejoicings of the Moslem feast of *Bukra-Eed*, (called by the Turks Bairam,) by Najeena, the Birmingham of Upper India, to Nujeebabad. Here resided, on a pension of 60,000 rupees (£6000) a-year from the English government, the Nawab Gholam-ed-deen, better known by the nickname

Page 76

of Bumbo Khan, a brother of the once famous Rohilla chief Gholam-Khadir. Though past eighty years of age, and weighing upwards of twenty stone, he had not lost, any more than the equiponderant colonel, his taste for the good things of this world; and our traveller, on partaking of the Nawab's hospitality, records with infinite zest the glories of a peculiar preparation of lamb, called *nargus*, or the narcissus. But, alas! the reminiscences of the nargus were less grateful than the fruition, and the remorse of the colonel's guilty stomach (as poor Theodore Hooke, or some one else, used to call indigestion) continued to afflict him all the way to Hurdwar; and may probably account, by the consequent irritation of his temper, for various squabbles in which he was involved on the route.

The great fair of Hurdwar was in full swing at the colonel's arrival, with its vast concourse of Hindoo devotees from all parts of India, to whom it is in itself a spot of peculiar sanctity, besides lying in the way to the shrine of Gungotree, (the source of the Ganges,) in the Himmalaya—its crowds of merchants and adventurers of all sorts, even from Uzbek Tartary and the remote regions of Central Asia—Seiks by thousands from the Punjab, with their families—Affghan and Persian horse-dealers—and numerous grandees, both of the Hindoo and Moslem faith, who repair hither as to a scene of gaiety and general resort. The colonel found quarters in the tent of a friend employed in the purchase of horses for government, and seems to have entered with all his heart into the humours of the scene; his description of which, and of the varied characteristics of the motley groups composing the half million of human beings present, is one of the most graphic and picturesque sketches in his work. "Huge heaps of assafoetida, in bags, from the mountains beyond Cabool—tons of raisins of various sorts—almonds, pistachio nuts, sheep with four or five horns—Balkh[8] cats, with long silken hair; of singular beauty—faqueers begging, and abusing the uncharitable with the grossest and most filthy language—long strings of elderly ladies, proceeding in a chant to the priests of the Lingam, to bargain for bodily issue—Ghat priests presenting their books for the presents and signatures of the European visitors—groups of Hindoos surrounding a Bramin, who gives each of them a certificate of his having performed the pilgrimage"—such are a few of the component parts of the scene; but the colonel's attention seems to have been principally fixed upon the horses, and the tricks of the *dulals* or brokers, to whom the purchase is generally confided, it being almost hopeless for an European to make a personal bargain with a native dealer. But among the greatest curiosities in this way were some *tortoiseshell* ponies—for we can call them nothing else—a peculiar race from Uzbek Tartary, which we never remember to have heard of before. "They were under thirteen hands high, and the most curious compound

Page 77

of colours and marks that can be imagined. Suppose the animal pure, snowy white; cover the white with large, irregular, light bay spots through which the white is visible; in the middle of these light bay let there be dark bay marbled spots; at every six or eight inches plant rhomboidal patches of a very dark iron-grey; then sprinkle the whole with dark flea-bites! There's a *phooldar*, (flower-market,) as they call them;" and we agree with the colonel that such an animal would be a fortune at Bartlemy fair.

[8] In the original "bulkh," which we have ventured to amend as above. The Oriental words and phrases are, in several instances, very incorrectly printed; but whether the fault rests with the colonel's "undecipherable" MS., or the correctors of the press, it is not for us to decide.

Among the distinguished visitors to Hurdwar at this season of festivity was the noted Begum Sombre, or Sumroo, whose face the colonel compares to that of an old Scotch highlander, and her person to a sackful of shawls, and who declared "that the Duke of Wellington *must* be at heart a Catholic, *because* he emancipated the Catholics!" He also renewed his gastronomic friendship with his friend Bumbo Khan, with whom the recollections of past indigestion did not prevent him from feasting on *mahaseer*, a delicious fish found in this part of the Ganges; and on this occasion his Apician ecstasies are not alloyed by subsequent regrets—"even now the recollection soothes me"—and he recommends such of his readers as are yet ignorant of this luxury to start forthwith for Hurdwar and repair the omission. The fair ended April 13; and the colonel having previously succeeded in disposing of his buggy to a potentate whom he calls "the Kheerea Thunnasir Rajah," (we believe, the ruler of one of the Seik protected states,) and buying a stout Turcomani pony for the hills, started the same day on the road to Suharunpoor. He favours his readers, *en passant*, with some exceedingly original speculations touching the Mosaic deluge, in reference to the hills about Hurdwar, which do not speak very highly for his attainments in geology, though in some other branches of natural history, and particularly in botany, he appears to be no mean proficient. The journey was disturbed by attempts to steal the colonel's new purchase, (which was not, like the rest of the stud, distinguished from the horses of the country by having its tail cut,) and by a quarrel at Secunderpore with a thannadar, or native police magistrate, whose European superior's neglect of the colonel's complaint he charitably attributes to "some (I hope slight) derangement of the stomach." At Suharunpore he visited the well-known botanist Dr Royle, the curator of the Company's botanic garden there, then engaged in those labours on the Flora of the Himmalayas which have been since given to the world; and at Boorea, leaving the British territory, he entered that of the protected Seik states, whose

Page 78

petty chieftains are secured in their semi-independence by the treaty with Runjeet in 1809, which confined the ruler of Lahore to the right bank of the Sutlej. But their reception of the colonel did not appear to indicate any great degree of gratitude for these favours to the British nation, as represented in his person; for not one of the five Seik chiefs, "each of whom has his own snug little fort close to the city," would supply him with a lodging; and it was only by perseverance and ingenuity that he secured a place to lay his head, after long wrangling with the subordinate functionaries. Matters improved, however, as he advanced further into the country; and, at the little mountain-city of Nahun, he was most hospitably received and entertained by the young rajah, Futteh Pur Grass Sing, "who had been educated almost entirely under the kind and fatherly superintendence of Captain Murray," the commissioner of the Seik states, and whose frank and gentlemanlike manners, "so unlike those of the ghee-fed wretches of the plains," did honour to his guardian's precepts. The town of Nahun, which is 3600 feet above the level of the sea, is described as clean and well paved; and the rajah, whose revenue had been increased under the management of Captain Murray from 37,000 to 53,000 rupees, was highly popular, and by the colonel's account deservedly so, with his subjects. He earnestly pressed "the fat gentleman" (whose caution in mounting an elephant, while two men on the other side of the howdah balanced his weight, vehemently excited his risibility) to return to the plains through Nahun, and have a month's shooting with him in the valley; but whether the invitation was accepted or not remains untold, as—"Alas for the literature of the age! when I was ordered to Bundelcund, a vile thief entered my tents at night, and robbed me of my second volume; and thus did I lose my carefully written account of the sub-Himalayan range, which cost me fully eight months' labour."

Thus abruptly terminates the first part of the colonel's travels, and at the commencement of the second we find him crossing the Jumna to Calpee, the frontier town of Bundelcund, a wild and unsettled province, prolific in Thugs and bad characters of all sorts, and principally inhabited by a peculiar race called Bundelas, who have never been perfectly reconciled to the British supremacy, and who, at this present writing, are kept quiet only by the presence of a force of 15,000 men. Calpee is said to be the hottest place in India, the thermometer in June, according to the colonel, standing even on a cloudy day at 145 degrees—a degree of heat almost incredible; and it is also the principal mart for the cotton, which the rich black soil of Bundelcund produces of finer quality than any other part of Hindostan. But, notwithstanding its commercial importance, the town was at this time left to the government of a native Darogah or chief of police, the nearest European courts being at Hameerpore, thirty miles distant, and the

Page 79

state of society seems to have been somewhat singular. Among its most conspicuous members is "Gopal, the celebrated robber, murderer, and smuggler, a tall athletic man about forty-two years of age, with a most hideous muddy eye, having the glare of hell itself. It is said that he has always fifteen servants in stated pay, and can in a few hours command the services of three hundred armed and desperate men; and the strength and vigour of the Calpee police may be estimated by the fact, that he has been known to walk into the house of a rich merchant in the centre of the town, when he was surrounded by his servants and family; he has very coolly selected the gold bangles of his children, and silenced the trembling remonstrances of the Mahajun by threats of vengeance; nor is this a solitary instance. When he murders, he is equally above all concealment; as in the recent case of a sepahee returning home with his savings, who was waylaid and murdered by our hero in open day. He very coolly gave himself up, acknowledging that he had killed the sepahee, who had first assaulted him. It was proved on the trial, that the sepahee was wholly unarmed, and he was condemned to be hung by the court of Hameerpore on his own confession, but released, *from want of evidence*, by the Sudder Court at Calcutta. Their objection was excellent, though curious; that if his confession was taken, it must be taken altogether, and not that part only which could lead to his conviction. He was released, and now walks about in his Sunday clothes, a living evidence of British tenderness."

Gopal was not the only amiable character with whom the colonel became acquainted at Calpee, as he sought and obtained an interview with a famous Thug approver, who had retired from the active exercise of his profession, and was travelling the country in company with a party of police, denouncing his former associates to justice. We cannot help suspecting, both from the traits recorded of him, and from the vicinity of Calpee to his former residence at Jalone, that this personage was no other than the celebrated Ameer Ali, whose adventures formed the ground of Captain Meadows Taylor's well-known "Confessions of a Thug;" and as a pendant to the already published descriptions of him, we here quote the impression he made upon the colonel. "I expected to see a great man, but at the first glance I saw that I was in the presence of a master. The Thug was tall, active, and slenderly formed; his head was nearly oval; his eye most strongly resembled that of a cobra di capello; its dart was perfectly wild and maniacal, restless, brilliant, metallic, and concentrated." The colonel had a narrow escape from irretrievably affronting this eminent professor of murder, by unguardedly enquiring whether he was in any way cognizant of a trifling robbery by which the colonel himself had been a sufferer. "No, sir!" he exclaimed with a look which might have frozen a less innocent querist; "murder,

Page 80

not robbery, is my profession ... and none but the merest novices would descend so low as to rob a tent or a dwelling-house.” The colonel, however, expresses a shrewd suspicion, from circumstances which had come to his knowledge, that his distinguished visitor’s *esprit de corps* led him to deviate from truth in this particular—a belief in which Captain Taylor’s pages fully bear him out.

The colonel’s movements, after quitting Calpee and its attractive circles, appear to have been somewhat desultory. We find him, successively, at Murgaon or Murgong, Julalpore, Keitah, &c., without being told what decided his route; but from some subsequent remarks, it appears probable that he was engaged on engineering service by order of Government. Between Julalpore and Keitah he fell in with a gang of *nutts*[9] or gipsies, whom the beauty of their women (a point to which the colonel is always alive) did not prevent him from suspecting of an intention to practise *thuggee* on his own portly person—a belief in which he was confirmed by hearing them speak *in another tongue* among themselves—no doubt the *Ramasee*, or cant language of the Thugs, subsequently made known to the world at large by the investigations of Major Sleeman. At Goraree he purchased some small cups, carved from the variegated serpentine of the rock on which the town is built; but, on proposing to employ the artist in making some larger vases, “he told me that he was a very poor man, and his efforts had never been directed to larger patterns; meaning to infer that it was impossible he could either try or succeed!” Such is Hindoo nature!

[9] The Indian gipsies are several times mentioned in the journal of Bishop Heber, who says they are called Kunjas in Bengal. Colonel Davidson also mentions a race in Bundelcund called Kunjurs who were in the habit, as he was informed by the Bramins, of “catching lizards, scorpions, snakes, and foxes,” which, if it is meant that they use them for food, is analogous to the omnivorous propensities of the gipsies.

Churkaree, the capital of Ruttun Sing Buhadoor, one of the principal of the numerous rajahs among whom Bundelcund is divided, is described as “prettily situated on the side of the hill, over a lake covered with the white lotus flower, and having a very fine appearance from a distance, as most of the houses have their upper stories whitewashed, and are seen peeping through the dark-green leafy trees of the country, but the town, which contains perhaps 15,000 souls, of whom 1000 may be Mussulmen, is very straggling, irregular, and dirty.” The male population were all fiercely mustached, and loaded with arms; but their repulsive exterior was more than compensated by the charms of the other sex, all of whom wore immense hollow ankle bangles of zinc, filled with bits of gravel, which tinkled as they walked. “I have never seen so many well-formed and handsome women together as I did at the wells outside the town, drawing water

Page 81

a la Rebecca. Some of their faces were strikingly intelligent, and their figures eminently graceful. The population is almost purely Hindoo; and I think the Hindoo females are more delicate in their forms than the Mussulmanees." The Rajah was, however, absent on a sporting excursion, and the darogah refused to provide the colonel with lodgings, alleging his master's orders that no Feringhis should be allowed in the town; and it was not till after a long altercation, of which the colonel gives himself greatly the best, that he succeeded in finding quarters in the house of a *bunneea* or grocer. But the next day's march (for Bundelcund is almost as thickly set with sovereign princes as Saxony itself) carried him out of the realm of this inhospitable potentate into the territories of the Rajah of Jalone, the once noted patron and protector of Thuggee, by whose agent he was most politely received at Mahoba, a once splendid but now ruined city, celebrated for its artificial lakes, which in long-past times were formed by a famous Rajpoot prince named Purnal, by damming up the narrow gorges of the hills. "Never had I seen, in the plains of India, a prospect more enchanting! Conceive a beautiful sheet of calm, clear, silvery water, of several miles in circumference, occasionally agitated by the splashing leaps of large fishes, or the gradual alighting of noble swan-like aquatic birds: its margin broken as if by the most skilful artist; now running into the centre, and ending in most romantic low rocky hills, covered with trees and embellished with black, antique Jain temples, deserted probably for hundreds of years, and at present the retreat of the elegant peafowl; in other places embanked with huge blocks of cut granite, embrowned by the shade of magnificent trees, under which small bright Hindoo temples, carefully whitewashed, might be seen in the shade; or bounded by abrupt rocky promontories, surmounted by many-pillared temples in ruins, hanging in the sky. A fine rich sunset gave an exquisite richness and classic magnificence to the scene. Many little boys with rod and line were ensnaring the sweet little *singhee*, or the golden *rohoo* or carp—bringing back to my heart the days, when, stealing from school, I was wont to sit on the rocks of the Dee, at Craglug, near Aberdeen, watching the motion of a float that was not under water once in the twenty-four hours."

The colonel's laudable habit of associating freely, whenever opportunity occurred, with the natives, gave him considerable insight into the state of the country, where the caprices of the native princes were not then much interfered with, and which consequently, as he says, "was pretty much in the situation of the Emerald Isle;" and verily if the tale told him by the Hindoo *gosain* or priest at Jourahoo, of the murder of his predecessor in the temple, and the impunity of the robbers, were correctly related, the Bundelas have not much to learn in the arts of bloodshed and depredation. "This village being a sort of corner to the territories of several Rajahs, robberies, murders, and all other diversions, are of daily occurrence; and when enquiries are made; each territory throws the blame on its neighbour." The maxim of government most current in Bundelcund, both with rulers and ruled, seems indeed to have been—

Page 82

"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That those should take who have the power,
And those should keep who can;"

for while this strange confusion of *meum* and *tuum* prevailed among the peasantry, the country was ruined by the oppressive and irregular exactions of the rajahs, both zemindars and cultivators flying from their habitations to escape the levying of the rents, which were often demanded more than once by different collectors. At Chundla, the colonel was lodged in the house of an opulent zemindar, who had absconded for the reason just given; "and one of the thanna servants told me, that, by those means, Bundelcund was depopulated"—a statement corroborated by the numerous ruined brick houses remaining in the towns among the miserable hovels of the present day. The rajahs of Bundelcund are, almost without exception, of Rajpoot lineage, and thus of a different race from their Bundela subjects; but the condition of the country is much the same wherever it is left under the sway of the Hindoo princes, who are exempt even from the partial restraint which the Koran imposes on the despotism of Mahomedan rulers. The only effectual cure for the evils reigning in Bundelcund will be its formal incorporation with the dominions of the Company—a consummation which, from the refractory spirit shown in the province after our losses in Affghanistan, is probably not far distant.

The remainder of the colonel's notes on Bundelcund relate principally to his visits to the ancient hill-fortresses of Ajeegur and Kalingur, both formerly occupied in force by the British, but now—with the exception of a havildar's (sergeant's) party of sepoys posted at the former, and a single company at the latter—garrisoned solely by the *lungoors*, or large black monkeys, whom the colonel found holding solemn assembly in the Jain temples and the hall of audience, built by the famous Rajah Purmal at Ajeegur. While exploring his way along the ruined and overgrown ramparts, he had a narrow escape from the fangs of a large venomous serpent, ("the *Katula Rekula Poda*, No. 7 of Russell,") on which he was on the point of treading, and which, in commendable gratitude for its forbearance; he allowed to glide off unharmed by his fowling-piece; "but he was the first reptile that ever escaped without the chance of losing his life at my hands." On the road to Kalingur he had an interview with a petitioner, who offered him 400 rupees in cash, or a large diamond, for his interest in a certain case then pending before the judge at Bandah; "but I explained to my client that I was not in that line of business, and as I saw he had no intention of insulting me, we parted friends." Kalingur, which was taken by the British after a long siege in 1812, stands on a rock towering "upwards of 850 feet above the plain below, and probably about 3000 feet above the level of the sea;" but its strength as a fortress is as nothing in comparison

Page 83

to its sanctity, which entitles every one, who resides there only as long as it takes to milk a cow, to especial beatitude—the object of veneration being a *lingam* of black stone enshrined in a temple, the guardianship of which is jointly vested in five resident families of Bramins. “At this time,” says the colonel, “the place is not worth keeping, the country being so thoroughly impoverished and desolate;” and he accordingly, after viewing the marvels of the locality, pursued his way to Banda, and thence *laid a dak* (or travelled by palanquin with relays of bearers) to Calpee, “there to sit from nine to four, writing filthy accounts of bricks and mortar, square feet, cubic feet, and running feet, rupees, annas, and pie; squabbling with wrinkled unromantic villains, whose cool-tempered and overwhelming patience amply deserve their unlawful gains—I mean as labourers in the vineyard of villany.”

“A sporting excursion in Oude,” in the spring of 1836, comes next in order of time; and in regular order we accordingly take it, though it has pleased either Mr Colburn or the colonel to place it after the voyage down the Ganges. The colonel left Lucknow, March 2; and three days later the whole party rendezvoused at Khyrabad, consisting of “Mrs, Miss, and Brigadier Churchill, Colonel Arnold, Major Cureton, Lieut. Waugh, Dr Ross of her Majesty’s 16th Lancers, and the writer of these amiable records;” to whom was soon after added, in the capacity of guide and hanger-on, “Sam Lall, by birth a Chuttree or Rajpoot, by profession a zemindar, and by inclination a sycophant and shikarree, (hunter.)” Indian field sports, with their concomitants of hogs, hogdeer, jungles, elephants, tigers, and nullahs, have been of late years rendered so familiar to stay-at-home travellers, that we shall but concisely notice the colonel’s exploits in this forest campaign, which present no remarkable novelty, though detailed *con amore*, and with the two-fold zest of a sportsman and an epicure. With all deference, indeed, to the colonel, we have shrewd doubts whether the latter feeling was not the predominant one; for the death of a tiger, nine of which fell during the three weeks’ foray before the rifles of himself and his companions, is evidently chronicled with less of heart-felt enthusiasm than characterises his encomiums on the hogdeer soup, the delicate floricans and black partridges, (in the preparation of bread sauce, for which, with his own hands, he earned immortal renown,) and the other materials for good living poured forth from the cornucopia of an Indian game-bag. His gastronomic fervour during this jaunt reaches at times an ecstatic pitch, which, as old Weller says, “verges on the poetical.” “For him (the gastronomist) the dark rocks and arid plains of the dry Dekkan produce their purple grapes, and cunning but goodly bustard; for him burning Bundelcund its wonderful rock pigeon and ortolan inimitable; the Jumna, most ancient of rivers, its large rich Kala banse, and tasty crabs; for him yields the low and marshy Terace her elegant florican; the mighty Gunga its melting mahaseer; the Goomtee its exquisite mullet. And shall he not eat and delight in her fruits? ... Let the ass eat its thistles, and the swallow its flies *au naturel*; you and I, reader, know better!”

Page 84

One day, while wading on their elephants through a deep marsh in pursuit of a tiger, the chasseurs suddenly stumbled upon a pleasant family party—"a labyrinth of huge boa-constrictors or pythons, sound asleep, floating on a bed of crushed *nurkool*, (a gigantic species of reed,) the least of them twenty feet long, and two feet in circumference. A more beautiful natural mosaic cannot be imagined: they appeared, from being wet, as if recently varnished. Perhaps they were from twenty to thirty in number, and occupied a spot of about twenty feet square. No sooner did the dreadful glistening reptiles hear the click of my rifle, and feel its ball, than they shot forth with all their vigour, and diving, disappeared in an instant under the matted roots of the tall *nurkool*, and, although I tried, I could not get another glimpse." One of these giant serpents, seventeen feet long, and eighteen inches in circumference, which the colonel calls a small one, was shot a few days afterwards by Colonel Arnold. The marsh and jungle swarmed with peacocks, jungle-fowl, and wild-fowl of all sorts, affording glorious sport; and, besides the smaller kinds of deer, several specimens occurred of a magnificent species of stag with twelve-tynd horns, called *baru-singa*—apparently allied to the *sambur* and *rusa* of the Dekkan. The comparatively small number of tigers killed was, however, a source of disappointment; since the utility of these battues, in which the superior fire-arms and appliances of the English are brought into action for the destruction of these ferocious animals, may be estimated from the damage done by them in the wilder parts of India, "which is beyond the belief even of Indo-European residents, and must, consequently, appear an exaggeration to distant Englishmen. General (then Captain) Briggs, when resident at Dhoolia in Candeish, in 1821, where his potails, or head men, were obliged to keep a register of the oxen (exclusive of sheep and goats) destroyed in their villages, reported that no less than 21,000 had been killed in three years! As no register is kept in Oude, it is impossible to register the number."

On the banks of the Mohun-nuddee the party was joined by Rajah Ruttun Sing, a chief holding a considerable tract of country under the suzerainty of Oude, who favoured them with his company while they remained in his district—a compliment which he expected to be acknowledged, as he distinctly intimated on taking leave, by the gift of a valuable fowling-piece; but this modest request was parried by the rejoinder, that none of their guns were good enough for his highness! During one of the halts, an incident occurred which strongly illustrates the inhuman apathy of the Hindoos towards any one not connected with them by the ties of caste. A man was found sitting under a tree near the camp, uttering strange cries, and the servants were desired to order him to withdraw; "they returned, saying carelessly that he was a *nutt*,

Page 85

or gipsy, who had been robbed.” A robbery *from* a gipsy was such a strange contradiction of terms, that the colonel went personally to enquire into the matter, when he was horror-struck by finding, that the man had been, not only plundered of his earnings by a band of Bunjarras, but frightfully mutilated and wounded, a trifle which the Hindoo servants had not thought worth mentioning. The poor wretch’s arm was amputated by Dr Ross; and, being carried with the camp and carefully tended, he was at last dismissed, with a fair prospect of recovery, and with a gift of sixty rupees subscribed among the party; but not even the example of the *sahibs* could teach the Hindoos humanity, and only the peremptory commands of Dr Ross could prevail upon his bearer to place a mattress under the sufferer! On their return march, the party were further honoured by visits from several rajahs and zemindars, all of whom were “loud in complaint against the extortions of the aumils, who constantly attempted to gather more, and sometimes twice and a half as much, as the stipulated rent, in consequence of which the zemindars were compelled to rebel;” a view of the political condition of Oude which naturally results from its anomalous position, under a sovereign nominally independent, who is at once too weak to control his own subjects, and fearful of diminishing the shadow of authority left to him by calling in the only available aid. On the 29th of March the party again reached Khyrabad, the appointed place of their separation, as it had been of their meeting; and here the narrative, as before, breaks off abruptly.

The concluding part, in order of time, of the colonel’s lucubrations, contains his narrative of a voyage on the Ganges, from Allahabad, by Dhacca, to Calcutta; but the features and incidents of this navigation have been so frequently described by travellers of all sorts and kinds, from Bishop Heber and Captain Bellew to our own much-esteemed Kerim Khan, that we shall devote but brief space to it. He quitted Allahabad, as he informs us, December 5, 1839, so deeply regretted by the native population, that they determined to perpetuate his memory by the erection of a new ghat or landing-place, every brick of which was to be stamped with the letter D—a distinction which he had, no doubt, deserved by the *bonhomie* towards both Hindoo and Moslem, which forms one of the most favourable traits in the jovial colonel’s character. The Tribeenee Ghat, immediately below Allahabad, where the streams of the Jumna and the Ganges unite, is one of the holiest spots in India; to which pilgrims resort from all quarters, in the hope of securing paradise by dying at the junction of the sacred waters. The spirit of religious exclusiveness prevails here as well as in other places; and the colonel mentions his having been once an eyewitness of some rough treatment received by a *chumar*, or leather-dresser, (one of the lowest castes,) at the hands of some high caste sepoys, who were highly

Page 86

indignant that so mean a carcass should presume to defile the holy ground! Leaving the ghats and devotees behind him, however, and floating down the stream in his capacious three-roomed budgerow, he passed Mirzapoor, Chunar, and even the holy city of Benares, (which he perversely spells Bunarus,) without halting; and reached without adventure or mishap the mouth of the Goomtee, where his attention was attracted by a party of eighteen young elephants, the property of the king of Oude, bathing in the river. "Of all animals, saving the Bundela goat, there is none that suffers more from change of climate than the elephant: of the numbers caught on the eastern frontier, probably not one in four survives a journey to Delhi. Bred in the darkest and most gloomy forests, they are in a great measure sheltered from heat by the eternal moisture of the cool shady bower under which they rove; and are then expected to bear all on a sudden the most intense heat, acting directly on their jet-black skins, when brought into the plains of Upper India. A very clever native told me he could make money by any thing but young elephants." Another curious fact relative to the elephant, mentioned in a subsequent chapter on the authority of Captain Broadfoot of the Madras commissariat, is, that both wild and tame elephants are extremely subject to a pulmonary disease, which proved on dissection to be tubercular—in fact, consumption! It was found to yield, however, to copious bleedings, if taken in its early stages.

The colonel's pages, at this point, are filled with digressions and dissertations on subjects somewhat miscellaneous—Aberdeen pale ale—the enormities of Warren Hastings' government—the late James Prinsep and the moral precepts of the Rajah Piyadasee—and a most incomprehensible rhapsody about "a red mustached member of the Bengal civil service," of which we profess ourselves utterly incompetent to make either head or tail, and strongly recommend the colonel to expunge it if the work reaches another edition. The voyage presents no incidents but the usual ones of pelicans, alligators, and porpoises: and on January 15, he arrived at Dhacca, "the once famous city of muslins." But the muslin trade has now almost wholly disappeared; and with it "the thousands of families of muslin weavers, who, from the extreme delicacy of their manufacture, were obliged to work in pits, sheltered from the heat of the sun and changes of the weather; and even after that precaution, only while the dew lay on the ground, as the increasing heat destroyed the extremely delicate thread." The jungle is in consequence advancing close upon the city, which is thus rendered almost uninhabitable from malaria—the only manufacturers which continue to flourish being those of violins, bracelets, made from a peculiar shell resembling the *Murex tulipa*, and —idols for Hindoo worship!

Page 87

The colonel remained at Dhacca till February 4, awaiting ulterior orders from headquarters, and had, consequently, abundance of leisure for making himself acquainted with the place and its people. These researches, however, were not always unattended with danger; for on one occasion, while viewing the city from an elevated building, a piece of plaster was struck from the cornice near where he stood by a matchlock ball—a delicate hint that the Mussulmans disliked being overlooked. The Nawab, apparently the son of Bishop Heber's acquaintance, Shumseddowlah, still resides in the palace of his ancestors, but is described as an extravagant, uneducated youth, who has mortgaged away his income from 5000 to 200 rupees per mensem—that is, from L.6000 to L.240 per annum. The inhabitants were a mixture of almost all the creeds and nations of Asia—Chinese, Thibetans, Mugs from Arracan, Burmese, Malays, *etc.*; but the great majority are Hindoos, whose sanguinary goddess Kalee is adored in not less than fifty temples. The Greeks and Armenians also have each a church, the services of which, as described by the colonel, are conducted in much the same form as at Constantinople:—"But among the (Armenian) matrons only was any appearance of devotion visible; one of them, most gorgeously appareled in the Armenian fashion, with a magnificent tiara of jewels on her brow, and wearing a superb shawl, threw herself on the ground, with her head sunk between her arms, towards the altar, and remained in that position nearly five minutes. The others, being dressed a *l'Anglaise*, with stiff stays and fashionable bonnets, could not afford to indulge in such a position." The Armenians were formerly numerous in Dhacca, and are still an influential and wealthy body; the Greeks are now "few and far between," but in the palmy days of Dhacca they were a flourishing community.

Dhacca was a place abounding in strange characters from all parts of the world; and among others whom the colonel encountered, was a singular specimen of a cosmopolite, a native of Fez, who called himself a Moslem, but whom our friend vehemently suspected of being a Jew. He had been almost as great a traveller as his countryman the famous Sheikh Ebn Batuta, whose wanderings are immortalized in the pages of Maga,[10] and came last from Moulmein, with a cargo of black pepper and rubies. He had resided seventeen years in India, and proposed to the colonel, whom he claimed as a brother, "since from his own home he could reach England in ten days," that they should jointly freight a vessel with valuables, and go *home* together! And, among other scattered facts, a casual encounter with some Chinese in the employ of the Assam Tea Company, whom the colonel considerably astonished by addressing them in their own language, introduces "the very curious fact," that at Tipperah, a civil station not more than fifty or sixty miles from Dhacca, the natives have from time immemorial used the tea which grows there abundantly,

Page 88

and is prepared after a fashion of their own. “And yet” (continues the colonel—and we fear there is too much truth in his remarks) “the existence of the tea-plant is but a recent discovery! Any other nation would have established a tea-manufactory at Tipperah, immediately after the first settlement, and the Yankees would have ‘progressed’ railroads and steam-boats for its success. India is at this moment a mine of unexplored wealth. No sooner had steam-boats appeared than coal has been discovered in every direction!” The manufacture of native iron in Bengal, which had been pressed upon Lord Hastings, as the colonel seems to imply, by himself, and at first warmly adopted by him, was objected to in the council, and ultimately abandoned, “on the grounds that it would militate against the commercial interests of Great Britain—that is, against the profits of those India stockholders, possessing votes, who followed the trade of ironmongers!” There is many a true word spoken in jest; and this and other side-cuts of the colonel at the shortsighted proceedings of the Bahadurs at Calcutta, though sometimes queerly worded, contain now and then some unpalatable facts. The administration of the present Governor-General has shown at least some *promise* of a better state of things—and if the impulse now given to the development of the resources of India be steadily followed up, this reproach will ere long be taken away. The receipt of his final orders, however, which pointed out China as his destination, put an end to the colonel’s speculations; and re-embarking on the stream of the Booree Gunga, he passed, with little incident worth noticing, through the numerous branches of the river, and the picturesque jungles of the Soonderbunds, and arrived safely, after an absence of twenty-one years, at the city of palaces—and there we leave him.

[10] May 1841.

The subject of the manufactures and products of India, is not, however, the only point connected with the internal administration, respecting which some inconvenient facts find their way to light in the colonel’s pages—and with one or two of these revelations, we shall conclude our extracts. The majority of those Anglo-Indian employes, who have favoured the world with “Reminiscences” and “Narratives,” are singularly free from the charge of what is familiarly termed “telling tales out of school.” According to their account, nowhere is justice so efficiently administered, or its functionaries so accessible, as in our Indian empire; but here, whether from the native frankness of the colonel’s disposition, or from his having nothing more to hope or fear from the old Begum in Leadenhall Street, we find this important subject placed, on several occasions, in rather a different light from that in which it is usually represented. It is well known that Sir David Ochterlony, a short time before his death, discovered by mere accident that he was enrolled as a pensioner to a large amount

Page 89

on the civil list of almost every native prince in Upper India, from the emperor of Delhi downwards—his principal moonshee, or native secretary, having thrown out intelligible hints, as though from his master, that such douceurs would not be without their use in securing his powerful interest at Calcutta—the moonshee himself quietly pocketing the proceeds. This was certainly an outrageous instance; but it is the direct interest of every native subordinate to screen his own misdeeds and extortions, by promoting to the utmost, in his European superior, that inaccessibility to which he is naturally but too much inclined—and the extent to which this system of exclusion is carried, may be inferred from the following anecdote. The colonel had been requested by a native landholder of high respectability, to introduce him to the house of a civilian; and on asking why he could not go by himself, was told, “I dare not approach the very compound of the house he lives in! If his head man should hear that I ventured to present myself before the gentleman without his permission, he would immediately harass me by some false complaint, or even by instituting an enquiry into the very title-deeds of my estate, which might, however falsely, terminate in my ruin. It is not long since I paid eleven hundred rupees to —— to suppress false claims, which, if they had actually gone into court, would have cost me ten times the sum.”

Of the practical effects of criminal punishments, the colonel does not speak more highly. “In the real Hindoostanee view of the subject, a convict in chains is nearly a native gentleman—a little roue, perhaps—employed on especial duties in the Company’s service, for which he is well fed, and has little labour. A jail-bird can easily be distinguished after the first six months, by his superior bodily condition. On his head maybe seen either a kinkhab (brocade) or embroidered cap, or one of English flowered muslin, enriched with a border of gold or silver lace. Gros de Naples is coming into fashion, but slowly.... Was he low-spirited, he could, for a trifling present, send to the bazar, and enjoy a nautah from the hour the judge went to sleep till daybreak next morning—nay, under proper management, he might be gratified by the society of his wife and family.... See him at work, the burkandauze (policeman) is smoking *his* chillum, while he and his friends are sound asleep, *sub tegmine fagi*. All of a sudden there is an alarm—the judge is coming! up they all start, and work like devils for ten or fifteen seconds, and then again to repose. This is working in chains on the roads! In fact, after a man is once used to the comforts of an Indian prison, there’s no keeping him out!”

All this, no doubt, is broad caricature—but “*ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?*” a motto which the colonel could not do better than adopt for any future edition of his eccentric lucubrations. And so Rookhsut! Colonel Sahib! may your favourite tomata sauce never pall upon your palate; and though perhaps you would hardly thank us for the usual oriental good wish, that your shadow may continue to increase, may it at least never be diminished by that worst of all fiends, indigestion!

Page 90

* * * * *

BELFRONT CASTLE.

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

One half of the world was surprised that Reginald Belfront married Jane Holford—and the other half was equally surprised that Jane Holford married Reginald Belfront; for, considering the experience that both halves of the world must have had, it is amazing how subject they still are to surprise. To us, who have not the pleasure to belong to either half, there is very little surprising in the matter. Reginald had been for some time on a visit at the house of a distant relation—old Sir Hugh de Mawley. He had wandered through the great woods of the estate, and found them very tiresome; had strolled in the immense park, and found it dull; and, in the long evenings, had sat in the stately hall, and listened to the endless, whispered anecdotes of his host, and found them both intolerable. No wonder he started with joyful surprise when, one day in the drawing-room, he heard the rustle of a silk gown; caught the glancing of some beautiful real flowers on the top of a bright-green bonnet; and, more wonderful than all, the smile of the prettiest lips, and the glances of the clearest eyes he had ever seen in his life. The gown, the bonnet, the smiles, and eyes, all belonged to Jane Holford; and Reginald, who had, up to this time, made no great progress in the study of comparative physiology, now made such rapid strides, that he could have told you every point in which the possessor of the above-named attributes differed from the stiff and prim Miss de Mawley, who had hitherto been the sole representative of the female sex in Mawley Court. The neck and shoulders—the chin—nose—arms—ankles—feet—not to mention the hair and eyebrows—of the new specimen, were minutely studied; and, in spite of the usual antipathy he entertained against all scientific pursuits, he felt a strong inclination to be the owner of it himself, in order to pursue his investigations at full leisure. He was no genius—hated books—disliked clever people—but prided himself on his horsemanship, his play at quarterstaff, his personal strength, and, above all, in his fine old castle in a somewhat inaccessible part of Yorkshire, which had remained in the possession of his family ever since the Conquest. Jane, on the other hand, had no castle to boast of; and probably had no ancestor whatever at any period preceding the year 1750, when her grandfather had bought an estate near Mawley Court—which had gone on improving with the improvement of the times, till her father found himself the possessor of a rent-roll of fifteen hundred a year, four sons, and six grown-up daughters. It will easily be believed that no objections to the match were raised on the part of a middle-aged gentleman, with so many reasons for agreeing to the marriage settlement proposed by Reginald Belfront; consisting, as it did, of a jointure to the widow, and the use of Belfront Castle

Page 91

for life, without the remotest allusion to any portion or other contingent advantage on the other side; and as Jane herself was, if possible, still more satisfied on the subject than her father, all the arrangements were rapidly made, and in less than three months after the apparition of the silk gown and other etceteras in the drawing-room, the indissoluble knot was tied, and Miss Cecilia, the second daughter, was advanced to the dignity of Miss Holford, vice Jane—promoted.

The church was all decked out with roses and other pleasing emblems of the unfading nature of connubial bliss; wreaths of sunflowers, with the same comfortable moral, were hung up over the great gate of Mawley Court; while Miss de Mawley, representing in her own person the evergreens omitted in the garlands, received the happy couple on their return from the ceremony at the head of all the female domestics, from the housekeeper down to the kitchenmaid, and led the bride and bridegroom to the table in the great hall, where old Sir Hugh was sitting in great state. They kneeled down before his chair; and, laying his hand on their heads, he began blessing; but not having practised that style of oratory so much as he ought, it rapidly degenerated into a grace—and, as lunch in the mean time was brought in, and the Holford family, and one or two of the neighbours who had been present at the ceremony, had now arrived, the eloquence of Sir Hugh was not altogether thrown away. There were several speeches and toasts, and sundry attempts at jocularities; and Sir Hugh began the story of the French countess and the waterfall at Fountainbleau; and Reginald availed himself of the somnolency of the rest of the party to slip out with his bride without being observed, just as the royal family began to suspect the secret—and, long before the incensed husband sent the challenge, the happy pair were careering onward as fast as the postboy could drive, on the first stage of their wedding tour.

A month afterwards they were in a country inn in Wales. The window at which they sat commanded a view of the beautiful vale of Cwmcwyllychly—a small river glided down in winding mazes, hiding itself behind wooded knolls, and brawling over rocks in the most playful and picturesque manner imaginable. The sun had begun to set, and was taking a last look at the prospect, with his vast chin rested on the top of Penchymcrwm, presenting to the poetical mind an image of a redfaced farmer looking over a five-barred gate—every thing, in short, that is generally met with in Tourists' Guides, as constituting a splendid view, was assembled on this favoured spot; and yet Jane heaved a deep sigh, and appeared to take no notice of the landscape.

"You're tired, my love," said Reginald; "you have walked too far up these Welsh mountains."

"I hope to get used to climbing," answered Jane; "there are plenty of hills at Belfront—aren't there?"

“Yes, we have plenty of hills; but why don’t you call it home, Jane?”

Page 92

"Because I have never lived there," she replied; "and a place can scarcely be called home that one has never seen."

"But you have never said you wished to see it."

"Oh, but I have wished it all the same—may we—may we go—home?"

She said the word at last, and Reginald was delighted.

"Home! to be sure—to-morrow, at daybreak; for, to tell you the truth, I don't care sixpence for fine views—in fact, I don't think there is any difference between any two landscapes—except that there may be hills in one, and none in another, or woods, or a river—but they are all exactly the same in reality. So, let us go home, my love, as fast as we can, or I'm very much afraid Mr Peeper won't like it."

"Mr Peeper?" enquired Jane. "Who is Mr Peeper?"

"You will know him in good time," said Reginald; "and I hope he will like you."

"I hope he will—I hope all your friends will like me—I will do every thing in my power to please them."

"You're a very good girl, Jane; and Mr Peeper can't help but be pleased, and I am glad of it; for it ought to be our first study to make ourselves agreeable to *him*."

"Agreeable to Mr Peeper!" thought Jane. "How strange that I never was told about him before this moment! Does he live in the castle, Reginald?" she asked.

"Certainly. One of his family has lived there ever since one of mine did; so there is a connexion between us of a few hundred years."

"Have you any other friends who live in the castle?" enquired the bride.

"I don't know whether Phil Lorimer is there just now or not; he has a room whenever he comes; and a knife and fork at table."

"Who is he?"

"A capital fellow—full of wit—and makes funnier faces and better songs than any man in Yorkshire. You will like Phil Lorimer."

"And I hope he will like me!"

"If he don't, I'll break every bone in his body."

“Oh! I beg you won’t,” said the bride with a smile, and looking up in Reginald’s face to assure herself he spoke in joke. It was as earnest a face as if it had been of cast-iron; and she saw that Mr Lorimer’s only chance of preserving a whole skin was to like her with all his might.

“Is there any one else?”

“There’s Mr Peeper’s assistant, Mark Lutter—a clever man, and a great scholar. I hate scholars, so he dines in the servants’ hall, or far down the table—below the salt.”

“Are you serious?” enquired Jane.

“Do you not like scholars?”

“What’s the use of them? I never could see what they were good for—and, besides, Mr Peeper hates them too.”

“Then why does he keep this man as his assistant?”

“Because if he didn’t, the fellow would rebel.”

“Well, you could turn him off.”

“We never turn any body off at Belfront Castle. If they go of their own accord, we punish them for it if we can—if they stay, they are welcome. Mr Peeper must look to it, or Lutter will make a disturbance.”

Page 93

"What a curious place this castle must be," thought Jane, "and what odd people they are that live in it!" She asked no more questions, but determined to restrain her curiosity till she could satisfy it on the spot; and, luckily, she had not long to wait. Next day they started on their homeward way. As they drew nearer their destination, Jane's anxiety to gain the first glimpse of her future home increased with every mile. She had, of course, formed many fancy pictures of it in her own mind; and, as love lent the brush and most obligingly compounded the colours, there can be no doubt they made out a very captivating landscape of it between them.

"At the top of the next hill," said Reginald, "you will see the keep."

Jane stretched her head forward, and looked through the front window as if she could pierce the hill that lay between her and home. On went the horses; but the next hill seemed an incredible way off; it was now getting late, and the shadows of evening, like a flock of tired black sheep, began to lie down and rest themselves on the vast dreary moor they were travelling over. At last Jane felt that they were beginning an ascent; and a sickly moon, that seemed to have undergone a severe operation, and lost nearly all her limbs, lifted up her pale face in the sky. The wind, too, began to whistle in long low gusts, and Reginald, who was not of a poetical temperament, as we have already observed, was nearly asleep. They reached the hill top at last, and a great expanse of rugged and broken country lay before them.

"Where is it?—on which hand?" said Jane.

"Straight before you," replied the husband; "it is only three miles off; the high-road turns off to the left, but we go through fields right on."

Jane looked with almost feverish anxiety. At a good distance in front, rose a tall black structure, like the chimney of a shot manufactory—a single, square, gigantic tower—throwing a darker mass against the darkened sky, and sicklied o'er on one of the faces with the yellow-green moonlight. There were no lights in it, nor any sign of habitation; and Jane would have indulged in various enquiries and exclamations, if the carriage had allowed her; but it had by this time left the main road, and sank up to the axles in the ruts; it bounded against stones, and wallowed in mire alternately; and all that she could do, was to hold on by one of the arm rests, as if she had been in the cabin of a storm-toss'd ship.

"For mercy's sake, Reginald, will this last long?" she said, out of breath with her exertions.

"We are about a mile from the drawbridge. I hope they have not drawn it up."

"Could we not get into the castle if they have?"

“We might fall into the moat if we tried the postern.”

“Oh, gracious!—is there a moat?”—and instinctively she put her hand to her throat, for her mother had brought her up with a salutary dread of colds, and she felt a sensation of choking at the very name.

Page 94

At this moment, the agonized carriage, after several groans that would have moved the heart of a highway commissioner, gave a rush downward, and committed suicide in the most determined manner, by dashing its axle on the ground—the wheels endeavouring in vain to fathom the profundity of the ruts, and the horses totally unable to move the stranded equipage. The sudden jerk knocked Reginald's hat over his eyes against the roof of the carriage, and Jane screamed when she felt the top of her bonnet squeezed as flat as a pancake by the same process, but neither of them, luckily, was hurt.

"We must get out and walk," said the husband; "it isn't more than half a mile, and we will send Phil Lorimer, or some of them, for the trunks."

He put his arm round Jane's waist, and helped her over the almost impassable track.

"We must try to get the road mended," said Jane.

"It has never been mended in our time," was the reply; and it was said in a tone which showed that the fact so announced was an unanswerable argument against the proposition of the bride.

"A few stones well broken would do it all," she urged.

"We never break stones at Belfront," was the rejoinder; and in silence, and with some difficulty, they groped their unsteady way. At last they emerged from a thick overgrown copse, in which the accident had happened, and, after sundry narrow escapes from sprained ankles and broken arms, they reached the gate. It was an immense wooden barrier, supported at each end by little round buildings—like a slice of toast laid lengthways between two half pounds of butter. It was thickly studded with iron nails, and the round piers were of massive stone, partly overgrown with ivy, and as solid as if they had been formed of one mass.

"Does any body live in those lodges?" enquired Jane.

"There is a warder in the inner court," said Reginald. "These are merely the supporters of the outer gate."

"And how are we to get in?"

"We must blow, I suppose." And so saying, Reginald lifted up a horn that was hung by an iron chain from one of the piers, and executed a flourish that made Jane put her fingers to her ears.

In a short time the creaking of an iron chain—whose recollection of oil must have been of the most traditionary nature—gave intimation that its intentions were decidedly hospitable; and with many squeaks and grunts the enormous portal turned at last on its hinges, and exposed to view a narrow winding road between two walls, which, in a short



time, conducted the visitors to a long wooden bridge over a piece of stagnant water—the said bridge having only that moment been let down from the lofty position in which its two halves were kept by an immense wooden erection, which bore an awful resemblance to a scaffold. When they got over the bridge, Reginald turned round, and, imprinting a kiss on the pale cheek of the astonished bride, said—

Page 95

“Welcome home, dear Jane. This is Belfront Castle!”

Jane looked round a spacious courtyard, and saw a square of low dark-looking buildings, with the enormous tower she had seen from the top of the hill rearing its thick head above all at one corner. They proceeded across the roughly-paved quadrangle, and entered a low door; ascended three steps, and opened another door. They then found themselves in a large and lofty hall, with fitful flashes of red light flickering on the walls, as the flame of the wood fire on the hearth rose or fell beneath the efforts of a half distinguishable figure, extended at full length on the floor, and puffing the enormous log with a pair of gigantic bellows. In the palpable obscure, Jane could scarcely make out the persons of the occupants of the apartment; but when the flame burnt up a little more powerfully than usual, she observed the figure of a tall man dressed in black, who shook hands with Reginald, and bowed very coldly and formally to her, when he was introduced as Mr Peeper. He seemed about fifty or sixty years of age, but very much enfeebled. He stooped and coughed, and was very infirm in his motions; but when the red glare from the hearth fell upon his eyes, they fixed themselves on Jane with such a piercing expression, that she turned away her face almost in fear. His hair was snow-white, and yet it was impossible to decide whether he was a man of the years we have stated, with the premature appearance of age, or a person of extraordinary longevity, retaining the vigorous eyes and active spirit of youth. However it was, Mr Peeper was too harsh and haughty in his approaches, and exacted too much deference from the youthful bride, to be very captivating at first. He said no welcome to the new-comer, and was stiff and unkind even to the owner of the castle. Candles were soon brought in, and Jane took the opportunity of looking round. The individual who had been busy blowing the fire now rose from his humble position, and was presented to the lady as Phil Lorimer. He bowed and smiled, and was proceeding with a compliment, in which, however, he advanced no further than the summer sun bringing out the roses, when Reginald pushed him out of the hall, with orders to get the luggage brought in from the carriage, and to be back in time for supper. Phil Lorimer seemed a man of thirty, strongly built, with a sweet voice and friendly smile; but what station he filled in the household—whether a servant, a visitor, a poor relation, or what he could be, Jane could not make out, either from his manner or the way he was treated.

“Mr Lorimer is very good-natured—very obliging, to take care of the luggage, I am sure,” said Jane.

“Better that than talking nonsense about roses,” replied Reginald. “Did you expect us this evening, Mr Peeper?”

“I did, Mr Reginald, and have invited a few of the neighbours to meet you.”

“Who are coming?”

“Sir Bryan De Barreilles, Hasket of Norland, Maulerer of Phascald, and old Dr Howlet. They will be here soon, so you had better make haste.”

Page 96

"I had better not appear, love," said Jane; "no ladies are coming, and among so many gentlemen my presence might be awkward."

"By no means," replied the husband. "It wouldn't be right, Mr Peeper, for my wife to be absent from the supper-table?"

"Certainly not. It is to see *her* the neighbours are coming."

Is this Mr Peeper to have the control of all my actions? thought Jane. Who can he be?

She took another glance at the object of her thoughts, but caught his eye fixed on her with the same penetrating brightness as before; and she cast her looks on the ground; and, whether from anger or fear, she felt her cheeks glowing with blushes.

"You will not be long gone, if you please," he said to Jane as she retired to change her dress.

"You don't seem pleased to see us, Mr Peeper," said Reginald, when Jane had gone to her room under the guidance of a very tall old woman, who walked before her, holding out a tremendously long candle, as if it were a sword, and she was at the head of a military procession.

"No, sir," replied Mr Peeper; "I am not pleased with the person you have brought here. You have gone too far from home for a wife. None of the Belfronts have ever married out of Yorkshire, and it may give rise to troubles."

"I am very sorry my wife's relations would not allow me to send for you to perform the ceremony."

"It is a bad omen," said the old man; "my predecessors have married your predecessors without a break since the conquest. It bodes no good."

"I trust no harm will happen, and that you will soon forget the disappointment."

"None of my family forget, but we will not *talk* of it." So saying, he turned away, and arranged a goodly array of bottles on the sideboard. Reginald sat down on an oak chair beside the fire, and gazed attentively into the log.

In the mean time, Jane had followed her gigantic conductor through half a mile of passages, and reached a small room at one end of the quadrangle, and through the window (of which half the panes were broken, as if on purpose) she caught the melodious murmur of a rapid river, that chafed against the foundation walls of the castle. On looking round, the prospect was not very encouraging. Tattered tapestries hung down the walls, and waved in a most melancholy and ghost-like fashion in the wind; the floor was thinly littered over with some plaited rushes, to supply the place of a



carpet; and a few long high-backed oak chairs kept guard against the wall. The fire had died an infant in its iron cradle, the grate; and the curtain of the bed waved to and fro in mournful sympathy with the tapestry round the room. Jane was so cold that she could hardly go through her toilette, simple as it was; but having at last achieved a very slight alteration in her dress, and left her bonnet on the head of an owl, which formed the ornament of one of the high-backed chairs, she endeavoured to retrace her steps; and after a few pauses and mistakes, she found her way once more into the hall.

Page 97

The guests in the mean time were assembled and had seated themselves at table. On Jane's entrance they all rose, and on being respectively named by their host, bowed with cold and stately courtesy, and sat down again. The four strangers seemed all of the same ages, fifty or thereabouts—tall, hale, and dignified in their manners. Sir Bryan de Barreilles had a patch on his right eye; Hasket of Norland a deep scar on his forehead, that cut his left eyebrow into two parts, and gave a very extraordinary expression to his rigid countenance; Maulerer of Phascald had the general effect of very handsome features, marred by the want of his nose; not that there was actually no nose, but that it did not occupy the prominent position it usually holds on the human face divine, but was inserted deep between the cheeks—in fact, was a nose not set on after the fashion of a knocker, but a fine specimen of *basso-relievo*, indented after the manner of Socrates's head on a seal, and would probably have made a very fine impression. Dr Howlet was perfectly blind, and from the tone in which he was addressed by the other gentlemen, Jane concluded he was also very nearly deaf. Besides these, there were present Mr Peeper, at the foot of the table next to Reginald, and on the other side of him a thick square-built man, with a fine hilarious open countenance, who was perhaps of too low a rank to be introduced to the lady of the castle—no other in fact than the redoubtable Mr Lutter, of whom Jane had heard on her journey home.

After the serving men, with some difficulty, had brought in the supper, consisting of enormous joints of meat, hot and cold, and deposited on the sideboard vast tankards of strong ale and other potent beverages, Mr Peeper rose, and folding his hands across his breast, and bending forward his head with every appearance of devotion, muttered some words evidently intended to represent a grace; but so indistinct that it was utterly impossible to make the slightest guess at their meaning, whereupon they all fell to with prodigious activity, and cut and slashed the enormous dishes as if they had been famished for a year. Mr Lutter, after making an observation that true thankfulness was as much shown by moderate enjoyment of good gifts as by long prayers said over them, made a most powerful assault on the cold sirloin, and, of all the party, was the only one who had the politeness to send a helping to Jane. She was tired and hungry, and felt really obliged by the attention, but could scarcely do justice to the viands from surprise at the conversation of the guests.

"Ho, ho!" said Sir Bryan de Barreilles, "I once knew a thing—such a thing it was too—ho! ho!" And partly the vividness of the recollection, and principally an enormous mouthful of beef, produced a long fit of coughing—"twill make you laugh," he continued—"twas a rare feat—ho! ho!—even this lady will be pleased to hear it."

Jane bowed in expectation of an amusing anecdote.

Page 98

“One of my tenants was going to be married; his bride was a very young creature, not more than eighteen, and on the wedding-day, as I always was ready for a joke in those days—ah! ’tis thirty years ago, or more—I asked the bridal party to the Tower. Ho! ho! such laughing we had!—Giles Mallet and Robin Henslow fought with red-hot brands out of the fire, till I thought we should all have died; and Giles—the cleverest fellow and the wittiest, ho! ho!—such a fellow was Giles!—he took up the poker instead of the fire-log, and watched his opportunity, ho! ho!—it was red-hot too—a good stout poker as ever you saw—and ran it clean through his cheek—you heard the tongue fizz! as it licked the hot iron—’twas a famous play. How Robin roared, to be sure, and couldn’t speak plain—ho! ho! Well, the games went on; and nothing would please some of the young ones but we should see the Oubliette. ’Twas a dark hole where my forefathers imprisoned their refractory vassals, and sad stories were told about it—how that voices were heard from the bottom of it, and groans, and sometimes gory heads were seen at the top of it, looking up to the skylight, and struggling to escape, but ever tumbling back into the deep dark hole, with screams and smothered cries; a rare place for a man’s enemies—but it had not been used for many years. Well—nothing would do, but when we were all merry with ale, we should all go and see the Oubliette, and a kiss of the bride was promised to the one who should go down the furthest. Now, the stone steps were very narrow at best; and were all worn away—and that was the best of it—all along the passages we went, and past the dungeon grating, till we came to the open mouth of the Oubliette. Ho! ho! how you’ll laugh. Down a step went one—no kiss from the bride for him—two steps went another—some went down six steps, and one bold fellow went down so far that we lost sight of him in the darkness. Then the bridegroom, a stout young yeoman—thought it shame to let anyone beat him in daring, for so rich a prize as a kiss from the rosy lips of his bride, and down—down—he went—step after step—till finally, far down in the gloom, we heard a loud scream—such a scream—ho! ho! I can’t help laughing yet when I think of it—and in a minute or two, whose voice should we hear but Giles Mallet’s! *There* was Giles, hollowing and roaring for us to send down a rope but *how* he had got down, or *when* he had gone down, nobody knew. However, a rope was got, and merrily, stoutly, we all pulled, but no Giles came up. Instead of him, we drew forth the bridegroom! but such a changed man. His eyes were fixed, and his face as white as silver—his mouth was wide open, and his great tongue went lolling about from side to side—and he shook his head, and mumbled and slavered—he was struck all of a sudden into idiocy, and knew nobody; not even his bride. She was sinking before him, but he never noticed her, but went moaning, and muttering,

Page 99

and shaking his head. Ho! ho! 'twas the comicallest thing I ever saw. And when Giles came up he explained it all. Giles had gone down deeper than any of them, and waited for the others on a ledge in the cavern; and just when the bridegroom reached it, Giles seized him by the leg, and said—'Your soul is mine'—ho! ho! 'Your soul is mine,' said Giles—and the bridegroom uttered only the loud, long scream we had all heard, and stood and shook and trembled. 'Twas a rare feat; and if you had come down last year"—he added, turning to Jane—"you would have seen the bridegroom going from door to door, followed by all the boys in the village—he never recovered. There he went, shake, shaking his head—and gape gaping with his mouth. "Twas good sport to tease him. I've set my dogs on him myself; but he never took the least notice. 'Twas a good trick—I never knew better."

"And the bride?" enquired Jane.

"Oh, she died in a week or two after the adventure! A silly hussy—I wished to marry her, by the left hand, to my forester, but she kept on moping and looking at the idiotical bridegroom, and died—a poor fool."

"Ah! we've grown dull since those merry times," said Hasket of Norland, looking, round the empty hall, and then towards Reginald, as if reproaching him with the absence of the ancient joviality. "There were three men killed at my marriage—in fair give and take fight—in the hall, at the wedding supper. There is the mark of blood on the floor yet."

"I lost my eye at the celebration of a christening," said Sir Bryan de Barreilles. "My uncle of Malmescott pushed it in with the handle of his dagger."

"I got this wound on my forehead at a feast after a funeral," said Hasket of Norland. "I quarreled with Morley Poyntz, and he cut my eyebrow with an axe. 'Twas a merry party in spite of that."

"The Parson of Pynsent jumped on my face at a festival in honour of the birth of Sir Ranulph Berlingcourt's heir," said Maulerer of Phascald. "I had been knocked on the floor by the Archdeacon of Warleileigh, and the Parson of Pynsent trode on my nose. He was the biggest man in Yorkshire, and squeezed my nose out of sight—a rare jovial companion, was the Parson of Pynsent, and many is the joke we have had about the weight of his foot. Ah! we have no fun now—no fighting, no grinning through a horse-collar, no roasting before a fire, no singing"—

"Yes," said Reginald, "we have Phil Lorimer."

"Let him come—let us hear him," said some of the party.

"I hate songs," said Dr Howlet; "and think all ballads should be burned."

“And the writers of them, too,” added Mr Peeper, with a fierce glance towards the fireplace, from which Phil Lorimer emerged.

“Oh no! I think songs an innocent diversion,” said Mr Lutter, “and softening to the heart. Sit near me, Mr Lorimer.”

“Make a face, Phil,” cried the knight; “I would rather see a grin than hear your ballad.”

Page 100

“Jump, Phil,” said Hasket of Norland, applying his fork to Phil’s leg as he passed, “you are a better morris-dancer than a poet.”

Phil, who was imperturbably good-natured, did as he was told. He opened his mouth to a preternatural size, turned one eye to the ceiling, and the other down to the floor, till Sir Bryan was in ecstasies at his achievement. He then sprang to an incredible height in that air, and danced once or twice through the hall, throwing himself into the most grotesque attitudes imaginable, and the table was nearly shaken in pieces by the thumpings with which the party showed their satisfaction.

“Now then, Phil; here’s a cup of sherry-wine—drink it, boy, and sing a sweet song to the lady,” said Reginald.

“Songs are an invention of the devil,” said Mr Peeper.

“Unless they are sung through the nose,” said Mr Lutter, with a sneer.

“You approve of songs then?” inquired Mr Peeper, with a fierce look.

“Certainly,” said Mr Lutter, “when their subject is good, and the language modest.”

“Then you are an atheist,” retorted Mr Peeper.

“What has a ballad to do with atheism?” enquired Mr Lutter, looking angry.

“You approve of wicked songs, and therefore are an atheist.”

“A man is more like an atheist,” retorted Mr Lutter, “who is ungrateful to God for the gift of song, and shuts up the sweetest avenue by which the spirit approaches its Creator. I admire poetry, and respect poets.”

“Any one who holds such diabolic doctrines is not fit to remain in Belfront Castle.”

“Nay,” replied Mr Lutter, “Belfront Castle would be infinitely improved if such doctrines were adopted in it.”

“Gentlemen,” said Reginald, “you are both learned men; and I know nothing about the questions you discuss.”

“Your lady shall judge between us,” said Mr Lutter.

“She shall not,” said Mr Peeper; “I am the sole judge in matters of the kind.”

“Let us hear Phil’s song in the mean time,” said Reginald. “Come, Lorimer.”

“What shall it be?” said Phil.

“Something comic,” said Sir Bryan.

“Something bloody,” said Hasket of Norland.

“Something loving,” said Maulerer of Phascald.

“Will the lady decide for us?” said Phil, with a smile. “Will you have the ‘Silver Scarf,’ madam; or ‘the Knight and the Soldan of Bagdad?’ They are both done into my poor English from the troubadours of Almeigne.”

The lady fixed, at haphazard, on “the Knight and the Soldan of Bagdad:” and Phil prepared to obey her commands. He took a small harp in his hand, and sate down in the vacant chair next to Sir Bryan de Bareilles. The rest of the company composed themselves to listen; and, after a short prelude, Lorimer, in a fine manly voice, began—



Page 101

“Oh, brightly bloom’d the orange flow’r,
And fair the roses round;
And the fountain, in its marble bed,
Leapt up with a happy sound;
And stately, stately was the hall,
And rich the feast outspread;
But the Soldan of Bagdad sigh’d full sore,
And never a word he said.
Never a word the Soldan said,
But many a tear let fall;
He had tried all the joys that life could give,
And was weary of them all.
The Soldan lift up his heavy eye—
And to that garden fair,
A stranger enter’d with harp in hand,
And with a winsome air;
Long locks of yellow molten gold
Hung over his cheek so brown,
And a red mantle of Venice silk
Fell from his shoulders down.
A weary wanderer he did seem,
Come from a distant land;
And over the harpstrings thoughtfully,
He moveth his cunning hand.
He opes his lips, and he poureth forth
Such a sweet stream of sound,
That the Soldan’s heart leaps up in his breast,
And his eye he casts around.
‘Was never a voice,’ the Soldan said,
‘So sweet—nor so blest a song;—
Sing on, kind minstrel,’ the Soldan said,
‘I have been sad too long.’
The minstrel sang, and soft and sweet
The Soldan’s tears fell free;
‘Oh, tell me, thou minstrel dear,’ he said,
‘What boon shall I give to thee?
Oh, stay with me but a year and a day,
And sing sweet songs to me;
And whatever the boon, by Allah, I swear,
I will freely give it to thee.’
The minstrel stay’d a year and a day,
And the Soldan loved him well;
‘Now what is the boon thou askest of me—



I prithee, dear minstrel, tell.'
'A Christian knight in thy dungeon pines,
And his hope is nearly o'er;
His freedom is the boon I ask—
Oh, open his prison door!
The minstrel went—and no more was seen;
And the Christian knight, set free,
Found a stately ship, that bore him safe
Home to his own country.
And his lady met him at the gate,
His lady fair and young;
And with a scream of pride and joy,
She in his bosom hung.
Oh, glad, glad was the Christian knight,
And glad was his lady fair,
And her pale cheek flush'd as he cast aside
The locks of her raven hair,
And kiss'd her brow, and told the tale
Of his dungeon, deep and strong;
And of the minstrel, too, he told
And of the power of song.
And they blest the minstrel, and blest his song,
And soon the feast was dight;
And prince and noble crowded in,
To welcome home the knight.
And when the brimming cup went round,
Spoke out an evil tongue,
And blamed that lady to her lord,
That lady fair and young;
And told, with many a bitter sneer,
How that, for many a day,

Page 102

When he was prison'd in Paynim land,
That dame was far away,
And none knew where; but all could guess—
Up rose the knight, and kept
His hand close clutch'd on his dagger heft,
And down the hall he stept;
And onwards with the dagger bared,
He rush'd to the lady's bower—
'Thou hast been false, and left thy home—
Thou diest this very hour!'
'Oh! it is true, I left my home;
But yet, before I die,
Oh! look not on me with face so changed,
Nor with so fierce an eye!
Oh! let me, but for a minute's space,
Into my chamber hie;
One prayer I would say for thee and me—
One prayer—before I die!'
She left the bower; and as he stept
To and fro in ireful mood,
A stranger from the chamber came,
And close behind him stood.
Long locks of molten yellow gold
Hung over his cheek so brown,
And a red mantle of Venice silk,
Fell from his shoulder, down.
Dark frown'd the knight—'Vile churl!' he said;
But ere he utter'd more,
The stranger let the mantle fall
Unclasp'd upon the floor,—
And off he cast the yellow locks—
And, lo! the lady fair,
Blushing and casting from her cheek
Her glossy raven hair!
Down fell the dagger; down the knight
Sank kneeling and opprest;
And the lady oped her snow white arms,
And wept upon his breast!"

“A foul song!—a wanton woman!”—exclaimed Sir Bryan de Barreilles—“he should have stabbed her for living so long with a Jew villain like the Soldan of Bagdad.”

“Was the villain a Jew?” enquired Dr Howlet, who had caught the word. “I did not know Bagdad was in Jewry. Is a heathen the same as a Jew, Mr Peeper?”

The gentleman thus appealed to, coughed as if to clear his throat, and though he usually spoke with the utmost clearness, he mumbled and muttered in the same unintelligible manner as he had done when he was saying grace; and it was a very peculiar habit of the learned individual, whenever he was applied to for an explanation, to betake himself to a mode of speech that would have puzzled a far wiser head than Dr Howlet’s, to make head or tail of it.

Dr Howlett, however, appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the information; and by the indignant manner in which he struck his long gold-headed ebony walking-stick on the floor, seemed entirely to agree with the worthy knight in his estimate of the heroine of Phil Lorimer’s ballad.

“I like the ballad about the jousting of Romulus the bold Roman, with Judas Maccabaeus in the Camp at Ascalon far better,” said Hasket of Norland. “Sing it, Phil.”

“No, no,” cried Maulerer, who was far gone in intoxication. “Sing us the song of the Feasting at Glaston, when Eneas the Trojan married Arthur’s daughter.—Sing the song, sirrah, this moment, or I’ll cut your tongue in two, to make your note the sweeter.—Sing.”

Page 103

Thus adjured, Phil once more began:—

“There was feasting high and revelry
In Glaston’s lofty hall;
And loud was the sound, as the cup went round,
Of joyous whoop and call;
And Arthur the king, in that noble ring,
Was the merriest of them all.
No thought, no care, found entrance there,
But beauty’s smiles were won;
No sour Jack Priest to spoil the feast”—

“Ha!” cried Howlet, interrupting Mr Lorimer in a tremendous passion, “what says the varlet? He is a heathen Turk, and no Christian. How dares he talk so of the church?” The old man rose as he spoke, and, suddenly catching hold of the enormous ebony walking-stick, which generally reposed at the side of his chair, he aimed a blow with all his force at the unfortunate songster; but, being blind, and not calculating his distance, his staff fell with tremendous effect on the left eye of Sir Bryan de Barreilles.

“Is it so?” cried the Knight, stunned; but resisting the tendency to prostration produced by the stroke, and flinging a large silver flagon across the table, which missed Dr Howlet, and made a deep indentation in the skull of Maulerer of Phascald—“Now, then!”

Hasket of Norland attempted to hold Sir Bryan, and prevent his following up his attack; and Mr Maulerer recovered sufficiently to fling the heavy candlestick at his assailant; the branches of which hit the cheek of Hasket, while the massive bottom ejected the three front teeth of Sir Bryan.

There was now no possibility of preventing the quarrel; and while the four strangers were pounding each other with whatever weapons came first to hand, and Mr Peeper crept under the table for safety, and Reginald essayed to talk them into reason, Mr Lutter politely handed Jane to the door of the hall.

“Permit me, madam, to rescue you from this dreadful scene.”

“Is it thus always?” enquired Jane, nearly weeping with fright.

“There are many things that may be improved in the castle,” said Mr Lutter. “I have seen the necessity of an alteration for a long time, and, if you will favour me with your assistance, much may be done.”

“Oh! I will help you to the utmost of my power.”

“We must upset the influence of Mr Peeper,” said Mr Lutter. “May I speak to you on the subject to-morrow?”

A month had passed since Jane's arrival at Belfront Castle, and she had had many private and confidential conversations with Mr Lutter. The ominous eyes of Mr Peeper grew fiercer and fiercer, and she many times thought of coming to an open rupture with him at once; but was deterred from doing so, by not yet having ascertained whether her influence over Reginald was sufficiently established to stand a contest with the authority of his ancient friend. She could not understand how her husband could have remained hoodwinked so long; or how he had submitted to the despotic proceedings of his former tutor, who persisted

Page 104

in assembling the same airs of authority over him, as he had exercised when he was a child. Such, however, was evidently the case; and Reginald had never entertained a thought of rescuing himself from the thralldom in which he had grown up. A look from Mr Peeper; a solemn statement from him, that such and such things had never been heard of before in Belfront; and, above all, the use of the muttered and unintelligible jargon to which Mr Peeper betook himself in matters of weight and difficulty, were quite sufficient: Reginald immediately gave up his own judgment, and felt in fact rather ashamed of himself for having hinted that he had a judgement at all. Under these circumstances, Mr Lutter had a very difficult part to play; and all that Jane could do, was to second him whenever she had the opportunity. One day, in the lovely month of April, Phil Lorimer sat on a sunny part of the enormous wall that guarded the castle, and leaning his back against one of the little square towers that rose at intervals in the circuit of the fortifications, sang song after song, as if for the edification of a number of crows that were perched on the trees on the other side of the moat. The audience were grossly inattentive, and paid no respect whatever to the performer, who still continued his exertions, as highly satisfied as if he were applauded by boxes, pit, and gallery of a crowded theatre:—Among others, he sang the ballad of the “Silver Scarf.”

“It was a King’s fair daughter,
With eyes of deepest blue,
She wove a scarf of silver
The whole long summer through—

“A stately chair she sat on
Before the castle door,
And ever in the calm moonlight
She work’d it o’er and o’er.

“And many a knight and noble
Went daily out and in,
And each one marvell’d in his heart
Which the fair scarf might win.

“She took no heed of questions,
From her work ne’er raised her head,
And on the snow-white border
Sew’d her name in blackest thread.

“Then came a tempest roaring,
From the high hills it came,
And bore the scarf far out to sea
From forth its fragile frame:



"The maiden sate unstartled,
As if it *must* be so—
She stood up from her stately chair,
And to her bower did go.

"She took from forth her wardrobe
Her dress of mourning hue—
Whoever for a scarf before
Such weight of sorrow knew?

"In robes of deepest mourning,
Three nights and days she sate;
On the third night, the warder's horn
Was sounded at the gate—

"A messenger stands at the door,
And sad news bringeth he;
The king and all his gallant ships
Are wreck'd upon the sea.

"And now the tide is rising,
And casts upon the shore
Full many a gallant hero's corse,
And many a golden store.

Page 105

"Then up rose the king's daughter,
Drew to her window near;
'What is it glitters on thine arm,
In the moonlight so clear?'

"'It is a scarf of silver,
I brought it from the strand;
I took it from the closed grasp
Of a strong warrior's hand.'

"That feat thou ne'er shouldst boast of
If but alive were he;
Go take him back thy trophy
To the blue rolling sea.

"And when that knight you've buried,
The scarf his grave shall grace;
And next to where you've laid him,
Oh, leave a vacant place!"

"Here, you cursed old piper! leave off frightening the crows, and open the gate this moment. Who the devil, do you think, is to burst a bloodvessel by hollowing here all day?"

Mr Lorimer, though used to considerable indignities, as we have already seen, had still a little of the becoming poetical pride about him, and looked rather angrily over the wall. "Nobody wishes you to break bloodvessels, or have their own ears disturbed by your screaming," he said. "What do you want?"

"To get into your infernal house, to be sure. Where did you get such unchristian roads? My bones are sore with the jolting. Send somebody to open the gate."

"The drawbridge is up, and Mr Peeper must have his twopence."

"Who the devil is Mr Peeper?" said the stranger. "I sha'n't give him a fraction. Who made the drawbridge his? Is Mr Belfront at home?"

"Yes, he is in Mr Peeper's study."

"And Mrs Belfront?"—

"Pickling cod. It is Mr Peeper's favourite dish; so we all live on it sometimes for weeks together."

“With such a trout-stream at your door? He’ll be a cleverer fellow than I think him if he gets me to eat his salted carrion. Open the door, I say, or you’ll have the worst of it when my stick gets near your head. Tell Mrs Belfront her uncle is here—her Uncle Samson.”

Phil Lorimer saw no great resemblance to the Jewish Hercules in the little, dapper, bustling-mannered man in a blue coat with bright brass buttons, pepper-and-salt knee-breeches, and long gaiters, who thus proclaimed his relationship to the lady of the castle. He hurried down from the wall to make the required announcement.

“My uncle Samson, the manufacturer, from Leeds! Oh, let him in, by all means!” exclaimed Jane; “he was always so kind to me when I was a child!”

“He can’t get in, madam, unless Mr Peeper orders the drawbridge to be lowered; and he is now busy with Mr Belfront.”

“Go for Mr Lutter; he will be glad to hear of uncle Samson’s arrival.”

Mr Lorimer discovered Mr Lutter comfortably regaling himself in the buttery; but on hearing in what respect his services were required, he left unfinished a large tankard of ale, with which he was washing down an enormous quantity of bread and cheese, and proceeded to the moat.

Page 106

"Don't disturb Mr Peeper," he said, "but help me to launch the little punt."

By dint of a little labour, the small vessel was got into the water, and Mr Lutter, taking a scull in his hand, paddled over to the other side, and embarked the gentleman in the blue coat. Paddling towards an undefended part of the castle, he taught him how to clamber up the wall; and Mr Samson, wiping the stains of his climbing from the knees of his nether habiliments, looked round the castle-yard. "Well! who'd have thought that such a monstrous strong-looking place should be stormed by a middle-aged gentleman in a punt!"

"You've a friend in the garrison, you'll remember, sir, and the battlements have never been repaired."

"They ain't worth repairing. It's a regular waste of building materials to make such thick walls and pinnacles. Blowed, if them stones wouldn't build a mill; and a precious water-power, too," he added, as he saw the river sparkling downward at the northern side. "Oho! I must have a talk with Jane. Will you take me to Mrs Belfront? I haven't seen her for five years. She must be much changed since then, and I must prepare her for the arrival of her cousins."

Jane was sitting in the great hall, feeling disconsolate enough. Often, in her father's comfortable parlour, she had read accounts of baronial residences of the olden time; and one of the greatest pleasures she had felt in becoming Mrs Belfront, was to be the possessor of a real *bona fide* castle that had been actually a fortress in the days of knighthood. She had studied long ago the adventures of high-born dames and stately nobles, till she was nearly as far gone in romance as Don Quixote; and many questions she had asked about Belfront, and donjon-towers, and keeps, and tiltyards, and laboured very hard to acquire a correct idea of the mode of life and manners of the days of chivalry. Her imagination, we have seen, was too lively to be restrained by the more matter-of-fact nature of her husband; and she now felt with great bitterness the difference between presiding at a tournament, or being present at the Vow of the Peacock, and the slavish submission in which she, with the whole household, was held by Mr Pepper. Deeply she now regretted the feelings of superiority she had experienced over her own relations by her marriage into such an ancient race as the Belfronts. She felt ashamed of the contempt she had felt for the industrious founders of her own family's wealth, and at that moment would have preferred the blue coat and brass buttons of her uncle Samson, to all the escutcheons and shields of the Norman conquest; and at that moment, luckily, the identical coat and buttons made their appearance.

"Well, niece, here's a go!" exclaimed the angry uncle. "Is this a way to receive a near relation after such a journey?"

"Oh, uncle!"

“Why, did ye never hear tell of such a place as Kidderminster?—have you no carpets?”

Page 107

“Mr Belfront says there were no carpets in his ancestor’s time”—

“And no railroads, nor postchaises, nor books, nor nothing; and is that any reason why we shouldn’t have lots of every thing now? By dad, before I’ve been here a week I’ll have a reg’lar French Revolution! No Bastille! says I; let’s have a Turkey carpet, and a telescope dining-table, good roads, and no infernal punts—and, above all, let’s get quit of the villain Peeper.”

“Oh! if Reginald would only consent!”

“Why not? by dad, I’ll make his fortune. I’ll give him a thousand a-year for the water-power that’s now all thrown away. I’ll have a nice village built down in the valley. I’ll get him two guineas an acre for his land that’s now lying waste. I’ll dig for coal. We’ll build a nice comfortable house, and leave this old ruin to the crows.”

“And the neighbours, uncle Samson?”

“Why, we’ll build a church, and the parson will be a good companion. When the roads are made, you’ll give a jolly dinner once a-week to every squire within ten miles. You’ll have a book club. You’ll help in the Sunday school. You’ll go to the county balls. Your husband will join the agricultural society, and act as a magistrate. He’ll subscribe to the hounds. He’ll attend to the registrations. He’ll have shooting-parties in September. And as to any old-world, wretched talks about chivalry and antiquity, we’ll show him that there never was a time like the present—commerce, land, property, and intelligence, all in the very best condition. We’ll make Lutter superintendent of the whole estate, and send old Peeper about his business. And in all this you must help; for there’s nothing to be done without the help of the ladies: so give me your hand, dear niece, and don’t cry.”

“It would make me so happy! I would never look into Amadis de Gaul again!”

“Hang Amadis de Gall and Amadi de Spurzheim, too! Where is your husband?”

“I seldom see him now. He is always in the oratory with Mr Peeper.”

“The deuce he is!” said the uncle. “And how do you get on in other respects? Are you comfortable—happy—contented?” Jane told him all she had encountered since she had come to the castle, and the uncle seemed thunderstruck at the recital.

“Well! bold measures are always the best,” he said at last; “I’ll kick Peeper into the moat!” and before his niece could interfere, the uncle had rushed across the quadrangle, guided, we are sorry to say, by Mr Lutter, and, grasping the venerable Peeper, whom he met near the drawbridge, he dragged him towards the water.

Jane ran to get assistance for the unfortunate victim; and crying “Help! help!” as she saw the wretched man forced over the walls, she looked in a state of distraction towards her husband. “Dear Jane,” said that individual, smiling blandly, “I told you you had overtired yourself with walking.” Jane gazed round; there was Reginald sitting beside her, with her head reclining on his shoulder, at the open window of the inn in Wales. The vale of Cwmcwylchly was spread in a beautiful landscape below. They were still on their wedding tour.

Page 108

"You have been asleep, Jane," said Reginald.

"And have had such dreadful dreams. Oh, Reginald! I have had such visions of horrid things and people. I shall never be romantic again about chivalry. Such coarseness!—such slavery!—such ignorance! Ah, how happy we ought to be that we are born in a civilized time, with no Mr Peepers for father confessors, nor fighting with firebrands for amusement!"

"You have been reading *Hallam's Middle Ages*—a present from your uncle Samson—till you have become a right-down Utilitarian. Come, let us ring for tea; and to-morrow we must start for Yorkshire! The Quarter-sessions are coming on."

* * * * *

DUMAS IN HIS CURRICLE.

We left M. Dumas at Marseilles: we find him again at Naples. Three volumes are the result of his visit to the last named city—volumes in which he manages to put a little of every thing, and a good deal of some things. Antiquarian, historian, virtuoso, novelist, he touches upon all subjects, flying from one to the other with a lightness and a facility of transition peculiarly his own, and peculiarly agreeable. English travellers and Italian composers, St Januarius and the opera, Masaniello and the *gettatura*, Pompeii, princes, police spies, Vesuvius, all have their turn—M. Dumas, with his usual tact, merely glancing at those subjects which are known and written about by every tourist, but giving himself full scope when he gets off the beaten track. His book is literally crammed with tales and anecdotes, to such a degree indeed, and most of them so good, that our principal difficulty in commencing a notice of it, is to know where to pick and choose our extracts; *l'embarras des richesses*, in short. The best way will probably be to begin at the beginning, and go as far as our limits allow us, referring our readers to the original for the many good things that want of space will compel us to exclude.

M. Dumas calls his book the *Corricolo*, and devotes a short and characteristic preface to an explanation of the title. This explanation we must give in his own words. It is so highly graphic, that, after reading it, we fancied we had seen a picture of what it describes.

"A *corricolo* is a sort of tilbury or gig, originally intended to hold one person, and be drawn by one horse. At Naples they harness two horses to it; and it conveys twelve or fifteen individuals, not at a walk nor at a trot, but at full gallop, and this, notwithstanding that only one of the horses does any work. The shaft horse draws, but the other, which is harnessed abreast of him, and called the *bilancino*, prances and curvets about, animates his companion, but does nothing else.

Page 109

“Having said that the gig built to carry one is made to carry fifteen, I am, of course, expected to explain how this is accomplished. There is an old French proverb, according to which, when there is enough for one there is enough for two; but I am not aware of any proverb in any language which says, that when there is enough for one, there is enough for fifteen. Nevertheless, it is the case with the *corricolo*. In the present advanced state of civilization, every thing is diverted from its primitive destination. As it is impossible to say at what period, or in how long a time, the capacity of the vehicle in question was extended in the ratio of one to fifteen, I must content myself with describing the way of packing the passengers.

“In the first place, there is almost invariably a fat greasy monk seated in the middle, forming the centre of a sort of coil of human creatures. On one of his knees is some robust rosy-cheeked nurse from Aversa or Nettuno; on the other, a handsome peasant woman from Bauci or Procida. On either side of him, between the wheels and the body of the vehicle, stand the husbands of these two ladies. Standing on tiptoe behind the monk is the driver, holding in his left hand the reins, and in his right the long whip with which he keeps his horses at an equal rate of speed. Behind *him* are two or three lazzaroni, who get up and down, go away, and are succeeded by others, without any body taking notice of them, or expecting them to pay for their ride. On the shafts are seated two boys, picked up on the road from Torre del Greco or Pouzzoles, probably supernumerary *ciceroni* of the antiquities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Finally, suspended under the carriage, in a sort of coarse rope network with large meshes, which swings backwards and forwards at every movement of the vehicle, is a shapeless and incomprehensible mass, which cries, laughs, sings, screams, shouts, and bellows, all by turns and none for long together, and the nature of which it is impossible to distinguish, dimly seen as it is through the clouds of dust raised by the horses' feet. This mass consists of three or four children, who belong to Heaven knows who, are going Heaven knows where, live Heaven knows how, and are there Heaven knows wherefore.

“Now then, put down, one above the other, monk, women, husbands, driver, lazzaroni, boys and children; add them up, include the infant in arms, which has been forgotten, and the total will be fifteen.

“It sometimes happens that the *coricolo* passes over a big stone, and upsets, pitching out its occupants to a greater or less distance, according to their respective gravity. But, on such occasions, nobody thinks of himself; the attention of every one is immediately turned to the monk. If he is hurt, the journey is over for the day; they carry him to the nearest house; the horses are put into the stable, and he is put to bed; the women nurse him, make much of him, cry and pray over him. If, on the other hand, the monk is safe and sound, nobody has a right to complain; he resumes his seat, the nurse and the peasant woman resume theirs, the others climb up into their respective places—a crack of the long whip, and a shout from the driver, and the *corricolo* is off again full speed.”

Page 110

From this we learn what a *corricolo* is, but we have not yet been told why M. Dumas should christen his book after the degenerate descendant of the Roman curriculum. Patience—we shall get to it in time. Materials crowd upon our traveller, and it is only in the second chapter that the desired explanation is given. In the first we are informed of M. Dumas's installation at the Hotel Vittoria, kept by M. Martin Zill, who, besides being an innkeeper, is a man of much taste in art, a distinguished antiquary, an amateur of pictures, a collector of autographs and curiosities. Apropos of the hotel we have an anecdote of the ex-dey of Algiers, who, on being dispossessed of his dominions by the French, took refuge at Naples, and established himself under M. Zill's hospitable roof. The third floor was entirely occupied by his suite and attendants, the fourth was for himself and his treasures, the fifth, or the garrets, he converted into his harem. The curious arms, costumes, and jewels which Hussein Pacha had brought with him, were a godsend to the virtuoso weary of examining and admiring them; and, before the African had been a week in the house, he and his host were sworn friends. Unfortunately this harmony was not destined to last very long.

“One morning Hussein Pacha's cook (a Nubian as black as ink, and as shining as if he had been polished with a shoe-brush) entered the kitchen of the hotel, and asked for the largest knife they had. The head-cook gave him a sort of carving-knife, some eighteen inches long, sharp as a razor, and pliant as a foil. The negro looked at it, shook his head as if in doubt whether it would do, but nevertheless took it up stairs with him. Presently he brought it down again, and asked for a larger one. The cook opened all his drawers, and at last found a sort of cutlass, which he hardly ever used on account of its enormous size. With this the Nubian appeared more satisfied, and again went up stairs. Five minutes afterwards he came down for the third time, and returned the knife, asking for a bigger one still. The cook's curiosity was excited, and he enquired who wanted the knife, and for what purpose.

“The African told him very coolly that the dey, having left his dominions rather in a hurry, had forgotten to bring an executioner with him, and had consequently ordered his cook to get a large knife and cut off the head of Osmin, chief of the eunuchs, who was convicted of having kept such negligent watch and ward over his highness's seraglio, that some presumptuous Giaour had made a hole in the wall, and established a communication with Zaida, the dey's favourite *odalisque*. Accordingly Osmin was to be decapitated; and as to the offending lady, the next time the dey took an airing in the bay of Naples, she would be put into the boat in a sack, and consigned to the keeping of the kelpies. Thunderstruck at such summary proceedings, the cook desired his Nubian brother to wait while he went for a larger knife; then hastening to M. Martin Zill, he told him what he had just heard.

Page 111

"M. Martin Zill ran to the minister of police, and laid the matter before him. His excellency got into his carriage and went to call upon the dey.

He found his highness reclining upon a divan, his back supported by cushions, smoking latakia in a chibouque, while an icoglan scratched the soles of his feet, and two slaves fanned him. The minister made his three salaams; the dey nodded his head.

"Your highness,' said his excellency, 'I am the minister of police.'

"I know you are,' answered the dey.

"Then your highness probably conjectures the motive of my visit.'

"No. But you are welcome all the same.'

"I come to prevent your highness from committing a crime.'

"A crime! And what crime?' said the dey, taking the pipe from his mouth, and gazing at his interlocutor in the most profound astonishment.

"I wonder your highness should ask the question,' replied the minister. 'Is it not your intention to cut off Osmin's head?'

"That is no crime,' answered the dey.

"Does not your highness purpose throwing Zaida into the sea?'

"That is no crime,' repeated the dey. 'I bought Osmin for five hundred piasters, and Zaida for a thousand sequins, just as I bought this pipe for a hundred ducats.'

"Well,' said the minister, 'what does your highness deduce from that?'

"That as this pipe belongs to me, as I have bought it and paid for it, I may break it to atoms if I choose, and nobody has a right to object.' So saying, the pacha broke his pipe, and threw the fragments into the middle of the room.

"All very well, as far as a pipe goes,' said the minister; 'but Osmin, but Zaida?'

"Less than a pipe,' said the dey gravely.

"How! less than a pipe! A man less than a pipe! A woman less than a pipe!'

"Osmin is not a man, and Zaida is not a woman: they are slaves. I will cut off Osmin's head, and throw Zaida into the sea.'

"No!' said the magistrate. 'Not at Naples at least.'

“‘Dog of a Christian!’ shouted the dey, ‘do you know who I am?’

“‘You are the ex-dey of Algiers, and I am the Neapolitan minister of police; and, if your deyship is impertinent, I shall send him to prison,’ added the minister very coolly.

“‘To prison!’ repeated the dey, falling back upon his divan.

“‘To prison,’ replied the minister.

“‘Very well,’ said Hussein. ‘I leave Naples to-night.’

“‘Your highness is as free as air to go and to come. Nevertheless, I must make one condition. Before your departure, you will swear by the Prophet, that no harm shall be done to Osmin or Zaida.’

“‘Osmin and Zaida belong to me, and I shall do what I please with them.’

“‘Then your highness will be pleased to deliver them over to me, to be punished according to the laws of the country; and, until you do so, you will not be allowed to leave Naples.’

Page 112

“Who will prevent me?”

“I will.”

“The pacha laid his hand on his dagger. The minister stepped to the window and made a sign. The next moment the tramp of heavy boots and jingle of spurs were heard upon the stairs; the door opened, and a gigantic corporal of gendarmes made his appearance, his right hand raised to his cocked hat, his left upon the seam of his trouser.

“Gennaro,” said the minister of police, “if I gave you an order to arrest this gentleman, would you see any difficulty in executing it?”

“None, your excellency.”

“You are aware that this gentleman’s name is Hussein Pacha.”

“I was not, your excellency.”

“And that he is dey of Algiers.”

“May it please your excellency, I don’t know what that is.”

“You see?” said the minister, turning to the dey.

“The devil! exclaimed Hussein.

“Shall I?” said Gennaro, taking a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and advancing a pace towards the dey, who, on his part, took a step backwards.

“No,” replied the minister, “it will not be necessary. His highness will do as he is bid. Go and search the hotel for a man named Osmin, and a woman named Zaida, and take them both to the prefecture.”

“What!” cried the dey; “this man is to enter my harem?”

“He is not a man,” replied the minister; “he is a corporal of gendarmes. But if you do not wish him to go, send for Osmin and Zaida yourself.”

“Will you promise to have them punished?” enquired the dey.

“Certainly; according to the utmost rigour of the law.”

“Hussein Pacha clapped his hands. A door concealed behind a tapestry was opened, and a slave entered the room.



“‘Bring down Osmin and Zaida,’ said the dey.

“The slave crossed his hands on his breast, bowed his head, and disappeared without uttering a word. The next instant he came back with the two culprits.

“The eunuch was a little round fat fellow, with beardless face, and small hands and feet. Zaida was a beautiful Circassian, her eyelids painted with kool, her teeth blackened with betel, her nails reddened with henna. On perceiving Hussein Pacha, the eunuch fell upon his knees; Zaida raised her head. The dey’s eyes flashed, and he clutched the hilt of his kangiar. Osmin grew pale; Zaida smiled. The minister of police made a sign to the gendarme, who stepped up to the two captives, handcuffed them, and led them out of the room. As the door closed behind them, the dey uttered a sound between a sigh and a roar.

“The magistrate looked out of the window, till he saw the prisoners and their escort disappear at the corner of the Strada Chiatamone. Then turning to the dey—

“‘Your highness is now at liberty to leave Naples, if he wishes so to do,’ said the imperturbable functionary with a low bow.

“‘This very instant!’ cried Hussein. ‘I will not remain another moment in such a barbarous country as yours.’

Page 113

“‘A pleasant journey to your highness,’ said the minister.

“‘Go to the devil!’ retorted Hussein.

“Before an hour had elapsed, the dey had chartered a small vessel, on board of which he embarked the same evening with his suite, his wives, and his treasures; and at midnight he set sail; cursing the tyranny that prevented a man from drowning his wife and cutting off the heads of his slaves. The next day the minister of police had the culprits brought before him and examined. Osmin was found guilty of having slept when he ought to have watched, and Zaida of having watched when she ought to have slept. But, by some strange omission, the Neapolitan code allots no punishment to such offences; and, consequently, Osmin and Zaida, to their infinite astonishment, were immediately set at liberty. Osmin took to selling pastilles for a livelihood, and the lady got employment as *dame de comptoir* in a coffeehouse. As to the dey, he had left Naples with the intention of going to England, in which country, as he had been informed, a man is at liberty to sell his wife, if he may not drown her. He was taken ill, however, on the road, and obliged to stop at Leghorn, where he died.”

M. Dumas, not being in good odour with the Neapolitan authorities, on account of some supposed republican tendencies of his, is at Naples under an assumed name; and, as it is uncertain how long he may be able to preserve his incognito, he is desirous of seeing all that is to be seen in as short a time as possible. He finds that Naples, independently of its suburbs, consists of three streets where every body goes, and five hundred streets where nobody goes. The three streets are, the Chiaja, the Toledo, and the Forcella; the five hundred others are nameless—a labyrinth of houses, which might be compared to that of Crete, deducting the Minotaur, and adding the Lazzaroni. There are three ways of seeing Naples—on foot, in a *corricolo* or in a carriage. On foot, one goes every where, but one sees too much; in a carriage, one only goes through the three principal streets, and one sees too little—the *corricolo* is the happy medium, the *juste milieu*, to which M. Dumas for once determines to adhere. Having made up his mind, he sends for his host, and enquires where he can hire a *corricolo* by the week or month. His host tells him he had better buy one, horse and all. To this plan M. Dumas objects the expense.

“‘It will cost you,’ said M. Martin, after a momentary calculation in his head, ‘it will cost you—the *corricolo* ten ducats, each horse thirty carlini, the harness a pistole; in all, eighty French francs.’

“‘What! for ten ducats I shall have a *corricolo*?’

“‘A magnificent one.’

“‘New?’

“Oh! you are asking too much. There are no such things as new *corricoli*. There is a standing order of the police forbidding coachmakers to build them.’

Page 114

“Indeed! How long has that order been in force?”

“Fifty years, perhaps.”

“How comes it, then, that there is such a thing as a *corricolo* in existence?”

“Nothing easier. You know the story of Jeannot’s knife?”

“To be sure I do; it is one of our national chronicles. The blade had been changed fifteen times, and the handle fifteen times, but it was still the same knife.”

“The case of the *corricolo* is exactly similar. It is forbidden to build new ones, but it is not forbidden to put new wheels to old bodies, and new bodies on old wheels. By these means the *corricolo* becomes immortal.”

“I understand. An old body and new wheels for me, if you please. But the horses? Do you mean to say that for thirty francs I shall have a pair of horses?”

“A superb pair, that will go like the wind.”

“What sort of horses?”

“Oh, dead ones, of course!”

“Dead ones!”

“Certainly. At that price you could hardly expect any thing better.”

“My dear M. Martin, be kind enough to explain. I am travelling for my improvement, and information of all kinds is highly acceptable.”

“You are acquainted with the history of the horse, I suppose?”

“The natural history? Buffon’s? Certainly. The horse is, after the lion, the noblest of all the beasts.”

“No, no; the philosophical history. The different stages and vicissitudes in the existence of those noble quadrupeds.”

“Oh yes! first the saddle, then a carriage or gig, thence to a stage-coach or omnibus, hackney-coach or cab, and finally—to the knacker’s.”

“And from the knacker’s?”

“To the Elysian fields, I suppose.”

“No. Not here, at least. From the knacker’s they go to the *corricoli*.’

“How so?’

“I will tell you. At the Ponte della Maddalena, where horses are taken to be killed, there are always persons waiting, who, when a horse is brought, buy the hide and hoofs for thirty carlini, which is the price regulated by law. Instead of killing the horse and skinning him, these persons take him with the skin on, and make the most of the time he yet has to live. They are sure of getting the skin sooner or later. And these are what I mean by dead horses.’

“But what can they possibly do with the unfortunate brutes?’

“They harness them to the *corricoli*.’

“What! those with which I came from Salerno to Naples’—

“Were the ghosts of horses; spectre steeds, in short.’

“But they galloped the whole way.’

“Why not? *Les morts vont vite*.’”

Page 115

Et cetera, et cetera. For the price stated by his host, M. Dumas finds himself possessor of a magnificent *corricolo* of a bright red colour, with green trees and animals painted thereon. Two most fiery and impatient steeds, half concealed by harness, bells, and ribands, are included in his purchase. After a vain attempt to drive himself, the phantom coursers having apparently a supreme contempt for whipcord, he gives up the reins to a professional charioteer, and commences his perambulations. His first visit is to the Chiaja, the favourite promenade of the aristocracy and of foreigners; his second to the Toledo, the street of shops and loungers; his third to the Forcella, frequented by lawyers and their clients. He makes a chapter, and a long one too, out of each street; but not in the way usually adopted by those pitiless tour-writers who overwhelm their readers with dry architectural details, filling a page with a portico, and a chapter with a chapel—not letting one off a pane of a painted window or line of worm-eaten inscription however often those things may have been described already by previous travellers. M. Dumas prefers men to things as subjects for his pen; and the three chapters above named are filled with curious illustrations of Neapolitan manners, customs, and character. Apropos of the Toledo, we are introduced to the well-known *impresario*, Domenico Barbaja, who had his palazzo in that street, and who, from being waiter in a coffeehouse at Milan, became the manager of three theatres at one time, namely, San Carlo, La Scala, and the Vienna opera. He appears to have been a man of great energy and originality of character, concealing an excellent heart under the roughest manners and most choleric of tempers.

“It would be impossible,” says M. Dumas, “to translate into any language the abuse with which Barbaja used to overwhelm the singers and musicians at his theatres when they displeased him. Yet not one of them bore him malice for it, knowing that, if they had the least triumph, Barbaja would be the first to embrace and congratulate them: if they were unsuccessful, he would console them with the utmost delicacy: if they were ill, he would watch over them with the tenderness of a father or brother. The fortune which he had amassed, little by little, and by strenuous exertions, he spent in the most generous and princely manner. His palace, his villa, and his table, were open to all.

“His genius was of a peculiar and extraordinary kind. Education he had none: he was unable to write the commonest letter, and did not know a note of music; yet he would give his composers the most valuable hints, and dictate with admirable skill the plan of a libretto. His own voice was of the harshest and most inharmonious texture; but by his advice and instructions he formed some of the first singers in Italy. His language was a Milanese patois; but he found means to make himself excellently

Page 116

understood by the kings and emperors, with whom he carried on negotiations upon a footing of perfect equality. It was a great treat to see him seated in his box at San Carlo, opposite that of the King of Naples, on the evening of a new opera; with grave and impartial aspect, now turning his face to the actors, then to the audience. If a singer went wrong, Barbaja was the first to crush him with a severity worthy of Brutus. His '*Can de Dio!*' was shouted out in a voice that made the theatre shake and the poor actor tremble. If, on the other hand, the public disapproved without reason, Barbaja would start up in his box and address the audience. '*Figli d'una racca!*' 'Will you hold your tongues? You don't deserve good singers.' If by chance the King himself omitted to applaud at the right time, Barbaja would shrug his shoulders and go grumbling out of his box.

"With all his peculiarities, he it was who formed and brought forward Lablache, Tamburini, Rubini, Donzelli, Colbran, Pasta, Fodor, Donizetti, Bellini, and the great Rossini himself, whose masterpieces were composed for Barbaja. It is impossible to form an idea of the amount of entreaties, stratagems, and even violence, expended by the *impresario* to make Rossini work. I will give an example of it, which is highly characteristic both of the manager and of the greatest and happiest, but most *insouciant* and idle, musical genius that ever drew breath under the bright sky of Italy."

We are sorry to tantalize our readers, but we have not space for the story that follows. It relates to the opera of *Othello*, which was composed by Rossini in an incredibly short time, whilst a prisoner in an apartment of Barbaja's house. For nearly six months had the composer been living with the manager, entertaining his friends at his well-spread table, drinking his choicest wines, and occupying his best rooms—all this under promise of producing a new opera within the half-year, a promise which he showed little disposition to fulfil. Barbaja was in a fever of anxiety, and finding remonstrance unavailing, had recourse to stratagem. One morning, when Rossini was about to start on a party of pleasure, he found his doors secured outside; and, on putting his head out of the window, was informed by Barbaja that he must remain captive until his ransom was paid. The ransom, of course, was the opera.

Rossini subsequently revenges himself on his tyrant in a very piquant manner; and, finally, the morning after *Othello* has been performed with triumphant success, he starts for Bologna, taking with him, as travelling companion, the *prima donna* of the San Carlo theatre, Signora Colbran, whom he had privately married. All this is related very amusingly by M. Dumas, but at too great length for our limits.

Page 117

We have a naval combat in the second volume, in which a French frigate is attacked by two English line-of-battle ships, one of which she sinks, and receives in return the entire point-blank broadside of the other, a three-decker; which broadside, we in our ignorance of nautical matters, should have thought sufficient to blow her either out of the water or under it. It has not that effect, however, and the frigate is captured; the captain of her, when he has hauled down his flag in order to save the lives of his men, stepping into his cabin and blowing his brains out. All this is very pretty, whatever may be said of its probability. But there are two subjects on which the majority of Frenchmen indulge in most singular delusions. These are, their invincibility upon the sea, and the battle of Waterloo. M. Dumas has not escaped the national monomania.

Our author is very hard upon the poor English in this book. He attacks them on all sides and with all weapons. Nelson and Lady Hamilton occupy a prominent position in his pages. The execution of Admiral Carraciolo, an undoubted blot on the character of our naval hero, is given in all its details, and with some little decorations and embellishments, for which we suspect that we have to thank our imaginative historian. Nelson's weakness, the ascendancy exercised over him by Lady Hamilton, or Emma Lyonna, as M. Dumas prefers styling her, her intimacy with the Queen of Naples, and subservient to the wishes and interests of the Neapolitan court, are all set forth in the most glowing colours. This is the heavy artillery, the round-shot and shell; but M. Dumas is too skilful a general to leave any part of his forces unemployed, and does not omit to bring up his sharpshooters, and open a pretty little fire of ridicule upon English travellers in Italy, who, as it is well known, go thither to make the fortunes of innkeepers and purchase antiquities manufactured in the nineteenth century. Strange as it may appear, we should be heartily sorry if M. Dumas were to exchange his evident dislike of us for a more kindly feeling. We should then lose some of his best stories; for he is never more rich and amusing than when he shows up the sons and daughters of *le perfide Albion*. In support of our assertion, take the following sketch:—

“During my stay at Naples an Englishman arrived there, and took up his quarters at the hotel at which I was stopping. He was one of those phlegmatic, overbearing, obstinate Britons, who consider money the engine with which every thing is to be moved and all things accomplished, the argument in short which nothing can resist. Money was every thing in his estimation of mankind; talent, fame, titles, mere feathers that kicked the beam the moment a long rent-roll or inscription of three per cents were placed in the opposite scale. In proportion as men were rich or poor, did he esteem them much or little. Being very rich himself, he esteemed himself much.

Page 118

“He had come direct to Naples by steam, and during the voyage had made this calculation: With money I shall say every thing, do every thing, and have every thing I please. He had not long to wait to find out his mistake. The steamer cast anchor in the port of Naples just half an hour too late for the passengers to land. The Englishman, who had been very sea-sick, and was particularly anxious to get on shore, sent to offer the captain of the port a hundred guineas if he would let him land directly. The quarantine laws of Naples are very strict; the captain of the port thought the Englishman was mad, and only laughed at his offer. He was therefore obliged to sleep on board in an excessively bad humour, cursing alike those who made the regulations and those who enforced them.

“The first thing he did when he got on shore, was to set off to visit the ruins of Pompeii. There happened to be no regular guide at hand, so he took a lazzarone instead. He had not forgotten his disappointment of the night before, and all the way to Pompeii he relieved his mind by abusing King Ferdinand in the best Italian he could muster. The lazzarone, whom he had taken into his carriage, took no notice of all this so long as they were on the high-road. Lazzaroni, in general, meddle very little in politics, and do not care how much you abuse king or kaiser so long as nothing disrespectful is said of the Virgin Mary, St Januarius, or Mount Vesuvius. On arriving, however, at the *Via dei Sepolchri*, the ragged guide put his finger on his lips as a signal to be silent. But his employer either did not understand the gesture, or considered it beneath his dignity to take notice of it, for he continued his invectives against Ferdinand the Well-beloved.

“‘Pardon me, Eccellenza,’ said the lazzarone at last, placing his hand upon the side of the barouche, and jumping out as lightly as a harlequin. ‘Pardon me, Eccellenza, but I must return to Naples.’

“‘And why so?’ inquired the other in his broken Italian.

“‘Because I do not wish to be hung.’

“‘And who would dare to hang you?’

“‘The king.’

“‘Why?’

“‘Because you are speaking ill of him.’

“‘An Englishman has a right to say whatever he likes.’

“‘It may be so, but a lazzarone has not.’

“‘But you have said nothing.’

“But I hear everything.’

“Who will tell what you hear?’

“The invalid soldier who accompanies us to visit Pompeii.’

“I do not want an invalid soldier.’

“Then you cannot visit Pompeii.’

“Not by paying?’

“No.’

“But I will pay double, treble, four times, whatever they ask.’

“No, no, no.’

“Oh!’ said the Englishman, and he fell into a brown study, during which the lazzarone amused himself by trying to jump over his own shadow.

“I will take the invalid,’ said the Englishman after a little reflection.

Page 119

“‘Very good,’ replied the lazzarone, ‘we will take him.’

“‘But I shall say just what I please before him.’

“‘In that case I wish you a good morning.’

“‘No, no; you must remain.’

“‘Allow me to give you a piece of advice then. If you want to say what you please before the invalid, take a deaf one.’

“‘Ooh!’ cried the Englishman, delighted with the advice, ‘by all means a deaf one. Here is a piaster for you for having thought of it.’ The lazzarone ran to the guard-house, and soon returned with an old soldier who was as deaf as a post.

“‘They began the usual round of the curiosities, during which the Englishman continued calling King Ferdinand any thing but a gentleman, of all which the invalid heard nothing, and the lazzarone took no notice. They visited the Via dei Sepolchri, the houses of Diomedes and Cicero. At last they came to Sallust’s house, in one of the rooms of which was a fresco that hit the Englishman’s fancy exceedingly. He immediately sat down, took a pencil and a blank book from his pocket, and began copying it. He had scarcely made a stroke, however, when the soldier and the lazzarone approached him. The former was going to speak, but the latter took the words out of his mouth.

“‘Eccellenza,’ said he, ‘it is forbidden to copy the fresco.’

“‘Oh!’ said the Englishman, ‘I must make this copy. I will pay for it.’

“‘It is not allowed, even if you pay.’

“‘But I will pay ten times its value if necessary; I must copy it, it is so funny.’

“‘If you do, the invalid will put you in the guard-room.’

“‘Pshaw! An Englishman has a right to draw any thing he likes.’ And he went on with his sketch. The invalid approached him with an inexorable countenance.

“‘Pardon me, Eccellenza,’ said the lazzarone; ‘but would you like to copy not only this fresco, but as many more as you please?’

“‘Certainly I should, and I will too.’

“‘Then, let me give you a word of advice. Take a blind invalid.’

“‘Ooh!’ cried the Englishman, still more enchanted with this second hint than with the first. ‘By all means, a blind invalid. Here are two piasters for the idea.’

“They left Sallust’s house, the deaf man was paid and discharged, and the lazzarone went to the guard-room, and brought back an invalid who was stone-blind and led by a black poodle.

“The Englishman wished to return immediately to continue his drawing, but the lazzarone persuaded him to delay it, in order to avoid exciting suspicion. They continued their rambles, therefore, guided by the invalid, or rather by his dog, who displayed a knowledge of Pompeii that might have qualified him to become a member of the antiquarian society. After visiting the blacksmith’s shop, Fortunata’s house, and the public oven, they returned to the abode of Sallust, where the Englishman finished his sketch, while the lazzarone chatted with the blind man, and kept him amused. Continuing their lounge, he made a number of other drawings, and in a couple of hours his book was half full.

Page 120

“At last they arrived at a place where men were digging. There had been discovered a number of small busts and statues, bronzes, and curiosities of all kinds, which, as soon as they were dug up, were carried into a neighbouring house, and had his attention speedily attracted by a little statue of a satyr about six inches high. ‘Oh!’ cried he, ‘I shall buy this figure.’

“‘The king of Naples does not wish to sell it,’ replied the lazzarone.

“‘I will give its weight in sovereigns—double its weight even.’

“‘I tell you it is not to be sold,’ persisted the lazzarone; ‘but,’ added he, changing his tone, ‘I have already given your excellence two pieces of advice which you liked, I will now give you a third: Do not buy the statue—steal it.’

“‘Oh—oh! that will be very original, and we have a blind invalid too. Capital!’

“‘Yes, but the invalid has a dog, who has two good eyes and sixteen good teeth, and who will fly at you if you so much as touch any thing with your little finger.’

“‘I’ll buy the dog, and hang him.’

“‘Do better still; take a lame invalid. Then, as you have seen nearly every thing here, put the figure in your pocket and run away. He may call out as much as he likes, he will not be able to run after you.’

“‘Ooh!’ cried the Englishman, in convulsions of delight, ‘here are three piasters for you. Fetch me a lame invalid.’

“And in order not to excite the suspicions of the blind man and his dog, he left the house, and pretended to be examining a fountain made of shell-work, while the lazzarone went for a third guide. In a quarter of an hour he returned, accompanied by an invalid with two wooden legs. They gave the blind man three carlini, two for him and one for his dog, and sent him away.

“The theatre and the temple of Isis were all that now remained to be seen. After visiting them, the Englishman, in the most careless tone he could assume, said he should like to return to the house in which were deposited the produce of the researches then making. The invalid, without the slightest suspicion, conducted them thither, and they entered the apartment in which the curiosities were arranged on shelves nailed against the wall.

“While the Englishman lounged about, pretending to be examining every thing with the greatest interest, the lazzarone busied himself in fastening a stout string across the doorway, at the height of a couple of feet from the ground. When he had done this, he made a sign to the Englishman, who seized the little statue that he coveted from under



the very nose of the astounded invalid, put it into his pocket, and, jumping over the string, ran off as hard as he could, accompanied by the lazzarone. Darting through the Stabian gate, they found themselves on the Salerno road—an empty hackney-coach was passing, the Englishman jumped in, and had soon rejoined his carriage, which was waiting for him in Via dei Sepolchri. Two hours after he had left Pompeii he was at Torre del Greco, and in another hour at Naples.

Page 121

“As to the invalid, he at first tried to step over the cord fastened across the door, but the height at which the lazzarone had fixed it was too great for wooden legs to accomplish. He then endeavoured to untie it, but with no better success; for the lazzarone had fastened it in a knot compared to which the one of Gordian celebrity would have appeared a mere slip-knot. Finally, the old soldier, who had perhaps read of Alexander the Great, determined to cut what he could not untie, and accordingly drew his sword. But the sword in its best days had never had much edge, and now it had none at all; so that the Englishman was halfway to Naples whilst the invalid was still sawing away at his cord.

“The same evening the Englishman left Naples on board a steamboat, and the lazzarone was lost in the crowd of his comrades; the six plasters he had got from his employer enabling him to live in what a lazzarone considers luxury for nearly as many months.

“The Englishman had been twelve hours at Naples, and had done the three things that are most expressly forbidden to be done there. He had abused the king, copied frescoes, and stolen a statue, and all owing, not to his money, but to the ingenuity of a lazzarone.”

The lazzarone is a godsend for M. Dumas, an admirable peg upon which to hang his quaint conceit and sly satire; and he is accordingly frequently introduced in the course of the three volumes. We must make room for one more extract, in which he figures in conjunction with his friend the sbirro or gendarme, who before being invested with a uniform, and armed with carbine, pistols, and sabre, has frequently been a lazzarone himself, and usually preserves the instincts and tastes of his former station. The result of this is a coalition between the lazzarone and the sbirro—law-breaker and law-preserver uniting in a systematic attack upon the pockets of the public.

“I was one day passing down the Toledo, when I saw a sbirro arrested. Like La Fontaine’s huntsman, he had been insatiable, and his greediness brought its own punishment. This is what had happened.

“A sbirro had caught a lazzarone in the fact.

“‘What did you steal from that gentleman in black, who just went by?’ he demanded he.

“‘Nothing, your excellency,’ replied the lazzarone. A lazzarone always addresses a sbirro as *eccellenza*.

“‘I saw your hand in his pocket.’

“‘His pocket was empty.’

“‘What! Not a purse, a snuff-box, a handkerchief?’

“Nothing, please your excellency. It was an author.’

“Why do you go to those sort of people?’

“I found out my mistake too late.’

“Come along with me to the police-office.’

“But, your excellency—since I have stolen nothing?’

“Idiot, that’s the very reason. If you *had* stolen something, we might have arranged matters.’

“Only wait till next time. I shall not always be so unfortunate. I promise you the contents of the pocket of the next person who passes.’



Page 122

“Very good; but I will select the individual, or else you will be making a bad choice again.’

“As your excellency pleases.’

“The sbirro folded his arms in a most dignified manner, and leaned his back against a post; the lazzarone stretched himself on the pavement at his feet. A priest came by, then a lawyer, then a poet; but the sbirro made no sign. At last there appeared a young officer, dressed in brilliant uniform, who passed gaily along, humming between his teeth a tune out of the last opera. The sbirro gave the signal. Up sprang the lazzarone and followed the officer. Both disappeared round a corner. Presently the lazzarone returned with his ransom in his hand.

“What have you got there?’ said the sbirro.

“A handkerchief,’ replied the other.

“Is that all?’

“That all! It is of the finest cambric.’

“Had he only one?’[11]

[11] At Naples, it is customary to carry two handkerchiefs, one of silk, and the other of cambric; the latter being used to wipe the forehead.

“Only one in that pocket.’

“And in the other?’

“In the other he had a silk handkerchief.’

“Why didn’t you bring it?’

“I keep that for myself, excellency. It is fair that we should divide the profits. One pocket for you, the other for me.’

“I have a right to both, and I must have the silk handkerchief.’

“But, your excellency’——

“I must have the silk handkerchief.’

“It is an injustice.’



“Ha! Do you dare speak ill of his majesty’s sbirri? Come along to prison.’

“You shall have the silk handkerchief, your excellency.’

“How will you find the officer again?’

“He is gone to pay a visit in the Strada de Foria. I will go and wait for him at the door.’

“The lazzarone walked away, turned the corner of the street, and established himself in the recess of a doorway. Presently the young officer came out of a house opposite, and before he had gone ten paces, put his hand in his pocket, and found he was minus a handkerchief.

“Pardon me, excellency,’ said the lazzarone, stepping up to him; ‘you have lost something, I think?’

“I have lost a cambric handkerchief.’

“Your excellency has not lost it; it has been stolen from him.’

“And who stole it?’

“What will your excellency give me if I find him the thief?’

“I will give you a piastre.’

“I must have two.’

“You shall. Hallo! What are you doing?’

“I am stealing your silk handkerchief.’

“In order to find my cambric one?’

“Yes.’

“And where will both of them be?’

“In the same pocket. The person to whom I shall give this handkerchief is the same to whom I have already given the other. Follow me, and observe what I do.’

Page 123

“The officer followed the lazzarone, who gave the handkerchief to the sbirro, and walked away. The latter had hardly put his prize in his pocket when the officer came up and seized him by the collar. The sbirro fell on his knees, but the officer was inexorable, and he was sent to prison. As the sbirro had himself been a lazzarone, he saw at once the trick that had been played him. He wanted to cheat his confederate, and his confederate had cheated him; but far from bearing him malice for having done so, the sbirro views the conduct of the lazzarone in the light of an exploit, and feels an additional respect for him in consequence. When he is released from prison, he will seek him out, and they will be hand and glove together. When that time comes, look to your pockets.”

We are introduced to Ferdinand IV. of Naples, King Nasone, as the lazzaroni nicknamed him; also to Padre Rocco, a popular preacher, and the idol of the lower classes of Neapolitans; and to Cardinal Perelli, remarkable for his simplicity, which quality, as may be supposed, loses nothing in passing through the hands of his present biographer. With his usual skill, M. Dumas glides from a ticklish story of which the cardinal is the hero, (a story that he does *not* tell, for which forbearance we give him due credit, since he is evidently sorely tempted thereto,) to an account of the Vardarelli, a band of outlaws which for some time infested Calabria and the Capitanato.

“Gaetano Vardarelli was a native of Calabria, and one of the earliest members of the revolutionary society of the Carbonari. When Murat, after for some time favouring that society, began to persecute it, Vardarelli fled to Sicily, and took service under King Ferdinand. He was then twenty-six years of age, possessing the muscles and courage of a lion, the agility of a chamois, the eye of an eagle. Such a recruit was not to be despised, and he was made sergeant in the Sicilian guards. On Ferdinand’s restoration in 1815, he followed him to Naples; but finding that he was not likely ever to rise above a very subordinate grade, he became disgusted with the service, deserted, and took refuge in the mountains of Calabria. There two of his brothers, and some thirty brigands and outlaws, assembled around him and elected him their chief, with right of life and death over them. He had been a slave in the town; he found himself a king in the mountains.

“Proceeding according to the old formula observed by banditti chiefs both in Calabria and in melodramas, Vardarelli proclaimed himself redresser general of wrongs and grievances, and acted up to his profession by robbing the rich and assisting the poor. The consequence was, that he soon became exceedingly dreaded by the former, and exceedingly popular among the latter class; and at last his exploits reached the ears of King Ferdinand himself, who was highly indignant at such goings on, and gave orders that the bandit should immediately be hung. But there are three things

Page 124

necessary to hang a man—a rope, a gallows, and the man himself. In this instance, the first two were easily found, but the third was unfortunately wanting. Gendarmes and soldiers were sent after Vardarelli, but the latter was too cunning for them all, and slipped through their fingers at every turn. His success in eluding pursuit increased his reputation, and recruits flocked to his standard. His band soon doubled its numbers, and its leader became a formidable and important person, which of course was an additional reason for the authorities to wish to capture him. A price was set on his head, large bodies of troops sent in search of him, but all in vain. One day the Prince of Leperano, Colonel Calcedonio, Major Delponte, with a dozen other officers, and a score of attendants, were hunting in a forest a few leagues from Bari, when the cry of '*Vardarelli!*' was suddenly heard. The party took to flight with the utmost precipitation, and all escaped except Major Delponte, who was one of the bravest, but, at the same time, one of the poorest, officers of the whole army. When he was told that he must pay a thousand ducats for his ransom, he only laughed, and asked where he was to get such a sum. Vardarelli then threatened to shoot him if it was not forthcoming by a certain day. The major replied that it was losing time to wait; and that, if he had a piece of advice to give his captor, it was to shoot him at once. The bandit at first felt half inclined to do so; but he reflected that the less Delponte cared about his life, the more ought Ferdinand to value it. He was right in his calculation; for no sooner did the king learn that his brave major was in the hands of the banditti, than he ordered the ransom to be paid out of his privy purse, and the major recovered his freedom.

“But Ferdinand had sworn the extermination of the banditti with whom he was thus obliged to treat as from one potentate to another. A certain colonel, whose name I forget, and who had heard this vow, pledged himself, if a battalion were put under his command, to bring in Vardarelli, his two brothers, and the sixty men composing his troop, bound hand and foot, and to place them in the dungeons of the Vicaria. The offer was too good to be refused; the minister of war put five hundred men at the disposal of the colonel, who started with them at once in pursuit of the outlaw. The latter was soon informed by his spies of this fresh expedition, and *he* also made a vow, to the effect that he would cure his pursuer, once and for all, of any disposition to interfere with the Vardarelli.

“He began by leading the poor colonel such a dance over hill and dale, that the unfortunate officer and his men were worn out with fatigue; then, when he saw them in the state that he wished, he caused some false intelligence to be conveyed to them at two o'clock one morning. The colonel fell into the snare, and started immediately to surprise Vardarelli, whom he was assured was in a little village

Page 125

at the further extremity of a narrow pass, through which only four men could pass abreast. He made such haste that he marched four leagues in two hours, and at daybreak found himself at the entrance of the pass, which, however, seemed so peculiarly well adapted for an ambuscade, that he halted his battalion, and sent on twenty men to reconnoitre. In a quarter of an hour the twenty men returned. They had not met a single living thing. The colonel hesitated no longer, and entered the defile; but, on reaching a spot about halfway through it, where the road widened out into a sort of platform surrounded by high rocks and steep precipices, a shout was suddenly heard, proceeding apparently from the clouds, and the poor colonel looking up, saw the summits of the rocks covered with brigands, who levelled their rifles at him and his soldiers. Nevertheless, he began forming up his men as well as the nature of the ground would permit, when Vardarelli himself appeared upon a projecting crag. 'Down with your arms, or you are dead men!' he shouted in a voice of thunder. The bandits repeated his summons, and the echoes repeated their voices, so that the troops, who had not made the same vow as their colonel, and who thought themselves surrounded by greatly superior numbers, cried out for quarter, in spite of the entreaties and menaces of their unfortunate commander. Then Vardarelli, without leaving his position, ordered them to pile their arms, and march to two different places which he pointed out to them. They obeyed; and Vardarelli, leaving twenty of his men in their ambush, came down with the remainder, who immediately proceeded to render the Neapolitan muskets useless (for the moment at least) by the same process which Gulliver employed to extinguish the conflagration of the palace at Lilliput.

"The news of this affair put the king in very bad humour for the first twenty-four hours; after which time, however, the love of a joke overcoming his anger, he laughed heartily, and told the story to every one he saw; and as there are always lots of listeners when a king narrates, three years elapsed before the poor colonel ventured to show his face at Naples and encounter the ridicule of the court."

The general commanding in Calabria takes the matter rather more seriously, and vows the destruction of the banditti. By offers of large pay and privileges, they are induced to enter the Neapolitan service, and prove highly efficient as a troop of gendarmes. But the general cannot forget his old grudge against them; although, for lack of an opportunity, and on account of the desperate character of the men, he is obliged to defer his revenge for some time. At last he succeeds in having their leaders assassinated, and by pretending great indignation, and imprisoning the perpetrators of the deed, he lulls the suspicions of the remaining bandits, who elect new officers, and on an appointed day, proceed to the town of Foggia to have their election confirmed. Only eight of them, apprehensive of treachery, refuse to accompany their comrades. The remaining thirty-one, and a woman who would not leave her husband, obey the general's summons.

Page 126

“It was a Sunday, the review had been publicly announced, and the square was thronged with spectators. The Vardarelli entered the town in perfect order, armed to the very teeth, but giving no sign of hostility or mistrust. On reaching the square, they raised their sabres, and with one voice exclaimed—‘*Viva il Re!*’ The general appeared on his balcony to acknowledge their salute. The aide-de-camp on duty came down to receive them, and after complimenting them on the beauty of their horses and good state of their arms, desired them to file past under the general’s window, which they did with a precision worthy of regular troops. They then formed up again in the middle of the square, and dismounted.

“The aide-de-camp went into the house again with the list of the three new officers; the Vardarelli were standing by their horses, when suddenly there was a great confusion and movement in the crowd, which opened in various places, and down every street leading to the square, a column of Neapolitan troops was seen advancing. The Vardarelli were surrounded on all sides. Perceiving at once that they were betrayed, they sprang upon their horses and drew their sabres; but at the same moment the general took off his hat, which was the signal agreed upon; the command, ‘*Faccia in terra,*’ was heard, and the spectators, throwing themselves on their faces, the soldiers fired over them, and nine of the brigands fell to the ground, dead or mortally wounded. Those who were unhurt, seeing that they had no quarter to expect, dismounted, and forming a compact body, fought their way to an old castle in which they took refuge. Two only, trusting to the speed of their horses, charged the group of soldiers that appeared the least numerous, shot down two of them, and succeeded in breaking through the others and escaping. The woman owed her life to a similar piece of daring, effected, however, on another point of the enemy’s line. She broke through, and galloped off, after having discharged both her pistols with fatal effect.

“The attention of all was now turned to the remaining twenty Vardarelli, who had taken refuge in the ruined castle. The soldiers advanced against them, encouraging one another, and expecting to encounter an obstinate resistance; but, to their surprise, they reached the gate of the castle without a shot being fired at them. The gate was soon beaten in, and the soldiers spread themselves through the halls and galleries of the old building. But all was silence and solitude; the bandits had disappeared.

“After an hour passed in rummaging every corner of the place, the assailants were going away in despair, convinced that their prey had escaped them; when a soldier, who was stooping down to look through the air-hole of a cellar, fell, shot through the body.

Page 127

“The Vardarelli were discovered; but still it was no easy matter to get at them. Instead of losing men by a direct attack, the soldiers blocked up the air-hole with stones, set a guard over it, and then going round to the door of the cellar, which was barricadoed on the inner side, they heaped lighted fagots and combustibles against it, so that the staircase was soon one immense furnace. After a time the door gave way, and the fire poured like a torrent into the retreat of the unfortunate bandits. Still a profound silence reigned in the vault. Presently two carbine shots were fired; two brothers, determined not to fall alive into the hands of their enemies, had shot each other to death. A moment afterwards an explosion was heard; a bandit had thrown himself into the flames, and his cartridge box had blown up. At last the remainder of the unfortunate men being nearly suffocated, and seeing that escape was impossible, surrendered at discretion, were dragged through the air-hole, and immediately bound hand and foot, and conveyed to prison.

“As to the eight who had refused to come to Foggia, and the two who had escaped, they were hunted down like wild beasts, tracked from cavern to cavern, and from forest to forest. Some were shot, others betrayed by the peasantry, some gave themselves up, so that, before the year was out, all the Vardarelli were dead or prisoners. The woman who had displayed such masculine courage, was the only one who finally escaped. She was never heard of afterwards.”

M. Dumas finds that the climate of Naples, delightful as it is, has nevertheless its little drawbacks and disadvantages. He returns one night from an excursion in the environs, and has scarcely got into bed, when he is almost blown out of it again by a tornado of tropical violence.

“At midnight, when we returned to Naples, the weather was perfect, the sky cloudless, the sea without a ripple. At three in the morning I was awakened by the windows of my room bursting open, their eighteen panes of glass falling upon the floor with a frightful clatter. I jumped out of bed, and felt that the house was shaking. I thought of Pliny the Elder, and having no desire for a similar fate, I hastily pulled on my clothes and hurried out into the corridor. My first impulse had apparently been that of all the inmates of the hotel, who were all standing, more or less dressed, at the doors of their apartments; amongst others, Jadin, who made his appearance with a phosphorus box in his hand, and his dog Milord at his heels. ‘What a terrible draught in the house!’ said he to me. This same draught, as he called it, had just carried off the roof of the Prince of San Feodoro’s palace, including the garrets and several servants who were sleeping in them.

“My first thought had been of an eruption of Vesuvius, but there was no such luck for us; it was merely a hurricane. A hurricane at Naples, however, is rather different from the same thing in any other European country.

Page 128

“Out of the seventy windows of the hotel, three only had escaped damage. The ceilings of seven or eight rooms were rent across. There was a crack extending from top to bottom of the house. Eight shutters had been carried away, and the servants were running down the street after them, just as one runs after one’s hat on a windy day. The broken glass was swept away; as for sending for glaziers to mend the windows, it was out of the question. At Naples nobody thinks of disturbing himself at three in the morning. Besides, even had new panes been put in, they would soon have shared the fate of the old ones. We were obliged, therefore, to manage as well as we could with the shutters. I was tolerably lucky, for I had only lost one of mine. I went to bed again, and tried to sleep; but a storm of thunder and lightning soon rendered that impossible, and I took refuge on the ground-floor, where the wind had done less damage. Then began one of those storms of which we have no idea in the more northern parts of Europe. It was accompanied by a deluge such as I had never witnessed, except perhaps in Calabria. In an instant the Villa Reale appeared to be a part of the sea; the water came up to the windows of the ground-floor, and flooded the parlours. A minute afterwards, the servants came to tell M. Zill that his cellars were full, and his casks of wine floating about and staving one another. Presently we saw a jackass laden with vegetables come swimming down the street, carried along by the current. He was swept away into a large open drain, and disappeared. The peasant who owned him, and who had also been carried away, only saved himself from a like fate by clinging to a lamp-post. In one hour there fell more water than there falls in Paris during the two wettest months in the year.

“Two hours after the cessation of the rain, the water had disappeared, and I then perceived the use of this kind of deluge. The streets were clean; which they never are in Naples except after a flood of this sort.”

One short anecdote, and we have done. After a long account of St Januarius, including the well-known miracle of the liquefaction of his blood, and some amusing illustrations of his immense popularity with the Neapolitans, M. Dumas, in two pithy lines, gives us the length, breadth, and thickness of a lazzarone’s religion.

“I was one day in a church at Naples,” he says, “and I heard a lazzarone praying aloud. He entreated God to intercede with St Januarius to make him win in the lottery.”

On the whole, we think this one of the most amusing of M. Dumas’s works, very light and sketchy, as is evident from our extracts; but at the same time giving a great deal of information concerning Naples, its environs, inhabitants, and customs, of much interest, and calculated to be highly useful to the traveller. It is also very free from a fault with which we taxed its author in a former paper, and we can scarcely call

Page 129

to mind a single line which it would be necessary to expunge, in order to render it fit reading for the most fastidious. As far as we ourselves are concerned, we heartily wish M. Dumas would travel over all the kingdoms of the earth, and write a book about each of them; and if he is as good company in a post-chaise as his books are at the chimney-corner, there are few things we should like better than to accompany him on his pilgrimage.

* * * * *

MARSTON; OR, THE MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN.

PART IX.

“Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puft up with wind,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven’s artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in the pitched battle heard
Loud ’larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang?”

SHAKSPEARE.

The market-place was lighted up, and filled with dragoons. Leaving my hulans under cover of a dark street, and riding forward to reconnoitre, I saw with astonishment the utter carelessness with which they abandoned themselves to their indulgences in the midst of an irritated population. Some were drinking on horseback; some had thrown themselves on the benches of the market, and were evidently intoxicated. The people stood at the corners of the streets looking on, palpably in terror, yet as palpably indignant at the outrage of the military. From the excessive blaze in some of the windows, and the shrieks of females, I could perceive that plunder was going on, and that the intention was, after having ransacked the place, to set it on fire. Yet a strong body of cavalry mounted in the middle of the square, and keeping guard round a waggon on which a guillotine had been already erected, still made me feel that an attack would be hopeless. I soon saw a rush of the people from one of the side streets; a couple of dragoon helmets were visible above the crowd; and three or four carts followed, filled with young females in white robes and flowers, as if dressed for a ball. I gazed intently, to ascertain the meaning of this strange and melancholy spectacle. At this moment I felt my horse’s bridle pulled, and saw the old noble at his head. “Now or never!” he cried, in a voice almost choked with emotion. “Those are destined for the guillotine. Barbarians! brigands!—they will murder my Amalia.” He sank before me.

“What! is this an execution?” I exclaimed. His answer was scarcely above a whisper, for he seemed fainting. “The villains have been sent,” said he, “to burn the town; they have seized those children of our best families, compelled them to dress as they were dressed for the Prussian ball, and are now about to murder them by their accursed guillotine.” Pointing to one lovely girl, who, pale as death, stood in the foremost

Page 130

of those vehicles of death, he exclaimed “Amalia! O, my Amalia!” The cart was already within a few feet of the scaffold when I gave the word to my troopers. The brave fellows answered my “Forward!” with a shout, charged sabre in hand, and in an instant had thrown themselves between the victims and the scaffold. Their escort, taken completely by surprise, was broken at the first shock; we dashed without loss of time on the squadrons scattered round the market, and swept it clear of them. Surprised, intoxicated, and unacquainted with our force—which they probably thought to be the advance of the whole Prussian cavalry—after having lost many men, for the peasantry showed no mercy on the dismounted, the regiment turned at full gallop to the open country. The townspeople now performed their part. The victims were hurried away by their families, among a storm of lamentations and rejoicings, tears and kisses. The old noble’s daughter, half dead, was carried off in her father’s arms, with a thousand benedictions on me. The guillotine was hewn down with a hundred axes, and I saw the fragments burning in the square. Its waggon was made to serve its country as a portion of a barricade; and with every vehicle, wheeled or unwheeled, which could be rolled out, the entrance to the streets was fortified with the national rapidity in any deed, good or ill, under the stars.

After having appeased our hunger and that of our famishing horses, and being offered all the purses, which the French dragoons, however, had lightened nearly to the last coin, we finished the exploit by a general chant in honour of the ladies, and marched on our route, followed by the prayers of the whole community. This ended the only productive skirmish of the retreat. It fed us, broke the monotony of the march, and gave us something to talk of—and the soldier asks but little more. A gallant action had certainly been done; not the less gallant for its being a humane one; and even my bold hulans gave me credit for being a “smart officer,” a title of no slight value in their dashing service.

Yet what, as the poet Saadi says, is fortune but a peacock “a showy tail on a frightful pair of legs?” Our triumph was to be followed by a reverse. The burgundy and champagne of the old count’s cellar had made us festive, and our voices were heard along the road with a gaiety imprudent in a hostile land. The sound of a trumpet in our front brought us to our senses and a dead stand. But we were in a vein of heroism and instead of taking to our old hussar habits, and slipping round the enemy’s flanks, we determined to cut our way through them, if they had the whole cavalry of France as their *appui*. The word was given, and the spur carried us through a strong line of cavalry posted across the road. The moon had just risen enough to show that there was a still stronger line a few hundred yards beyond, which it would be folly to touch. There was now no resource but to return as we went, which we did

Page 131

at full speed, and again broke up our antagonists. But again we saw squadron after squadron blocking up the road. All was now desperate. But Frederick's law of arms was well known—"the officer of cavalry who *waits to be charged*, must be broke." We made a plunge at our living circumvallation; but the French dragoons had now learned common sense—they opened for us—and when we were once fairly in, enveloped us completely; it was then a troop to a brigade; fifty jaded men and horses to fifteen hundred fresh from camp. What happened further I know not. I saw for a minute or two a great deal of pistol firing and a great deal of sabre clashing; I felt my horse stagger under me, at the moment when I aimed a blow at a gigantic fellow covered all over with helmet and mustache; a pistol exploded close at my ear as I was going down, and I heard no more.

On opening my eyes again, I found the scene strangely altered. I was lying in a little chamber hung round with Parisian ornament—a sufficient contrast to a sky dark as pitch, or only illumined by carbines and the sparkles of sabres delving at each other. I was lying on an embroidered sofa—an equally strong contrast to my position under the bodies of fallen men and the heels of kicking horses. A showy Turkish cloak, or *robe de chambre*, had superseded my laced jacket, purple pantaloons, and hussar boots. I was completely altered as a warrior; and, from a glimpse which I cast on a mirror, surrounded with gilt nymphs and swains enough to have furnished a ballet, I saw in my haggard countenance, and a wound, which a riband but half concealed, across my forehead, that I was not less altered as a man.

All round me looked so perfectly like the scenes with which I had been familiar in my romance-reading days, that, bruised and feeble as I was, I almost expected to find my pillow attended by some of those slight figures in long white drapery with blue eyes, which of old ministered to so many ill-used knights and exhausted pilgrims. But my reveries were broken up by a rough voice in the outer chamber insisting on an entrance into mine, and replied to by a weak and garrulous female one, refusing the admission. The dialogue was something of this order—

"Strong or weak, well or ill, able or not able, I must send him, before twelve o'clock this night, to Paris."

"But the poor gentleman's wounds are still unhealed."

"Still he must set out. The '*malle poste*' will be at the door; and, if he had fifty wounds on him, he must go. The marquis is halfway to Paris by this time; perhaps more than halfway to the guillotine."

This was followed by a burst of sobs and broken exclamations from the female, whom I discovered, by her sorrowing confessions, to have been a nurse in the family.

“Well,” was the ruffian’s reply; “women of all ages are fools: what is it to you whether this young fellow is shot or hanged? He was taken in arms against the Republic—one and indivisible. All the enemies of France must perish!”

Page 132

The old woman now partially opened the door, to see whether I slept; and I closed my eyes, for the purpose of hearing all that was to be heard without interruption. The speaker, whom I alternately took for the *gendarme* of the district, and the executioner, gave vent to his swelling soul in the national style.

“What! leave *me*! leave Jean Jacques Louis Gilet in charge of this wretched aristocrat, while I should be marching with my battalion, and at its head too, if merit meets its reward, to sweep the foes of the Republic from the face of the earth. No; I shall not remain in this paltry place, solicitor of a village, when I ought to be on the highest seat of justice—or playing the part of arresting aristocrats, when I might be commandant of a brigade, marching over the bodies of the crowned tyrants of the earth to glory!”

As his harangue glowed, his pace quickened, and his voice grew more vehement; at length, probably impatient of the time which lay between him and the first offices of the Republic, he overpowered the resistance of the nurse, and rushed into the chamber. Throwing himself into a theatrical attitude before a mirror—for what Frenchman ever passes one without a glance of happy recognition?—“Rise, aristocrat!” he cried, in the tone of Talma calling up the shade of Caesar. “Rise, and account to the world for your crimes against the liberty of man!”

I looked with such surprise on this champion of the sons of Adam—a little meagre creature, who seemed to be shaped on the model of one of his own pens, stripped, withered, and ink-dried—that I actually burst into laughter. His indignation rose, and, pulling out a pistol with one hand, and a roll of paper from his bosom with the other, he presented them together. I perceived, as I lay on my pillow, that the pistol was without a lock, and thus was comforted; but the paper was of a more formidable description. It was the famous decree of “Fraternization,” by which France pronounced the fall of her own monarchy, declared “that she would grant succour to every people who wished to recover their liberty,” and commanded her generals “to aid all such, and to defend all citizens who might be troubled in the cause of freedom.”

This paper indeed startled me; it was the consummation which I had dreaded so long. I saw at once that France, in those wild words, had declared war against every throne in Europe, and that we were now beginning the era of struggle and suffering which Mordecai’s strong sense had predicted, and of which no human sagacity could foresee the end. My countenance probably showed the impression which this European anathema had made upon me; for Monsieur Gilet became more heroic than ever, tore his grizzled curls, throwing aside his pistol, which he had at length discovered to be *hors de combat*, and drawing the falchion which clattered at his heels, and was nearly as long as himself, flourished it in quick march backward and

Page 133

forward before the mirror—that mirror never forgotten!—in all the whirlwind of his rage, and panted for the conquest of “perfidious Albion,” the “traitor” Pitt, and the whole brood of hoary power. I was too feeble to turn him out of the room, and too contemptuous to reply. But his overthrow was not the further off. The old nurse, who, old as she was, still retained some of the sinews and all the irritability of a stout Champenoise peasant, roused by his insults to the aristocracy, one of whom she probably regarded herself, from having lived so long under their roof, watched her opportunity, made a spring at him like a wild-cat, wrested the sabre from his hand, and, grasping the struggling and screaming little functionary in her strong arms, carried him like a child out of the room.

She then returned, and having locked the door to prevent his second inroad, sat down by the side of my couch, and, with the usual passion of women after strong excitement, burst into exclamations and tears. What I could collect from her broken narrative, was little more than the commonplace of national misery in that fearful time. She had been a servant in the family of the nobleman whose daughter I had saved from death. She had been the nurse of the young countess; and all the blessings that sorrow and gratitude ever gathered together, could not be exceeded by the praises which she poured upon my head. It had been rumoured in the town that I was attacked and killed by a body of cavalry sent to revenge the rout of their comrades. And the Marquis Lanfranc—I now first learned the name of my noble entertainer—had gone forth to look for my remains in the field. I was found still breathing, and to avoid further danger was carried to this dwelling, a hunting-lodge in the heart of the forest; there I had been attended by the family physician only, and, after a week of insensibility, had given signs of recovery. The marquis’s humanity had brought evil on himself. His visits to the lodge had been remarked, and on this very morning he had been arrested, and conveyed with his daughter, in a carriage escorted by *gendarmes* to the capital. My detection followed of course; papers found on my person had proved that I was an agent of England; and the officious M. Gilet had spent the morning in exhibiting to the peasantry of the neighbourhood the order of the “Committee of Public Safety,” a name which froze the blood, to take me under his charge, and conduct me forthwith to their tribunal. I tell all this in my own way; for the dame’s sighs, sobs, and vehement indignation, would have defied all record.

Page 134

My prospect was now black enough, for justice was a word unheard of in the present condition of things; and my plea of being an Englishman, and in the civil service of my country, would have been a death-warrant. I must acknowledge, too, that I had fairly thrown it away by my adoption of the Prussian sabre. I might well be now in low spirits; for the guillotine was crushing out life at that moment in every province of France, and the thirst of public curiosity was to be fed by nothing but blood. Yet, even in that moment, let me give myself credit for the recollection, my first enquiry was for the fate of my squadron. The old woman could tell me but little on the subject; but that little was consolatory. The French troopers, who had come back triumphing into the town, had not brought any Prussian prisoners: two or three foreigners, who had lost their horses, were sheltered in her master's stables until they could make their escape; and of them she had heard no more. The truth is, that nothing is more difficult in war than to catch a hussar who understands his business; and the probability was, that the chief part of them had slipped away, leaving the French to sabre each other in the dark. The fall of my horse had brought me down, otherwise I might have escaped the shot which stunned me, and been at that hour galloping to Berlin.

Monsieur Gilet, with some of the civic authorities, paid me a second visit in the evening, to prepare me for my journey. To me it was become indifferent whether I died in the carriage or by the edge of the guillotine; the journey was short in either case, and the shorter and sooner the better. I answered none of their interrogatories; told them I was at their disposal; directed the old woman to pack up whatever travelling matters remained to me, and to remember me to her master and mistress, if she ever should see them in this world; shook her strong old hand, and bade God bless her. In return, she kissed me on both cheeks, whispered a thousand benedictions, and left the room violently sobbing; yet with a parting glance at Monsieur Gilet and his *collaborateurs*, so mingled of wrath and ridicule, that it was beyond all my deciphering.

“Time and the hour run through the longest day,”

says the great poet; and, with the coming of midnight, a *chaise de poste* drew up at the door. As I was a prisoner of importance, M. Gilet was not suffered to take all the honour of my introduction to the axe on himself; and the mayor and deputy-mayor of the district insisted on this opportunity of making themselves known to the supreme Republic. They mounted the box in front, a couple of gendarmes sat behind, M. Gilet took his seat at my side, and, with an infinite cracking of whips, we rushed out upon the causeway.

I soon discovered that my companion was by no means satisfied with existing circumstances. The officiousness of the pair of mayors prodigiously displeased him. He broke forth—

Page 135

"See these two beggars," he exclaimed, "pretending to patriotism! They have no energy, no courage, no civism. Why, *you* might have remained for a twelvemonth under their very nostrils before they would have found you out. Gilet is the man for the service of his country." Merely to stop the torrent of his complainings, I asked him some vague questions relative to the nobleman whom I was now following to Paris. But the patriot was not to be moved from his topic.

"Hah! Citizen Lanfranc. All is over with him. He once held his head high enough, but it will soon be as low as ever it was high. Yet I could have forgiven his aristocracy, if he had not put these two 'chiens' above me."

The position in which the mayor and his deputy sat, on the box of the chaise, continually presenting them to the eye of my companion, kept his choler peculiarly active.

"One of these fellows," he exclaimed, "was the Marquis's cook, another his perruquier! *I* was his tailor. Every man of taste and talent knows the superiority of *my* profession; for what is the first of noblemen without elegance of costume, or what indeed would man himself be without my art, the noblest and the earliest art of mankind? And yet he made these two 'brigands' mayor and deputy—*peste!* I did my duty. I denounced him on the spot. I did more. The aristocrat had a faction in the town. It was filled with his dependents. In fact, it had been built on his grounds, and tenanted by the old hangers-on of the family. So, to make a clear stage, I denounced the town." He clapped his hands with exultation at this civic triumph.

My recollection of the miseries which his malice had caused roused me into wrath, and, rash as the act was, I grasped him by the collar, with the full intent of throwing the little writhing wretch out of the window; but, while I was lifting him from the seat to which he clung screaming for help, and had already forced him halfway outside, a shot whistled close by the head of the postilion, which brought him to a full stop. "Mon Dieu!—Brigands!" exclaimed Monsieur Gilet; and, dropping back into the carriage, attempted to make a screen of my body by slipping his adroitly behind me. Two or three more discharges rattled through the trees, followed by a rush of peasants, who unceremoniously knocked down the two officials in front, and began a general scuffle with the gendarmes. The night was so dark, that I could discover nothing of the *melee* but by the blaze of the fusils. All, however, was quiet in a few moments, by the disappearance of the gendarmes, and the complete capture of the convoy—M. Gilet, mayors, and all. Whether we had fallen into the hands of highwaymen, or of stragglers from the French army, was doubtful for a while, as not a syllable was spoken, nor a sound uttered, except by the unhappy functionaries, who grumbled prodigiously as they were dragged along through "rough and

Page 136

smooth, moss and mire,” and whose pace was evidently quickened by many a kick and blow of the fusil. This was a rude march for me, too, with my unhealed wound, and my week’s sojourn in bed; but I was treated, if not with tenderness, without incivility, while my *compagnons de voyage* were insulted with every contemptuous phrase in a vocabulary at least as rich in those matters as any other in Europe. At length, after about an hour’s rapid movement, we reached an open ground, and the door of one of the wide, old, staring, yet not uncomfortable farmhouses which are to be found in the northern provinces of France.

Signs of comfort within were visible even at a distance, and the light of a huge wood fire had been seen for the last quarter of an hour gleaming through the woods, and leaving us in doubt whether we were approaching a horde of gipsies, or about to realize the classic scenes of *Gil Blas*.

But it was only a farm-house after all. The good dame of the house, with an enormous cap, enormous petticoats, enormous earrings, and all the glaring good-humour of a countenance of domestic plenty and power, came to meet us on the threshold; and her reception of me was ardent, to the very verge of strangulation. Nothing could exceed her rapture at the sight of me, or the fierceness of her embraces, except her indignation at the sight of my traveling companions. Her disgust at the mayor and his deputy—and certainly after their night trip they were not figures to charm the eye—was pitched in the highest key of scorn, so as to be surpassed only by the torrent of contempt which her well-practised elocution poured upon the “*traître tailleur*.” I really believe, that, if she could have boiled him in the huge soup-kettle which bubbled upon the fire, without spoiling our supper, she would have flung him in upon the spot. The peasants who had captured us—bold, tall fellows, well dressed and well armed with cutlass and fusil, in the style of the *gardes-de-chasse*—could scarcely be kept from taking them out to the next tree, to make marks of them; and it was probably by my intercession alone that they were consigned to an outer house for the night. How the scene was to end with me, I knew not; though the jovial visage of my protectress showed me that I was secure. But the prisoners had no sooner been flung out of the door than I was ushered into an inner room, prepared with somewhat more of attention; where, to my great surprise and delight, the Marquis Lanfranc came forward to shake my hand, and, with a thousand expressions of gratitude, made me known to his daughter. The adventure was of the simplest order. The arrest of the Marquis was, of course, known in an instant, and a party of his foresters had immediately determined to take the law into their own hands—had posted themselves on the road by which his carriage was to pass, and had released him without difficulty. My release was merely a sequel to the drama. I had been left

Page 137

in the hunting-lodge by its owner, under the impression that an individual who could not be moved without hazard to life, would escape the vengeance of village patriotism. But the nurse, whom he had placed in charge of me, had no sooner ascertained that I was arrested, than she sent an express to the farm-house. The consequence naturally followed in my liberty; and the night which I expected to have spent freezing on my way to the dungeon, presented me with the pleasant exchange of hospitable shelter, the society of a most accomplished man, and his graceful handsome daughter; and last, not least, a couple of kisses from my late nurse, according to the custom of the country, as glowing and remorseless as those of my portly landlady herself.

We sat for some hours, and scarcely felt them pass in the anxious topics which engrossed us; the perils of France, the prospects of the Allies, and the captivity of the unhappy Bourbons. Now and then the conversation turned on their own hair-breadth escapes, and those of their relatives and friends. Among the rest, the hazards of the De Tourville family were mentioned, and I heard the name of Clotilde pronounced with a sensation indescribable. The name was connected with such displays of fortitude, nobleness of spirit, and deep devotion to the royal cause, that, if I had loved before, I now honoured her. She had saved the lives of her household; she had, by an act of extraordinary, but most perilous affection, saved the life of her mother, at the moment when the first insurgency broke out; and, young as she was, she had exhibited so noble a union of generosity and strength of mind, that the Marquis's eyes filled with tears as he told it, and Amalia buried her forehead in her hands to conceal her convulsive emotions: what must have been mine!

Our conversation was not unfrequently interrupted by bursts of merriment from the outer room, where the peasants were at supper provided by the Marquis for his bold rescuers—an indulgence which they seemed to enjoy with the highest zest imaginable. Songs were sung with very various kinds of merit in the performer, but all well received. Healths were proposed, in which the existing Government was certainly not much honoured; and, if the good wishes of the party could have sent the “Committee of Public Safety,” the butcher cabinet of France, to the darkest spot on earth, or under it, its time would have been brief. But even this died away; the laugh subsided, the mirth grew silent, and at length the *gardes-de-chasse* went away, making the forest ring with their professional whoops and holloas, the remnants of their honest revel. At length the Marquis and his daughter, who were to be on the wing at daybreak for the German frontier, and who had generously offered to take charge of my invalid frame in the same direction, retired; and wrapping myself up in a dark cloak, furnished by my mistress and formed to her showy proportions, I threw myself on the sofa, and was in the land of dreams.

Page 138

But though I slept, I did not rest. My fever, or my lassitude, or probably some presentiment of the troubled career into which I was to be plunged, made "tired nature's sweet restorer" a stepmother to me. I can never endure hearing the dreams of others, and thus I cannot suffer myself to inflict them on my hearers; but on that night, Queen Mab, like Jehu, drove her horses furiously. Every possible kind of disappointment, vexation, and difficulty; every conceivable shape of things, past and present, rushed through my brain; and all pale, fierce, disastrous, and melancholy. I was beckoned along dim shades by shapeless phantoms; I was trampled in battle; I was brought before a tribunal; I was on board a ship which blew up, and was flung strangling down an infinite depth in a midnight ocean. But this exceeded the privilege even of dreams. I made one desperate effort to rise, and awoke with a bound on the floor. There I found a real obstacle—a ruffian in a red cap. One strong hand was on my throat; and by the glimmer of the dying lantern, which hung from the roof, I saw the glitter of a pistol-barrel in the other. "Surrender in the name of the Republic!" were the words which told me my fate. Four or five wearers of the same ominous emblem, with sabres and pistols, were round me at the moment, and after a brief struggle I was secured. Cries were now heard outside the door, and a wounded gendarme was carried in, borne in the arms of his comrades. From their confused clamour, I could merely ascertain that the gendarmes who had escaped in the original *melee*, had obtained assistance, and returned on their steps. The farm-house had been surrounded, and the Marquis was indebted only to the vigilance of his peasantry for a second escape with his daughter. The *gardes-de-chasse* had kept the gendarmes at bay until their retreat was secure; and the post-chaise which had brought M. Gilet and his coadjutors, was, by this time, some leagues off, at full speed, beyond the fangs of Republicanism.

This at least was comfort, though I was left behind. But it was clear that the gallant old noble was blameless in the matter, and that nothing was to be blamed but my habitual ill luck. "*En route* for Paris," was the last order which I heard; and with a gendarme, in the strange kind of post-waggon which was rolled out from the farmer's stable, I was dispatched, before daybreak, on my startling journey.

I found my gendarme a facetious fellow; though his merriment might not be well adapted to cheer his prisoner. He whistled, he sang, he screamed, he stamped, to get rid of the ennui of travelling with so silent a companion. He told stories of his own prowess; libeled M. Gilet, who had got him beaten on this service in the first instance, and who seemed to be in the worst possible odour with man and woman; and abused all, mayors, deputy-mayors, and authorities, with the tongue of a leveler. But my facetious friend had his especial *chagrins*.

Page 139

"I have all my life," said he, "been longing to see Paris, and have never been able to stir a step beyond this stupid province. Yet I have had my chances too. I was once valet to a German count, and we were on the way to Paris together when the post-chaise was stopped, the baron was arrested as a swindler, and I was charged as his accomplice. He was sent to the galleys; I got off. I then had a second chance. I enlisted in a regiment of dragoons which was to be quartered in Versailles. But such was my fate, I had no sooner passed the first drill, when we were ordered off to Lorraine to watch old King Stanislaus, the Pole, who lived there like one of his own bears, frozen and fat. Still I was determined to see Paris. I asked leave of absence; the adjutant laughed at me, the colonel turned on his heel, and the provost-marshal gave me a week of the black-hole. But a week is but seven days after all, and on my seeing the parade again—I—"

"You deserted?"

"Not quite that," was the reply. "I took leave, and, as I had seen enough of the black hole already, I took good care to give the provost-marshal no notice on the subject. A fortnight's march brought me within sight of the towers of Notre-Dame. But as I was resting myself on the roadside, our adjutant, as ill luck would have it, came by in the *coupe* of the diligence. He jumped out. I was seized, given up to the next guard-house, and after fitting me with a pair of fetters, by way of boots, I was ordered to take my passage with a condemned regiment for the West Indies. There I served ten years; I saw the regiment reduced to a skeleton by short rations and new rum; and returned the tenth representative of fifteen hundred felons. At last I have a chance; the gendarme of the village was so desperately mauled by the foresters in the attempt to carry you prisoner, that he has been forced to take to his bed, and let me take his place. The thing is certain now. *You* will be guillotined, but I shall see Paris."

Yet what is certain in this most changeful of possible worlds?

"Fate granted half the prayer,
The rest the gods dispersed in empty air."

We had toiled through our long journey, rendered doubly long by the dreariest and deepest roads on earth, and were winding round the spur of Montmartre, when a troop of citizen heroes, coming forth to sweep the country of the retreating Prussians, and whose courage had risen to the boiling point by the news of the retreat, surrounded the carriage. My Prussian uniform was proof enough for the brains of the patriots; and the quick discovery of Parisian ears, that I had not learned my French in their capital, settled the question of my being a traitor. The gendarme joined in the charge with his natural volubility; but rather insisted rashly on his right to take his prisoner into Paris on his own behalf. I saw a cloud gathering on the brow of the *chef*, a short, stout, and

Page 140

grim-looking fellow, with the true Faubourg St Antoine physiognomy. The prize was evidently too valuable not to be turned to good account with the authorities; and he resolved on returning at the head of his brother patriots to present me as the first-fruits of his martial career. The dispute grew hot; my escort was foolish enough to clap his hand on the hilt of his sabre—an affront intolerable to a citizen, at the head of fifty or sixty *braves* from the counter or the shambles; the result was, a succession of blows from the whole troop, which closed in my seeing him stripped of every thing, and flung into the *cachot* of the *corps de garde*, from which his only view of his beloved Paris must have been through an iron *grille*.

My captor, determined to enter the capital for once with éclat, seated himself beside me in the *chaise de poste*, and, surrounded by his pike-bearers, we began our march down the descent of the hill.

My new friend was communicative. He gave his history in a breath. He had been a clerk in the office of one of the small tribunals in the south; inflamed with patriotism, and indignant at the idea of selling his talents at the rate of ten sous a-day, “in a rat-hole called a bureau,” he had resolved on being known in the world, and to Paris he came. Paris was the true place for talent. His *civisme* had become conspicuous; he had “assisted” at the birth of liberty. He had carried a musket on the 10th of August, and had “been appointed by the Republic to the command of the civic force,” which now moved, before and behind me. He was a “*grand homme*” already. Danton had told him so within the last fortnight, and France and Europe would no sooner read his last pamphlet on the “Crimes of Kings,” than his fame would be fixed with posterity.

I believe that few men have passed through life without experiencing times when it would cost them little to lay it down. At least such times have occurred to me, and this was among them. Yet this feeling, whether it is to be called nonchalance or despair, has its advantages for the moment; it renders the individual considerably careless of the worst that man can do to him; and I began to question my oratorical judge’s clerk on the events in the “city of cities.” No man could take fuller advantage of having a listener at his command.

“We have cut down the throne,” said he, clapping his hands with exultation, “and now you may buy it for firewood. But you are an aristocrat, and of course a slave; while we have got liberty, equality, and a triumvirate that shears off the heads of traitors at a sign. Suspicion of being suspected is quite sufficient. Away goes the culprit; a true patriot is ordered to take possession of his house until the national pleasure is known; and thus every thing goes on well. Of course, you have heard of the clearance of the prisons. A magnificent work. Five thousand aristocrats, rich, noble,

Page 141

and enemies to their country, sent headless to the shades of tyrants. *Vive la Republique!* But a grand idea strikes me. You shall see Danton himself, the genius of liberty, the hero of human nature, the terror of kings." The thought was new, and a new thought is enough to turn the brain of the Gaul at any time. He thrust his head out of the window, ordered a general halt; and, instead of taking me to the quarters of the National, resolved to have the merit of delivering up an "agent of Pitt and English guineas" to the master of the Republic alone. "*A l'Abbaye!*" was his cry. But a new obstacle now arose in his troop; they had reckoned on a civic supper with their comrades of the guard; and the notion of bivouacking in front of the Abbaye, under the chilling wind and fierce showers which now swept down the dismal streets, was too much for their sense of discipline. The dispute grew angry. At length one of them, a huge and savage-looking fellow, who, by way of illustration, thrust his pike close to the little commandant's shrinking visage, bellowed out—

"The people are not to be insulted. The people order, and all must obey!" Nothing could be more unanswerable, and no attempt was made to answer. The captain dropped back into the chaise, the troop took their own way, and my next glance showed the street empty. But the Frenchman finds comfort under all calamities. After venting his wrath in no measured terms on "rabble insolence," and declaring that laws were of no use when "*gueux*" like these could take them into their hands, he consoled himself by observing that, stripped as he was of his honours, the loss might be compensated by his profits; that the "vagabonds" might have expected to share the reward which the "grand Danton would infallibly be rejoiced to give for my capture, and that both the purse and the praise would be his own." "*A l'Abbaye!*" was the cry once more.

We now were in motion again; and, after threading a labyrinth of streets, so dreary and so dilapidated as almost to give me the conception that I had never been in Paris before, we drove up to the grim entrance of the Abbaye. My companion left me in charge of the sentinel, and rushed in. "And is this," thought I, as I looked round the narrow space of the four walls, "the spot where so many hundreds were butchered; this the scene of the first desperate triumph of massacre; this miserable court the last field of so many gallant lives; these stones the last resting-place of so many whose tread had been on cloth of gold; these old and crumbling walls giving the last echo to the voices of statesmen and nobles, the splendid courtiers, the brilliant orators, and the hoary ecclesiastics, of the most superb kingdom of Europe!" Even by the feeble lamp-light, that rather showed the darkness than the forms of the surrounding buildings, it seemed to me that I could discover the colour of the slaughter on the ground; and there were still heaps in corners, which looked to me like clay suddenly flung over the remnants of the murdered.



Page 142

But my reveries were suddenly broken up by the return of the little captain, more angry than ever. He had missed the opportunity of seeing the “great man,” who had gone to the Salpetriere. And some of the small men who performed as his jackals, having discovered that the captain was looking for a share in their plunder, had thought proper to treat him, his commission, and even his civism, with extreme contempt. In short, as he avowed to me, the very first use which he was determined to make of that supreme power to which his ascent was inevitable, would be to clear the *bureaux* of France, beginning with Paris, of all those insolent and idle hangers-on, who lived only to purloin the profits, and libel the services, of “good citizens.”

“*A la Salpetriere.*” There again disappointment met us. The great man had been there “but a few minutes before,” and we dragged our slow way through mire and ruts that would have been formidable to an artillery waggon with all its team. My heart, buoyant as it had been, sank within me as I looked up at the frowning battlements, the huge towers, more resembling those of a fortress than of even a prison, the gloomy gates, and the general grim aspect of the whole vast circumference, giving so emphatic a resemblance of the dreariness and the despair within.

“*Aux Carmes!*” was now the direction; for my conductor’s resolve to earn his reward before daybreak, was rendered more pungent by this interview with the *gens de bureau* at the Abbaye. He was sure that they would be instantly on the scent; and if they once took me out of his hands, adieu to dreams, of which Alnaschar, the glassman’s, were only a type. He grew nervous with the thought, and poured out his whole vision of hopes and fears with a volubility which I should have set down for frenzy, if in any man but a wretch in the fever of a time when gold and blood were the universal and combined idolatries of the land.

“You may think yourself fortunate,” he exclaimed, “in having been in my charge! That brute of a country gendarme could have shown you nothing. Now, *I* know every jail in Paris. I have studied them. They form the true knowledge of a citizen. To crush tyrants, to extinguish nobles, to avenge the cause of reason on priests, and to raise the people to a knowledge of their rights—these are the triumphs of a patriot. Yet, what teacher is equal to the jail for them all? *Mais voila les Carmes!*”

I saw a low range of blank wall, beyond which rose an ancient tower.

“Here,” said he, “liberty had a splendid triumph. A hundred and fifty tonsured apostles of incivism here fell in one day beneath the two-handed sword of freedom. A cardinal, two archbishops, dignitaries, monks, hoary with prejudices, antiquated with abuses, extinguishers of the new light of liberty, here were offered on the national shrine! *Chantons la Carmagnole.*”

But he was destined to be disappointed once more. Danton had been there, but was suddenly called away by a messenger from the Jacobins. Our direction was now

changed again. "Now we shall be disappointed no longer. Once engaged in debate, he will be fixed for the night. *Allons*, you shall see the 'grand patriote,' 'the regenerator,' 'the first man in the world.' *Aux Jacobins!*"

Page 143

Our unfortunate postilion falling with fatigue on his horses' neck, attempted to propose going to an inn, and renewing our search in the morning; but the captain had made up his mind for the night, and, drawing a pistol from his breast, exhibited this significant sign pointed at his head. The horses, as tired as their driver, were lashed on. I had for some time been considering, as we passed through the deserted streets, whether it was altogether consistent with the feelings of my country, to suffer myself to be dragged round the capital at the mercy of this lover of lucre; but an apathy had come over my whole frame, which made me contemptuous of life. The sight of his pistol rather excited me to make the attempt, from the very insolence of his carrying it. But we still rolled on. At length, in one of the streets, which seemed darker and more miserable than all the rest, we were brought to a full stop by the march of a strong body of the National Guard, which halted in front of an enormous old building, furnished with battlement and bartizan. "*Le Temple!*" exclaimed my companion, with almost a shriek of exultation. I glanced upward, and saw a light with the pale glimmer which, in my boyish days, I had heard always attributed to spectres passing along the dim casements of a gallery. I cannot express how deeply this image sank upon me. I saw there only a huge tomb—the tomb of living royalty, of a line of monarchs, of all the feelings that still bound the heart of man to the cause of France. All now spectral. But, whatever might be the work of my imagination, there was terrible truth; enough before me to depress, and sting, and wring the mind. Within a step of the spot where I sat, were the noblest and the most unhappy beings in existence—the whole family of the throne caught in the snare of treason. Father, mother, sister, children! Not one rescued, not one safe, to relieve the wretchedness of their ruin by the hope that there was an individual of their circle beyond their prison bars—all consigned to the grave together—all alike conscious that every day which sent its light through their melancholy casements, only brought them nearer to a death of misery! But I must say no more of this. My heart withered within me as I looked at the towers of the Temple. It almost withers within me, at this moment, when I think of them. They are leveled long since; but while I write I see them before me again, a sepulchre; I see the mustering of that crowd of more than savages before the grim gate; and I see the pale glimmer of that floating lamp, which was then, perhaps, lighting the steps of Marie Antoinette to her solitary cell.

Page 144

Of all the sights of that melancholy traverse, this the most disheartened me, whatever had been my carelessness of life before. It was now almost scorn. The thoughts fell heavy on my mind. What was I, when such victims were prepared for sacrifice? What was the crush of my obscure hopes, when the sitters on thrones were thus leveled with the earth? If I perished in the next moment, no chasm would be left in society; perhaps but one or two human beings, if even they, would give a recollection to my grave. But here the objects of national homage and gallant loyalty, beings whose rising radiance had filled the eye of nations, and whose sudden fall was felt as an eclipse of European light, were exposed to the deepest sufferings of the captive. What, then, was I, that I should murmur; or, still more, that I should resist; or, most of all, that I should desire to protract an existence which, to this hour, had been one of a vexed spirit, and which, to the last hour of my career, looked but cloud on cloud?

Some of this depression may have been the physical result of fatigue, for I had been now four-and-twenty hours without rest; and the dismal streets, the dashing rain, and the utter absence of human movement as we dragged our dreary way along, would have made even the floor of a dungeon welcome. I was as cold as its stone.

At length our postilion, after nearly relieving us of all the troubles of this world, by running on the verge of the moat which once surrounded the Bastille, and where nothing but the screams of my companion prevented him from plunging in, wholly lost his way. The few lamps in this intricate and miserable quarter of the city had been blown out by the tempest, and our only resource appeared to be patience, until the tardy break of winter's morn should guide us through the labyrinth of the Faubourg St Antoine. However, this my companion's patriotism would not suffer. "The Club would be adjourned! Danton would be gone!" In short, he should not hear the Jacobin lion roar, nor have the reward on which he reckoned for flinging me into his jaws. The postilion was again ordered to move, and the turn of a street showing a light at a distance, he lashed his unfortunate horses towards it. Utterly indifferent as to where I was to be deposited, I saw and heard nothing, until I was roused by the postilion's cry of "Place de Greve."

A large fire was burning in the midst of the gloomy square, round which a party of the National Guard were standing, with their muskets piled, and wrapped in their cloaks, against the inclemency of the night. Further off, and in the centre, feebly seen by the low blaze, was a wooden structure, on whose corners torches were flaring in the wind. "Voilà, la guillotine!" exclaimed my captor with the sort of ecstasy which might issue from the lips of a worshipper. As I raised my eyes, an accidental flash of the fire showed the whole outline of the horrid machine. I saw the glitter of the very axe that

Page 145

was to drop upon my head. My first sensation was that of deadly faintness. Ghastly as was the purpose of that axe, my imagination saw even new ghastliness in the shape of its huge awkward scythe-like steel; it seemed made for massacre. The faintness went off in the next moment, and I was another man. In the whole course of a life of excitement, I have never experienced so total a change. All my apathy was gone. The horrors of public execution stood in a visible shape before me at once. I might have fallen in the field with fortitude; I might have submitted to the deathbed, as the course of nature; I might have even died with exultation in some great public cause. But to perish by the frightful thing which shot up its spectral height before me; to be dragged as a spectacle to scoffing and scorning crowds—dragged, perhaps, in the feebleness and squalid helplessness of a confinement which might have exhibited me to the world in imbecility or cowardice; to be grasped by the ruffian executioner, and flung, stigmatized as a felon, into the common grave of felons—the thought darted through my mind like a jet of fire; but it gave me the strength of fire. I determined to die by the bayonets of the guard, or by any other death than this. My captor perceived my agitation, and my eye glanced on his withered and malignant visage, as with a smile he was cocking his pistol. I sprang on him like a tiger. In our struggle the pistol went off, and a gush of blood from his cheek showed that it had inflicted a severe wound. I was now his master, and, grasping him by the throat with one hand, with the other I threw open the door and leaped upon the pavement. For the moment, I looked round bewildered; but the report of the pistol had caught the ears of the guard, whom I saw hurrying to unpile their muskets. But this was a work of confusion, and, before they could snatch up their arms, I had made my choice of the darkest and narrowest of the wretched lanes which issue into the square. A shot or two fired after me sent me at my full speed, and I darted forward, leaving them as they might, to follow.

How long I scrambled, or how often I felt sinking from mere weariness in that flight, I knew not. In the fever of my mind, I only knew that I twined my way through numberless streets, most of which have been since swept away; but, on turning the corner of a street which led into the Boulevard, and when I had some hope of taking refuge in my old hotel, I found that I had plunged into the heart of a considerable crowd of persons hurrying along, apparently on some business which strongly excited them. Some carried lanterns, some pikes, and there was a general appearance of more than republican enthusiasm, even savage ferocity, among them, that gave sufficient evidence of my having fallen into no good company. I attempted to draw back, but this would not be permitted; the words, "Spy, traitor, slave of the Monarchiques!" and, apparently as the blackest charge of all, "Cordelier!"

Page 146

were heaped upon me, and I ran the closest possible chance of being put to death on the spot. It may naturally be supposed that I made all kinds of protestations to escape being piked or pistoled. But they had no time to wait for apologies. The cry of "Death to the traitor!" was followed by the brandishing of half a dozen knives in the circle round me. At that moment, when I must have fallen helplessly, a figure stepped forward, and opening the slide of his dark lantern directly on his own face, whispered the word Mordecai. I recognised, I shall not say with what feelings, the police agent who had formerly conveyed me out of the city. He was dressed, like the majority of the crowd, in the republican costume; and certainly there never was a more extraordinary costume. He wore a red cap, like the cap of the butchers of the Faubourgs; an enormous beard covered his breast, a short Spanish mantle hung from his shoulders, a short leathern doublet, with a belt like an armoury, stuck with knives and pistols, a sabre, and huge trousers striped with red, in imitation of streams of gore, completed the patriot uniform. Some wore broad bands of linen round their waists, inscribed, "2d, 3d and 4th September,"—the days of massacre. These were its heros. I was in the midst of the *elite* of murder.

"Citizens," exclaimed the Jew in a voice of thunder, driving back the foremost, "hold your hands up; are you about to destroy a friend of freedom? Your knives have drunk the blood of aristocrats; but they are the defence of liberty. This citizen, against whom they are now unsheathed, is one of ourselves. He has returned from the frontier, to join the brave men of Paris, in their march to the downfall of tyrants. But our friends await us in the glorious club of the Jacobins. This is the hour of victory. Advance, regenerated sons of freedom! Forward, Frenchmen!"

His speech had the effect. The rapid executors of public vengeance fell back; and the Jew, whispering to me, "You must follow us, or be killed,"—I chose the easier alternative at once, and stepped forward like a good citizen. As my protector pushed the crowd before him, in which he seemed to be a leader, he said to me from time to time, "Show no resistance. A word from you would be the signal for your death—we are going to the hall of the Jacobins. This is a great night among them, and the heads of the party will either be ruined to-night, or by morning will be masters of every thing. I pledge myself, if not for your safety, at least for doing all that I can to save you." I remained silent, as I was ordered; and we hurried on, until there was a halt in front of a huge old building. "The hall of the Jacobins," whispered the Jew, and again cautioned me against saying or doing any thing in the shape of reluctance.

Page 147

We now plunged into the darkness of a vast pile, evidently once a convent, and where the chill of the massive walls struck to the marrow. I felt as if walking through a charnel-house. We hurried on; a trembling light, towards the end of an immense and lofty aisle, was our guide; and the crowd, long familiar with the way, rushed through the intricacies where so many feet of monks had trod before them, and where, perhaps, many a deed that shunned the day had been perpetrated. At length a spiral stair brought us to a large gallery, where our entrance was marked with a shout of congratulation; and tumbling over the benches and each other, we at length took our seats in the highest part, which, in both the club and the National Assembly, was called, from its height, the Mountain, and from the characters which generally held it, was a mountain of flame. In the area below, once the nave of the church, sat the Jacobin club. I now, for the first time, saw that memorable and terrible assemblage. And nothing could be more suited than its aspect to its deeds. The hall was of such extent that a large portion of it was scarcely visible, and few lights which hung from the walls scarcely displayed even the remainder. The French love of decoration had no place here; neither statues nor pictures, neither gilding nor sculpture, relieved the heaviness of the building. Nothing of the arts was visible but their rudest specimens; the grim effigies of monks and martyrs, or the coarse and blackened carvings of a barbarous age. The hall was full; for the club contained nearly two thousand members, and on this night all were present. Yet, except for the occasional cries of approval or anger when any speaker had concluded, and the habitual murmur of every huge assembly, they might have been taken for a host of spectres; the area had so entirely the aspect of a huge vault, the air felt so thick, and the gloom was so feebly dispersed by the chandeliers. All was sepulchral. The chair of the president even stood on a tomb, an antique structure of black marble. The elevated stand, from which the speakers generally addressed the assembly, had the strongest resemblance to a scaffold, and behind it, covering the wall, were suspended chains, and instruments of torture of every horrid kind, used in the dungeons of old times; and though placed there for the sake of contrast with the mercies of a more enlightened age, yet enhancing the general idea of a scene of death. It required no addition to render the hall of the Jacobins fearful; but the meetings were always held at night, often prolonged through the whole night. Always stormy, and often sanguinary, daggers were drawn and pistols fired—assassination in the streets sometimes followed bitter attacks on the benches; and at this period, the mutual wrath and terror of the factions had risen to such height, that every meeting might be only a prelude to exile or the axe; and the deliberation of this especial night must settle the question, whether the Monarchy or the Jacobin club was to ascend the scaffold. It was the debate on the execution of the unhappy Louis XVI.

Page 148

The arrival of the crowd, among whom I had taken my unwilling seat, evidently gave new spirits to the regicides; the moment was critical. Even in Jacobinism all were not equally black, and the fear of the national revulsion at so desperate a deed startled many, who might not have been withheld by feelings of humanity. The leaders had held a secret consultation while the debate was drawing on its slow length, and Danton's old expedient of "terror" was resolved on. His emissaries had been sent round Paris to summon all his banditti; and the low *cafés*, the Faubourg taverns, and every haunt of violence, and the very drunkenness of crime, had poured forth. The remnant of the Marseillois—a gang of actual galley-slaves, who had led the late massacres—the paid assassins of the Marais, and the *sabreurs* of the Royal Guard, who after treason to their king, had found profitable trade in living on the robbery and blood of the nobles and priests, formed this reinforcement; and their entrance into the gallery was recognised by a clapping of hands from below, which they answered by a roar, accompanied with the significant sign of clashing their knives and sabres.

Danton immediately rushed into the Tribune. I had seen him before, on the fearful night which prepared the attack on the palace; but he was then in the haste and affected savageness of the rabble. He now played the part of leader of a political sect; and the commencement of his address adopted something of the decorum of public council. In this there was an artifice; for, resistless as the club was, it still retained a jealousy of the superior legislative rank of the assembly of national representatives, the Convention. The forms of the Convention were strictly imitated; and even those Jacobins who usually led the debate, scrupulously wore the dress of the better orders. Robespierre was elaborately dressed whenever he appeared in the Tribune, and even Danton abandoned the *canaille* costume for the time. I was struck with his showy stature, his bold forehead, and his commanding attitude, as he stood waving his hand over the multitude below, as if he waved a sceptre. His appearance was received with a general shout from the gallery, which he returned by one profound bow, and then stood erect, till all sounds had sunk. His powerful voice then rang through the extent of the hall. He began with congratulating the people on their having relieved the Republic from its external dangers. His language at first was moderate, and his recapitulation of the perils which must have befallen a conquered country, was sufficiently true and even touching; but his tone soon changed, and I saw the true democrat. "What!" he cried, "are those perils to the horrors of domestic perfidy? What are the ravages on the frontier to poison and the dagger at our firesides? What is the gallant death in the field to assassination in cold blood? Listen, fellow-citizens, there is at this hour a plot deeper laid for your destruction

Page 149

than ever existed in the shallow heads of, or could ever be executed by the coward hearts of, their soldiery. Where is that plot? In the streets? No. The courage of our brave patriots is as proof against corruption as against fear.” This was followed by a shout from the gallery. “Is it in the Tuileries? No; there the national sabre has cut down the tree which cast its deadly fruits among the nation. Where then is the focus of the plot—where the gathering of the storm that is to shake the battlements of the Republic—where that terrible deposit of combustibles which the noble has gathered, the priest has piled, and the king has prepared to kindle? Brave citizens, that spot is ——,” he paused, looking mysteriously round, while a silence deep as death pervaded the multitude; then, as if suddenly recovering himself, he thundered out—“The Temple!” No language can describe the shout or the scene that followed. The daring word was now spoken which all anticipated; but which Danton alone had the desperate audacity to utter. The gallery screamed, howled, roared, embraced each other, danced, flourished their weapons, and sang the Marseillaise and the Carmagnole. The club below were scarcely less violent in their demonstrations of furious joy. Danton had now accomplished his task; but his vanity thirsted for additional applause, and he entered into a catalogue of his services to Republicanism. In the midst of the detail, a low but singularly clear voice was heard, from the extremity of the hall.

“Descend, man of massacre!”

I saw Danton start back as if he had been shot. At length, recovering his breath, he said feebly—

“Citizens, of what am I accused?”

“Of the three days of September,” uttered the voice again, in a tone so strongly sepulchral, that it palpably awed the whole assemblage.

“Who is it that insults me? who dares to malign me? What spy of the Girondists, what traitor of the Bourbons, what hireling of the gold of Pitt, is among us?” exclaimed the bold ruffian, yet with a visage which, even at the distance, I could observe had lost its usual fiery hue, and turned clay-colour. “Who accuses me?”

“I!” replied the voice, and I saw a thin tall figure stalk up the length of the hall, and stand at the foot of the tribune. “Descend!” was the only word which he spoke; and Danton, as if under a spell, to my astonishment, obeyed without a word, and came down. The stranger took his place, none knew his name; and the rapidity and boldness of his assault suspended all in wonder like my own. I can give but a most incomplete conception of the extraordinary eloquence of this mysterious intruder. He openly charged Danton with having constructed the whole conspiracy against the unfortunate prisoners of September; with having deceived the people by imaginary alarms of the

approach of the enemy; with having plundered the national treasury to pay the assassins; and, last and most deadly charge of all, with having formed

Page 150

a plan for a National Dictatorship, of which he himself was to be the first possessor. The charge was sufficiently probable, and was not now heard for the first time. But the keenness and fiery promptitude with which the speaker poured the charge upon him, gave it a new aspect; and I could see in the changing physiognomies round me, that the great democrat was already in danger. He obviously felt this himself; for starting up from the bench to which he had returned, he cried out, or rather yelled—

“Citizens, this man thirsts for my blood. Am I to be sacrificed? Am I to be exposed to the daggers of assassins!” But no answering shout now arose; a dead silence reigned: all eyes were still turned on the tribune. I saw Danton, after a gaze of total helplessness on all sides, throw up his hands like a drowning man, and stagger back to his seat. Nothing could be more unfortunate than his interruption; for the speaker now poured the renewed invective, like a stream of molten iron, full on his personal character and career.

“Born a beggar, your only hope of bread was crime. Adopting the profession of an advocate, your only conception of law was chicanery. Coming to Paris, you took up patriotism as a trade, and turned the trade into an imposture. Trained to dependence, you always hung on some one till he spurned you. You licked the dust before Mirabeau; you betrayed him, and he trampled on you; you took refuge in the cavern of Marat, until he found you too base even for his base companionship, and he, too, spurned you; you then clung to the skirts of Robespierre, and clung only to ruin. Viper! known only by your coils and your poison; like the original serpent, degraded even from the brute into the reptile, you already feel your sentence. I pronounce it before all. The man to whom you now cling will crush you. Maximilien Robespierre, is not your heel already lifted up to tread out the life of this traitor? Maximilien Robespierre,” he repeated with a still more piercing sound, “do I not speak the truth?” “Have I not stripped the veil from your thoughts? Am I not looking on your heart?” He then addressed each of the Jacobin leaders in a brief appeal. “Billaud Varennes, stand forth—do you not long to drive your dagger into the bosom of this new tyrant? Collot d’Herbois, are you not sworn to destroy him? Couthon, have you not pronounced him perjured, perfidious, and unfit to live? St Just, have you not in your bosom the list of those who have pledged themselves that Danton shall never be Dictator; that his grave shall be dug before he shall tread on the first step of the throne; that his ashes shall be scattered to the four winds of heaven; that he shall never gorge on France?”

Page 151

A hollow murmur, like an echo of the vaults beneath, repeated the concluding words. The murmur had scarcely subsided when this extraordinary apparition, flinging round him a long white cloak, which he had hitherto carried on his arm, and which, in the dim light, gave him the look of one covered with a shroud, cried out in a voice of still deeper solemnity, "George Jacques Danton, you have this night pronounced the death of your king—I now pronounce your own. By the victims of the 20th of June—by the victims of the 10th of August—by the victims of the 2d of September—by the thousands whom your thirst of blood has slain—by the tens of thousands whom your treachery has sent to perish in a foreign grave—by the millions whom the war which you have kindled will lay in the field of slaughter—I cite you to appear before a tribunal, where sits a judge whom none can elude and none can defy. Within a year and a month, I cite you to meet the spirits of your victims before the throne of the Eternal."

He stopped; not a voice was heard. He descended the steps of the Tribune, and stalked slowly through the hall; not a hand was raised against him. He pursued his way with as much calmness and security as if he had been a supernatural visitant, until he vanished in the darkness.

This singular occurrence threw a complete damp on the regicidal ardour; and, as no one seemed inclined to mount the Tribune, the club would probably have broken up for the night, when a loud knocking at one of the gates, and the beating of drums, aroused the drowsy sitters on the benches. The gallery was as much awake as ever; but seemed occupied with evident expectation of either a new revolt, or a spectacle; pistols were taken out to be new primed, and the points and edges of knives duly examined. The doors at length were thrown open, and a crowd, one half of whom appeared to be in the last stage of intoxication, and the other half not far from insanity, came dancing and chorusing into the body of the building. In the midst of their troop they carried two busts covered with laurels—the busts of the regicides Ravayrac and Clement, with flags before them, inscribed, "They were glorious; for they slew kings!" The busts were presented to the president, and their bearers, a pair of *poissardes*, insisted on giving him the republican embrace, in sign of fraternization. The president, in return, invited them to the "honours of a sitting;" and thus reinforced, the discussion on the death of the unhappy monarch commenced once more, and the vote was carried by acclamation. The National Convention was still to be applied to for the completion of the sentence; but the decree of the Jacobins was the law of the land.

Page 152

I had often looked towards the gallery door, during the night, for the means of escape; but my police friend had forbade my moving before his return. I therefore remained until the club were breaking up, and the gallery began to clear. Cautious as I had been, I could not help exhibiting, from time to time, some disturbance at the atrocities of the night, and especially at the condemnation of the helpless king. In all this I had found a sympathizing neighbour, who had exhibited marked civility in explaining the peculiarities of the place, and giving me brief sketches of the speakers as they rose in succession. He had especially agreed with me in deprecating the cruelty of the regicidal sentence. I now rose to bid my gentlemanlike *cicerone* good-night; but, to my surprise, I saw him make a sign to two loiterers near the door, who instantly pinioned me.

“We cannot part quite so soon, Monsieur l’Aristocrat,” said he; “and, though I much regret that I cannot have the honour of accommodating you in the Temple, near your friend Monsieur Louis Capet, yet you may rely on my services in procuring a lodging for you in one of the most agreeable prisons in Paris.”

I had been entrapped in the most established style, and I had nothing to thank for it but fortune. Resistance was in vain, for they pointed to the pistols within their coats; and with a vexed heart, and making many an angry remark on the treachery of the villain who had ensnared me—matters which fell on his ear probably with about the same effect as water on the pavement at my feet—I was put into a close carriage, and, with my captors, carried off to the nearest barrier, and consigned to the governor of the well-known and hideous St Lazare.

* * * * *

The Olympic Jupiter.

Calm the Olympian God sat in his marble fane,
High and complete in beauty too pure and vast to wane;
Full in his ample form, Nature appear’d to spread;
Thought and sovran Rule beam’d in his earnest head;
From the lofty foliaged brow, and the mightily bearded chin,
Down over all his frame was the strength of a life within.

Lovely a maid in twilight before the vision knelt,
Looking with upturn’d gaze the awe that her spirit felt.
Hung like the skies above her was bow’d the monarch mild,
Hearing the whisper’d words of the fair and panting child.
—Could she be dear to him as dew to ocean are,
Be in his wreath a leaf, on his robes a golden star!
Could she as incense float around his eternal throne,
Sound as the note of a hymn to his deep ear alone!



Lo! while her heart adoring still to the God exhales,
Speech from his glimmering lips on the silent air prevails:
—"Child of this earth, bewilder'd in thine aerial dream,
Turn thee to Powers that are, and not to those that seem.
All of fairest and noblest filling my graven form
First in a human spirit was breathing alive and warm.
Seek thou in him all else that he can evoke from nought,
Seek the creative master, the king of beautiful thought."

Page 153

—Down the eyes of the maiden sank from the Thunderer's look,
Pale in her shame and terror, and yet with delight she shook
Swift on her brow she felt a crown by the God bestow'd,
Shading her face that now with a hope too lively glow'd.
Bending the Sculptor stood who wrought the work divine,
Godlike in voice he spake—Ever, oh, maid be mine!

J.S.

* * * * *

A ROMAN IDYL.

Oh! blame not, friend, with scoff unfeeling,
The gentle tale of grief and wrong,
Which, all the pain of life revealing,
Yet teaches peace by thoughtful song.

The landscape round us wide expanded
As ere was heard the name of Rome;
And Rome, though fallen, our souls commanded,
In this her empire's earliest home.

Her brightness beam'd on each far mountain,
Her life made green the grass we trode,
Her memory haunted still the fountain,
And spread her shadows o'er the sod.

Her ruins told their tale of glory,
Decreed to that eternal sky;
And through that ancient grove, her story
With sibyl whisper seem'd to sigh.

The pile her wealthiest mourner builded,
In glimpse we caught through ilex gloom—
Metella's Tower, by sunshine gilded,
That beams alike on feast or tomb.

And on this plain, not yet benighted,
'Mid awful ages mouldering there,
Young hands in new-bloom flowers delighted,
Young eyes look'd bright in sunniest air.



Till we, Viterbo's wine-cup quaffing,
Which fairer lips refused to grace,
Could win by jest those lips to laughing,
And veil'd in folly wisdom's face.

But say, my friend, thou sage mysterious,
What Nymph, what Muse disown'd the strain
Which bade our heedless mirth be serious,
And woke our ears to nobler pain?

That region grave of plain and highland,
With Rome's grey ruin strewn around,
Is not a soft Calypso's island,
Nor fades at Truth's evoking sound.

High thoughts in words of quiet beauty
Accord with visions grand as these,
And song's imperishable duty
Has holier aims than but to please.

By word and image deeply wedded,
By cadence apt and varied rhyme,
To rouse the soul in sloth imbedded,
And tune its powers to life sublime.

By loftier shows of man's large being
Than man's dim actual hour displays,
To clear our eyes for purer seeing,
And nerve the flagging spirit's gaze.

By strains of bold heroic pleasure,
And action strong as thought conceives,
By many a doom-resounding measure
That best our selfish woes relieves;

By these to stir, by these to brighten,
By these to lift the soul from earth,
The Poet dares our joys to frighten,
And thrills the dirge of lazy mirth.



Page 154

Ye Ruins, dust of empires vanish'd,
Ye mountains, clad with countless years,
From your great presence ne'er be banish'd
Sad songs that live in earnest ears:

Sad songs, the music of all sorrow,
Profound and calm as night's blue deep:
Accurst the dreams of any morrow
When man will feel he cannot weep.

J.S.

* * * * *

GOETHE

Alas! on earth his marvels done,
The noble German bosom lies,
His fatherland's Athenian son,
Amid the sage must largely rise!

Amid the sage the generous race
Of soaring thought and steadfast glow,
He breathes no more who gave a grace
To all our daily lot below.

He gave to man's encumber'd hours
The tuneful joys of truth serene,
And twined our life's neglected flowers
With nature's holiest evergreen.

Alas! for him the soul of fire,
For him of fancy's golden rays,
For him whose aims ascended higher
Than all that won a nation's praise!

We pause and ask—Why gloom'd the grave
For one of light so broadly mild?
And wonder beauty could not save
From death's deep night her eager child.

But could the lyre be heard again,
Its widow'd notes would seem to cry—



In all was he a man of men,
For them to live, like them to die.

What life inspires 'twas his to feel,
With ampler soul than all beside;
What earth's bright shows to few reveal,
His art for all expanded wide.

With earnest heed from hour to hour,
Through all his years of striving hope,
He fed his lamp, its light to shower
On paths where myriads dimly grope.

He taught mankind by toil, by love,
To cheer the world that must be theirs;
And ne'er to look for peace above,
By scorning earthly joys and cares.

Ah! pages full of grief and fear,
But all attuned to melody,
Vesuvio's flame reflected clear
In glassy seas of Napoli.

And on that sea we seem to float
In amber light, and catch from far,
'Mid ocean's boundless Voice, the note
Of girl who hymns the evening-star.

The sweetest word, the melting tone,
The pictured wisdom bright as day,
And Faust's remorse, and Tasso's groan,
And Dorothea's morning lay,

Glad Egmont, light of Clara's eyes,
Free Goetz, the warmth of manhood's noon,
And Mignon, all a tune of sighs,
And Iorn Ottilia crush'd so soon.

Ah! tale that tells the life of all
To lovelier truth by fancy wrought,
And songs that e'en to us recall
The bliss a poet's vision caught!

All these are ours, yes, all—but he.
And who that lives can find a strain
Of worth like his the soul to free
From bonds of sublunary pain?



Page 155

A strain like his we vainly seek
To sound above the singer's grave,
A voice empower'd like his to speak
The word our aching bosoms crave.

That word is not—Oh! not, farewell!
To thee whom all thy lays restore;
But deeply longs the heart to tell
A love thy smile accepts no more.

J.S.

* * * * *

HYMN OF A HERMIT.

Long the day, the task is longer;
Earth the strong by heaven the stronger.
Still is call'd to rise and brighten,
But, alas! how weak the soul;
While its inbred phantoms frighten,
While the past obscures the whole.

Shadows of the wise departed,
Be the brave, the loving-hearted;
Deathless dead, resounding, rushing,
From the morning-land of hope
Come, with viewless footsteps, crushing
Dreams that make the wing'd ones grope.

Socrates, the keen, the truthful,
In thy hoary wisdom youthful;
Smiling, fear-defying spirit,
From beside thy Grecian waves,
Teach us Norsemen to inherit
Thoughts whose dawn is life to graves.

Rome's Aurelius, thou the holy
King of earth, in goodness lowly,
From thy ruins by the Tiber,
Look with tearless aspect mild,
Till each agonizing fibre
Like thine own is reconciled.



Augustinus, bright and torrid,
Isles of green in deserts horrid
Once thy home, thy likeness ever!
We with sword no less divine
Would the good and evil sever,
In a larger world than thine.

Soft Petrarca, sweet and subtle,
Weaving still, with silver shuttle,
Moony veils for human feeling—
Thine the radiance from above,
Half-transfiguring, half-concealing,
Wounds and tears of earthly love.

Saxon rude, of thundering stammer,
Iron heart, by sin's dread hammer
Ground to better dust than golden,
May thy prophecy be true.
Melt the stern, the weak embolden;
Teach what Luther never knew.

Pale Spinosa, nursed in fable,
Painted hopes and portent sable,
Then an opener wisdom finding,
Let thy round and wintry sun
Chase the lurid vapour, blinding
Souls that seek the Holy One.

Thou from green Helvetia roaming,
Meteor pale in misty gloaming,
With a breast too fiercely burning;
Generous, tuneful, frail Rousseau!
Would that all to truth returning,
Gave, like thee, a tear to woe!

Eye of clear and diamond sparkle,
Where the Baltic waters darkle,
Lonely German seer of Reason,
Great and calm as Atlas old;
Through our formless foggy season,
Short thine adamantine cold.

Shelley, born of faith and passion,
Nobler far than gain and fashion;
Daring eaglet arm'd with lightning,
Firing soon thy native nest,

Still the eternal blaze is brightening
Ocean where thy pinions rest.



Page 156

Heroes, prophets, bards, and sages,
Gods and men of climes and ages,
Conquerors of lifelong sorrow,
Torment that ye made your throne,
Help, Oh! help in us the morrow,
Full of triumph like your own.

J.S.

* * * * *

THE LUCKLESS LOVER

"If aught on earth assault may bide
Of ceaseless time and shifting tide,
Beloved! I swear to thee
It is the truth of hearts that love,
United in a world above
The moment's misty sea.

"Oh! sweeter than the light of dawn,
Than music in the woods withdrawn
From clamours of the crowd,
A new creation all our own,
Unvisited by scoff or groan,
Is faith in silence vow'd.

"Two hearts by reason nobly sad,
Nor rashly blind, nor lightly glad,
Possess they not a bliss
In their communion, felt and full,
Beyond all custom's deadly rule?
For life is only this.

"In sighs we met, in sighs and sobs,
Such grief as from the wretched robs
The hope to heaven allied:
Great calm was ours, a strength severe,
Though wet with many a scalding tear,
When soul to soul replied.

"Of thy dark eyes and gentle speech,
The memory has a power to teach



What know not many wise.
New stars may rise, the ancient fade,
But not for us, my own pale maid,
Be lost that pure surprise—

“The pure delight, the awful change,
Chief miracle in wonder’s range,
That binds the twain in one;
While fear, foes, friends, and angry Fate,
And all that wreck our mortal state
Shall pass, like motes i’ the sun.

“In his fine frame the thristle feels
The music that his note reveals;
And spite of shafts and nets,
How better is the dying bird
Than some dumb stone that ne’er was heard,
That arrow never threatens?

“Disdaining man, the mountains rise;
Is love less kindred with the skies,
Or less their Maker’s will?
The strains, without a human cause,
Flow on, unheeding lies and laws—
Will hearts for words be still?

“What cliffs oppose, what oceans roll,
What frowns o’ershade the weeping soul,
Alas! were long to tell.
But something is there more than these,
Than frowns and coldness, rocks and seas:
Until its hour—farewell!”

So sang the vassal bard by night,
Beneath his high-born lady’s light
That from her turret shone.
Next morning in the forest glade
His corpse was found. Her brother’s blade
Had cut his bosom’s bone.

What reap’d Lord Wilfrid by the stroke?
Before another morning broke,
She, too, was with the blest:
And ’twas her last and only prayer,
That her sweet limbs might slumber where
The minstrel had his rest.

Page 157

J.S.

* * * * *

FREE TRADE AND PROTECTION

THE CORN LAWS.

It is remarkable that, while we hear so much of the advantages of free trade, the reciprocity of them is always in *prospect* only. By throwing open our harbours to foreign nations, indeed, we give *them* an immediate and obvious advantage over ourselves; but as to any corresponding advantages we are to gain in our intercourse with them, we are still waiting, in patient expectation of the anticipated benefit. Our patience is truly exemplary; it might furnish a model to Job himself. We resent nothing. No sooner do we receive a blow on one cheek, than we turn up the other to some new smiter. No sooner are we excluded, in return for our concessions, from the harbours of one state, than we begin making concessions to another. We are constantly in expectation of seeing the stream of human envy and jealousy run out:—

“Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis: at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.”

We are imitating the man who made the experiment of constantly reducing the food on which his horse is to live. Let us take care that, just as he is learning to live on nothing, we do not find him dead in his stall.

This, however, is no joking matter. The total failure of the free trade system to procure any, *even the smallest return*, coupled with the very serious injury it has inflicted on many of the staple branches of our industry, has now been completely demonstrated by experience, and is matter of universal notoriety. If any proof on the subject were required, it would be furnished by *Porter's Parliamentary Tables*, to which we earnestly request the attention of our readers. The first exhibits the effect of the reciprocity system, introduced by Mr Huskisson in Feb. 1823, in destroying our shipping with the Baltic powers, and quadrupling theirs with us. The second shows the trifling amount of our exports to these countries during the five last years, and thereby demonstrates the entire failure of the attempt to, extend our traffic with them by this gratuitous destruction of our shipping. The third shows the progress of our whole exports to Europe during the six years from 1814 to 1820, before the free trade began, and from 1833 to 1839, after it had been fifteen years in operation, and proves that it had *declined* in the latter period as compared with the former, despite all our gratuitous sacrifices by free trade to augment our commerce.[12]

[12] See No. CCCXL, *Blackwood's Magazine*, p. 261.

Page 158

The free traders fully admit, and deeply deplore, as we have shown on a former occasion, these unfavourable results; but they say that it is to be hoped they will not continue: that foreign nations must, in the end, come to see that they are as much interested as we are in enlightened system of free trade; and that, meantime, it is for our interest to continue the system; or even though it totally fails in producing any augmentation in our exports, it is obviously for our advantage to continue it, as it brings in the immediate benefit of purchasing articles imported at a cheaper rate. Supposing, say they, we obtain no corresponding advantage from other states, there is an immense benefit accrues to ourselves from admitting foreign goods at a nominal duty, from the low price at which they may be purchased by the British consumer. To that point we shall advert in the sequel; in the mean time, it may be considered as demonstrated, that the free trade system has entirely failed in procuring for us the slightest extension of our foreign exports, or abating in the slightest degree the jealousy of foreign nations at our maritime and manufacturing superiority. Nor is there any difficulty in discovering to what this failure has been owing. It arises from laws inherent in the nature of things, and which will remain unabated as long as we continue a great and prosperous nation.

It is related of the Lacedemonians, that while all the other citizens of Greece were careful to surround their towns with walls, they alone left a part open on all sides. Thus, superiority in the field rendered them indifferent to the adventitious protection of ramparts. It is for a similar reason that England is now willing to throw down the barriers of tariffs, and the impediments of custom-houses; and that all other nations are fain to raise them up. It is a secret sense of superiority on the one side, and of inferiority on the other, which is the cause of the difference. We advocate freedom of trade, because we are conscious that, in a fair unrestricted competition, we should succeed in beating them out of their own market. They resist it, and loudly clamour for protection, because they are aware that such a result would speedily take place, and that the superiority of the old commercial state is such, that on an open trial of strength, it must at once prove fatal to its younger rivals. As this effect is thus the result of permanent causes affecting both sides, it may fairly be presumed that it will be lasting; and that the more anxiously the old manufacturing state advocates or acts upon freedom of commercial intercourse, the more strenuously will the younger and rising ones advocate protection. Reciprocity, therefore, is out of the question between them: for it never could exist without the destruction of the manufactures of the younger state; and if that state has begun to enter on the path of manufacturing industry, it never will be permitted by its government.

Page 159

But this is not all. If free trade must of necessity prove fatal to the manufactures of the younger state, it as certainly leads to the destruction *of the agriculture of the older*; and it is this double effect this RECIPROCITY OF EVIL, which renders it so disastrous and impracticable an experiment for both the older and the younger community. The reason of this has not hitherto been generally attended to; but when once it is stated, its force becomes obvious, and it furnishes the true answer on principle to the delusive doctrines of free trade.

Nature has established, and, as it will immediately be shown, for very wise and important purposes, a permanent and indelible distinction between the effect of civilization and opulence on the production of food, and on the preparation of manufactures. In the latter, the discoveries of science, the exertions of skill, the application of capital, the introduction of machinery, are all-powerful, and give the older and more advanced state an immediate and decisive advantage over the younger and the ruder. In the former, the very reverse takes place: the additions made to productive power are comparatively inconsiderable, even by the most important discoveries; and as this capital and industry have in the end a powerful effect, and always enable the power of raising food for the human race to keep far a-head of the wants of mankind; yet this effect takes place very slowly, and the annual addition that can be made to the produce of the earth by such means is by no means considerable. The introduction of thorough draining will probably increase the productive power of the soil in Great Britain a third: scientific discovery may perhaps add another third; but at least ten years must elapse in the most favourable view before these effects generally take place—ere the judicious and well-directed labours of our husbandmen have formed rivulets for the superfluous wet of our fields, or overspread the soil with the now wasted animal remains of our cities. But our manufactures can in a few years quadruple their produce. So vast is the power which the steam-engine has made to the powers of production in commercial industry, that it is susceptible to almost indefinite and immediate extension; and the great difficulty always felt is, not to get hands to keep pace with the demand of the consumers, but to get a demand to keep pace with the hands employed in the production. Manchester and Glasgow could, in a few years, furnish muslin and cotton goods for the whole world.

Nor is the difference less important and conspicuous in the *price* at which manufacturing and agricultural produce can be raised in the old and the young state. This is the decisive circumstance which renders reciprocity between them impossible. The rich old state is as superior to the young one in the production of manufactures, as the poor young state is to the rich old one in that of subsistence. The steam-engine,

Page 160

capital, and machinery, have so enormously increased the power of manufacturing production, that they have rendered the old commercial state omnipotent in the foreign market in the supply of its articles. Nothing but fiscal regulations and heavy duties can protect the young state from ruin in those branches of industry. Heavy taxes, high wages, costly rents, dear rude produce, all are at once compensated, and more than compensated, by the gigantic powers of the steam-engine. Cotton goods are raised now in Great Britain at a fifth of the price which they were during the war. A gown, which formerly was cheap at L2, 10s., is now sold for ten shillings. Silks, muslins, and all other articles of female apparel, have been reduced in price in the same proportion. Colossal fortunes have been made by the master manufacturers, unbounded wealth diffused through the operative workmen in Lancashire and Lanarkshire, even at these extremely reduced prices. This is the real reason of the universal effort made by all nations which have the least pretensions to commercial industry, of late years to exclude, by fixed duties, our staple manufactures; of which the President of the Board of Trade so feelingly complains, and which the advocates of free trade consider as so inexplicable. A very clear principle has led to it, and will lead to it. It is the instinct of SELF-PRESERVATION.

But there is no steam-engine in agriculture. The old state has no superiority over the young one in the price of producing food; on the contrary, it is decidedly its inferior. There, as in love, the apprentice is the master. The proof of this is decisive. Poland can raise wheat with ease at fifteen or twenty shillings a quarter, while England requires fifty. The serf of the Ukraine would make a fortune on the price at which the farmer of Kent or East Lothian would be rendered bankrupt. The Polish cultivators have no objection whatever to a free competition with the British; but the British anticipate, and with reason, total destruction from the free admission of Polish grain. These facts are so notorious, that they require no illustration; but nevertheless the conclusion to which they point is of the highest importance, and bears, with overwhelming force, on the theory of free trade as between an old and a young community. They demonstrate that that theory is not only practically pernicious, but on principle erroneous. It involves an oblivion of the fundamental law of nature as to the difference between the effect of wealth and civilization on the production of food and the raising of manufactures. It proceeds on insensibility to the difference in the age and advancement of nations, and the impossibility of a reciprocity being established between them without the ruin of an important branch of industry in each. It supposes nations to be of the same genus and age, like the trees in the larch plantation, not of all varieties and ages, as in the natural forest. If established in complete operation, it would only lead to the ruin of the manufactures of the younger state, and of the agriculture of the old one. The only reciprocity which it can ever introduce between such states is the reciprocity of evil.

Page 161

Illustrations from everyday life occur on all sides to elucidate the utter absurdity, and, in fact, total impracticability of the system of free trade, as applied to nations who are, or are becoming, rivals of each other in manufacturing industry. Those who have the advantage, will always advocate free competition; those who are labouring under impediments, will always exclaim against them. In some cases the young have the advantage, in others the old; but in all the free system is applauded by those in the sunshine, and execrated by those in the shade. The fair *debutante* of eighteen, basking in the bright light of youth, beauty, birth, and connections, has no sort of objection to the freedom of choice in the ball-room. If the mature spinster of forty would divulge her real opinion, what would it be on the same scene of competition? Experience proves that she is glad to retire, in the general case, from the unequal struggle, and finds the system of established precedence and fixed rank at dinner parties, much more rational. The leaders on the North Circuit—Sir James Scarlett or Lord Brongham—have no objections to the free choice, by solicitors and attorneys, for professional talent; but their younger brethren of the gown are fain to take shelter from such formidable rivals in the exclusive employment of the Crown, the East India Company, the Bank of England, or some of the numerous chartered companies in the country. England is the old lawyer on the Circuit in manufactures—but Poland is the young beauty of the ball-room in agriculture. We should like to see what sort of reciprocity could be established between them. Possibly the young belle may exchange her beauty for the old lawyer's guineas, but it will prove a bad reciprocity for both.

It is usual for both philosophers and practical men to ascribe the superior cheapness with which subsistence can be raised in the young state to the old one, to the weight of taxes and of debt, public and private, with which the latter is burdened, from which the former is, in general, relieved. But, without disputing that these circumstances enter with considerable weight into the general result, it may safely be affirmed that the main cause of it is to be found in two laws of nature, of universal and permanent application. These are the low value of money in the rich state, in consequence of its plenty, compared with its high value in the poor one, in consequence of its poverty, and the experienced inapplicability of machinery or the division of labour to agricultural operations.

Labour is cheap in the poor state, such as Poland, Prussia, and the Ukraine, because guineas are few.—“It is not,” as Johnson said of the Highlands, “that eggs are many, but that pence are few.” Commercial transactions being scanty, and the want of a circulating medium inconsiderable, it exists to a very limited extent in the country. People do not need a large circulating medium, therefore they

Page 162

do not buy it; they are poor, therefore they cannot. In the opulent and highly advanced community, on the other hand, the reverse of all this takes place. Transactions are so frequent, the necessities of commerce so extensive, that a large circulating medium is soon felt to be indispensable. In addition to a considerable amount of specie, the aid of bank-notes, public and private, of Government securities and exchequer bills, and of private bills to an immense amount, becomes necessary. McCulloch calculates the circulating medium of Great Britain, including paper and gold, at £72,000,000. The bills in circulation are probably in amount nearly as much more. A hundred and forty, or a hundred and fifty millions, between specie, bank-notes, exchequer bills, Government securities, on which advances are made, and private bills, constitute the ordinary circulating medium of twenty-seven millions in the British empire. The total circulation of Russia, with sixty millions of inhabitants, is not forty millions sterling. The effect of this difference is prodigious. It is no wonder, when it is taken into account, that wages are 5-1/2d. or 6d. a-day in Poland or the Ukraine, and 2s. or 2s. 6d. a-day in England.

The clearest proof that this is the great cause of the superior cost of raising subsistence in the old than the young state, is afforded by the different value which money bears in different parts of the *same* community. Ask any housekeeper what is the difference between the expense of living in London, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and he will answer, that £1500 a-year in Edinburgh, or £750 in Aberdeen. Yet these different places are all situated in the same community, and their inhabitants pay the same public taxes, and very nearly the same of local ones. It is the vast results arising from the concentration of wealth and expediture in one place, compared with its abstraction from others, which occasions the difference. But if this effect is conspicuous, and matter of daily observation, in different parts of the same compact and moderately sized country, how much more must it obtain in regard to different countries, situated in different latitudes and political circumstances, and in different stages of wealth, civilization, and commercial opulence? Between England for example, and Poland or the Ukraine? The difference is there important and durable. Wheat can be raised with as good a profit to the cultivator for sixteen shillings per quarter in Poland, as for forty-eight shillings in England or Scotland.

This superior weight of wages, rent and all the elements of cost, in the old, when compared with the young community, affects the manufacturer as well as the farmer; and in some branches of manufactures it does so with an overwhelming effect. But, generally speaking, the advantages of capital, machinery, and the division of labour, render the old state altogether predominant over the young one in these particulars.

Page 163

It would seem to be a fixed law of nature, that the progress of society adds almost nothing to the application of machinery to agriculture, but indefinitely to its importance in manufactures. Observe an old man digging his garden with a spade—that is the most productive species of cultivation; it is the last stage of agricultural progress to return to it. No steam engines or steam ploughs will ever rival it. But what is the old weaver toiling with his hands, to the large steam-power mill, turning at once ten thousand spindles? As dust in the balance. Man, by a beneficent law of his Maker, is permanently secured in his first and best pursuit. It is in those which demoralize and degrade, that machinery progressively encroaches on the labour of his hands. England can undersell India in muslins and printed goods, manufactured in Lancashire or Lanarkshire, out of cotton which grew on the banks of the Ganges; for England though younger in years compared to India, is old in civilization, wealth, and power. We should like to see what profit would be made by exporting wheat from England, raised on land paying thirty shillings an acre of rent, by labourers paid at two shillings a-day, to Hindostan, where rice is raised twice a-year, on land paying five shillings an acre rent, by labourers receiving twopence a-day each.

It is the constant operation of this law of nature which ensures the equalization of empires, the happiness of society, and the dispersion of mankind. To be convinced of this, we have only to reflect on the results which would ensue if this were not the case; if no unvarying law gave man in remote situations an advantage in raising subsistence over what they enjoy in the centres of opulence; and agriculture, in the aged and wealthy community, was able to acquire the same decisive superiority over distant and comparatively poor ones, which we see daily exemplified in the production of manufactures. Suppose, for example, that in consequence of the application of the steam-engine, capital, and machinery to the raising of subsistence, Great Britain could undersell the cultivations of Poland and the Ukraine as effectually as she does their manufacturers in the production of cotton goods; that she could sell in the Polish market wheat at five shillings a quarter, when they require fifteen shillings to remunerate the cost of production. Would not the result be, that commerce between them would be entirely destroyed; that subsistence would be exclusively raised in the old opulent community; that mankind would congregate in fearful multitudes round the great commercial emporium of the world; and that the industry and progress of the more distant nations would be irrevocably blighted? Whereas, by the operation of the present law of nature, that the rich state can always undersell the poor one in manufactures, and the poor one always undersell the rich one in subsistence, those dangers are removed, a check is provided to the undue multiplication of the species in particular situations, and the dispersion of mankind over the globe—a vital object in the system of nature—is secured, from the very necessities and difficulties in which, in the progress of society, the old and wealthy community becomes involved.

Page 164

These considerations point out an important limitation to which, on principle, the doctrines of free trade must be subjected. Perfectly just in reference to a single community, or a compact empire of reasonable extent, they wholly fail when applied to separate nations in different degrees of civilization, or even to different provinces of the same empire, when it is of such an extent as to bring such different nations, in various degrees of progress, under one common dominion. They were suggested, in the first instance, to philosophers, by the absurd restrictions on the commerce of grain which existed in France under the old monarchy, and which Turgot and the Economists laboured so assiduously to abolish. There can be no doubt that they were perfectly right in doing so; for France is a compact, homogeneous country, in which the cost of producing subsistence is not materially different in one part from another, and the interests of the whole community are closely identified. The same holds with the interchange of grain between the different provinces of Spain, or for the various parts of the British islands. But the case is widely different with an empire so extensive as, like the British in modern or the Roman in ancient times, to embrace separate kingdoms, in wholly different circumstances of climate, progress, and social condition. Free trade, in such circumstances, must lead to a destruction of important interests, and a total subversion of the balance of society in both the kingdoms subjected to it. To be convinced of this, we have only to look at the present condition of the British, or the past fate of the Roman empire.

It is the boast of our manufacturers—and such a marvel may well afford a subject for exultation—that with cotton which grew on the banks of the Ganges, they can, by the aid of British capital, machinery, and enterprise, undersell, in the production of muslin and cotton goods, the native Indian manufacturers, who work up their fabrics in the close vicinity of the original cotton-fields. The constant and increasing export of British goods to India, two-thirds of which are cotton, demonstrates that this superiority really exists; and that the muslin manufacturers in Hindostan, who work for 3d. a-day on their own cotton, cannot stand the competition of the British operatives, who receive 3s. 6d. a-day, aided as they are by the almost miraculous powers of the steam-engine. Free trade, therefore, is ruinous to the manufacturing interests of India; and accordingly the Parliamentary proceedings are filled with evidence of the extreme misery which has been brought on the native manufacturers of Hindostan by that free importation of British goods, in which our political economists so much and so fully exult.

Page 165

The great distance of India from the British islands, the vast expense of transporting bulky articles eight thousand miles across the ocean, have prevented the counterpart of this effect taking place; and the British farmers feeling the depressing influence of the Indian plough, in like manner as the Indian manufacturers have the ruinous competition of the British steam-engine. But it is clear that, if India had been nearer, the former effect would have taken place as well as the latter. If the shores of Hindostan were within a few days sail of London and Liverpool, and the Indian cultivators, labouring at 2d. or 3d. a-day, had been brought into direct competition with the British farmers, employing labourers who received two or three shillings, can there be a doubt that the British farmers would have been totally destroyed in the struggle? The English farmers would have been prostrated by the same cause which has ruined the Indian muslin manufacturers. Cheap grain, the fruit of free trade, would have demolished British agriculture as completely as cheap cotton goods, the fruits of unlimited importation, has ruined Indian manufacturing industry.

Is, then, commercial intercourse impossible, on terms of mutual benefit, between states in widely different circumstances of commercial or agricultural advancement; and is the only reciprocity which can exist between them and reciprocity of evil? It is by no means necessary to rest in so unsatisfactory a conclusion. A most advantageous commercial intercourse to both parties may be carried on, but it must not be on the footing of free trade. The foundation of such an intercourse should be, that each should take, on the most favourable terms, the articles which *it wants and does not produce*, and impose restrictions on those which *it wants and does produce*. On this principle, trade would be conducted so as to benefit both countries, and injure neither. Thus England may take from India to the utmost extent, and with perfect safety, sugar, indigo, cotton, tea, spices, cinnamon, and the more costly species of shawls; while India might take from England some species of cotton manufacture in which they have no fabrics of their own, cutlery, hardware, and all of the various luxuries of European manufacture. But a paternal and just government, equally alive to the interests of all its provinces, how far removed soever from the seat of power, would impose restrictions to prevent India being deluged with British cottons, to the ruin of its native manufactures, and to prevent Britain—if the distance did not operate, which it certainly would, as a sufficient protection—from being flooded with Indian grain. The varieties of climate, productions, and wants, in different countries, are such, that commerce, regulated on these principles, might be carried to the greatest extent consistent with the paramount duty of providing in each state for the preservation of its staple articles of industry.

Page 166

The Roman empire in ancient times afforded the clearest demonstration of the truth of these principles; and the fate of their vast dominion shows, in the most decisive manner, what is the inevitable consequence to which the free trade principles, now so strongly contended for by a party in this country, must lead. Alison is the first modern author with whom we are acquainted, who has traced the decline of the Roman empire in great part to this source. In the tenth volume of his “History of Europe,” p. 752, we find the following passage:—

“No nation can pretend to independence which rests for any sensible portion of its subsistence in ordinary seasons on foreign, who may become hostile, nations. And if we would see a memorable example of the manner in which the greatest and most powerful nation may, in the course of ages, come to be paralysed by this cause, we have only to cast our eyes on imperial Rome, when the vast extent of the empire had practically established a free trade in grain with the whole civilized world; and the result was, that cultivation disappeared from the Italian plains, that the race of Roman agriculturists, the strength of the empire, became extinct, that the fields were laboured only by slaves and cattle. The legions could no longer be recruited but from foreign bands, vast tracts of pasturage overspread even the fields of Lombardy and the Compagna of Naples, and it was the plaintive confession of the Roman annalist, that the mistress of the world had come to depend for her subsistence on the floods of the Nile.”

This observation has excited, as well it might, the vehement indignation of the free trade journals. The example of the greatest and most powerful nation that ever existed being weakened, and at length ruined by a free trade in corn, afforded too cogent an argument, and was too striking a warning, not to excite the wrath of those who would precipitate Great Britain into a similar course of policy. They have attacked the author, accordingly, with unwonted asperity; and, while they admit the ruin of Italian agriculture in the later stages of the Roman empire, endeavour to ascribe it to the gratuitous distribution of grain to the Roman populace, not the effect of a free importation of grain from its Egyptian and African provinces. The vast importance of the subject has induced us to look into the original authorities to whom Alison refers in support of his observation, and from among them we select three—Tacitus, Gibbon, and Michelet. Tacitus says,

“At Hercule *olim ex Italia* legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabantur, *nec nunc infecunditate laboratur*; sed *Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus*, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est.”—TACITUS, *Annal.* xii. 43.

Antiquity does not contain a more pregnant and important passage, or one more directly bearing on the present policy of the British empire, than this. It demonstrates:

Page 167

1, That in former times Italy had been an exporting country: "*olim ex Italia commeatus in longinquas provincias portabantur.*" 2, That at the time when Tacitus wrote, in the days of the Emperor Trajan, it had ceased to be so, and had come to import largely from Africa and Lybia, "*sed nunc Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus.*" 3, That this was not the result of any supervening sterility or unfruitfulness, "*nec nunc infecunditate laboratur,*" but was from causes which made it more profitable to purchase grain in the Egyptian or Lybian markets, "*sed Africam POTIUS et Egyptum exercemus.*"

Of the extent to which this decay of agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire went, in the latter stages of its history, we have the following striking account in the authentic pages of Gibbon:—

"Since the age of Tiberius *the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy*; and it was a just subject of complaint that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and the waves. In the division and decline of the empire, *the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn*; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, pestilence, and famine. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that, in Emilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated."—GIBBON, vol. vi. c. xxxvi. p. 235.

Of the progress and extent of this decay, Gibbon gives the following account in another part of his great work:—

"The agriculture of the Roman provinces *was insensibly ruined*; and in the progress of despotism, which tends to disappoint its own purpose, the emperors were obliged to derive some merit from the forgiveness of debts, or the remission of tributes, which their subjects were utterly incapable of paying. According to the new division of Italy, the fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and of the delicious retirements of the citizens of Rome, extended between the sea and the Apennines, from the Tiber to the Silarius. Within sixty years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of 330,000 English acres *of desert and uncultivated land, which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province.* As the footsteps of the barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws, (Cod. Theod. lxi. t. 38, l. 2,) can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors."—GIBBON, vol. iii. c. xviii. p. 87. Edition in 12 volumes.

Michelet observes, in his late profound and able History of France—

Page 168

“The Christian emperors could not remedy the growing depopulation of the country any more than their heathen predecessors. All their efforts only showed the impotence of government to arrest that dreadful evil. Sometimes, alarmed at the depopulation, they tried to mitigate the lot of the farmer, to shield him against the landlord; upon this the proprietor exclaimed he could no longer pay the taxes. At other times they abandoned the farmer, surrendered him to the landlord, and strove to chain him to the soil; but the unhappy cultivators perished or fled, *and the land became deserted*. Even in the time of Augustus, efforts were made to arrest the depopulation at the expense of morals, by encouraging concubinage. Pertinax granted an immunity from taxes to those who could occupy the desert lands of Italy, *to the cultivators of the distant provinces, and the allied kings*. Aurelian did the same. Probus was obliged to transport from Germany men and oxen to cultivate Gaul.[13] Maximian and Constantius transported the Franks and Germans from Picardy and Hainault into Italy: but the depopulation in the towns and the country alike continued. The people surrendered themselves in the fields to despair, as a beast of burden lies down beneath his load and refuses to rise. In vain the emperor strove, by offers of immunities and exemptions, to recall the cultivator to his deserted fields. Nothing could do so. The desert extended daily. At the commencement of the fifth century there was, in the *happy* Campania, the most fertile province of the empire, 520,000 *jugera* in a state of nature.”—MICHELET, *Histoire de France*, i. 104-108.

[13] “*Arantur Gallicana rura barbaris bobus, et juga Germanica captiva praebeant colla nostris cultoribus.*”—*Probi Epist. ad Senatum in Vopesio*.

Pursued to its very grave by the same deep-rooted cause of evil, the strength of Italy, even in the last stages of its decay, was still prostrated by the importation of grain from Egypt and Lybia. “The Campagna of Rome,” says Gibbon, “about the close of the sixth century, was reduced to the state of a *dreary wilderness*, in which the land was barren, the waters impure, and the air infectious. Yet the number of citizens *still exceeded the measure of subsistence; their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Egypt and Lybia*; and the frequent repetitions of famine betray the inattention of the emperors to a distant province.”—GIBBON, *vil. viii. c. xlv.* 162.

Nor was this desolating scourge of foreign importation confined to Italy; it obtained also in Greece equally with the Ausonian fields, the abode of early riches, opulence, and prosperity. “In the later stages of the empire,” says Michelet, “Greece was almost entirely supported by corn raised in the fields of *Podolia*,” (Poland.)—MICHELET, i. 277.

Page 169

Now let it be recollected that this continual and astonishing decline of agriculture, and disappearance of the rural cultivators in the latter stages of the Roman empire, took place in an empire which contained, as Gibbon tells us, 120,000,000 of inhabitants, and 1600 great cities, was 3000 miles long and 2000 miles broad, contained 1,600,000 square miles, chiefly fertile and well cultivated land, which embraced the fairest and most fertile portions of the earth, and which had been governed for eighty yers under the successive sway of Nerva, Adrian, Trajan, and the two Antonines, with consummate wisdom and the most paternal spirit.[14] The scourge of foreign war, the devastation of foreign armies, were alike unknown; profound tranquillity pervaded every part of the empire; and a vast inland lake, spreading its ample waters through the heart of the dominion, afforded to all its provinces the most perfect facility of intercourse with the metropolis and the central parts of the empire. Yet this period—the period which Mr Hume has told us the philosophers would select as the happiest the human race had ever known—was precisely that during which agriculture so rapidly declined in the Italian and Grecian fields, during which the sturdy race of free cultivators disappeared, and the plains of Italy were entirely absorbed by pasturage, and maintained only vast herds of cattle tended by slaves.

[14] “Quingena viginti octo millia quadringinta duo jugera, quae Campania provincia, juxta inspectorum relationem, in desertis et squalidis locis habere dignoscitur, iisdem provincialibus concessum.”—*Cod. Theod.* lxi. i. 2382.

What was it, then, which in an empire containing so immense a population, and such boundless resources, drawn forth and developed under so wise and beneficent a race of emperors, occasioned this constant and uninterrupted decay of agriculture, and at length the total destruction of the rural population in the heart of the empire? How did it happen that Italian cultivation receded, as Tacitus and Gibbon tell us it did, *from the time of Tiberius*; and equally under the wisdom of the Antonines, as the tyranny of Nero, or the civil wars of Vitellius? Some general and durable cause must have been in operation during all this period, which at first depressed, and at length totally destroyed, the numerous body of free Italian cultivators who so long had constituted the strength of the legions, and had borne the Roman eagles, conquering and to conquer, to the very extremities of the habitable earth. The cause is apparent. It was the free importation of Egyptian and Lybian grain, consequent on the extension of the Roman dominion over their fertile fields, which effected the result. Were England to extend its conquering arms over Poland and the Ukraine, and, as a necessary consequence, expose the British farmer to the unrestrained competition of Polish and Russian wheat, precisely the same result would ensue.

Page 170

If the shores of Hindostan were within three or four days' sail of the Tiber, this result would long ago have taken place. Let Polish and Russian grain be admitted without a protecting duty into the British harbours, as Lybian and Egyptian were into those of Italy, and we shall soon see the race of cultivators disappear from the fields of England as they did from those of old Rome, and the words of Tacitus will, by a mere change of proper names, become a picture of our condition; three hundred thousand acres will soon be reduced to a state of nature in Kent and Norfolk, as they were in the Campania Felix. "Nec nunc infecunditate laboramur, *Podoliam* potius et *Scythiam* exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi *Anglici* permissa est."

The free traders allege that the decay of agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire, to which, by the concurring testimony of all historians, the ruin of the dominion of the Caesars was chiefly owing, is to be ascribed, not to the free importation of grain from Egypt, Podolia, and Lybia, but to the tyranny of the emperors, the gratuitous distribution of grain to the Roman populace, and the dreadful evils of domestic slavery. A very slight consideration, however, must be sufficient to show that these causes, how powerful soever in producing *general* evils over the empire, could not have been instrumental in occasioning those *peculiar* and separate causes of depression, which so early began to check, and at length totally destroyed, the agriculture of its central provinces.

The tyranny of the Caesars, the oppression of the Proconsuls, the avarice of the Patricians, were general evils, affecting alike every part of the empire; or rather they were felt with more severity in the remote provinces than the districts nearer home, in consequence of the superior opportunities of escape which distance from the central government afforded to iniquity, and the lesser chance of success which the insurrection of a remote province held forth to the "wild revenge" of rebellion. Muscovite oppression, accordingly, is more severely felt at Odessa or Taganrog than St Petersburg; and British rule is far from being restrained by the same considerations of justice on the banks of the Ganges or the Indus, as on those of the Thames. The gratuitous distribution of grain by the emperors to the populace of Rome, could never have occasioned the ruin of the Italian *cultivators*. Supposing that the two or three hundred thousand lazy and turbulent plebeians, who were nourished by the bounty or fed by the terrors of the Caesars, were the most useless, worthless, and dangerous set of men that ever existed, (which they probably were,) that circumstance could never have uprooted the race of cultivators from the plains of Lombardy, Umbria, or the Campania Felix. The greatest possible good to a nation, according to the free trader, is cheap grain, and never more so than when it is purchased or imported

Page 171

from foreign growers. If this be true, the importation of the harvests of Egypt and Africa into the Italian harbours, either by the voluntary purchase of the Roman emperors, or the forced tribute in grain which they exacted from those provinces, must have been the greatest possible benefit to the Italian people. How then, if there be no mischief in such foreign importations, is it possible to ascribe the ruin of Italian cultivation, and with it of the Roman empire, to these forced contributions? If the free traders have recourse to such an argument, they concede the very point in dispute, and admit that the introduction of foreign grain is injurious, and may in the end prove fatal, to the agriculture and existence of a state.

Slavery, though a great evil, will as little explain the peculiar and extraordinary decline of Italian and Grecian cultivation in the later stages of the Roman empire. The greater part of the labour of the ancient world, as every one knows, was conducted by means of slaves. They were slaves who held the plough, and tilled the land, and tended the flocks, equally in Lybia, in Campania, in Egypt, as in Umbria. Nay, the number of freemen, at least in the days of the Roman Republic, and the earlier periods of the empire, was incomparably *greater* in Italy and Greece, the abode of celebrated, powerful, and immortal republics, than in Lybia and Egypt, which from the earliest times had been subject to the despotic sway of satraps, kings, and tyrants. So numerous were the free citizens of Rome in the early days of the empire, that, by the census of Claudius, we are told by Gibbon they amounted to 6,945,000 men,[15] the greater proportion of whom, of course, were residents in Italy, the seat of government, and the centre of wealth, power, and enjoyment. While so great was the multitude of free citizens which the Republic bequeathed to the empire, resident and exercising unfettered industry in Italy, the cultivators of Africa and Egypt were all serfs and slaves, toiling, like the West Indian negroes, beneath the lash of a master. How, then, did it happen that the labour of the Italian freeman was disused, and at length extinguished, while that of the African and Egyptian slaves continued to furnish grain for Italy down to the very latest period of the empire? We are told that the labour of freemen is cheaper than that of slaves; and the free traders will probably not dispute that proposition. It could not, therefore, have been the slavery of antiquity which ruined Italian agriculture, carried on, in part at least, by freemen; since African agriculture, the fruits entirely of slavery, continued to flourish down to the very last days of the Roman world.

[15] GIBBON, chap. i. 68.

Page 172

The severe taxation of the emperors is justly stated by Gibbon and Sismondi, as well as Michelet, as a principal cause of the decline of Italian agriculture: but very little consideration is required to show, that this cause is inadequate to explain this ruin of cultivation in the Italian plains, when it continued to flourish and maintain the chief cities of the empire with food, in Egypt and Lybia. Heavy as it was, and oppressive as it ultimately became, *it was equal*; it was the same every where; it might, therefore, satisfactorily explain the *general* decline of rural industry through the empire, and doubtless had a large share in contributing to its downfall; but it cannot explain the *particular* ruin of it, in the central provinces of this vast dominion, while it continued, down to the very last moment, to flourish in its remote dependencies.

But the taxation of the empire, *when coupled with the free importation of grain* from these distant dependencies, does afford a most satisfactory, and, in truth, the true explanation of the ruin of Italian and Grecian cultivation. It was a fixed principle of Roman taxation, that the duties allotted on a particular district should remain fixed, how much lower the inhabitants or industry of the province might decline. When, therefore, by the constant importation of Egyptian and African grain, raised at half the cost at which they could produce it, the Italian cultivators were deprived of a remunerating return, and the taxes exacted from each district underwent no diminution, it is not surprising that the small farmers and proprietors were ruined; that they took refuge in the industry and crowds of cities, and that the race of freemen disappeared from the country. A similar process is now going on in the Turkish provinces. But without undervaluing—on the contrary, attaching full weight to this circumstance—nothing can be clearer than that it was the ruinous competition of foreign grain, raised cheaper than they could produce it, which rendered the same taxation crushing on the Italian farmers, which was borne with comparative facility in the remoter provinces, where land was more fertile, and labour less expensive. An example, *a fortiori*, applied to the British empire, where the free traders wish us to admit a free importation of grain from Poland and the Ukraine, where not only is labour cheap but taxation trifling, into the British islands, where not only is labour dear but taxation is five times more burdensome.

And for a decisive proof that it was the superior advantages which Egypt and Lybia enjoyed in the production of grain, and not any other causes, which occasioned the ruin of Italian agriculture, and with it the fall of the Roman empire, we have only to look to the condition of the Italian fields in the last stages of the government of the Caesars. Already, in the time of the elder Pliny, it had become a subject of complaint that the

Page 173

great properties were ruining Italy[16]—a sure proof, when the great division of estates in the days of the Republic—when, literally speaking, “every rood had its man”—that some general and irresistible cause, affecting the remuneration of their industry, was exterminating the small proprietors. Ere long, cultivators ceased entirely in the country, and the huge estates of the nobles were cultivated exclusively in pasturage, and by means of slaves. “La classe,” says Michelet, “*des petits cultivateurs peu à peu a disparu*; les grands propriétaires qui leur succéderent y suppléerent par des esclaves.”[17] It is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus, that when Rome was taken by the Goths, it contained 1,200,000 inhabitants, and was mainly supported by 1780 great families, who cultivated their ample estates in Italy in pasturage, by means of slaves. [18] For centuries before, the threat of blockading the Tiber had been found to be the most effectual way of coercing the Roman populace; and whenever it took place, famine ensued, not only in Rome, but the Italian provinces. The diminution of its agricultural produce had, long before, been stated by Columella at *nine-tenths*, and by Varro at *three-fourths*, of what at one period had been raised. Yet such was the wealth of the Roman nobles, derived from pasturage, that some of them had L.160, 000 a-year.[19] Agriculture, therefore, was destroyed; grain was no longer raised in Italy; Rome was wholly dependent on foreign supplies—but pasturage was undecayed; and colossal fortunes were enjoyed by a wealthy race of great proprietors, who managed their vast estates by means of slaves, and had bought up and absorbed the properties of the whole free cultivators in the country. Such was the effect—such was the result—of a free trade in grain in ancient times.

[16] “Verumque confitentibus *latifundia perdidere Italiam*.”—PLINY, *Hist. Nat.*xviii. 7.

[17] MICHELET, i. 96.

[18] AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, c. xvi.—See also GIBBON, vi. 264.

[19] GIBBON, vi. 262.

The free traders seem not insensible to these inevitable results of their favourite principles; but they meet them by describing such consequences as rather advantageous than injurious. If England, say they, can raise iron and cotton goods cheaper than Poland, and Poland and Russia grain cheaper than England, then the interest of each require that they should follow out these branches of industry, and it is impolitic to strive against it. Let, then, England admit foreign grain on a nominal duty, and this will in the end induce Russia and Prussia to admit English manufactured goods on equally favourable terms; and thus the real interests of both countries will in the end be promoted.

There are two objections to this system. In the first place, it is impracticable if it were expedient. In the second, it is inexpedient if it were practicable.

Page 174

It is impracticable if it were expedient. Theoretical writers may coolly discuss in their closets the total destruction of various important branches of industry, the “absorption” of the persons engaged in them in other pursuits, and the transference of national capital and industry from agriculture to manufactures, and *vice versa*; but it is impossible to effect such changes by the voluntary act of government, even in the most despotic country. We say by the voluntary act of government; because there is no doubt that it may be effected, though at an enormous sacrifice of life, wealth, and happiness, by the silent and unobserved operation of the laws of nature, which are irresistible; as was the case with the transference of industry from agriculture to pasturage, under the effect of free trade in grain in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, in the later stages of the Roman empire; or from manufactures to agriculture, from the consequences of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in the Italian republics in modern times. But no government, not even that of the Czar Peter or Sultaun Mahmoud, could succeed in destroying or nipping in the bud branches of national industry, by simple acts of the legislature or sovereign authority, not imposed by external and irresistible authority. The Emperor Paul tried it, and got a sash twisted about his neck, according to the established fashion of that country, for his pains. The Whigs tried it, and were turned out of office in consequence. All the governments of Europe, despotic, constitutional, and democratic, meet our concessions, in favour of free trade, by increased protection to their manufacturers. They dare not destroy their rising commercial wealth any more than we dare destroy our old colossal agricultural investments. The republicans of America even exceed them in the race of tariffs and protection. Sixty-two per cent has lately been laid on our British iron goods in return for Sir Robert Peel’s tariff; a similar duty on iron and cotton goods, it is well known, is contemplated in the Prussian leagues in Germany. The British government has at length, through its prime minister, spoken out firmly in support of the existing corn-laws. The feeling of the agricultural counties, as evinced at the late meetings, left them no alternative. All nations, under all varieties of government, situation, race, and political circumstances, concur in rising up to resist the doctrines of free trade. Necessity has enlightened, experience has taught them: a very clear motive urges them on, which is not likely to decline in strength with the progress of time—it is the instinct of self-preservation.

Such a system as the free traders advocate, if practicable, would be to the last degree inexpedient.

Page 175

What would be the result? Why, that one country would become wholly, or in great part, agricultural, and the other wholly, or in great part, manufacturing. Is this a result desirable to either? Admitting that a city or small state, which has no territory which can furnish any considerable proportion of the subsistence which it requires, like Holland, may do well to attend exclusively to manufactures and commerce; or a country which, by the rigour of nature, or the remoteness of its situation, cannot attain to commercial or manufacturing greatness, would do well to attend exclusively to the cultivation or productions of the earth; the question which here occurs—Is such a system advisable or expedient for a nation which has received from the bounty of nature the means of rising to greatness in *both*—such as Great Britain, Russia, or Prussia? The free traders would have England sacrifice its agriculture to its manufactures, and Russia sacrifice its manufactures to its agriculture. Would such a system benefit either? Would England be happier or richer, more stable or more moral, if the already colossal amount of its manufactures were trebled; or Russia, if its rising iron and woollen fabrics were destroyed, and its industry confined exclusively to the slow return of agricultural labour? Is it desirable that the zone of tall chimneys, sickly faces, brick houses, and crowded jails, which at present spans across the whole of England and part of Scotland, should be doubled and trebled in breadth; and the fertile fields of Kent, Norfolk, and East Lothian, be reduced to vast unenclosed pastures, such as overspread Italy in the later stages of the Roman empire? Or is it desirable to Russia and Prussia that they should be for ever chained to the labour of boors, serfs, and shepherds, and all the vivifying and unimportant effects of commercial wealth be denied to their exertions? Nature has designed, experience recommends, a very different system. History tells us in all parts of the world, that it is in the *intermixture* of commerce and agriculture that the best security is to be found for social happiness and advancement, and the most effectual antidote provided to the evils with which either, when existing alone, is so prone. Mr McCulloch has told us, that the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain have now risen to such a prodigious height, that any further extension of them is undesirable, and that no real patriot would have desired them to have become so extensive as they already are. Is it desirable, in such a state of matters, to go on increasing the same splendid but perilous system, and to do so at the expense of the great pillar of national wealth, security, and independence—the land of the state?

Further, the proposed system is pernicious even with reference to the national wealth and interests of the manufacturers themselves, as tending to undermine the main branches of our national resources, and substitute encouragement to an inferior, to upholding of the superior market for our manufacturing industry.

Page 176

Although in the meetings where they address the agricultural constituencies, the free traders hold out that their measures would benefit the manufacturers, and *not injure the agriculturists*; yet nothing can be clearer than that this is a mere shallow pretext, put forth to conceal their real objects and the effect of their measures, and that the result they *really* anticipate is as different from that as the poles are asunder. What is the benefit they hold out to the community as an inducement to go into their measures? Cheap grain. What is the motive which stimulates all their efforts, and which, among themselves and in private conversation with all men of sense, they at once admit is their ruling object? *Reduced wages*; the hope of extending our export in foreign countries by taking an additional quantity of their rude produce; and diminishing the cost of production to our manufacturers by lowering the price of food, and with it the wages of labour. The whole strength of their case rests in these propositions. Their influence over the urban multitudes arises solely from the continual reiteration of these alluring hopes. If these effects are not to follow free trade and the efforts of the League, in the name of Heaven, what good are they to do, and why do they agitate the country and subscribe to the League fund? Sensible men do not throw away £100,000 for nothing, for no benefit to themselves or others. But these prospects are as fallacious as they are alluring, and so a very few observations will demonstrate.

Considered in a *national* point of view, if the matter is brought to this issue, the great question is—Whether agriculture or manufactures are the superior interests in the production of national wealth. Admitting that the true policy for government is to protect *all* the branches of national industry, and stoutly contending, as we do, and ever shall do, that the real and ultimate interests of all is the same, and cannot be separated—the question comes to be, if one fiercely demands the sacrifice of the other, and insists that its interests are so weighty and momentous that all others must be sacrificed to them, which of the two thus placed in jeopardy is the most momentous? which brings in most to the national treasury? Now, on this point the facts are as adverse to the arguments of the League, as on all other branches of their case.

Take the sum total of manufactures in Great Britain and Ireland, accompanied with the sum total of agricultural production, in order to discover which of the two is the more valuable interest—in order that it may be discovered, if matters are brought to that issue that one or other must be abandoned, which is to be sacrificed. The choice of a wise government could not be doubtful, if it were necessary to make the selection. The agricultural productions of the British islands amount to £300,000,000 a-year, while the sum total of manufactures of every description

Page 177

is only L.180,000,000. Nor can it be said, with any degree of truth, that the agriculture of the country is dependent for its existence on its manufactures, and would decline if they were materially injured; for the example of modern Italy and Flanders proves, that three centuries *after* a country has ceased to be the chief in manufacturing or commercial industry, it may advance with undiminished vigour and success in the production of agricultural riches.

But this is not all. The statistical documents which have now been prepared with so much care by Parliament, and published by the accurate and indefatigable Mr Porter, himself a decided free trader, demonstrate that, of the manufacturing productions, nearly three-fourths are taken off by the home market, and *four-fifths* by the home and colonial market taken together, leaving only ONE-FIFTH for *the whole foreign markets of the world put together*—

“The total amount of British manufactures annually produced is about L180,000,000 worth, of which only L47,000,000 is taken off by the whole external trade of the world put together, while no less than L133,000, 000 is consumed in the home market; and of the foreign consumption, fully a third is absorbed by the British Colonies, in different parts of the world. So that the home and colonial trade is to the whole foreign put together as 5 to 1. And, while the total produce of manufactures is L180,000,000 annually, and of mines and minerals L13,776,000, the amount of agricultural produce annually extracted from the soil is not less than L300,000,000; or a half more than the whole manufactures and mines put together.”

Further, if we compare the proportion purchased of our manufactures, which is taken off by foreign nations, for the export to whom we are required to make the sacrifice of our domestic agriculture, with what is consumed by our own native population, whether in the British islands or in our colonies of British descent, the difference is prodigious, and such as might well, even for their own sake, make the Anti-corn-law League pause in their career of violence. From the tables compiled from Porter's *Parliamentary Tables*, and the population of the different states to whom we export, taken from Malte Brun and Balbi, it appears, that while the British population, whether at home or abroad, consume from L3 to L5 a-head worth of our manufactures, the foreign nations to whom we are willing to sacrifice the British agriculturists, take off per head ONLY AS MANY PENCE. In preferring the one to the other, therefore, we are, literally speaking, penny wise and pound foolish.

Page 178

We have shown how agriculture was ruined in the Roman empire in Italy, by the free importation of grain from the Lybian and Egyptian provinces of the empire. As a contrast to that woful progress, the main cause of the destruction of the empire of the Caesars, we request the attention of our readers to the progress of British exports in official value, which indicates their amount from 1790 to 1840, premising that the *whole* of that period was one of protection to the British agriculturist; during the first twenty years of the period, by the effects of the war—during the last twenty-five, by the operation of the corn law and sliding scale, introduced in 1814. We recommend the advocates of free trade to search the annals of the world for a similar instance of progress and prosperity flowing from, or co-existent with, the practical adoption of their principles.

These facts, which, in truth, are altogether decisive of the present question, point to the great source from which the errors of the free trade party are derived, and which appears, in an especial manner, their favourite position, that cheap prices is an unmitigated blessing, and that the great thing to attend to is to increase our imports. Cheap prices of grain are like the Amreeta cap in Kehama; the greatest of all blessings is the greatest of all curses, *according as they arise from magnitude of domestic production, or magnitude of foreign importation*. Of the first we had an example during the five fine years in succession, from 1830 to 1835, during which the foreign importation was practically abolished by the abundant harvests, and consequent high duty on grain under the sliding scale. This was a period, as all the world knows, of universal and unexampled commercial prosperity. Of the second we had a memorable example during the five bad years in succession, which elapsed from 1836 to 1840, in the course of which the corn laws, from the effect of the same sliding scale, and the continued low prices, were practically abolished; and importations, at the close of the period, amounted to 2,500,000 quarters, and, on an average of the whole, was little short of 2,000,000 of quarters. And what was the result? The exportation of 6,000,000 of sovereigns in a single year to buy grain; an unexampled pressure on the money market; commercial embarrassments, long-continued, and severe beyond all former precedent; the contraction of ten millions of additional debt in four years, and the creation of a deficit which at length rose to the formidable amount, in 1842, of L.4,000,000 sterling! And what first dispelled this distress, and arrested this downward and disastrous progress? The fine harvests of 1842—the blessed sun of its long summer, followed by the more checkered, but also fine summer of 1843, which again gave us plenty, derived from domestic production, and consequent general and increasing manufacturing as well as rural prosperity.

Page 179

It is in vain, therefore, to say, cheap prices are a blessing in themselves, and the consumers at least are ever benefited by a fall in the cost of grain. Cheap prices are a real blessing if that effect consists with prosperity to the producer, as by improved methods of cultivation or manufacture, or the benignity of nature in giving fine seasons. But cheap prices are the greatest of all evils, and to none more shall the consumers, if they are the result, not of the magnitude of domestic production, but of the magnitude of foreign importation. It was that sort of cheap prices which ruined the Roman empire, from the destruction of the agriculture of Italy; it is that sort of cheap prices which has ruined the Indian weavers, from the disastrous competition of the British steam-engine; it is that sort of low prices which has so grievously depressed British shipping, from the disastrous competition of the Baltic vessels under the reciprocity system. It is in vain for the consumers to say, we will separate our case from that of the producers, and care not, so as we get low prices, what comes of them. Where will the consumers be, and that ere long, if the producers are destroyed? What will be the condition of the landlords if their farmers are ruined? or of bondholders if their debtors are bankrupt? or of railway proprietors if traffic ceases? or of owners of bank stock if bills are no longer presented for discount? or of the 3 per cents if Government, by the failure of the productive industry of the country, is rendered bankrupt? The consumers all rest on the producers, and must sink or swim with them.

* * * * *

Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, Paul's Work.