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MARLBOROUGH. No. II.[1]

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It might have been expected, that after the march into Bavaria had demonstrated the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, and the battle of Blenheim had in so decisive a manner broken the enemy's power, the principal direction of military affairs would have been entrusted to that consummate commander; and that the Allied cabinets, without presuming to interfere in the management of the campaigns, would have turned all their efforts to place at his disposal forces adequate to carry into execution the mighty designs which he meditated, and had shown himself so well qualified to carry into execution. It was quite the reverse. The Allied cabinets did nothing. They did worse than nothing—they interfered only to do mischief. Their principal object after this appeared to be to cramp the efforts of this great general, to overrule his bold designs, to tie down his aspiring genius. Each looked only to his own separate objects, and nothing could make them see that they were to be gained only by promoting the general objects of the alliance. Relieved from the danger of instant subjugation by the victory of Blenheim, and the retreat of the French army across the Rhine, the German powers relapsed into their usual state of supineness, lukewarmness, and indifference. No efforts of Marlborough could induce the Dutch either to enlarge their contingent, or even render that already in the field fit for active service. The English force was not half of what the national strength was capable of sending forth. Parliament would not hear of any thing like an adequate expenditure. Thus the golden opportunity, never likely to be regained, of profiting by the consternation of the enemy after the battle of Blenheim, and their weakness after forty thousand of their best troops had been lost to their armies, was allowed to pass away; and the war was permitted to dwindle into one of posts and sieges, when, by a vigorous effort, it might have been concluded in the next campaign.[2]

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It was not thus with the French. The same cause which had loosened the efforts of the confederates, had inspired unwonted vigour into their councils. The Rhine was crossed by the Allies; the French armies had been hurled with disgrace out of Germany; the territory of the Grand Monarque was threatened both from the side of Alsace and Flanders; and a formidable insurrection in the Cevennes both distracted the force and threatened the peace of the kingdom. But against all these evils Louis made head. Never had the superior vigour and perseverance of a monarchy over that of a confederacy been more clearly evinced. Marshal Villars had been employed in the close of the preceding year to appease the insurrection in the Cevennes, and his measures were at once so vigorous and conciliatory, that before the end of the following winter the disturbances were entirely appeased. In consequence of this, the forces employed in that quarter became disposable; and by this means, and the immense efforts made by the government over the whole kingdom, the armies on the frontier were so considerably augmented, that Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria took the field in the Low Countries at the head of seventy-five thousand men, while Marshal Marsin on the Upper Rhine, covered Alsace with thirty thousand. Those armies were much larger than any which the Allies could bring against them; for although it had been calculated that Marlborough was to be at the head of ninety thousand men on the Moselle on the 1st May, yet such had been the dilatory conduct of the States-general and the German princes, that in the beginning of June there were scarcely thirty thousand men collected round his standards; and in Flanders and on the Upper Rhine the enemy's relative superiority was still greater.

The plan of the campaign of 1705, based on the supposition that these great forces were to be at his disposal, concerted between him and Prince Eugene, was in the highest degree bold and decisive. It was fixed that, early in spring, ninety thousand men should be assembled in the country between the Moselle and the Saar, and, after establishing their magazines and base of operations at Treves and Traerbach, they should penetrate, in two columns into Lorraine; that the column under Marlborough in person should advance along the course of Moselle, and the other, under the Margrave of Baden, by the valley of the Saar, and that Saar-Louis should be invested before the French army had time to take the field. In this way the whole fortresses of Flanders would be avoided, and the war, carried into the enemy's territory, would assail France on the side where her iron barrier was most easily pierced through. But the slowness of the Dutch, and backwardness of the Germans, rendered this well-conceived plan abortive, and doomed the English general, for the whole of a campaign which promised such important advantages, to little else but difficulty, delay, and vexation. Marlborough's enthusiasm, great as it was, nearly sank under the repeated disappointments which he experienced at this juncture; and, guarded as he was, it exhaled in several bitter complaints in his confidential correspondence.[3] But, like a true patriot and man of perseverance, he did not give way to despair when he found nearly all that had been promised him awanting; but perceiving the greater designs impracticable, from the want of all the means by which they could be carried into execution, prepared to make the most of the diminutive force which alone was at his disposal.

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At length, some of the German reinforcements having arrived, Marlborough, in the beginning of June, though still greatly inferior to the enemy, commenced operations. Such was the terror inspired by his name, and the tried valour of the English troops, that Villars remained on the defensive, and soon retreated. Without firing a shot, he evacuated a strong woody country which he occupied, and retired to a strong defensive position, extending from Haute Sirk on the right, to the Nivelles on the left, and communicating in the rear with Luxembourg, Thionville, and Saar-Louis. This position was so strong, that it was hopeless to attempt to force it without heavy cannon; and Marlborough's had not yet arrived, from the failure of the German princes to furnish the draught-horses they had promised. For nine weary days he remained in front of the French position, counting the hours till the guns and reinforcements came up; but such was the tardiness of the German powers, and the universal inefficiency of the inferior princes and potentates, that they never made their appearance. The English general was still anxiously awaiting the promised supplies, when intelligence arrived from the right of so alarming a character as at once changed the theatre of operations, and fixed him for the remainder of the campaign in the plains of Flanders.

It was the rapid progress which Marshal Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria, at the head of seventy-five thousand men, were making in the heart of Flanders, which rendered this change necessary. General

Overkirk was there entrusted with the army intended to cover Holland; but it was greatly inferior to the enemy in point of numerical amount, and still more so in the quality and composition of the troops of which it was composed. Aware of his superiority, and of the timid character of the government which was principally interested in that army, Villeroi pushed his advantages to the utmost. He advanced boldly upon the Meuse, carried by assault the fortress of Huys, and, marching upon Liege, occupied the town without much resistance, and laid siege to the citadel. Overkirk, in his lines before Maestricht, was unable even to keep the field. The utmost alarm seized upon the United Provinces. They already in imagination saw Louis XIV. a second time at the gates of Amsterdam. Courier after courier was dispatched to Marlborough, soliciting relief in the most urgent terms; and it was hinted, that if effectual protection were not immediately given, Holland would be under the necessity of negotiating for a separate peace. There was not a moment to be lost: the Dutch were now as hard pressed as the Austrians had been in the preceding year, and in greater alarm than the Emperor was before the battle of Blenheim. A cross march like that into Bavaria could alone reinstate affairs. Without a moment's hesitation, Marlborough took his determination.

On the 17th June, without communicating his designs to any one, or even without saying a word of the alarming intelligence he had received, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at midnight, and setting out shortly after, he marched, without intermission, eighteen miles to the rear. Having thus gained a march upon the enemy, so as to avoid the risk of being pursued or harassed in his retreat, he left General D'Aubach with eleven battalions and twelve squadrons to cover the important magazines at [Pg 652] Treves and Saarbruck; and himself, with the remainder of the army, about thirty thousand strong, marched rapidly in the direction of Maestricht. He was in hopes of being able, like the Consul Nero, in the memorable cross march from Apulia to the Metaurus in Roman story, to attack the enemy with his own army united to that of Overkirk, before he was aware of his approach; but in this he was disappointed. Villeroi got notice of his movement, and instantly raising the siege of the citadel of Liege, withdrew, though still superior in number to the united forces of the enemy, within the shelter of the lines he had prepared and fortified with great care on the Meuse. Marlborough instantly attacked and carried Huys on the 11th July. But the satisfaction derived from having thus arrested the progress of the enemy in Flanders, and wrested from him the only conquest of the campaign, soon received a bitter alloy. Like Napoleon in his later years, the successes he gained in person were almost always overbalanced by the disasters sustained through the blunders or treachery of his lieutenants. Hardly had Huys opened its gates, when advices were received that D'Aubach, instead of obeying his orders, and defending the magazines at Treves and Saarbruck to the last extremity, had fled on the first appearance of a weak French detachment, and burned the whole stores which it had cost so much time and money to collect. This was a severe blow to Marlborough, for it at once rendered impracticable the offensive movement into Lorraine, on which his heart was so set, and from which he had anticipated such important results. It was no longer possible to carry the war into the enemy's territory, or turn, by an irruption into Lorraine, the whole fortresses of the enemy in Flanders. The tardiness of the German powers in the first instance, the terrors of the Dutch, and misconduct of D'Aubach in the last, had caused that ably conceived design entirely to miscarry. Great was the mortification of the English general at this signal disappointment of his most warmly cherished hopes; it even went so far that he had thoughts of resigning his command.[4] But instead of abandoning himself to despair, he set about, like the King of Prussia in after times, the preparation of a stroke which should reinstate his affairs by the terror with which it inspired the enemy, and the demonstration of inexhaustible resources it afforded in himself.

The position occupied by the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villeroi was so strong that it was regarded as impregnable, and in truth it was so to a front attack. With its right resting on Marche aux Dames on the Meuse, it stretched through Leau to the strong and important fortress of Antwerp. This line was long, and of course liable to be broken through at points; but such was the skill with which every vulnerable point had been strengthened and fortified by the French engineers, that it was no easy matter to say where an impression could be made. Wherever a marsh or a stream intervened, the most skilful use had been made of it; while forts and redoubts, plentifully mounted with heavy cannon, both commanded all the approaches to the lines, and formed so many *points d'appui* to its defenders in case of disaster. Such a position, *[Pg 653]* defended by seventy thousand men, directed by able generals, might well be deemed impregnable. But Marlborough, with an inferior force, resolved to attempt it. In doing so, however, he had difficulties more formidable to overcome than even the resistance of the enemy in front; the timidity of the authorities at the Hague, the nervousness and responsibility of the Dutch generals, were more to be dreaded than Villeroi's redoubts. It required all the consummate address of the English general, aided by the able co-operation of General Overkirk, to get liberty from the Dutch authorities to engage in any offensive undertaking. At length, however, after infinite difficulty, a council of war, at headquarters, agreed to support any undertaking which might be deemed advisable; and Marlborough instantly set about putting his design in execution.

The better to conceal the real point of attack, he gave out that a march to the Moselle was to be immediately undertaken; and to give a colour to the report, the corps which had been employed in the siege of Huys was not brought forward to the front. At the same time Overkirk was detached to the Allied left towards Bourdine, and Marlborough followed with a considerable force, ostensibly to support him. So completely was Villeroi imposed upon, that he drew large reinforcements from the centre to his extreme right; and soon forty thousand men were grouped round the sources of the Little Gheet on his extreme right. By this means the centre was seriously weakened; and Marlborough instantly assembled, with every imaginable precaution to avoid discovery, all his disposable forces to attack the weakened part of the lines. The corps hitherto stationed on the Meuse was silently brought up to the front; Marlborough put himself at the head of his own English and German troops, whom he had carried with him from the Moselle; and at eight at night, on the 17th July, the whole began to march, all profoundly ignorant of the service on which they were to be engaged. Each trooper was ordered to carry a truss of hay at his saddle-bow, as if a long

march was in contemplation. At the same instant on which the columns under Marlborough's orders commenced their march, Overkirk repassed the Mehaigne on the left, and, hid by darkness, fell into the general line of the advance of the Allied troops.

No fascines or gabions had been brought along to pass the ditch, for fear of exciting alarm in the lines. The trusses of hay alone were trusted to for that purpose, which would be equally effectual, and less likely to awaken suspicion. At four in the morning, the heads of the columns, wholly unperceived, were in front of the French works, and, covered by a thick fog, traversed the morass, passed the Gheet despite its steep banks, carried the castle of Wange, and, rushing forward with a swift pace, crossed the ditch on the trusses of hay, and, in three weighty columns, scaled the rampart, and broke into the enemy's works. Hitherto entire success had attended this admirably planned attack; but the alarm was now given; a fresh corps of fifteen thousand men, under M. D'Allegré, hastily assembled, and a heavy fire was opened upon the Allies, now distinctly visible in the morning light, from a commanding battery. Upon this, Marlborough put himself at the head of Lumley's English horse, and, charging vigorously, succeeded, though not till he had sustained one repulse, in breaking through the line thus hastily formed. In this charge the Duke narrowly escaped with his life, in a personal conflict with a Bavarian officer. The Allies now crowded in, in great numbers, and the French, panic-struck, fled on all sides, abandoning the whole centre of their intrenchments to the bold assailants. Villeroi, who had become aware, from the retreat of Overkirk in his front, that some attack was in contemplation, but ignorant where the tempest was to fall, remained all night under arms. At length, attracted by the heavy fire, he approached the scene of action in the centre, only in time to see that the position was broken through, and the lines no longer tenable. He drew off his whole troops accordingly, and took up a new position, nearly at right angles to the former, stretching from Elixheim towards Tirlemont. It was part of the design of the Duke to have intercepted the line of retreat of [Pg 654] the French, and prevented them from reaching the Dyle, to which they were tending; but such was the obstinacy and slowness of the Dutch generals, that nothing could persuade them to make any further exertion, and, in defiance of the orders and remonstrances alike of Marlborough and Overkirk, they pitched their tents, and refused to take any part in the pursuit. The consequence was, that Villeroi collected his scattered forces, crossed the Dyle in haste, and took up new ground, about eighteen miles in the rear, with his left sheltered by the cannon of Louvain. But, though the disobedience and obstinacy of the Dutch thus intercepted Marlborough in the career of victory, and rendered his success much less complete than it otherwise would have been, yet had a mighty blow been struck, reflecting the highest credit on the skill and resolution of the English general. The famous lines, on which the French had been labouring for months, had been broken through and carried, during a nocturnal conflict of a few hours; they had lost all their redoubts and ten pieces of cannon, with which they were armed; M. D'Allegré, with twelve hundred prisoners, had been taken; and the army which lately besieged Liege and threatened Maestricht, was now driven back, defeated and discouraged, to seek refuge under the cannon of Louvain.

Overkirk, who had so ably co-operated with Marlborough in this glorious victory, had the magnanimity as well as candour, in his despatch to the States-general, to ascribe the success which had been gained entirely to the skill and courage of the English general.[5] But the Dutch generals, who had interrupted his career of success, had the malignity to charge the consequences of their misconduct on his head, and even carried their effrontery so far as to accuse him of supineness in not following up his success, and cutting off the enemy's retreat to the Dyle, when it was themselves who had refused to obey his orders to do so. Rains of extraordinary severity fell from the 19th to the 23d July, which rendered all offensive operations impracticable, and gave Villeroi time, of which he ably availed himself, to strengthen his position behind the Dyle to such a degree, as to render it no longer assailable with any prospect of success. The precious moment, when the enemy might have been driven from it in the first tumult of success, had been lost.

The subsequent success in the Flemish campaign by no means corresponded to its brilliant commencement. The jealousy of the Dutch ruined every thing. This gave rise to recriminations and jealousies, which rendered it impracticable even for the great abilities and consummate address of Marlborough to effect any thing of importance with the heterogeneous array, with the nominal command of which he was invested. The English general dispatched his adjutant-general, Baron Hompesch, to represent to the States-general the impossibility of going on longer with such a divided responsibility; but, though they listened to his representations, nothing could induce them to put their troops under the direct orders of the commander-in-chief. They still had "field deputies," as they were called who were invested with the entire direction of the Dutch troops; and as they were civilians, wholly unacquainted with military affairs, they had recourse on every occasion to the very fractious generals who already had done so much mischief to the common cause. In vain Marlborough repeatedly endeavoured, as he himself said, "to cheat them into victory," by getting their consent to measures, of which they did not see the bearing, calculated to achieve that object; their timid, jealous spirit interposed on every occasion to mar important operations, and the corps they commanded was too considerable to admit of their being undertaken without their co-operation. After nine days' watching the enemy across the Dyle, Marlborough proposed to cross the river [Pg 655] near Louvain, and attack the enemy; the Dutch Deputies interposed their negative, to Marlborough's infinite mortification, as, in his own words, "it spoiled the whole campaign."[6]

Worn out with these long delays, Marlborough at length resolved at all hazards to pass the river, trusting that the Dutch, when they saw the conflict once seriously engaged, would not desert him. But in this he was mistaken. The Dutch not only failed to execute the part assigned them in the combined enterprise, but sent information of his designs to the enemy. The consequence was, Villeroi was on his guard. All the Duke's demonstrations could not draw his attention from his left, where the real attack was intended; but nevertheless the Duke pushed on the English and Germans under his orders, who forced the passage in the most gallant style. But when the Duke ordered the Dutch generals to support the attack of the Duke of Wirtemberg, who had crossed the river, and established himself in force on the opposite bank, they refused to move their men. The consequence was that this attack, as well planned and likely to succeed as the famous forcing of the lines a fortnight before, proved abortive; and Marlborough, burning with

indignation, was obliged to recall his troops when on the high-road to victory, and when the river had been crossed, before they had sustained a loss of a hundred men. So general was the indignation at this shameful return on the part of the Dutch generals to Marlborough for all the services he had rendered to their country, that it drew forth the strongest expressions from one of his ablest, but most determined opponents, Lord Bolingbroke, who wrote to him at this juncture:—"It was very melancholy to find the malice of Slangenberg, the fears of Dopf, and the ignorance of the deputies, to mention no more, prevail so to disappoint your Grace, to their prejudice as well as ours. We hope the Dutch have agreed to what your Grace desires of them, without which the war becomes a jest to our enemies, *and can end in nothing but an ill peace, which is certain ruin to us.*"[7]

Still the English general was not discouraged. His public spirit and patriotism prevailed over his just private resentment. Finding it impossible to prevail on the Dutch deputies, who, in every sense, were so many viceroys over him, to agree to any attempt to force the passage of the Dyle, he resolved to turn it. For this purpose the army was put in motion on the 14th August; and, defiling to his left, he directed it in three columns towards the sources of the Dyle. The march was rapid, as the Duke had information that strong reinforcements, detached from the army at Alsace, would join Villeroi on the 18th. They soon came to ground subsequently immortalized in English story. On the 16th they reached Genappe, where, on 17th June 1815, the Life-guards under Lord Anglesea defeated the French lancers; on the day following, the enemy retired into the forest of Soignies, still covering Brussels, and the Allied headquarters were moved to Braine la Leude. On the 17th August, a skirmish took place on the plain in front of Waterloo; and the alarm being given, the Duke hastened to the spot, and rode over the field where Wellington and Napoleon [Pg 656] contended a hundred and ten years afterwards. The French upon this retired into the forest of Soignies, and rested at Waterloo for the night.

The slightest glance at the map must be sufficient to show, that by this cross march to Genappe and Waterloo, Marlborough had gained an immense advantage over the enemy. *He had interposed between them and France.* He had relinquished for the time, it is true, his own base of operations, and was out of communication with his magazines; but he had provided for this by taking six days' provisions for the army with him; and he could now force the French to fight or abandon Brussels, and retire towards Antwerp—the Allies being between them and France. Still clinging to their fortified lines on the Dyle, and desirous of covering Brussels, they had only occupied the wood of Soignies with their right wing; while the Allies occupied all the open country from Genappe to Frischermont and Braine la Leude, with their advanced posts up to La Haye Sainte and Mount St John. The Allies now occupied the ground, afterwards covered by Napoleon's army: the forest of Soignies and approaches to Brussels were guarded by the French. Incalculable were the results of a victory gained in such a position: it was by success gained over an army of half the size, that Napoleon established his power in so surprising a manner at Marengo. Impressed with such ideas, Marlborough, on the 18th August, anxiously reconnoitred the ground; and finding the front practicable for the passage of troops, moved up his men in three columns to the attack. The artillery was sent to Wavre; the Allied columns traversed at right angles the line of march by which Blucher advanced to the support of Wellington on the 18th June 1815.

Had Marlborough's orders been executed, it is probable he would have gained a victory, which, from the relative position of the two armies, could not have been but decisive; and possibly the 18th August 1705, might have become as celebrated in history as the 18th June 1815. Overkirk, to whom he showed the ground at Over-Ische which he had destined for an attack, perfectly concurred in the expedience of it, and orders were given to bring the artillery forward to commence a cannonade. By the malice or negligence of Slangenberg, who had again violated his express instructions, and permitted the baggage to intermingle with the artillery-train, the guns had not arrived, and some hours were lost before they could be pushed up. At length, at noon, the guns were brought forward, and the troops being in line, Marlborough rode along the front to give his last orders. The English and Germans were in the highest spirits, anticipating certain victory from the relative position of the armies; the French fighting with their faces to Paris, the Allies with theirs to Brussels. But again the Dutch deputies and generals interposed, alleging that the enemy was too strongly posted to be attacked with any prospect of success. "Gentlemen," said Marlborough to the circle of generals which surrounded him, "I have reconnoitred the ground, and made dispositions for an attack. I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day, or wait till to-morrow. It is indeed late; but you must consider, that by throwing up intrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more difficult to force." "Murder and massacre," replied Slangenberg. Marlborough, upon this, offered him two English for every Dutch battalion; but this too the Dutchman refused, on the plea that he did not understand English. Upon this the Duke offered to give him German regiments; but this too was declined, upon the pretence that the attack would be too hazardous. Marlborough, upon this, turned to the deputies and said—"I disdain to send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter. I will lead them where the peril is most imminent. I adjure you, gentlemen! for the love of God and your country, do not let us neglect so favourable an opportunity." But it was all in vain; and instead of acting, the Dutch deputies [Pg 657] and generals spent three hours in debating, until night came on and it was too late to attempt any thing. Such was Marlborough's chagrin at this disappointment, that he said, on retiring from the field, "I am at this moment *ten years* older than I was four days ago."

Next day, as Marlborough had foreseen, the enemy had strengthened their position with field-works; so that it was utterly hopeless to get the Dutch to agree to an attack which *then* would indeed have been hazardous, though it was not so the evening before. The case was now irremediable. The six days' bread he had taken with him was on the point of being exhausted, and a protracted campaign without communication with his magazines was impracticable. With a heavy heart, therefore, Marlborough remeasured his steps to the ground he had left in front of the Dyle, and gave orders for destroying the

lines of Leau, which he had carried with so much ability. His vexation was increased afterwards, by finding that the consternation of the French had been such on the 18th August, when he was so urgent to attack them, that they intended only to have made a show of resistance, in order to gain time for their baggage and heavy guns to retire to Brussels. To all appearance Marlborough, if he had not been so shamefully thwarted, would have illustrated the forest of Soignies by a victory as decisive as that of Blenheim, and realized the triumphant entrance to Brussels which Napoleon anticipated from his attack on Wellington on the same ground a hundred years afterwards.

Nothing further, of any moment, was done in this campaign, except the capture of Leau and levelling of the enemy's lines on the Gheet. Marlborough wrote a formal letter to the States, in which he regretted the opportunity which had been lost, which M. Overkirk had coincided with him in thinking promised a great and glorious victory; and he added, "my heart is so full that I cannot forbear representing to your High Mightinesses on this occasion, that I find my authority here to be much less than when I had the honour to command your troops in Germany."[8] The Dutch generals sent in their counter-memorial to their government, which contains a curious picture of their idea of the subordination and direction of an army, and furnishes a key to the jealousy which had proved so fatal to the common cause. They complained that the Duke of Marlborough, "without holding a council of war, made two or three marches *for the execution of some design formed by his Grace*; and we cannot conceal from your High Mightinesses that all the generals of our army think it very strange *that they should not have the least notice of the said marches*." [9] It has been already mentioned that Marlborough, like every other good general, kept his designs to himself, from the impossibility of otherwise keeping them from the enemy; and that he had the additional motive, in the case of the Dutch deputies and generals, of being desirous "to cheat them into victory."

Chagrined by disappointment, and fully convinced, as Wellington was after his campaign with Cuesta and the Spaniards at Talavera, that it was in vain to attempt any thing further with such impediments, on the part of the Allies, thrown in his way, Marlborough retired, in the beginning of September, to Tirlemont, the mineral waters of which had been recommended to him; and, in the end of October, the troops on both sides went into winter quarters. His vexation with the Dutch at this period strongly appeared in his private letters to his intimate friends;[10] but, though he exerted himself to the utmost during the suspension of [Pg 658] operations in the field, both by memorials to his own government, and representations to the Dutch rulers, to get the direction of the army put upon a better footing, yet he had magnanimity and patriotism enough to sacrifice his private feelings to the public good. Instead of striving, therefore, to inflame the resentment of the English cabinet at the conduct of the Dutch generals, he strove only to moderate it; and prevailed on them to suspend the sending of a formal remonstrance, which they had prepared, to the States-general, till the effect of his own private representation in that quarter was first ascertained. The result proved that he had judged wisely; his disinterested conduct met with the deserved reward. The Patriotic party, both in England and at the Hague, was strongly roused in his favour; the factious accusations of the English Tories, like those of the Whigs a century after against Wellington, were silenced; the States-general were compelled by the public indignation to withdraw from their commands the generals who had thwarted his measures; and, without risking the union of the two powers, the factious, selfish men who had endangered the object of their alliance, were for ever deprived of the means of doing mischief.

But while the danger was thus abated in one quarter, it only became more serious in another. The Dutch had been protected, and hindered from breaking off from the alliance, only by endangering the fidelity of the Austrians; and it had now become indispensable, at all hazards, to do something to appease their jealousies. The Imperial cabinet, in addition to the war in Italy, on the Upper Rhine, and in the Low Countries, was now involved in serious hostilities in Hungary; and felt the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of maintaining the contest at once in so many different quarters. The cross march of Marlborough from the Moselle to Flanders, however loudly called for by the danger and necessities of the States, had been viewed with a jealous eye by the Emperor, as tending to lead the war away from the side of Lorraine, with which the German interests were wound up; and the instances were loud and frequent, that, now that the interests of the Dutch were sufficiently provided for, he should return with the English contingent to that, the proper theatre of offensive operations. But Marlborough's experience had taught him, that as little reliance was to be placed on the co-operation of the Margrave of Baden, and the lesser German powers, as on that of the Dutch; and he felt that it was altogether in vain to attempt another campaign either in Germany or Flanders, unless some more effectual measures were taken to appease the jealousies, and secure the co-operation of this discordant alliance, than had hitherto been done. With this view, after having arranged matters to his satisfaction at the Hague, when Slangenberg was removed from the command, he repaired to Vienna in November, and thence soon after to Berlin.

Marlborough's extraordinary address and powers of persuasion did not desert him on this critical [Pg 659] occasion. Never was more strongly exemplified the truth of Chesterfield's remark, that manner had as much weight as matter in procuring him success; and that he was elevated to greatness as much on the wings of the Graces as by the strength of Minerva. Great as were the difficulties which attended the holding together the grand alliance, they all yielded to the magic of his name and the fascination of his manner. At Bernsberg he succeeded in obtaining from the Elector a promise for the increase of his contingent, and leave for it to be sent into Italy, where its co-operation was required; at Frankfort he overcame, by persuasion and address, the difficulties of the Margrave of Baden; and at Vienna he was magnificently received, and soon obtained unbounded credit with the Emperor. He was raised to the rank of prince of the empire, with the most flattering assurances of esteem; and fêted by the nobles, who vied with each other in demonstrations of respect to the illustrious conqueror of Blenheim. During his short sojourn of a fortnight there, he succeeded in allaying the suspicions and quieting the apprehensions of the Emperor, which no other man could have done; and, having arranged the plan of the next campaign, and raised, on his own credit, a loan of 100,000 crowns for the imperial court from the bankers, as well as promised one of L.250,000 more, which he afterwards obtained in London, he set out for Berlin, where his presence was not less necessary to stimulate the exertions and appease the complaints of the King of

Prussia. He arrived there on the 30th November, and on the same evening had an audience of the King, to whose strange and capricious temper he so completely accommodated himself, that he allayed all his discontents, and brought him over completely to his views. He prevailed on him to renew the treaty for the furnishing of eight thousand men to aid the common cause, and to repair the chasms occasioned by the campaign in their ranks, as well as revoke the orders which had been issued for their return from Italy, where their removal would have proved of essential detriment. This concession, in the words of the prime minister who announced it, was granted "as a mark of respect to the Queen, and of particular friendship to the Duke." From Berlin he went, loaded with honours and presents, to Hanover, where jealousies of a different kind, but not less dangerous, had arisen in consequence of the apprehensions there entertained, that the Whigs were endeavouring to thwart the eventual succession of the House of Hanover to the throne of England. Marlborough's address, however, here also succeeded in overcoming all difficulties; and, after a sojourn of only a few days, he departed in the highest favour both with the Elector and his mother. From thence he hastened to the Hague, where he remained a fortnight, and succeeded in a great degree in removing those difficulties, and smoothing down those jealousies, which had proved so injurious to the common cause in the preceding campaign. He prevailed on the Dutch to reject separate offers of accommodation, which had been made to them by the French government. Having thus put all things on as favourable a footing as could be hoped for on the Continent, he embarked for England in the beginning of January 1705—having overcome greater difficulties, and obtained greater advantages, in the course of this winter campaign, with his divided allies, than he ever did during a summer campaign with the enemy.

Every one, how cursorily soever he may be acquainted with Wellington's campaigns, must be struck with the great similarity between the difficulties which thus beset the Duke of Marlborough, in the earlier periods of his career, and those which at a subsequent period so long hampered the genius and thwarted the efforts of England's greatest general. Slangenberg's jealousy as an exact counterpart of that of Cuesta at Talavera; the timidity of the Dutch authorities was precisely similar to that of the Portuguese regency; the difficulty of appeasing the jealousy of Austria and Prussia, identical with that which so often compelled Wellington to hurry from the field to Lisbon and Cadiz. Such is the selfishness of human nature that it seems impossible to get men, actuated by different interests, to concur in any measures for the general [Pg 660] good but under the pressure of immediate danger, so threatening as to be obvious to every understanding, or by the influence of ability and address of the very highest order. It is this which in every age has caused the weakness of the best-cemented confederacies, and so often enabled single powers, not possessing a fourth part of their material resources, to triumph over them. And it is in the power of overcoming these difficulties, and allaying those jealousies, that one of the most important qualities of the general of an alliance is to be found.

Marlborough sailed for the Continent, to take the command of the armies in the Low Countries, on the 20th April 1706. His design was to have transferred the seat of war into Italy, as affairs had become so unpromising in that quarter as to be well-nigh desperate. The Imperialists had been surprised by the French general, Vendôme, in their quarters near Como, and driven into the mountains behind that town with the loss of three thousand men; so that all hold of the plain of Lombardy was lost. The Duke of Savoy was even threatened with a siege in his capital of Turin. The Margrave of Baden was displaying his usual fractious and impracticable disposition on the Upper Rhine: it seemed, in Marlborough's words, "as if he had no other object in view but to cover his own capital and residence." In Flanders, the habitual procrastination and tardiness of the Dutch had so thrown back the preparations, that it was impossible to begin the campaign so early as he had intended; and the jealousies of the cabinets of Berlin and Copenhagen had again revived to such a degree, that no aid was to be expected either from the Prussian or Danish contingents. It was chiefly to get beyond the reach of such troublesome and inconstant neighbours, that Marlborough was so desirous of transferring the seat of war to Italy, where he would have been beyond their reach. But all his efforts failed in inducing the States-general to allow any part of their troops to be employed to the south of the Alps; nor, indeed, could it reasonably have been expected that they would consent to hazard their forces, in an expedition not immediately connected with their interests, to so distant a quarter. The umbrage of the Elector of Hanover at the conduct of Queen Anne, had become so excessive, that he positively refused to let his contingent march. The Danes and Hessians excused themselves on various pretences from moving their troops to the south; and the Emperor, instead of contributing any thing to the war in Flanders, was urgent that succour should be sent, and that the English general should, in person, take the command on the Moselle. Marlborough was thus reduced to the English troops, and those in the pay of Holland; but they amounted to nearly sixty thousand men; and, on the 19th May, he set out from the Hague to take the command of this force, which lay in front of the old French frontier on the river Dyle. Marshal Villeroi had there collected sixty-two thousand men; so that the two armies, in point of numerical strength, were very nearly equal.

The English general had established a secret correspondence with one Pasquini, an inhabitant of Namur, through whose agency, and that of some other citizens of the town who were inclined to the Imperial interest, he hoped to be able to make himself master of that important fortress. To facilitate that attempt, and have troops at hand ready to take advantage of any opening that might be afforded them in that quarter, he moved towards Tirlemont, directing his march by the sources of the Little Gheet. Determined to cover Namur, and knowing that the Hanoverians and Hessians were absent, Villeroi marched out of his lines, in order to stop the advance of the Allies, and give battle in the open field. On the 20th May, the English and Dutch forces effected their junction at Bitsia; and on the day following the Danish contingent arrived, Marlborough having by great exertions persuaded them to come up from the Rhine, upon receiving a guarantee for their pay from the Dutch government. This raised his force to seventy-three battalions and one hundred and twenty-four squadrons. The French had seventy-four battalions and one hundred and twenty-eight squadrons; but they had a much greater advantage in the homogeneous quality [Pg 661] of their troops, who were all of one country; while the forces of the confederates were drawn from three different nations, speaking different languages, and many of whom had never acted in the field together.

Cadogan, with six hundred horse, formed the vanguard of Marlborough's army; and at daybreak on the 22d, he beheld the enemy's army grouped in dense masses in the strong camp of Mont St André. As their position stretched directly across the allied line of march, a battle was unavoidable; and Marlborough no sooner was informed of it, than with a joyous heart he prepared for the conflict.

The ground occupied by the enemy, and which has become so famous by the battle of Ramilies which followed, was on the summit of an elevated plateau forming the highest ground in Brabant, immediately above the two sources of the Little Gheet. The plateau above them is varied by gentle undulations, interspersed with garden grounds, and dotted with coppice woods. From it the two Gheets, the Mehaigne and the Dyle, take their source, and flow in different directions, so that it is the most elevated ground in the whole country. The descents from the summit of the plateau to the Great Gheet are steep and abrupt; but the other rivers rise in marshes and mosses, which are very wet, and in some places impassable. Marlborough was well aware of the strength of the position on the summit of this eminence, and he had used all the dispatch in his power to reach it before the enemy; but Villeroi had less ground to go over, and had his troops in battle array on the summit before the English appeared in sight. The position which they occupied ran along the front of a curve facing inwards, and overhanging the sources of the Little Gheet. Their troops extended along the crest of the ridge above the marshes, having the village of Autre Eglise in its front on the extreme left, the villages of Offuz and Ramilies in its front, and its extreme right on the high grounds which overhung the course of the Mehaigne, and the old *chaussée* of Brunehand which ran near and parallel to its banks. Their right stretched to the Mehaigne, on which it rested, and the village of Tavieres on its banks was strongly occupied by foot-soldiers. The French foot were drawn up in two lines, with the villages in their front strongly occupied by infantry. In Ramilies alone twenty battalions were posted. The great bulk of their horse was arranged also in two lines on the right, across the chaussée of Brunehand, by which part of the Allied column was to advance. On the highest point of the ridge occupied by the French, and in the rear of their extreme right, commanding the whole field of battle, behind the mass of cavalry, was the tomb or barrow of Ottomond, a German hero of renown in ancient days, which it was evident would become the subject of a desperate strife between the contending parties in the conflict which was approaching.

Marlborough no sooner came in sight of the enemy's position than he formed his own plan of attack. His troops were divided into ten columns; the cavalry being into two lines on each wing, the infantry in six columns in the centre. He at once saw that the French right, surmounted by the lofty plateau on which the tomb of Ottomond was placed, was the key of the position, and against that he resolved to direct the weight of his onset; but the better to conceal his real design, he determined to make a vehement false attack on the village of Autre Eglise and the French left. The nature of the ground occupied by the allies and enemy respectively, favoured this design; for the French were posted round the circumference of a segment, while the allies occupied the centre and chord, so that they could move with greater rapidity than their opponents from one part of the field to another. Marlborough's stratagem was entirely successful. He formed, in the first instance, with some ostentation, a weighty column of attack opposite to the French left, menacing the village of Autre Eglise. No sooner did Villeroi perceive this than he drew a considerable body of infantry from his centre behind Offuz, and marched them with the utmost expedition to reinforce the threatened point on his left. When Marlborough saw this cross-movement fairly [Pg 662] commenced, skilfully availing himself of a rising ground on which the front of his column of attack on his right was placed, he directed the second line and columns in support when the front had reached the edge of the plateau, where they obstructed the view of those behind them, to halt in a hollow where they could not be seen, and immediately after, still concealed from the enemy's sight, to defile rapidly to the left till they came into the rear of the left centre. The Danish horse, twenty squadrons strong, under the Duke of Wirtemberg, were at the same time placed in a third line behind the cavalry of the left wing, so as to bring the weight of his horse as well as foot into that quarter.

At half past twelve the cannonade began on both sides, and that of the French played heavily on the columns of the confederates advancing to the attack. The Allied right wing directed against Autre Eglise, steadily advanced up the slopes from the banks of the Little Gheet to the edge of the plateau; but there they halted, deployed into line, and opened their fire in such a position as to conceal entirely the transfer of the infantry and cavalry in their rear to the Allied left. No sooner had they reached it, than the attack began in real earnest, and with a preponderating force in that direction. Colonel Wertonville, with four Dutch battalions, advanced against Tavieres, while twelve battalions in columns of companies, supported by a strong reserve, began the attack on Ramilies in the left centre. The vehemence of this assault soon convinced Villeroi that the real attack of the Allies was in that quarter; but he had no reserve of foot to support the troops in the villages, every disposable man having been sent off to the left in the direction of Autre Eglise. In this dilemma, he hastily ordered fourteen squadrons of horse to dismount, and, supported by two Swiss battalions, moved them up to the support of the troops in Tavieres. Before they could arrive, however, the Dutch battalions had with great gallantry carried that village; and Marlborough, directing the Danish horse, under the brave Duke of Wirtemberg, against the flank of the dismounted dragoons, as they were in column and marching up, speedily cut them in pieces, and hurled back the Swiss in confusion on the French horse, who were advancing to their support.

Following up his success, Overkirk next charged the first line of advancing French cavalry with the first line of the Allied horse, and such was the vigour of his onset, that the enemy were broken and thrown back. But the second line of French and Bavarian horse soon came up, and assailing Overkirk's men when they were disordered by success, and little expecting another struggle, overthrew them without difficulty, drove them back in great confusion, and almost entirely restored the battle in that quarter. The danger was imminent that the victorious French horse, having cleared the open ground of their opponents, would wheel about and attack in rear the twelve battalions who were warmly engaged with the attack on Ramilies. Marlborough instantly saw the danger, and putting himself at the head of seventeen squadrons at hand, himself led them on to stop the progress of the victorious horse; while, at the same time, he sent

orders for every disposable sabre to come up from his right with the utmost expedition. The moment was critical, and nothing but the admirable intrepidity and presence of mind of the English general retrieved the Allied affairs. Leading on the reserve of the Allied horse with his wonted gallantry, under a dreadful fire from the French batteries on the heights behind Ramilies, he was recognised by some French troopers, with whom he had formerly served in the time of Charles II., who made a sudden rush at him. They had well-nigh made him prisoner, for they succeeded in surrounding the Duke before his men could come up to the rescue, and he only extricated himself from the throng of assailants by fighting his way out, like the knights of old, sword in hand. He next tried to leap a ditch, but his horse fell in the attempt; and when mounting another horse, given him by his aide-de-camp Captain Molesworth, Colonel Bingfield, his equery, who held the stirrup, had his head carried off by a cannon ball. The imminent danger of their [Pg 663] beloved general, however, revived the spirit of his troops, whom the dreadful severity of the cannonade had, during the scuffle, thrown into disorder; and, re-forming with great celerity, they again returned with desperate resolution to the charge.

At this critical moment, when nothing was as yet decided, the twenty fresh squadrons whom Marlborough had so opportunely called up from the Allied right, were seen galloping at full speed, but still in regular order, on the plain behind this desperate conflict. Halting directly in rear of the spot where the horse on both sides were so vehemently engaged, they wheeled into line, and advanced, in close order and admirable array, to the support of the Duke. Encouraged by this powerful reinforcement, the whole Allied cavalry re-formed, and crowded forward in three lines, with loud shouts, to the attack of the now intimidated and disheartened French. They no longer withstood the onset, but, turning their horses' heads, fled with precipitation. The low grounds between Ramilies and the old chaussée were quickly passed, and the victorious horse, pressing up the slope on the opposite side, erelong reached the summit of the plateau. The tomb of Ottomond, its highest point, and visible from the whole field of battle, was soon seen resplendent with sabres and cuirasses, amidst a throng of horse; and deafening shouts, heard over the whole extent of both armies, announced that the crowning point and key of the whole position was carried.

But Villeroi was an able and determined general, and his soldiers fought with the inherent bravery of the French nation. The contest, thus virtually decided, was not yet over. A fierce fight was raging around Ramilies, where the garrison of twenty French battalions opposed a stout resistance to Schultz's grenadiers. By degrees, however, the latter gained ground; two Swiss battalions, which had long and resolutely held their ground, were at length forced back into the village, and some of the nearest houses fell into the hands of the Allies. Upon this the whole rushed forward, and drove the enemy in a mass out of it towards the high grounds in their rear. The Marquis Maffei, however, rallied two regiments of Cologne guards, in a hollow way leading up from the village to the plateau, and opposed so vigorous a resistance that he not only checked the pursuit but regained part of the village. But Marlborough, whose eye was every where, no sooner saw this than he ordered up twenty battalions in reserve behind the centre, and they speedily cleared the village; and Maffei, with his gallant troops, being charged in flank by the victorious horse at the very time that he was driven out of the village by the infantry, was made prisoner, and almost all his men taken or destroyed.

The victory was now decided on the British left and centre, where alone the real attack had been made. But so vehement had been the onset, so desperate the passage of arms which had taken place, that though the battle had lasted little more than three hours, the victors were nearly in as great disorder as the vanquished. Horse, foot, and artillery, were blended together in wild confusion; especially between Ramilies and the Mehaigne, and thence up to the tomb of Ottomond, in consequence of the various charges of all arms which had so rapidly succeeded each other on the same narrow space. Marlborough, seeing this, halted his troops, before hazarding any thing further, on the ground where they stood, which, in the left and centre, was where the enemy had been at the commencement of the action. Villeroi skilfully availed himself of this breathing-time to endeavour to re-form his broken troops, and take up a new line from Geest-a-Gerompont, on his right, through Offuz to Autre Eglise, still held by its original garrison, on his left. But in making the retrograde movement so as to get his men into this oblique position, he was even more impeded and thrown into disorder by the baggage waggons and dismounted guns on the heights, than the Allies had been in the plain below. Marlborough seeing this, resolved to give the enemy no time to rally, but again sounding the charge, ordered infantry and cavalry to advance. A strong column passed the morass in which the Little Gheet takes its rise, directing their steps towards Offuz; but the [Pg 664] enemy, panic-struck as at Waterloo, by the general advance of the victors, gave way on all sides. Offuz was abandoned without firing a shot; the cavalry pursued with headlong fury, and soon the plateau of Mont St André was covered with a mass of fugitives. The troops in observation on the right, seeing the victory gained on the left and centre, of their own accord joined in the pursuit, and soon made themselves masters of Autre Eglise and the heights behind it. The Spanish and Bavarian horse-guards made a gallant attempt to stem the flood of disaster, but without attaining their object; it only led to their own destruction. Charged by General Wood and Colonel Wyndham at the head of the English horse-guards, they were cut to pieces. The rout now became universal, and all resistance ceased. In frightful confusion, a disorganized mass of horse and foot, abandoning their guns, streamed over the plateau, poured headlong down the banks of the Great Gheet, on the other side, and fled towards Louvain, which they reached in the most dreadful disorder at two o'clock in the morning. The British horse, under Lord Orkney, did not draw bridle from the pursuit till they reached the neighbourhood of that fortress; having, besides fighting the battle, marched full five-and-twenty miles that day. Marlborough halted for the night, and established headquarters at Mildert, thirteen miles from the field of battle, and five from Louvain.

The trophies of the battle of Ramilies were immense; but they were even exceeded by its results. The loss of the French in killed and wounded was 7000 men, and, in addition to that, 6000 prisoners were taken. With the desertion in the days after the battle, they were weakened by full 15,000 men. They lost fifty-two guns, their whole baggage and pontoon train, all their caissons, and eighty standards wrested from them in fair fight. Among the prisoners were the Princes de Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard.

The victors lost 1066 killed, and 2567 wounded, in all, 3633. The great and unusual proportion of killed to the wounded, shows how desperate and hand to hand, as in ancient battles, the fighting had been. Overkirk nobly supported the Duke in this action, and not only repeatedly charged at the head of his horse, but continued on horseback in the pursuit till one in the morning, when he narrowly escaped death from a Bavarian officer whom he had made prisoner, and given back his sword, saying, "You are a gentleman, and may keep it." The base wretch no sooner got it into his hand than he made a lounge at the Dutch general, but fortunately missed his blow, and was immediately cut down for his treachery by Overkirk's orderly.

The immediate result of this splendid victory, was the acquisition of nearly all Austrian Flanders—Brussels, Louvain, Mechlin, Alort, Luise, and nearly all the great towns of Brabant, opened their gates immediately after. Ghent and Bruges speedily followed the example; and Daun and Oudenarde also soon declared for the Austrian cause. Of all the towns in Flanders, Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, and Dunkirk alone held out for the French; and to their reduction the Duke immediately turned his attention. The public transports in Holland knew no bounds; they much exceeded what had been felt for the victory of Blenheim, for that only saved Germany, but this delivered themselves. The wretched jealousy which had so long thwarted the Duke, as it does every other really great man, was fairly overpowered in "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." In England, the rejoicings were equally enthusiastic, and a solemn thanksgiving, at which the Queen attended in person at St Paul's, gave a willing vent to the general thankfulness. "Faction and the French," as Bolingbroke expressed it, [11] were all that Marlborough had to fear, and he had fairly conquered both. But the snake was scotched, not killed, and he replenished his venom, and prepared [Pg 665] future stings even during the roar of triumphant cannon, and the festive blaze of rejoicing cities.[12]

The French army, after this terrible defeat, retired in the deepest dejection towards French Flanders, leaving garrisons in the principal fortresses which still held out for them. Marlborough made his triumphant entry into Brussels in great pomp on the 28th May, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The Three Estates of Brabant assembled there, acknowledged Charles III. for their sovereign, and received, in return, a guarantee from the English government and the States-general, that the *joyeuse entrée*, the Magna Charta of Flanders, should be faithfully observed. "Every where, says Marlborough, the joy was great at being delivered from the insolence and exactions of the French." The victory of Ramilies produced no less effect on the northern courts, where jealousies and lukewarmness had hitherto proved so pernicious to the common cause. The King of Prussia, who had hitherto kept aloof, and suspended the march of his troops, now on the mediation of Marlborough became reconciled to the Emperor and the States-general; and the Elector of Hanover, forgetting his apprehensions about the English succession, was among the foremost to offer his congratulations, and make a tender of his forces to the now triumphant cause. It is seldom that the prosperous want friends.

The Dutch were clear, after the submission of Brabant, to levy contributions in it as a conquered country, to relieve themselves of part of the expenses of the war; and Godolphin, actuated by the same short-sighted views, was eager to replenish the English exchequer from the same source. But Marlborough, like Wellington in after days, had magnanimity and wisdom enough to see the folly, as well as injustice, of thus alienating infant allies at the moment of their conversion, and he combated the project so successfully, that it was abandoned.[13] At the same time, he preserved the strictest discipline on the part of his troops, and took every imaginable precaution to secure the affections and allay the apprehensions of the inhabitants of the ceded provinces. The good effects of this wise and conciliatory policy were soon apparent. Without firing a shot, the Allies gained greater advantages during the remainder of the campaign, than they could have done by a series of bloody sieges, and the sacrifice of thirty thousand men. Nor was it less advantageous to the English general than to the common cause; for it delivered him, for that season at least, from the thraldom of a council of war, the invariable resource of a weak, and bane of a lofty mind.[14]

The Estates of Brabant, assembled at Brussels, sent injunctions to the governor of Antwerp, Ghent, and all [Pg 666] the other fortresses within their territories, to declare for Charles III., and admit these troops. The effects of this, coupled with the discipline preserved by the Allied troops, and the protection from contributions, was incredible. No sooner were the orders from the States at Brussels received at Antwerp, than a schism broke out between the French regiments in the garrison and the Walloon guards, the latter declaring for Charles III. The approach of Marlborough's army, and the intelligence of the submission of the other cities of Brabant, brought matters to a crisis; and after some altercation, it was agreed that the French troops should march out with the honours of war, and be escorted to Bouchain, within the frontier of their own country. On the 6th June this magnificent fortress, which it had cost the Prince of Parma so vast an expenditure of blood and treasure to reduce, and which Napoleon said was itself worth a kingdom, was gained without firing a shot. Oudenarde, which had been in vain besieged in the last war by William III. at the head of sixty thousand men, at the same time followed the example; and Ghent and Bruges opened their gates. Flanders, bristling with fortresses, and the possession of which in the early part of the war had been of such signal service to the French, was, with the exception of Ostend, Dunkirk, and two or three smaller places, entirely gained by the consternation produced by a single battle. Well might Marlborough say, "the consequences of our victory are almost incredible. A whole country, with so many strong places, delivered up without the least resistance, shows, not only the great loss they must have sustained, but likewise the terror and consternation they are in."[15]

At this period, Marlborough hoped the war would be speedily brought to a close, and that a glorious peace would reward his own and his country's efforts. His thoughts reverted constantly, as his private correspondence shows, to home, quiet, and domestic happiness. To the Duchess he wrote at this period —"You are very kind in desiring I would not expose myself. Be assured, I love you so well, and am so desirous of ending my days quietly with you, that I shall not venture myself but when it is absolutely necessary; and I am sure you are so kind to me, and wish so well to the common cause, that you had rather see me dead than not do my duty. I am persuaded that this campaign will bring in a good peace; and I beg

of you to do all that you can, that the house of Woodstock may be carried up as much as possible, that I may have the prospect of living in it."[16]—But these anticipations were not destined to be realized; and before he retired into the vale of years, the hero was destined to drain to the dregs the cup of envy, jealousy, and ingratitude.

His first step of importance, after consolidating the important conquests he had made, and averting the cupidity of the Dutch, which, by levying contributions on their inhabitants, threatened to endanger them before they were well secured, was to undertake the siege of Ostend, the most considerable place in Flanders, which still held out for the French interest. This place, celebrated for its great strength, and the long siege of three years which it had withstood against the Spanish under Spinola, was expected to make a very protracted resistance; but such was the terror now inspired by Marlborough's name, that it was reduced much sooner than had been anticipated. Every preparation had been made for a protracted resistance. A fleet of nine ships of the line lay off the harbour, and a formidable besieging train was brought up from Antwerp and Brussels. Trenches were opened on the 28th June; the counterscarp was blown in on the 6th July; and the day following, the besieged, after a fruitless sally, capitulated, and the Flemish part of the garrison entered the service of the Allies. The garrison was still five thousand strong, when it surrendered; two ships of the line were taken in the harbour; and the total loss of the besiegers was only five hundred men. [Pg 667]

Menin was next besieged, but it made a more protracted resistance. Its great strength was derived from the means which the governor of the fortress possessed of flooding at will the immense low plains in which it is situated. Its fortifications had always been considered as one of the masterpieces of Vauban; the garrison was ample; and the governor a man of resolution, who was encouraged to make a vigorous resistance, by the assurances of succour which he had received from the French government. In effect, Louis XIV. had made the greatest efforts to repair the consequences of the disaster at Ramilies. Marshal Marsin had been detached from the Rhine with eighteen battalions and fourteen squadrons; and, in addition to that, thirty battalions and forty squadrons were marching from Alsace. These great reinforcements, with the addition of nine battalions which were in the lines on the Dyle when the battle of Ramilies was fought, would, when all assembled, have raised the French army to one hundred and ten battalions, and one hundred and forty squadrons—or above one hundred thousand men; whereas Marlborough, after employing thirty-two battalions in the siege, could only spare for the covering army about seventy-two battalions and eighty squadrons. The numerical superiority, therefore, was very great on the side of the enemy, especially when the Allies were divided by the necessity of carrying on the siege; and Villeroi, who had lost the confidence of his men, had been replaced by the Duke de Vendôme, one of the best generals in the French service, illustrated by his recent victory over the Imperialists in Italy. He loudly gave out that he would raise the siege, and approached the covering army closely, as if with that design. But Marlborough persevered in his design; for, to use his own words, "The Elector of Bavaria says, he is promised a hundred and ten battalions, and they are certainly stronger in horse than we. But even if they had greater numbers, I neither think it is their interest nor their inclination to venture a battle; for our men are in heart, and theirs are cowed."[17]

Considerable difficulties were experienced in the first instance in getting up the siege equipage, in consequence of the inundations which were let loose; but a drought having set in, when the blockade began, in the beginning of August, these obstacles were erelong overcome, and on the 9th August the besiegers' fire began, while Marlborough took post at Helchin to cover the siege. On the 18th, the fire of the breaching batteries had been so effectual, that it was deemed practicable to make an assault on the covered way. As a determined resistance was anticipated, the Duke repaired to the spot to superintend the attack. At seven in the evening, the signal was given by the explosion of two mines, and the troops, the English in front, rushed to the assault. They soon cut down the palisades, and, throwing their grenades before them, erelong got into the covered way; but there they were exposed to a dreadful fire from two ravelins which enfiladed it. For two hours they bore it without flinching, labouring hard to erect barricades, so as to get under cover; which was at length done, but not before fourteen hundred of the brave assailants had been struck down. This success, though thus dearly purchased, was however decisive. The establishment of the besiegers in this important lodgement, in the heart as it were of their works, so distressed the enemy, that on the 22d they hoisted the white flag, and capitulated, still 4300 strong, on the following day. The reduction of this strong and celebrated fortress gave the most unbounded satisfaction to the Allies, as it not only materially strengthened the barrier against France; but having taken place in presence of the Duke de Vendôme and his powerful army, drawn together with such diligence to raise the siege, it afforded the strongest proof of the superiority they had now acquired over their enemy in the field.[18]

Upon the fall of Menin, Vendôme collected his troops, and occupied a position behind the Lys and the Dyle, in order to cover Lille, against which he supposed the intentions of Marlborough were directed. But he had another object in view, and immediately sat down before Dendermonde, still keeping post with his covering army at Helchin, which barred the access to that fortress. Being situated on the banks of the Scheldt, it was so completely within the power of the governor to hinder the approaches of the besiegers, by letting out the waters, that the King of France said, on hearing they had commenced its siege—"They must have an army of ducks to take it." An extraordinary drought at this period, however, which lasted seven weeks, had so lowered the Scheldt and canals, that the approaches were pushed with great celerity, and on the 5th September the garrison surrendered at discretion. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin on this occasion—"The taking of Dendermonde, making the garrison prisoners of war, was more than could have been expected; but I saw they were in a consternation. That place could never have been taken but by the hand of God, which gave us seven weeks without rain. The rain began the day after we had taken possession, and continued without intermission for the three next days."[19] [Pg 668]

Ath was the next object of attack. This small but strong fortress is of great importance, as lying on the

direct road from Mons to Brussels by Halle; and, in consequence of that circumstance, it was rendered a fortress of the first order, when the barrier of strongholds, insanely demolished by Joseph II. before the war of the Revolution, was restored by the Allies, under the direction of Wellington, after its termination. Marlborough entrusted the direction of the attack to Overkirk, while he himself occupied, with the covering army, the position of Leuze. Vendôme's army was so much discouraged that he did not venture to disturb the operations; but retiring behind the Scheldt, between Condé and Montagne, contented himself with throwing strong garrisons into Mons and Charleroi, which he apprehended would be the next object of attack. The operations of the besiegers against Ath were pushed with great vigour; and on the 4th October the garrison, eight hundred strong, all that remained out of two thousand who manned the works when the siege began, surrendered prisoners of war. Marlborough was very urgent after this success to undertake the siege of Mons, which would have completed the conquest of Brabant and Flanders; but he could not persuade the Dutch authorities to furnish him with the requisite stores to undertake it.[20] After a parade of his army in the open field near Cambron, in the hope of drawing Vendôme, who boasted of having one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons at his command, to a battle, in which he was disappointed, he resigned the command to Overkirk, put the army into winter quarters, and hastened to Brussels, to commence his arduous duties of stilling the jealousies and holding together the discordant powers of the alliance.[21]

Marlborough was received in the most splendid manner, and with unbounded demonstrations of joy, at Brussels, not only by the inconstant populace, but by the deputies of the Three Estates of Brabant, which [Pg 669] were there assembled in regular and permanent sovereignty. Well might they lavish their demonstrations of respect and gratitude on the English general; for never in modern times had more important or glorious events signalized a successful campaign. In five months the power of France had been so completely broken, and the towering temper of its inhabitants so lowered, that their best general, at the head of above a hundred thousand men, did not venture to measure swords with the Allies, not more than two-thirds of their numerical strength in the field. By the effects of a single victory, the whole of Brabant and Flanders, studded with the strongest fortresses in Europe, each of which, in former wars, had required months—some, years—for their reduction, had been gained to the Allied arms. Between those taken on the field of Ramilies, and subsequently in the besieged fortresses, above twenty thousand men had been made prisoners, and twice that number lost to the enemy by the sword, sickness, and desertion; and France now made head against the Allies in Flanders only by drawing together their forces from all other quarters, and starving the war in Italy and on the Rhine, as well as straining every nerve in the interior. This state of almost frenzied exertion could not last. Already the effects of Marlborough's triumph at the commencement of the campaign had appeared, in the total defeat of the French in their lines before Turin, by Prince Eugene, on the 18th September, and their expulsion from Italy. It was the reinforcements procured for him, and withheld from his opponents, by Marlborough, which obtained for him this glorious victory, at which the English general, with the generosity of true greatness, rejoiced even more sincerely than he had done in any triumphs of his own;[22] while Eugene, with equal greatness of mind, was the first to ascribe his success mainly to the succours sent him by the Duke of Marlborough.[23]

But all men are not Marlboroughs or Eugenes: the really great alone can witness success without envy, or achieve it without selfishness. In the base herd of ignoble men who profited by the efforts of these great leaders, the malignant passions were rapidly gaining strength by the very magnitude of their triumphs. The removal of danger was producing its usual effect, among the Allies, of reviving jealousy. Conquest was spreading its invariable discord in the cupidity to share its fruits. These divisions had early appeared after the battle of Ramilies, when the Emperor Joseph, as a natural mark of gratitude to the general who had delivered his people from their oppressors, as well as from a regard to his own interests, appointed Marlborough to the general command as viceroy of the Netherlands. The English general was highly gratified by this mark of confidence and gratitude; and the appointment was cordially approved of by Queen Anne and the English cabinet, who without hesitation authorized Marlborough to accept the proffered dignity. But the Dutch, who had already begun to conceive projects of ambition by an accession of territory to themselves on the side of Flanders, evinced such umbrage at this appointment, as tending to throw the administration of the Netherlands entirely into the hands of the English and Austrians, that Marlborough had the magnanimity to solicit permission to decline an honour which threatened to breed [Pg 670] disunion in the alliance.[24] This conduct was as disinterested as it was patriotic; for the appointments of the government, thus declined from a desire for the public good, were no less than sixty thousand pounds a-year.

Although, however, Marlborough thus renounced this splendid appointment, yet the court of Vienna were not equally tractable, and evinced the utmost jealousy at the no longer disguised desire of the Dutch to gain an accession of territory, and the barrier of which they were so passionately desirous, at the expense of the Austrian Netherlands. The project also got wind, and the inhabitants of Brabant, whom difference of religion and old-established national rivalry had long alienated from the Dutch, were so much alarmed at the prospect of being transferred to their hated neighbours, that it at once cooled their ardour in the cause of the alliance, and went far to sow the seeds of irrepressible dissension among them. The Emperor, therefore, again pressed the appointment on Marlborough; but from the same lofty motives he continued to decline, professing a willingness, at the same time, to give the Emperor every aid privately in the new government which was in his power; so that the Emperor was obliged to give a reluctant consent. Notwithstanding this refusal, the jealousy of the Dutch was such, that on the revival of a report that the government had been again confirmed to the Duke of Marlborough, they were thrown into such a ferment, that in the public congress the Pensionary could not avoid exclaiming in the presence of the English ambassador, "Mon Dieu! est-il possible qu'on voudrait faire ce pas sans notre participation?"[25]

The French government were soon informed of this jealousy, and of the open desire of the Dutch for an accession of territory on the side of Flanders, at the expense of Austria; and they took advantage of it,

early in the summer of 1706, to open a secret negotiation with the States-general for the conclusion of a separate peace with that republic. The basis of this accommodation was to be a renunciation by the Duke of Anjou of his claim to the crown of Spain, upon receiving an equivalent in Italy: he offered to recognize Anne as Queen of England, and professed the utmost readiness to secure for the Dutch, *at the expense of Austria*, that barrier in the Netherlands, to which he conceived them to be so well entitled. These proposals elated the Dutch government to such a degree, that they began to take a high hand, and assume a dictatorial tone at the Hague: and it was the secret belief that they would, if matters came to extremities, be supported by France in this exorbitant demand for a slice of Austria, that made them resist so strenuously the government of the Low Countries being placed in such firm and vigorous hands as those of Marlborough. Matters had come to such a pass in October and November 1706, that Godolphin regarded affairs as desperate, and thought the alliance was on the point of being dissolved.[26] Thus was [Pg 671] Marlborough's usual winter campaign with the confederates rendered more difficult on this than it had been on any preceding occasion; for he had now to contend with the consequences of his own success, and allay the jealousies and stifle the cupidity which had sprung up, out of the prospect of the magnificent spoil which he himself had laid at the feet of the Allies.

But in this dangerous crisis, Marlborough's great diplomatic ability, consummate address, and thorough devotion to the common good, stood him in as good stead as his military talents had done him in the preceding campaign with Villeroi and Vendôme. In the beginning of November, he repaired to the Hague, and though he found the Dutch in the first instance so extravagant in their ideas of the barrier they were to obtain, that he despaired of effecting any settlement of the differences between them and the Emperor; [27] yet he at length succeeded, though with very great difficulty, in appeasing, for the time, the jealousies between them and the cabinet of Vienna, and obtaining a public renewal of the alliance for the prosecution of the war. The publication of this treaty diffused the utmost satisfaction among the ministers of the Allied powers assembled at the Hague; and this was further increased by the breaking off, at the same time, of a negotiation which had pended for some months between Marlborough and the Elector of Bavaria, for a separate treaty with that prince, who had become disgusted with the French alliance. But all Marlborough's efforts failed to make any adjustment of the disputed matter of the barrier, on which the Dutch were so obstinately set; and finding them equally unreasonable and intractable on that subject, he deemed himself fortunate when he obtained the adjourning of the question, by the consent of all concerned, till the conclusion of a general peace.

After the adjustment of this delicate and perilous negotiation, Marlborough returned to England, where he was received with transports of exultation by all classes of the people. He was conducted in one of the royal carriages, amidst a splendid procession of all the nobility of the kingdom, to Temple Bar, where he was received by the city authorities, by whom he was feasted in the most magnificent manner at Vintners' Hall. Thanks were voted to him by both Houses of Parliament; and when he took his seat in the House of Peers, the Lord Keeper addressed him in these just and appropriate terms—"What your Grace has performed in this last campaign has far exceeded all hopes, even of such as were most affectionate and partial to their country's interest and glory. The advantages you have gained against the enemy are of such a nature, so conspicuous in themselves, so undoubtedly owing to your courage and conduct, so sensibly and universally beneficial to the whole confederacy, that to attempt to adorn them with the colouring of words would be vain and inexcusable. Therefore I decline it, the rather because I should certainly offend that great modesty which alone can and does add lustre to your actions, and which in your Grace's example has successfully withstood as great trials, as that virtue has met with in any instance whatsoever." The House of Commons passed a similar resolution; and the better to testify the national [Pg 672] gratitude, an annuity of £5000 a-year, charged upon the Post-Office, was settled upon the Duke and Duchess, and their descendants male or female; and the dukedom, which stood limited to heirs-male, was extended also to heirs-female, "in order," as it was finely expressed, "that England might never be without a title which might recall the remembrance of so much glory."

So much glory, however, produced its usual effect in engendering jealousy in little minds. The Whigs had grown spiteful against that illustrious pillar of their party; they were tired of hearing him called the just. Both Godolphin and Marlborough became the objects of excessive jealousy to their own party; and this, combined with the rancour of the Tories, who could never forgive his desertion of his early patron the Duke of York, had well-nigh proved fatal to him when at the very zenith of his usefulness and popularity. Intrigue was rife at St James's. Parties were strangely intermixed and disjointed. Some of the moderate Tories were in power; many covetous Whigs were out of it. Neither party stood on great public principle, a sure sign of instability in the national councils, and ultimate neglect of the national interests. Harley's intrigues had become serious; the prime minister, Godolphin, had threatened to resign. In this alarming juncture of domestic affairs, the presence of Marlborough produced its usual pacifying and benign influence. In a long interview which he had with the Queen on his first private audience, he settled all differences; Godolphin was persuaded to withdraw his resignation; the cabinet was re-constructed on a new and harmonious basis, Harley and Bolingbroke being the only Tories of any note who remained in power; and this new peril to the prosecution of the war, and the cause of European independence, was removed.

Marlborough's services to England and the cause of European independence in this campaign, recall one mournful feeling to the British annalist. All that he had won for his country—all that Wellington, with still greater difficulty, and amidst yet brighter glories, regained for it, has been lost. It has been lost, too, not by the enemies of the nation, but by itself; not by an opposite faction, but by the very party over whom his own great exploits had shed such imperishable lustre. Antwerp, the first-fruits of Ramilies—Antwerp, the last reward of Waterloo—Antwerp, to hold which against England Napoleon lost his crown, has been abandoned to France! An English fleet has combined with a French army to wrest from Holland the barrier of Dutch independence, and the key to the Low Countries. The barrier so passionately sought by the Dutch has been wrested from them, and wrested from them by British hands; a revolutionary power has been

placed on the throne of Belgium; Flanders, instead of the outwork of Europe against France, has become the outwork of France against Europe. The tricolor flag waves in sight of Bergen-op-Zoom; within a month after the first European war, the whole coast from Bayonne to the Texel will be arrayed against Britain! The Whigs of 1832 have undone all that the Whigs of 1706 had done—all that the glories of 1815 had secured. Such is the way in which nations are ruined by the blindness of faction.

FOOTNOTES.

[1] Continued from No. I., in July 1845, Vol. lviii. p. 1.

[2] "C'est le retard de toutes les troupes Allemandes qui dérange nos affaires. Je ne saurais vous expliquer la situation où nous sommes qu'en vous envoyant les deux lettres ci jointes,—l'une que je viens de recevoir du Prince de Bade, et l'autre la réponse que je lui fais. En vérité notre état est plus à plaindre que vous ne croyez; mais je vous prie que cela n'aille pas outre. *Nous perdons la plus belle occasion du monde—manque des troupes qui devaient être ici il y a deja longtemps*. Pour le reste de l'artillerie Hollandaise, et les provisions qui peuvent arriver de Mayence, vous les arrêterez, s'il vous plait, pour quelques jours, jusqu'à ce que je vous en écrive."—*Marlborough à M. Pesters; Trêves, 31 Mai 1705. Despatches*, II. 60-1.

[3] Even so late as the 8th June, Marlborough wrote.—"J'ai d'abord pris poste dans ce camp, où je me trouve à portée d'entreprendre la siège de Saar-Louis, si les troupes qui devaient avoir été ici il y a quelques jours m'avaient joint. Cependant je n'ai pas jusqu'ici un seul homme qui ne soit à la solde d'Angleterre ou de la Hollande. Les troupes de Bade ne peuvent arriver avant le 21 au plutôt; quelques-uns des Prussiens sont encore plus en arrière; et pour les trois mille chevaux que les princes voisins devaient nous fournir pour méner l'artillerie et les munitions, et sans quoi il nous sera impossible d'agir, je n'en ai aucune nouvelle, nonobstant toutes mes instances. J'ai grand peur même qu'il n'y ait, à l'heure même que je vous écris celle-ci, des regulations en chemin de la Haye qui détruiront entièrement tous nos projets de ce côté. Cette situation me donne tant d'inquiétude que je ne saurais me dispenser de vous prier d'en vouloir part à sa Majesté Impériale."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wroteslau; Elft, 8 Juin 1705. Despatches*, II. 85.

[4] "Par ces contretemps tous nos projets de ce côté-ci sont évanouis, au moins pour le present; et j'espère que V.A. me fera la justice de croire que j'ai fait tout ce qui a dependu de moi pour les faire réussir. Si je pouvais avoir l'honneur d'entretenir V.A. pour une seule heure, je lui dirai bien des choses, par où elle verrait combien je suis à plaindre. J'avais 94 escadrons et 72 bataillons, tous à la solde de l'Angleterre et de la Hollande; de sorte que, si l'on m'avait secondé nous aurions une des plus glorieuses campagnes qu'on pouvait souhaiter. Après un tel traitment, V.A., je suis sûr, ne m'aurait pas blâmé si j'avais pris la résolution *de ne jamais plus servir*, comme je ne ferai pas aussi, je vous assure, après cette campagne, à moins que de pouvoir prendre des mésures avec l'empereur sur lesquelles je pourrais entièrement me fier."—*Marlborough à Eugène, 21 Juin 1705. Despatches*, II. 124.

[5] "It is a justice I owe to the Duke of Marlborough to state, that the whole honour of the enterprise, executed with so much skill and courage, is entirely due to him."—*Overkirk to States-general, 19th July 1705. Coxe*, II. 151.

[6] "On Wednesday, it was unanimously resolved we should pass the Dyle, but that afternoon there fell so much rain as rendered it impracticable; but the fair weather this morning made me determine to attempt it. Upon this the deputies held a council with all the generals of Overkirk's army, who have unanimously retracted their opinions, and declared the passage of the river too dangerous, which resolution, in my opinion, *will ruin the whole campaign*. They have, at the same time, proposed to me to attack the French on their left; but I know they will let that fall also, as soon as they see the ground. It is very mortifying to meet more obstruction from friends than from enemies; but that is now the case with me; yet I dare not show my resentment for fear of alarming the Dutch."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, 29th July 1705. Coxe*, II. 158.

[7] Bolingbroke to Marlborough, August 18, 1705. *Coxe*, II. 160.

[8] Marlborough to the States, Wavre, 19th August 1705. *Desp*. II. 224.

[9] Dutch Generals' Mem. *Coxe*, II. 174.

[10] "Several prisoners whom we have taken, as well as the deserters, assure us, that they should have made no other defence but such as might have given them time to draw off their army to Brussels, where their baggage was already gone. By this you may imagine how I am vexed, seeing very plainly I am joined with people who will never do any thing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, August 24 1705*.

"M. Overkirk et moi avons d'abord été reconnaitre les postes que nous voulions attaquer, et l'armée étant rangée en bataille sur le midi, nous avions tout d'esperer, avec la benediction du ciel, vu notre supériorité, et la bonté des troupes, une heuruse journée; mais MM. les deputés de l'état ayant voulu consulter leurs généraux, et les trouvant de differentes sentiments d'avec M. Overkirk et moi, ils n'ont pas voulu passer outre. De sorte que tout notre dessein, après l'avoir méné jusque là, a échoué, et nous avons rebroussé chemin pour aller commencer la démolition des Lignes, et prendre Leau. Vous pouvez bien croire, Monsieur, que je suis au désespoir d'être obligé d'essuyer encore ce contretemps; mais je vois bien qu'il ne faut pas plus songer à agir offensivement avec ces messieurs, puisqu' ils ne veulent rien risquer quand même ils ont tout l'advantage de leur côté."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wartenberg, Wavre, 20 Août 1705. Despatches*, II. 226.

[11] "This vast addition of renown which your Grace has acquired, and the wonderful preservation of your life, are subjects upon which I can never express a thousandth part of what I feel. *France and faction are the only enemies England has to fear*, and your Grace will conquer both; at least, while you beat the French, you give a strength to the Government which the other dares not contend with."—*Bolingbroke to Marlborough, May 28, 1706. Coxe*, II. 358.

[12] "I shall attend the Queen at the thanksgiving on Thursday next: I assure you I shall do it,

from every vein within me, having scarce any thing else to support either my head or heart. The *animosity and inveteracy one has to struggle against is unimaginable*, not to mention the difficulty of obtaining things to be done that are reasonable, or of satisfying people with reason when they are done."—*Godolphin to Marlborough, May 24, 1706.*

[13] Duke of Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley, June 14, 1706.

[14] "The consequences of this battle are likely to be greater than that of Blenheim; for we have now the whole summer before us, and, with the blessing of God, I will make the best use of it. *For as I have had no council of war before this battle, so I hope to have none during the whole campaign;* and I think we may make such work of it as may give the Queen the glory of making a safe and honourable peace, for the blessing of God is certainly with us."—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin, May 27, 1706. Coxe, II. 365.*

[15] Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley, 3d June 1706. *Desp. II.* 554.

[16] Marlborough to Duchess of Marlborough, May 31, 1706.

[17] Marlborough to Secretary Harley, Helchin, 9th August 1706. *Desp*. III. 69.

[18] Marlborough to Duke of Savoy, Helchin, 25th August 1706. *Desp*. III. 101.

[19] Marlborough to Godolphin, September 4, 1706. *Coxe*, III. 10.

[20] "If the Dutch can furnish ammunition for the siege of Mons, we shall undertake it; for if the weather continues fair, we shall have it much cheaper this year than the next, when they have had time to recruit their army. The taking of that town would be a very great advantage to us for the opening of next campaign, which we must make if we would bring France to such a peace as will give us quiet hereafter."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, October 14, 1706. Coxe*, III. 14.

[21] "M. de Vendôme tells his officers he has one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons, and that, if my Lord Marlborough gives him an opportunity, he will pay him a visit before this campaign ends. I believe he has neither will nor power to do it, which we shall see quickly, for we are now camped in so open a country that if he marches to us we cannot refuse fighting."—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin, October 14, 1706. Ibid.*

[22] "I have now received confirmation of the success in Italy, from the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene, and it is impossible for me to express the joy it has given me; *for I not only esteem, but really love, that Prince*. This glorious action must bring France so low, that if our friends can be persuaded to carry on the war one year longer with vigour, we could not fail, with God's blessing, to have such a peace as would give us quiet in our days. But the Dutch are at this time unaccountable."—*Marlborough to the Duchess, Sept. 26, 1706. Coxe*, III. 20, 21.

[23] "Your highness, I am sure, will rejoice at the signal advantage which the arms of his Imperial Majesty and the Allies have gained. *You have had so great a hand in it, by the succours you have procured*, that you must permit me to thank you again."—*Eugene to Marlborough, 20th Sept. 1706. Coxe*, III. 20.

[24] "This appointment by the Emperor has given some uneasiness in Holland, by thinking that the Emperor has a mind to put the power in this country into the Queen's hands, in order that they may have nothing to do with it. If I should find the same thing by the Pensionary, and that nothing can cure this jealousy but my desiring to be excused from accepting this commission, I hope the Queen will allow of it; for the advantage and honour I have by this commission is *very insignificant in comparison of the fatal consequences that might be if it should cause a jealousy between the two nations*. And though the appointments of this government are sixty thousand pounds a-year, I shall with pleasure excuse myself, since I am convinced it is for her service, if the States should not make it their request, which they are very far from doing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, July 1 and 8, 1706. Coxe*, III. 391, 393.

[25] Mr Stepney to Duke of Marlborough, *Hague, Jan. 4, 1707. Coxe*, II. 407.

[26] "Lord Somers has shown me a long letter which he has had from the Pensionary, very intent *upon settling the barrier*. The inclinations of the Dutch are so violent and plain, that I am of opinion nothing will be able to prevent their taking effect but our being as plain with them upon the same subject, and threatening to publish to the whole world the terms for which they solicit."—*Lord Godolphin to Marlborough*, Oct. 24, 1706. Coxe, III. 74.

[27] "My inclinations will lead me to stay as little as possible at the Hague, though the Pensionary tells me I must stay to finish the succession treaty and their barrier, which, should I stay the whole winter, I am very confident would not be brought to perfection. For they are of so many minds, and are all so very extravagant about their barrier, that I despair of doing any thing good till they are more reasonable, which they will not be till they see that they have it not in their power to dispose of the whole Low Countries at their will and pleasure, in which the French flatter them."-*Marlborough to Godolphin, Oct. 29, 1706. Coxe*, III. 79.

THE STUDENT OF SALAMANCA.

[Pg 673]

PART II.

"Por estas montañas,
Facciosos siguiendo,
Vamos defendiendo
La Constitucion."

Himno de Navarra.

Rarely had the alameda of the picturesque old town of Logroño presented a gayer or more brilliant

appearance than on a certain July evening of the year 1834. The day had been sultry in the extreme, and the sun was touching the horizon before the fair Riojanas ventured to quit their artificially darkened rooms, and the cool shelter of their well-screened *miradores*, for the customary promenade. It was pleasant, certainly, in those sombre apartments, and beneath those thick awnings, which excluded each ray of sun, although they did not prevent what little breeze there was from circulating freely between the heavy stone balustrades or quaintly moulded iron-work of the spacious balconies, rustling the leaves and blossoms of the orange-trees, and wafting their fragrance to the languid beauties who sat dozing, chatting, or love-making within. But if the *farniente* and languor induced by the almost tropical heat, were so agreeable as to tempt to their longer indulgence, on the other hand the *paseo*, that indispensable termination to a Spaniard's day, had, upon the evening in question, peculiar attractions for the inhabitants of Logroño, and especially for their fairer portion. Within the preceding three days, a body of troops, in number nearly twenty thousand men, a large portion of them the pick and flower of the Spanish army, had been concentrated at Logroño, whence, under the command of Rodil—a general of high reputation—they were to advance into Navarre, and exterminate the daring rebels, who, for some months past, had disturbed the peace of Spain. All had been noise and movement in the town during those three days; every stable full of horses, every house crowded with soldiers; artillery and baggage-waggons encumbering the squares and suburbs; the streets resounding with the harsh clang of trumpets and monotonous beat of drums; muleteers loading and unloading their beasts; commissaries bustling about for rations; beplumed and embroidered staff-officers galloping to and fro with orders; the clash of arms and tramp of horses in the barrack-yards; the clatter of wine-cups, joyous song, and merry tinkle of the guitar, from the various wine-houses in which the light-hearted soldiery were snatching a moment of enjoyment in the intervals of duty;—such were a few of the sights and sounds which for the time animated and gave importance to the usually quiet town of Logroño. Towards evening, the throng and bustle within the town diminished, and were transferred to the pleasant walks around it, and especially to the shady and flower-bordered avenues of the alameda. Thither repaired the proud and graceful beauties of Castile and Navarre, their raven locks but partially veiled by the fascinating mantilla, their dark and lustrous eyes flashing coquettish glances upon the gay officers who accompanied or hovered around them. Every variety of uniform was there to be seen; all was blaze, and glitter, and brilliancy; the smart trappings of these fresh troops had not yet been tattered and tarnished amidst the hardships of mountain warfare. The showy hussar, the elegant lancer, the helmeted dragoon, aides-de-camp with their cocked-hats and blue sashes, crossed and mingled in the crowd that filled the alameda, at either end of which a band of music was playing the beautiful and spirit-stirring national airs of Spain. On the one hand arose the dingy masses of the houses of Logroño, speckled with the lights that issued from their open casements, their outline distinctly defined against the rapidly darkening sky; on the other side was a wide extent of corn-field, intersected and varied by rows and clusters of trees, amongst the branches of which, and over the waving surface of the corn, innumerable fire-flies darted and sparkled. Here, a group of soldiers and country girls danced a bolero to the music of a guitar and tambourine; there, another party was collected round an Andalusian ballad-singer, of whose patriotic ditties "*la Libertad*" and "*la inocente Isabel*" were the usual themes. In a third place, a few inveterate gamblers—as what Spanish soldiers are not?—had stretched themselves upon the grass in a circle, and by the flickering light of a broken lantern, or of a candle stuck in the earth, were playing a game at cards for their day's pay, or for any thing else they might chance to possess. On all sides, ragged, bare-footed boys ran about, carrying pieces of lighted rope in their hands, the end of which they occasionally dashed against the ground, causing a shower of sparks to fly out, whilst they recommended themselves to the custom of the cigar-smokers by loud cries of "*Fuego! Buen fuego! Quien quiere fuego?*"

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At few of the young officers, who, on the evening referred to, paraded the alameda of Logroño, was the artillery of eyes and fan more frequently levelled by the love-breathing beauties there assembled, than at Luis Herrera, who, in the uniform of the cavalry regiment to which he now belonged, was present upon the paseo. But for him fans waved and bright eyes sparkled in vain. He was deeply engaged in conversation with Mariano Torres, who, having recently obtained a commission in the same corps with his friend, had arrived that evening to join it. The two young men had parted soon after the death of Don Manuel Herrera, and had not met since. One of Mariano's first questions concerned the Villabuenas.

"The count went to France some months ago, I believe," replied Luis, dryly.

"Yes," said Torres, "so I heard, and took his daughter with him. But I thought it probable that he might have returned in the train of his self-styled sovereign. He is capable of any folly, I should imagine, since he was mad enough to sacrifice his fine fortune and position in the country by joining in this absurd rebellion. You of course know that he has been declared a traitor, and that his estates have been confiscated?"

Luis nodded assent.

"Well, in some respects the count's losses may prove a gain to you," continued Torres, pursuing the train of his own thoughts, and not observing that the subject he had started was a painful one to his friend. "When we have put an end to the war, in a month or two at furthest, you can go to France, and obtain his consent to your marriage with his daughter. In the present state of his fortunes he will hardly refuse it; and you may then return to Spain, and make interest for your father-in-law's pardon."

"I am by no means certain," said Herrera, "that the war will be over so soon as you imagine. But you will oblige me, Mariano, by not speaking of this again. My engagement with Rita is long at an end, and not likely ever to be renewed. It was a dream, a vision of happiness not destined to be realized, and I endeavour to forget it. I myself put an end to it; and not under present circumstances, perhaps under none, should I think myself justified in seeking its renewal. Let us talk of something else—of the future if you will, but not of the past."

The hours passed by Luis beside Don Manuel's death-bed, had witnessed a violent revolution in his feelings and character. Devotedly attached to his father, who had been the sole friend, almost the only

companion, of his boyhood, the fiercer passions of Herrera's nature were awakened into sudden and violent action by his untimely fate. A burning desire of revenge on the unscrupulous faction to which the persecution, exile, and cruel death of Don Manuel were to be attributed, took possession of him; and in order to gratify this desire, and at the same time to fulfil the solemn pledge he had given to his dying parent, he felt himself at the moment capable of sacrificing even his love for Rita. No sooner was the mournful ceremony of the interment over, than he wrote to Villabuena, informing him, in a few stern words, how those who professed like him to be the defenders of religion and legitimacy, had enacted the [Pg 675] part of assassins and incendiaries, and shed his father's blood upon his own threshold. This communication he considered to be, without further comment, a sufficient reply to the proposition made to him by the count a few days previously. At the same time—and this was by far the most difficult part of his self-imposed task—he addressed a letter to Rita, releasing her from her engagement. He felt, he told her, that, by so doing, he renounced all his fondest hopes; but were he to act otherwise, and at once violate his oath, and forego his revenge, he should despise himself, and deserve her contempt. He implored her to forget their ill-fated attachment, for his own misery would be endurable only when he knew that he had not compromised her happiness.

Scarcely had he dispatched these letters, written under a state of excitement almost amounting to frenzy, when Herrera, in pursuance of a previously formed plan, and as if to stifle the regrets which a forced and painful determination occasioned him, hastened to join as a volunteer the nearest Christino column. It was one commanded by General Lorenzo, then operating against Santos Ladron and the Navarrese Carlists. In several skirmishes Herrera signalized himself by the intrepidity and fury with which he fought. Ladron was taken and shot, and Lorenzo marched to form the advanced guard of a strong division which, under the command of Sarsfield, was rapidly nearing the scene of the insurrection. On the mere approach of the Christino army, the battalions of Castilian Realistas, which formed, numerically speaking, an important part of the forces then under arms for Don Carlos, disbanded themselves and fled to their homes. Sarsfield continued his movement northwards, took possession, after trifling resistance, of Logroño, Vittoria, Bilboa, and other towns occupied by the Carlists; and, after a few insignificant skirmishes, succeeded in dispersing and disarming the whole of the insurgents in the three Basque provinces. A handful of badly armed and undisciplined Navarrese peasants were all that now kept the field for Charles V., and of the rapid capture or destruction of these, the sanguine Christinos entertained no doubt. The principal strength of the Carlists was broken; their arms were taken away; the majority of the officers who had joined, and of the men of note and influence in the country who had declared for them, had been compelled to cross the Pyrenees. But the tenacious courage and hardihood of the Navarrese insurgents, and the military skill of the man who commanded them, baffled the unceasing pursuit kept up by the Queen's generals. During the whole of the winter the Carlists lived like wolves in the mountains, surrounded by ice and snow, cheerfully supporting the most incredible hardships and privations. Nay, even under such disadvantageous circumstances, their numbers increased, and their discipline improved; and when the spring came they presented the appearance, not of a band of robbers, as their opponents had hitherto designated them, but of a body of regular troops, hardy and well organized, devoted to their general, and enthusiastic for the cause they defended. Their rapid movements, their bravery and success in several well-contested skirmishes, some of which almost deserved the name of regular actions, the surprise of various Christino posts and convoys, the consistency, in short, which the war was taking, began seriously to alarm the Queen's government; and the formidable preparations made by the latter for a campaign against the Carlists, were a tacit acknowledgment that Spain was in a state of civil war.

In the wild and beautiful valley of the Lower Amezcoa, in the *merindad* or district of Estella, a large body of Christino troops was assembled on the fifteenth day after Rodil's entrance into Navarre. The numerous forces which that general found under his command, after uniting the troops he had brought with him with those already in the province, had enabled him to adopt a system of occupation, the most effectual, it was believed, for putting an end to the war. In pursuance of this plan, he established military lines of communication between the different towns of Navarre and Alava, garrisoned and fortified the principal [Pg 676] villages, and having in this manner disseminated a considerable portion of his army through the insurgent districts, he commenced, with a column of ten thousand men that remained at his disposal, a movement through the mountainous regions, to which, upon his approach, the Carlists had retired. His object was the double one of attacking and destroying their army, and, if possible, of seizing the person of Don Carlos, who but a few days previously had arrived in Spain. The heat of the weather was remarkable, even for that usually sultry season; the troops had had a long and fatiguing march over the rugged sierra of Urbasa; and Rodil, either with a view of giving them rest, or with some intention of garrisoning the villages scattered about the valley, which had hitherto been one of the chief haunts of the Carlists, had come to a halt in the Lower Amezcoa.

It was two in the afternoon, and, notwithstanding the presence of so large a body of men, all was stillness and repose in the valley. The troops had arrived that morning, and after taking up their cantonments in the various villages and hamlets, had sought refuge from the overpowering heat. In the houses, the shutters of which were carefully closed to exclude the importunate sunbeams, in the barns and stables, under the shadow cast by balconies or projecting eaves, and along the banks of the stream which traverses the valley, and is noted in the surrounding country for the crystal clearness and extreme coldness of its waters, the soldiers were lying, their uniforms unbuttoned, the stiff leathern stock thrown aside, enjoying the mid-day slumber, which the temperature and their recent fatigue rendered doubly acceptable. Here and there, at a short distance from the villages, and further off, near the different roads and passes that give access to the valley through or over the gigantic mountain-wall by which it is encircled, the sun flashed upon the polished bayonets and musket-barrels of the pickets. The men were lying beside their piled arms, or had crept under some neighbouring bush to indulge in the universal *siesta*; and even the sentries seemed almost to sleep as they paced lazily up and down, or stood leaning upon their muskets, keeping but a drowsy watch and careless look-out for an enemy whose proximity was neither to be

anticipated nor dreaded by a force so superior to any which he could get together.

Such was the scene that presented itself to one who, having approached the valley from the south, and ascended the mountains that bound it on that side, now contemplated from their summit the inactivity of its occupants. He was a man of the middle height, but appearing rather shorter, from a slight stoop in the shoulders; his age was between forty and fifty years, his aspect grave and thoughtful. His features were regular, his eyes clear and penetrating, a strong dark mustache covered his upper lip and joined his whisker, which was allowed to extend but little below the ear. His dress consisted of a plain blue frock, girt at the waist by a belt of black leather, to which a sabre was suspended, and his head was covered with a *boina*, or flat cap, of the description commonly worn in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees, woven in one piece of fine scarlet wool, and decorated with a *borla*, or tassel of gold cord, spreading like a star over the crown of the head. In his hand he held a telescope, which he rested on the top of a fragment of rock, and through which he attentively noted what passed in the valley below. The case of the field-glass was slung across his body by a strap, and, upon inspection, a name would have been found stamped upon its leathern surface. It was that of Tomas Zumalacarregui.

A short distance in rear of the Carlist leader, and so posted as not to be visible from the valley, stood a little group of officers, and persons in civilian garb, and a few orderlies, one of whom held the general's horse. Behind, a battalion of infantry was drawn up—fine, muscular, active fellows, inured to every hardship, and as indifferent to the scorching heat to which they were now exposed, as they had been to the bitter cold in the mountains amongst which they had passed the preceding winter. Their appearance was not very uniform in its details; short jackets, loose trousers, and sandals, composed the dress of most of [Pg 677] them—one well adapted to long marches and active movements—and they all wore caps similar to those of the officers, but of a blue colour, and coarser material. A second battalion of these hardy guerillas was advancing with light and elastic step up the rugged and difficult path; and this was followed by two others, which, as fast as they arrived, were formed up by their officers in the best manner that the uneven nature of the ground would admit. Half a dozen mules, laden with ammunition, brought up the rear. When the four battalions, consisting together of nearly three thousand men, were assembled on the summit of the mountain, the arms were piled, and the soldiers allowed to sit down or repose themselves as they chose from the fatigues of their long and wearisome ascent, and of a march that had lasted from early dawn.

The mountain upon which these troops were now stationed was less precipitous upon its inner side than most of those that surrounded the valley. It shelved gradually downwards, broken here and there by ravines, its partially wooded slopes forming a succession of terraces, which extended right and left for a distance of more than a mile. At the foot of these slopes, and immediately below the spot occupied by the Carlists, a low hill ran off at right angles from the higher range, projecting into the valley as a promontory does into the sea. With the exception of the side furthest from the mountains, which consisted of pasture land, the base and skirts of this hill were covered with oak and chestnut, and upon the clearing on its summit stood a shepherd's hut, whence was commanded a view of a considerable extent of the face of the sierra, as well as of the entrance of a neighbouring pass that led out of the valley in the direction of Estella. At this hut a Christino picket was stationed, to which, when the Carlist chief had completed his general survey of the valley, his attention became more particularly directed. The outpost consisted of about thirty men, little, brown-complexioned, monkey-faced creatures from the southern provinces, who, sunk in fancied security and in the indolence natural to them, were neglecting their duty to an extent which might seriously have compromised the safety of the Christino army, had it depended upon their vigilance. The majority of them were lying asleep in and around the picket-house, which was situated on one side of the platform, within fifty yards of the trees. Of the three sentinels, one had seated himself on a stone, with his musket between his knees, and, having unbuttoned the loose grey coat that hung like a sack about his wizened carcass, was busily engaged in seeking, between his shirt and his skin, for certain companions whom he had perhaps picked up in his quarters of the previous night, and by whose presence about his person he seemed to be but moderately gratified. One of the other two sentries had wandered away from the post assigned to him, and approached his remaining comrade, with the charitable view of dividing with him a small quantity of tobacco, which the two were now deliberately manufacturing into paper cigars, beguiling the time as they did so by sundry guardroom jokes and witticisms.

An almost imperceptible smile of contempt curled the lip of Zumalacarregui as he observed the unmilitary negligence apparent in the advanced post of the Christinos. It was exchanged for a proud and well-pleased glance when he turned round and saw his gallant Navarrese awaiting in eager suspense a signal to advance upon the enemy, whom they knew to be close at hand. Zumalacarregui walked towards the nearest battalion, and on his approach the men darted from their various sitting and reclining postures, and stood ready to seize their muskets, and fall into their places. Their chief nodded his approbation of their alacrity, but intimated to them, by a motion of his hand, that the time for action was not yet come.

"*Paciencia, muchachos!*" said he. "Patience, you will not have long to wait. Refresh yourselves, men, whilst the time is given you. Captain Landa!" cried he, raising his voice.

The officer commanding the light company of the battalion stepped forward, and, halting at a short [Pg 678] distance from his general, stood motionless, with his hand to his cap, awaiting orders.

"Come with me, Landa," said Zumalacarregui; and, taking the officer's arm, he led him to the spot whence he had been observing the valley, and pointed to the Christino picket.

"Take your company," said he, "and fetch me those sleepy fellows here; without firing a shot if it be possible."

The officer returned to his men, and, forming them up with all speed, marched them off at a rapid pace. When they had disappeared amongst the rocks, Zumalacarregui turned to the chief of his staff.

"Colonel Gomez," said he, "take the third and fourth battalions, and move them half a mile to our left,

keeping them well out of sight. We are not strong enough to attack in the plain, but we shall perhaps get our friends to meet us in the mountain."

Gomez—a tall, portly man, of inexpressive countenance, and whose accent, when he spoke, betrayed the Andalusian—proceeded to execute the orders he had received, and Zumalacarregui once more resumed his post of observation.

The carelessness of the Christino picket, and the practice which the Carlists had already had in a warfare of stratagem and surprise, enabled the company of light infantry to execute, with great facility, the instructions they had received. The young ensign who commanded the outpost was walking listlessly along the edge of the wood, cursing the wearisome duty entrusted to him, and referring to his watch to see how far still the hour of relief was off, when he was suddenly struck to the ground by a blow from a musket-butt, and before he could attempt to rise, the point of a bayonet was at his throat. At the same instant three score long-legged Navarrese dashed from under cover of the wood, bayoneted the sentinels, surrounded the picket-house, and made prisoners of the picket. The surprise was complete; not a shot had been fired, and all had passed with so little noise that it appeared probable the *coup-de-main* would only become known to the Christinos when the time arrived for relieving the outposts.

A trifling oversight, however, on the part of the Carlists, caused things to pass differently. A soldier belonging to the picket, and who was sleeping amongst the long grass, just within the wood, had escaped all notice. The noise of the scuffle awoke him; but on perceiving how matters stood, he prudently remained in his hiding-place till the Carlists, having collected the arms and ammunition of their prisoners, began to reascend the mountain. At a distance of three hundred yards he fired at them, and then scampered off in the contrary direction. His bullet took no effect, and the retreating guerillas, seeing how great a start he had, allowed him to escape unpursued. But the report of his musket spread the alarm. The pickets right and left of the one that had been surprised, saw the Carlists winding their way up the mountain; the vedettes fired, and the drums beat to arms. The alarm spread rapidly from one end of the valley to the other, and every part of it was in an instant swarming with men. Dragoons saddled and artillery harnessed; infantry formed up by battalions and brigades; generals and aides-de-camp dashed about hurrying the movements of the troops, and asking the whereabouts of the enemy. This information they soon obtained. No sooner was the alarm given, than Zumalacarregui, relying upon the tried courage of his soldiers, and on the advantage of his position, which must render the enemy's cavalry useless, and greatly diminish the effect of the artillery, put himself at the head of his two battalions, and rapidly descended the mountain, dispatching an officer after Gomez with orders for a similar movement on his part. Before the Carlists reached the plain, the Christinos quartered in the nearest village advanced to meet them, and a smart skirmish began.

Distributed along the clifts and terraces of the mountain, kneeling amongst the bushes and sheltered behind the trees that grew at its base, the Carlists kept up a steady fire, which was warmly replied to by their antagonists. In the most exposed situations, the Carlist officers of all ranks, from the ensign to the general, showed themselves, encouraging their men, urging them to take good aim, and not to fire till they could distinguish the faces of their enemies, themselves sometimes taking up a dead man's musket and sending a few well-directed shots amongst the Christinos. Here a man was seen binding the sash, which forms part of the dress of every Navarrese peasant, over a wound that was not of sufficient importance to send him to the rear; in another place a guerilla replenished his scanty stock of ammunition from the cartridge-belt of a fallen comrade, and sprang forward, to meet perhaps, the next moment, a similar fate. On the side of the Christinos there was less appearance of enthusiasm and ardour for the fight; but their numbers were far superior, and each moment increased, and some light guns and howitzers that had been brought up began to scatter shot and shell amongst the Carlists, although the manner in which the latter were sheltered amongst wood and rock, prevented those missiles from doing them very material injury. The fight was hottest around the hill on which the picket had been stationed, now the most advanced point of the Carlist line. It was held by a battalion, which, dispersed amongst the trees that fringed its sides, opposed a fierce resistance to the assaults of the Christinos. At last the latter, weary of the protracted skirmishing, by which they lost many men, but were unable to obtain any material advantage, sent forward two battalions of the royal guards to take the hill at the point of the bayonet. With their bugles playing a lively march, these troops, the finest infantry in the Spanish army, advanced in admirable order, and without firing a shot, to perform the duty assigned to them. On their approach the Carlists retreated from the sides of the hill, and assembled in the wood on its summit, at the foot of the higher mountains. One battalion of the guards ascended the hill in line, and advanced along the open ground, whilst the other marched round the skirt of the eminence to take the Carlists in flank. The Navarrese reserved their fire till they saw the former battalion within fifty yards of them, and then poured in a deadly volley. The ranks of the Christinos were thinned, but they closed them again, and, with levelled bayonets and quickened step, advanced to clear the wood, little expecting that the newly-raised troops opposed to them would venture to meet them at close quarters. The event, however, proved that they had undervalued their antagonists. Emerging from their shelter, the Carlists brought their bayonets to the charge, and, with a ringing shout of "*Viva Carlos Quinto!*" rushed upon their foe. A griding clash of steel and a shrill cry of agony bore witness to the fury of the encounter. The loss on both sides was severe, but the advantage remained with the Carlists. The guards, unprepared for so obstinate a resistance, were borne back several paces, and thrown into some confusion. But the victors had no time to follow up their advantage, for the other Christino battalion had entered the wood, and was advancing rapidly upon their flank. Hastily collecting their wounded, the Carlists retired, still fighting, to the higher ground in their rear. At the same moment Zumalacarregui, observing a body of fresh troops making a movement upon his right, as if with the intention of outflanking him, ordered the retreat to be sounded, and the Carlist line retired slowly up the mountains. Some of Rodil's battalions followed, and the skirmishing was kept up with more or less spirit till an end was put to it by the arrival of night.

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From the commencement of the fight, several squadrons of the Queen's cavalry had remained drawn up near a village in which they had their quarters, at about a mile from the left of the Carlists. A short distance in front of the line, a number of officers had collected together, and were observing the progress of the combat, in which the impracticability of the ground for horsemen prevented them from taking a share. There was considerable grumbling, especially amongst the juniors, at the inactivity to which they found themselves condemned. [Pg 680]

"If this is the kind of fighting we are always to have," said a young cornet sulkily, "they might as well have left us in our garrisons. We were a deuced deal more comfortable, and quite as useful, in our snug quarters at Valladolid. The faction, it is well known, have no cavalry, and you will not catch their infernal guerillas coming down into the plain to be sabred at leisure."

"No," said another subaltern, "but they are forming cavalry, it is said. Besides, we may catch their infantry napping some day, as they did our picket just now."

"Pshaw!" replied the first speaker. "Before that time comes every horse in the brigade will be lame or sore-backed, and we ourselves shall be converted into infantry men. All respect for lance and sabre—but curse me if I would not rather turn foot-soldier at once, than have to crawl over these mountains as we have done for the last fortnight, dragging our horses after us by the bridle. For six hours yesterday did I flounder over ground that was never meant to be trod by any but bears or izards, breaking my spurs and shins, whilst my poor nag here was rubbing the skin off his legs against rocks and tree-stumps. When I entered the cavalry I expected my horse would carry me; but if this goes on, it is much more likely I shall have to carry him."

"A nice set of fellows you are," said an old grey-mustached captain, "to be grumbling before you have been a month in the field. Wait a bit, my boys, till your own flesh and your horses' have been taken down by hard marching and short commons, and until, if you mount a hill, you are obliged to hold on by the mane, lest the saddle should slip back over the lean ribs of your charger. The marches you have as yet seen are but child's play to what you *will* see before the campaign is over."

"Then hang me if I don't join the footpads," returned the dissatisfied cornet. "At any rate one would have a little fighting then—a chance of a broken head or t'other epaulet; and that is better than carrying a sabre one never has to draw. Why, the very mules cannot keep their footing amongst these mountains. Ask our quartermaster, whom I saw yesterday craning over the edge of a precipice, and watching two of his beasts of burden which were going down hill a deal quicker than they had come up—their legs in the air, and the sacks of corn upon their backs hastening their descent to some ravine or other, where the crows no doubt at the present moment are picking their bones. You should have heard old Skinflint swear. I thought he would have thrown the muleteer after the mules. And they call this a country for cavalry!"

"I certainly fear," said Herrera, who had been listening to the colloquy, "that as long as the war is confined to these provinces, cavalry will not be very often wanted."

"And if they were not here, they would be wanted immediately," said a field-officer, who was observing the skirmish through a telescope. "Besides, you young gentlemen have less cause for discontent than any body else. There may be no opportunity for brilliant charges, but there is always work for a subaltern's party, in the way of cutting off detachments, or some such *coup-de-main*. I see a group of fellows yonder who will get themselves into trouble if they do not take care."

All eyes and glasses turned towards the direction in which the major was looking. It was the hottest moment of the fight; by their impetuosity and courage the Carlists were keeping at bay the superior numbers of their antagonists; and on their extreme left, a small party of horsemen, consisting of four or five officers and a dozen lancers, had ventured to advance a short distance into the plain. They had halted at the edge of a *manzanal*, or cider orchard; and although some way in advance of their own line, they were at a considerable distance from any Christino troops; whilst a tolerably good path, which led up the least precipitous part of the mountains in their rear, seemed to ensure them an easy retreat whenever it might become necessary. So confident were they of their safety, that the officers had dismounted, and were observing the Christino reserves, and the various bodies of infantry which were advancing from the more distant cantonments. At this moment the officer commanding the cavalry rode up to the spot where Herrera and his comrades were assembled. [Pg 681]

"Major Gonzalez," said he, "send half a troop to cut off those gentlemen who are reconnoitring. Let the party file off to the rear, or their intention will be perceived."

The subalterns belonging to the squadron under command of Gonzalez, pressed round him, eager to be chosen for the duty that was to vary the monotony and inaction of which they had so recently been complaining.

"Herrera," said the major, "you have most practice in this sort of thing. Take thirty men and march them back into the village, out on the other side, and round that rising ground upon our right. There is plenty of cover, and if you make the most of it, the game cannot escape. And, a hint to you—your fellows generally grind their sabres pretty sharp, I know, and you are not fond of encumbering yourself with prisoners; but yonder party, judging from their appearance, may be men of note amongst the rebels, worth more alive than dead. Bring them in with whole skins if you can. As to the fellows with the red and white lance-flags, I leave them entirely at your discretion."

"I shall observe your orders, major," replied Herrera, whose eyes sparkled at the prospect of a brush with the enemy. "Sergeant Velasquez, tell off thirty men from the left of the troop."

The non-commissioned officer, who was introduced to the reader at the commencement of this narrative, and who now found himself, in consequence of a change of regiment, in the same squadron as Herrera,

obeyed the order he had received, and the party marched leisurely into the village. No sooner, however, had they entered the narrow street, and were concealed from the view of those whom they intended to surprise, than their pace was altered to a brisk trot, which became a hand-gallop when they got into the fields beyond the rising ground referred to by the major. They then struck into a hollow road, sheltered by bush-crowned banks, and finally reached the long narrow strip of apple-orchard, at the further angle of which the group of Carlists was posted. Skirting the plantation on the reverse side to the enemy, they arrived at its extremity, and wheeling to the left, cantered on in line, their sabre scabbards hooked up to their belts to diminish the clatter, the noise of their horses' feet inaudible upon the grass and fern over which they rode. "Charge!" shouted Herrera, as they reached the second angle of the orchard; and with a loud hurra and brandished sabres, the dragoons dashed down upon the little party of Carlists, now within a hundred paces of them. The dismounted officers hurried to their horses, and the lancers hastily faced about to resist the charge; but before they could complete the movement, they were sabred and ridden over. Herrera, mindful of the orders he had received, hurried to protect the officers from a similar fate. One of the latter, who had his back turned to Herrera, and who, although he wore a sword by his side, was dressed in plain clothes, was in the very act of getting into the saddle, when a dragoon aimed a furious cut at his head. Herrera was in time to parry the blow, and as he did so, the person whose life he had saved, turned round and disclosed the well-known features of the Conde de Villabuena.

"Señor Conde!" exclaimed the astonished Luis, "I am grieved"——

"It is unnecessary, sir," said the count, coldly. "You are obeying orders, I presume, and doing what you consider your duty. Am I to be shot here, or taken to your chief?"

"It is much against my will," answered Herrera, "that I constrain you in any way. I am compelled to conduct you to General Rodil."

The count made no reply, but, turning his horse's head in the direction of the Christino camp, rode moodily onwards, followed, rather then accompanied, by his captor. A Carlist officer and three members of the rebel junta were the other prisoners. The lancers had all been cut to pieces.

The position in which Herrera now found himself was in the highest degree embarrassing and painful. Old affection and friendship were revived by the sight of the count; and, had he obeyed his first impulse, he would frankly have expressed his sorrow at the chance which had thrown Villabuena into the hands of his foes, and have said what he could to console him under his misfortune. But the count's manner was so haughty and repulsive, and he so studiously avoided recognising in Luis any thing more than an opponent and a captor, that the words of kindness froze upon the young man's tongue, and during the few minutes that were required to rejoin the regiment, the silence remained unbroken. On reaching the spot where the cavalry was still halted, the detachment was received with loud congratulations on the successful issue of the expedition. [Pg 682]

"Cleverly managed, Señor Herrera!" said the colonel; "and the prisoners are of importance. Take them yourself to the general."

In obedience to this order, Herrera moved off to the part of the field in which Rodil, surrounded by a numerous and brilliant staff, had taken his post.

"Ha!" said the general, when the young officer had made his report, his quick eye glancing at the prisoners, some of whom were known to him by sight. "Ha! you have done well, sir, and your conduct shall be favourably reported at Madrid. The Marquis of Torralva and Count Villabuena—an important capture this. Your name, sir—and yours, and yours?" said he sharply to the other prisoners.

The answers visibly increased his satisfaction. They were all men well known as zealous and influential partizans of the Pretender. Rodil paused an instant, and then turned to one of his aides-de-camp.

"A priest and a firing party," said he. "You have half an hour to prepare for death," he added, addressing the prisoners. "Rebels taken with arms in their hands can expect no greater favour."

Herrera felt a cold chill come over him as he heard this order given for the instant execution of a man whom he had so long regarded as his friend and benefactor. Forgetting, in the agitation of the moment, his own subordinate position, and the impropriety of his interference, he was about to address the general, and petition for the life of Villabuena, when he was saved from the commission of a breach of discipline by the interposition of a third party. A young man in the uniform of a general officer, of sallow complexion and handsome countenance, who was stationed upon Rodil's right hand, moved his horse nearer to that of the general, and spoke a few words to him in a low tone of voice. Rodil seemed to listen with attention, and to reflect a moment before replying.

"You are right, Cordova," said he; "they may be worth keeping as hostages; and I will delay their death till I can communicate with her Majesty's government. Let them be strictly guarded, and sent to-morrow to Pampeluna under good escort. Your name, sir?" said he, turning to Herrera.

Herrera told his name and regiment.

"Luis Herrera," repeated Rodil; "I have heard it before, as that of a brave and promising officer. Well, sir, since you have taken these prisoners, you shall keep them. Yourself and a detachment of your squadron will form part of their escort to Pampeluna."

The flattering words of his general went but a short way towards reconciling Luis to the unpleasant task of escorting his former friend to a captivity which would in all probability find its termination in a violent death. With a heavy heart he saw Villabuena and the other prisoners led off to the house that was to serve as their place of confinement for the night; and still more painful were his feelings, when he thought of Rita's grief on receiving intelligence of her father's peril, perhaps of his execution. In order to alleviate to

the utmost of his power the present position of the count, he recommended him to the care of the officer placed on guard over him, who promised to allow his prisoner every indulgence consistent with his safe keeping. And although the escort duty assigned to him was in some respects so unpleasant to fulfil, Herrera became almost reconciled to it by the reflection, that he might be able to spare Villabuena much of the hardship and rough treatment to which his captivity exposed him. [Pg 683]

The first grey light of morning had scarcely appeared in the Lower Amezcoa, stealing over the mountain-tops, and indistinctly shadowing forth the objects in the plain, when the stillness that had reigned in the valley since the conclusion of the preceding day's skirmish, was broken by the loud and joyous clang of the reveillé. At various points of the Christino cantonments, the brazen instruments of the cavalry, and the more numerous, but perhaps less martially sounding, bands of the infantry regiments, were rousing the drowsy soldiers from their slumbers, and awakening the surrounding echoes by the wild melody of Riego's hymn. Gradually the sky grew brighter, the last lingering stars disappeared, the summits of the western mountains were illuminated with a golden flush, and the banks and billows of white mist that rested on the meadows, and hung upon the hillsides, began to melt away and disappear at the approach of the sun's rays. In the fields and on the roads near the different villages, the troops were seen assembling, the men silent and heavy-eyed, but refreshed and invigorated by the night's repose, the horses champing their bits, and neighing with impatience. Trains of mules, laden with sacks of corn and rations, that from their weight might be deemed sufficient load for as many dromedaries, issued from barn and stable, expending their superfluous strength and spirit by kicking and biting viciously at each other, and were ranged in rear of the troops, where also carts and litters, containing wounded men, awaited the order for departure. The sergeant-majors called the roll of their troops and companies; whilst the men, leaning upon their muskets, or sitting at ease in their saddles, munched fragments of the brown ration bread, smoked the cigarette, or received from the hands of the tawny-visaged sutlers and *cantinieras*, who walked up and down the ranks, an antidote to the effects of the cool morning air, in the shape of a glass of *aguardiente*. When all preparations were completed, and the time necessary for the forming up of so numerous a body of men had elapsed, the order to march was given, and the troops moved off in a southerly direction.

Whilst this general movement took place, a detachment, consisting of four companies of infantry, and fifty dragoons, separated itself from the main body, and took the road to Pampeluna, whither it was to escort Count Villabuena and his fellow captives. The country to the north-east of the Amezcoa, through which they would have to pass, was known to be free from Carlists, with the exception of unimportant parties of armed peasants; Rodil himself had gone in pursuit of Zumalacarregui, who had retired in the same direction whence he had approached the valley; and therefore this escort, although so few in number, was deemed amply sufficient to convey the prisoners in all safety to their destination, to which one long day's march would bring them. The detachment was commanded by a major of infantry—a young man who had acquired what military experience he possessed in the ease and sloth of a garrison life, during which, however, thanks to certain influential recommendations, he had found promotion come so quickly that he had not the same reason with many of his comrades to be satisfied with the more active and dangerous service to which he had recently been called. Inwardly congratulating himself on the change which his present duty ensured him from the hardships of bivouacs and bad quarters to at least a day or two's enjoyment of the fleshpots of Pampeluna, he rode gaily along at the head of the escort, chatting and laughing with his second in command. Behind him came Herrera and his dragoons, and in rear of them the prisoners, on either side of whom marched foot-soldiers with fixed bayonets. The body of infantry brought up the rear. Strict orders had been given against conversing with the captives; and Herrera was compelled, therefore, to abandon the intention he had formed of endeavouring to break down the barrier of cold reserve within which Count Villabuena had fenced himself, and of offering such assistance and comfort as it was in his power to give. He was forced to be contented with keeping near the prisoners, in order to protect them from any abuse or ill-treatment on the part of the soldiery. [Pg 684]

For some hours the march continued without incident or novelty to vary its monotony. There was no high-road in the direction the escort was taking; the way, which was shown them by a peasant, led through country lanes, over hills, and across fields, as nearly in a straight line as the rugged and mountainous nature of the country would allow. Towards noon, the heat, endurable enough during the first hours of the morning, became excessive. The musket barrels and sabre scabbards almost burned the fingers that touched them; the coats of the horses were caked with sweat and dust; and the men went panting along, looking out eagerly, but in vain, for some roadside fountain or streamlet, at which to quench the thirst that parched their mouths. They had reached a beaten road, which, although rough and neglected, yet afforded a better footing than they had hitherto had, when such means of refreshment at last presented themselves. It was near the entrance of a sort of defile formed by two irregular lines of low hills, closing in the road, which was fringed with patches of trees and brushwood, and with huge masses of rock that seemed to have been placed there by the hands of the Titans, or to have rolled thither during some mighty convulsion of nature from the distant ranges of mountains. At a short distance from this pass, there bubbled forth from under a moss-grown block of granite a clear and sparkling rivulet, which, overflowing the margin of the basin it had formed for itself, rippled across the road, and entered the opposite fields. Here a five minutes' halt was called, the men were allowed to quit their ranks, and in an instant they were kneeling by scores along the side of the little stream, collecting the water in canteens and foraging-caps, and washing their hands and faces in the pure element. The much-needed refreshment taken, the march was resumed.

Notwithstanding that the pass through which the prisoners and their escort were now advancing was nearly a mile in length, and in many places admirably adapted for a surprise, the officer in command, either through ignorance or over-confidence, neglected the usual precaution of sending scouts along the hills that on either side commanded the road. This negligence struck Herrera, who knew by experience, that, with such active and wily foes as the Carlists, no precaution could be dispensed with, however superfluous it might seem. Scarcely had the troops entered the defile when he suggested to the major the propriety of sending out skirmishers to beat the thickets and guard against an ambuscade.

"Quite unnecessary, sir," was the reply. "There is no rebel force in this part of the country that would venture to come within a league of us."

"So we are told," said Herrera; "but I have had occasion to see that one must not always rely on such assurances."

"I shall do so, nevertheless, in this instance," said the major. "We have a long march before us, and if I fag the men by sending them clambering over hills and rocks, I shall lose half of them by straggling, and perhaps not reach Pampeluna to-night."

"If you will allow me," said Herrera, "I will send a few of my dragoons to do the duty. They will hardly be so effective as infantry for such a service, but it will be better than leaving our flanks entirely unguarded."

"I have already told you, sir," replied the major testily, "that I consider such precaution overstrained and unnecessary. I believe, Lieutenant Herrera, that it is I who command this detachment."

Thus rebuked, Herrera desisted from his remonstrances, and fell back into his place. The march continued in all security through the wild and dangerous defile; the men, refreshed by their momentary halt, tramping briskly along, chattering, smoking, and singing snatches of soldier's songs. It appeared as if the negligence of the major was likely to be justified, as far as it could be, by the result; for they were now within two hundred yards of the extremity of the pass, and in view of the open country. The defile was [Pg 685] each moment widening, and the space between the road and the hills was filled up with a wood of young beech and oak. Herrera himself, who had each moment been expecting to receive a volley from some ambushed foe, was beginning to think the danger over, when a man dressed in red uniform, with a scarlet cap upon his head, and mounted on a white horse, suddenly appeared at the end of the pass, and tossing his lance, which he carried at the trail, into his bridle hand, put a trumpet that was slung round his neck, to his mouth, and blew a loud and startling blast. The signal, for such it was, did not long remain unanswered. A hoarse wild shout issued from the wood on either side of the road, and a volley of musketry resounded through the pass. In an instant the hills were alive with Carlist soldiers, some reloading the muskets they had just fired, others taking aim at the Christinos, or fixing their bayonets in preparation for a closer encounter. Another minute had scarcely elapsed, when a strong squadron of cavalry, which the trumpeter had preceded, dashed out of the fields at the extremity of the pass, formed column upon the road, and levelling their long light lances, advanced, led on by Zumalacarregui himself, to charge the astonished Christinos.

Extreme was the confusion into which the escort was thrown by this attack, so totally unexpected by every body but Herrera. All was bewilderment and terror; the men stood staring at each other, or at their dead and wounded comrades, without even thinking of defending themselves. This state of stupefaction lasted, however, but a second; and then the soldiers, without waiting for orders, turned back to back, and facing the points where the Carlists had stationed themselves, returned their fire with all the vigour and promptness which desperation could give. The major—a really brave man, but quite unequal to an emergency of this nature—knew not what orders to give, or how to extricate himself and his men from the scrape into which his own headstrong imprudence had brought them. Foreseeing no possibility of escape from an enemy who, in numbers and advantage of position, so far overmatched him, his next thought regarded the prisoners, and he galloped hastily back to where they stood. The Carlists had probably received orders concerning them; for neither they nor their immediate escort had suffered injury from the volley that had played such havoc with the main body of the detachment.

"Fire on the prisoners!" shouted the major.

The guard round Villabuena and his fellow-captives stared at their officer without obeying. Some of them were reloading, and the others apparently did not comprehend the strange order.

"Fire, I say!" repeated the commandant. "By the holy cross! if we are to leave our bones here, theirs shall whiten beside them."

More than one musket was already turned in the direction of the doomed captives, when Herrera, who, at the moment that he was about to lead his dragoons to the encounter of the Carlist cavalry, just then appearing on the road, had overheard the furious exclamation of his superior, came galloping back to the rescue.

"Stop!" shouted he, striking up the muzzles of the muskets. "You have no warrant for such cruelty."

"Traitor!" screamed the major, almost breathless with rage, and raising his sword to make a cut at Herrera. Before, however, he could give force to the blow, his eyes rolled frightfully, his feet left the stirrups, and, dropping his weapon, he fell headlong into the dust. A Carlist bullet had pierced his heart.

"Fire at your foes, and not at defenceless prisoners," said Herrera sternly to the dismayed soldiers. "Remember that your lives shall answer for those of these men."

And again placing himself at the head of the cavalry, he led them to meet Zumalacarregui and his lancers, who were already charging down upon them.

But the few seconds that had been occupied in saving Villabuena and his companions from the slaughter, had made all the difference in the chances of success. Could Herrera have charged, as he had been about to do, before the Carlists formed up and advanced, he might, in all probability, owing to the greater skill of [Pg 686] his men in the use of their weapons, and to the superiority of their horses, have broken and sabred his opponents, and opened the road for the Christino infantry. Once in the plain, where the dragoons could act with advantage, the Carlists might have been kept at bay, and a retreat effected. Now, however, the state of affairs was very different. The lancers, with Zumalacarregui and several of his staff charging at their head like mere subalterns, came thundering along the road, and before Herrera could get his dragoons

into full career, the shock took place. In an instant the way was blocked up with a confused mass of men and horses. The rear files of the contending cavalry, unable immediately to check their speed, pushed forward those in front, or forced them off the road upon the strip of broken ground and brushwood on either side; friends and foes were mingled together, cutting, thrusting, swearing, and shouting. But the dragoons, besides encountering the lances of the hostile cavalry, suffered terribly from the fire of the foot-soldiers, who came down to the side of the road, blazing at them from within a few paces, and even thrusting them off their horses with the bayonet. In so confused a struggle, and against such odds, the superior discipline and skill of the Christinos was of small avail. Herrera, who, at the first moment of the encounter, had crossed swords with Zumalacarregui himself, but who the next instant had been separated from him by the mêlée, fought like a lion, till his right arm was disabled by a lance-thrust. The soldier who had wounded him was about to repeat the blow, when a Carlist officer interfered to save him. He was made prisoner, and his men, discouraged by his loss, and reduced already to little more than a third of their original numbers, threw down their arms and asked for quarter. Their example was immediately followed by those of the infantry who had escaped alive from the murderous volleys of their opponents.

Of all those who took part in this bloody conflict, not one bore himself more gallantly, or did more execution amongst the enemy, than our old acquaintance, Sergeant Velasquez. When the charge had taken place, and the desperate fight above described commenced, he backed his horse off the narrow road upon which the combatants were cooped up, into a sort of nook formed by a bank and some trees. In this advantageous position, his rear and flanks protected, he kept off all who attacked him, replying with laugh and jeer to the furious oaths and imprecations of his baffled antagonists. His fierce and determined aspect, and still more the long and powerful sweep of his broad sabre, struck terror into his assailants, who found their best aimed blows and most furious assaults repelled, and returned with fatal effect by the practised arm of the dragoon. At the moment that Herrera was wounded, and the fight brought to a close, the mass of combatants had pressed further forward into the defile, and only three or four of the rearmost of the Carlists occupied the portion of the pass between Velasquez and the open country. Just then a shout in his rear, and a bullet that pierced his shako, warned the sergeant that the infantry were upon him; and at the same moment he saw his comrades desist from their defence. Setting spurs to his charger, he made the animal bound forward upon the road, clove the shoulder of the nearest lancer, rode over another, and passing unhurt through the rain of bullets that whistled around him, galloped out of the defile.

But, although unwounded, Velasquez was not unpursued. A dozen lancers spurred their horses after him; and although more than half of these, seeing that they had no chance of overtaking the well-mounted fugitive, soon pulled up and retraced their steps, three or four still persevered in the chase. Fortunate was it for the sergeant that the good horse which he had lost at the venta near Tudela, had been replaced by one of equal speed and mettle. With unabated swiftness he scoured along the road through the whirlwind of dust raised by his charger's feet, until the Carlists, seeing the distance between them and the object of their pursuit rapidly increasing, gradually abandoned the race. One man alone continued stanch, and [Pg 687] seemed not unlikely to overtake the dragoon. This was no other than the sergeant's former opponent in the ball-court, Paco the muleteer, now converted into a Carlist lancer, and who, his sharp-rowelled spurs goring his horse's sides, his lance in his hand, his body bent forward as though he would fain have outstripped in his eagerness the speed of the animal he bestrode, dashed onward with headlong and reckless violence. His lean and raw-boned but swift and vigorous horse, scarcely felt the light weight of its rider; whilst Velasquez' charger, in addition to the solid bulk of the dragoon, was encumbered with a well-filled valise and heavy trappings. The distance between pursued and pursuer was rapidly diminishing; and the sergeant, hearing the clatter of hoofs each moment drawing nearer, looked over his shoulder to see by how many of his enemies he was so obstinately followed. Paco immediately recognised him, and with a shout of exultation again drove the rowels into his horse's belly.

"*Halto! traidor! infame!*" yelled the ex-muleteer. "Stop, coward, and meet your death like a man!"

His invitation was not long disregarded. Velasquez, having ascertained that he had but a single pursuer, and that pursuer a man to whom he owed a grudge and was by no means sorry to give a lesson, pulled up his horse and confronted Paco, who, nothing daunted, came tearing along, waving his lance above his head like a mad Cossack, and shouting imprecations and defiance. As he came up, Velasquez, who had steadily awaited his charge, parried the furious thrust that was aimed at him, and at the same time, by a movement of leg and rein which he had often practised in the *manège*, caused his horse to bound aside. Unable immediately to check his steed, Paco passed onwards; but as he did so, Velasquez dealt him a back-handed blow of his sabre, and the unlucky Carlist fell bleeding and senseless from the saddle. His horse, terrified at its rider's fall, galloped wildly across the country.

"That makes the half-dozen," said the sergeant coolly, as he looked down on his prostrate foe; "if every one of us had done as much, the day's work would have been better."

And sheathing his sabre, he resumed, but at a more moderate pace, the flight which had for a moment been interrupted.

WHITE'S THREE YEARS IN CONSTANTINOPLE. [Pg 688]

The title of "*Domestic* Manners of the Turks,"[28] given to the volumes before us, can scarcely be considered as a correct designation; since it is not in the privacy of their own families, in their harems and among their children, (scenes in which it would indeed be rash to challenge comparison with the eloquent author of the *Spirit of the East*,) that Mr White has depicted the Turks of the present day: but rather in the

places "where men most do congregate"—in the *bezestans* and *tcharshys* or markets, commonly called bazars:[29] in the exercise of the various trades and callings, and the intercourse of professional and commercial relations. The work is rather a treatise on the corporate bodies and municipal institutions of Constantinople—a subject hitherto almost untouched by European writers, and in the investigation of which Mr White has diligently availed himself of the opportunities afforded him by the liberal spirit which the events of late years have fostered among the Turks. The results of these researches are now laid before us, in a form which, though perhaps not the most popular which might have been adopted, is not ill calculated to embrace the vast variety of subjects included in the range of the author's observations. Taking the bezestans and markets—the focus of business and commerce to which the various classes of the Stamboul population converge—as the ground-work of his lucubrations, Mr White proceeds to enumerate in detail the various trades and handicrafts carried on within the precincts of these great national marts, the articles therein sold, and the guilds or incorporated companies, to many of which extensive privileges have been granted by the sultans for their services to the state. These topics are diversified by numerous digressions on politics, religion, criminal law, the imperial harem, the language of flowers—in short, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*—in the course of which Mr White gives his readers the benefit of all the miscellaneous information which has fallen in his way during his three years' residence among the Osmanlis. Of a work so diffuse in its nature, it is impossible to give more than an outline; and accordingly, omitting all mention of those subjects which have been rendered tolerably familiar to European readers by the narratives of former travellers, we shall select from these "orient pearls," strung most literally "at random," such topics as possess most novelty, or on which Mr White has imparted some novel information.

The space of ground occupied by the two great bezestans—the jewel or arms' bezestan, and the silk bezestan—with the surrounding *tcharshys*, and other buildings appropriated to trade, forms an irregular quadrangle of about three hundred and fifty square yards, to the north of the Mosque of Sultan Bajazet, and west of that of Noor-Osmanya. "The bezestans originally consisted of isolated buildings, each with four gates opening nearly to the cardinal points, which were, and still are, designated after the trades carried on in booths around or beneath their respective porches. By degrees new shops, alleys, and enclosures clustered around the original depots, until the whole were enclosed within walls, arched, roofed, and provided with lock-up gates and posterns, of which there are twelve large and about twenty small. They were then subjected to the same syndical laws that regulate the police and administration of the parent buildings." They are opened soon after dawn, and closed at afternoon prayer; and the same regulations are observed at the *Missr Tcharshy*, or Egyptian drug-market, hereafter to be noticed. The jewel bezestan [Pg 689] alone shuts at mid-day—the former occupants having been principally janissaries, who held it beneath their dignity to keep their shops open all day; on Fridays they are closed; and, during Ramazan, are open only from mid-day to afternoon prayer. The silk bezestan, being tenanted only by Armenians, is closed on Sundays, and the saints' days of their calendar, amounting to nearly a fourth of the year. "With the exception of the two bezestans, the bazars are not surmounted by domes, the distinctive ornament of almost all public edifices; ... so that the whole surface, when seen from the Serasker's Tower, presents a vast area of tiles, without any architectural relief, and exhibits a monotonous vacuum in the midst of the surrounding noble mosques and lofty khans."

The Jewel or Arms' Bezestan (Djevahir or Silah-Bezestany) is the oldest of these establishments, dating from the time of the conquest by Mahommed II.; but, having been repeatedly destroyed by fire, the present edifice of stone was constructed in 1708. It is a lofty oblong quadrangular building, with fifteen cupolas and four arched gates—the booksellers', the goldsmiths', the mercers', and the beltmakers'. The interior consists of a broad alley, intersected by four transverse alleys with double rows of shops, where the dealers, who are all Moslems, sit on platforms raised about three feet and a half from the pavement. They constitute a guild among themselves, presided over by a sheikh, with a deputy and six elders; and are so highly esteemed for their probity, that valuable deposits are frequently left in their charge by persons going on pilgrimage or to distant countries; but this privilege has lately been interfered with by government, which has claimed, in failure of heirs, the reversions which formerly fell to the guild. "It would be an endless task to describe the articles exposed to sale in Djevahir-Bezestany, which, from jewels being rarely sold there at present, might be more appropriately called the bezestan of antiquities." The principal objects of attraction, especially to foreigners, are the arms, to which Mr White accordingly confines his remarks: but the once famed Damascus sabres (called *Sham* or Syrian) are now held as inferior to those of Khorassan and Persia, (*Taban* or polished,) unless anterior to the destruction of the old manufactory by Timour in 1400; and those of this ancient fabric are now of extreme rarity and value. "A full-sized Khorassan, or ancient Damascus sabre, should measure about thirty-five inches from guard to point; the back should be free from flaws, the watering even and distinct throughout the whole length: the colour a bluish grey. A perfect sabre should possess what the Turks call the Kirk Merdevend, (forty gradations:) that is, the blade should consist of forty compartments of watered circles, diminishing in diameter as they reach the point. A tolerable *taban* of this kind, with plain scabbard and horn handle, is not easily purchased for less than 2000 piastres; some fetch as much as 5000, and when recognised as extraordinary, there is no limit to the price. Damascus sabres made prior to 1600 are seldom seen, but modern blades of less pure temper and lighter colour are common. Their form is nearly similar to the Khorassan; but the latter, when of extraordinary temper, will cut through the former like a knife through a bean-stalk." The shorter swords of bright steel called *pala*, watered not in circles, but in waving lines, are mostly from the manufactory established at Stamboul by Mahommed II. soon after the conquest, and which maintained its celebrity up to the time of Mourad IV., the last sultan who headed his armies in person:—"After his death, the fashion of wearing Khorassan and old Syrian blades was revived: and the Stamboul manufactory was gradually neglected."

It is needless to follow Mr White through his dissertations on handjars, yataghans, and other Oriental varieties of cold steel; but passing through the booksellers' (Sahhaf) gate of the bezestan, we find

ourselves in the Paternoster Row of Stamboul—a short space exclusively inhabited by the trade from which the gate derives its name. The booksellers' guild consists of about forty members, presided over by a [Pg 690] sheikh and a council of elders; and is conducted on principles as rigidly exclusive as those of some corporations nearer home, it being almost impossible for any one to purchase the good-will of a shop, unless connected by blood with some of the fraternity: but Mr White's account of "the trade," and of the bearded Murrays and Colburns by whom it is carried on, is far from favourable. Competition being excluded by this monopoly, the prices demanded are so exorbitant, "that it is common to say of a close-fisted dealer, 'he is worse than a sahhaf.' The booksellers' stalls are the meanest in appearance in all the bazars; and the effendy, who lord it over the literary treasures, are the least prepossessing, and by no means the most obliging, of the crafts within this vast emporium." There are some exceptions, however, to this sweeping censure. Suleiman Effendi, father of the imperial historiographer, Sheikh-Zadeh Assad Effendi, is celebrated as a philologist; and Hadji-Effendi, though blind, "appears as expert in discovering the merits of a MS. or printed work as the most eagle-eyed of his contemporaries, and is moreover full of literary and scientific information." Catalogues are unknown, and the price even of printed books, after they have passed out of the hands of the editor, is perfectly arbitrary; but the commonest printed books are double the relative rate in Europe. The value of MSS. of course depends on their rarity and beauty of transcription; a finely illuminated Koran cannot be procured for less than 5000 or 6000 piastres, and those written by celebrated caligraphers fetch from 25,000 to even 50,000. Mr White estimates the average number of volumes on a stall at about 700, or less than 30,000 in the whole bazar; but among these are frequently found works of great rarity in the "three languages," (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.) Of those most in request, a catalogue is given, comprising the usual range of Oriental literature.

There are about forty public libraries in Constantinople, but many of these are within the principal mosques, and therefore not easily accessible to Europeans. They are all endowed with ample funds for their maintenance and the salaries of their librarians, who frequently add considerably to their emoluments by transcribing MSS:—"but it does not appear that these funds are employed in adding to these collections; so that in point of numbers they remain nearly as when first founded." Each library has not only a simple nomenclature, but a *catalogue raisonnée* containing a summary of each work; and the books, most of which are transcribed on vellum or highly glazed paper, are bound in the manner of a tuck pocket-book, in dark morocco or calf, with the titles written on the outside of the margin, and are laid on their sides on the shelves. The floors are covered with mats, and on one or more sides are low divans for the use of the students, who leave their slippers at the door; a narrow desk in front of the divans supports the volumes in use. Neither fire, candle, nor smoking, is permitted; and the libraries in general are open daily, except on Friday, and during Ramazan and the two Beirams, from about 9 A.M. to afternoon prayer; those present at the time of mid-day prayer, quit their studies and perform their devotions in common.

Many of the most valuable and costly of the illuminated MSS. are in the two libraries of the seraglio, the larger of which, containing at present 4400 volumes, is the most extensive collection of books in Constantinople: but they can scarcely be reckoned among the public libraries, as admission to them is obtained with difficulty, and only by special permission, even by Moslems. Besides the MSS. in the great seraglio library, among the most valuable of which is a magnificent copy of the Arabic poem of Antar, and another of the Gulistan, the great moral poem of Saadi, there is a canvass genealogical tree, containing portraits of all the sovereigns of the house of Osman, from originals preserved in the sultan's private library. Next in importance is the library of the mosque of Aya Sofia (St Sophia,) founded by Mohammed the Conqueror, which is rich in valuable MSS. and contains a Koran said to have been written by the hand of the Khalif Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet: another attributed to the same source, as well as one [Pg 691] ascribed to the Khalif Omar, are in the library of Osman III., attached to the beautiful mosque of Noor-Osmanya. But the most interesting of the public libraries, though the number of its volumes does not exceed sixteen hundred, is that of the grand-vizir Raghib Pasha, a celebrated patron of learning in the middle of the last century. It stands in an enclosed court, which also contains a free school, fountains, and the monuments of the founder and his family. The library itself is a lofty square chamber, with a central dome and four semi-domes, supported by marble columns, and round the apartment "runs a complete and most correct version of the celebrated Boorda of the poet Keab," (a poem composed in honour of Mohammed by an Arab contemporary,) "in gold letters, fourteen inches long, on a green ground, forming an original and brilliant embellishment." Its contents include some of the richest and rarest specimens of Persian and Arabic caligraphy; and the founder's note-book, with a copy of his divan, (poetical works,) is also exhibited: "the former proves that he was not unaccomplished as a draughtsman and architect.... There is a lightness and elegance in this building which renders it superior to all others: but he survived its foundation only three years. His remains are deposited in the north-east angle of the court, on an elevated terrace, beneath open marble canopy, protected by a wirework trellis. This, with the roses and myrtles, and the figs, vines, pomegranates, and cypresses, that cast their shade around, gives it the appearance of a noble aviary, more than that of a repository for the dead: and the doves that nestle in the overhanging branches, and fill the air with their querulous notes, add to the delusion."

The total number of volumes in all the public libraries is believed not to exceed 75,000, of which at least a fourth are duplicates; "it must be remembered, however, that, with a few modern exceptions, the whole are MSS. admirably transcribed, elaborately embellished: and thus, taking one volume with another, the sums paid for each work far exceed the average price of rare printed editions in Europe." Besides these stores of Oriental lore, the library of the medical academy established by Mahmood II. in the palace of Galata Serai, contains several hundred volumes of the best French medical works, which the professors are allowed to carry to their own apartments—a privilege not allowed in any other library. The art of printing was first introduced in 1726, by a Hungarian renegade named Ibrahim, (known as *Basmadji*, or the printer,) who was patronised by the Sultan Achmet III;—but the establishment languished after his death; and though revived in 1784 by Sultan Abdoul Hamid, it was only after the destruction of the janissaries, the enemies of every innovation, that the press began to exhibit any thing like activity. At

present there are four imperial printing establishments; and the types, which were formerly cast in Venice, being now manufactured in Stamboul, a marked improvement has taken place in the character. Though the Koran, and all religious and doctrinal works, are still transcribed exclusively by hand, the art of printing is regarded with great jealousy by the booksellers, who hold that "presses are made from the calcined wood of Al-Zacum, the dread tree of the lowest pit; while transcribers have their seats near the gate of the seventh heaven." The newspaper press of Stamboul is still in its infancy—for though the *Takwim*, or *Moniteur Ottoman*, established in 1831 by Mahmood II. as an official gazette, was conducted with considerable ability by the original editor, M. Blaque, and his successor M. Francesschi, the sudden death of both these gentlemen, within a short period of each other, awakened strong suspicions of foul play; and the French translation, published for European circulation, has since sunk into a mere transcript of the Turkish original, which consists of little but official announcements. Several attempts made, by Mr Churchill and others, to establish a non-official paper for the advocacy of Turkish interests, have been smothered after a brief existence, by the jealousy of Russia and France: "the result is, that the *Moniteur* is [Pg 692] a dull court-circular, and the Smyrna journals, abandoned to chance communications, are neither prompt nor exact in circulating or detailing events."[30]

The spread of literary cultivation among the Turks of the present day, and the European education which many of the rising generation have received, has naturally led to a taste for European literature; and many possess libraries stored not only with the lore of the East, but with the choicest treasures of the French and English classics. Ali Effendi, late ambassador from the Porte to the court of St James's, is well known to have collected a most extensive and valuable library during his residence in the regions of the West; and Mr White enumerates several young Osmanlis distinguished for their accomplishments in the literature and science of the Franks. Emin Pasha, the director of the Imperial Military Academy, and Bekir Pasha, late superintendent of the small-arm manufactory at Dolma-Baktchi, were both educated in England, the latter at Woolwich and the former at Cambridge, where he gained a prize for his mathematical attainments. Fouad Effendi, son of the celebrated poet Izzet-Mollah, and himself a poet of no small note, "possesses a choice library of some 2000 volumes, in French, English, and Italian;" and Derwish Effendi, professor of natural history in the academy of Galata Serai, "has studied in France and England, and is not less esteemed for his knowledge than for his modesty." But foremost among this *Tugenbund*, the future hopes of Turkey, stands one whose name has already appeared in the pages of *Maga*, (Sept. 1841, p. 304,) Achmet Wekif Effendi, now third dragoman to the Porte, and son of Rouh-ed-deen Effendi, late Secretary of Legation at Vienna, whom Mr White pronounces, with justice, "one of the most rising and enlightened young men of the Turkish empire. His knowledge of the French language is perfect, and he adds to this an intimate acquaintance with the literature of that country and of England." While men like these (and we could add other names to those enumerated by Mr White, from our personal knowledge) are in training for the future administration of the empire, there is yet hope of the regeneration of the Osmanli nation.

In no country is primary instruction more general than in Turkey. Each of the smaller mosques has attached to it an elementary school, superintended by the imam, where the children of the lower classes are taught to read and write, and to repeat the Koran by heart; while those intended for the liberal professions undergo a long and laborious course of study at the medressehs or colleges of the great mosques, some of which are intended to train youth in general literature, or qualify them for government employments, while others are devoted to the study of theology and jurisprudence. Mr White states the number of students in Stamboul, in 1843, at not less than 5000, all of whom were lodged, instructed, and furnished with one meal a-day, at the expense of the *wakoof* or foundation, (a term which we shall hereafter more fully explain,) all their other expenses being at their own charge; but "the sallow complexions and exhausted appearance of these young men indicate intense labour, or most limited commons."

After thus successfully vindicating the Turks from the charge so often brought against them by travellers who have only spent a few weeks at Pera, of ignorance and indifference to knowledge, Mr White thus sums up the general question of education. "For ten men that *can* read among Perotes and Fanariotes, there are an equal number that *do* read at Constantinople; and, taking the mass of the better classes indiscriminately, it will be found also that there are more libraries of useful books in Turkish houses than in those of Greeks and Armenians." And though "the number of Turkish ladies that can read is much less [Pg 693] than those of Pera and the Fanar, those who can read among the former never open a bad book; while among the latter there is scarcely one that ever reads a good work, unless it be the catechism or breviary on certain forced occasions. And while neither Greek nor Armenian women occupy themselves with literature, Constantinople can boast of more than one female author. Among the most celebrated of these is Laila Khanum, niece to the above-mentioned Izzet-Mollah. Her poems are principally satirical, and she is held in great dread by her sex, who tremble at her cutting pen. Her *divan* (collection of poems) has been printed, and amounts to three volumes. Laila Khanum is also famed for her songs, which are set to music, and highly popular. Hassena Khanum, wife of the Hakim Bashy, (chief physician,) is likewise renowned for the purity and elegance of her style as a letter-writer, which entitles her to the appellation of the Turkish Sevigné."

But we must again diverge, in following Mr White's desultory steps, from the Turkish fair ones—whom he has so satisfactorily cleared from Lord Byron's imputation, that

> "They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
> Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse—"

to his dissertation on the *wakoofs* above referred to;—a word implying a deposit or mortgage, and used to designate a species of tenure under which the greater part of the landed property throughout the empire is held, and the nature of which is but imperfectly understood in Europe. These institutions have existed from the earliest period of Islam; but nowhere to so great an extent as in the Ottoman empire; where they were divided by Soliman the Magnificent into three classes, all alike held sacred, and exempt from

confiscation either by the sovereign or courts of law. The first class comprises the lands or funds absolutely bequeathed to the mosques either by founders or subsequent benefactors, the revenues of which are employed in the payment of the imams, khatibs, and other ministers of religion attached to their service, and to the gratuitous maintenance of the colleges and hospitals dependent on them; and which are in all cases amply sufficient for these purposes. "No demands in the shape of tithes, collections, or entrance-money, are ever made: the doors of all temples are open to the public without distinction:" and although the imam usually receives a fee for marriages, name-givings, circumcisions, and funerals, no demand can be legally made. The author proceeds to enumerate the endowments in 1842, as nearly as they could be ascertained, of the seventeen mosques in the capital entitled to rank as imperial foundations —the richest being that of Aya-Sofia, amounting to 1,500,000 piastres annually, while the others vary from 710,000 to 100,000 piastres. The ecclesiastical staff of an imperial mosque comprehends in general from thirty to forty persons—the sheikh, who preaches after mid-day prayer on Friday, and who is a member of the superior ecclesiastical synod, with rank and privileges nearly similar to those of our bishops:—two or more khatibs, who recite the khotbah, or prayer for the Prophet and sultan:—four imams, who alternately read prayers:—twelve to twenty muezzins, who call to prayers from the minarets:—with fifteen to twenty subordinate functionaries. The finances of each of the mosques are regulated by a *nazir* (inspector) and *mutawelly*, (accountant,) who are bound by law to render half-yearly statements; and these offices, lucrative from the opportunities they afford for malversation, are usually held for life by the holders for the time being of high official stations, or sometimes by the heirs of the founders, who thus secure their lands from forfeiture or confiscation; or by persons to whom they have been bequeathed, with power to nominate their successors. The annual revenues of the imperial mosques being triple their expenditure, the wakoof fund has been often encroached upon by the Sultan, nominally as a loan under the warrant of the minister of finance, who checks the accounts of the imperial nazir; and by these not unfrequent inroads, as well as by the peculations of the superintendents, the accumulations, though great, are not so enormous as they would otherwise become. [Pg 694]

The second class comprises the funds devoted to the maintenance of public baths, libraries, fountains, alms-houses, and of useful and charitable institutions in general. They are frequently charged with annuities to the representatives of the founder; and in all foundations for gratuitous education, or distribution of alms or food, founders' kin have the preference. They are all registered in the treasury; but the foundation is invalidated if the property assigned for its support be encumbered by mortgages or other obligations:—nor can any one labouring under an incurable disease convert freehold property into wakoof except as a testator, in which case the inalienable rights of the heirs to two-thirds of the property are secured:—a third part only, according to law, being otherwise disposable by will. The third class of wakoofs (called *ady* or customary, the others being termed *shary* or legal, as sanctioned by religious law) are considered as secular foundations, consisting of lands purchased by the religious wakoofs from their accumulations, on reversion at the death of the assigner, or failure of his direct heirs, for an inconsiderable portion of their value, leaving to the vendors in the interim the full enjoyment of the property, which is frequently continued to their nephews and brothers on the same terms. "At first this plan was not considered lucrative for the wakoofs: but when the system was widely extended, the multitude of assignments, which fell in every year from death and default of issue, soon crowned the speculation with success, in a country where the tenure of life is eminently uncertain, not only from the caprices of sultans, but from the constant ravages of plague.... The advantages to sellers were equally great. They secured themselves from confiscation, and their heirs from spoliation at their demise. They were enabled to raise money to the value of a sixth or eighth of their capital, on payment of a trifling interest, and yet retained the full enjoyment of the whole for themselves and immediate issue. By founding these wakoofs, sellers are also enabled to check the extravagance of their children, who can neither mortgage nor alienate the property—a practice nearly as common in Turkey as in other countries."

Not less than three-fourths of the buildings and cultivated lands throughout the empire, according to the author, and even the imperial domains, are held under one or other of these wakoof tenures, which thus represent the great landed interests of the country. Formerly, the domains belonging to the mosques in each pashalik were let on annual leases (as the public revenues are still farmed) to *multezim* or contractors, generally the pashas of the provinces: but the system of subletting and dilapidation to which this course of short leases gave rise, was so ruinous to the agricultural population and the property of the wakoofs, that a thorough reform was introduced in the reign of Abdoul-Hamid, the father of Mahmood II. The lands were now let on life tenancies, (*malikania*,) on the same system of beneficial leases and large fines on renewals which prevails with respect to the property of collegiate and other corporate bodies in England; which has greatly improved their condition, as it is no longer the interest of the lessee to rack the peasantry, or damage the property, for the sake of present advantage. "More than one monarch has entertained projects of dispossessing the mosques of these privileges, and of placing the wakoofya under the exclusive superintendence of government. Sultan Mahmood II. seriously contemplated carrying this plan into effect, and probably would have done so, had his life been spared. The government in this case would have paid the salaries of all sheikhs, priests, and persons attached to the sacred edifices, together with all repairs and expenses of their dependent institutions, and would have converted the surplus to state purposes. Various plans were suggested to Mahmood's predecessors; but during the existence of the janissaries, no one dared to interfere with institutions whence the Oolema, (men of law and religion,) intimately connected with the janissaries, derived invariable profit."

Returning at length from this long digression to the jewel bezestan, and passing from the south-eastern, or mercers' gate, "through lines of shops stored with a variety of ready-made articles required by ladies," we reach the Silk Bezestan, (Sandal Bezestany,) which, like the other, has four arched gates named after different trades, and is surmounted by twenty domes, four in a line. Though occupied solely by Armenians, and regulated by a committee of six Armenian elders, it is directed by a Turkish kehaya or president, with his deputy, whose duty it is to superintend the police and collect the government dues. The scene [Pg 695]

presented by the interior presents a striking contrast to the other, and (we regret to say) not at all to the advantage of the Christians. "The building is gloomy and badly lighted, and appears not to have been white-washed or cleansed since the first construction; and while a stranger may repeatedly enter the jewel bezestan, and its tenants, though they see him gazing with covetous eyes on some antiquated object, will scarcely condescend to say 'Né istersiniz?' (what want you?) ... the clamours of the Armenians to attract purchasers are only to be surpassed by their want of honesty. Strangers may often pay too much to Turkish shopkeepers, but they will receive fair weight to a hair: whereas they will be subject not only to overcharge, but to short quantity, at the hands of the Armeninians and their more profligate imitators, the Greek dealers." The original silk manufactories were established before the conquest of Constantinople at the old capital of Broussa, whence most of the raw material is still derived, the abundance of mulberry trees in its neighbourhood being favourable to the nurture of the silkworm; little Broussa silk is, however, now sold in the sandal bezestany, the manufacture being principally carried on along the shores of the Bosphorus. "But within the last ten years, and especially since the conclusion of commercial treaties with the Porte, the silk trade in home-made articles has decreased 50 per cent. A large supply of common imitation goods is now received from England, France, and Italy, and the richer articles, principally manufactured at Lyons, have completely superseded those formerly received from Broussa, or fabricated at Scutari and Constantinople."

The trade in furs, as well as that in silk, is entirely in the hands of the Armenians, but has greatly fallen off since the European dress, now worn by the court and the official personages, replaced the old Turkish costume. In former times, the quality of the fur worn by different ranks, and at different seasons of the year, was a matter of strict etiquette, regulated by the example of the sultan, who, on a day previously fixed by the imperial astrologer, repaired in state to the mosque arrayed in furs, varying from the squirrel or red fox, assumed at the beginning of autumn, to the samoor or sable worn during the depth of winter; while all ranks of persons in office changed their furs, on the same day with the monarch, for those appropriated to their respective grades. The most costly were those of the black fox and sable, the former of which was restricted, unless by special permission, to the use of royalty: while sable was reserved for vizirs and pashas of the highest rank. The price of these furs, indeed, placed them beyond the reach of ordinary purchasers, 15,000 or 20,000 piastres being no unusual price for a sable lined pelisse, while black fox cost twice as much. In the present day the *kurk* or pelisse is never worn by civil or military functionaries, except in private: but it still continues in general use among the sheikhs and men of the law, "who may be seen mounted on fat ambling galloways, with richly embroidered saddle-cloths and embossed bridles, attired in kurks faced with sables, in all the pomp of ancient times." The kurk is, moreover, in harem etiquette, the recognised symbol of matronly rank:—and its assumption by a Circassian is a significant intimation to the other inmates of the position she has assumed as the favourite of their master. The same rule extends to the imperial palace, where the elevation of a fair slave to the rank of *kadinn* (the title given to the partners of the sultan) is announced to her, by her receiving a pelisse lined with sables from the *ket-khoda* or mistress of the palace, the principal of the seven great female officers to whom is [Pg 696] entrusted the management of all matters connected with the harem. The imperial favourites are limited by law to seven, but this number is seldom complete; the present sultan has hitherto raised only five to this rank, one of whom died of consumption in 1842. These ladies are now always Circassian slaves, and though never manumitted, have each their separate establishments, suites of apartments, and female slaves acting as ladies of honour, &c. Their slipper, or (as we should call it) pin money, is about 25,000 piastres (£240) monthly—their other expenses being defrayed by the sultan's treasurer. Mr White enters into considerable detail on the interior arrangements of the seraglio, the private life of the sultan, &c.; but as it does not appear from what sources his information is derived, we shall maintain an Oriental reserve on these subjects.

The slave-markets and condition of slaves in the East is treated at considerable length: but as the erroneous notions formerly entertained have been in a great measure dispelled by more correct views obtained by modern travellers, it is sufficient to observe, that "the laws and customs relative to the treatment of slaves in Turkey divest their condition of its worst features, and place the slave nearly on a level with the free servitor: nay, in many instances the condition of the slave, especially of white slaves, is superior to the other; as the path of honour and fortune is more accessible to the dependent and protected slave than to the independent man of lower degree." It is well known that many of those holding the highest dignities of the state—Halil Pasha, brother-in-law of the Sultan—Khosref, who for many years virtually ruled the empire, with numberless others, were originally slaves: and in all cases the liberation of male slaves, after seven or nine years' servitude, is ordained by *adet* or custom, which, in Turkey, is stronger than law. This rule is rarely infringed:—and excepting the slaves of men in the middle ranks of life, who frequently adopt their master's trade, and are employed by him as workmen, they in most cases become domestic servants, or enter the army, as holding out the greatest prospect of honour and promotion. The condition of white female slaves is even more favourable. In point of dress and equipment, they are on a par with their mistresses, the menial offices in all great harems being performed by negresses;—and frequent instances occur, where parents prefer slaves educated in their own families to free women as wives for their sons:—the only distinction being in the title of *kadinn*, which may be considered equivalent to *madame*, and which is always borne by these emancipated slaves, instead of *khanum*, (or *lady*,) used by women of free birth. Female slaves are rarely sold or parted with, except for extreme misconduct; and though it is customary for their masters, in the event of their becoming mothers, to enfranchise and marry them, "the facility of divorce is such, that women, if mothers, prefer remaining slaves to being legally married: as they are aware that custom prevents their being sold when in the former condition: whereas their having a family is no bar to divorce when married."

The guilds, or corporations of the different trades and professions, to which allusion has more than once been made, and which constitute what may be called the municipality of Constantinople, were formerly mustered and paraded through the city, on every occasion when the Sandjak-Shereef (or holy banner of

Mahommed) was taken from the seraglio to accompany the army. This gathering, the object of which was to ascertain the number of men who could be levied in case of extremity for the defence of the capital, was first ordained by Mourad IV., [31] before his march against Bagdad in 1638; when, according to Evliya Effendi, 200,000 men fit to bear arms passed in review—and the last muster was in the reign of Mustapha III., at the commencement of the disastrous war with Russia in 1769. Its subsequent discontinuance is said [Pg 697] to have been owing to an insult then offered by the guild of *emirs* (or descendants of the Prophet) to the Austrian Internuncio, who was detected in witnessing incognito the procession of the Sandjak-Shereef, deemed too sacred for the eyes of an infidel—and a tumult ensued, in which many Christians were maltreated and murdered, and which had nearly led to a rupture with the court of Vienna. On this occasion the number of guilds was forty-six, subdivided into 554 minor sections; and, excepting the disappearance of those more immediately connected with the janissaries, it is probable that little or no change has since taken place. These guilds included not only the handicraft and other trades, but the physicians and other learned professions, and even the *Oolemah* and imams, and others connected with the mosques. Each marched with its own badges and ensigns, headed by its own officers, of whom there were seven of the first grade, with their deputies and subordinates, all elected by the crafts, and entrusted with the control of its affairs, subject to the approbation of a council of delegates: while the property of these corporations is invariably secured by being made *wakoof*, the nature of which has been already explained. The shoemakers', saddlers', and tanners' guilds are among the strongest in point of numbers, and from them were drawn the *élite* of the janissaries stationed in the capital, after the cruel system of seizing Christian children for recruits had been discontinued; the tailors are also a numerous and resolute craft, generally well affected to government, to which they rendered important services in the overthrow of the janissaries in 1826, when the Sandjak-Shereef[32] was displayed in pursuance of the *Fethwa* of the mufti excommunicating the sons of Hadji-Bektash, and the guilds mustered in arms by thousands for the support of the Sheikh al Islam and the Commander of the Faithful.

Among these fraternities, one of the most numerous is that of the *kayikjees* or boatmen, of whom there are not fewer than 19,000, mostly Turks, in the city and its suburbs; while 5000 more, nearly all of whom are Greeks, are found in the villages of the Bosphorus. They are all registered in the books of the *kayikjee-bashi*, or chief of the boatmen, paying each eight piastres monthly (or twice as much if unmarried) for their *teskera* or license: and cannot remove from the stations assigned them without giving notice. The skill and activity of these men, in the management of their light and apparently fragile skiffs, has been celebrated by almost every tourist who has floated on the waters of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus: and not less precise is the accuracy with which is adjusted the number of oars to be employed by the members of the European *corps diplomatique*, and the great officers of the Porte, according to their relative ranks; the smallest infringement of which would be regarded as an unpardonable breach of etiquette. The oars and mouldings are painted of the national colours, with the hulls white or black; the latter colour is usually affected by the Turkish grandees, with the exception of the capitan-pasha, who is alone privileged to use a green boat. Ambassadors-extraordinary are entitled to ten oars; and the same number is assigned to the grand-vizir, the mufti, and ministers holding the rank of *mushir*, or marshal, the highest degree in the new scale of Ottoman precedence. Pashas of the second rank, the *cazi-askers* or [Pg 698] grand judges of Anatolia and Roumelia, with other functionaries of equivalent grade, are allowed eight oars, the number employed by the Austrian Internuncio, and by ministers-plenipotentiary; while three or five pair of sculls are allotted to *chargés d'affaires*, and the heads of different departments at the Porte. The procession of the sultan, when he proceeds to the mosque by water, consists of six kayiks, the largest of which is seventy-eight feet in length, and pulled by twenty-four rowers—under the old *régime* the crew was taken from the bostandjis, whose chief, the bostandji-bashi, held the helm; but since the abolition of that corps, they have been chosen, without distinction of creed, from the common boatmen. The imperial barge is distinguished, independent of its superior size, by the gold-embroidered canopy of crimson silk, surmounted by crescents at the stern; it is painted white within and without, with rich gilt mouldings, under which runs a broad external green border, ornamented with gilded arabesques. The oars are painted white, with gold scrolls; the stern is adorned with massive gilt carvings; and the long projecting prow with a richly-gilded ornament, representing a palm-branch curling upwards. Behind this flutters a gilded falcon, the emblem of the house of Osman. The carvings and ornaments of these boats are elaborately finished, and exquisitely light and graceful. These embellishments, combined with the loose white dresses, blue-tasselled red caps, and muscular forms of the boatmen, as they rise from their seats, vigorously plunge their oars into the dark blue waters, and propel the kayiks with racehorse speed, give to these splendid vessels an air of majesty and brilliancy, not less characteristic than original and imposing.

Many instances have occurred, in which men have risen from the class of boatmen to stations of high honour and dignity; the most recent instance of which was in the case of the arch-traitor Achmet Fevzy Pasha, who, in 1839, betrayed the Ottoman fleet under his command into the hands of Mohammed Ali—a deed of unparalleled perfidy, for which he righteously received a traitor's reward, perishing in January 1843 (as was generally believed) by poison administered by the orders of the Egyptian Viceroy. The kayikjees, as a class, are generally considered, in point of personal advantages, the finest body of men in the empire; and share with the *sakkas*, or water-carriers—another numerous and powerful guild, equally remarkable with the kayikjees for their symmetry and athletic proportions—the dangerous reputation of being distinguished favourites of the fair sex—doubly dangerous in a country where, in such cases, "the cord or scimitar is the doom of the stronger sex—the deep sea-bed that of the weaker. Money will counterbalance all crimes in Turkey save female frailty. For this neither religious law nor social customs admit atonement. Tears, beauty, youth, gold—untold gold—are of no avail. The fish of the Bosphorus and Propontis could disclose fearful secrets, even in our days:"—and as a natural transition, apparently, from cause to effect, Mr White proceeds, in the next chapter, to give an account of the Balyk-Bazary, the Billingsgate of Stamboul. But we shall not follow him through his enumeration of such a carte as throws the glories of a Blackwall dinner into dim eclipse, and which no other waters of Europe could probably rival:—since, in Mr White's usual course of digression upon digression, the mention of the Fishmarket

Gate, the usual place of executions, leads him off again at a tangent to the consideration of the criminal law, and its present administration in the Ottoman Empire.

There is no change among those wrought since the introduction of the new system, more calculated forcibly to impress those who had known Constantinople in former years, than the almost total cessation of those public executions, the sanguinary frequency of which formed so obtrusive and revolting a feature under the old *régime*. Since the fate of the unfortunate Pertef Pasha in 1837, no one has suffered death for political offences:—and the abolition by Sultan Mahmoud, immediately after the destruction of the janissaries, of the *Moukhallafat Kalemy*, or Court of Confiscations, put an end to the atrocious system [Pg 699] which had for centuries made wealth a sufficient pretext for the murder of its possessors. In all cases of banishment or condemnation to death, however arbitrary, confiscation of property inevitably followed: but the wealthy Armenians and Greeks were usually selected as the victims of these ruthless deeds of despotism and rapacity; numerous records of which may be seen in the Christian burying-grounds, where the rudely-carved figure of a headless trunk, or a hanging man, indicates the fate of the sufferer. But the humane and politic act of Mahmoud, which rendered riches no longer a crime, has produced its natural effects in the impulse which has been given to commercial activity and public confidence by the security thus afforded to life and property. "The government finds the Armenians willing to advance money in case of need; and there is scarcely a pasha of rank who has not recourse to their assistance, which is the more readily afforded, as the Armenians are aware that their debtors' lives and property, as well as their own, are secure, and that they shall not endure extreme persecution in the event of suing those on whom they have claims."

In criminal cases, the administration of justice by the Moslem law appears at all times to have been tempered by lenity; and the extreme repugnance of the present sultan to sign death-warrants, even in cases which in this country would be considered as amounting to wilful murder, has rendered capital punishments extremely rare: while the horrible death by impalement, and the amputation of the hand for theft, have fallen into complete disuse. Offences are tried, in the first instance, in the court of the Cazi-asker or grand judge of Roumelia or Anatolia, according as the crime has been committed in Europe or Asia: from this tribunal an appeal lies to the Supreme Council of justice, the decisions of which require to be further ratified by the Mufti. The *procès-verbal* of two of the cases above referred to, is given at length; in one of which the murderer escaped condign punishment only because the extreme youth of the only eye-witness, a slave, nine years old, prevented his testimony from being received otherwise than as *circumstantial* evidence:—in the other, "it being essential to make a lasting and impressive public example, it was resolved that the criminals should not be put to death, but condemned to such ignominious public chastisement as might serve during many years as a warning to others." The sentence in the former case was ten, and in the latter, seven years' public labour in heavy irons—a punishment of extreme severity, frequently terminating in the death of the convict. Nafiz Bey, the principal offender in the second of the above cases, did not survive his sentence more than twenty months. "On examining a multitude of condemnations for crimes of magnitude, the maximum average, when death was not awarded, was seven years' hard labour in chains, and fine, for which the convict is subsequently imprisoned as a simple debtor till the sum is paid. The average punishment for theft, robbery, assault, and slightly wounding, is three years' hard labour, with costs and damages. These sentences (of which several examples are given) were referred, according to established forms, from the local tribunals to the supreme council: and before being carried into effect, were legalized by a *fethwa* (decree) of the Sheikh-Islam, (Mufti,) and after that by the sultan's warrant; a process affording a triple advantage to the accused, each reference serving as an appeal."

The exclusive jurisdiction over the subjects of their own nation, exercised by the legations of the different European powers in virtue of capitulations with the Porte, was doubtless at one time necessary for the protection of foreigners from the arbitrary proceedings of Turkish despotism; it has, however, given rise to great abuses, and at the present day its practical effect is only to secure impunity to crime, by impeding the course of justice. The system in all the legations is extremely defective; "but in none is it more flagrantly vicious and ineffective than in that of Great Britain." This is a grave charge; but only too fully borne out by the facts adduced. Not fewer than three thousand British subjects are now domiciled in and [Pg 700] about the Turkish capital, chiefly vagabonds and desperadoes, driven by the rigour of English law from Malta and the Ionian Isles:—and half the outrages in Stamboul "are committed by or charged to the Queen's adopted subjects, who, well knowing that eventual impunity is their privilege, are not restrained by fear of retribution." All the zeal and energy of our consul-general, Mr Cartwright, (in whom are vested the judicial functions exercised by chancellors of other legations,) are paralysed by the necessity of adhering to the forms of British law, the execution of which is practically impossible. "In a case of murder or felony, for instance,—a case which often occurs—a *pro formâ* verdict of guilty is returned; but what follows? The ambassador has no power to order the law to be carried into effect: nothing remains, therefore, but to send the accused, with the depositions, to Malta or England. But the Maltese courts declare themselves incompetent, and either liberate or send back the prisoner; and English tribunals do not adjudicate on documentary evidence. The consequence is, that unless witnesses proceed to England, criminals must be liberated at Pera, or sent to be liberated at home, for want of legal testimony. They have then their action at law against the consul-general for illegal arrest." It appears scarcely credible that a state of things, so calculated to degrade the British national character in the eyes of the representatives of the other European powers, should ever have been suffered to exist, and still more that it should have remained so long unheeded. A bill was indeed carried through Parliament in 1835, in consequence of the urgent reclamations of Lord Ponsonby and Mr Cartwright, for empowering the Crown to remedy the evil; but though the subject was again pressed by Sir Stratford Canning in 1842, it still remains a dead letter. Mr White has done good service in placing this plain and undeniable statement of facts before the public eye; and we trust that the next session of Parliament will not pass over without our seeing the point brought forward by Mr D'Israeli, Mr Monckton Milnes, or some other of those members of the legislature

whose personal knowledge of the East qualifies them to undertake it. "One plan ought to be adopted forthwith, that of investing the consul-general with such full powers as are granted to London police magistrates, or, if possible, to any magistrates at quarter-sessions. He would then be able to dispose of a multitude of minor correctional cases, which now pass unpunished, to the constant scandal of all other nations. The delegated power might be arbitrary, and inconsistent with our constitutional habits, but the evil requires extrajudicial measures."

In pursuing Mr White's devious course through the various marts of Constantinople, we have not yet brought our readers to the Missr Tcharshy, or Egyptian market, probably the most diversified and purely Oriental scene to be seen in Constantinople, and a representation of which forms the frontispiece to one of the volumes. The building, the entrance to which is between the Fishmarket Gate and the beautiful mosque of the Valida, (built by the mother of Mohammed IV.,) consists of an arcade lighted from the roof, like those of our own capital, 140 yards long, and 20 wide, filled on each side with shops, not separated from each other by partitions, so as to impede the view; the tenants of which are all Osmanlis, and dealers exclusively in perfumes, spices, &c., imported chiefly through Egypt from India, Arabia, &c. Here may be found "the Persian atar-gul's perfume," sandalwood, and odoriferous woods of all kinds from the lands of the East; opium for the *Teryakis*, a race whose numbers are happily now daily decreasing; ambergris for pastilles; "cinnamon and ginger, nutmegs and cloves;" the pink henna powder brought from Mekka by the pilgrims for tinging ladies' fingers, though these "rosy-fingered Auroras" (as Mr W. kindly warns the poetasters of Franguestan) are now only to be found among slaves and the lower orders, the custom being now utterly exploded among dames of high degree: "add to the above, spices, roots, dyewoods, and minerals, and colours of every denomination, and an idea may be formed of the contents of this neatly- [Pg 701] arranged and picturesque bazar. Its magnitude, its abundance and variety of goods, the order that reigns on every side, and the respectability of the dealers, render it one of the most original and interesting sights of the city; it serves to refresh the senses and to dispel the unfavourable impressions caused on first landing."

In the foregoing remarks and extracts, it has been our aim rather to give a condensed view of the information to be derived from the volumes before us, on topics of interest, than to attempt any thing like a general abstract of a work so multifarious in its nature, and so broken into detail, as to render the ordinary rules of criticism as inapplicable to it as they would be to an encylopædia. In point of arrangement, indeed, the latter would have the advantage; for a total absence of *lucidus ordo* pervades Mr White's pages, to a degree scarcely to be excused even by the very miscellaneous nature of the subject. Thus, while constant reference is made, from the first, to the bezestans, the names of their different gates, &c., no description of these edifices occurs till the middle of the second volume, where it is introduced apropos to nothing, between the public libraries and the fur-market. The chapter headed "Capital Punishments," (iv. vol. 1.) is principally devoted to political disquisitions, with an episode on lunatic asylums and the medical academy of Galata Serai, while only a few pages are occupied by the subject implied in the title; which is treated at greater length, and illustrated by the *procès-verbaux* of several criminal trials, at the end of the second volume, where it is brought in as a digression from the slavery laws, on the point of the admissibility of a slave's evidence! But without following Mr White further through the slipper-market, the poultry-market, the coffee-shops, and tobacco-shops, the fruit and flower market, the Ozoon Tcharshy or long market, devoted to the sale of articles of dress and household furniture, *cum multis aliis*; it will suffice to say that there is no article whatever, either of luxury or use, sold in Constantinople, from diamonds to old clothes, of which some account, with the locality in which it is procurable, is not to be found in some part or other of his volumes. We have, besides, disquisitions on statistics and military matters; aqueducts and baths, marriages and funerals, farriery and cookery, &c. &c. —in fact on every imaginable subject, except the price of railway shares, which are as yet to the Turks a pleasure to come. It would be unpardonable to omit mentioning, however, for the benefit of gourmands, that for the savoury viands called kabobs, and other Stamboul delicacies, the shop of the worthy Hadji Mustapha, on the south side of the street called Divan-Yolly, stands unequaled; while horticulturists and poetasters should be informed, that in spite of Lord Byron's fragrant descriptions of "the gardens of Gul in their bloom," the finer European roses do not sympathize with the climate. Lady Ponsonby's attempts to introduce the moss-rose at Therapia failed; and the only place where they have succeeded is the garden of Count Stürmer, the Austrian Internuncio, whose palace is, in more respects than one, according to Mr White, the Gulistan of Stamboul society.

But we cannot take leave of this part of the subject without remarking, that while all praise is due to Mr White's accuracy in describing the scenes and subjects on which he speaks from personal knowledge, his acquaintance with past Turkish history appears to be by no means on a par with the insight he has succeeded in acquiring into the usages and manners of the Turks of the present day. The innumerable anecdotes interspersed through his pages, and which often mar rather than aid the effect of the more solid matter, are frequently both improbable and pointless; and the lapses which here and there occur in matters of historical fact, are almost incomprehensible. Thus we are told (i. 179,) that the favour enjoyed (until recently) by Riza Pasha, was owing to his having rescued the present sultan, when a child, from a reservoir in the Imperial Gardens of Beglerbey, into which he had been hurled by his father in a fit of brutal fury—an act wholly alien to the character of Mahmoud, but which (as Mr W. observes,) "will not [Pg 702] appear improbable to those acquainted with Oriental history"—since it is found related, in all its circumstances, in Rycaut's history of the reign of Ibrahim, whose infant son, afterwards Mohammed IV., nearly perished in this manner by his hands, and retained through life the scar of a wound on the face, received in the fall. This palpable anachronism is balanced in the next page by a version of the latter incident, in which Mohammed's wound is said to have been inflicted by the dagger of his intoxicated father, irritated by a rebuke from the prince (who, be it remarked, was only seven years old at Ibrahim's death, some years later) on his unseemly exhibition of himself as a dancer. As a further instance of paternal barbarity in the Osmanli sultans, it is related how Selim I. was bastinadoed by command of his

father, Bajazet II., for misconduct in the government of Bagdad! with the marvellous addition, (worthy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,) that from the sticks used for his punishment, and planted by his sorrowing tutor, sprung the grove of Tchibookly, opposite Yenikouy! History will show that Selim and Bajazet never met after the accession of the latter, except when the rebellious son met the father in arms at Tchourlou; and it is well known that Bagdad did not become part of the Ottoman empire till the reign of Soliman the Magnificent the son of Selim. The mention of the City of the Khalifs, indeed, seems destined to lead Mr White into error; for in another story, the circumstances of which differ in every point from the same incident as related by Oriental historians, we find the Ommiyade Khalif, Yezid III., who died A.D. 723, (twenty-seven years before the accession of the Abbasides, and forty before the foundation of Bagdad,) spoken of as an Abbaside khalif of Bagdad! Again, we find in the list of geographical writers, (ii. 172,) "Ebul Feredj, Prince of Hama, 1331"—thus confounding the monk Gregory Abulpharagius with the Arabic Livy, Abulfeda, a prince of the line of Saladin! This last error, indeed, can scarcely be more than a slip of the pen. But instances of this kind might be multiplied; and it would be well if such passages, with numerous idle legends (such as the patronage of black bears by the Abbasides, and brown bears by the Ommiyades,) be omitted in any future edition.

We have reserved for the conclusion of our notice, the consideration of Mr White's observations on the late *constitution* (as it has been called) of Gul-khana, a visionary scheme concocted by Reshid Pasha, under French influence, by which it was proposed to secure equal rights to all the component parts of the heterogeneous mass which constitutes the population of the Ottoman empire. The author's remarks on this well-meant, but crude and impracticable *coup-d'état*, evince a clear perception of the domestic interests and relative political position of Turkey, which lead us to hope that he will erelong turn his attention on a more extended scale, to the important subject of Ottoman politics. For the present, we must content ourselves with laying before our readers, in an abridged form, the clear and comprehensive views here laid down, on a question involving the future interests of Europe, and of no European power more than of Great Britain.

"The population of the Turkish empire consists of several distinct races, utterly opposed to each other in religion, habits, descent, objects, and in every moral and even physical characteristic. The Turkomans, Kurds, Arabs, Egyptians, Druses, Maronites, Albanians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, and Armenians, are so many distinct nations, inhabiting the same or contiguous soils, without having intermixed in the slightest degree from their earliest conquest, and without having a single object in common. Over these dissentient populations stands the pure Ottoman race, the paramount nation, charged with maintaining the equilibrium between all, and with neutralizing the ascendancy of one faction by the aid of others. Were this control not to exist—were the Turks, who represent their ancestors, the conquerors of the land, to be reduced to a level with those now beneath them, or were the preponderating influence of the former to be destroyed by the elevation and equalization of the latter, perpetual revolts and civil wars could not fail to ensue. The dependent populations, now constituting so large a portion of [Pg 703] the empire, would continue the struggle until one of them obtained the supremacy at present exercised by the Turkish race, or until the territory were divided among themselves, or parcelled out by foreign powers. In this last hypothesis will be found the whole secret of the ardent sympathy evinced by most foreigners, especially by the press of France, for the subjugated races.

"Many benevolent men argue, that the surest means of tranquillizing the tributaries of the Porte, and attaching them to the government, is by raising them in the social scale, and by granting to all the same rights and immunities as are enjoyed by their rulers. But it has been repeatedly proved, that concessions do but lead to fresh demands, and that partial enfranchisement conducts to total emancipation. 'And why should they not?' is often asked. To this may be replied, that the possession of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles by any other power, or fraction of power, than the Porte, would be a source of interminable discord to Europe, and irreparable detriment to England. It would not only affect our commerce, and undermine our political influence throughout the East, but would add enormously to our naval expenditure, by requiring an augmentation of our maritime force equivalent to that now remaining neuter in the Golden Horn. Treaties, it is said, might be concluded, exacting maritime restrictions. But what are treaties in the face of events? Whoever possesses the Bosphorus, Propontis, and Archipelago, *must* become a maritime nation in spite of treaties. Whoever possesses Constantinople *must* become a great manufacturing and exporting nation, in defiance of competition. In less than half a century, the romantic villas and tapering cypresses that now fringe the blue Bosphorus, would be replaced by factories and steam-chimneys—every one of which would be a deadly rival to a similar establishment in Great Britain. I argue as an Englishman, whose duty it is to consider the material interests of his country, now and hereafter, and not to occupy himself with the theories of political philanthropists.

"According to the levelling system, recommended as the basis of reforms, all classes would eventually be assimilated—the desert Arabs to the laborious Maronites, the intractable Arnoots to the industrious Bulgarians, the thrifty Armenians to the restless and ambitious Greeks, and the humble and parsimonious Jews to the haughty and lavish Osmanlis. Thus, contiguous populations, which now keep each other in check, because their interests are divergent and their jealousies inveterate, would find their interests assimilated; and in the event of opposition to government, the Porte, in lieu of being able to overcome one sect through the rivalry of another, would find them all united against the dominant power. The Ottoman government should therefore avoid establishing any community of rights or interests among the races subjected to its rule. Each of these races ought to be governed according to its own usages and individual creed; there should be uniformity in the principles of administration, but diversity in the application. The Ottoman tenure cannot be maintained but by decided and peremptory superiority. Adhesion on the part of the subjugated is impossible; connexion is all that can be expected; and to preserve this connexion, the supremacy of conquest must not be relaxed. The Porte cannot expect attachment; it must consequently enforce submission. When this absolutism ceases to exist, the power will pass into other hands; and where is the politician that can calculate the results of the transfer? One issue may be safely predicted—England

must lose, but cannot gain by the change. With the increasing embarrassments to commerce and industry, which continental states are raising against Britain, it is essential that we should not allow a false cry of philanthropy to throw us off our guard in the Levant. France in Africa, and Russia on the Danube, are intent on the same object. Their battle-cries are civilization and religion; their pretext the improvement of the Christian populations. But who is there that has studied the recent policy of the one, and the undeviating system of the other, since the days of Catherine, that can question for a moment the purport of both? *And yet England and Austria have acted recently as if France were sincere, and Russia disinterested.*"

FOOTNOTES.

[28] *Three Years in Constantinople; or, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844.* By Charles White, Esq.

[29] The root of bezestan and bazar is *bez*, cloth;—of tcharshy, *tchar*, four, meaning a square.

[30] A catalogue of works printed from the establishment of the press in 1726 to 1820, is given in the notes to Book 65 of Von Hammer Purgstall's Ottoman History.

[31] Mr White erroneously calls him Mourad III., and places the expedition against Bagdad in 1834.

[32] Mr White here introduces a digression on the other relics of the Prophet, the Moslem festivals, &c., his account of which presents little novelty; but he falls into the general error of describing the Mahmil, borne by the holy camel in the pilgrim caravan, as containing the brocade covering of the Kaaba, when it is in fact merely an emblem of the presence of the monarch, like an empty carriage sent in a procession.—(See *Lane's Modern Egyptians*, ii. p. 204, 8vo. ed.) It is indeed sufficiently obvious, that a box six feet high and two in diameter, could not contain a piece of brocade sufficient to surround a building described by Burckhardt as eighteen paces long, fourteen broad, and from thirty-five to forty feet high.

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE CLOUD.

[Pg 704]

(A Reminiscence of Switzerland.)

The cloud is to the mountain what motion is to the sea; it gives to it an infinite variety of expression—gives it a life—gives it joy and sufferance, alternate calm, and terror, and anger. Without the cloud, the mountain would still be sublime, but monotonous; it would have but a picture-like existence.

How thoroughly they understand and sympathize with each other—these glorious playmates, these immortal brethren! Sometimes the cloud lies supported in the hollow of the hill, as if out of love it feigned weariness, and needed to be upheld. At other times the whole hill stands enveloped in the cloud that has expanded to embrace and to conceal it. No jealousy here. Each lives its own grand life under the equal eye of heaven.

As you approach the mountains, it seems that the clouds begin already to arrange themselves in bolder and more fantastic shapes. They have a fellowship here. They built their mountains upon mountains—their mountains which are as light as air—huge structures built at the giddy suggestion of the passing breeze. Theirs is the wild liberty of endless change, by which they compensate themselves for their thin and fleeting existence, and seem to mock the stationary forms of their stable brethren fast rooted to the earth. And how genially does the sun pour his beam upon these twin grandeurs! For a moment they are assimilated; his ray has permeated, has etherealized the solid mountain, has fixed and defined the floating vapour. What now is the one but a stationary cloud? what is the other but a risen hill?—poised not in the air but in the flood of light.

I am never weary of watching the play of these giant children of the earth. Sometimes a soft white cloud, so pure, so bright, sleeps, amidst open sunshine, nestled like an infant in the bosom of a green mountain. Sometimes the rising upcurling vapour will linger Just above the summit, and seem for a while an incense exhaling from this vast censer. Sometimes it will descend, and *drape* the whole side of the hill as with a transparent veil. I have seen it sweep between me and the mountain like a sheeted ghost, tall as the mountain, till the strong daylight dissolved its thin substance, and it rose again in flakes to decorate the blue heavens. But oh, glorious above all! when on some brightest of days, the whole mass of whitest clouds gathers midway upon the snow-topped mountain. How magnificent then is that bright eminence seen above the cloud! How it seems rising upwards—how it seems borne aloft by those innumerable wings—by those enormous pinions which I see stretching from the cloudy mass! What an ascension have we here!—what a transfiguration! O Raphael! I will not disparage thy name nor thy art, but thy angels bearing on their wings the brightening saint to Heaven—what are they to the picture here?

Look! there—fairly in the sky—where we should see but the pure ether—above the clouds which themselves are sailing high in serenest air—yes, there, in the blue and giddy expanse, stands the solid mountain, glittering like a diamond. O God! the bewildered reason pent up in cities, toils much to prove and penetrate thy being and thy nature—toils much in vain. Here, I reason not—I see. The Great King lives—lo there is his throne.

To him who quits the plain for the mountain, how the character of the cloud alters. That which seemed to belong exclusively to the sky, has been drawn down and belongs as plainly to the earth. Mount some noble eminence and look down—you will see the clouds lying *on* and *about* the landscape, as if they had fallen on it. You are on the steadfast earth, and they are underneath you. You look down perhaps on the lake, and there is a solitary cloud lying settled on it; when the rest of the fleecy drove had risen from their couch, this idle sleeper had been left dreaming there. [Pg 705]

Or stay below, and see the sun rise in the valley. When all is warm and clear upon the heights, and the tops of the hills are fervid with the beams of heaven, there still lies a cold white mass of cloud about your feet. It is not yet morning in the valley. There the cloud has been slumbering all night—there it found its home. It also will by and by receive the beam, and then it will arise, enveloping the hill as it ascends; the hill will have a second dawn; the cloud will assume its proud station in the sky; but it will return again to the valley at night.

I am sailing on the lake of Brienz on a day golden with sunbeams. The high ridge of its rocky castellated hills is distinct as light can make it. Yet half-way up, amidst the pine forests, there lies upon the rich verdure a huge motionless cloud. What does it there? Its place was surely in the sky. But no; it belongs, like ourselves, to the earth.

Is nature gaily mocking us, when upon her impregnable hills she builds these *castles in the air*? But, good heavens! what a military aspect all on a sudden does this mountain-side put on. Mark that innumerable host of pine-trees. What regiments of them are marching up the hill in the hot sun, as if to storm those rocky forts above! What serried ranks! and yet there are some stragglers—some that have hastened on in front, some that have lingered in the rear. Look at that tall gigantic pine breasting the hill alone, like an old grenadier. How upright against the steep declivity! while his lengthened shadow is thrown headlong back behind him down the precipice. I should be giddy to see such a shadow of my own. I should doubt if it would consent to be drawn up by the heels to the summit of the mountain—whether it would not rather drag me down with it into the abyss.

I have seen hills on which lay the clear unclouded sky, making them blue as itself. I have gazed on those beautiful far-receding valleys—as the valley of the Rhone—when they have appeared to collect and retain the azure ether. They were full of Heaven. Angels might breathe that air. And yet I better love the interchange, the wild combination of cloud and mountain. Not cloud that intercepts the sun, but that reflects its brilliancy, and brightens round the hills. It is but a gorgeous drapery that the sky lets fall on the broad Herculean shoulders of the mountain. No, it should not intercept the beams of the great luminary; for the mountain loves the light. I have observed that the twilight, so grateful to the plain, is mortal to the mountain. It craves light—it lifts up its great chalice for light—this great flower is the first to close, to fade, at the withdrawal of the sun. It stretches up to heaven seeking light; it cannot have too much—under the strongest beam it never droops—its brow is never dazzled.

But then these clouds, you will tell me, that hover about the mountain, all wing, all plumage, with just so much of substance for light to live in them—these very clouds can descend, and thicken, and blacken, and cover all things with an inexpressible gloom. True, and the mountain, or what is seen of it, becomes now the very image of a great and unfathomable sorrow. And only the great can express a great sadness. This aspect of nature shall never by me be forgotten; nor will I ever shrink from encountering it. If you would know the gloom of heart which nature can betray, as well as the glory it can manifest, you must visit the mountains. For days together, clouds, huge, dense, unwieldy, lie heavily upon the hills—which stand, how mute, how mournful!—as if they, too, knew of death. And look at the little lake at their feet. What now is its tranquillity when not a single sunbeam plays upon it? Better the earth opened and received it, and hid for ever its leaden despondency. And now there comes the paroxysm of terror and despair; deep thunders are heard, and a madness flashes forth in the vivid lightning. There is desperation amongst the elements. But the elements, like the heart of man, must rage in vain—must learn the universal lesson of submission. With them, as with humanity, despair brings back tranquillity. And now the driving cloud reveals again the glittering summits of the mountains, and light falls in laughter on the beaming lake. [Pg 706]

How like to a ruined Heaven is this earth! Nay, is it not more beautiful for being a ruin?

Who can speak of lakes and not think of thee, beautiful Leman? How calm! how exquisitely blue! Let me call it a liquid sky that is spread here beneath us. And note how, where the boat presses, or the oar strikes, it yields ever a still more exquisite hue—akin to the violet, which gives to the rude pressure a redoubled fragrance—akin to the gentlest of womankind, whose love plays sweetest round the strokes of calamity.

Oh, there is a woman's heart in thy waters, beautiful Leman!

I have seen thee in all thy moods, in all thy humours. I have watched thee in profoundest calm; and suddenly, with little note of preparation, seen thee lash thy blue waves into a tempest. How beautiful in their anger were those azure waves crested with their white foam! And at other times, when all has been a sad unjoyous calm, I have seen, without being able to trace whence the light had broken, a soft expanse of brightness steal tremulous over the marble waters. A smile that seemed to speak of sweet caprice—that seemed to say that half its anger had been feint.

Yes, verily there is a woman's heart in thy waters, beautiful Leman!

I lie rocking in a boat midway between Vevay and Lausanne. On the opposite coast are the low purple hills *couching* beside the lake. But there, to the left, what an ethereal structure of cloud and snowy mountain is revealed to me! What a creation of that spirit of beauty which works its marvels in the unconscious earth! The Alps here, while they retain all the aërial effect gathered from distance, yet seem to arise from the very margin of the lake. The whole scene is so ethereal, you fear to look aside, lest when you look again it may have vanished like a vision of the clouds.

And why should these little boats, with their tall triangular sails, which glide so gracefully over the water, be forgotten? The sail, though an artifice of man, is almost always in harmony with nature. Nature has adopted it—has lent it some of her own wild privileges—her own bold and varied contrasts of light and shade. The surface of the water is perhaps dark and overclouded; the little upright sail is the only thing that has caught the light, and it glitters there like a moving star. Or the water is all one dazzling sheet of silver, tremulous with the vivid sunbeam, and now the little sail is black as night, and steals with bewitching contrast over that sparkling surface.

But we fly again to the mountain. Tourists are too apt to speak of the waterfall as something independent, something to be visited as a separate curiosity. There may be some such. But in general, the waterfall should be understood as part of the mountain—as the great fountain which adorns the architecture of its rocks, and the gardens of its pine forests. It belongs to the mountain. Pass through the valley, and look up; you see here and there thin stripes of glittering white, noiseless, motionless. They are waterfalls, which, if you approach them, will din you with their roar, and which are dashing headlong down, covered with tossing spray. Or ascend the face of the mountain, and again look around and above you. From all sides the waterfalls are rushing. They bear you down. You are giddy with their reckless speed. How they make the rock live! What a stormy vitality have they diffused around them! You might as well separate a river from its banks as a waterfall from its mountain.

And yet there is one which I could look at for hours together, merely watching its own graceful movements. Let me sit again in imagination in the valley of Lauterbrunnen, under the fall of the Staubbach. Most graceful and ladylike of descents! It does not fall; but over the rock, and along the face of the precipice, developes some lovely form that nature had at heart;—diffuses itself in down-pointing pinnacles of liquid vapour, fretted with the finest spray. The laws of gravity have nothing to do with its [Pg 707] movements. It is not hurled down; it does not leap, plunging madly into the abyss; it thinks only of beauty as it sinks. No noise, no shock, no rude concussion. Where it should dash against the projecting rock, lo! its series of out-shooting pinnacles is complete, and the vanishing point just kisses the granite. It disappoints the harsh obstruction by its exquisite grace and most beautiful levity, and springs a second time from the rock without trace of ever having encountered it.

The whole side of the mountain is here barren granite. It glides like a spirit down the adverse and severe declivity. It is like Christ in this world. The famous fall of the Griesbach, near the lake of Brienz, thunders through the most luxuriant foliage; the Staubbach meets the bare rock with touches of love, and a movement all grace, and a voice full of reconcilement.

Mont Blanc! Mont Blanc! I have not scaled thy heights so boldly or so far as others have, but I will yield to none in worship of thee and thy neighbour mountains. Some complain that the valley of Chamouni is barren; they are barren souls that so complain. True, it has not the rich pastures that lie bordering on the snow in the Oberland. But neither does it need them. Look *down* the valley from the pass of the Col de Balme, and see summit beyond summit; or ascend the lateral heights of La Flegère, and see the Alps stretched out in a line before you, and say if any thing be wanting. Here is the sculpture of landscape. Stretched yourself upon the bare open rock, you see the great hills built up before you, from their green base to their snowy summits, with rock, and glacier, and pine forests. You see how the Great Architect has wrought.

And for softer beauty, has not the eye been feasted even to excess—till you cried "hold—enough!" till you craved repose from excitement—along the whole route, from Lausanne to this spot? What perfect combinations of beauty and sublimity—of grandeur of outline with richness of colouring—have you not been travelling through!

It seems a fanciful illustration, and yet it has more than once occurred to me, when comparing the scenery of the Oberland with that of the valley of Chamouni and its neighbourhood; the one resembles the first work—be it picture or poem—of a great genius; the other, the second. On his first performance, the artist lavishes beauties of every description; he crowds it with charms; all the stores of his imagination are at once unfolded, and he must find a place for all. In the second, which is more calm and mature, the style is broader, the disposition of materials more skilful: the artist, master of his inspiration, no longer suffers one beauty to crowd upon another, finds for all not only place, but place sufficient; and, above all, no longer fears being simple or even austere. I dare not say that the Oberland has a fault in its composition—so charming, so magnificent have I found it; but let me mark the broad masterly style of this Alpine region. As you journey from Villeneuve, with what a gentle, bland magnificence does the valley expand before you! The hills and rocks, as they increase in altitude, still fall back, and reveal in the centre the towering *Dent du Midi*, glittering with its eternal snows. The whole way to Martigny you see sublimity without admixture of terror; it is beauty elevated into grandeur, without losing its amenity. And then, if you cross by the Col de Balme, leaving the valley of the Rhone as you ascend, and descending upon the valley of Chamouni, where the Alps curve before you in most perfect grouping—tell me if it is possible for the heart of man to desire more. Nay, is not the heart utterly exhausted by this series of scenic raptures?

For ever be remembered that magnificent pass of the Col de Balme! If I have a white day in my calendar, it is the day I spent in thy defiles. Deliberately I assert that life has nothing comparable to the delight of traversing alone, borne leisurely on the back of one's mule, a mountain-pass such as this. Those who have stouter limbs may prefer to use them; give me for my instrument of progression the legs of the patient and [Pg 708] sure-footed mule. They are better legs, at all events, than mine. I am seated on his back, the bridle lies knotted upon his neck—the cares of the way are all his—the toil and the anxiety of it; the scene is all mine, and I am all in it. I am seated there, all eye, all thought, gazing, musing; yet not without just sufficient occupation to keep it still a luxury—this leisure to contemplate. The mule takes care of himself, and, in so doing, of you too; yet not so entirely but that you must look a little after yourself. That he by no means has your safety for his primary object is evident from this, that, in turning sharp corners or traversing narrow paths, he never calculates whether there is sufficient room for any other legs than his own—takes no thought of yours. To keep your knees, in such places, from collision with huge boulders, or shattered stumps of trees, must be your own care; to say nothing of the occasional application of whip or stick, and a *very* strong pull at his mouth to raise his head from the grass which he has leisurely begun to crop. Seated thus upon your mule, given up to the scene, with something still of active life going on about you, with full liberty to pause and gaze, and dismount when you will, and at no time proceeding at a railroad speed, I do say—unless you are seated by your own incomparable Juliet, who has for the first time breathed that she loves you—I do say that you are in the most enviable position that the wide world affords. As for me, I have spent some days, some weeks, in this fashion amongst the mountains; they are the only days of my life I would wish to live over again. But mind, if you would really enjoy all this, go alone—a silent guide before or behind you. No friends, no companion, no gossip. You will find gossip enough in your inn, if you want it. If your guide thinks it is his duty to talk, to explain, to tell you the foolish names of things that need no name—make belief that you understand him not—that his language, be it French or German, is to you utterly incomprehensible.

I would not paint it all *couleur de rose*. The sun is not always shining.

There is tempest and foul weather, fatigue and cold, and abundant moisture to be occasionally encountered. There is something to endure. But if you prayed to Heaven for perpetual fair weather, and your prayer were granted, it would be the most unfortunate petition you could put up. Why, there are some of the sublimest aspects, the noblest moods and tempers of the great scene, which you would utterly forfeit by this miserable immunity. He who loves the mountain, will love it in the tempest as well as in the sunshine. To be enveloped in driving mist or cloud that obscures every thing from view—to be made aware of the neighbouring precipice only by the sound of the torrent that rushes unseen beneath you—how low down you can only guess—this, too, has its excitement. Besides, while you are in this total blank, the wind will suddenly drive the whole mass of cloud and thick vapour from the scene around you, and leave the most glorious spectacle for some moments exposed to view. Nothing can exceed these moments of sudden and partial revelation. The glittering summits of the mountains appear as by enchantment where there had long been nothing but dense dark vapour. And how beautiful the wild disorder of the clouds, whose array has been broken up, and who are seen flying, huddled together in tumultuous retreat! But the veering wind rallies them again, and again they sweep back over the vast expanse, and hill and valley, earth and sky, are obliterated in a second.

He who would ponder what *man* is, should journey amongst the mountains. What *men* are, is best learnt in the city.

How, to a museful spirit, the heart and soul of man is reflected in the shows of nature! I cannot see this torrent battling for ever along its rocky path, and not animate it with human passions, and torture it with a human fate. Can it have so much turmoil and restlessness, and not be allied to humanity?

But all are not images of violence or lessons of despondency. Mark the Yungfrau, how she lifts her slight and virgin snows fearlessly to the blazing sun! She is so high, she feels no *reflected heat*. [Pg 709]

How well the simple architecture of the low-roofed buildings of Switzerland accords with its magnificent scenery! What were lofty steeples beside Mont Blanc, or turreted castles beside her pinnacles of granite? Elsewhere, in the level plain, I love the cathedral. I had lately stood enraptured in the choir of that of Cologne, gazing up at those tall windows which spring where other loftiest buildings terminate—windows so high that God only can look in upon the worshipper.

But here—what need of the stately edifice, when there is a church whose buttresses are mountains, whose roof and towers are above the clouds, verily in the heavens? What need of artificial reminiscences of the Great King, here where he has built for himself? The plain, it is *man's* nature—given to man's wants; there stands his corn, there flow his milk and honey. But the mountain, it is God's nature—his stationary tabernacle—reserved for the eye only of man and the communing of his spirit. If meant to subserve the wants of his earthly nature, meant still more expressly to kindle other wants. Do they not indeed lead to Heaven, these mountains? At least I know they lead beyond this earth.

There is a little church stands in the valley of Chamouni. It was open, as is customary in Catholic countries, to receive the visits and the prayers of the faithful; but there was no service, no priest, nor indeed a single person in the building. It was evening—and a solitary lamp hung suspended from the ceiling, just before the altar. Allured by the mysterious appearance of this lamp burning in solitude, I entered, and remained in it some time, making out, in the dim light, the wondrous figures of virgins and saints generally found in such edifices. When I emerged from the church, there stood Mont Blanc before

me, reflecting the last tints of the setting sun. I am habitually tolerant of Catholic devices and ceremonies; but at this moment how inexpressibly strange, how very little, how poor, contemptible, and like an infant's toy, seemed all the implements of worship I had just left!

And yet the tall, simple, wooden cross that stands in the open air on the platform before the church, this was well. This was a symbol that might well stand, even in the presence of Mont Blanc. Symbol of suffering and of love, where is it out of place? On no spot on earth, on no spot where a human heart is beating.

Mont Blanc and this wooden cross, are they not the two greatest symbols that the world can show? They are wisely placed opposite each other.

I have alluded to the sunset seen in this valley. All travellers love to talk a little of their own experience, their good or their ill fortune. The first evening I entered Chamouni, the clouds had gathered on the summits of the mountains, and a view of Mont Blanc was thought hopeless. Nevertheless I sallied forth, and planted myself in the valley, with a singular confidence in the goodness of nature towards one who was the humblest but one of the sincerest of her votaries. My confidence was rewarded. The clouds dispersed, and the roseate sunset on the mountain was seen to perfection. I had not yet learned to distinguish that summit which, in an especial manner, bears the name of Mont Blanc. There is a modesty in its greatness. It makes no ostentatious claim to be the highest in the range, and is content if for a time you give the glory of pre-eminence to others. But it reserves a convincing proof of its own superiority. I had been looking elsewhere, and in a wrong direction, for Mont Blanc, when I found that all the summits had sunk, like the clouds when day deserts them, into a cold dead white—all but one point, that still glowed with the radiance of the sun when all beside had lost it. There was the royal mountain.

What a cold, corpse-like hue it is which the snow-mountain assumes just after the sun has quitted it. There is a short interval then, when it seems the very image of death. But the moon rises, or the stars take up their place, and the mountain resumes its beauty and its life. Beauty is always life. Under the star-light how ethereal does it look!

[Pg 710]

In the landscapes of other countries, the house—the habitation of man—be it farm-house or cottage—gathers, so to speak, some of the country about itself—makes itself the centre of some circle, however small. Not so in Switzerland. The hooded chalet, which even in summer speaks so plainly of winter, and stands ever prepared with its low drooping roof to shelter its eyes and ears from the snow and the wind—these dot the landscape most charmingly, but yet are lost in it; they form no group, no central point in the scene. I am thinking more particularly of the chalets in the Oberland. There is no path apparently between one and the other; the beautiful green verdure lies untrodden around them. One would say, the inhabitants found their way to them like birds to their nests. And like enough to nests they are, both in the elevation at which they are sometimes perched, and in the manner of their distribution over the scene.

However they got there, people at all events are living in them, and the farm and the dairy are carried up into I know not what altitudes. Those beautiful little tame cattle, with their short horns, and long ears, and mouse-coloured skin, with all the agility of a goat, and all the gentleness of domesticity—you meet them feeding in places where your mule looks thoughtfully to his footing. And then follows perhaps a peasant girl in her picturesque cloak made of the undressed fur of the goat and her round hat of thickly plaited straw, calling after them in that high sing-song note, which forms the basis of what is called Swiss music. This cry heard in the mountains is delightful, the voice is sustained and yet varied—being varied, it can be sustained the longer—and the high note pierces far into the distance. As a real cry of the peasant it is delightful to hear; it is appropriate to the purpose and the place. But defend my ears against that imitation of it introduced by young ladies into the Swiss songs. Swiss music in an English drawing-room—may I escape the infliction! but the Swiss peasant chanting across the mountain defiles—may I often again halt to listen to it!

But from the mountain and the cloud we must now depart. We must wend towards the plain. One very simple and consolatory thought strikes me—though we must leave the glory of the mountain, we at least take the sun with us. And the cloud too, you will add. Alas! something too much of that.

But no murmurs. We islanders, who can see the sun set on the broad ocean—had we nothing else to boast of—can never feel deserted of nature. We have our portion of her excellent gifts. I know not yet how an Italian sky, so famed for its deep and constant azure, may affect me, but I know that we have our gorgeous melancholy sunsets, to which our island tempers become singularly attuned. The cathedral splendours—the dim religious light of our vesper skies—I doubt if I would exchange them for the unmitigated glories of a southern clime.

THE SECOND PANDORA.

[Pg 711]

Methought Prometheus, from his rock unbound,
Had with the Gods again acceptance found.
Once more he seem'd his wond'rous task to ply,
While all Olympus stood admiring by.
To high designs his heart and hands aspire,
To quicken earthly dust with heavenly fire,

Won by no fraud, but lent by liberal love,
To raise weak mortals to the realms above;
For the bright flame remembers, even on earth,
And pants to reach, the region of its birth.
A female form was now the artist's care;
Faultless in shape, and exquisitely fair.
Of more than Parian purity, the clay
Had all been leaven'd with the ethereal ray.
Deep in the heart the kindling spark began,
And far diffused through every fibre ran;
The eyes reveal'd it, and the blooming skin
Glow'd with the lovely light that shone within.
The applauding Gods confess'd the matchless sight;
The first Pandora was not half so bright;
That beauteous mischief, formed at Jove's command,
A curse to men, by Mulciber's own hand;
Whose eager haste the fatal jar to know,
Fill'd the wide world with all but hopeless woe.
But dawn of better days arose, when He,
The patient Hero, set Prometheus free,
Alcides, to whose toils the joy was given
To conquer Hell and climb the heights of Heaven.
In the fair work that now the master wrought,
The first-fruits of his liberty were brought;
The Gods receive her as a pledge of peace,
And heap their gifts and happiest auspices.
Minerva to the virgin first imparts
Her skill in woman's works and household arts;
The needle's use, the robe's embroider'd bloom,
And all the varied labours of the loom.
Calm fortitude she gave, and courage strong,
To cope with ill and triumph over wrong;
Ingenuous prudence, with prophetic sight,
And clear instinctive wisdom, ever right.
Diana brought the maid her modest mien,
Her love of fountains and the sylvan scene;
The Hours and Seasons lent each varying ray
That gilds the rolling year or changing day.
The cunning skill of Hermes nicely hung,
With subtle blandishments, her sliding tongue,
And train'd her eyes to stolen glances sweet,
And all the wiles of innocent deceit.
Phœbus attuned her ear to love the lyre,
And warm'd her fancy with poetic fire.
Nor this alone; but shared his healing art,
And robb'd his son of all the gentler part;
Taught her with soothing touch and silent tread
To hover lightly round the sick one's bed,
And promised oft to show, when medicines fail,
A woman's watchful tenderness prevail.
Next Venus and the Graces largely shed [Pg 712]
A shower of fascinations on her head.
Each line, each look, was brighten'd and refined,
Each outward act, each movement of the mind,
Till all her charms confess the soft control,
And blend at once in one harmonious whole.
But still the Eternal Sire apart remain'd,
And Juno's bounty was not yet obtained.
The voice of Heaven's High Queen then fill'd the ear,
"A wife and mother, let the Nymph appear."
The mystic change like quick enchantment shows—
The slender lily blooms a blushing rose.
Three gentle children now, by just degrees,
Are ranged in budding beauty round her knees:
Still to her lips their looks attentive turn,
And drink instruction from its purest urn,
While o'er their eyes soft memories seem to play,
That paint a friend or father far away.
A richer charm her ripen'd form displays,
A halo round her shines with holier rays;
And if at times, a shade of pensive grace
Pass like a cloud across her earnest face,
Yet faithful tokens the glad truth impart,
That deeper happiness pervades her heart.
Jove latest spoke: "One boon remains," he said,
And bent serenely his ambrosial head;
"The last, best boon, which I alone bestow;"
Then bade the waters of Affliction flow.
The golden dream was dimm'd; a darken'd room
Scarce show'd where dire disease had shed its gloom.
A little child in death extended lay,
Still round her linger'd the departing ray.
Another pallid face appear'd, where Life
With its fell foe maintain'd a doubtful strife.
Long was the contest; changeful hopes and fears
Now sunk the Mother's soul, now dried her tears.
At last a steady line of dawning light
Show'd that her son was saved, and banish'd night.
Though sad her heart, of one fair pledge bereft,
She sees and owns the bounties Heaven hath left.
In natural drops her anguish finds relief,
And leaves the Matron beautified by grief;
While consolation, beaming from above,

Fills her with new-felt gratitude and love.
O happy He! before whose waking eyes,
So bright a vision may resplendent rise—
The New PANDORA, by the Gods designed,
Not now the bane, but blessing of Mankind!

REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD.[33]

[Pg 713]

It is scarcely theoretical to say, that every century has a character of its own. The human mind is essentially progressive in Europe. The accumulations of past knowledge, experience, and impulse, are perpetually preparing changes on the face of society; and we may fairly regard every hundred years as the period maturing those changes into visible form. Thus, the fifteenth century was the age of discovery in the arts, in the powers of nature, and in the great provinces of the globe: the sixteenth exhibited the general mind under the impressions of religion—the Reformation, the German wars for liberty and faith, and the struggles of Protestantism in France. The seventeenth was the brilliant period of scientific advance, of continental literature, and of courtly pomp and power. The eighteenth was the period of politics; every court of Europe was engaged in the game of political rivalry; the European balance became the test, the labour, and the triumph of statesmanship. The negotiator was then the great instrument of public action. Diplomacy assumed a shape, and Europe was governed by despatches. The genius of Frederick the Second restored war to its early rank among the elements of national life; but brilliant as his wars were, they were subservient to the leading feature of the age. They were fought, not, like the battles of the old conquerors, for fame, but for influence—not to leave the king without an enemy, but to leave his ambassadors without an opponent—less to gain triumphs, than to ensure treaties: they all began and ended in diplomacy!

It is remarkable, that this process was exhibited in Europe alone. In the East, comprehending two-thirds of human kind, no change was made since the conquests of Mahomet. That vast convulsion, in which the nervousness of frenzy had given the effeminate spirit of the Oriental the strength of the soldier and the ambition of universal conqueror, had no sooner wrought its purpose than it passed away, leaving the general mind still more exhausted than before. The Saracen warrior sank into the peasant, and the Arab was again lost in his sands; the Turk alone survived, exhibiting splendour without wealth, and pride without power—a decaying image of Despotism, which nothing but the jealousy of the European saved from falling under the first assault. Such is the repressive strength of evil government; progress, the most salient principle of our nature, dies before it. And man, of all beings the most eager for acquirement, and the most restless under all monotony of time, place, and position, becomes like the dog or the mule, and generation after generation lives and dies with no more consciousness of the capacities of his existence, than the root which the animal devours, or the tree under which it was born.

In England, the eighteenth century was wholly political. It was a continual struggle through all the difficulties belonging to a free constitution, exposed to the full discussion of an intellectual people. Without adopting the offensive prejudice, which places the individual ability of the Englishmen in the first rank; or without doubting that nature has distributed nearly an equal share of personal ability among all European nations; we may, not unjustly, place the national mind of England in the very highest rank of general capacity—if that is the most intellectual nation, by which the public intellect is most constantly employed, in which all the great questions of society are most habitually referred to the decision of the intellect, and in which that decision is the most irresistible in its effects, no nation of Europe can stand upon equal ground with the English. For, in what other nation is the public intellect in such unwearied exercise, in such continual demand, and in such unanswerable power?

[Pg 714]

In what other nation of the world (excepting, within those few years, France; and that most imperfectly) has public opinion ever been appealed to? But, in England, to what else is there any appeal? Or, does not the foreign mind bear some resemblance to the foreign landscape—exhibiting barren though noble elevations, spots of singular though obscure beauty among its recesses, and even in its wildest scenes a capacity of culture?—while, in the mind of England, like its landscape, that culture has already laid its hand upon the soil; has crowned the hill with verdure, and clothed the vale with fertility; has run its ploughshare along the mountain side, and led the stream from its brow; has sought out every finer secret of the scene, and given the last richness of cultivation to the whole.

From the beginning of the reign of Anne, all was a contest of leading statesmen at the head of parties. Those contests exhibit great mental power, singular system, and extraordinary knowledge of the art of making vast bodies of men minister to the personal objects of avarice and ambition. But they do no honour to the moral dignity of England. All revolutions are hazardous to principle. A succession of revolutions have always extinguished even the pretence to principle. The French Revolution is not the only one which made a race of *girouettes*. The political life of England, from the death of Anne to the reign of George the Third, was a perpetual turning of the weathercock. Whig and Tory were the names of distinction. But their subordinates were of as many varieties of feature as the cargo of a slave-ship; the hue might be the same, but the jargon was that of Babel. It was perhaps fortunate for the imperial power of England, that while she was thus humiliating the national morality, which is the life-blood of nations; her reckless and perpetual enemy beyond the Channel had lost all means of being her antagonist. The French sceptre had fallen into the hands of a prince, who had come to the throne a debauchee; and to whom the throne seemed only a scene for the larger display of his vices. The profligacy of Louis-Quatorze had been palliated by his passion for splendour, among a dissolute people who loved splendour much, and hated profligacy little. But the vices of Louis the Fifteenth were marked by a grossness which degraded them in the eye

even of popular indulgence, and prepared the nation for the overthrow of the monarchy. In this period, religion, the great purifier of national council, maintained but a struggling existence. The Puritanism of the preceding century had crushed the Church of England; and the restoration of the monarchy had given the people a saturnalia. Religion had been confounded with hypocrisy, until the people had equally confounded freedom with infidelity. The heads of the church, chosen by freethinking administrations, were chosen more for the suppleness than for the strength of their principles; and while the people were thus taught to regard churchmen as tools, and the ministers to use them as dependents, the cause of truth sank between both. The Scriptures are the life of religion. It can no more subsist in health without them, than the human frame can subsist without food; it may have the dreams of the enthusiast, or the frenzy of the monk; but, for all the substantial and safe purposes of the human heart, its life is gone for ever. It has been justly remarked, that the theological works of that day, including the sermons, might, in general, have been written if Christianity had never existed. The sermons were chiefly essays, of the dreariest kind on the most commonplace topics of morals. The habit of reading these discourses from the pulpit, a habit so fatal to all impression, speedily rendered the preachers as indifferent as their auditory; and if we were to name the period when religion had most fallen into decay in the public mind, we should pronounce it the half century which preceded the reign of George the Third.

On the subject of pulpit eloquence there are some remarks in one of the reviews of the late Sydney Smith, expressed with all the shrewdness, divested of the levity of that writer, who had keenly observed the popular sources of failure. [Pg 715]

"The great object of modern sermons is, to hazard nothing. Their characteristic is decent debility; which alike guards their authors from ludicrous errors, and precludes them from striking beauties. Yet it is curious to consider, how a body of men so well educated as the English clergy, can distinguish themselves so little in a species of composition, to which it is their peculiar duty, as well as their ordinary habit, to attend. To solve this difficulty, it should be remembered that the eloquence of the bar and of the senate force themselves into notice, power, and wealth." He then slightly guards against the conception, that eloquence should be the sole source of preferment; or even "a common cause of preferment." But he strongly, and with great appearance of truth, attributes the want of public effect to the want of those means by which that effect is secured in every other instance.

"Pulpit discourses have insensibly dwindled from speaking into reading; a practice of itself sufficient to stifle every germ of eloquence. It is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected. What can be more unfortunate, than an orator delivering stale indignation, and fervour of a week old; turning over whole pages of violent passions, written out in German text; reading the tropes and metaphors into which he is hurried by the ardour of his mind; and so affected, at a preconcerted line and page, that he is unable to proceed any further?"

This criticism was perfectly true of sermons forty years ago, when it was written. Times are changed since, and changed for the better. The pulpit is no longer ashamed of the doctrines of Christianity, as too harsh for the ears of a classic audience, or too familiar for the ears of the people. Still there are no rewards in the Church, for that great faculty, or rather that great combination of faculties, which commands all the honours of the senate and the bar. A clerical Demosthenes might find his triumph in the shillings of a charity sermon, but he must never hope for a Stall.

We now revert to the curious, inquisitive, and gossiping historian of the time. Walpole, fond of French manners, delighting in the easy sarcasm, and almost saucy levity, of French "Memoirs," and adopting, in all its extent, the confession, (then so fashionable on the Continent,) that the perfection of writing was to be formed in their lively *persiflage*, evidently modelled his "History" on the style of the Sevignés and St Simons. But he was altogether their superior. If he had been a chamberlain in the court of Louis XV., he might have been as frivolously witty, and as laughingly sarcastic, as any Frenchman who ever sat at the feet of a court mistress, or whoever looked for fame among the sallies of a *petit souper*. But England was an atmosphere which compelled him to a manlier course. The storms of party were not to be stemmed by a wing of gossamer. The writer had bold facts, strong principles, and the struggles of powerful minds to deal with, and their study gave him a strength not his own.

Walpole was fond of having a hero. In private life, George Selwyn was his Admirable Crichton; in public, Charles Townshend. Charles was unquestionably a man of wit. Yet his wit rather consisted in dexterity of language than in brilliancy of conception. He was also eloquent in Parliament; though his charm evidently consisted more in happiness of phrase, than in richness, variety, or vigour, of thought. On the whole, he seems to have been made to amuse rather than to impress, and to give a high conception of his general faculties than to produce either conviction by his argument, or respect by the solid qualities of his genius. Still, he must have been an extraordinary man. Walpole describes his conduct and powers, as exhibited on one of those days of sharp debate which preceded the tremendous discussions of the American war. The subject was a bill for regulating the dividends of the East India Company—the topic was extremely trite, and apparently trifling. But any perch will answer for the flight of such bird. "It was on that day," says [Pg 716] Walpole, "and on that occasion, that Charles Townshend displayed, in a latitude beyond belief, the amazing powers of his capacity, and the no less amazing incongruities of his character." Early in the day he had opened the business, by taking on himself the examination of the Company's conduct, had made a calm speech on the subject, and even went so far as to say, "that he hoped he had atoned for the inconsiderateness of his past life, by the care which he had taken of that business." He then went home to dinner. In his absence a motion was made, which Conway, the secretary of state, not choosing to support alone, it being virtually Townshend's own measure besides, sent to hurry him back to the House. "He returned about eight in the evening, half drunk with champagne," as Walpole says, (which, however, was subsequently denied,) and more intoxicated with spirits. He then instantly rose to speak, without giving himself time to learn any thing, except that the motion had given alarm. He began by vowing that he had not been consulted on the motion—a declaration which astonished every body, there being twelve persons

round him at the moment, who had been in consultation with him that very morning, and with his assistance had drawn up the motion on his own table, and who were petrified at his unparalleled effrontery. But before he sat down, he had poured forth, as Walpole says, "a torrent of wit, humour, knowledge, absurdity, vanity, and fiction, heightened by all the graces of comedy, the happiness of quotation, and the buffoonery of farce. To the purpose of the question he said not a syllable. It was a descant on the times, a picture of parties, of their leaders, their hopes, and effects. It was an encomium and a satire on himself; and when he painted the pretensions of birth, riches, connexions, favours, titles, while he effected to praise Lord Rockingham and that faction, he yet insinuated that nothing but parts like his own were qualified to preside. And while he less covertly arraigned the wild incapacity of Lord Chatham, he excited such murmurs of wonder, admiration, applause, laughter, pity, and scorn, that nothing was so true as the sentence with which he concluded—when, speaking of government, he said, that it had become what he himself had often been called—the weathercock."

Walpole exceeds even his usual measure of admiration, in speaking of this masterly piece of extravagance. "Such was the wit, abundance, and impropriety of this speech," says he, "that for some days men could talk or enquire of nothing else. 'Did you hear Charles Townshend's champagne speech,' was the universal question. The bacchanalian enthusiasm of Pindar flowed in torrents less rapid and less eloquent, and inspired less delight, than Townshend's imagery, which conveyed meaning in every sentence. It was Garrick acting extempore scenes of Congreve." He went to supper with Walpole at Conway's afterwards, where, the flood of his gaiety not being exhausted, he kept the table in a roar till two in the morning. A part of this entertainment, however, must have found his auditory in a condition as unfit for criticism as himself. Claret till "two in the morning," might easily disqualify a convivial circle from the exercise of too delicate a perception. And a part of Townshend's facetiousness on that occasion consisted in mimicking his own wife, and a woman of rank with whom he fancied himself in love. He at last gave up from mere bodily lassitude. Walpole happily enough illustrates those talents and their abuse by an allusion to those eastern tales, in which a benevolent genius endows a being with supernatural excellence on some points, while a malignant genius counteracts the gift by some qualification which perpetually baffles and perverts it. The story, however, of Charles Townshend's tipsiness is thus contradicted by a graver authority, Sir George Colebrook, in his Memoirs.

"Mr Townshend loved good living, but had not a strong stomach. He committed therefore frequent excesses, considering his constitution; which would not have been intemperance in another. He was supposed, for instance, to have made a speech in the heat of wine, when that was really not the case. It was a speech in which he treated with great levity, but with wonderful art, the characters of the Duke of Grafton and Lord Shelburne, whom, though his colleagues in office, he entertained a sovereign contempt for, and heartily wished to get rid of. He had a black riband over one of his eyes that day, having tumbled out of bed, probably in a fit of epilepsy; and this added to the impression made on his auditors that he was tipsy. Whereas, it was a speech he had meditated a great while upon, and it was only by accident that it found utterance that day. I write with certainty, because Sir George Yonge and I were the only persons who dined with him, and we had but one bottle of champagne after dinner; General Conway having repeatedly sent messengers to press his return to the House." [Pg 717]

This brings the miracle down to the human standard, yet that standard was high, and the man who could excite this admiration, in a House which contained so great a number of eminent speakers, and which could charm the caustic spirit of Walpole into the acknowledgment that his speech "was the most singular pleasure of the kind he had ever tasted," must have been an extraordinary performance, even if his instrument was not of the highest tone of oratory. A note from the Duke of Grafton's manuscript memoirs also contradicts, on Townshend's own authority, his opinion of the "wild incapacity of Lord Chatham." The note says:—

> "On the night preceding Lord Chatham's first journey to Bath, Mr Charles Townshend was for the first time summoned to the Cabinet. The business was on a general view and statement of the actual situation and interests of the various powers in Europe. Lord Chatham had taken the lead in this consideration in so masterly a manner, as to raise the admiration and desire of us all to co-operate with him in forwarding his views. Mr Townshend was particularly astonished, and owned to me, as I was carrying him in my carriage home, that Lord Chatham had just shown to us what inferior animals we were, and that as much as he had seen of him before, he did not conceive till that night his superiority to be so transcendant."

Walpole writes with habitual bitterness of the great Lord Chatham. The recollection of his early opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, seems to have made him an unfaithful historian, wherever this extraordinary man's name comes within his page; but at the period of those discussions, it seems not improbable that the vigour of Chatham's understanding had in some degree given way to the tortures of his disease. He had suffered from gout at an early period of life; and as this is a disease remarkably affected by the mind, the perpetual disturbances of a public life seem to have given it a mastery over the whole frame of the great minister. Walpole talks in unjustifiable language of his "haughty sterility of talents." But there seems to be more truth in his account of the caprices of this powerful understanding in his retirement. Walpole calls it the "reality of Lord Chatham's madness." Still, we cannot see much in those instances, beyond the temper naturally resulting from an agonizing disease. When the Pynsent estate fell to him, he removed to it, and sold his house and grounds at Hayes—"a place on which he had wasted prodigious sums, and which yet retained small traces of expense, great part having been consumed in purchasing contiguous tenements, to free himself from all neighbourhood. Much had gone in doing and undoing, and not a little in planting by torchlight, as his peremptory and impatient habits could brook no delay. Nor were those the sole circumstances which marked his caprice. His children he could not bear under the same roof, nor communications from room to room, nor whatever he thought promoted noise. A winding passage between his house and children was built with the same view. When, at the beginning of his second administration, he fixed at North End by Hampstead, he took four or five houses successively, as fast as Mr Dingley his landlord went into them, still, as he said, to ward off the houses of the neighbourhood."

Walpole relates another anecdote equally inconclusive. At Pynsent, a bleak hill bounded his view. He ordered his gardener to have it planted with evergreens. The man asked "with what sorts." He replied, [Pg 718] "With cedars and cypresses." "Bless me, my lord," replied the gardener, "all the nurseries in this county would not furnish a hundredth part." "No matter, send for them from London: and they were brought by land carriage." Certainly, there was not much in this beyond the natural desire of every improver to shut out a disagreeable object, by putting an agreeable one in its place. His general object was the natural one of preventing all noise—a point of importance with every sufferer under a wakeful and miserable disease. His appetite was delicate and fanciful, and a succession of chickens were kept boiling and roasting at every hour, to be ready whenever he should call. He at length grew weary of his residence and, after selling Hayes, took a longing to return there. After considerable negotiation with Mr Thomas Walpole the purchaser, he obtained it again, and we hear no more of his madness.

The session was one of continual intrigues, constant exhibitions of subtlety amongst the leaders of the party, which at this distance of time are only ridiculous, and intricate discussions, which are now among the lumber of debate. Townshend, if he gained nothing else, gained the freedom of the city for his conduct on the East India and Dividend bills, for which, as Walpole says, "he deserved nothing but censure." A contemptuous epigram appeared on the occasion by "somebody a little more sagacious"—that "somebody" probably being Walpole himself:

"The joke of Townshend's box is little known,
Great judgment in the thing the cits have shown;
The compliment was an expedient clever,
To rid them of the like expense for ever.
Of so burlesque a choice the example sure
For city boxes must all longing cure,
The honor'd Ostracism at Athens fell,
Soon as Hyperbolus had got the shell."

It is scarcely possible to think that an epigram of this heavy order could have been praised by Walpole, if his criticism had not been tempered by the tenderness of paternity.

We then have a character of a man embalmed in the contempt poured upon him by Junius—the Duke of Grafton. Though less bitter, it is equally scornful. "Hitherto," says Walpole, "he had passed for a man of much obstinacy and firmness, of strict honour, devoid of ambition, and, though reserved, more diffident than designing. He retained so much of this character, as to justify those who had mistaken the rest. If he precipitated himself into the most sudden and inextricable contradictions, at least he pursued the object of the moment with inflexible ardour. If he abandoned himself to total negligence of business, in pursuit of his sports and pleasures, the love of power never quitted him; and, when his will was disputed, no man was more imperiously arbitrary. If his designs were not deeply laid, at least they were conducted in profound silence. He rarely pardoned those who did not guess his inclination. It was necessary to guess, so rare was any instance of his unbosoming himself to either friends or confidants. Why his honour had been so highly rated I can less account, except that he had advertised it, and that obstinate young men are apt to have high notions, before they have practised the world, and essayed their own virtue."

At length, after a vast variety of intrigues, which threw the public life of those days into the most contemptible point of view, the King being made virtually a cipher, while the families of the Hertfords, Buckinghams, and Rockinghams trafficked the high offices of state as children would barter toys; an administration was tardily formed. Walpole, who seemed to take a sort of *dilettante* pleasure in constructing those intrigues, and making himself wretched at their failure, while nobody suffered him to take advantage of their success; now gave himself a holiday, and went to relax in Paris for six weeks—his relaxation consisting of gossip amongst the literary ladies of the capital. During his absence an event happened which, though it did not break up the ministry, yet must have had considerable effect in its [Pg 719] influence on the House of Commons. This was the death of the celebrated Charles Townshend, on the 4th of September 1767, in the forty-second year of his age. The cause of his death was a neglected fever; if even this did not arise from his carelessness of health, and those habits which, if not amounting to intemperance, were certainly trespasses on his constitution. Walpole speaks of him with continual admiration of his genius, and continual contempt of his principles. He also thinks, that he had arrived at his highest fame, or, in his peculiar phrase, "that his genius could have received no accession of brightness, while his faults only promised multiplication." Walpole, with no pretence to rival, probably envied this singular personage; for, whenever he begins by panegyric, he uniformly ends with a sting. One of the Notes gives an extract on Sir George Colebrook's Memoirs, which perhaps places his faculties in a more favourable point of view than the high-coloured eulogium of Burke, or the polished insinuations of Walpole. Sir George tells us, that Townshend's object was to be prime minister, and that he would doubtless have attained that object had he lived to see the Duke of Grafton's resignation. Lord North succeeded him as chancellor of the exchequer, and Townshend would evidently have preceded *him* as prime minister. "As a private man, his friends were used to say, that they should not see his like again. Though they were often the butts of his wit, they always returned to his company with fresh delight, which they would not have done had there been either malice or rancour in what he said. He loved society, and in his choice of friends preferred those over whom he had a decided superiority of talent. He was satisfied when he had put the table in a roar, and he did not like to see it done by another. When Garrick and Foote were present, he took the lead, and hardly allowed them an opportunity of showing their talents for mimicry, because he could excel them in their own art. He shone particularly in taking off the principal members of the House of Commons. Among the few whom he feared was Mr Selwyn, and at a dinner at Lord Gower's they had a trial of skill, in which Mr Selwyn prevailed. When the company broke up, Mr Townshend, to show that he had no animosity, carried him in his carriage to White's; and, as they parted, Selwyn could not help saying—'Remember, this is the first set-down you have given me to-day.'"

As Townshend lived at a considerable expense, and had little paternal fortune, he speculated occasionally

in both the French and English funds. One of the incidents related by Sir George, and without a syllable of censure too, throws on him an imputation of trickery which, in our later day, would utterly destroy any public man. "When he was chancellor of the exchequer, he came in his nightgown to a dinner given by the Duke of Grafton to several of the principal men of the city to settle the loan. After dinner, when the terms were settled, and every body present wished to introduce some friend on the list of subscribers, he pretended to cast up the sums already admitted, said the loan was full, huddled up his papers, got into a chair, and returned home, reserving to himself by this manœuvre a large share of the loan." An act of this kind exhibits the honesty of the last age in a very equivocal point of view. If proud of nothing else, we may be proud of the public sense of responsibility; in our day, it may be presumed that such an act would be impossible, for it would inevitably involve the ruin of the perpetrator, followed by the ruin of any ministry which would dare to defend him.

At this period died a brother of the king, Edward Duke of York, a man devoted to pleasure, headstrong in his temper, and ignorant in his conceptions. "Immoderate travelling, followed by immoderate balls and entertainments," had long kept his blood in a peculiar state of accessibility to disease. He died of a putrid fever. Walpole makes a panegyric on the Duke of Gloucester, his brother; of which a part may be supposed due to the Duke's marriage with Lady Waldegrave, a marriage which provoked the indignation of the King, and which once threatened political evils of a formidable nature. Henry, the Duke of Cumberland, was also [Pg 720] an unfortunate specimen of the blood royal. He is described as having the babbling loquacity of the Duke of York, without his talents; as at once arrogant and low; presuming on his rank as a prince, and degrading himself by an association with low company. Still, we are to remember Walpole's propensity to sarcasm, the enjoyment which he seems to have felt in shooting his brilliant missiles at all ranks superior to his own; and his especial hostility to George the Third, one of the honestest monarchs that ever sat upon a throne.

In those days the composition of ministries depended altogether upon the high families.—The peerage settled every thing amongst themselves. A few of their dependents were occasionally taken into office; but all the great places were distributed among a little clique, who thus constituted themselves the real masters of the empire. Walpole's work has its value, in letting us into the secrets of a conclave, which at once shows us the singular emptiness of its constituent parts, and the equally singular authority with which they seem to have disposed of both the king and the people. We give a scene from the *Historian*, which would make an admirable fragment of the *Rehearsal*, and which wanted only the genius of Sheridan to be an admirable pendant to Mr Puff's play in the *Critic*. "On the 20th a meeting was held at the Duke of Newcastle's, of Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, and of Dowdeswell, with Newcastle himself on one part, and of the Duke of Bedford, Lord Weymouth, and Rigby on the other. The Duke of Bedford had powers from Grenville to act for him; but did not seem to like Lord Buckingham's taking on himself to name to places. On the latter's asking what friends they wished to prefer, Rigby said, with his cavalier bluntness—Take the *Court Calendar* and give them one, two, three thousand pounds a-year! Bedford observed—They had said nothing on measures. Mr Grenville would insist on the sovereignty of this country over America being asserted. Lord Rockingham replied—He would never allow it to be a question whether he had given up this country—he never had. The Duke insisted on a declaration. The Duke of Richmond said—We may as well demand one from you, that you will never disturb that country again. Neither would yield. However, though they could not agree on measures; as the distribution of place was more the object of their thoughts and of their meeting, they reverted to that topic. Lord Rockingham named Mr Conway. Bedford started; said he had no notion of Conway; had thought he was to return to the military line. The Duke of Richmond said it was true, Mr Conway did not desire a civil place; did not know whether he would be persuaded to accept one; but they were so bound to him for his resignation, and thought him so able, they must insist. The Duke of Bedford said—Conway was an officer *sans tache*, but not a minister *sans tache*. Rigby said—Not one of the present cabinet should be saved. Dowdeswell asked—'What! not one?' 'No.' 'What! not Charles Townshend.' 'Oh!' said Rigby, 'that is different. Besides, he has been in opposition.' 'So has Conway,' said Dowdeswell. 'He has voted twice against the court, Townshend but once.' 'But,' said Rigby, 'Conway is Bute's man.' 'Pray,' said Dowdeswell, 'is not Charles Townshend Bute's?' 'Ah! but Conway is governed by his brother Hertford, who is Bute's.' 'But Lady Ailesbury is a Scotchwoman.' 'So is Lady Dalkeith.' Those ladies had been widows and were now married, (the former to Conway, the latter to Townshend.) From this dialogue the assembly fell to wrangling, and broke up quarrelling. So high did the heats go, that the Conways ran about the town publishing the issue of the conference, and taxing the Bedfords with treachery."

Notwithstanding this collision, at once so significant, and so trifling—at once a burlesque on the gravity of public affairs, and a satire on the selfishness of public men—on the same evening, the Duke of Bedford sent to desire another interview, to which Lord Rockingham yielded, but the Duke of Bedford refused to be [Pg 721] present. So much, however, were the minds on both sides ulcerated by former and recent disputes, and so incompatible were their views, that the second meeting broke up in a final quarrel, and Lord Rockingham released the other party from all their engagements. The Duke of Bedford desired they might still continue friends, or at least to agree to oppose together. Lord Rockingham said no, "they were broken for ever."

It was at this meeting that the Duke of Newcastle appeared for the last time in a political light. Age and feebleness had at length worn out that busy passion for intrigue, which power had not been able to satiate, nor disgrace correct. He languished above a year longer, but was heard of no more on the scene of affairs. (He died in November 1768.)

A remarkable circumstance in all those arrangements is, that we hear nothing of either the king or the people. The king is of course applied to to sign and seal, but simply as a head clerk. The people are occasionally mentioned at the end of every seven years; but in the interim all was settled in the parlours of the peerage! The scene which we have just given was absolutely puerile, if it were not scandalous; and, without laying ourselves open to the charge of superstition on such subjects, we might almost regard the preservation of the empire as directly miraculous, while power was in the hands of such men as the Butes

and Newcastles, the Bedfords and Rockinghams, of the last century. It is not even difficult to trace to this intolerable system, alike the foreign calamities and the internal convulsions during this period. Whether America could, by any possibility of arrangement, have continued a British colony up to the present time, may be rationally doubted. A vast country, rapidly increasing in wealth and population, would have been an incumbrance, rather than an addition, to the power of England. If the patronage of her offices continued in the hands of ministers, it must have supplied them with the means of buying up every man who was to be bought in England. It would have been the largest fund of corruption ever known in the world. Or, if the connexion continued, with the population of America doubling in every five-and-twenty years, the question must in time have arisen, whether England or America ought to be the true seat of government. The probable consequence, however, would have been separation; and as this could scarcely be effected by amicable means, the result might have been a war of a much more extensive, wasteful, and formidable nature, than that which divided the two countries sixty-five years ago.

But all the blunders of the American war, nay the war itself, may be still almost directly traceable to the arrogance of the oligarchy. Too much accustomed to regard government as a natural appendage to their birth, they utterly forgot the true element of national power—the force of public opinion. Inflated with a sense of their personal superiority, they looked with easy indifference or studied contempt on every thing that was said or done by men whose genealogy was not registered in the red book. Of America—a nation of Englishmen—and of its proceedings, they talked, as a Russian lord might talk of his serfs. Some of them thought, that a Stamp act would frighten the sturdy free-holders of the Western World into submission! others talked of reducing them to obedience by laying a tax on their tea! others prescribed a regimen of writs and constables! evidently regarding the American farmers as they regarded the poachers and paupers on their own demesnes. All this arose from stupendous ignorance; but it was ignorance engendered by pride, by exclusiveness of rank, and by the arrogance of *caste*. So excessive was this exclusiveness, that Burke, though the most extraordinary man of his time, and one of the most memorable of any time, could never obtain a seat in the cabinet; where such triflers as Newcastle, such figures of patrician pedantry as Buckingham, such shallow intriguers as the Bedfords, and such notorious characters as the Sandwiches, played with power, like children with the cups and balls of their nursery. Lord North, with all his wit, his industry, and his eloquence, owed his admission into the cabinet, to his being the son [Pg 722] of the Earl of Guilford. Charles Fox, though marked by nature, from his first entrance into public life, for the highest eminence of the senate, would never have been received into the government *class*, but for his casual connexion with the House of Richmond. Thus, they knew nothing of the real powers of that infinite multitude, which, however below the peerage, forms the country. They thought that a few frowns from Downing Street could extinguish the resistance of millions, three thousand miles off, with muskets in their hands, inflamed by a sense of wrong, whether fancied or true, and insensible to the gatherings of a brow however coroneted and antique.

This haughty exclusiveness equally accounts for the contests with Wilkes. They felt themselves affronted, much more than resisted; they were much more stung by the defiance of a private individual to themselves, than they were urged to the collision by any conceivable sense of hazard to the Monarchy. No man, out of bedlam, could conceive, that Wilkes had either the power or the intention to subvert the state. But Mr Wilkes, an obscure man, whose name was not known to the calendar of the government fabricators, had actually dared to call their privilege of power into question; had defied them in the courts of law; had rebuked them in the senate; had shaken their influence in the elections; and had, in fact, compelled them to know, what they were so reluctant to learn, that they were but human beings after all! The acquisition of this knowledge cost them half a dozen years of convulsions, the most ruinous to themselves, and the most hazardous to the constitution. Wilkes' profligacy alone, perhaps, saved the constitution from a shock, which might have changed the whole system of the empire. If he had not been sunk by his personal character, at the first moment when the populace grew cool, he might have availed himself of the temper of the times to commit mischiefs the most irreparable. If his personal character had been as free from public offence as his spirit was daring, he might have led the people much further than the government ever had the foresight to contemplate. The conduct of the successive cabinets had covered the King with unpopularity, not the less fierce, that it was wholly undeserved. Junius, the ablest political writer that England has ever seen, or probably ever will see, in the art of assailing a ministry, had pilloried every leading man of his time except Chatham, in the imperishable virulence of his page. The popular mind was furious with indignation at the conduct of all cabinets; in despair of all improvement in the system; irritated by the rash severity which alternated with the equally rash pusillanimity of ministers; and beginning to regard government less as a protection, than as an encroachment on the natural privileges of a nation of freemen.

They soon had a growing temptation before them in the successful revolt of America.

We do not now enter into that question; it is too long past. But we shall never allude to it without paying that homage to truth, which pronounces, that the American revolt was a rebellion, wholly unjustifiable by the provocation; utterly rejecting all explanation, or atonement for casual injuries; and made in the spirit of a determination to throw off the allegiance to the mother country. But, if Wilkes could have sustained his opposition but a few years longer, and with any character but one so shattered as his own, he might have carried it on through life, and even bequeathed it as a legacy to his party; until the French Revolution had joined flame to flame across the Channel, and England had rivalled even the frenzy of France in the rapidity and ruin of her Reform.

Fortunately, the empire was rescued from this most fatal of all catastrophes. A great English minister appeared, on whom were to devolve the defence of England and the restoration of Europe. The sagacity of Pitt saw where the evil lay; his intrepidity instantly struck at its source, and his unrivalled ability completed the saving operation. He broke down the cabinet monopoly. No man less humiliated himself to [Pg 723] the populace, but no man better understood the people. No man paid more practical respect to the

peerage, but no man more thoroughly extinguished their exclusive possession of power. He formed his cabinet from men of all ranks, in the peerage and out of the peerage. The great peers chiefly went over to the opposition. He resisted them there, with as much daring, and with as successful a result, as he had expelled them from the stronghold of government. He made new peers. He left his haughty antagonists to graze on the barren field of opposition for successive years; and finally saw almost the whole herd come over for shelter to the ministerial fold.

At this period a remarkable man was brought into public life—the celebrated Dunning, appointed solicitor-general. Walpole calls this "an extraordinary promotion," as Dunning was connected with Lord Shelburne. It was like every thing else, obviously an intrigue; and Dunning would have lost the appointment, but for his remarkable reputation in the courts; Wedderburne being the man of the Bedfords. Walpole's opinion of Dunning in the House, shows, how much even the highest abilities may be influenced by circumstances. He says, "that Dunning immediately and utterly lost character as a speaker, although he had acquired the very highest distinctions as a pleader;" so different, says he, is the oratory of the bar and of parliament. Mansfield and Camden retained an equal rank in both. Wedderburne was most successful in the House. Norton had at first disappointed the expectations that were conceived of him when he came into parliament; yet his strong sense, that glowed through all the coarseness of his language and brutality of his manner, recovered his weight, and he was much distinguished. While Sir Dudley Ryder, attorney-general in the preceding reign, the soundest lawyer, and Charles Yorke, one of the most distinguished pleaders, soon talked themselves out of all consideration in parliament; the former by laying too great a stress on every part of his diffusive knowledge, and the latter by the sterility of his intelligence.

An intelligent Note, however, vindicates the reputation of Dunning. It is observed, that Dunning's having been counsel for Wilkes, and the intimate of Lord Shelburne, it could not be expected that he should take a prominent part in any of the debates which were so largely occupied with Wilkes' misdemeanours. Lord North, too, was hostile to Dunning. Under such conditions it was impossible that any man should exhibit his powers to advantage; but at a later period, when he had got rid of those trammels, his singular abilities vindicated themselves. He became one of the leaders of the opposition, even when that honour was to be shared with Burke. We have heard, that such was the pungency of Dunning's expressions, and the happy dexterity of his conceptions, that when he spoke, (his voice being feeble, and unable to make itself heard at any great distance,) the members used to throng around the bench on which he spoke. Wraxall panegyrizes him, and yet with a tautology of terms, which must have been the very reverse of Dunning's style. Thus, he tells us that when Dunning spoke, "every murmur was hushed, and every ear attentive," two sentences which amount to the same thing. Hannah More is also introduced as one of the panegyrists; for poor Hannah seems to have been one of the most bustling persons possible; to have run every where, and to have given *her* opinion of every body, however much above her comprehension. She was one of the spectators on the Duchess of Kingston's trial, (a most extraordinary scene for the choice of such a purist;) but Hannah was not at that time quite so sublime as she became afterwards. Hannah describes Dunning's manner as "insufferably bad, coughing and spitting at every word; but his sense and expression pointed to the last degree." But the character which the annotator gives as a model of panegyric, pleases us least of all. It is by Sir William Jones, and consists of one long antithesis. It is a studied toil of language, expressing ideas, a commonplace succession, substituting words for thoughts, and at once leaving the ear palled, and the understanding dissatisfied. What, for instance, could be made of such a passage as this? Sir William is [Pg 724] speaking of Dunning's wit. "This," says he, "relieved the weary, calmed the resentful, and animated the drowsy. This drew smiles even from such as were *the object of it, and scattered flowers over a desert*, and, like *sunbeams sparkling on a lake*, gave spirit and vivacity to the dullest and least interesting cause." And this mangling of metaphor is to teach us the qualities of a profound and practical mind. What follows, is the perfection of see-saw. "He was endued with an intellect sedate yet penetrating, clear yet profound, subtle yet strong. His knowledge, too, was equal to his imagination, and his memory to his knowledge." He might have equally added, that the capacity of his boots was equal to the size of his legs, and the length of his purse to the extent of his generosity. This reminds us of one of Sydney Smith's burlesques on the balancing of epithets by that most pedantic of pedants, the late Dr Parr—"profundity without obscurity, perspicuity without prolixity, ornament without glare, terseness without barrenness, penetration without subtlety, comprehensiveness without digression, and a great number of other things without a great number of other things."

Little tricks, or rather large ones, now and then diversify the narrative. On the same day that Conway resigned the seals, Lord Weymouth was declared secretary of state. At the same time, Lord Hilsborough kissed hands for the American department, but nominally retaining the post-office, the salary of which he paid to Lord Sandwich, *till the elections should be over*; there being so strict a disqualifying clause in the bill for prohibiting the postmasters for interfering in elections, which Sandwich *was determined to do* to the utmost, that he did not dare to accept the office in his own name, *till he had incurred the guilt*. Another trick of a very dishonourable nature, though ultimately defeated, may supply a moral for our share-trafficking days in high quarters. Lord Bottetort, one of the bedchamber, and a kind of second-hand favourite, had engaged in an adventure with a company of copper-workers at Warmley. They broke, and his lordship, in order to cover his estate from the creditors, begged a privy seal to incorporate the company, by which means private estates would not be answerable. The king ignorantly granted the request; but Lord Chatham, aware of the deception, refused to affix the seal to the patent, pleading that he was not able. Lord Bottetort, outrageous at the disappointment, threatened to petition the lords to remove Lord Chatham, on the ground of inability. The annotator justly observes, that the proposal was absolutely monstrous, being nothing but a gross fraud on his lordship's creditors. It, however, does not seem to have attracted the attention of the attorney-general, or the home-office; but, for some cause or other, the patent did not pass, the result being, that Lord Bottetort, unable to retrieve his losses, obtained the government of Virginia in the following summer, where he subsequently died.

A curious instance of parliamentary corruption next attracted the notice of the public. It came out, that the

city of Oxford had offered their representation to two gentlemen, if they would pay £7500 towards the debts of the corporation. They refused the bargain, and Oxford sold itself to the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Abingdon. The matter was brought before the House, and the mayor of Oxford and ten of the corporation appeared at the bar, confessing their crime, and asking pardon. It ended with committing them to prison for five days. A note describes the whole affair as being treated with great ridicule, (there being probably not a few who looked upon things of this nature as a matter of course;) and the story being, that the aldermen completed their bargain with the Duke of Marlborough, during their imprisonment in Newgate.

On the 11th of March 1768, the parliament was dissolved. Walpole says, "that its only characteristic was servility to the government; while our ancestors, we presume, from the shamelessness of its servility, might have called it the Impudent Parliament."

After wearying himself in the dusty field of politics, Walpole retired, like Homer's gods from Troy, to rest in the more flowery region of literature. His habits led him to the enjoyment of bitter political poetry, [Pg 725] which, in fact, is not poetry at all; while they evidently disqualified him from feeling the power and beauty of the imaginative, the only poetry that deserves the name. Thus, he describes Goldsmith as the "correct author of *The Traveller*," one of the most beautiful poems in the language; while he panegyrizes, with a whole catalogue of plaudits, Anstey's *Bath Guide*—a very scandalous, though undoubtedly a lively and ingenious, caricature of the habits of the time. An ultra-heavy poem by Bentley, the son of the critic, enjoys a similar panegyric. We give, as an evidence of its dulness, a fragment of its praise of Lord Bute:—

"Oh, if we seize with skill the coming hour,
And reinvest us with the robe of power;
Rule while we live, let future days transmute
To every merit all we've charged on Bute.
Let late posterity receive his name,
And swell its sails with every breath of fame—
Downwards as far as Time shall roll his tide,
With ev'ry pendant flying, let it glide."

The rest is equally intolerable.

But Bentley was lucky in his patrons, if not in his poetry; as, in addition to a Commissionership of Lotteries, he received a pension for the lives of himself and his wife of £500 a-year! Though thus undeservedly successful in attracting the notice of the government, his more honest efforts failed with the public. He wrote two plays, both of which failed. Walpole next describes Robertson the historian in these high-coloured terms, "as sagacious and penetrating as Tacitus, with a perspicuity of Livy:" qualities which every one else knows to be directly the reverse of those which characterize Robertson. That very impudent woman, Catharine Macaulay, seems also to have been one of the objects of his literary admiration. He describes her, as being as partial in the cause of liberty as bigots to the church and royalists to tyranny, and as exerting manly strength with the gravity of a philosopher.

But Walpole is aways amusing when he gives anecdotes of passing things. The famous Brentford election finds in him its most graphic historian. The most singular carelessness was exhibited by the government on this most perilous occasion—a carelessness obviously arising from that contempt which the higher ranks of the nobility in those days were weak enough to feel for the opinion of those below them. On the very verge of an election, within five miles of London, and which must bring to a point all the exasperation of years; Camden, the chancellor, went down to Bath, and the Duke of Grafton, the prime minister, who was a great horse-racer, drove off to Newmarket. Mansfield, whom Walpole seems to have hated, and whom he represents as at "once resentful, timorous, and subtle," the three worst qualities of the heart, the nerves, and the understanding, pretended that it was the office of the chancellor to bring the outlaw (Wilkes) to justice, and did nothing. The consequence was, that the multitude were left masters of the field.

On the morning of the election; while the irresolution of the court, and the negligence of the prime minister, caused a neglect of all precautions; the populace took possession of all the turnpikes and avenues leading to the hustings by break of day, and would suffer no man to pass who did not wear in his hat a blue cockade, with "Wilkes and Number 45," on a written paper. Riots took place in the streets, and the carriage of Sir William Proctor, the opposing candidate, was demolished. The first day's poll for Wilkes was 1200, for Proctor 700, for Cooke 300. It must be remembered, that in these times the elections were capable of being prolonged from week to week, and that the first day was regarded as scarcely more than a formality. At night the West-end was in an uproar. It was not safe to pass through Piccadilly. Every house was compelled to illuminate; the windows of all which did not exhibit lights were broken; the coach-glasses of such as did not huzza for "Wilkes and liberty" were broken; and the panels of the carriages were scratched with 45! Lord Weymouth, the secretary of state, wrote to Justice Fielding for constables. Fielding answered, that they were all gone to Brentford. On this, the guards were drawn out. The mob [Pg 726] then attacked Lord Bute's house and Lord Egmont's, but without being able to force an entrance. They compelled the Duke of Northumberland to give them liquor to drink Wilkes's health. Ladies of rank were taken out of their sedan-chairs, and ordered to join the popular cry. The lord-mayor was an anti-Wilkite—the mob attacked the Mansion-house, and broke the windows. He ordered out the trained bands; they had no effect. Six thousand weavers had risen under the Wilkite banner, and defied all resistance. Even some of the regimental drummers beat their drums for Wilkes! His force at the election was evidently to be resisted no longer. The ministerial candidate was beaten, Wilkes threw in his remaining votes for Cooke, and they came in together. The election was thus over on the second day, but the mob paraded the metropolis at night, insisting on a general illumination. The handsome Duchess of Hamilton, one of the Gunnings, who had now become quite a Butite, was determined not to illuminate. The result was, that the mob grew outrageous, broke down the outward gates with iron-crows, tore up the pavement of the street, and battered the doors and shutters for three hours; fortunately without being able to get in. The Count de

Sollein, the Austrian ambassador, the most stately and ceremonious of men, was taken out of his coach by the mob, who chalked 45 on the sole of his shoe! He complained in form of the insult. Walpole says, fairly enough, "it was as difficult for the ministers to help laughing as to give him redress."

Walpole frequently alludes to the two Gunnings as the two handsomest sisters of their time. They were Irish-women, fresh-coloured, lively, and well formed, but obviously more indebted to nature than to education. Lady Coventry died young, and had the misfortune, even in her grave, of being made the subject of an epitaph by Mason, one of the most listless and languid poems of an unpoetic time. The Duchess of Hamilton survived to a considerable age, and was loaded with matrimonial honours. She first married the Duke of Hamilton. On his death, she married the Marquis of Lorn, eldest son of the Duke of Argyll, whom he succeeded in the title—thus becoming mother of the heirs of the two great rival houses of Hamilton and Argyll. While in her widowhood, she had been proposed for by the Duke of Bridgewater. Lady Coventry seems to have realized Pope's verses of a dying belle—

"And, Betty, give this cheek a little red,
One would not, sure, look ugly when one's dead."

"Till within a few days of her death, she lay on a couch with a looking-glass in her hand. When she found her beauty, which she idolized, was quite gone, she took to her bed, and would be seen by nobody, not even by her nurse, suffering only the light of a lamp in her room."

Walpole's description of the ministry adds strikingly to the contemptuous feeling, naturally generated by their singular ill success. We must also observe, as much to the discredit of the past age as to the honour of the present; that the leading men of the day exhibited or affected a depravity of morals, which would be the ruin of any public character at the present time. Many of the scenes in high life would have been fitter for the court of Charles II., and many of the actors in those scenes ought to have been cashiered from public employment. Personal profligacy seems actually to have been regarded as a species of ornamental appendage to public character; and, except where its exposure sharpened the sting of an epigram, or gave an additional flourish to the periods of a political writer, no one seems to have conceived that the grossest offences against morality were of the nature of crime. Another scandal seems to have been frequent—intemperance in wine. Hard drinking was common in England at that period, and was even regarded as the sign of a generous spirit; but nearly all the leading politicians who died early, are described as owing their deaths to excess. Those are fortunate distinctions for the days which have followed; and the country may justly congratulate itself on the abandonment of habits, which, deeply tending to corrupt private character, render political baseness the almost inevitable result among public men. [Pg 727]

Walpole promptly declares, that half the success of Wilkes was owing to the supineness of the ministers. He might have gone further, and fixed his charge on higher grounds. He ought to have said, that the whole was owing to the mingled treachery and profligacy which made the nation loathe the characters of public parties and public men. Walpole says, in support of his assertion—"that Lord Chatham would take no part in business; that the Duke of Grafton neglected every thing, and whenever pressed to be active threatened to resign; that the Chancellor Camden, placed between two such intractable friends, with whom he was equally discontented, avoided dipping himself further; that Conway, no longer in the Duke's confidence, and more hurt with neglect than pleased with power, stood in the same predicament; that Lord Gower thought of nothing but ingratiating himself at St James's; and though what little business was done was executed by Lord Weymouth, it required all Wood's, the secretary's, animosity to Wilkes, to stir him up to any activity. Wood even said, "that if the King should pardon Wilkes, Lord Weymouth would not sign the pardon." The chief magistrate of the city, consulting the chancellor on what he should do if Wilkes should stand for the city, and being answered that he "must consult the recorder," Harley sharply replied, "I consulted your lordship as a minister, I don't want to be told my duty."

Some of the most interesting portions of these volumes are the notes, giving brief biographical sketches of the leading men. The politics have comparatively passed away, but the characters remain; and no slight instruction is still to be derived from the progressive steps by which the individuals rose from private life to public distinction. The editor, Sir Denis la Marchant, deserves no slight credit for his efforts to give authenticity to those notices. He seems to have collected his authorities from every available source; and what he has compiled with the diligence of an editor, he has expressed with the good taste of a gentleman.

The commencement of a parliament is always looked to with curiosity, as the debut of new members. All the expectations which have been formed by favouritism, family, or faction, are then brought to the test. Parliament is an unerring tribunal, and no charlatanry can cheat its searching eye. College reputations are extinguished in a moment, the common-places of the hustings can avail no more, and the pamperings of party only hurry its favourites to more rapid decay.

Mr Phipps, the son of Lord Mulgrave, now commenced his career. By an extraordinary taste, though bred a seaman, he was so fond of quoting law, that he got the sobriquet of the "marine lawyer." His knowledge of the science (as the annotator observes) could not have been very deep, for he was then but twenty-two. But he was an evidence of the effect of indefatigable exertion. Though a dull debater, he took a share in every debate, and he appears to have taken the pains of revising his speeches for the press. Yet even under his nursing, they exhibit no traces of eloquence. His manner was inanimate, and his large and heavy figure gained him the luckless appellation of Ursa Major, (to distinguish him from his brother, who was also a member.) As if to complete the amount of his deficiencies, his voice was particularly inharmonious, or rather it was two distinct voices, the one strong and hoarse, the other weak and querulous; both of which he frequently used. On this was constructed the waggish story—that one night, having fallen into a ditch, and calling out in his shrill voice, a countryman was coming up to assist him; when Phipps calling out again in his hoarse tone, the man exclaimed—"If there are two of you in the ditch, you may help each other out!"

One of his qualities seems to have been a total insensibility to his own defects; which therefore suffered him to encounter any man, and every man, whatever might be their superiority. Thus, in his early day, his dulness constantly encountered Lord North, the most dexterous wit of his time. Thus, too, in his maturer age, he constantly thrust himself forward to meet the indignant eloquence of Fox; and seems to have been equally unconscious that he was ridiculed by the sarcastic pleasantry of the one, or blasted by the lofty contempt of the other. Yet, such is the value of perseverance, that this man was gradually regarded as important in the debates, that he wrought out for himself an influence in the House, and obtained finally the office of joint paymaster, one of the most lucrative under government, and a British peerage. And all this toil was undertaken by a man who had no children.

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At his death, he was succeeded in his Irish title by his brother Henry, who became first lord of the admiralty, and also obtained an English peerage. The present Marquis of Normandy is his eldest son.

Parliamentary history sometimes gives valuable lessons, in exhibiting the infinite folly of parliamentary prediction. It will scarcely be believed in a day like ours, which has seen and survived the French Revolution, that the chief theme of the period, and especial terror of the opposition, was the conquest of Corsica by the French! Ministers seem to have been deterred from a war with the French monarchy, solely by the dislocated state of the cabinet; while the opposition declared, that the possession of Corsica by the French, would be "the death-blow to our influence in the Mediterranean." With Corsica in French hands, it was boldly pronounced that "France would receive an accession of power which nothing could shake; and they scarcely hesitated to say, that upon the independence of Corsica rested not merely the supremacy but the safety of England." Yet the French conquered Corsica (at a waste of money ten times worth its value to their nation, and at a criminal waste of life, both French and Corsican) without producing the slightest addition to the power of the monarchy, and with no slight disgrace to the honour of its arms. For, the Corsicans, the most savage race of the Italian blood, and accustomed to the use of weapons from their childhood, fought with the boldness of all men fighting for their property, and routed the troops of France in many a successive and desperate encounter. Still, the combat was too unequal; the whole force of a great monarchy was obviously too strong for the hope of successful resistance, and Corsica, after many a severe struggle, became a French territory. But, beyond this barren honour the war produced no fruit, except a deeper consciousness of the unsparing ambition of the monarchy, and of the recklessness with which it sacrificed all considerations of humanity and justice, to the tinsel of a military name. One fatal gift, however, Corsica made, in return to France. From it came, within a few years, the man who sealed the banishment of the Bourbons! and, tempting France by the ambition of military success, inflicted upon her the heaviest mortality, and the deepest shame known in any kingdom, since the fall of the Roman empire. Whether this were that direct retribution for innocent blood, which Providence has so often inflicted upon guilty nations; or whether it were merely one of those extraordinary casualties which circumstances make so impressive; there can be no question, that the man came from Corsica who inflicted on France the heaviest calamities that she had ever known; who, after leading her armies over Europe, to conquests which only aroused the hatred of all nations, and after wasting the blood of hundreds of thousands of her people in victories totally unproductive but of havoc; saw France twice invaded, and brought the nation under the ban of the civilized world!

France is at this moment pursuing the same course in Algiers, which was the pride of her politicians in Corsica. She is pouring out her gigantic force, to overwhelm the resistance of peasants who have no defence but their naked bravery. She will probably subdue the resistance; for what can be done by a peasantry against the disciplined force and vast resources of a great European power, applied to this single object of success? But, barbarian as the Moor and the Arab are, and comparatively helpless in the struggle, the avenger may yet come, to teach the throne of France, that there is a power higher than all thrones; a tribunal to which the blood cries out of the ground.

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The death of Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, excites a few touches of Walpole's sarcastic pen. He says, "that his early life had shown his versatility, his latter his ambition. But hypocrisy not being parts, he rose in the church without ever making a figure in the state." So much for antithesis. There is no reason why a clergyman should make a figure in the state under any circumstances; and the less figure he made in the state, as it was then constituted, the more likely he was to be fitted for the church. But the true censure on Secker would have been, that he rose, without making a figure in any thing; that he had never produced any work worthy of notice as a divine; that he had neither eloquence in the pulpit, nor vigour with the pen; that he seems to have been at all times a man of extreme mediocrity; that his qualifications with the ministry were, his being a neutral on all the great questions of the day; and his merits with posterity were, that he possessed power without giving offence. A hundred such men might have held the highest positions of the church, without producing the slightest effect on the public mind; or might have been left in the lowest, without being entitled to accuse the injustice of fortune. His successor was Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield, raised to the primacy by the Duke of Grafton, who, as Walpole says, "had a friendship for the bishop's nephew, Earl Cornwallis." This seems not altogether the most sufficient reason for placing a man at the head of the Church of England, but we must take the reason such as we find it. Walpole adds, that the nomination had, however, the merit of disappointing a more unsuitable candidate, Ternet of London, whom he describes as "the most time-serving of the clergy, and sorely chagrined at missing the archiepiscopal mitre."

It was rather unlucky for the public estimate of royalty, that, at this moment of popular irritation, the young King of Denmark should have arrived in England. He had married the King's youngest sister, and making a sort of tour of Europe, he determined to visit the family of his wife. His proposal was waived by the King, who excused himself by the national confusions. But the young Dane, scarcely more than a giddy boy, and singularly self-willed, was not to be repelled; and he came. Nothing could be colder than his reception; not a royal carriage, not an officer of the court, was sent to meet him. He arrived at St James's even in a hired carriage. Neither King nor Queen was there. The only mark of attention paid to him was

giving him an apartment, and supplying him and his suite with a table. Walpole observes, that this sullen treatment was as impolitic as it was inhospitable; that the Dane was then actually a pensioner of France, and, of course, it would have been wise to win him out of its hands. But the Danish king seems to have been little better than a fool; and between his frolics and his follies, he finally produced a species of revolution in his own country. All power fell into the hands of his queen, who, though of a bolder nature, seems to have been scarcely less frantic than himself. On the visit of her mother, the Princess of Wales, to Denmark, the Queen met her, at the head of a regiment, dressed in full uniform, and wearing buckskin breeches. She must have been an extraordinary figure altogether, for she had grown immensely corpulent. Court favouritism was the fashion in Denmark, and the King and Queen were equally ruled by favourites. But, in a short period, a young physician of the household managed both, obtaining peculiarly the confidence of the Queen. Scandal was not idle on this occasion, and Germany and England rang with stories of the court of Denmark. The physician was soon created a noble, and figured for a while as the prime minister, or rather sovereign of the kingdom, by the well-known title of Count Struensee. A party was formed against him by the Queen-mother, at the head of some of the nobility. The Queen was made prisoner, and died in prison. Struensee was tried as traitor, and beheaded. The King was finally incapacitated from reigning, and his son was raised to the regency. This melancholy transaction formed one of the tragedies of Europe; but it had the additional misfortune of occurring at a time when royalty had begun to sink under the incessant attacks of the revolutionists, and France, the leader of public opinion on the Continent, was filled with opinions contemptuous of all thrones. [Pg 730]

The year 1768 exhibited France in her most humiliating position before Europe. The Duc de Choiseul was the minister—a man of wit, elegance, and accomplishment; but too frivolous to follow, if he had not been too ignorant to discover, the true sources of national greatness. His foreign policy was intrigue, and his domestic policy the favouritism of the court by administering to its vices. He raised a war between the Russians and Turks, and had the mortification of seeing his *protégé* the Turk trampled by the armies of his rival the Czarina. Even the Corsicans had degraded the military name of France. But he had a new peril at home. Old Marshal Richelieu—who, as Walpole sarcastically observes, "had retained none of his faculties, but that last talent of a decayed Frenchman, a spirit of back-stairs intrigue"—had provided old Louis XV. with a new mistress. Of all the persons of this character who had made French royal life scandalous in the eyes of Europe, this connexion was the most scandalous. It scandalized even France. This mistress was the famous Countess du Barri—a wretched creature, originally of the very lowest condition; whose vices would have stained the very highest; and who, in the convulsions of the reign that followed, was butchered by the guillotine.

In November of this year died the Duke of Newcastle, at the age of seventy-five. He had been struck with palsy some months before, and then for the first time withdrew from public life. Walpole observes, that his life had been a proof that, "even in a free country, great abilities are not necessary to govern it." Industry, perseverance, and intrigue, gave him that duration of power "which shining talents, and the favour of the crown, could not secure to Lord Granville, nor the first rank in eloquence, or the most brilliant services, to Lord Chatham. Rashness overset Lord Granville's parts, and presumptuous impracticability Lord Chatham; while adventitious cunning repaired Newcastle's folly." Such is the explanation of one of the most curious phenomena of the time, by one of its most ingenious lookers-on. But the explanation is not sufficient. It is impossible to conceive, how mere cunning could have sustained any man for a quarter of a century in the highest ministerial rank; while that rank was contested from day to day by men of every order of ability. Since the days of Bolingbroke, there have been no examples of ministerial talent, equal to those exhibited, in both Houses, in the day of the Duke of Newcastle. Chatham was as ambitious as any man that ever lived, and full of the faculties that make ambition successful. The Butes, the Bedfords, the Hollands, the Shelburnes, exhibited every shape and shade of cabinet dexterity, of court cabal, of popular influence, and of political knowledge and reckless intrigue. Yet the Duke of Newcastle, with remarkable personal disadvantages—a ridiculous manner, an ungainly address, speech without the slightest pretension to eloquence, and the character of extreme ignorance on general subjects—preserved his power almost to the extreme verge of life; and to the last was regarded as playing a most important part in the counsels of the country. Unless we believe in magic, we must believe that this man, with all his oddity of manner, possessed some remarkable faculty, by which he saw his way clearly through difficulties impervious to more showy minds. He must have deeply discovered the means of attaching the monarch, of acting upon the legislature, and of controlling the captiousness of the people. He must have had practical qualities of a remarkable kind; and his is not the first instance, in which such qualities, in the struggles of government, bear away the prize. Thus, in later times, we have seen Lord Liverpool minister for eleven years, and holding power with a firm, yet quiet grasp to the last; with the whole strength of Lord Grey and the Whigs struggling for it in front, and George Canning, a still more dangerous enemy, watching for it in the rear.

In one of the Notes referring to the appointment of Earl Cornwallis to the vice-treasuryship of Ireland, the editor makes a remark which ought not to pass without strong reprehension. Earl Cornwallis, towards the close of the Irish rebellion in 1798, had been made chief governor of Ireland, at the head of a large army, for the purpose of extinguishing the remnants of the rebellion, and restoring the country to the habits of peace. The task was no longer difficult, but he performed his part with dignity and moderation. He had been sent expressly for the purpose of pacifying the country, an object which would have been altogether inconsistent with measures of violence; but the editor, in telling us that his conduct exhibited sagacity and benevolence, hazards the extraordinary assertion, that "he was one of the few statesmen who inculcated the necessity of forbearance and concession in the misgoverned country!" Nothing can be more erroneous than this statement in point of principle, or more ignorant in point of fact. For the last hundred years and upwards, dating from the cessation of the war with James II., Ireland had been the object of perpetual concessions, and, if misgoverned at all, it has been such by the excess of those concessions. It is to be remembered, that in the reign of William I. the Roman Catholics were in actual alliance with France, and in actual arms against England. They were next beaten in the field, and it was the business of the [Pg 731]

conquerors to prevent their taking arms again. From this arose the penal laws. To those laws we are not friendly; because we are not friendly to any attempt at the suppression even of religious error by the force of the state. It was a political blunder, and an offence to Christian principle, at the same time; but the Papist is the last man in the world who has a right to object to penal laws; for he is the very man who would have enacted them himself against the Protestant—who always enacts them where he has the power—and, from the spirit of whose laws, the British legislature were in fact only borrowing at the moment. Yet from the time when James II. and his family began to sink into insignificance, the legislature began to relax the penal laws. Within the course of half a century, they had wholly disappeared; and thus the editor's flippant assertion, that Earl Cornwallis was one of the few statesmen who inculcated the necessity of forbearance and concession, exhibits nothing but his Whiggish ignorance on the subject. The misgovernment of Ireland, if such existed, was to be laid to the charge of neither the English minister nor the English people. The editor probably forgets, that during that whole period she was governed by her own parliament; while her progress during the second half of the 18th century was memorably rapid, and prosperous in the highest degree, through the bounties, privileges, and encouragements of every kind, which were constantly held out to her by the *British* government. And that so early as the year 1780, she was rich enough to raise, equip, and support a volunteer army of nearly a hundred thousand men—a measure unexampled in Europe, and which would probably task the strength of some of the most powerful kingdoms even at this day. And all this was previous to the existence of what is called the "patriot constitution."

Walpole has the art of painting historic characters to the life; but he sadly extinguishes the romance with which our fancy so often enrobes them. We have been in the habit of hearing Pascal Paoli, the chief of the Corsicans, described as the model of a republican hero; and there can be no question, that the early resistance of the Corsicans cost the French a serious expenditure of men and money. But Walpole charges Paoli with want of military skill, and even with want of that personal intrepidity so essential to a national leader. At length, Corsican resistance being overpowered by the constant accumulation of French force, Paoli gave way, and, as Walpole classically observes, "not having fallen like Leonidas, did not despair like Cato." Paoli had been so panegyrized by Boswell's work, that he was received with almost romantic applause. The Opposition adopted him for the sake of popularity, but ministers took him out of their hands by a pension of £1000 a-year. "I saw him," says Walpole, "soon after his arrival, dangling at court. He was a man of decent deportment, and so void of any thing remarkable in his aspect, that, being asked if I knew who he was, I judged him a Scotch officer—for he was sandy complexioned and in regimentals—who was cautiously awaiting the moment of promotion." All this is in Walpole's style of fashionable impertinence; but there can be no doubt that Paoli was a brave man, and an able commander. He gave the French several severe defeats, but the contest was soon too unequal, and Paoli withdrew to this country; which was so soon after to be a shelter to the aristocracy of the country which had stained his mountains with blood.

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By a singular fate, on his return to France in an early period of the Revolution, he was received with a sort of national triumph, and actually appointed lieutenant-general of Corsica by the nation which had driven him into exile. In the war which followed, Paoli, disgusted by the tyranny of French republicanism, and alarmed by the violence of the native factions, proposed to put his country under the protection of the English government. A naval and military force was sent to Corsica, and the island was annexed to the British crown. But the possession was not maintained with rational vigour. The feeble armament was found unequal to resist the popular passion for republicanism. And, from this expenditure of troops, and probably still more from the discovery that the island would be wholly useless, the force was altogether withdrawn. Paoli returned to England, where he died, having attained the advanced age of eighty. His red hair and sandy complexion are probably fatal to his character as an Italian chieftain. But if his locks were not black, his heart was bold; and if his lip wanted mustaches, his mind wanted neither sagacity nor determination.

Walpole was born for a cynic philosopher. He treats men of all ranks with equal scorn. From Wilkes to George III., he brands them all. Ministers meet no mercy at his hands. He ranges them, as the Sultan used to range heads on the spikes of the seraglio, for marks for his arrows. His history is a species of moveable panorama; the scene constantly shifting, and every scene a burlesque of the one that went before; or perhaps the more faithful similitude would be found in a volume of HB.'s ingenious caricatures, where all the likenesses are preserved, though perverted, and all the dexterity of an accomplished pencil is employed only in making its subjects ridiculous. He thus tells us:—"The Duke of Grafton was the fourth prime minister in seven years, who fell by his own fault. Lord Bute was seized with a panic, and ran away from his own victory. Grenville was undone by his insolence, by joining in the insult on the princess, and by his persecution of Lord Bute and Mackenzie. Lord Rockingham's incapacity overturned *him*; and now the Duke of Grafton destroyed a power which it had depended on himself to make as permanent as he could desire." But rash and rapid as those changes were, what were the grave intrigues of the English cabinet to the *boudoir* ministries of France? Walpole is never so much in his element, as when he is sporting in the fussy frivolities of the Faubourg St Germain. He was much more a Frenchman than an Englishman; his love of gossip, his passion for haunting the society of talkative old women, and his delight at finding himself revelling in a region of *petite soupers*, court gallantries, and the faded indiscretions of court beauties in the wane, would have made him a rival to the courtiers of Louis XIV.

Perhaps, the world never saw, since the days of Sardanapalus, a court so corrupt, wealth so profligate, and a state of society so utterly contemptuous of even the decent affectation of virtue, as the closing years of the reign of Louis XV. A succession of profligate women ruled the king, a similar succession ruled the cabinet; lower life was a sink of corruption; the whole a romance of the most scandalous order. Madame de Pompadour, a woman whose vice had long survived her beauty, and who ruled the decrepit heart of a debauched king, had made Choiseul minister. Choiseul was the beau-ideal of a French noble of the old *régime*. His ambition was boundless, his insolence ungoverned, his caprice unrestrained, and his love of

pleasure predominant even over his love of power. "He was an open enemy, but a generous one; and had more pleasure in attaching an enemy, than in punishing him. Whether from gaiety or presumption, he was never dismayed; his vanity made him always depend on the success of his plans, and his spirits made him soon forget the miscarriage of them." [Pg 733]

At length appeared on the tapis the memorable Madame du Barri! For three months, all the faculties of the court were absorbed in the question of her public presentation. Indulgent as the courtiers were to the habits of royal life, the notoriety of Madame du Barri's early career, startled even their flexible sense of etiquette. The ladies of the court, most of whom would have been proud to have taken her place, determined "that they would not appear at court if she should be received there." The King's daughters (who had borne the ascendant of Madame du Pompadour in their mother's life) grew outrageous at the new favourite; and the relatives of Choiseul insisted upon it, that he should resign rather than consent to the presentation. Choiseul resisted, yielded, was insulted for his resistance, and was scoffed at for his submission. He finally retired, and was ridiculed for his retirement. Du Barri triumphed. Epigrams and *calembours* blazed through Paris. Every one was a wit for the time, and every wit was a rebel. The infidel faction looked on at the general dissolution of morals with delight, as the omen of general overthrow. The Jesuits rejoiced in the hope of getting the old King into their hands, and terrifying him, if not into a proselyte, at least into a tool. Even Du Barri herself was probably not beyond their hopes; for the established career of a King's mistress was, to turn *dévote* on the decay of her personal attractions.

Among Choiseul's intentions was that of making war on England. There was not the slightest ground for a war. But it is a part of the etiquette of a Frenchman's life, that he must be a warrior, or must promote a war, or must dream of a war. M. Guizot is the solitary exception in our age, as M. Fleury was the solitary exception in the last; but Fleury was an ecclesiastic, and was eighty years old besides—two strong disqualifications for a conqueror. But the King was then growing old, too; his belligerent propensities were absorbed in quarrels with his provincial parliaments; his administrative faculties found sufficient employment in managing the morals of his mistresses; his private hours were occupied in pelting Du Barri with sugar-plums; and thus his days wore away without that supreme glory of the old *régime*—a general war in Europe.

The calamities of the French noblesse at the period of the Revolution, excited universal regret; and the sight of so many persons, of graceful manners and high birth, flung into the very depths of destitution in foreign lands, or destroyed by the guillotine at home, justified the sympathy of mankind. But, the secret history of that noblesse was a fearful stigma, not only on France, but on human nature. Vice may have existed to a high degree of criminality in other lands; but in no other country of Europe, or the earth, ever was vice so public, so ostentatiously forced upon the eyes of man, so completely formed into an established and essential portion of fashionable and courtly life. It was even the *etiquette*, that the King of France should have a *mistress*. She was as much a part of the royal establishment as a prime minister was of the royal councils; and, as if for the purpose of offering a still more contemptuous defiance to the common decencies of life, the etiquette was, that this mistress should be a *married woman*! Yet in that country the whole ritual of Popery was performed with scrupulous exactness. A vast and powerful clergy filled France; and the ceremonials of the national religion were performed continually before the court, with the most rigid formality. The King had his confessor, and, so far as we can discover, the mistress had her confessor too; the nobles attended the royal chapel, and also had their confessors. The confessional was never without royal and noble solicitors of monthly, or, at the furthest, quarterly absolution. Still, from the whole body of ecclesiastics, France heard no remonstrance against those public abominations. Their sermons, few and feeble, sometimes declaimed on the vices of the beggars of Paris, or the riots among the peasantry; but no sense of scriptural responsibility, and no natural feeling of duty, ever ventured to deprecate the vices of the nobles and the scandals of the throne. [Pg 734]

We must give but a fragment, from Walpole's *catalogue raisonné*, of this Court of Paphos. It had been the King's object to make some women of rank introduce Madame du Barri at court; and he had found considerable difficulty in this matter, not from her being a woman of no character, but on her being a woman of no birth, and whose earlier life had been spent in the lowest condition of vice. The King at last succeeded—and these are the *chaperons*. "There was Madame de l'Hôpital, an ancient mistress of the Prince de Soubize! The Comtesse Valentinois, of the highest birth, very rich, but very foolish; and as far from a Lucretia as Madame du Barri herself! Madame de Flavacourt was another, a suitable companion to both in virtue and understanding. She was sister to *three* of *the King's earliest mistresses*, and had aimed at succeeding them! The Maréchale Duchesse de Mirpoix was the last, and a very important acquisition." Of her, Walpole simply mentions that all her talents were "drowned in such an overwhelming passion for play, that though she had long and singular credit with the King, she reduced her favour to an endless solicitation for money to pay her debts." He adds, in his keen and amusing style—"That, to obtain the post of *dame d'honneur* to the Queen, she had left off *red* (wearing rouge,) and acted *dévotion*; and the very next day was seen riding with Madame de Pompadour (the King's mistress) in the latter's coach!" The editor settles the question of *her* morality, too.—"She was a woman of extraordinary wit and cleverness, but totally *without character*." She had her morals by inheritance; for she was the daughter of the *mistress* of the Duke of Lorraine, who married her to Monsieur de Beauvan, a poor noble, and whom the duke got made a prince of the empire, by the title of De Craon. Now, all those were females of the highest rank in France, ladies of fashion, the stars of court life, and the models of national manners. Can we wonder at the retribution which cast them out into the highways of Europe? Can we wonder at the ruin of the corrupted nobility? Can we wonder at the massacre of the worldly church, which stood looking on at those vilenesses, and yet never uttered a syllable against them, if it did not even share in their excesses? The true cause for astonishment is, not in the depth of their fall, but in its delay; not in the severity of the national judgment, but in that long-suffering which held back the thunderbolt for a hundred years, and even then did not extinguish the generation at a blow!

FOOTNOTE.

[33] *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third, by Horace Walpole. From the MSS. Edited, with Notes, by* Sir D. La Marchant, Bart. London: Bentley.

A FEW PASSAGES CONCERNING OMENS, DREAMS, APPEARANCES, &c.

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In a Letter to Eusebius.
No. II.

It is somewhat late, my dear, Eusebius, to refer me to my letter of August 1840, and to enquire, in your bantering way, if I have shaken hands with a ghost recently, or dreamed a dream worth telling. You have evidently been thinking upon this subject ever since I wrote to you; and I suspect you are more of a convert than you will admit. You only wish to provoke me to further evidence; but I see—through the flimsy veil of your seeming denials, and through your put-on audacity—the nervous workings of your countenance, when your imagination is kindled by the mysterious subject. Your wit and your banter are but the whistle of the clown in the dark, to keep down his rising fears. However good your story[34] may be, there have been dreams even of the numbers of lottery-tickets that have been verified. We call things coincidences and chances, because we have no name to give them, whereas they are phenomena that want a better settlement. You speak, too, of the "doctrine of chances." If chance have a doctrine, it is subject to a rule, is under calculation, arithmetic, and loses all trace at once of our idea of absolute chance. If there be chance, there is also a power over chance. The very hairs of our head, which seem to be but a chance-confusion, are yet, we are assured, all numbered—and is it less credible that their every movement is noted also? One age is the type of another; and every age, from the beginning of the world, hath had its own symbols; and not poetically only, but literally true is it, that "coming events cast their shadows before." If the "vox populi" be the "vox Dei," it has pronounced continually, in a space of above five thousand years, that there is communication between the material and immaterial worlds. So rare are the exceptions, that, speaking of mankind, we may assert that there is a universal belief amongst them of that connexion by signs, omens, dreams, visions, or ghostly presences. Many professed sceptics, who have been sceptics only in the pride of understanding, have in secret bowed down to one form or other of the superstition. Take not the word in a bad sense. It is at least the germ, the natural germ, of religion in the [Pg 736] human mind. It is the consciousness of a superiority not his own, of some power so immeasurably above man, that his mind cannot take it in, but accepts, as inconsiderable glimpses of it, the phenomena of nature, and the fears and misgivings of his own mind, spreading out from himself into the infinite and invisible. I am not certain, Eusebius, if it be not the spiritual part of conscience, and is to it what life is to organized matter—the mystery which gives it all its motion and beauty.

It is not my intention to repeat the substance of my former letter—I therefore pass on. You ask me if the mesmeric phenomena—which you ridicule, yet of which I believe you covet a closer investigation—are not part and parcel of the same incomprehensible farrago? I cannot answer you. It would be easy to do so were I a disciple. If the mesmerists *can* establish *clairvoyance*, it will certainly be upon a par with the ancient oracles. But what the philosopher La Place says, in his *Essay on Probabilities*, may be worth your consideration—that "any case, however apparently incredible, if it is a recurrent case, is as much entitled to a fair valuation under the laws of induction, as if it had been more probable beforehand." If the mesmerized can project, and that apparently without effort, their minds into the minds of others—read their thoughts; if they can see and tell what is going on hundreds of miles off, on the sea and on distant lands alike; if they can at remote distances *influence* others with a sense of their presence—they possess a power so very similar to that ascribed, in some extraordinary cases, to persons who, in a dying state, have declared that they have been absent and conversed with individuals dear to them in distant countries, and whose presence has been recognised at those very times by the persons so said to be visited, that I do not see how they can be referable to different original phenomena. Yet with this fact before them, supposing the facts of mesmerism, of the mind's separation from, and independence of its organic frame, is it not extraordinary that so many of this new school are, or profess themselves by their writings, materialists? I would, however, use the argument of mesmerism thus:—Mesmerism, if true, confirms the ghost and vision power, though I cannot admit that dreams, ghosts, and visions are any confirmation of mesmerism; for if mesmerism be a delusion and cheat, it may have arisen from speculating upon the other known power—as true miracles have been known to give rise to false. In cases of mesmerism, however, this shock is felt—the facts, as facts in the ordinary sense, are incredible; but then I see persons who have examined the matter very nicely, whom I have known, some intimately, for many years, of whose good sense, judgement, and *veracity* I will not allow myself to doubt—indeed to doubt whose veracity would be more incredible to me than the mesmeric facts themselves. Here is a conflict—a shock. Two contradictory impossibilities come together. I do not weigh in the scale at all the discovery of some cheats and pretenders; this was from the first to have been expected. In truth, the discoveries of trick and collusion are, after all, few. Not only has mesmerism been examined into by persons I respect, but practised likewise; and by one, a physician, whom I have known intimately many years, who, to his own detriment, has pursued it, and whom I have ever considered one of the most truthful persons living, and incapable of collusion, or knowingly in any way deceiving. Now, Eusebius, we cannot go into society, and pronounce persons whom

we have ever respected all at once to be cheats and liars. Yet there may be some among them who will tell you that they themselves were entirely sceptical until they tried mesmerism, and found they had the power in themselves. We must then, in fairness, either acknowledge mesmerism as a power, or believe that these persons whom we respect and esteem are practised upon and deluded by others. And such would, I confess, be the solution of the difficulty, were it not that there are cases where this is next to an impossibility.

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But I do not mean now, Eusebius, to discuss mesmerism, [35] further than as it does seem "a part and parcel" of that mysterious power which has been manifested in omens, dreams, and appearances. I say *seem*—for if it be proved altogether false, the other mystery stands untouched by the failure—for in fact it was, thousands of years before either the discovery or practice—at least as far as we know; for some will not quite admit this, but, in their mesmeric dreaming, attribute to it the ancient oracles, and other wonders. And there are who somewhat inconsistently do this, having ridiculed and contemned as utterly false those phenomena, until they have found them hitch on to, and give a credit to, their new Mesmeric science.

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But to return to the immediate subject. It has been objected against dreams, omens, and visions, that they often occur without an object; that there is either no consequence, or a very trifling one; the knot is not "dignus vindice." Now, I am not at all staggered by this; on the contrary, it rather tends to show that there is some *natural* link by which the material and immaterial within and without ourselves may be connected; and very probably many more intimations of that connexion are given than noted. Those of thought, mental suggestions, may most commonly escape us. It is thus what we would not do of ourselves we may do in spite of ourselves. Nor do we always observe closely objects and ends. We might, were we to scrutinize, often find the completion of a dream or omen which we had considered a failure, because we looked too immediately for its fulfilment. But even where there is evidently no purpose attained, there is the less reason to suspect fabrication, which would surely commence with an object. Some very curious cases are well attested, where the persons under the impression act upon the impulse blindly, not knowing why; and suddenly, in conclusion, the whole purpose bursts upon their understandings. But I think the objection as to purpose is answered by one undoubted fact, the dream of Pilate's wife—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." There is here no apparent purpose—the warning was unheeded. Yet the dream, recorded as it is and where it is, was unquestionably a dream upon the event to happen; and is not to be considered as a mere coincidence, which would have been unworthy the sacred historian, who wrote the account of it under inspiration. And this is a strong—the strongest confirmation of the inspiration of dreams, or rather, perhaps, of their significance, natural or otherwise, and with or without a purpose. So the dream of Cæsar's wife did not save Cæsar's life. And what are we to think of the whole narrative, beginning with the warning of the Ides of March? Now, Joseph's dream and Pharaoh's dream were dreams of purpose; they were prophetic, and disclosed to the understanding of Joseph. So that, with this authority of Scripture, I do not see how dreams can be set aside as of no significance. And we have the like authority for omens, and symbols, and visions —so that we must conclude the things themselves to be possible; and this many do, yet say that, with other miracles, they have long ceased to be.

Then, again, in things that by their agreement, falling in with other facts and events, move our wonder, we escape from the difficulty, as we imagine, by calling them coincidences; as if we knew what coincidences are. I do not believe they are without a purpose, any more than that seeming fatality by which little circumstances produce great events, and in ordinary life occur frequently to an apparent detriment, yet turn out to be the very hinge upon which the fortune and happiness of life depend and are established. I remember a remarkable instance of this—though it may not strictly belong to omens or coincidences; but it shows the purpose of an accident. Many years ago, a lady sent her servant—a young man about twenty years of age, and a native of that part of the country where his mistress resided—to the neighbouring town with a ring which required some alteration, to be delivered into the hands of a jeweller. The young man went the shortest way, across the fields; and coming to a little wooden bridge that crossed a small stream, he leaned against the rail, and took the ring out of its case to look at it. While doing so, it slipped out of his hand, and fell into the water. In vain he searched for it, even till it grew dark. He thought it fell into the hollow of a stump of a tree under water; but he could not find it. The time taken in the search was so long, that he feared to return and tell his story—thinking it incredible, and that he should even be suspected of having gone into evil company, and gamed it away or sold it. In this fear, he determined never to return—left wages and clothes, and fairly ran away. This seemingly great misfortune was the making of him. His intermediate history I know not; but this—that after many years' absence, either in the East or West Indies, he returned with a very considerable fortune. He now wished to clear himself with his old mistress; ascertained that she was living, purchased a diamond ring of considerable value, which he determined to present in person, and clear his character, by telling his tale, which the credit of his present condition might testify. He took the coach to the town of ——, and from thence set out to walk the distance of a few miles. He found, I should tell you, on alighting, a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood, who was bound for the adjacent village. They walked together; and, in conversation, this former servant, now a gentleman, with graceful manners and agreeable address, communicated the circumstance that made him leave the country abruptly, many years before. As he was telling this, they came to the very wooden bridge. "There," said he—"it was just here that I dropped the ring; and there is the very bit of old tree, into a hole of which it fell—just there." At the same time, he put down the point of his umbrella into the hole of a knot in the tree—and, drawing it up, to the astonishment of both, found *the* very ring on the ferrule of the umbrella. I need not tell the rest. But make this reflection—why was it that he did not as easily find it immediately after it had fallen in? It was an incident like one of those in Parnell's "Hermit," which, though a seeming chance, was of purpose, and most important.

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Now, here is an extraordinary coincidence between a fact and a dream, or a vision, whatever it may be, which yet was of no result—I know it to be true. And you know, Eusebius, my excellent, truth-telling,

worthy Mrs H——, who formerly kept a large school at ——. One morning early, the whole house was awakened by the screams of one of the pupils. She was in hysterics; and, from time to time, fainting away in an agony of distress. She said she had seen her grandfather—that he was dead, and they would bury him alive. In due time, the post brought a letter—the grandfather *was dead*. Letters were written to the friends to announce the dream or vision, and the burial was delayed in consequence. Nothing could be more natural than the fear of burying him alive in the mind of the young girl, unacquainted with death, and averse to persuade herself that the person she had seen could be really dead. Now, my dear Eusebius, you know Mrs H——, and cannot doubt the fact.

Cases of this kind are so many, and well authenticated, that one knows not where to choose.

——"Tam multa loquacem
Delassare valent Fabium."

I think you knew the worthy and amiable Mr ——, who had the charge of the valuable museum at ——. I well remember hearing this narrated of him, long *before* his death. He stated, that one day opening a case, he heard a voice issue from it, which said—"In three days you shall die." He became ill, and sent for Dr P ——, the very celebrated physician. It was in vain to reason with him. The third day arrived. The kind physician sat with him till the hour was past. He did not then die! Did he, however, mistake or miscalculate the meaning of the voice? He died *that very day three years!!* Nothing can be more authentic than this.

When I was in town in the summer, Eusebius, I spent an agreeable day with my friends, the C——s. Now, I do not know a human being more incapable of letting an idea, a falsehood of imagination, run away with his sober judgment. He has a habit, I should say, more than most men, of tying himself down to matters of fact. I copy for you an extract from a diary; it was taken down that night. "Mr C—— has just told me the following very curious circumstance:—Some years ago, Mrs C—— being not in good health, they determined to spend some weeks in the country. His father was then in his house. They separated—the father, to his own home in the neighbourhood of London, and Mr and Mrs C—— to visit the brother of Mrs C——, a clergyman, and resident upon his living, in Suffolk. Soon after their arrival, there was a large assembly of friends, in consequence of some church business. There was church service—in the midst of [Pg 740] which Mr C—— suddenly felt an irresistible desire to return to his house in town. He knew not why. It was in vain he reasoned with himself—go he must, forced by an impulse for which he could in no way account. It would distress his friends—particularly on such an occasion. He could not help it. He communicated his intention to Mrs C——; begged her to tell no one, lest he should give trouble by having the carriage;—his resolution was instantly taken, to quit the church at once, to walk about six miles to meet the coach if possible; if not, determining to walk all night, a distance of thirty-two miles. He did quit the church, walked the six miles, was in time to take the coach, reached London, and his own home. The intelligence he found there was, that his father was dangerously ill. He went to him—found him dying—and learned that he had told those about him that he knew he should see his son. That wish was gratified, which could not have been but for this sudden impulse and resolution. His father expired in his arms."

It is curious that his father had told him a dream which he had had some years before—that he was in the midst of some convulsion of nature, where death was inevitable, and that then the only one of his children who came to him was my friend Mr C——, which was thus in manner accomplished on the day of his death.

I know not if some persons are naturally more under these and suchlike mysterious influences. There was another occurrence which much affected Mr C——. He went into Gloucestershire to visit a brother. I do not think the brother was ill. All the way that he went in the coach, he had, to use his own words, a death-smell which very much annoyed him. Leaving the coach, he walked towards his brother's house greatly depressed; so much so, that, for a considerable time, he sat on a stone by the way, deeply agitated, and could not account for the feeling. He arrived in time only to see his brother expire. I do not know, Eusebius, how you can wish for better evidence of facts so extraordinary. Mr C——'s character is sufficient voucher.

Here is another of these extraordinary coincidences which I have been told by my friend Mrs S——, niece to the Rev. W. Carr, whom she has very frequently heard narrate the following:—A farmer's wife at Bolton Abbey, came to him, the Rev. W. Carr, in great agitation, and told him she had passed a dreadful night, having dreamed that she saw Mr Richard, (brother to Rev. W. Carr;) that she saw him in great distress, struggling in the water, with his portmanteau on his shoulders, escaping from a burning ship; and she begged the family to write to know if Mr Richard was safe. It was exactly according to the dream; he had, at the very time, so escaped from the burning of (I believe) the Boyne. How like is this to some of the mesmeric visions! I am assured of the truth of the following, by one who knew the circumstance. One morning, as Mrs F—— was sitting in her room, a person came in and told her he had had a very singular dream; that he had been sitting with her sister, Mrs B——k, when some one came into the room with distressing intelligence about her husband. Though it could not have been there known at the time, Mr B ——k had been thrown from his horse and killed.

A party of gentlemen had met at Newcastle; the nature of the meeting is stated to have been of a profane character. One of them suddenly started, and cried, "What's that?"—and saw a coffin. The others saw it; and one said—"It is mine: I see myself in it!" In twenty-four hours he was a corpse.

I think I mentioned to you, Eusebius, that when I dined with Miss A——, in town, she told me a curious story about a black boy. I have been since favoured with the particulars, and copy part of the letter; weigh it well, and tell me what you think of such coincidences—if you are satisfied that there is nothing but chance in the matter.

"Now for the little black boy. In the year 1813, I was at the house of Sir J. W. S——th of D—— House, near Bl——d, who then resided in Portman Square, and a Mr L——r of Norfolk, a great friend of Sir John's, was of the party. On coming into the room, he said—'I have just been calling on our old Cambridge friend, H [Pg 741]

——n, who returned the other day from India; and he has been telling me a very curious thing which happened in his family. He had to go up the country to a very remote part, on some law business, and he left Mrs H——n at home, under the protection of her sister and that lady's husband. The night after Mr H——n went away, the brother-in-law was awakened by the screams of his own wife in her sleep; she had dreamed that a little black boy, Mr H——n's servant, who had attended him, was murdering him. He woke her, and while he was endeavouring to quiet her, and convince her that her fears were the effects of a bad dream, produced probably by indigestion, he was roused by the alarming shrieks of Mrs H——n, who slept in an adjoining room. On going to her, he found her, too, just awakening after a horrid dream—the little Indian boy was murdering her husband. He used the same arguments with her that he had already found answer in quieting his own wife; but, in his own mind, he felt very anxious for tidings from Mr H——n. To their great surprise, that gentleman made his appearance the next evening, though he had expected to be absent above a week. He looked ill and dejected. They anxiously asked him what was the matter. Nothing, but that he was angry with himself for acting in a weak, foolish manner. He had dreamed that his attendant, the little black boy, intended to murder him; and the dream made such an impression on his nerves that he could not bear the sight of the boy, but dismissed him at once without any explanation. Finding he could not go on without an attendant, he had returned home to procure one; but as he had no reason whatever to suspect the boy of any ill intention, he felt very angry with himself for minding a dream. Dear Mrs H——n was much struck with this story; but she used to say—unless it were proved that the boy really had the intention of murdering his master, the dreams were for nothing.'"

In this instance a murder may have been prevented by these dreams; for if merely coincidences, and without an object, the wonder of coincidences is great indeed; for it is not one dream, but three, and of three persons.

Things apparently of little consequence are yet curious for observation. Our friend K——n, and two or three other friends, some months ago went on an excursion together. Their first point was Bath, where they meant to remain some time. K——n dreamed on Friday they were to start on Saturday; that there was a great confusion at the railway station; and that there would be no reaching Bath for them. They went, however, on Saturday morning, and he told his dream when in the carriage. One of the party immediately repeated the old saying—

"A Friday's dream on Saturday told
Will be sure to come true ere the day is old."

There was no accident to the train; but, instead of finding themselves at Bath, they found themselves at Bristol—having, in their conversation, neglected to notice that they had passed Bath. They were put to great inconvenience, and confusion, and difficulty in getting their luggage. I know you too well, Eusebius, not to hear, by anticipation, your laughter at this trifling affair, and the wit with which for a few moments you will throw off your ridicule. You may ask, if the shooting of your corns are not as sure and as serious prognostications? Be it so; and why not, Eusebius? You can tell by them what weather to expect; and, after all, you know little more of the material world, less of the immaterial, and nothing of their mystical union. Nothing now, past, present, and future, may be but terms for we know not what, and cannot comprehend how they can be lost in an eternity. There they become submerged. So take the thing represented, not the paltry, perhaps ridiculous, one through which it is represented. It is the picture, the attitude, the position, the undignified familiarity of yourself with the defects of your own person, that make the ridiculous; but there is grave philosophy, nevertheless, to be drawn from every atom of your own person, if you view it aright. I have heard you eloquent against the "hypocrite Cicero," as you called him, for his saying, that one [Pg 742] Augur meeting another could scarcely help laughing. If mankind chose augury as a sign, it might have been permitted them to find a sign in it. But this is plunging into deeper matter, and one which you will think a quagmire, wherein wiser thoughts may flounder and be lost. When the officers of Hannibal's army were heard to laugh by the soldiery on the morning of the battle of Cannæ, they took it as a good omen. It was generally received, and the day was fatal to the Romans. "Possunt quia posse videntur," you will say; but whence comes the "videntur?" There, Eusebius, you beg the whole question. The wonders and omens, gravely related by Livy, at least portray a general feeling—an impression before events. In the absence of a better religion, I would not have quarrelled with the superstition, and very much join you in your condemnation of the passage in Cicero.

The fatal necessity of event upon event, of omen, dream, and vision, is the great characteristic of the wondrous Greek drama. So awfully portrayed is the *Œdipus*—and with more grand and prophetic mystery pervading the *Agamemnon*. Had it not been congenial with popular belief, it could never have been so received; nor, indeed, could somewhat similar (though degraded from their high authority, as standing less alone by their amalgamation with a purer creed) characteristics in some of the plays of our own Shakspeare have touched the mind to wonderment, had there been no innate feeling to which they might, and without effort, unite. The progress, however, of the omen and vision, clearer and clearer, pointing to the very deed, and even while its enactment has commenced, and that fatality by which (prophetic, too) the plainest prophecy is unheeded, contemned, and the Prophetess herself doomed, and knowing herself doomed, may be considered as an epitome of the Grecian creeds upon the subject. It was no vulgar punning spirit that designated the very *name* of Helen as a cursing omen.

"Τις ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ὤδ'
"Ες το πᾶν ετητυμς——
"Μή τις όντων οὐχ ορω——
"Μεν προνόαισι τοῦ πεπρωμευόυ
"Γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχσ νέμων."

Helen, the destroyer—yes, that was her significant name. The present King of the French was not allowed to assume the title of Valois, which was, strictly speaking, his, and instead assumed that of Duc de Chartres, on account of an evil omen attached to the former name; and that evil omen originating in a

curious fact, the seeing of a spectre by that German princess who succeeded the poisoned sister of our second Charles. But there is nothing in modern history more analogous to the fatalities of the Grecian drama than those singular passages relating to the death of Henry the Fourth of France. We have the gravest authority of the gravest historians, that prophecies, warnings, and omens so prepared Henry for his death, that he waited for it with a calm resignation, as to an irresistible fatality. "In fact," (says an eloquent writer in Maga of April 1840,) "it is to this attitude of listening expectation in the king, and breathless waiting for the blow, that Schiller alludes in that fine speech of Wallenstein to his sister, where he notices the funeral knells that sounded continually in Henry's ears; and, above all, his prophetic instinct, that caught the sound from a far distance of his murderer's motions, that could distinguish, amidst all the tumult of a mighty Capital, those stealthy steps."

And does it seem so strange to you, Eusebius, if the ear and the eye, those outposts, as it were, of the ever watchful, spiritual, and intellectual sentinels within man, convey the secret intelligences that most concern him? What is there, Eusebius, so marvellous to your conception, if there be sympathy more than electric between those two worlds, outer Nature and Man himself? If earth, that with him and for him partook of [Pg 743] one curse, with all its accompanying chain and interchange of elements, be still one with him, in utterance and signification, whether of his weal or woe. The sunshine and the gloom enter into him, and are his; they reflect his feelings, or rather they are his feelings, almost become his flesh—they are his bodily sensations. The winds and the waters, in their gentler breathings and their sullen roar, are but the music of his mind, echo his joys, his passions, or funereally rehearse the dirge of his fate.

Reject not, my Eusebius, any fact, because it seems little and trifling; a mite is a wonder in creation, from which deep, hidden truths present themselves. It was a heathen thought, an imperfect conception of the wide sympathy of all nature, and of that meaning which every particle of it can convey, and more significantly as we calculate our knowledge;—it was a heathen thought, that the poet should lament the unlikeliness of the flowers of the field to man in their fall and reappearance. It was not the blessing given to his times to see the perfectness of the truth—the "non omnis moriar" indicated even in his own lament. [36]

I had written thus far, when our friend H—- l—- r looked in upon me, and enquired what I was about; I told him I was writing to you, and the subject of my letter. He is this moment gone, and has left with me these two incidents. They came within his own experience. He remembers, that when he was a boy, he was in a room with several of his brothers, some of whom were unwell, yet not seriously ill. On a sudden, there was a great noise, so great, that it could be compared to nothing but the firing of a pistol—a pane in the window was broken; not, he said, to *pieces*, but literally to a *powder* of glass. All in the house heard it, with the exception of one of his brothers, which struck them as very strange. The servants from below, and their mother from above, rushed into the room, fearing one of them might have been shot. The mother, when she saw how it was, told H—- l—- r that his brother, who did not hear the noise, she knew it well, would die. At that same hour next day that brother did die.

The other story is more singular. His family were very intimate with another, consisting of father, mother, and an only daughter—a child. Of her the father was so fond, that he was never happy but when she was with him. It happened that he lost his health, and during his long illness, continually prayed that, when he was gone, his child too should be shortly taken from this world, and that he might be with her in a better. He died—when, a short time after his death, the child, who was in perfect health, came rushing into the presence of her mother, from a little room which looked out upon a court, but from which there was no [Pg 744] entrance to the room—she came rushing to her mother, calling out—"Oh, papa, papa! I have seen papa in the court, and he called me to him. I must go—open the door for me—do, mamma! I must go, for he called me." Within twenty-four hours that child was dead. Now, said H—l—r, I knew this to be a fact, as well as I ever knew any act, for our families were like one family. Sweet image of infant and of parental love!—let us excuse the prayer, by that of the ancient mother, who, when her sons dragged her chariot to the temple, prayed that they might receive from the gods what was best for them—and they were found dead in the temple. How beautiful is the smile of the sleeping infant! "Holds it not converse with angels?" the thought is natural—ministering spirits may be unseen around us, and in all space, and love the whispering speech in the ear of sleeping innocence; there is visible joy in the face, yet how little can it know of pleasurable sensations, communicable through this world's objects? How know we but the sense must be deteriorated, to make it serviceable for the lower purposes for which in part the child is born?—as the air we breathe must have something of poison, or it would be too pure for mortal beings. Look down some lengthening valley from a height, Eusebius, at the hour of twilight, when all lands, their marks and boundaries, grow dim, and only here and there the scant light indicates lowly dwellings, shelters of humanity in earth's sombre bosom, and mark the vast space of vapour that fills all between, and touches all, broods over all—can you think this little world of life that you know by having walked its path, and now see so indistinguishable, to be the all of existence before you? Lone indeed would be the world were there nothing better than ourselves in it. No beings to watch for us, to warn us, to defend us from "the Power of the Air:" ministering spirits—and why not of the departed?—may be there. If there be those that in darkness persuade to evil—and in winter nights, the winds that shake the casement seem to denote to the guilty conscience the presence of avenging fiends—take we not peace and wholesome suggestion from milder influences of air and sunshine? Brighter may be, perhaps, the child's vision than ours; as it grows for the toil and work for which it is destined, there comes another picture of a stern and new reality, and that which brought the smile of joy upon the face, is but as a dissolving view; and then he becomes fully fitted for humanity, of which he was before but the embryo. And even in his progress, if he keep charge of his mind, in purity and in love, seem there not ministering spirits, that spread before him, in the mirage of the mind, scenes that look like a new creation? and pedants, in their kind, call this the poet's fancy, his imagination.

Lately I have spent a month by the sea: the silent rocks seemed significant in their overhanging look, and

silence, as listening to the incessant sea. It would be painful to think every thing insensible about us, but ourselves. I wonder not that the rocks, the woods, and wilds, were peopled by ancient Mythologists; and with beings, too, with whom humanity could sympathize. I would not think that the greater part of the earth's islands and continents were given up to hearts insensate; that there were nothing better than wildernesses of chattering apes—no sounds more rational than

"The wolf's wild howl on Ulalaski's shore."

I would rather think that there are myriads of beings of higher nature than ourselves, whose passage is ὠστς νοημα, and whose home is ubiquity; and such as these may have their missions to us, and may sometimes take the dying breath of father or of brother in far-off seas, and instinct with, and maintaining in themselves, made visible, that poor remnant of life, stand at a moment at the bedside of beloved relatives, even in most distant lands, and give to each a blessed interchange and intelligence. In every sense, indeed, we "see but in part." In the dulness of the day, we see not a tenth part of the living things that people the ground; a gleam of sunshine instantly discovers to us in leaf and flower a little world; and [Pg 745] could we but remove this outward fog, this impure atmosphere of our mortal senses, that which may be occasionally granted at dying hour, we might behold all space peopled with the glory of created beings. There is a beautiful truth of best feeling hidden in the superstition, that at one particular moment on Christmas Eve, all the beasts of the field go down on their knees amidst the darkness, seen alone by their Creator's eye, and by that angelic host that sing again the first divine hymn of Palestine.

I do not wonder that sailors are, what we choose to call, more superstitious than landsmen; with but a plank between them and death—unfathomable seas around them, whose depths are continual wonder, from whose unseen treasure-house, the

——"billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore."

Seas and skies with the great attribute of life, motion—their very ship a personification, as it were a living creature—cut off, separated as they are for the most part, from cities, and the mind-lowering ways of cities, which they see recede from them and melt into utter insignificance, leaving for companionship but the winds and the waters. Can it be a matter of wonder, if, with warm wishes and affections in their breasts, their imaginations shape the clouds and mists into being, messengers between them and the world they have all but lost? The stars, those "watches of the night," to them are not the same, changing yet ever significant. Even the waters about them, which by day are apparently without a living thing beyond the life of their own motion, in the darkness glittering with animated fire; can we wonder, then, if their thoughts rise from these myriad, invisible, lucent worms of the sea, to a faith in the more magnificent beings who "clothe themselves with light;" and if they believe that such are present, unseen, commissioned to guard and guide them in ways perilous and obscure? Seamen, accustomed to observe signs in their great solitude, unattracted by the innumerable sights and businesses of other life, are ever open and ready to receive signs and significations even of omen and vision; whereas he that is engaged in crowded street and market, heeds no sign, though it were offered, but that which his little and engrossing interests make for him; he, indeed, may receive "angels' visits unaware." Omens, dreams, and visions are to seamen more real, more frequent, as more congenial with their wants; and some extraordinary cases have even been registered in ships' logs, not resting on the credibility of one but of a crew, and such logs, if I mistake not, have been admitted evidence in courts of judicature. Am I led away by the subject, Eusebius? You will say I am; yet I could go on—the wonder increases—the common earth is not their sure grave—

"Nothing of them that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

But I must not pursue this, lest, in your wit, you find reason to compare me to that great philosopher, who gravely asserted that he had discovered how to make a mermaid, but abstained from using the receipt; and I am quite sure you are not likely to resemble the learned Dr Farmer, who folded down the page for future experiment.[37]

It is not very long ago that I was discussing subjects of this kind with our acute friend S—— V——. I send you a letter received from him, written, I presume, more for you than myself; for I told him I was on the point of answering yours, which he read. His attempt to account for any of his stories by common coincidences, is rather indicative of his naturally inquisitive mind than of his real belief; and I suspect he has been led into that train of argument by his hostility to mesmerism, which he pronounces to be a cheat from beginning to end; and he cannot but see that, granting mesmerism, the step in belief beyond is easy. He would, therefore, have no such stepping stone; and lest confidence in dreams, omens, &c., should make [Pg 746] mesmerism more credible, he has been a little disposed to trim his own opinions on the subject. You will judge for yourself—here is his letter:—

> "My dear ————,——You desire me to give you a written account of the dreams which I related to you when we lately met, and amused ourselves with speculations on these mysterious phenomena.
>
> "*Dream I.*—Mrs X——, when a child, was attached to Captain T——, R.N. She had been brought up from infancy by her uncle and aunt, with whom she resided, and with whom Captain T—— had long been on terms of the most intimate friendship and regard. At the time to which I now refer, Captain T—— commanded a frigate in the West Indies, where he had been stationed for some months; letters had been occasionally received from him; his health had not suffered from the climate, nor had any of his friends in England the least reason to apprehend that a man of his age, good constitution, and temperate habits, by whom also the service in which he was engaged had been eagerly desired, would be likely to suffer from the diseases of these latitudes. One morning Mrs X——, (then Miss X——,) appeared at the breakfast table with an expression of grief on her countenance, that at once induced her uncle and aunt to ask the cause. She said, that she

had dreamed that Captain T—— had died of fever in the West Indies, and that the intelligence had been sent in a large letter to her uncle. The young lady's uncle and aunt both represented to her the weakness of yielding to the impression of a dream, and she appeared to acquiesce in the good sense of their remonstrances—when, shortly after, the servant brought in the letter-case from the Post-office, and when her uncle had unlocked it, and was taking out the letters, (there were several,) Miss X—— instantly exclaimed, pointing to one of them—'That's the letter! I saw it in my dream!' It was the letter—a large letter, of an official size, addressed to her uncle, and conveying precisely the event which Miss X—— had announced.

"*Dream II.*—General D——, R.M., was one morning conversing with me on the subject of dreams, and gave me the following relation:—'I had the command of the marines on board a frigate, and in company with another frigate, (giving names and date,) was proceeding to America, when, on joining the breakfast table, I told my brother officers that I had had a very vivid and singular dream. That I had dreamed that the day was calm, as it now was, and bright, but with some haziness in the distance; and that whilst we were at breakfast, as we now are, the master-at-arms came in and announced two sail in the distance. I thought we all immediately ran on deck—saw the two ships—made them out to be French frigates, and immediately gave chase to them. The wind being light, it was long before we could approach the enemy near enough to engage them; and when, in the evening, a distant fire was commenced, a shot from the frigate which we attacked, carried away our foretopmast, and, consequently, we were unable to continue the chase. Our companion, also, had kept up a distant fire with the other French frigate, but in consequence of our damage, shortened sail to keep company with us during the night. On the following morning the French frigates had made their escape—no person had been killed or wounded on board our own ship; but in the morning we were hailed by our companion, and told that she had lost two men. Shortly after, whilst my brother officers were making comments on my dream—and before the breakfast table was cleared, the master-at-arms made his appearance, announcing, to the great surprise of all present, two sail in the distance; (and General D—— assured me that on reaching the deck they appeared to him precisely the same in place and distance as in his dream)—'the chase—the distant action—the loss of the topmast—the escape of the enemy during the night—and the announcement from the companion frigate that she had lost two men—all took place precisely as represented in my dream.' The General had but just concluded his narration, when a coincidence took place, little less extraordinary than that of [Pg 747] the dream and its attendant circumstances.—The door opened, and a gentleman rushed into the room with all that eagerness which characterizes the unexpected meeting of warm friends after a long absence—and immediately after the first cordial greetings, General D—— said—'My dear F——, it is most singular, that although we have not met during the last fifteen years, and I had not the most distant expectation of seeing or hearing from you, yet you were in my thoughts not five minutes ago—I was relating to my friend my extraordinary dream when on board the ——; you were present, and cannot have forgotten it.' Major F—— replied, that he remembered it most accurately, and, at his friend's request, related it to me, in every particular correspondent with the General's account.

"What I now relate to you cannot be called a dream, but it bears a close affinity to 'those shadowy tribes of mind' which constitute our sleeping phantasmagoria. Calling one morning on my friend, Mrs D——m, who had for some time resided in my neighbourhood, I found her greatly distressed at the contents of a letter which she had just received. The letter was from her sister, Mrs B——, who was on her return to England, on board the ——, East Indiaman, accompanied by her two youngest children, and their nurse; Mr B——, her husband, remaining in India. One morning, shortly after breakfast, Mrs B—— was sitting in the cabin, with many other passengers present, but not herself at that moment engaged in conversation with them; when she suddenly turned her head, and exclaimed aloud, and with extreme surprise, 'Good God! B——, is that you?' At the same moment the children, who were with their nurse at a distant part of the ship, too far off, it is stated, to have heard their mother's exclamation, both cried out, 'Papa! papa!' Mrs B—— declared, that the moment she spoke, she saw her husband most distinctly, but the vision instantly vanished. All the persons present noted the precise time of this singular occurrence, lat. and long., &c., and Mrs B——'s letter to her sister was written immediately after it; it was forwarded to England by a vessel that was expected to reach home before the East Indiaman, and which did precede her by some weeks. No reasonings that I could offer were sufficient to relieve my friend's mind from the conviction that her sister had lost her husband, and that his decease had been thus mysteriously announced to her, until letters arrived from Mr B——, attesting his perfect health, which he enjoyed for some years after—and I believe he is still living.

"To arrive at any reasonable conclusion respecting the phenomena of dreams, we require data most difficult to be obtained; we should compare authentic dreams, faithfully related, with their equally well-attested attendant and *precedent* circumstances. But who can feel certain that he correctly relates even his own dream? I have many times made the attempt, but cannot be perfectly sure that in the act of recording a dream, I have not given more of order to the succession of the events than the dream itself presented. In the case of the first dream, the mere delivery of a letter, there is no succession of events, and therefore no ground to suppose that any invention could have been added to give it form and consistency. The young lady knew that her friend was in the West Indies; she knew, too, the danger of that climate, and had often seen the Admiral, her uncle, receive official letters. Some transient thoughts on these subjects, although too transient to be remembered, unquestionably formed her dream. That the letter really arrived and confirmed the event predicted, can only be referable to those coincidences which are not of very uncommon occurrence in daily life. To similar causes I attribute the second dream; and even its external fulfilment in so many particulars can hardly be deemed more extraordinary than the coincidence of the sudden and wholly unexpected arrival of Major F——, just at the very moment after General D—— had related to me his dream. The third narrative admits of an easy solution. Mrs B—— was not in good health. Thinking of her husband, in a state of reverie, a [Pg 748] morbid spectrum might be the result—distinct enough to cause her sudden alarm and exclamation which, if the children heard, (and children distinguish their mother's voice at a considerable distance—the cabin door, too, might have been open, and the children much nearer than they were supposed to have been,) would account at once for their calling out 'Papa! papa!' During our waking hours, we are never conscious of any complete suspension of thought, even for a moment; if fatigued by any long and laborious mental exertion, such as the solution of a complicated mathematical problem, how is the weariness relieved? Not by listless rest like the tired body, but by a change of subject—a change of action—a new train of thoughts and expressions. Are we, then, always dreaming when asleep? We certainly are not conscious that we are; but it may be that in our sleep we do not remember our dreams, and that it is only in

imperfect sleep, or in the act of waking, that the memory records them. That dreams occupy an exceedingly short period of time, I know from my own experience; for I once had, when a boy, a very long dream about a bird, which was placed in an insecure place in my bedroom, being attacked by a cat. The fall of the cage on the floor awoke me, and I sprang out of bed in time to save the bird. The dream must, I think, have been suggested by the fall of the cage; and, if so, my seemingly long dream could only have occupied a mere point of time. I have also experienced other instances nearly similar. It seems reasonable, too, to suppose that this is generally the case; for our dreams present themselves to us as pictures, with the subjects of which we are intimately acquainted. I now glance my eye at the fine landscape hanging in my room. You may say of it, as Falstaff said of Prince Henry, 'By the Lord, I know you as well as he that made you.' Well, it is full of subject, full of varied beauty and grand conception—a 'paulo majora' eclogue. When I first saw it, I could barely read it through in an hour. For pictures that are what pictures ought to be, Poems to the eye, demand and repay this investigating attention—those that do not demand and suggest thoughts are not worth a thought; but this picture, now its every part, tint, and sentiment, have long been intimately known to me. I see, at a glance, its entire subject—ay, at a glance, too, see the effect which a casual gleam of light has just thrown over it. Is it not probable, then, that our dreams may be equally suggestive, in as short a space of time? Dreams that have not some connexion, something of a continuity of events, however wild, are not retained by the memory. Most persons would find it much more difficult to learn to repeat the words in a dictionary, than a page of poetry of equal length; and many dreams are probably framed of very unconnected materials. In falling asleep, I have often been conscious of the dissevering of my thoughts—like a regiment dismissed from parade, they seemed to straggle away "in most admired disorder;" but these scattered bands muster together again in our sleep; and, as these have all been levied from the impressions, cogitations, hopes, fears, and affections, of our waking hours, however strangely they may re-combine, if they do combine with sufficient continuity to be remembered, the form presented, however wild, will always be found, on a fair analysis, to be characteristic of the dreamer. They are his own thoughts oddly joined, like freshwater Polyps, which may be divided, and then stuck again together, so as to form chains, or any other strange forms, across the globe of water in which they may be exhibited. In Devonshire, the peasantry have a good term to express that wandering of thought, and imperfect dreaming, which is common in some states of disease.—"Oh, sir, he has been lying pretty still; but he has been *roading* all night." By this, they mean, that the patient, in imperfect sleep, has been muttering half-connected sentences; and the word, *roading*, is taken from the mode in which they catch woodcocks. At the last gleam of evening, the woodcocks rise from their shelter in the woods, and wind their way to the open vistas, which lead to the adjacent meadows, where they go to feed during the night; and they return to their covert, through the same vistas, with the first beam of morning. At the end of these vistas, which they call 'cock-roads,' the woodcock [Pg 749] catchers suspend nets to intercept the birds in their evening and morning flights, and great numbers are taken in this manner; the time when they suspend the nets, is called roading-time; and thus, by applying the term, roading, to disturbed and muttered sleep, they compare the dim, loose thoughts of the half-dreaming patient, to the flight of the woodcocks, wheeling their way through the gloomy and darkling woods. It has been asserted that we never feel *surprise* in our dreams; and that we do not *reason* on the subjects which they present to us. This, from my own experience, I know to be a mistake. I once dreamed, whilst residing with a friend in London, that on entering his breakfast-room, the morning was uncommonly dark; but not very much more so than sometimes occurs in a November fog, when, as some one has said, the thick yellow air makes you think you are walking through pease-soup, and the sun, when seen at all, looks like the yolk of a poached egg floating on it. My friend was seated alone by the table, resting his head thoughtfully on his hand, when, looking towards me, with a very serious countenance, he said —'Can you account for this darkness? There is no eclipse stated in the almanack. Some change is taking place in our system. Go to N——, (a philosophical neighbour, who lived within three doors of our house,) and ask if he can explain it.' I certainly felt much surprised at my friend's observations. I went to N—— 's house—or, rather, I found myself in his room. He was walking up and down the room in evident perplexity; and, turning to me, said, 'This is very extraordinary! A change is taking place in our system!—look at the barometer.'—I looked at the barometer, which appeared to be hanging in its usual place in the room, and saw, with great surprise, that the tube was without quicksilver; it had fallen almost entirely down to the bulb. Certainly in this dream I felt great *surprise*, and that the faculty of reason was not suspended is apparent, nay, perhaps, it was quickened in this instance, for I doubt, if I had really seen the præternatural darkness, whether I should so readily have thought of consulting an almanack, or referring to a barometer; I should certainly have gone to my friend N——, for I was in the frequent habit of appealing to him on any subject of natural philosophy on which I might be desirous to be fully instructed. It is clear that the fabricator of the Ephesian Diana could not pay real adoration to his own work; and as we must be the artificers of our own dreams, and furnish all the materials, it seems difficult to discover by what process the mind can present subjects of surprise to itself; but surprise is that state of mind which occurs when an object or idea is presented to it, which our previous train of thought would not lead us to expect or account for. In dreams the catenation of our ideas is very imperfect and perplexed; and the mind, by forgetting its own faint and confused links of association, may generate subjects of surprise to itself. There are some dreams which we dream over again many times in our lives, but these dreams are generally mere scenes, with little or no action or dialogue. I formerly often dreamed that I was standing on a broad road by the side of a piece of water, (in which geese were swimming,) surrounding the base of a green hill, on the summit of which were the ruins of a castle: the sun shining brightly, and the blue sky throwing out the yellow stone-work of the ruin in strong relief. This dream always gave me an indefinite sense of pleasure. I fancied I had formed it from some picture that I might at some time have casually seen and forgotten; but a few years ago I visited the village in which I was born, and from which I had been removed when about three and a half years old. I found that I well remembered many things which might have engaged the attention of a child. The house in which my parents resided was little changed; and I remembered every room, and the pictures on the Dutch tiles surrounding the fireplace of that which had been our nursery. I pointed out the house [Pg 750] where sugar-candy had formerly been sold, and went to the very spot in the churchyard where I had been led, when a child, to call out my name and hear the echo from the tower. I then went by a pathway, through some fields, which led to a neighbouring town. In these fields I recognised a remarkable stone stile, and a bank on which I had gathered daisies; then, extending my route, that I might return to the village by a different course, suddenly the prototype of my often dreamed dream stood before me. The day was bright. There was the blue sky—the green hill—the geese in the surrounding water. 'In every form of the thing *my dream* made true and good.' The distance of this spot from the house of my birth was rather a long walk for a child so young; and, therefore, I suppose I might only once or twice have seen it, and then only in the summer,

or in bright weather. I have said that that dream, whenever it recurred, always impressed me with an indefinite sense of pleasure; was not this feeling an echo, a redolence, of the happy, lively sensations with which, as a child, I had first witnessed the scene? It is singular that, remembering so many objects much less likely to have fixed themselves on the memory, I should have so utterly forgotten, in my waking hours, the real existence of that of which my dream had so faithfully Daguerreotyped; and it is not less remarkable that I have never had the dream since I recognised its original. I think I can account for this, but will not now attempt it, as the length of my epistle may probably have put you in a fair way of having dreams of your own.—Ever faithfully yours.

"C. S."

This last dream of our friend exhibits one of the phenomena of memory, which may not be unconnected with another, curious, and I suppose common. Did you never feel a sense of a reduplication of any passing occurrence, act, or scene—something which you were saying or doing, or in which you were actor or spectator? Did you never, while the occurrence was taking place, suddenly feel a consciousness of its pre-existence and pre-acting; that the whole had passed before, just as it was then passing, even to the details of place, persons, words, and circumstances, and this not in events of importance, but mostly in those of no importance whatever; as if life and all its phenomena were a duplicate in itself, and that that which is acting here, were at the same time acting also elsewhere, and the fact were suddenly revealed to you? I call this one of the phenomena of memory, because it may possibly be accounted for by the repercussion of a nerve, an organ, which, like the string of an instrument unequally struck, will double the sound. Vibrations of memory—vibrations of imagination are curious things upon which to speculate; but not now, Eusebius—you must work this out yourself.

What a curious story is that of Pan.[38] "Pan is dead,"—great Pan is dead—as told by Plutarch. Was not one commissioned by dream or vision to go to a particular place to proclaim it there; and is it not added that the cry "great Pan is dead," was re-echoed from shore to shore, and that this happened at the time of the ceasing of oracles?

It little matters whether you look to public events or private histories—you will see signs and omens, and wondrous visitations, prefiguring and accomplishing their purposes; and if occasionally, when too they are indisputable, they seem to accomplish no end, it may be only a seeming non-accomplishment—but suppose it real, it would then the more follow, that they arise necessarily from the nature of things, though a nature with which we are not acquainted. There is an unaccountable sympathy and connexion between all animated nature—perhaps the invisible, as well as the visible. Did you never remark, that in a crowded room, if you fix your eyes upon any one person, he will be sure soon to look at you? Whence is this more than electric power! Wonderful is that of yawning, that it is communicable;—it is so common, that the why escapes our observation. This attractive power, the fascination of the eye, is still more wonderful. Hence, perhaps, the superstition of the "Evil Eye," and the vulgarly believed mischief of "being overlooked." [Pg 751]

Of private histories—I should like to see the result of a commission to collect and enquire into the authenticity of anecdotes bearing upon this subject. I will tell you one, which is traditionary in our family—of whom one was of the *dramatis personæ*. You know the old popular ballad of "Margaret's Ghost"—

"In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet."

You do not know, perhaps that it is founded on truth. William was Lord S——, who had jilted Margaret; she died; and after death appeared to him—and, it is said, gave him the choice of two things—to die within a week, or to vow constancy, never to marry. He gave the solemn promise to the ghost. We must transfer the scene to the living world of pleasure. Lord S—— is at Bath. He is in the rooms; suddenly he starts—is so overcome as to attract general attention—his eyes are riveted upon one person, the beautiful Mary T——, whose father resided in great style and fashion at Bathford. It was her resemblance to Margaret, her astonishing resemblance, that overcame him. He thought the ghost had again appeared. He was introduced—and, our family tradition says, was for a length of time a daily visitor at Bathford, where his habit was, to say little, but to sit opposite to, and fix his eyes upon the lovely face of Mary T——. The family not liking this, for there was no declaration on his part, removed Mary T—— to the house of some relative in London. There Lord S—— followed her, and pursued his daily habit of profound admiration. At length the lady spoke, and asked him his intentions with regard to her guest. Lord S—— was in the greatest agitation, rose, burst into tears, and left the house. Time passed; and here nothing more is said of Mary T——; Lord S—— saw her no more. But of him, it is added, that, being persuaded by his family and friends, he consented to marry—that the bride and her relatives were at the appointed hour at the church—that no bridegroom was there—that messengers sent to enquire for him brought back the frightful intelligence, that he was no more. He had suddenly expired.

My dear Eusebius, with this story I terminate my long letter. Ruminate upon the contents. Revolved in your mind, they will yield a rich harvest of thought. I hope to be at the reaping. Ever yours, &c.

FOOTNOTES.

[34] The story given by Eusebius is very probably of his own manufacture. It is this. Some years ago, when all the world were mad upon lotteries, the cook of a middle-aged gentleman drew from his hands the savings of some years. Her master, curious to know the cause, learned that she had repeatedly dreamed that a certain number was a great prize, and she had bought it. He called her a fool for her pains, and never omitted an occasion to tease her upon the subject. One day, however, the master saw in the newspaper, or at his bookseller's in the country town, that *the* number was actually the L.20,000 prize. Cook is called up, a palaver ensues—had known each other many years, loth to part, &c.—in short, he proposes and is accepted, but insists on marriage being celebrated next morning. Married they were; and, as the carriage took them from the

church they enjoy the following dialogue. "Well, Molly—two happy events in one day. You have married, I trust, a good husband. You have something else—but first let me ask you where you have locked up your lottery-ticket." Molly, who thought her master was only bantering her again on the old point, cried—"Don't ye say no more about it. I thought how it would be, and that I never should hear the end on't, so I sold it to the baker of our village for a guinea profit. So you need never be angry with me again about that."

[35] Supposing mesmerism true in its facts, one knows not to what power to ascribe it—a good or an evil. It is difficult to imagine it possible that a good power would allow one human being such immense influence over others. All are passive in the hands of the mesmeriser. Let us take the case related by Miss Martineau. She willed, and the water drunk by the young girl *was* wine, at another time it *was* porter. These were the effects. Now, supposing Miss M. had willed it to be a poison, if her statement is strictly true, the girl would have been poisoned. We need no hemlock, if this be so—and the agent must be quite beyond the reach of justice. A coroner's inquest here would be of little avail.

It is said that most mischievous consequences have resulted from the doings of some practitioners—and it must be so, if the means be granted; and it is admitted not to be a very rare gift. The last mesmeric exhibition I witnessed, was at Dr Elliotson's. It appeared to be of so public a nature, that I presume there is no breach of confidence in describing what took place. There were three persons mesmerised, all from the lower rank of life. The first was put into the sleep by, I think, but two passes of the hand, (Lord Morpeth the performer.) She was in an easy-chair: all her limbs were rendered rigid—and, as I was quite close to her, I can testify that she remained above two hours in one position, without moving hand or foot, and breathing deeply, as in a profound sleep. Her eyes were closed, and she was finally wakened by Dr Elliotson waving his hand at some distance from her. As he motioned his hand, I saw her eyelids quiver, and at last she awoke, but could not move until the rigidity of her limbs was removed by having the hand slightly passed over them. She then arose, and walked away, as if unconscious of the state she had been in. The two others were as easily transferred to a mesmeric state. They conversed, answered questions, showed the usual phrenological phenomena, singing, imitating, &c.

But there was one very curious phrenological experiment which deserves particular notice. They sat close together. Dr W. E—— touched the organ of Acquisitiveness of the one, (we will call her A.) She immediately put out her hand, as if to grasp something, and at length caught hold of the finger of Dr W. E——; she took off his ring and put it in her pocket. Dr W. E—— then touched the organ of Justice of the second girl, (B,) and told her that A had stolen his ring. B, or Justice, began to lecture upon the wickedness of stealing. A denied she had done any such thing, upon which Dr W. E—— remarked, that thieving and lying always went together. Then, still keeping his hand on Acquisitiveness, he touched also that of Pride; then, as Justice continued her lecture, the thief haughtily justified the act, that she should steal if she pleased. The mesmeriser then touched also the organ of Combativeness, so that three organs were in play. Justice still continued her lecture; upon which A, the thief, told her to hold her tongue, and not lecture her, and gave her several pretty hard slaps with her hand. Dr W. E—— then removed his hands, and transferred the operation, making Justice the thief, and the thief Justice; when a similar scene took place.

Another curious experiment was, differently affecting the opposite organs—so that endearment was shown on one side, and aversion on the other, of the same person. One scene was beautiful, for the very graceful motion exhibited. One of these young women was attracted to Dr Elliotson by his beckoning her to him, while by word he told her not to come. Her movements were slow, very graceful, as if moved by irresistible power.

[36] You remember the melancholy music of the lines of Moschus:—

"Ἄι Ἄι ταί μαλαχαι μεν επαν κατα κᾶπον ὄλωνται
"Ἦ ταχλωρα σελινα, τδ τ᾽ ἑυθαλές οὖλον ἄνηδον,
"Ὑστερον αὖζωόντι, και εἄς ἔτος ἄλλ φύοντι.
"Ἄμμεςδ᾽ όι μεγάλοι και καρτεροι ἠ σοφοι ἄνδρες,
"Οππότε π ρῶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοσι ἐν χθονί κοίλα
"Εὐδαμες ευ μάλα μακρόν ἀτερμονα νηγρετον
ὑπνον."

Accept of this attempt:—

Alas! alas! the mallows, though they wither where they lie,
And all the fresh and pleasant herbs within the garden die,
Another year they shall appear, and still fresh bloom supply.

But we, Great men, the strong, the wise, the noble, and the brave,
When once we fall into the earth, our nourriture that gave,
Long silence keep of endless sleep, within the hollow grave.

[37] *Vide* an amusing little *jeu-d'esprit—A Descant upon Weather-Wisdom—both Witty and Wise.*—Anon. Longmans. 1845.

[38] There is an exquisite little poem, taken from this passage of Plutarch, at once imaginative and true, for hidden truths are embodied in the tangible workings of the poet's imagination, by Miss Barrett.

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A MOTHER TO HER FORSAKEN CHILD.

My child—my first-born! Oh, I weep
To think of thee—thy bitter lot!
The fair fond babe that strives to creep
Unto the breast where *thou art not*,
Awakes a piercing pang within,

And calls to mind thy heavy wrong.
Alas! I weep not for my sin—
To thy dark lot these tears belong.

Thy little arms stretch forth in vain
To meet a mother's fond embrace;
Alas! in weariness or pain,
Thou gazest on a hireling's face.
I left thee in thy rosy sleep—
I dared not then kneel down to bless;
Now—now, albeit thou may'st weep,
Thou canst not to my bosom press.

My child! though beauty tint thy cheek,
A deeper dye its bloom will claim,
When lips all pitiless shall speak
Thy mournful legacy of shame.
Perchance, when love shall gently steal
To thy young breast all pure as snow,
This cruel thought shall wreck thy weal,
The mother's guilt doth lurk below.

J. D.

SUMMER NOONTIDE.

Unruffled the pure ether shines,
O'er the blue flood no vapour sails,
Bloom-laden are the clinging vines,
All odour-fraught the vales.

There's not a ripple on the main,
There's not a breath to stir the leaves,
The sunlight falls upon the plain
Beside the silent sheaves.

The drowsy herd forget to crop,
The bee is cradled in the balm:
If but one little leaf should drop,
'Twould break the sacred calm.

From the wide sea leaps up no voice,
Mute is the forest, mute the rill;
Whilst the glad earth sang forth *Rejoice*,
God's whisper said—*Be still*.

Her pulses in a lull of rest,
In hush submissive Nature lies,
With folded palms upon her breast,
Dreaming of yon fair skies.

J. D.

[Pg 753]

CLARA.

I would not we should meet again—
We twain who loved so fond,
Although through years and years afar,
I wish'd for nought beyond.

Yet do I love thee none the less;
And aye to me it seems,
There's not on earth so fair a thing
As thou art in my dreams.

All, all hath darkly changed beside,
Grown old, or stern, or chill—
All, save one hoarded spring-tide gleam,
Thy smile that haunts me still!

My brow is but the register
Of youth's and joy's decline;
I would not trace such record too
Deep graven upon thine.

I would not *see* how rudely Time
Hath dealt with all thy store
Of bloom and promise—'tis enough
To know the harvest's o'er.

I would not that one glance to-day,
One glance through clouds and tears,
Should mar the image in my soul
That love hath shrined for years.

J. D.

SECLUSION.

The heart in sacred peace may dwell,
Apart from convent gloom—
To matins and to vespers rise,
'Mid nature's song and bloom:

Or in the busy haunts of life,
In gay or restless scene,
In sanctuary calm abide,
As vestal saint serene.

It is the pure and holy thought,
The spotless veil within,
That screens pollution from the breast,
And hides a world of sin.
J. D.

LAST HOURS OF A REIGN.

[Pg 754]

A Tale in Two Parts.—Part I.

Chapter I.

"Let's see the devil's writ.
What have we here?"

* * * * *

"First of the King. What shall of him become?"
Shakspeare.

"A pretty plot, well chosen to build upon."
Idem.

It was in the month of May 1574, and in the city of Paris, that, at an hour of the night which in these days might be considered somewhat early, but which at that period was already late, two personages were seated in a gloomy room, belonging to a small and ancient hotel, at no great distance from the old palace of the Louvre, with which it was supposed to communicate by courts and passages little known and seldom used.

One of these personages was a woman of middle age, whose form, although full, was peculiarly well made, and whose delicate but well fleshed hands were of striking beauty. The fair face was full and fat, but very pale; the eyes were fine and dark, and the whole expression of her physiognomy was in general calm, almost to mildness. But yet there lurked a haughty air on that pale brow; and at times a look of searching inquisitiveness, amounting almost to cunning, shot from those dark eyes. Her ample dress was entirely black, and unrelieved by any of the embroidery or ornament so much lavished upon the dress of the higher classes at that time; a pair of long white ruffles turned back upon the sleeve, and a large standing collar of spotless purity, alone gave light to the dark picture of her form. Upon her head she wore a sort of skull-cap of black velvet, descending with a sharp peak upon her forehead—the cowl-like air of which might almost have given her the appearance of the superior of some monastic community, had not the cold imperious physiognomy of the abbess been modified by a frequent bland smile, which showed her power of assuming the arts of seduction at will, and her practice of courts. She leaned her arms upon the table, whilst she studied with evident curiosity every movement of her companion, who was engaged in poring, by the light of a lamp, over a variety of strange manuscripts, all covered with the figures, cyphers, and hieroglyphics used in cabalistic calculations.

This other personage was a man, whose appearance of age seemed to be more studied than real. His grey hair, contrary to the custom of the times, fell in thick locks upon his shoulders; and a white beard swept his dark velvet robe, which was fashioned to bestow upon him an air of priestly dignity; but his face was florid, and full of vigour, and the few wrinkles were furrowed only upon his brow.

Around the room, the dark old panels of which, unrelieved by pictures and hangings, rendered it gloomy and severe, were scattered books and instruments, such as were used by the astronomers, or rather astrologers, of the day, and a variety of other objects of a bizarre and mysterious form, which, as the light of the lamp flickered feebly upon them, might have been taken, in their dark nooks, for the crouching forms of familiar imps, attendant upon a sorcerer. After some study of his manuscripts, the old man shook his head, and, rising, walked to the window, which stood open upon a heavy stone balcony. The night was bright and calm; not a cloud, not a vapour dimmed the glitter of the countless myriads of stars in the firmament; and the moon poured down a flood of light upon the roofs of the surrounding houses, and on the dark towers of the not far distant Louvre, which seemed quietly sleeping in the mild night-air, whilst within were fermenting passions, many and dark, like the troubled dreams of the apparently tranquil sleeper. As the old man stepped upon the balcony, he turned up his head with an assumed air of inspiration to the sky, and considered the stars long and in silence. The female had also risen and followed him to the window; but she remained cautiously in the shadow of the interior of the room, whence she watched with increasing interest the face of the astrologer. Again, after this study of the stars, the old man returned to his table, and began to trace new figures in various corners of the patterned horoscopes, and

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make new calculations. The female stood before him, resting her hands upon the table, awaiting with patience the result of these mysteries of the cabala.

"Each new experience verifies the former," said the astrologer, raising up his head at last. "The truth cannot be concealed from your majesty. His hours are numbered—he cannot live long."

"And it is of a surety *he*, of whom the stars thus speak?" enquired the female thus addressed, without emotion.

"The horoscopes all clash and cross each other in many lines," answered the astrologer: "but they are not confounded with his. The horoscope of near and inevitable death is that of your son Charles, the King."

"I know that he must die," said the Queen-mother coldly, sitting down.

The astrologer raised for an instant his deep-set, but piercing grey eyes, to the pale, passionless face of the Queen, as if he could have read the thoughts passing within. There was almost a sneer upon his lip, as though he would have said, that perhaps none knew it better; but that expression flickered only, like a passing flash of faint summer lightning, and he quickly resumed—

"But about this point of death are centred many confused and jarring lines in an inextricable web; and bright as they look to vulgar eyes, yon stars in the heavens shine with a lurid light to those who know to look upon them with the eyes of science; and upon their path is a dim trail of blood—troubled and harassed shall be *the last hours of this reign*."

"But what shall be the issue, Ruggieri?" said the Queen eagerly. "Since Charles must die, I must resign myself to the will of destiny," she added, with an air of pious humility; and then, as if throwing aside a mask which she thought needless before the astrologer, she continued with a bitterness which amounted almost to passion in one externally so cold—"Since Charles must die, he can be spared. He has thrown off my maternal authority; and with the obstinacy of suspicion, he has thwarted all my efforts to resume that power which he has wrested from me, and which his weak hands wield so ill. He has been taught to look upon me with mistrust; in vain I have combated this influence, and if it grow upon him, mistrust will ripen into hate. He regrets that great master-stroke of policy, which, by destroying all those cursed Huguenots, delivered us at one blow from our most deadly enemies. He has spoken of it with horror. He has dared to blame me. He has taken Henry of Navarre, the recusant Huguenot, the false wavering Catholic, to his counsels lately. He is my son no longer, since he no longer acknowledges his mother's will: and he can be spared! But when he is gone, what shall be the issue, Ruggieri? how stand the other horoscopes?"

"The stars of the two Henrys rise together in the heavens" replied the Queen's astrologer and confidant. "Before them stands a house of double glory, which promises a double crown; but the order of the heavens is not such that I can read as yet, which of the two shall first enter it, or enter it alone."

"A double crown!" said the Queen musingly. "Henry of Anjou, my son, is king of Poland, and on his brother's death is rightful king of France. Yes, and he *shall* be king of France, and wear its crown. Henry never thwarted his mother's will, he was ever pliant as a reed to do her bidding; and when he is king, Catherine of Medicis may again resume the reins of power. You had predicted that he would soon return to France; and I promised him he should return, when unwillingly he accepted that barbarian crown, which Charles' selfish policy forced upon him, in order to rid himself of a brother whom he hated as a rival— [Pg 756] hated because I loved him. Yes, he shall return to resume his rightful crown—a double crown! But Henry of Navarre also wears a crown, although it be a barren one—although the kingdom of Navarre bestow upon him a mere empty title. Shall it be his—the double crown? Oh! no! no! The stars cannot surely say it. Should all my sons die childless, it is his by right. But they shall not die to leave *him* their heir. No! sooner shall the last means be applied, and the detested son perish, as did his hated mother, by one of those incomprehensible diseases for which medicine has no cure. A double crown! Shall his be the crown of France also? Never! Ah! little did I think, Ruggieri, when I bestowed upon him my daughter Margaret's hand, and thus lured him and his abhorred party to the court to finish them with one blow, that Margaret of Valois would become a traitress to her own mother, and protect a husband whom she accepted so unwillingly! But Margaret is ambitious for her husband, although she loves him not, although she loves another: the two would wish to thwart her brothers of their birthright, that she might wear their crown on her own brow. Through her intervention, Henry of Navarre has escaped me. He has outlived the massacre of that night of triumph, when all his party perished; and now Charles loves him, and calls him 'upright, honest Henry,' and if I contend not with all the last remnants of my broken power, my foolish son, upon his death-bed, may place the regency in his hands, and deprive his scorned and ill-used mother of her rights. The regency! Ah! lies there the double crown? Ah! Ruggieri, Ruggieri, why can you only tell me thus far and no further?"

"Madam," replied the wary astrologer, "the stars run in their slow unerring course. We cannot compel their path; we can only read their dictates."

Catherine de Medicis rose and approached the window, through which she contemplated the face of the bright heavens.

"Mysterious orbs of light," she said, stretching forth her arms—"ye who rule our destinies, roll on, roll on, and tarry not. Accomplish your great task of fate; but be it quickly, that I may know what awaits me in that secret scroll spread out above on which ye write the future. Let me learn the good, that I may be prepared to greet it—the ill, that I may know how to parry it."

Strange was the compound of that credulous mind, which, whilst it sought in the stars the announcement of an inevitable fate, hoped to find in its own resources the means of avoiding it—which, whilst it listened to their supposed dictates as a slave, strove to command them as a mistress.

"And the fourth horoscope that I have bid you draw?" said the Queen, returning to the astrologer. "How

stands it?"

"The star of your youngest son, the Duke of Alençon, is towering also to its culminating point," replied the old man, looking over the papers before him. "But it is nebulous and dim, and shines only by a borrowed light—that of another star which rises with it to the zenith. They both pursue the same path; and if the star of Alençon reach that house of glory to which it tends, that other star will shine with such a lustre as shall dim all other lights, however bright and glorious they now may be."

"Ha! is it so?" said Catherine thoughtfully. "Alençon conspires also to catch the tottering crown which falls from the dying head of Charles. But he is too weak and wavering to pursue a steady purpose. He is led, Ruggieri—he is led. He is taught to believe that since his elder brother has chosen the crown of Poland, it is his to claim the throne which death will soon leave vacant. But he wants firmness of will—it is another that guides his feeble hand. That star which aspires to follow in the track of Alençon—I know it well, Ruggieri. It is that of the ambitious favourite of my youngest son, of Philip de la Mole. It is he who pushes him on. It is he who would see his master on the throne, in order to throne it in his place. He has that influence over Alençon which the mother possesses no longer; and were Alençon king, it would be Philip [Pg 757] de la Mole who would rule the destinies of France, not Catherine de Medicis. Beneath that exterior of thoughtless levity, lie a bold spirit and an ardent ambition. He is an enemy not to be despised; and he shall be provided for. Alençon protects him—my foolish Margaret loves him—but there are still means to be employed which may curdle love to hate, and poison the secret cup of sympathy. They shall be employed. Ha! Alençon would be king, and Philip de la Mole would lord it over the spirits of the house of Medicis. But they must be bold indeed who would contend with Catherine. Pursue, Ruggieri, pursue. This star, which way does it tend?"

"It aspires to the zenith, madam," replied the astrologer. "But, as I have said, upon the track there is a trail of blood."

Catherine smiled.

"My youngest son has already been here to consult you; I think you told me?" she said, with an enquiring look to the astrologer.

"Among others, who have come disguised and masked, to seek to read their destinies in the skies, I have thought to recognise Monseigneur the Duke of Alençon," replied Ruggieri. "He was accompanied by a tall young man, of gay exterior and proud bearing."

"It is the very man!" exclaimed the Queen. "And do they come again?"

"I left their horoscope undetermined," replied the astrologer, "and they must come to seek an answer to my researches in the stars."

"Let the stars lie, Ruggieri—do you hear?" pursued Catherine. "Whatever the stars may say, you must promise them every success in whatever enterprise they may undertake. You must excite their highest hopes. Push them on in their mad career, that their plans may be developed. Catherine will know how to crush them."

"It shall be as your majesty desires," said the astrologer.

As the Queen and the astrologer still conferred, a loud knocking at the outer gate caused them to pause. Steps were heard ascending the hollow-sounding staircase.

"I will dismiss these importunate visitors," said Ruggieri.

"No," said Catherine, "admit them; and if it be really they you expect, leave them alone after a time, and come, by the outer passage, to the secret cabinet: there will I be. I may have directions to give; and, at all events, the cabinet may prove useful, as it has already done."

Impatient knockings now resounded upon the panels of the door, and the Queen-mother, hastily snatching up a black velvet mask and a thick black veil, which hung upon the back of her high carved chair, flung the latter over her head, so as to conceal her features almost as entirely as if she had worn the mask. Ruggieri, in the meantime, had pushed back a part of the panel of the oak walls, and when Catherine had passed through it into a little room beyond, again closed this species of secret door, so effectually that it would have been impossible to discover any trace of the aperture. The astrologer then went to open the outer door. The persons who entered, were two men whose faces were concealed with black velvet masks, commonly worn at the period both by men and women, as well for the purpose of disguise, as for that of preserving the complexion; their bearing, as well as their style of dress, proclaimed them to be young and of courtly habits.

The first who entered was of small stature, and utterly wanting in dignity of movement; and, although precedence into the room seemed to have been given him by a sort of deference, he turned back again to look at his companion, with an evident hesitation of purpose, before he advanced fully into the apartment. The young man who followed him was of tall stature, and of manly but graceful bearing. His step was firm, and his head was carried high; whilst the small velvet cap placed jauntily on one side upon his head, the light brown curling hair of which was boldly pushed back from the broad forehead and temples, according to the fashion of the times, seemed disposed as if purposely to give evidence of a certain gaiety, almost recklessness, of character. The astrologer, after giving them admittance, returned to his table, and sitting [Pg 758] down, demanded what might be their bidding at that hour of the night! At his words the smaller, but apparently the more important of the two personages, made a sign to his companion to speak; and the latter, advancing boldly to the table, demanded of the old man whether he did not know him.

"Whether I know you or know you not, matters but little," replied the astrologer; "although few things can be concealed before the eye of science."

At these words the smaller young man shuffled uneasily with his feet, and plucked at the cloak of his companion. Ruggieri continued—"But I will not seek to pierce the mystery of a disguise which can have no control over the ways of destiny. Whether I know you or not, I recognise you well. Already have you been here to enquire into the dark secrets of the future. I told you then, that we must wait to judge the movements of the stars. Would you know further now?"

"That is the purpose of our coming," said the latter of the two young men, to whom the office of spokesman had been given. "We have come, although at this late hour of the night, because the matter presses on which we would know our fate."

"Yes, the matter presses," replied the astrologer; "for I have read the stars, and I have calculated the chances of your destinies."

The smaller personage pressed forward at these words, as if full of eager curiosity. The other maintained the same easy bearing that seemed his usual habit.

The astrologer turned over a variety of mysterious papers, as if searching among them for the ciphers that he needed; then, consulting the pages of a book, he again traced several figures upon a parchment; and at length, after the seeming calculation of some minutes, he raised his head, and addressing himself to the smaller man, said—

"You have an enterprise in hand, young man, upon which not only your own destinies and those of your companion, but of many thousands of your fellow creatures depend! Your enterprise is grand, your destiny is noble."

The young men turned to look at each other; and he, who had as yet not broken silence, said, with an eager palpitating curiosity, although the tones of his voice were ill assured—

"And what say the stars? Will it succeed?"

"Go on, and prosper!" replied the astrologer. "A noble course lies before you. Go on, and success the most brilliant and the most prompt attends you."

"Ha! there is, after all, some truth in your astrology, I am inclined to think!" said the first speaker gaily.

"Why have you doubted, young man?" pursued the astrologer severely. "The stars err not—cannot err."

"Pardon me, father," said the young man with his usual careless air. "I will doubt no further. And we shall succeed?"

"Beyond your utmost hopes. Upon your brow, young man," continued the astrologer, addressing again the smaller person, "descends a circlet of glory, the brilliancy of which shall dazzle every eye. But stay, all is not yet done. The stars thus declare the will of destiny; but yet, in these inscrutable mysteries of fate, it is man's own will that must direct the course of events—it is his own hand must strike the blow. Fatality and human will are bound together as incomprehensibly as soul and body. You must still lend your hand to secure the accomplishment of your own destiny. But our mighty science shall procure for you so powerful a charm, that no earthly power can resist its influence. Stay, I will return shortly." So saying, Ruggieri rose and left the room by the door through which the young men had entered.

"What does he mean?" said the shorter of the young men.

"What matter, Monseigneur!" replied the other. "Does he not promise us unbounded success? I little thought myself, when I accompanied you hither, that my belief in this astrology would grow up so rapidly. Long live the dark science, and the black old gentleman who professes it, when they lighten our path so brilliantly!" [Pg 759]

"Let us breathe a little at our ease, until he returns," said he who appeared the more important personage of the two; and throwing himself into a chair, and removing his mask, he discovered the pale face of a young man, who might have been said to possess some beauty, in spite of the irregularity of his features, had not the expression of that face been marred by a pinched and peevish look of weakness and indecision.

His companion followed his example in removing his mask, and the face thus revealed formed a striking contrast to that of the other young man. His complexion was of a clear pale brown, relieved by a flush of animated colour; his brow was fair and noble; his features were finely but not too strongly chiselled. A small dark mustache curled boldly upwards above a beautifully traced and smiling mouth, the character of which was at once resolute and gay, and strangely at variance with the expression of the dark grey eyes, which was more that of tenderness and melancholy. He remained standing before the other personage, with one hand on his hip, in an attitude at once full of ease and deference.

"Did I not right, then, to counsel you as I have done in this matter, my lord duke," he said to the other young man, "since the astrologer, in whom you have all confidence, promises us so unbounded a success: and you give full credence to the announcement of the stars?"

"Yes—yes, Philip," answered the Duke, reclining back in his chair, and rubbing his hands with a sort of internal satisfaction.

"Then let us act at once," continued the young man called Philip. "The King cannot live many days—perhaps not many hours. There is no time to be lost. Henry of Anjou, your elder brother, is far away; the crown of Poland weighs upon his brow. You are present. The troops have been taught to love you. The Huguenot party have confidence in you. The pretensions of Henry of Navarre to the regency must give way before yours. All parties will combine to look upon you as the heir of Charles; and now the very heavens, the very stars above, seem to conspire to make you that which I would you should be. Your fortune, then, is in your own hands."

"Yes. So it is!" replied the Duke.

"Assemble, then, all those attached to your service or your person!"

"I will."

"Let your intention be known among the guards."

"It shall."

"As soon as the King shall have ceased to breathe, seize upon all the gates of the Louvre."

"Yes," continued the Duke, although his voice, so eager the moment before, seemed to tremble at the thought of so much decision of action.

"Declare yourself the Master of the kingdom in full parliament."

"Yes," again replied the young Duke, more weakly. "But"——

"But what—Monseigneur!" exclaimed his companion.

"But," continued the Duke again, with hesitation, "if Henry, my brother, should return—if he should come to claim his crown. You may be sure that our mother, who cares for him alone, will have already sent off messengers to advertise him of Charles's danger, and bid him come!"

"I know she has," replied Philip coolly. "But I have already taken upon myself, without Monseigneur's instructions, for which I could not wait, to send off a sure agent to intercept her courier, to detain him at any price, to destroy his despatches."

"Philip! what have you done?" exclaimed the young Duke, in evident alarm. "Intercept my mother's courier! Dare to disobey my mother! My Mother! You do not know her then."

"Not know her?" answered his companion. "Who in this troubled land of France does not know Catherine of Medicis, her artful wiles, her deadly traits of vengeance? Shake not your head, Monseigneur! You know her too. But, Charles no more, you will have the crown upon your brow—it will be yours to give orders: those who will dare to disobey you will be your rebel subjects. Act, then, as king. If she resist, give orders for her arrest!" [Pg 760]

"Arrest my Mother! Who would dare to do it?" said the Duke with agitation.

"I."

"Oh, no—no—La Mole! Never would I take upon myself"——

"Take upon yourself to be a King, if you would be one," said the Duke's confidant, with energy.

"We will speak more of this," hastily interposed the wavering Duke. "Hush! some one comes. It is this Ruggieri!"

In truth the astrologer re-entered the room. In his hand he bore a small object wrapped in a white cloth, which he laid down upon the table; and then, turning to the young men, who had hastily reassumed their masks before he appeared, and who now stood before him, he said—

"The sole great charm that can complete the will of destiny, and assure the success of your great enterprise, lies there before you. Have you no enemy whose death you most earnestly desire, to forward that intent?"

The young men looked at each other; but they both answered, after the hesitation of a moment—

"None!"

"None, upon whose death depends that turn in the wheel of fate that should place you on its summit?"

Both the young men were silent.

"At all events," continued the cunning astrologer, "your destiny depends upon the action of your own hands. This action we must symbol forth in mystery, in order that your destiny be accomplished. Here—take this instrument," he pursued, producing a long gold pin of curious workmanship, which at need might have done the task of a dagger, "and pierce the white cloth that lies before you on the table."

The Duke drew back, and refused the instrument thus offered to him.

"Do I not tell you that the accomplishment of your brilliant destiny depends upon this act?" resumed Ruggieri.

"I know not what this incantation may be," said the timid Duke. "Take it, Philip."

But La Mole, little as he was inclined to the superstitious credulity of the times, seemed not more disposed than his master to lend his hand to an act which had the appearance of being connected with the rites of sorcery, and he also refused. On the reiterated assurances of the astrologer, however, that upon that harmless blow hung the accomplishment of their enterprise, and at the command of the Duke, he took the instrument into his hand, and approached it over the cloth. Again, however, he would have hesitated, and would have withdrawn; but the astrologer seized his hand before he was aware, and, giving it a sharp direction downwards, caused him to plunge the instrument into the object beneath the cloth. La Mole shuddered as he felt it penetrate into a soft substance, that, small as it was, gave him the idea of a human body; and that shudder ran through his whole frame as a presentiment of evil.

"It is done," said the astrologer. "Go! and let the work of fate be accomplished."

The pale foreheads of both the young men, visible above their masks, showed that they felt they had been led further in the work of witchcraft than was their intention; but they did not expostulate. It was the Duke who now first rallied, and throwing down a heavy purse of coin on the table before the astrologer, he called to his companion to follow him.

Scarcely had the young men left the apartment, when the pannel by which Catherine of Medicis had disappeared, again opened, and she entered the room. Her face was pale, cold, and calm as usual.

"You heard them, Ruggieri!" she said, with her customary bland smile. "Alençon would be king, and that ambitious fool drives him to snatch his brother's crown. The Queen-mother is to be arrested, and imprisoned as a rebel to her usurping son. A notable scheme, forsooth! Her courier to recall Henry of Anjou from Poland has been intercepted also! But that mischance must be remedied immediately. Ay! and avenged. Biragne shall have instant orders. With this proof in my possession, the life of that La Mole is mine," continued she, tearing in twain the white linen cloth, and displaying beneath it a small wax figure, bearing the semblance of a king, with a crown upon its head, in which the gold pin was still left sticking, by the manner in which this operation was performed. "Little treasure of vengeance, thou art mine! Ruggieri, man, that plot was acted to the life. Verily, verily, you were right. Charles dies; and troubled and harassed will be the *last hours of his reign*."

[Pg 761]

CHAPTER II.

"There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust;
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment; and against this fire
Do I shrink up."

"Ambition is a great man's madness,
That is not kept in chains and close-pent rooms
But in fair lightsome lodgings, and is girt
With the wild noise of prattling visitants,
Which makes it lunatic beyond all cure."

In a room belonging to the lower apartments of the old palace of the Louvre, reclined, in one of the large but incommodious chairs of the time, a young man, whose pale, haggard face, and prematurely furrowed brow, betrayed deep suffering both from moral and physical causes. The thick lids of his heavy dark eyes closed over them with languor, as if he no longer possessed the force to open them; whilst his pale thin lips were distorted as if with pain. His whole air bore the stamp of exhaustion of mind and body.

The dress of this personage was dark and of an extreme plainness and simplicity, in times when the fashion of attire demanded so much display—it bore somewhat the appearance of a hunting costume. The room, on the contrary, betrayed a strange mixture of great richness and luxury with much confusion and disorder. The hangings of the doors were of the finest stuffs, and embroidered with gold and jewellery; tapestry of price covered the walls. A raised curtain of heavy and costly tissue discovered a small oratory, in which were visible a crucifix and other religious ornaments of great value. But in the midst of this display of wealth and greatness, were to be seen the most incongruous objects. Beneath a bench in a corner of the room was littered straw, on which lay several young puppies; in other choice nooks slept two or three great hounds. Hunting horns were hung against the tapestry, or lay scattered on the floor; an arquebuss rested against the oratory door-stall—the instrument of death beside the retreat of religious aspiration. Upon a standing desk, in the middle of the room, lay a book, the coloured designs of which showed that it treated of the "noble science of venerye," whilst around its pages hung the beads of a chaplet. Against the wall of the room opposite the reclining young man, stood one of the heavy chests used at that period for seats, as much as depositories of clothes and other objects; but the occupant of this seat was a strange one. It was a large ape, the light brown colour of whose hair bordered so much upon the green as to give the animal, in certain lights, a perfectly verdant aspect. It sat "moping and mowing" in sulky loneliness, as if its grimaces were intended to caricature the expression of pain which crossed the young man's face—a strange distorted mirror of that suffering form.

After a time the young man moved uneasily, as if he had in vain sought in sleep some repose from the torment of mind and body, and snapped his fingers. His hounds came obedient to his call; but, after patting them for a moment on the head, he again drove them from him with all the pettish ill-temper of ennui, and rose, feebly and with difficulty, from his chair. He moved languidly to the open book, looked at it for a moment, then shook his head and turned away. Again he took up one of the hunting horns and applied it to his lips; but the breath which he could fetch from his chest produced no sound but a sort of low melancholy whine from the instrument; and he flung it down. Then dealing a blow at the head of the grinning ape, who first dived to avoid it, and then snapped at its master's fingers, he returned wearily to his chair, and sunk into it with a deep groan, which told of many things—regret—bitter ennui—physical pain and mental anguish. The tears rose for a moment to his heavy languid eyes, but he checked their influence with a sneer of his thin upper-lip; then calling "Congo," to his ape, he made the animal approach and took it on his knees; and the two—the man and the beast—grinned at each other in bitter mockery.

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In this occupation of the most grotesque despair, the young man was disturbed by another personage, who, raising the tapestry over a concealed door, entered silently and unannounced.

"My Mother!" murmured the sufferer, in a tone of impatience, as he became aware of the presence of this person; and turning away his head, he began to occupy himself in caressing his ape.

"How goes it with you, Charles? Do you feel stronger now?" said the mother, in a soft voice of the fondest cajolery, as she advanced with noiseless, gliding steps.

The son gave no reply, and continued to play with the animal upon his knee, whilst a dark frown knitted his brow.

"What say the doctors to your state to-day, my son?" resumed the female soothingly. As she approached still nearer, the ape, with a movement of that instinctive hate often observable in animals towards persons who do not like them, sprang at her with a savage grin, that displayed its sharp teeth, and would have bitten her hand had she not started back in haste. Her cold physiognomy expressed, however, neither anger nor alarm, as she quietly remarked to her son—

"Remove that horrid animal, Charles: see how savage he is?"

"And why should I remove Congo, mother?" rejoined Charles, with a sneer upon his lip; "he is the only friend you have left me."

"Sickness makes you forgetful and unjust, my son," replied the Mother.

"Yes, the only friend you have left me," pursued the son bitterly, "except my poor dogs. Have you not so acted in my name, that you have left me not one kindred soul to love me; that in the whole wide kingdom of France, there remains not a voice, much less a heart, to bless its miserable king?"

"If you say that you have no friends," responded the Queen-mother, "you may speak more truly than you would. For they are but false friends; and real enemies, who have instilled into your mind the evil thoughts of a mother, who has worked only for your glory and your good."

"No, not one," continued the young King, unheeding her, but dismissing at the same time the ape from his knee with a blow that sent him screaming and mouthing to his accustomed seat upon the chest. "Not one! Where is Perotte, my poor old nurse? She loved me—she was a real mother to me. She! And where is she now? Did not that deed of horror, to which you counselled me, to which you urged me almost by force—that order, which, on the fatal night of St Bartholomew, gave signal for the massacre of all her co-religionists, drive her from my side? Did she not curse me—me, who at your instigation caused the blood of her friends and kindred to be shed—and leave me, her nursling, her boy, her Charlot, whom she loved till then, with that curse upon her lips? And do they not say that her horror of him who has sucked her milk, and lain upon her bosom, and of his damning deed, has frenzied her brain, and rendered her witless? Poor woman!" And the miserable King buried his haggard face between his hands.

"She was a wretched Huguenot, and no fitting companion and confidant for a Catholic and a king," said the Queen, in a tone of mildness, which contrasted strangely with the harshness of her words. "You should return thanks to all the blessed Saints, that she has willingly renounced that influence about your person, which could tend only to endanger the salvation of your soul."

"My soul! Ay! who has destroyed it?" muttered Charles in a hollow tone. [Pg 763]

The Queen-mother remained silent, but an unusual fire, in which trouble was mixed with scorn and anger, shot from her eyes.

"And have you not contrived to keep Henry of Navarre, my honest Henry, from my presence?" pursued the young King, after a pause, lifting up his heavy head from between his hands. "He was the only being you had left me still to love me; for my brothers hate me, both Anjou and Alençon—both wish me dead, and would wear my crown. And who was it, and for her own purposes, curdled the blood of the Valois in their veins until it rankled into a poison that might have befitted the Atrides of the tragedies of old? Henry of Navarre was the only creature that loved me still, and your policy and intrigues, madam, keep him from me, and so watch and harass his very steps in my own palace of the Louvre, where he is my guest, that never can I see him alone, or speak to him in confidence. He, too, deserts and neglects me now; and I am alone—alone, madam, with courtiers and creatures, who hate me too, it may be—alone, as a wretched orphan beggar by the way-side."

"My policy, as well as what you choose to call my intrigues, my son," rejoined the Queen, "have ever been directed to your interests and welfare. You are aware that Henry of Navarre has conspired against the peace of our realm, against your crown, may-be against your life. Would you condemn that care which would prevent the renewal of such misdeeds, when your own sister—when his wife—leagues herself in secret with your enemies!"

"Ay! Margaret too!" muttered Charles with bitterness. "Was the list of the Atrides not yet complete?"

"The dictates of my love and affection, of my solicitude for my son, and for his weal—such have been the main-springs of my intrigues," pursued the mother in a cajoling tone.

"The intrigues of the house of Medicis!" murmured the King, with a mocking laugh.

"What would you have me to do more, my son?" continued the Queen-mother.

"Nothing," replied Charles, "nothing but leave me—leave me, as others have done, to die alone!"

"My son, I will leave you shortly, and if it so please our Blessed Virgin, to a little repose, and a better frame of mind," said Catherine of Medicis. "But I came to speak to you of matters of weight, and of such deep importance that they brook no delay."

"I am unfitted for all matters of state—my head is weary, my limbs ache, my heart burns with a torturing fire—I cannot listen to you now, madam," pursued the King languidly; and then, seeing that his mother still stood motionless by his side, he added with more energy—"Am I then no more a king, madam, that, at my own command, I cannot even be left to *die* in peace?"

"It is of your health, your safety, your life, that I would speak," continued Catherine of Medicis, unmoved. "The physicians have sought in vain to discover the real sources of the cruel malady that devours you; but there is no reason to doubt of your recovery, when the cause shall be known and removed."

"And you, madam, should know, it would appear, better than my physicians the hidden origin of my sufferings!" said Charles, in a tone in which might be remarked traces of the bitterest irony. "Is it not so?" and he looked upon his mother with a deadly look of suspicion and mistrust.

The Queen-mother started slightly at these words; but, after a moment, she answered in her usual bland tone of voice—

"It is my solicitude upon this subject that now brings me hither."

"I thank you for your solicitude," replied the King, with the same marked manner; "and so, doubtless, does my brother Anjou: you love him well, madam, and he is the successor of his childish brother."

In spite of the command over herself habitually exercised by Catherine of Medicis, her pale brow grew paler still, and she slightly compressed her lips, to prevent their quivering, upon hearing the horrible insinuation conveyed in these words. The suspicions prevalent at the time, that the Queen-mother had [Pg 764] employed the aid of a slow poison to rid herself of a son who resisted her authority, in order to make room upon the throne for another whom she loved, had reached her ears, and, guilty or guiltless, she could not but perceive that her own son himself was not devoid of these suspicions. After the struggle of a moment with herself, however, during which the drops of perspiration stood upon her pale temples, she resumed ——

"I love my children all; and I would save your life, Charles. My ever-watchful affection for you, my son, has discovered the existence of a hellish plot against your life."

"More plots, more blood!—what next, madam?" interrupted, with a groan, the unhappy King.

"What the art of the physician could not discover," pursued his mother, "I have discovered. The strange nature of this unknown malady—these pains, this sleeplessness, this agony of mind and body, without a cause, excited my suspicions; and now I have the proofs in my own hands. My son, my poor son! you have been the victim of the foulest witchcraft and sorcery of your enemies."

"Enemies abroad! enemies at home!" cried Charles, turning himself uneasily in his chair. "Did I not say so, madam?"

"But the vile sorcerer has been discovered by the blessed intervention of the saints," continued Catherine; "and let him be once seized, tried, and executed for his abominable crime, your torments, my son, will cease for ever. You will live to be well, strong, happy."

"Happy!" echoed the young King with bitterness; "happy! no, there the sorcery has gone too far for remedy." He then added after a pause, "And what is this plot? who is this sorcerer of whom you speak?"

"Trouble not yourself with these details, my son; they are but of minor import," replied Catherine. "You are weak and exhausted. The horrid tale would too much move your mind. Leave every thing in my hands, and I will rid you of your enemies."

"No, no. There has been enough of ill," resumed her son. "That he should be left in peace is all the miserable King now needs."

"But your life, my son. The safety of the realm depends upon the extermination of the works of the powers of darkness. Would you, a Catholic Prince, allow the evil-doer of the works of Satan to roam about at will, and injure others as he would have destroyed his king?" pursued the Queen-mother.

"Well, we will speak more of this at another opportunity. Leave me now, madam, for I am very weak both in mind and body; and I thank you for your zeal and care."

"My son, I cannot leave you," persisted Catherine, "until you shall have signed this paper." She produced from the species of reticule suspended at her side a parchment already covered with writing. "It confers upon me full power to treat in this affair, and bring the offender to condign punishment. You shall have no trouble in this matter; and through your mother's care, your enemies shall be purged from the earth, and you yourself once more free, and strong and able shortly to resume the helm of state, to mount your horse, to cheer on your hounds. Come, my son, sign this paper."

"Leave me—leave me in peace," again answered Charles. "I am sick at heart, and I would do no ill even to my bitterest enemy, be he only an obscure sorcerer, who has combined with the prince of darkness himself to work my death."

"My son—it cannot be," said Catherine, perseveringly—for she was aware that by persisting alone could she weary her son to do at last her will. "Sign this order for prosecuting immediately the trial of the sorcerer. It is a duty you owe to your country, for which you should live, as much as to yourself. Come!" and, taking him by the arm, she attempted to raise him from his chair.

"Must I ever be thus tormented, even in my hours of suffering?" said the King with impatience. "Well, be it so, madam. Work your will, and leave me to my repose."

He rose wearily from his chair, and going to a table on which were placed materials for writing, hastily signed the paper laid before him by his mother; and then, fetching a deep respiration of relief, like a [Pg 765] school-boy after the performance of some painful task, he flung himself on to the chest beside the ape, and, turning his back to his mother, began to make his peace with the sulky animal.

Catherine of Medicis permitted a cold smile of satisfaction to wander over her face; and after greeting

again her son, who paid her no more heed than might be expressed by an impatient shrug of the shoulders, indicative of his desire to be left in peace, again lifted the hangings, and passed through the concealed door. The suffering King, whose days of life were already numbered, and fast approaching their utmost span, although his years were still so few, remained again alone with his agony and his ennui.

Behind the door by which the Queen-mother had left her son's apartment was a narrow stone corridor, communicating with a small winding staircase, by which she mounted to her own suite of rooms upon the first floor; but, when she had gained the summit, avoiding the secret entrance opening into her own chamber, she proceeded along one of the many hidden passages by which she was accustomed to gain not only those wings of the palace inhabited by her different children, but almost every other part of the building, unseen and unannounced. Stopping at last before a narrow door, forming a part of the stone-work of the corridor, she pulled it towards her, and again lifting up a tapestry hanging, entered, silently and stealthily, a small room, which appeared a sort of inner cabinet to a larger apartment. She was about to pass through it, when some papers scattered upon a table caught her eye, and moving towards them with her usual cat-like step, she began turning them over with the noiseless adroitness of one accustomed to such an employment. Presently, however, she threw them down, as if she had not found in them, at once, what she sought, or was fearful of betraying her presence to the persons whose voices might be heard murmuring in the adjoining room; and, advancing with inaudible tread, she paused to listen for a minute. The persons, however, spoke low; and finding that her *espionage* profited nothing to her, the royal spy passed on and entered the apartment.

In a chair, turning his back to her, sat a young man at a table, upon which papers and maps were mixed with jewellery, articles of dress, feathers and laces. A pair of newly-fashioned large gilt spurs lay upon a manuscript which appeared to contain a list of names; a naked rapier, the hilt of which was of curious device and workmanship, was carelessly thrust through a paper covered with notes of music. The whole formed a strange mixture, indicative at once of pre-occupation and listless *insouciance*, of grave employment and utter frivolity. Before this seated personage stood another, who appeared to be speaking to him earnestly and in low tones. At the sight of Catherine, as she advanced, however, the latter person exclaimed quickly,

"My lord duke, her majesty the Queen-mother!"

The other person rose hastily, and in some alarm, from his chair; whilst his companion took this opportunity to increase the confusion upon the table, by pushing one or two other papers beneath some of the articles of amusement or dress.

Without any appearance of remarking the embarrassment that was pictured upon the young man's face, Catherine advanced to accept his troubled greeting with a mild smile of tenderness, and said—

"Alençon, my son, I have a few matters of private business, upon which I would confer with you—and alone."

The increasing embarrassment upon the face of the young Duke must have been visible to any eye but that which did not choose to see it. After a moment's hesitation, however, in which the habit of obeying implicitly his mother's authority seemed to subdue his desire to avoid a conference with her, he turned and said unwillingly to his companion,

"Leave us, La Mole."

The Duke's favourite cast a glance of encouragement and caution upon his master; and bowing to the Queen-mother, who returned his homage with her kindest and most re-assuring smile of courtesy and benevolence, and an affable wave of the hand, he left the apartment. [Pg 766]

Catherine took the seat from which her son had risen; and leaving him standing before her in an attitude which ill-repressed trouble combined with natural awkwardness of manner to render peculiarly ungainly, she seemed to study for a time, and with satisfaction, his confusion and constraint. But then, begging him to be seated near her, she commenced speaking to him of various matters, of his own pleasures and amusements, of the newest dress, of the fêtes interrupted by the King's illness, of the effect which this illness, and the supposed danger of Charles, had produced upon the jarring parties in the state; of the audacity of the Huguenots, who now first began, since the massacre of St Bartholomew's day, again to raise their heads, and cause fresh disquietude to the government. And thus proceeding step by step to the point at which she desired to arrive, the wily Queen-mother resembled the cat, which creeps slowly onwards, until it springs at last with one bound upon its victim.

"Alas!" she said, with an air of profound sorrow, "so quickly do treachery and ingratitude grow up around us, that we no longer can discern who are our friends and who our enemies. We bestow favours; but it is as if we gave food to the dog, who bites our fingers as he takes it. We cherish a friend; and it is an adder we nurse in our bosoms. That young man who left us but just now, the Count La Mole—he cannot hear us surely;"—the Duke of Alençon assured her, with ill-concealed agitation, that his favourite was out of ear-shot—"that young man—La Mole!—you love him well, I know, my son; and you know not that it is a traitor you have taken to your heart."

"La Mole—a traitor! how? impossible!" stammered the young Duke.

"Your generous and candid heart comprehends not treachery in those it loves," pursued his mother; "but I have, unhappily, the proofs in my own power. Philip de la Mole conspires against your brother's crown."

The Duke of Alençon grew deadly pale; and he seemed to support himself with difficulty; but he stammered with faltering tongue,

"Conspires? how? for whom? Surely, madam, you are most grossly misinformed?"

"Unhappily, my son," pursued Catherine—"and my heart bleeds to say it—I have it no longer in my power to doubt."

"Madam, it is false," stammered again the young Duke, rising hastily from his chair, with an air of assurance which he did not feel. "This is some calumny."

"Sit down, my son, and listen to me for a while," said the Queen-mother with a bland, quiet smile. "I speak not unadvisedly. Be not so moved."

Alençon again sat down unwillingly, subdued by the calm superiority of his mother's manner.

"You think this Philip de la Mole," she continued, "attached solely to your interests, for you have showered upon him many and great favours; and your unsuspecting nature has been deceived. Listen to me, I pray you. Should our poor Henry never return from Poland, it would be yours to mount the throne of France upon the death of Charles. Nay, look not so uneasy. Such a thought, if it had crossed your mind, is an honest and a just one. How should I blame it? And now, how acts this Philip de la Mole—this man whom you have advanced, protected, loved almost as a brother? Regardless of all truth or honour, regardless of his master's fortunes, he conspires with friends and enemies, with Catholic and Huguenot, to place Henry of Navarre upon the throne!"

"La Mole conspires for Henry of Navarre! Impossible!" cried the Duke.

"Alas! my son, it is too truly as I say," pursued the Queen-mother; "the discoveries that have been made reveal most clearly the whole base scheme. Know you not that this upstart courtier has dared to love your sister Margaret, and that the foolish woman returns his presumptuous passion? It is she who has connived with her ambitious lover to see a real crown encircle her own brow. She has encouraged Philip de la Mole [Pg 767] to conspire with her husband of Navarre, to grasp the throne of France upon the death of Charles. You are ignorant of this, my son; your honourable mind can entertain no such baseness. I am well aware that, had you been capable of harbouring a thought of treachery towards your elder brother—and I well know that you are not—believe me, the wily Philip de la Mole had rendered you his dupe, and blinded you to the true end of his artful and black designs."

"Philip a traitor!" exclaimed the young Duke aghast.

"A traitor to his king, his country, and to you, my son—to you, who have loved him but too well," repeated the Queen-mother.

"And it was for this purpose that he"—commenced the weak Duke of Alençon. But then, checking the words he was about to utter, he added, clenching his hands together—"Oh! double, double traitor!"

"I knew that you would receive the revelation of this truth with horror," pursued Catherine. "It is the attribute of your generous nature so to do; and I would have spared you the bitter pang of knowing that you have lavished so much affection upon a villain. But as orders will be immediately given for his arrest, it was necessary you should know his crime, and make no opposition to the seizure of one dependent so closely upon your person."

More, much more, did the artful Queen-mother say to turn her weak and credulous son to her will, and when she had convinced him of the certain treachery of his favourite, she rose to leave him, with the words—

"The guards will be here anon. Avoid him until then. Leave your apartment; speak to him not; or, if he cross your path, smile on him kindly, thus—and let him never read upon your face the thought that lurks within, 'Thou art a traitor.'"

Alençon promised obedience to his mother's injunctions.

"I have cut off thy right hand, my foolish son," muttered Catherine to herself as she departed by the secret door. "Thou art too powerless to act alone, and I fear thee now no longer. Margaret must still be dealt with; and thou, Henry of Navarre, if thou aspirest to the regency, the struggle is between thee and Catherine. Then will be seen whose star shines with the brightest lustre!"

When Philip de la Mole returned to his master's presence, he found the Duke pacing up and down the chamber in evident agitation; and the only reply given to his words was a smile of so false and constrained a nature, that it almost resembled a grin of mockery.

The Duke of Alençon was as incapable of continued dissimulation, as he was incapable of firmness of purpose; and when La Mole again approached him, he frowned sulkily, and, turning his back upon his favourite, was about to quit the room.

"Shall I accompany my lord duke?" said La Mole, with his usual careless demeanour, although he saw the storm gathering, and guessed immediately from what quarter the wind had blown, but not the awful violence of the hurricane.

"No—I want no traitors to dog my footsteps," replied Alençon, unable any longer to restrain himself, in spite of his mother's instructions.

"There are no traitors here," replied his favourite proudly. "I could have judged, my lord, that the Queen-mother had been with you, had I not seen her enter your apartment. Yes—there has been treachery on foot, it seems, but not where you would say. Speak boldly, my lord, and truly. Of what does she accuse me?"

"Traitor! double traitor!" exclaimed the Duke, bursting into a fit of childish wrath, "who hast led me on with false pretences of a Crown—who hast made *me*—thy master and thy prince—the dupe of thy base stratagems; who hast blinded me, and gulled me, whilst thy real design was the interest of another!"

"Proceed, my lord duke," said La Mole calmly. "Of what other does my lord duke speak?"

"Of Henry of Navarre, for whom you have conspired at Margaret's instigation," replied Alençon, walking uneasily up and down the room, and not venturing to look upon his accused favourite, as if he himself had been the criminal, and not the accuser. [Pg 768]

"Ah! thither flies the bolt, does it?" said La Mole, with score. "But it strikes not, my lord. If I may claim your lordship's attention to these papers for a short space of time, I should need no other answer to this strange accusation, so strangely thrown out against me." And he produced from his person several documents concealed about it, and laid them before the Duke, who had now again thrown himself into his chair. "This letter from Condé—this from La Brèche—these from others of the Protestant party. Cast your eyes over them? Of whom do they speak? Is it of Henry of Navarre? Or is it of the Duke of Alençon? Whom do they look to as their chief and future King?"

"Philip, forgive me—I have wronged you," said the vacillating Duke, as he turned over these documents from members of the conspiracy that had been formed in his own favour. "But, gracious Virgin!—I now remember my mother knows all—she is fearfully incensed against you. She spoke of your arrest."

"Already!" exclaimed La Mole. "Then it is time to act! I would not that it had been so soon. But Charles is suffering—he can no longer wield the sceptre. Call out the guard at once. Summon your fiends. Seize on the Louvre."

"No—no—it is too late," replied the Duke; "my mother knows all, I tell you. No matter whether for me or for another, but you have dared to attack the rights of my brother of Anjou—and that is a crime she never will forgive."

"Then act at once," continued his favourite, with energy. "We have bold hearts and ready arms. Before to-night the Regency shall be yours; at Charles's death the Crown."

"No, no—La Mole—impossible—I cannot—will not," said Alençon in despair.

"Monseigneur!" cried La Mole, with a scorn he could not suppress.

"You must fly, Philip—you must fly!" resumed his master.

"No—since you will not act, I will remain and meet my fate!"

"Fly, fly, I tell you! You would compromise me, were you to remain," repeated the Duke. "Every moment endangers our safety."

"If such be your command," replied La Mole coldly, "rather than sacrifice a little of your honour, I will fly."

"They will be here shortly," continued Alençon hurriedly. "Here, take this cloak—this jewelled hat. They are well known to be mine. Wrap the cloak about you. Disguise your height—your gait. They will take you for me. The corridors are obscure—you may cross the outer court undiscovered—and once in safety, you will join our friends. Away—away!"

La Mole obeyed his master's bidding, but without the least appearance of haste or fear.

"And I would have made that man a king!" he murmured to himself, as, dressed in the Duke's cloak and hat, he plunged into the tortuous and gloomy corridors of the Louvre. "That man a king! Ambition made me mad. Ay! worse than mad—a fool!"

The Duke of Alençon watched anxiously from his window, which dominated the outer court of the Louvre, for the appearance of that form, enveloped in his cloak; and when he saw La Mole pass unchallenged the gate leading without, he turned away from the window with an exclamation of satisfaction.

A minute afterwards the agents of the Queen-mother entered his apartment.

THE SCOTTISH HARVEST. [Pg 769]

The approach of winter is always a serious time. When the fields are cleared, and the produce of our harvest has been gathered into the yard and the barn, we begin to hold a general count and reckoning with the earth, and to calculate what amount of augmented riches we have drawn from the bosom of the soil. When the investigation proves satisfactory, the result is but slightly recorded. Our ancestors, with just piety and gratitude, were accustomed to set apart whole days for thanksgiving to the Almighty Being who had blessed the labours of the year; we—to our shame be it said—have departed from the reverent usage. We take a good season as if it were no more than our appointed due—a bad one comes upon us with all the terrors of a panic.

But there are seasons frequently occurring which vary between the one and the other extreme; and these are they which give rise to the most discussion. It is unfortunately the tactics, if not the interest, of one great party in the nation, to magnify every season of scarcity into a famine for the purpose of promoting their own cherished theories. A bad August and an indifferent September are subjects of intense interest to your thorough-paced corn-law repealer; not that we believe the man has an absolute abstract joy in the prospect of coming scarcity—we acquit him of that—but he sees, or thinks he sees, a combination of events which, erelong, must realize his darling theory, and his sagacity, as a speculative politician, is at stake. Therefore, he is always ready, upon the slightest apprehension of failure, to demand, with most turbulent threat, the immediate opening of the ports, in the hope that, once opened, they may never be closed again.

Our original intention was not to discuss the corn-law question in the present article. We took up the pen for the simple purpose of showing that, so far as Scotland is concerned, a most unnecessary alarm has been raised with regard to the produce of the harvest; and we have not the slightest doubt that the same exaggeration has been extended to the sister country. Of course, if we can prove this, it will follow as a matter of deduction, that no especial necessity exists for opening the ports at present; and we shall further strengthen our position by reference to the prices of bonded grain. We shall not, however, conclude, without a word or two regarding the mischievous theories which, if put into execution, would place this country at the mercy of a foreign power; and we entreat the attention of our readers the more, because already our prospective position has become the subject of intense interest on the Continent.

It is a question of such immense importance, that we have thought it our duty to consult with one of the best-informed persons on the subject of practical agriculture in Scotland, or, indeed, in the United Kingdom. Our authority for the following facts, as to the results of the harvest in the North, is Mr Stephens, the author of *The Book of the Farm*. His opinions, and the results of his observation, have kindly been communicated to us in letters, written during the first fortnight in November; and we do not think that we can confer upon the public a greater service than by laying extracts from these before them. They may tend, if duly weighed and considered, to relieve the apprehensions of those who have taken alarm at the very commencement of the cry. Our conviction is, that the alarm is not only premature but unreasonable, and that the grain-produce of this year is rather above than below the ordinary average. We shall consider the potato question separately: in the meantime let us hear Mr Stephens on the subject of the quantity of the harvest.

Quantity of Grain-Crop.

"I am quite satisfied in my own mind, from observation and information, that a greater quantity of grain convertible into bread has been derived from this harvest than from the last. Both oats and barley are a [Pg 770] heavy crop; indeed oats are the bulkiest crop I ever remember to have seen in the higher districts of this country. The straw is not only long, but is strong in the reed, and thick in the ground; and notwithstanding all the rain, both barley and oats were much less laid than might have been expected. In regard to wheat, all the good soils have yielded well—the inferior but indifferently. There is a much greater diversity in the wheat than in barley and oats. The straw of wheat is long, and it is also strong; but still it was more laid than either oats or barley, and wherever it was laid the crop will be very deficient. As to the colour of all sorts of grain, it is much brighter than the farmers had anticipated, and there is no sprouted grain this year.

Let me relate a few instances of be yield of the crop. I must premise that the results I am about to give are derived from the best cultivated districts, and that no returns of yield have yet been had from the upper and later districts. At the same time I have no reason to suppose that these, when received, will prove in any way contradictory. In East Lothian two fields of wheat have been tried, in not the best soil; and the one has yielded 4½, and the other very nearly 5 quarters, per Scotch acre. Before being cut, the first one was estimated at 2½, and the second at 4½ quarters. The grain in both cases is good.

In Mid-Lothian, one farmer assures himself, from trials, that he will reap 8 quarters of wheat per Scotch acre of good quality. And another says, that, altogether, he never had so great a crop since he was a farmer.

In West Lothian, two farmers have thrashed some wheat, and the yield is 8 quarters per Scotch acre, of good quality.

In the best district of Roxburghshire the wheat will yield well; while a large field of wheat, in Berwickshire, that was early laid on account of the weakness of the straw, which was too much forced by the high condition of the soil, will scarcely pay the cost of reaping. This, however, is but a single isolated instance, for a farmer in the same county has put in 73 ordinary-sized stacks, whereas his usual number is about 60.

In the east of Forfarshire, the harvest is represented to me as being glorious; while in the west, there has not been a better crop of every thing for many years. The accounts from Northumberland, from two or three of my friends who farm there extensively, confirm the preceding statements, in regard to the bulk and general yield of the corn crop.

I may also mention, that the samples of wheat, and oats, and barley, presented at the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show at Dumfries, along with the grain in the straw, were really admirable.

With all these attestations from so many parts of the country, that are known to be good corn districts, I cannot doubt that the crop is a good one on good soils."

So much for the quantity, which, after all, is the main consideration. The above account certainly gives no indications of famine, or even scarcity. It contains the general character of the weight of the harvest in the principal corn-growing districts of Scotland, and we have no reason whatever to suppose that worse fortune has attended the results of the husbandry in England. The next consideration is the

Quality of the Crop.

"Not the entire crop, but most of it, is inferior in quality to that of last year. The barley and oats are both plump and heavy, but there is a slight roughness about them; and yet the weights in some cases of both are extraordinary. Potato oats were shown at Dumfries 48lb per bushel—3lb above the ordinary weight. Barley has been presented in the Edinburgh market every week as heavy as 56lb per quarter—about 3lb more than the ordinary weight. All the samples of wheat I have seen in Leith in the hands of an eminent [Pg 771]

corn-merchant, weighed from 60lb to 63lb per bushel, and it has been as high as 66lb in the Edinburgh market. I also saw samples of Essex wheat above 60lb, as well as good wheat from Lincolnshire.

Now such weights could not be indicated by grain at the end of a wet harvest, unless it were of good quality.

The quality is much diversified, especially in wheat; some of it not weighing above 48lb per bushel. The winnowings from all the grains will be proportionally large; although, in the case of barley and oats, had every pickle attained maturity, the crop would probably have exceeded the extraordinary one of 1815. But though heavy winnowings entail decided loss to the farmer, yet human beings will not be the greatest sufferers by them; the loss will chiefly fall on the poor work-horses, as they will be made to eat the light instead of the good corn, which latter will be reserved for human food. The light oats will no doubt be given to horses in larger quantities than good corn, and the light barley will be boiled for them in mashes probably every night.

The beans are a heavy crop in *straw* every where; and bean-straw, when well won, is as good for horses in winter as hay; while in certain districts, such as on the Border, the beans will also be good.

With all these facts before me, I cannot make myself believe that we are to experience any thing approaching to the privation of famine, so far as the grain crop is concerned."

Our practical experience in these matters is so limited, that we feel diffident in adding any thing to these remarks of Mr Stephens. We may, however, be permitted to express a doubt whether the average quality of the crop has yet been satisfactorily ascertained. It is well known that the farmer rarely brings his best wheat into the earliest market, because it is his interest to thrash out that part of the crop which may have sustained a partial damage, as soon as possible; and in these circumstances it usually follows, that the worst wheat is first exposed for sale. In like manner he wishes to dispose of his inferior barley first. In regard to oats, the inferior portions find consumption at home by the horses. In ordinary seasons, any wheat or barley that may have shown symptoms of heating in the stacks are first presented at market; but in this season, when there is no heated grain—thanks to the low temperature and the precautions used in stacking—the high prices have tempted the farmers to thrash both wheat and barley earlier than usual, in order to meet the demands for rent and wages at Martinmas—a term which, owing to the lateness of the season, followed close on the termination of the harvest. This peculiarity of the season may, perhaps, account for the large supplies of wheat presented for some weeks past at Mark Lane—to the extent, we understand, of from 30,000 to 40,000 quarters more than last year at the same period. It is more than probable that the largest proportion of the land in fallow has been sown with old wheat, as it was early ascertained that the harvest would be unusually late. There is always more bare fallow in England than in Scotland, and the old wheat having been thus disposed of, the earlier portion of the new grain was brought to market, and not appropriated for its usual purpose. We must, however, conclude, that the crop—at all events the wheat—is inferior to that of former years. This has generally been attributed to the wetness of the season, in which view our correspondent does not altogether concur; and we are glad to observe that on one important matter—namely, the fitness of this year's grain for seed—his opinions are decidedly favourable.

Cause of Inferior Quality of Wheat.

"I am of opinion, that the inferiority of the wheat in poor lands, both as regards quantity and quality, has not arisen from the wetness of the season, but from the *very low degree of temperature* which prevailed at the blooming season in the end of June, and which prevented the pollen coming to maturity, and therefore interfered with the proper fecundation of the plant. I observed that, during all that time, the rain did not fall in so large quantities as afterwards, but the thermometer averaged so low as from 48° to 52°, even during the day, and there was a sad want of sunshine. And it is an ascertained fact, that wheat will *not fecundate at all* in a temperature which does not exceed 45°, accompanied with a gloomy atmosphere. This theory of the influence of a low temperature also accounts for the quantity of *light* wheat this year; for the side of the ear that was exposed to the cold breeze which blew constantly from the north-east during the period of blooming, would experience a more chilly atmosphere than the other side, which was comparatively sheltered, and therefore its fecundation would be most interfered with.

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I may mention a peculiar characteristic of this year, if we take into consideration the wetness of the season; which is, that scarcely a sprouted ear of corn is to be found any where, notwithstanding that the crop was laid in many instances. This immunity from an evil which never fails to render grain, so affected, useless for human food, has no doubt been secured by the *low temperature of the season*. It was an observed fact, that immediately after the falls of rain, whether great or moderate, a firm, drying, cool breeze always sprang up, which quickly dried the standing and won the cut corn at the same time; and the consequence has been, that the entire crop has been secured in the stack-yard in a safe state. All the kinds of grain, therefore, may be regarded as being in a *sound* state; and, on that account, even the lighter grains will be quite fit for seed next year."

The point on which the nation at large is principally interested, is, of course, the price of bread. It is quite evident that the cost of manufactured flour ought, in all cases, to remain in just proportion with the value of the raw material. Unfortunately that proportion is not always maintained. The baker is a middleman between the farmer and the public, between the producing and the consuming classes. Amongst those who follow that very necessary trade, there exists a combination which is not regulated by law; and the

consequence is, that, whenever a scarcity is threatened, the bakers raise the price of the loaf at pleasure, and on no fixed principle corresponding with the price of corn. Few persons are aware at what rate the quartern loaf *ought to be sold* when wheat is respectively at 50s., 60s., or 70s. per quarter: they are, however, painfully sensitive when they are subjected to an arbitrary rise of bread and their natural conclusion is, that they are taxed on account of the dearness of the grain. The number of those who buy grain or who study its fluctuations, is very small; but every one uses bread, and the monthly account of the baker is a sure memento of its price. Let us see how the middle functionary has behaved.

WHY IS BREAD SO DEAR?

"The price of bread is very high already, and is not likely to fall; and the reason a baker would assign for this is the high price of wheat—a very plausible reason, and to which most people would too good-naturedly assent; but examine the particulars of the case, and the reason adduced will be found based on a fallacy. During all the last year, the aggregate average price of wheat never exceeded 56s. a quarter, and in that time the price of the 4lb loaf was 5½d.; at least I paid no more for it with ready money. The highest mark that wheat has yet attained in this market, is 88s. per quarter, and it is notorious that this market has, for the present year, been the dearest throughout the kingdom. As 10s. a quarter makes a difference of 1d. in the 4lb loaf, the loaf, according to this scale—which, be it remarked, is of the bakers' own [Pg 773] selection—should be at 8½d. when the wheat is at 88s. Can you, nevertheless, believe that, *whilst the present price of bread* is 8½d. *the loaf* is made wholly of wheat which cost the bakers 88s. the quarter? The bakers tell you they always buy the best wheat, and yet, though they are the largest buyers in the wheat market, the aggregate average of the kingdom did not exceed 58s. 6d. on the 8th November. The truth is, the bakers are trying to make the most they can; and they are not to blame, provided their gains were not imputed to the farmers. But we all know, that when bread gets inordinately high in price, clamour is raised against *dear wheat*—that is, against the farmer—and this again is made the pretext for *a free trade in corn*; whilst the *high price secured to the baker by the privilege of his trade* is left unblamed and unscathed."

Had the Court of Session thought proper to retain in observance the powers to which it succeeded after the abolition of the Privy Council, and which for some time it executed, we certainly should have applied to their Lordships for an Act of Sederunt to regulate the proceedings of Master Bakers. But, as centralisation has not even spared us an humble Secretary, we must leave our complaint for consideration in a higher quarter. Our correspondent, however, is rather too charitable in assuming that the bakers are not to blame. We cannot, for the life of us, understand why they are permitted to augment the price of bread, the great commodity of life, at this enormous ratio, in consequence of the rise of corn. Surely some enactment should be framed, by which the price of the loaf should be kept in strict correspondence with the average price of grain, and some salutary check put upon a monopoly, which, we are convinced, has often afforded a false argument against the agricultural interests of the country.

Such we believe to be the true state of the grain crop throughout the kingdom generally. How, from such a state of things, any valid argument can be raised for opening the ports at this time, we are totally at a loss to conceive. The only serious feature connected with the present harvest, is the partial failure of the potato crop, to which we shall presently refer. But, so far as regards corn, we maintain that there is no real ground for alarm; and further, there is this important consideration connected with the late harvest, which should not be ungratefully disregarded, that two months of the grain season have already passed, and the new crop remains comparatively untouched, so that it will have to supply only ten months' consumption instead of twelve: and should the next harvest be an early one, which we have reason to expect after this late one, the time bearing on the present crop will be still more shortened. Nor should the fact be overlooked, that two months' consumption is equal to 2,000,000 quarters of wheat—an amount which would form a very considerable item in a crop which had proved to be actually deficient.

But as there has been a movement already in some parts of Scotland, though solely from professed repealers, towards memorialising government for open ports on the ground of special necessity, we shall consider that question for a little; and, in doing so, shall blend the observations of our able correspondent with our own.

Such a step, we think, at the present moment, would be attended with mischief in more ways than one. There can be no pretext of a famine at present, immediately after harvest; and the natural course of events in operation is this, that the dear prices are inducing a stream of corn from every producing quarter towards Britain. In such circumstances, if you raise a cry of famine, and suspend the corn-laws, that stream of supply will at once be stopped. The importers will naturally suspend their trade, because they will then speculate, not on the rate of the import duty, which will be absolutely abolished by the suspension, but on the rise of price in the market of this country. They will therefore, as a matter of course —gain being their only object—withhold their supplies, until the prices shall have, through panic, attained a famine price here; and then they will realize their profit when they conceive they can gain no more. In the course of things at present, the price of fine wheat is so high, that a handsome surplus would remain to [Pg 774] foreigners, though they paid the import duty. Remove that duty, and the foreigner will immediately add its amount to the price of his own wheat. The price of wheat would then be as high to the consumer as when the duty remained to be paid; while the amount of duty would go into the pockets of the foreigner, instead of into our own exchequer. At present, the finest foreign wheat is 62s. in bond—remove the present duty of 14s., and that wheat will freely give *in the market* 80s. the quarter.

It is, therefore, clear that such an expedient as that of suspending the corn-laws merely to include the bonded wheat to be entered for home consumption, would, in no degree, benefit the consumer. The quantity of wheat at present in bond does not exceed half-a-million of quarters—the greatest part of which

did not cost the importer 30s. per quarter. At least we can vouch for this, that early last summer, when the crop looked luxuriant, 5000 quarters of wheat in bond were actually offered in the Edinburgh market for 26s., and were sold for that sum, and allowed to remain in bond. It still remains in bond, and could now realise 62s. Here, then, is a realisable profit of 36s. per quarter, and yet the holder will not take it, in the expectation of a higher.

We cannot think that Sir Robert Peel would sanction a measure so clearly and palpably unwise, for the sake of liberating only half a million quarters of wheat, which is the calculated consumption of a fortnight. But the late frequent meetings of the Privy Council have afforded an admirable opportunity for the alarmists to declaim upon coming famine. Matters, they say, must be looking serious indeed, when both Cabinet and Council are repeatedly called together; and they jump at the conclusion, that suspension of the corn-law is the active subject of debate. We pretend to no special knowledge of what is passing behind the political curtain; but a far more rational conjecture as to the nature of those deliberations may be found in the state of the potato crop, and the question, whether any succedaneum can be found for it. Perhaps it would be advisable to allow Indian corn, or maize, to come in duty-free; if not as food for people, it would feed horses, pigs, or poultry, and would make a diversion in favour of the consumption of corn to a certain extent; and such a relaxation could be made without interfering with the *corn*-laws, for maize is not regarded as corn, but stands in the same position as rice and millet. We might try this experiment with the maize, as the Dutch have already forestalled the rice market.

If the state of the harvest is such as we conscientiously believe it to be, there can be no special reason—but rather, as we have shown, the reverse—for suspending the action of the corn-laws at this particular juncture. If the enactment of that measure was founded on the principle of affording protection to the farmer, why interfere with these laws at a time when any apprehension of a famine is entirely visionary? And since there is a large quantity of food in the country, the present prices are certainly not attributable to a deficiency in the crop, and are, after all, little more than remunerative to the farmers who are raisers of corn alone. The present rents could not possibly be paid from the profits of the growth of corn. It is the high price of live stock which keeps up the value of the land. The aggregate average price of wheat throughout the kingdom is only 58s. 6d., upon which no rational argument can be founded for the suspension of the laws of the country. Besides the working of the corn-laws will in its natural course effect all that is desirable; at any rate it does not prevent the introduction of foreign grain into the market. The present state of the grain-market presents an apparent anomaly—that is, it affords a high and a low price for the same commodity, namely wheat; but this difference is no more than might have been anticipated from the peculiar condition of the wheat crop, which yields good and inferior samples at the same time. It can be no matter of surprise that fine wheat should realise good prices, or that inferior wheat should only draw low prices. The high price will remunerate those who have the good fortune to reap a crop of wheat of good quality, and the low prices of the inferior wheat will have the effect of keeping the aggregate [Pg 775] average price at a medium figure, and, by maintaining a high duty, will prevent the influx of inferior grain to compete with our own inferior grain in the home market. The law thus really affords protection to those who are in need of it—namely, to such farmers as have reaped an inferior crop of wheat; while those foreigners who have fine wheat in bond, or a surplus which they may send to this country, can afford to pay a high duty on receiving a high price for their superior article. Taking such a state of things into consideration, we cannot conceive a measure more wise in its operation, inasmuch as it accommodates itself to the peculiar circumstances of the times, than the present form of the corn-law.

Were that law allowed to operate as the legislature intended, it would bring grain into this country whenever a supply was actually necessary; but we cannot shut our eyes to the mischievous effects which unfounded rumours of its suspension have already produced in the foreign market. Owing to these reports, propagated by the newspapers, the holders of wheat abroad have raised the price to 56s. a quarter, free on board; and as the same rumours have advanced the freight to 6s. a quarter, wheat cannot *now* be landed here in bond under 66s. The suspension of the corn-law would tend to confirm the panic abroad, and would therefore increase the difficulties of our corn-merchants, in making purchases of wheat for this market. It seems to us very strange that sensible men of business should be so credulous as to believe every idle rumour that is broached in the newspapers, so evidently for party purposes; for the current report of the immediate suspension of the corn-law originated in the papers avowedly inimical to the Ministry. The character of the League is well known. That body has never permitted truth to be an obstacle in the way of its attempts.

So much for corn and the corn-laws. But there is a more serious question beyond this, and that is the state of the potatoes. If we are to believe the journals, more especially those which are attached to the cause of the League, the affection has spread, and is spreading to a most disastrous extent. Supposing these accounts to be true, we say, advisedly, that it will be impossible to find a substitute for the potato among the vegetable productions of the world; for neither wheat nor maize can be used, like it, with the simplest culinary preparation. There can be no doubt that in some places this affection is very prevalent, and that a considerable part of the crop in certain soils has been rendered unfit for ordinary domestic use. It is understood that the Lord-Advocate of Scotland has issued a circular to the parish clergymen throughout the kingdom, requesting answers to certain queries on this important subject. The information thus obtained will no doubt be classified, so that the government will immediately arrive at a true estimate of the extent of damage incurred.

In the mean time we have caused enquiry to be made for ourselves, and the result, in so far as regards Scotland, is much more favourable than we had expected, considering the extent of the first alarm. We have seen accounts *from every quarter of the kingdom*, and the following report may therefore be relied on as strictly consistent with fact.

It appears, on investigation, that no traces whatever of the complaint have yet been found in the northern half of Scotland. The crop in the upper parts of Forfarshire and Perthshire is quite untainted, and so across

the island. When we consider what a vast stretch of country extends to the north of Montrose, the point beyond which, as our informants say, this singular affection has not penetrated, we shall have great reason to be thankful for such a providential immunity. Our chief anxiety, when we first heard of the probable failure, was for the Highlands, where potato plant furnishes so common and so necessary an article of food. We know by former experience what bitter privation is felt during a bad season in the far glens and lonely western islands; and most rejoiced are we to find, that for this winter there is little likelihood of a repetition of the same calamity. Argyleshire, however, except in its northern parishes has not escaped so [Pg 776] well. We have reason to believe that the potatoes in that district have suffered very materially, but to what extent is not yet accurately ascertained.

In the Lowlands the accounts are more conflicting; but it is remarkable that almost every farmer confesses now, that his first apprehensions were greatly worse than the reality. On examination, it turns out that many fields which were considered so tainted as to be useless, are very slightly affected: it is thus apparent that undue precipitation has been used in pronouncing upon the general character of the crop from a few isolated samples. Some districts appear to have escaped altogether; and from a considerable number we have seen reports of a decided abatement in the disease.

In short, keeping in view all the information we have been able to collect, the following seems to be the true state of the case:—The crop throughout Scotland has been a very large one, but one-half of it is affected to a greater or less degree. About a fourth or a fifth of this half crop is so slightly damaged, that the unusual amount of produce will more than compensate the injury. The remainder is certainly worse. Of this, however, a considerable proportion has been converted into starch—an expedient which was early recommended in many quarters, wisely adopted by the prudent, and may yet be extensively increased. An affected potato, unless its juices were thoroughly fermented, and decomposition commenced, will yield quite as good starch as the healthy root, and all this may be considered as saved. Potato starch or farina, when mixed with flour, makes a wholesome and palatable bread. In some districts the doubtful potatoes are given to the cattle in quantities, and are considered excellent feeding. This also is a material saving.

The spread of the complaint, or rather the appearance of its worst symptoms, seems to depend very much on the mode of management adopted after the potatoes are raised. A friend of ours in Mid-Lothian, who has paid much attention to agriculture, has saved nearly the whole of his crop, by careful attention to the dryness of the roots when heaped, by keeping these heaps small and frequently turned, and, above all, by judicious ventilation *through them*. A neighbouring farmer, who had an immense crop, but who did not avail him of any of these precautions, has suffered most severely.

One letter which we have received is of great importance, as it details the means by which an affected crop has been preserved. We think it our duty to make the following extract, premising that the writer is an eminent practical farmer in the south of Scotland:—"I had this year a large crop of potatoes, but my fields, like those of my neighbours, did not escape the epidemic. On its first appearance, I directed my serious attention to the means of preserving the crop. Though inclined to impute the complaint to a deeper cause than the wetness of the season, I conceived that damp would, as a matter of course, increase any tendency to decay, and I took my measures accordingly. Having raised my potatoes, I caused all the sound ones, which seemed free from spot and blemish, to be carefully picked by the hand; and, having selected a dry situation in an adjoining field, I desired them to be heaped there in quantities, none of which exceeded a couple of bolls. The method of pitting them was this:—On a dry foundation we placed a layer of potatoes, which we covered with sandy mould, though I don't doubt straw would do as well; above that, another layer, also covered; and so on, keeping the potatoes as separate from each other as possible. We then thatched and covered them over as usual with straw, leaving ventilators on the top. I have had them opened since, and there is no trace whatever of any decay, which I attribute to the above precautions, as others in the neighbourhood, whose potatoes grew in exactly similar soil, have lost great part of their crop by heaping them in huge masses. Ventilation, you may depend upon it, is a great preservative. I have, I think, arrested the complaint even in affected potatoes, by laying them out (not heaping them) on a dry floor, in a covered place where there is a strong current of air. They are not spoiling *now*; and when the [Pg 777] unsound parts are cut out, we find them quite wholesome and fit for use. I am of opinion, therefore, that by using due caution, the progress of the complaint, so far as it has gone, may in most cases be effectually checked."

We are, therefore, almost certain, that when the damaged portion is deducted from the whole amount of the crop, there still remains an ample store of good potatoes for the consumption of the whole population —that is, if the potatoes were distributed equally through the markets. This, however, cannot be done, and, therefore, there are some places where this vegetable will be dear and scarce. The farmer who has a large crop of sound potatoes, and who does not reside in an exporting part of the country, will naturally enough use his superfluity for his cattle; and this cannot be prevented. We hope, however, that the habitual thrift of our countrymen will cause them to abstain, as much as possible, from wasting their extra stock in this manner, more especially as there is abundance of other kinds of fodder. They will command a high price as an esculent, and perhaps a higher, if they are preserved for the purposes of seed. Exportation also should be carried on cautiously; but we repeat, that the general tenor of our information is so far satisfactory, that it exhibits nothing more than a partial affection of the crop in the southern districts, and the majority of those are compensated by a good provision of corn.

In addition to these statistics, obtained from many and various sources, we have been favoured with the opinion of Mr Stephens, which we now subjoin:—

The Potato Rot.

"This affection I do not regard as a disease—but simply as a rottenness in the tuber, superinduced by the combination of a low temperature with excessive moisture, during the growing season of that sort of root,

when it is most liable to be affected on account of its succulent texture.[39] A friend informs me that he remembers the same kind of rottenness seizing the potato crop of the country in the late and wet season of 1799; and, as a consequence, the seed potato for the following crop fetched as high a price as 26s. the boll of 5 cwt.[40] I am inclined to believe, however, that the effects of this rot are much exaggerated. It is, in the first place, said to be poisonous; and yet pigs, to my certain knowledge, have been fed on spoiled potatoes alone, on purpose, with impunity. There is little outcry made against rot in the dry soils of Perthshire and Forfarshire, and these are the two most extensive districts from which potatoes are shipped for London. There are farmers in various parts of the country who warrant the soundness of the potatoes they supply their customers. The accounts of the potato crop from the Highland districts are most [Pg 778] favourable. I believe the fact will turn out to be this, that, like corn, the potatoes will not only be a good, but a great crop, in all the *true potato soils*—that is, in deep dry soils on a dry subsoil, whether naturally so, or made so by draining—and that in all the heavy soils, whether rich or poor, they are rotting.

A short time will put an end to all conjecture on the state of the potato crop, and afford us facts upon which we shall be able to reason and judge aright."

As the question of seed is always a most important one, whenever a new disease or partial affection of so staple a product is discovered, it may not be useless to note down Mr Stephens' ideas, in regard to the supposed destruction of the vegetative principle in part of the affected crop—

Seed Potatoes.

"I would feel no apprehension in employing such affected potatoes for seed, next spring, as shall be preserved till that time; because I believe it to be the case that the low temperature enfeebled the vegetative powers of the plant so much as to disable it from throwing off the large quantity of moisture that was presented to it; and I therefore conclude that any rot superinduced by such causes cannot possess a character which is hereditary. There seems no reason, therefore, why the complaint should be propagated in future, in circumstances favourable to vegetation; and this opinion is the more likely to be true, that it is not inconsistent with the idea of the disease of former years having arisen from a degenerate state of the potato plant, since low temperature and excessive moisture were more likely to affect a plant in a state of degeneracy than when its vitality remains unimpaired.

There is no doubt that this affection of the potato is general, and it is quite possible that it may yet spread. This, however, is a question which cannot yet be solved, and certainly, so far as we know, the Highlands, and the Orkney and Shetland Isles, have hitherto escaped. The portion of the crop as yet actually rendered unfit for human food, does not perhaps exceed one-fourth in parts of the country whence potatoes are exported; and could the affection be stopped from spreading further than this, there would still be a sufficiency of potatoes for the consumption of *human beings*, as the crop is acknowledged to be a large one in the best districts. Much, however, depends upon our ability to arrest the affection, or its cessation from other causes.

It is known that rotten potatoes, like rotten turnips, when left in heaps in contact with sound ones, will cause the latter to rot. Aware of this fact, farmers have, this last year, caused the potatoes in the heaps, as soon as the lifting of the crop was over, to be individually examined, and placed the sound ones in narrow, low pits, mixed with some desiccating substance, and covered with straw and earth. When the pits were opened for examination, the rot was found to have spread very much, in consequence of the dampness and heat which was so diffused throughout the pits. This is an effect that might have been anticipated. Had the precaution been used of taking up the crop in small quantities at a time, or of spreading the potatoes on the ground when the weather was fair, or in sheds when wet—and of allowing them to be exposed to the air until they had became tolerably firm and dry; and had the sound potatoes been then selected by hand, piled together, and afterwards put into smaller pits, it is probable that a much less proportion of any crop that was taken up would have been lost. Such a plan, no doubt, would have caused a protracted potato harvest, but the loss of time at that period, in performing the necessary work of selection, is a small consideration compared with an extensive injury to the crop. It is no doubt desirable to have the potato land ploughed for wheat as soon as possible after the potatoes have been removed; but there is no more [Pg 779] urgency in ploughing potato than in ploughing turnip land for wheat; and, at any rate, it is better to delay the ploughing of the potato land for a few days, than run the risk of losing a whole crop of so excellent an esculent.

I may here mention an experiment in regard to the potato, which shows that a larger crop has been received by planting the sets in autumn than in spring. Those who have tried this system on a large scale say, that the increase is in the ratio of 111 to 80 bolls per acre. If this is near the truth, it would indicate, that the sets may safely be entrusted to lie in the ground all winter upon the dung; and could we be assured of their safety there in all cases, the potatoes of this year, selected in the manner above described, might be used as seed this winter and preserved as such, in the ground, in a safer state than even in the small pits. Such an experiment may be tried this winter, in dry weather, without much risk of losing the future crop; for if, on examination in spring, it should be found that all the sets have rotted in the drills, there would be plenty of time to replant the crop, in its proper season, with the sets that had survived till that time, by the means of preservation used.

I have heard of farmers in this neighbourhood who are planting their potato crop in this favourable weather; and it does seem very probable that, as each set is placed at a considerable distance from the other, and in circumstances to resist frost—namely, amongst plenty of dung and earth—the entire number may escape putrefaction."

No doubt, if the potato crop shall prove to be very generally affected, the price of corn will rise yet farther, and may be for a long time maintained. But this is a very different thing from a scarcity of that article, which we believe is merely visionary. We must be fed with corn if we cannot get the potato in its usual plenty; and it is the certainty, or rather the expectation, of this, which has raised the price of the former. In the course of last month (October) we met with an admirable article on this subject, in the columns of *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, which we do not hesitate to adopt, as clear in its views, hopeful in its tone, and strictly rational in its argument.

The Rising Price of Wheat and Flour.

"What we predicted in one of our recent papers is daily becoming realised to an extent which is now exciting general attention, and, with some classes of the people, has already produced great alarm and anxiety for the future. We stated at that time, that though the return of fine weather, about the middle of last month, had saved the harvest, and given us a crop much more than had been anticipated, still there were causes in operation which would keep up the prices of wheat and flour; and that, at least for many weeks to come wheat would not fall in the British Market.

"It should be borne in mind that the getting in of the harvest is very closely followed by the wheat seed-time, and that two causes are then always operative to maintain and raise the price of wheat. There is, first, a large call on the stock in hand for seed wheat; and, secondly, the farmers are too busy to carry their corn into market, and accordingly the market is ill supplied. A third cause is also in operation to produce the same effect—that of an unreasonable alarm always resulting from an ill-supplied market.

"It would seem astonishing and even incredible to men who argue only theoretically, that though year after year the same uniform causes operate, and produce exactly the same effects, yet that this aspect of the market should continue to delude and mislead the public mind, but so it is in the corn-market, and with the British public in general; for though they see through a long succession of years that wheat and flour invariably rise in the market immediately after harvest and during seed-time, and though they ought to understand that this rise is produced by the quantity required for seed, and by the busy occupation of the farmers, they still perversely attribute it to another cause, existing only in their own apprehensions, namely, that the recent harvest has been deficient, and that the market is ill supplied because there is an insufficient stock with which to supply it. [Pg 780]

"As it is the inflexible rule of our paper to apply itself on the instant to correct all popular errors and to dissipate all unreasonable panics, we feel ourselves called upon to say, that the present rise in the price of corn results only from the very serious failure of the potato crop in many of our own counties, and still more materially in Belgium and other foreign kingdoms. From the mere circumstance of their numbers only, to say nothing of their habits and necessities, an immense quantity of this food is required for the sustenance of many millions of the community; and when the crop fails to such an extensive degree as it has done in the present case, this vast numerical proportion of every state must necessarily be chiefly maintained from the stock of corn. If the potato crop fail at home, the poor are directly thrown upon the corn-market, and the price of corn must necessarily rise in proportion to the increased demand. Where the potato crop has failed abroad, the supply of foreign corn must necessarily be directed to that quarter, and therefore less corn will be imported into the British market.

"Now, it is the expectation of this result, which, together with the wheat seed-time and the full occupation of the farmers, is producing the present rise in the British corn-market, and these causes will probably continue to operate for some time longer.

"In some parts of the country, such as our northern and eastern counties, we understand the current judgment to be, that though the harvest has produced more bushels than in an average year, the weight per bushel is less than last year, and that the deficiency of the quality brings the produce down in such districts to less than an average crop. But if we set against this the happier result of the wheat harvest in our southern and western counties, we must still retain our former opinion, that there is at least no present ground for any thing like a panic, either amongst the public in general or amongst the farmers themselves. The public as yet have no cause to dread any thing like that very serious scarcity which some of our papers have announced, and the farmers themselves have no cause to apprehend such a sudden and extraordinary state of the market, as would involve them in the general suffering of the community."

We shall now close our remarks on the subject of the Scottish Harvest. In thus limiting our remarks to the harvest in Scotland, we have been actuated by no narrow spirit of nationality, but have judged it right, in treating a subject of such importance, to confine ourselves to that portion of the United Kingdom in which we possessed means of obtaining information which positively could be relied upon. Indeed, were it not for the paramount importance of the question, which will soon be founded on as a topic for political discussion, we should hardly have addressed ourselves to the task. But we have noticed, with great disgust, the efforts of the League to influence, at this particular crisis, the public mind, by gross misrepresentations of our position and prospects; and, being convinced that a more dangerous and designing faction never yet thrust themselves into public notice, we have thought it right, in the first instance, to collect and to classify our facts. This done, we have yet a word or two in store for the members of the mountebank coalition.

No evil is unmixed with good. The murmurs of the alarmists at home, unfounded as we believe them to be, have brought out, more clearly than we could have hoped for, the state of foreign feeling with regard to British enterprise, and the prospects of future supply upon which this country must depend, should the sliding-scale be abrogated and all import duties abolished. The most infatuated Leaguer will hardly deny, that if the corn-law had ceased to exist three years ago, and a great part of our poorer soils had in consequence been removed from tillage, our present position with regard to food must have been infinitely

worse. In fact, we should then have presented the unhappy spectacle of a great industrial community incapable of rearing food for its population at home, and solely dependent for a supply on foreign states; and that, too, in a year when the harvests throughout Europe, and even in America, have suffered. And here, by the way, before going further, let us remark, that the advocates of the League never seem to have contemplated, at all events they have never grappled with, the notorious fact, that the effects of most [Pg 781] unpropitious seasons are felt far beyond the confines of the British isles. This year, indeed, we were the last to suffer; and the memory of the youngest of us, who has attained the age of reason, will furnish him with examples of far severer seasons than that which has just gone by. What, then, is to be done, should the proportion of the land in tillage be reduced below the mark which, in an average year, could supply our population with food—if, at the same time, a famine were to occur abroad, and deprive the continental agriculturists of their surplus store of corn? The answer is a short one—*Our people must necessarily* STARVE. The manufacturers would be the first to feel the appalling misery of their situation, and the men whom they would have to thank for the severest and most lingering death, are the chosen apostles of the League!

Is this an overdrawn picture? Let us see. France at this moment is convinced that we are on the verge of a state of famine. Almost all the French journalists, believing what they probably wish for, and misled by the repealing howl, and faint-hearted predictions of the coward, assume that our home stock of provision is not sufficient to last us for the ensuing winter. That is just the situation to which we should be reduced *every* year, if Messrs Cobden, Bright, and Company had their will. What, then, says our neighbour, and now most magnanimous ally? Is he willing—for they allege they have a superfluity—to supply us in this time of hypothetical distress—to act the part of the good Samaritan, and pour, not wine and oil, but corn into our wounds? Is he about to take the noblest revenge upon a former adversary, by showing himself, in the moment of need, a benefactor instead of a foe? Oh, my Lord Ashley! you and others, whose spirit is more timid than becomes your blood, had better look, ere you give up the mainstay of your country's prosperity—ere you surrender the cause of the agriculturist—to the *animus* that is now manifested abroad. We have reason to bless Heaven that it has been thus early shown, before, by mean and miserable concession to the clamours of a selfish interest, we have placed Britain for the first time absolutely at the mercy of a foreign power. Scarce a journal in France that does not tell you—loudly—boldly—exultingly—what treatment we may expect from their hands. "At last," they say, "we have got this perfidious Albion in our power. Nature has done for us, in her cycle, what for centuries the force of our arms and concentrated rancour could not achieve. The English newspapers in every column teem with the tidings of failure. The crop of corn is bad beyond any former experience. It cannot suffice to feed one half of the population. The potato crop also, which is the sole subsistence of Ireland, is thoroughly ruined. Scarce a minute fraction of it can be used for the purposes of human food. The British Cabinet are earnestly deliberating on the propriety of opening the ports. The public, almost to a man, are demanding the adoption of that measure—and doubtless erelong they will be opened.

"What, then, are we to do? Are we to be guilty of the egregious folly of supplying our huge and overgrown rival, at the moment when we have the opportunity to strike a blow at the very centre of her system, and that without having recourse to the slightest belligerent measures? Are we, at the commencement of her impending misery, to reciprocate with England—that England which arrested us in the midst of our career of conquest, swept our navies from the seas, baffled our bravest armies, and led away our Emperor captive? The man who can entertain such an idea—be he who he may—is a traitor to the honour of his country. Let England open her ports if she will, and as she must, but let us at the self-same moment be prepared to CLOSE our own. Let not one grain of corn, if possible, be exported from France. We have plenty, and to spare. Our hardy peasantry can pass the winter in comfort; whilst, on the opposite side of the Channel, we shall have the satisfaction of beholding our haughty enemy convulsed, and wallowing like a stranded Leviathan on the shore! We pity the brave Irish, but we shall not help them. To do so would be, in fact, to exonerate Britain of her greatest and primary burden."

This is the language which the French journalists are using at the present moment. Let no Englishman [Pg 782] delude himself into the belief that it does not express the true sentiments of the nation. We know something of the men whose vocation it is to compound these patriotic articles. They are fostered under the pernicious system which converts the penny-a-liner into that anomalous hybrid, a Peer of France—which make it almost a necessary qualification to become a statesman, that the aspirant has been a successful scribbler in the public journals. And this, forsooth, they call the genuine aristocracy of talent! Their whole aim is to be popular, even at the expense of truth. They are pandars to the weakness of a nation for their own individual advancement. They have no stake in the country save the grey goose-quill they dishonour; and yet they affect to lead the opinions of the people, and—to the discredit of the French intellect be it recorded—they do in a great measure lead them. In short, it is a ruffian press, and we know well by what means France has been ruffianized. The war party—as it calls itself—is strong, and has been reared up by the unremitting exertions of these felons of society, who, for the sake of a cheer to tickle their own despicable vanity, would not hesitate for a moment, if they had the power, to wrap Europe again in the flames of universal war. Such will, doubtless, one day be the result of this unbridled license. The demon is not yet exorcised from France, and the horrors of the Revolution may be acted over again, with such additional refinements of brutality as foregone experience shall suggest. Meantime, we say to our own domestic shrinkers—Is this a season, when such a spirit is abroad, to make ourselves dependent for subsistence—which is life—upon the chance of a foreign supply?

Yes, gentlemen journalists of France—whether you be peers or not—you have spoken out a little too early. The blindest of us now can see you in your genuine character and colours. But rest satisfied; the day of retribution, as you impiously dare to term it, has not yet arrived. Britain does not want your corn, and not for it will she abandon an iota of her system.

There can be no doubt, that the news of a famine here would be received in France with more joy than the

tidings of a second Marengo. The mere expectation of it has already intoxicated the press; and, accordingly, they have begun to speculate upon the probable conduct of other foreign powers, in the event of our ports being opened. Belgium, they are delighted to find, is in so bad a situation, in so far as regards its crop, that the august King Leopold has thought proper to issue a public declaration, that his own royal mouth shall for the next year remain innocent of the flavour of a single potato. This looks well. Belgium, it is hoped, is not overabundant in wheat; but, even if she were, Belgium owes much to France, and—a meaning asterisk covers and conveys the remaining part of the inuendo. Swampy Holland, they say, can do Britain no good—nay, have not the cautious Dutch been beforehand with Britain, and forestalled, by previous purchase, the calculated supply of rice? Well done, Batavian merchant! In this instance, at least, you are playing the game for France.

Then they have high hopes from the Zollverein. That combination has evidently to dread the rivalry of British manufacture, and its managers are too shrewd to lose this glorious opportunity of barricado. There are, therefore, hopes that Germany, utterly forgetting the days of subsidies, will shut her ports for export, and also prevent the descent of Polish corn. If not, winter is near at hand, and the mouths of the rivers may be frozen before a supply can be sent to the starving British. Another delightful prospect for young and regenerated France!

Also, mysterious rumours are afloat with regard to the policy of the Autocrat. It is said, he too is going to shut up—whether from hatred to Britain, or paternal anxiety for the welfare of his subjects, does not appear. Yet there is not a Parisian scribe of them all but derives his information direct from the secret cabinet of Nicholas. Then there is America—have we not rumours of war there? How much depends upon the result of the speech which President Polk shall deliver! *He* knows well by this time that England is [Pg 783] threatened with famine—and will he be fool enough to submit to a compromise, when by simple embargo he might enforce his country's claims? So that altogether, in the opinion of the French, we are like to have the worst of it, and may be sheerly starved into any kind of submission.

No thanks to Cobden and Co. that this is not our case at present. The abolition of the corn-duty would be immediately followed by the abandonment of a large part of the soil now under tillage. Every year we should learn to depend more and more upon foreign supply, and give up a further portion of our own agricultural toil. Place us in that position, and let a bad season, which shall affect not only us, but the Continent, come round, and the dreams of France will be realized. Gentlemen of England—you that are wavering from your former faith—will you refuse the lesson afforded you, by this premature exultation on the part of our dangerous neighbour? Do you not see what weight France evidently attaches to the repeal of our protection duties—how anxiously she is watching—how earnestly she is praying for it? If you will not believe your friends, will you not take warning from an enemy? Would you hold it chivalry, if you saw an antagonist before you armed at all points, and confident of further assistance, to throw away your defensive armour, and leave yourselves exposed to his attacks? And yet, is not this precisely what will be done if you abandon the principles of protection?

Are you afraid of that word, Protection? Shame upon you, if you are! No doubt it has been most scandalously misrepresented by the cotton-mongering orators, but it is a great word, and a wise word, if truly and thoroughly understood. It does not mean that corn shall be grown in this country for *your* benefit or that of any exclusive class—were it so, protection would be a wrong—but it means, that at all times there shall be maintained in the country an amount of food, reared within itself, sufficient for the sustenance of the nation, in case that war, or some other external cause, should shut up all other sources. And this, which is in fact protection for the nation—a just and wise security against famine, in which the poor and the rich are equally interested—is perverted by the chimney-stalk proprietors into a positive national grievance. Why, the question lies in a nutshell. Corn will not be grown in this country unless you give it an adequate market. Admit foreign corn, and you not only put a stop to agricultural improvement in reclaiming waste land, by means of which production may be carried to an indefinite degree, but you also throw a vast quantity of the land at present productive out of bearing. Suppose, then, that next year, all protection being abolished, the quantity of grain raised in the country is but equal to half the demand of the population; foreign corn, of course, must come in to supply the deficiency. We shall not enlarge upon the first argument which must occur to every thinking person—the argument being, that in such a state of things, the foreigner, whoever he may be, with whom we are dealing, has it in his power to demand and exact any price he pleases for his corn. What say the Cobdenites in answer to this? "Oh, then, we shall charge the foreigner a corresponding price for our cottons and our calicoes!" No, gentlemen—that will not do. We have no doubt this idea *has* entered into your calculations, and that you hope, through a scarcity of home-grown corn, to realize an augmented profit on your produce—in short, to be the only gainers in a time of general distress. But there is a flaw in your reasoning, too palpable to be overlooked. The foreigner *can do without calico*, but the British nation CANNOT *do without bread*. The wants of the stomach are paramount—nothing can enter into competition with them. The German, Pole, or Frenchman, may, for a season, wear a ragged coat, or an inferior shirt, or even dispense with the latter garment, if it so pleases him; and yet suffer comparatively nothing. But what are our population to do, if bread is not procurable except at the enormous prices which, when you abolish protection, you entitle the foreigner to charge? Have you the heart to respond, in the only imaginable answer—it is a mere monosyllable—Starve?

But suppose that, for the first two years or so, we went on swimmingly—that there were good and plentiful [Pg 784] seasons abroad, and that corn flowed into our market abundantly from all quarters of the world. Suppose that bread became cheaper than we ever knew it before, that our manufactures were readily and greedily taken, and that we had realised the manufacturing Eden, which the disciples of Devil's-dust have predicted, as the immediate consequence of our abandoning all manner of restrictions. How will this state of unbounded prosperity affect the land? For every five shillings of fall in the price of the quarter of wheat, fresh districts will be abandoned by the plough. The farmer will be unable to work them at a profit, and so he will cease to grow grain. He may put steers upon them; or they may be covered with little fancy villas,

or Owenite parallelograms, to suit the taste of the modern philosopher, and accomodate the additional population who are to assist in the prospective crops of calico. The cheaper corn then is, the smaller will become our home-producing surface. The chaw-bacon will be driven to the railroads, where there is already a tolerable demand for him. The flail will be silent in the barn, and the song of the reaper in the fields.

Let us suppose this to last for a few years, during which Lord John Russell—the Whigs having, in the meantime, got rid of all graduating scruples and come back to power—has taken an opportunity of enriching the peerage by elevating the redoubted Cobden to its ranks. But a change suddenly passes across the spirit of our dream. At once, and like a thunderbolt—without warning or presage—comes a famine or a war. We care not which of them is taken as an illustration. Both are calamities, unfortunately, well known in this country; and we hardly can expect that many years shall pass over our heads without the occurrence of one or other of them. Let us take the evil of man's creating—war. The Channel is filled with French shipping, and all along the coast, from Cape Ushant to Elsinore, the ports are rigidly shut. Mean time American cruisers are scouring the Atlantic, chasing our merchantmen, and embarassing communication with the colonies. Also, there is war in the Mediterranean. We have fifty, nay, a hundred points to watch with our vessels—a hundred isolated interests to maintain, and these demand an immense and yet a divided force. Convoys cannot be spared without loss of territory, and then—what becomes of us at home?

Most miserable is the prospect; and yet it does appear, if we are mad enough to abandon protection, perfectly inevitable. With but a portion of our land in tillage—an augmented population—no stored corn—no means of recalling for two years at the soonest, even if we could spare seed, and that is questionable, the dormant energies of the earth!—Can you fancy, my Lord Ashley, or you, converted Mr Escott, what Britain would be then? We will tell you. Not perhaps a prey—for we will not even imagine such degradation—but a bargainer and compounder with an inferior power or powers, whom she might have bearded for centuries with impunity, had not some selfish traitors been wicked enough to demand, and some infatuated statesmen foolish enough to grant, the abrogation of that protection which is her sole security for pre-eminence. What are all the cotton bales of Manchester in comparison with such considerations as these? O Devil's-dust—Devil's-dust! Have we really declined so far, that *you* are to be the Sinon to bring us to this sorry pass? Is the poisoned breath of the casuist to destroy the prosperity of those —

"Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ!"

It may be so—for a small shard-beetle can upset a massive candle-stick; and it will be so assuredly, if the protective principle is abandoned. The first duty of a nation is to rear food for its inhabitants from the bosom of its own soil, and woe must follow if it relies for daily sustenance upon another. We can now form a fair estimate of the probable continuance of the supply, from the premature exultation exhibited in the foreign journals, and we shall be worse than fools if we do not avail ourselves of the lesson.

FOOTNOTES.

[39] "Not that I think there was more rain in the *earlier part of summer* than the potato crop could absorb, for it is known to require a large supply of moisture in its growing state, in order to acquire a full development of all its parts. It was observable, however, that the rain increased as the season advanced, and after the potato plant had reached its full development. It is, therefore, probable that the increased moisture, which was not then wanted by the plant, would become excessive; and this moisture, along with the low temperature, may have produced such chemical change in the sap as to facilitate the putrefaction of the entire plant. As to the theories with respect to the presence of a fungus, or of insects, in the plant, I consider these as a mere exponent of the tendency to a state of putrefaction; such being the usual accompaniments of all vegetable and animal decay."

[40] "I remember the wet seasons of 1816 and 1817. There was then no rot in the potato; but, during the whole of those rainy seasons, we had not the *continued cold* weather which we have this year experienced."

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