VARIOUS

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Содержание

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MARSTON; OR, THE MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN

PART II

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

SHAKSPEARE.

My entertainer received me with more civility than I had expected. He was almost fashionably dressed; his grim features

were smoothed into an elaborate smile; and he repeated his gratification at seeing me, in such variety of tones that I began to doubt the cordiality of my reception. But I could have no doubt of the elegance of the apartment into which I was shown. All was foreign, even to the flowers in the vases that filled the windows. A few bas-reliefs in the most finished style; a few alabasters as bright as if they had been brought at the moment from Carrara; a few paintings of the Italian masters, if not original and of the highest value, at least first-rate copies—caught the eye at once: the not *too* much, the not *too* little, that exact point which it requires so much skill to touch, showed that the eye of taste had been every where; and I again thought of the dungeon in the city, and asked myself whether it was possible that Mordecai could be the worker of the miracle.

Naturally making him some acknowledgment for his invitation, and saying some civil thing of his taste, he laughed, and said, "I have but little merit in the matter. All this is my daughter's. Moorfields is *my* house; this house is Mariamne's. As our origin and connexions are foreign, we make use of our opportunities to indulge ourselves in these foreign trifles. But we have a little 'réunion' of our neighbours this evening, and I must first make you known to the lady of the *fête*." He rang the bell.

"Neighbours!" said I; "all round me, as I came, seemed solitude; and yours is so beautiful, that I almost think society would injure its beauty."

"Well, well, Mr Marston, you shall see. But this I advise you,

take care of your heart if you are susceptible."

A servant announced that his mistress would attend us in a few minutes, and I remained examining the pictures and the prospect; when a gay voice, and the opening of a door, made me turn round to pay my homage to the lady. I had made up my mind to see one of the stately figures and magnificent countenances which are often to be found in the higher orders of the daughters of Israel. I saw, on the contrary, one of the gayest countenances and lightest figures imaginable—the *petit nez retroussé*, and altogether much more the air of a pretty Parisian than one of the superb race of Zion. Her manner was as animated as her eyes, and with the ease of foreign life she entered into conversation; and in a few minutes we laughed and talked together, as if we had been acquaintances from our cradles.

The history of the house was simply, that "she hated town and loved the country; that she loved the sea better than the land, and loved society of her own selection better than society forced upon her.—On the sea-shore she found all that she liked, and escaped all that she hated. She therefore lived on the sea-shore. —She had persuaded her father to build that house, and they had furnished it according to their own recollections, and even their own whims.—Caprice was liberty, and liberty was essential to the enjoyment of every thing. Thus, she loved caprice, and laid herself open to the charge of being fantastic with those who did not understand her."

In this sportive way she ran on, saying all kinds of lively

nothings; while we drank our coffee out of Saxon porcelain which would have shone on the table of a crowned head.

The windows were thrown open, and we sat enjoying the noblest of all scenes, a glorious sunset, to full advantage. The fragrance of the garden stole in, a "steam of rich distilled perfumes;" the son of the birds, in those faint and interrupted notes which come with such sweetness in the parting day; the distant hum of the village, and the low solemn sound of the waves subsiding on the beach, made a harmony of their own, perhaps more soothing and subduing than the most refined touches of human skill. We wanted nothing but an Italian moon to realize the loveliness of the scene in Belmont.

> "The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise—in such a night
> Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
> That did renew old Jason."

As I glanced on the little, superbly dressed Jewess, sitting between her father and myself, I thought of the possibilities to come.

> ——"In such a night
> Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
> And, with an unthrift love, did run from Venice."

We soon after had the moon herself, rising broad and bright from the ocean; and all was romance, until a party were seen coming up the avenue, laughing and talking very sportively.

"I beg a thousand apologies; but I had forgotten to mention that we have a small dance this evening, chiefly foreign, and, as you may perceive, they keep early hours," said Jessica, rising to receive them.

"They are French, and emigrants," added Mordecai. "All is over with them and theirs in France, and they have made the best of their way to England, therein acting more wisely than those who have stayed behind. I know France well; the '*tigre-singe*,' as their countryman described them. These unfortunates have been consigned to me by my correspondents, like so many bales of silks, or barrels of Medoc. But here they come."

I certainly was not prepared for the names which I now heard successively announced. Instead of the moderate condition from which I had supposed Mordecai and his pretty daughter, aspiring as she was, to have chosen their society, I found myself in a circle of names of which the world had been talking since I was in my cradle, if not for a dozen centuries before. I was in the midst of dukes, counts, and chevaliers, maréchals and marchionesses, the patrons and patronesses of the Marmontels and D'Alemberts, the charm of the Du Deffand *soirées*, and the originals for the charming piquancies and exquisite impertinences of L'Espinasse, and the *coterieisme* of Paris.

All that I had seen of the peerage of our haughty country

was dim and dull to the gay glitter of the crowd around me. Nature never moulded two national characters so distinct in all points, but the French exterior carries all before it. Diamonds and decorations sparkled on every side. The dresses of the women were as superb as if they had never known fear or flight; and the conversation was as light, sportive, and *badinant*, as if we were all waiting in the antechamber of Versailles till the chamberlain of Marie Antoinette should signify the royal pleasure to receive us. Here was stateliness to the very summit of human pride, but it was softened by the taste of its display; the most easy familiarity, yet guarded by the most refined distinctions The *bon-mot* was uttered with such natural avoidance of offence, and the arch allusion was so gracefully applied, that the whole gave me the idea of a new use of language. They were *artistes* of conversation, professors of a study of society, as much as painters might be of the style of the Bolognese or the Venetian school.

I was delighted, but I was still more deeply interested; for the chief topics of the evening were those on which public curiosity was most anxiously alive at the moment—the hazards of the revolutionary tempest, which they had left raging on the opposite shore. Yet, "Vive la France!" we had our cotillon, and our songs to harp and piano, notwithstanding the shock of governments.

But we had scarcely sat down to the supper which Mordecai's hospitality and his daughter's taste had provided for us—and a most costly display of plate and pine-apples it was—when our entertainer was called out of the room by a new arrival. After

some delay, he returned, bringing in with him a middle-aged officer, a fine soldierly-looking figure, in the uniform of the royal guard. He had just arrived from France with letters for some of the party, and with an introduction to the Jew, whom I now began to regard as an agent of the French princes. The officer was known to the whole table; and the enquiries for the fate of their friends and France were incessant and innumerable. He evidently suppressed much, to avoid "a scene;" yet what he had to tell was sufficiently alarming. The ominous shake of the Jew's head, and the changes of his sagacious visage, showed me that he at least thought the evil day on the point of completion.

"Living," said he, "at this distance from the place of events which succeed each other with such strange rapidity, we can scarcely judge of any thing. But, if the king would rely more on his peasantry and less on his populace, and more on his army than either, he might be king of France still."

"True!—true!" was the general acclamation.

"He should have clung to his noblesse, like Henri Quatre," said a duke.

"He should have made common cause with his clergy," said a prelate, with the physiognomy of one of Titian's cardinals.

"Any thing but the Tiers Etat," was uttered by all, with a general voice of horror.

"My letters of this evening," said Mordecai, "tell me that the *fête* at Versailles has had dangerous consequences."

"*Ciel*!" exclaimed a remarkably handsome woman of middle

age, with the "air noble" in every feature. "Pardon me, it must be an error. I was present. It was the most brilliant of all possible réunions. It was a pledge to the salvation of France. I hear the sound of 'Richard, O mon Roi!' in my ear at this moment. When, oh when, shall I hear it again!" She burst into a passion of tears.

The name was electric. All began that very charming air at the moment. Sobs and sighs stole in between the pauses of the harmony. Their rich and practised voices gave it the sweetness and solemnity of a hymn. Fine eyes were lifted to heaven; fine faces were buried in their clasped hands; and the whole finished like the subsidence of a prayer.

But madame la duchesse was full of her subject, and we were full of curiosity. We implored her to give us some idea of a scene, of which all Europe was thinking and talking. She required no importunity, but told her tale with the majesty of a Clairon. It was at first all exclamation. "O my king!—O my unhappy but noble queen!—O my beloved but noble France! *O Richard! O mon Roi!—Le monde vous abandonné!*" She again wept, and we again sympathized.

"For weeks," said she, "we had been tortured at Versailles with reports from the capital. We lived in a perpetual fever. The fury of the populace was terrible. The wretches who inflamed it constantly threatened to lead the armed multitude to the palace. We were almost without defence. The ministers could not be prevailed on to order the advance of the troops, and we felt our lives from hour to hour dependent on chance."

"It was my month of waiting as lady of honour. I found the queen always firm; or, if she ever trembled, it was at the want of firmness in others. She had made up her mind for the worst long before. She often said to me, in those revolutionary nights when we sat listening for the sound of the cannon or the tocsin from Paris—'France is an abyss, in which the throne must sink. But sovereigns may be undone—they must not be disgraced.' The world never possessed a more royal mind.

"At length an opportunity seemed to offer of showing the true feeling of the court to the army. The regiment of Flanders had come to take its tour of service at the palace, and the *garde du corps* had sent them an invitation to a grand military banquet. There was nothing new, and could have been nothing suspicious, in the invitation; for it was the custom of the *garde*, on the arrival of any regiment at Versailles, as a commencement of mutual civility. The regiment of Flanders was a distinguished corps—but the whole army had been tampered with; and the experiment was for the first time a doubtful one. As if to make it still more doubtful, the invitation was extended to the national guard of Versailles."

Every eye was now fixed on the narrator, as she went on with increasing animation.

"Never was there a day of greater anxiety. We were sure of the *garde du corps*; but treachery was roving through France, and the banquet might only produce a collision. The entertainment, by being in the opera salon, was actually within the palace, and

all the royal suite remained in the royal apartments, in fear and trembling, during the entire day.

"But as the night advanced, the intelligence, which was brought to us every five minutes from the salon, became more tranquillizing. The coldness which had existed in the beginning between the *garde* and the troops of the line had vanished, and loyal healths, gay speeches, and charming songs succeeded. At length a gallant young lieutenant of the *garde*, in a fit of noble enthusiasm, cried—'We all are the soldiers of France—we all are loyal, all are happy—Why shall not our king witness our loyalty and our happiness?' The tidings were instantly conveyed to the royal apartments. The king rose—the court followed. We entered the salon. Oh, that sight!—so new, so touching, so indescribable!"

Her voice sank for a moment. She recovered herself, and proceeded—

"The queen leaned on the arm of the king, the dauphin and dauphiness followed; Madame Elizabeth, that saint on earth if ever there was one, headed the ladies of the court. All rose at our entrance; we were received with one acclamation. The sight is still before me. I had seen all that was brilliant in the courts of Europe. But this moment effaced them all. The most splendid *salle* on earth, crowded with uniforms, all swords drawn and waving in the light, all countenances turned on the king, all one shout of triumph, loyalty, and joy! Alas! alas! was it to be the last beat of the national heart? Alas! alas! was it to be the last

flash of the splendour of France; the dazzling illumination of the *catafalque* of the Bourbons; the bright burst of flame from the funeral pile of the monarchy?"

Her voice sank into silence; for the first time unbroken throughout the room.

At length, to relieve the pause, Mordecai expressed something of a hope that the royal family slept in peace, for that one night at least.

"I really cannot tell," briskly said the fair narrator. "But I know that the ladies of the court did not. As the king retired, and we remained in the opera boxes to amuse ourselves a little with the display, we heard, to our astonishment, a proposal that the tables should be cleared away, and the ladies invited to a dance upon the spot. The proposal was instantly followed by the officers climbing into the boxes, and by our tearing up our pocket-handkerchiefs to make them cockades. We descended, and danced loyally till daybreak."

"With nothing less than field-officers, I hope?" said a superb cavalier, with a superb smile.

"I hope so too," laughed the lady; "though really I can answer for nothing but that the cotillon was excessively gay—that our partners, if not the best dancers upon earth—I always honour the *garde du corps*,"—and she bowed to the captain; "were the most obliged persons possible."

"Ah, but roturiers, madame!" said a stiff old duke, with a scorn worthy of ten generations of ribands of St Louis.

"True; it was most melancholy, when one comes to reflect upon it," said the lady, with an elevation of her alabaster shoulders to the very tips of her ears. "But on that evening roturiers were in demand—popularity was every thing; the *bourgeoisie* of Versailles were polished by their friction against the *garde du corps*. And I am sure, that if the same experiment, distressing as it might be, were tried in every opera salon in the provinces, and we had longer dances and shorter harangues, more fiddles and fewer patriots, all would be well again in our 'belle France.'"

"But—your news, monsieur le capitaine," was the demand all round the table.

"I almost dread to allude to it," said the captain, "as it may seem to contradict the opinion of madame la duchesse; yet I am afraid that we shall have to regret this fête as one of the most disastrous events to the king." He stopped. But the interest of the time overcame all other considerations. "Ah, gallantry apart, let us hear!" was the general voice; and, with every eye instantly fixed on him, and in the midst of lips breathless with anxiety, and bosoms beating with terror at every turn of the tale, the captain gave us his fearful narrative:—

"The banquet of the 1st of October," said he, "had delighted us all; but its consequences, which, I quite agree with madame, ought to have restored peace, were fatal. It lulled Versailles into a false security, at the moment when it roused Paris into open rebellion. The leaders of the populace, dreading the return of the

national attachment to our good king, resolved to strike a blow which should shake the monarchy. Happening to be sent to Paris on duty next day, I was astonished to find every thing in agitation —The workmen all in the streets; the orators of the Palais Royal all on their benches, declaiming in the most furious manner. Crowds of women rushing along the Boulevards, singing their barbarous revolutionary songs; some even brandishing knives and carrying pikes, and all frantic against the fête. As I passed down the Rue St Honoré, I stopped to listen to the harangue of a half-naked ruffian, who had made a rostrum of the shoulders of two of the porters of the Halle, and, from this moving tribune, harangued the multitude as he went along. Every falsehood, calumny, and abomination that could come from the lips of man, were poured out by the wretch before me. The sounds of 'Vive Marat!' told me his name. I afterwards heard that he lived on the profits of a low journal, in a cellar, with a gang of wretches constantly drunk, and thus was only the fitter for the rabble. He told them that there was a conspiracy on foot to massacre the patriots of Paris; that the troops from the provinces were coming, by order of the king, to put man, woman, and child to the sword; that the fête at Marseilles was given to the vanguard of the army to pledge them to this terrible purpose; that the governors of the provinces were all in the league of blood; and that the bakers of Paris had received an order from Versailles to put poison in all their loaves within the next twenty-four hours. 'Frenchmen,' exclaimed this livid villain, tearing his hair, and howling with the

wildness of a demoniac, 'do you love your wives and children? Will you suffer them to die in agonies before your eyes? Wait, and you will have nothing to do but dig their graves. Advance, and you will have nothing to do but drive the tyrant, with his horde of priests and nobles, into the Seine. Pause, and you are massacred. Arm, and you are invincible.' He was answered by shouts of vengeance.

"I remained that night at the headquarters of the staff of Paris, the Hotel de Ville. I was awakened before daybreak by the sound of a drum; and, on opening my eyes, was startled by lights flashing across the ceiling of the room where I slept. Shots followed; and it was evident that there was a conflict in the streets. I buckled on my sabre hastily, and, taking my pistols, went to join the staff. I found them in the balcony in front of the building, maintaining a feeble fire against the multitude. The night was dark as pitch, cold and stormy, and except for the sparkle of the muskets from below, and the blaze of the torches in the hands of our assailants, we could scarcely have conjectured by whom we were attacked. This continued until daylight; when we at last got sight of our enemy. Never was there a more tremendous view. Every avenue to the Place de Grève seemed pouring in its thousands and tens of thousands. Pikes, bayonets on poles, and rusty muskets, filled the eye as far as it could reach. Flags, with all kinds of atrocious inscriptions against the king and queen, were waving in the blast; drums, horns, and every uncouth noise of the raging million filled the air. And in front of this

innumerable mass pressed on a column of desperadoes, headed by a woman, or a man disguised as a woman, beating a drum, and crying out, in the intervals of every roar, 'Bread, bread!'

"To resist was evidently hopeless, or only to provoke massacre; but I had already dispatched an express to the officer in command at the Tuileries, to come and save the arms and ammunition deposited at the Hotel de Ville; and we expected the reinforcement from minute to minute. While my eyes turned, in this fever of life and death, towards the quarter from which the troops were to come, a sudden shout from the multitude made me look round; a fellow, perhaps one of the *funambules* of the Fauxbourg theatres, was climbing up to the belfry by a rope, with the agility of a monkey. His purpose was seen by us at once, and seen with fresh alarm; for, if he had been able to reach the great bell, the terrible 'tocsin' would have aroused the country for ten leagues round, and have poured a hundred thousand armed peasantry into Paris. I pointed him out to the guard, and they fired a volley at him as he swung above their heads. They missed him, the populace shouted, and the fellow, taking off his cap and waving it in triumph, still climbed on. I next fired both my pistols at him; which was the luckier of the two I cannot tell, but I saw him stagger just as he planted his foot on the battlement; he was evidently hit, and a general yell from the multitude told that they saw it too; he made a convulsive spring to secure himself, fell back, lost his hold, and plunged headlong from a height of a hundred and fifty feet to the ground!

Another tried the same adventure, and with the same fate; three in succession were shot; but enthusiasm or madness gave them courage, and at length half a dozen making the attempt together, the belfry was reached, and the tocsin was rung. Its effect *was* terrible. The multitude seemed to be inspired with a new spirit of rage as they heard its clang. Every bell in Paris soon began to clang in succession. The din was deafening; the populace seemed to become more daring and desperate every moment; all was uproar. I could soon see the effect of the tocsin in the new crowds which recruited our assailants from all sides. Their fire became heavier; still, in the spirit of men fighting for their lives, we kept them at bay till the last cartridge was in our muskets. But, at the moment of despair, we saw the distant approach of the reinforcement from the Tuileries; and breathed for an instant. Yet, judge of our astonishment, when it had no sooner entered the crowd, than, instead of driving the wretches before them, we saw the soldiers scatter, mix, and actually fraternize with the *canaille*; a general scene of embracing and huzzaing followed, the shakos were placed on the heads of the rabble, the hats and caps of the rabble were hoisted on the soldiers' bayonets; and to our horror alike at their treachery and our inevitable destruction, the troops wearing the king's uniform, pushed forward, heading the column of insurrection. We fired our last volley, and all was over. The multitude burst into the hotel like a torrent. All our party were either killed or wounded. For the last half hour we had not a hundred men able to pull a trigger against a fire from the

streets, from windows, and from house tops, on every side of the squares. That any one of us escaped from the showers of bullets is a miracle. My own escape was the merest chance. On the first rush of the crowd into the hall, I happened to come in contact with one of the leaders of the party, a horrid-looking ruffian in a red cap, who roared out that he had marked me for bringing down the citizen climber up the belfry. The fellow fired his pistol so close to my face that it scorched me. In the agony of the pain I rushed on him; he drew his sabre and attempted to cut me down; but my sword was already out, and I anticipated him by a blow which finished his patriotism, at least in this world. In the next moment, I was trampled down, and we fell together."

I can of course offer but an imperfect transcript of the brave guardsman's narrative; seconded as it was by an intelligent countenance, and that national vividness of voice and gesture which often tell so much more than words. But, to describe its effect on his auditory is impossible. Every countenance was riveted on him, every change of those extraordinary scenes was marked by a new expression of every face round the table. Sighs and tears, wringing hands, and eyes turned on heaven, were universal evidences of the interest excited by his fearful detail. Yet, unused as I was to this quick emotion among my own sober countrymen, I could scarcely wonder even at its wildness. They were listening to the fate of all that belonged to them by affection, loyalty, hope, and possession, on this side of the grave. Every hour was big with the destinies of their king, their relations, and

their country. On the events happening, even at the moment, depended, whether a deluge of blood might not roll over France, whether flame might not be devouring their ancient castles, whether they might not be doomed to mendicancy in a strange land, wanderers through the earth, without a spot whereon to lay their head, fugitives forever. Yet the anxiety for those left behind was of a still deeper dye; the loved, the familiar, the honoured, all involved in a tide of calamity, irresistible by human strength or skill.—All so near, yet all so lost; like the crew of some noble ship hopelessly struggling with the winds and waves, within sight of the shore, within reach almost of the very voices of their friends, yet at the mercy of a tremendous element which forbade their ever treading on firm ground.

But there was still much to tell; the fate of the royal family was the general question; and the remainder of the melancholy tale was given with manly sensibility.

"When I recovered my senses it was late in the day; and I found myself in humble room, with only an old woman for my attendant; but my wounds bandaged, and every appearance of my having fallen into friendly hands. The conjecture was true. I was in the house of one of my father's *gardes de chasse*, who, having commenced tavern-keeper in the Fauxbourg St Antoine some years back, and being a thriving man, had become a 'personage' in his section, and was now a captain in the Fédérés. Forced, *malgré*, to join the march to the Hotel de Ville, he had seen me in the mêlée, and dragged me from under a heap of killed

and wounded. To his recollection I probably owed my life; for the patriots mingled plunder with their principles, stripped all the fallen, and the pike and dagger finished the career of many of the wounded. It happened, too, that I could not have fallen into a better spot for information. My *cidevant garde de chasse* was loyal to the midriff; but his position as the master of a tavern, made his house a rendezvous of the leading patriots of his section. Immediately after their victory of the morning, a sort of council was held on what they were to do next; and the room where I lay being separated from their place of meeting only by a slight partition, I could hear every syllable of their speeches, which, indeed, they took no pains to whisper; they clearly thought that Paris was their own. Lying on my bed, I learned that the attack on the Hotel de Ville was only a part of a grand scheme of operations; that an insurrection was to be organized throughout France; that the king was to be deposed, and a 'lieutenant of the kingdom' appointed, until the sovereign people had declared their will; and that the first movement was to be a march of all the Parisian sections to Versailles. I should have started from my pillow, to spring sabre in hand among the traitors; but I was held down by my wounds, and perhaps still more by the entreaties of my old attendant, who protested against my stirring, as it would be instantly followed by her murder and that of every inmate of the house. The club now proceeded to enjoy themselves after the labours of the day. They had a republican carouse. Their revels were horrible. They speedily became intoxicated, sang, danced,

embraced, fought, and were reconciled again. Then came the harangues; each orator exceeding his predecessor in blasphemy, till all was execration, cries of vengeance against kings and priests, and roars of massacre. I there heard the names of men long suspected, but of whom they now spoke openly as the true leaders of the national movement; and of others marked for assassination. They drank toasts to Death, to Queen Poissarde, and to Goddess Guillotine. It was a pandemonium.

"A drum at length beat the 'Alarme' in the streets; the orgie was at an end, and amid a crash of bottles and glasses, they staggered, as well as their feet could carry them, out of the house. They were received by the mob with shouts of laughter. But the column moved forward; to the amount of thousands, as I could judge by their trampling, and the clashing of their arms. When the sound had died away in the distance, my humble friend entered my room, thanking his stars that 'he had contrived to escape this march.'

"'Where are they gone?' I asked.

"'To Versailles,' was his shuddering answer.

"Nothing could now detain me. After one or two helpless efforts to rise from my bed, and an hour or two of almost despair, I succeeded in getting on my feet, and procuring a horse. Versailles was now my only object. I knew all the importance of arriving at the palace at the earliest moment; I knew the unprotected state of the king, and knew that it was my place to be near his person in all chances. I was on the point of sallying

forth in my uniform, when the precaution of my friend forced me back; telling me, truly enough, that, in the ferment of the public mind, it would be impossible for me to reach Versailles as a *garde du corps*, and that my being killed or taken, would effectually prevent me from bearing any information of the state of the capital. This decided me; and, disguised as a courier, I set out by a cross-road in hope to arrive before the multitude.

"But I had not gone above a league when I fell in with a scattered platoon of the mob, who were rambling along as if on a party of pleasure; tossing their pikes and clashing their sabres to all kinds of revolutionary songs. I was instantly seized, as a 'courier of the Aristocrats.' Their sagacity, once at work, found out a hundred names for me:—I was a 'spy of Pitt,' an 'agent of the Austrians,' a 'disguised priest,' and an 'emigrant noble;' my protestations were in vain, and they held a court-martial, on me and my horse, on the road; and ordered me to deliver up my despatches, on pain of being piked on the spot. But I could give up none; for the best of all possible reasons. Every fold of my drapery was searched, and then I was to be piked for *not* having despatches; it being clear that I was more than a courier, and that my message was too important to be trusted to pen and ink. I was now in real peril; for the party had continued to sing and drink until they had nearly made themselves frantic; and as Versailles was still a dozen miles off, and they were unlikely to annihilate the garrison before nightfall, they prepared to render their share of service to their country by annihilating me. In

this real dilemma, my good genius interposed, in the shape of an enormous *poissarde*; who, rushing through the crowd, which she smote with much the same effect as an elephant would with his trunk, threw her huge arms round me, called me her *cher Jacques*, poured out a volley of professional eloquence on the shrinking heroes, and proclaimed me her son returning from the army! All now was sentiment. The *poissarde* was probably in earnest, for her faculties were in nearly the same condition with those of her fellow patriots. I was honoured with a general embrace, and shared the privilege of the travelling bottle. As the night was now rapidly falling, an orator proposed that the overthrow of the monarchy should be deferred till the next day. A Fédéré uniform was provided for me; I was hailed as a brother; we pitched a tent, lighted fires, cooked a supper, and bivouacked for the night. This was, I acknowledge, the first night of my seeing actual service since the commencement of my soldiership.

"In ten minutes the whole party were asleep. I arose, stole away, left my newly found mother to lament her lost son again, and with a heavy heart took the road to Versailles. The night had changed to sudden tempest, and the sky grown dark as death. It was a night for the fall of a dynasty. But there was a lurid blaze in the distant horizon, and from time to time a shout, or a sound of musketry, which told me only too well where Versailles lay. I need not say what my feelings were while I was traversing that solitary road, yet within hearing of this tremendous mass of revolt; or what I imagined in every roar, as it came mingled with

the bellowing of the thunder. The attack might be commencing at the moment; the blaze that I saw might be the conflagration of the palace; the roar might be the battle over the bodies of the royal family. I never passed three hours in such real anxiety of mind, and they were deepened by the total loneliness of the whole road. I did not meet a single human being; for the inhabitants of the few cottages had fled, or put out all their lights, and shut themselves up in their houses. The multitude had rushed on, leaving nothing but silence and terror behind.

"The church clocks were striking three in the morning when I arrived at Versailles, after the most exhausting journey that I had ever made. But there, what a scene met my eye! It was beyond all that I had ever imagined of ferocity and rabble triumph. Though it was still night, the multitude thronged the streets; the windows were all lighted up, huge fires were blazing in all directions, torches were carried about at the head of every troop of the banditti; it was the bivouac of a hundred thousand bedlamites. It was now that I owned the lucky chance which had made me a Fédéré. In any other dress I should have been a suspicious person, and have probably been put to death; but in the brown coat, sabre, and red cap of the Sectionaire, I was fraternized with in all quarters. My first object was to approach the palace, if possible. But there I found a *cordon* of the national guard drawn up, who had no faith even in my mob costume; and was repelled. I could only see at a distance, drawn up in front of the palace, a strong line of troops—the regiment of Flanders and the Swiss

battalion. All in the palace was darkness. It struck me as the most funereal sight that I had ever beheld.

"In my disappointment I wandered through the town. The night was rainy, and gusts of wind tore every thing before them, yet the armed populace remained carousing in the streets —all was shouting, oaths, and execrations against the royal family. Some groups were feasting on the plunder of the houses of entertainment, others were dancing and roaring the 'Carmagnole.' One party had broken into the theatre, and dressed themselves in the spoils of the wardrobe; others were drilling, and exhibiting their skill by firing at the king's arms hung over the shops of the restaurateurs. Those shops were crowded with hundreds eating and drinking at free cost. All the *cafés* and gaming-houses were lighted from top to bottom. The streets were a solid throng, and almost as bright as at noonday, and the jangling of all the Savoyard organs, horns, and voices, the riot and roar of the multitude, and the frequent and desperate quarrels of the different sections, who challenged each other to fight during this lingering period, were absolutely distracting. Versailles looked alternately like one vast masquerade, like an encampment of savages, and like a city taken by storm. Wild work, too, had been done during the day.

"As, wearied to death, I threw myself down to rest on the steps of one of the churches, a procession of patriots happened to fix its quarters on the spot. Its leader, an old grotesque-looking fellow, dressed in a priest's vestments—doubtless a part of the

plunder of the night—and seated on a barrel on wheels, like a Silenus, from which, at their several halts, he harangued his followers, and drank to the 'downfal of the Bourbons,' soon let me into the history of the last twelve hours. 'Brave Frenchmen,' exclaimed the ruffian, 'the eyes of the world are fixed upon you; and this night you have done what the world has never rivalled. You have shaken the throne of the tyrant. What cared you for the satellites of the Bourbon? You scorned their bayonets; you laughed at their bullets. Nothing can resist the energy of Frenchmen.' This flourish was, of course, received with a roar. The orator now produced a scarf which he had wrapped round his waist, and waved it in the light before them. 'Look here, citizen soldiers,' he cried; 'brave Fédérés, see this gore. It is the blood of the monsters who would extinguish the liberty of France. Yesterday I headed a battalion of our heroes in the attack of the palace. One of the slaves of the tyrant Capet rushed on me sword in hand; I sent a bullet through his heart, and, as he fell, I tore this scarf from his body. See the marks of his blood.' It may be conceived with what feelings I heard this narrative. —The palace had been sacked, the queen insulted, my friends and comrades murdered. I gave an involuntary groan; his fierce eye fell upon me as I endeavoured to make my escape from this horrible neighbourhood, and he ordered me to approach him. The fifty pikes which were brandished at his word made obedience necessary. He whispered, 'I know you well; you are at my mercy; I have often played the barrel organ outside the walls

of your *corps-de-garde*; you are acquainted with the secret ways of the palace, and you must lead us in, or die upon the spot.' He probably took my astonishment and silence for acquiescence; for he put a musket into my hand. 'This night,' said he, aloud, 'will settle every thing. The whole race of the Bourbons are doomed. The fry may have escaped, but we have netted all the best fish. We have friends, too, in high quarters;' and he shook a purse of louis-d'ors at my ear. 'We are to storm the palace an hour before daybreak; the troops must either join us or be put to death; the king and his tribe will be sent to a dungeon, and France, before to-morrow night, will have at her head, if not the greatest man, the richest fool, in Europe.' He burst out into an irrestrainable laugh, in which the whole party joined; but the sound of cannon broke off his speech; all shouldered pike or musket; I was placed under the especial surveillance of a pair with drawn sabres, which had probably seem some savage service during the night, for they were clotted with blood; and with me for their guide, the horde of savages rushed forward, shouting, to join the grand attack on the defenders of our unfortunate king.

"My situation had grown more trying at every moment, but escape was impossible, and my next thought was to make the best of my misfortune, enter the palace along with the crowd, and, when once there, die by the side of my old comrades. I had, however, expected a sanguinary struggle. What was my astonishment when I saw the massive gates, which might have been so easily defended, broken open at once—a few random

shots the only resistance, and the staircases and ante-rooms in possession of the multitude within a quarter of an hour. 'Where is La Fayette?' in wrath and indignation, I cried to one of the wounded *garde-du-corps*, whom I had rescued from the knives of my *sans-culotte* companions. 'He is asleep,' answered the dying man, with a bitter smile. 'Where are the National Guard whom he brought with him last night from Paris?' I asked, in astonishment. 'They are asleep, too,' was the contemptuous answer. I rushed on, and at length reached my friends; tore off my Fédéré uniform, and used, with what strength was left me, my bayonet, until it was broken.

"I shall say no more of that night of horrors. The palace was completely stormed. The splendid rooms, now the scene of battle hand to hand; the royal furniture, statues, pictures, tossed and trampled in heaps; wounded and dead men lying every where; the constant discharge of muskets and pistols; the breaking open of doors with the blows of hatchets and hammers; the shrieks of women flying for their lives, or hanging over their wounded sons and husbands; and the huzzas of the rabble, at every fresh entrance which they forced into the suites of apartments, were indescribable. I pass over the other transactions of those terrible hours; but some unaccountable chance saved the royal family—I fear, for deeper sufferings; for the next step was degradation.

"The rabble leaders insisted that the king should go with them to Paris. Monsieur La Fayette was now awake; and he gave it as his opinion that this was the only mode of pleasing the populace.

When a king submits to popular will, he is disgraced; and a disgraced king is undone. It was now broad day; the struggle was at an end; the royal carriages were ordered, and the *garde-du-corps* were drawn up to follow them. At this moment, the barrel-organ man, my leader of the night, passed me by with a grimace, and whispered, 'Brother Fédéré, did I not tell you how it would be? The play is only beginning; all that we have seen is the farce.' He laughed, and disappeared among the crowd.

"There was one misery to come, and it was the worst; the procession to Paris lasted almost twelve hours. It was like the march of American savages, with their scalps and prisoners, to their wigwams. The crowd had been largely increased by the national guards of the neighbouring villages, and by thousands flocking from Paris on the intelligence of the rabble victory. Our escort was useless; we ourselves were prisoners. Surrounding the carriage of the king, thousands of the most profligate refuse of Paris, men and women, railed and revelled, sang and shouted the most furious insults to their majesties. And in front of this mass were carried on pikes, as standards, the heads of two of our corps, who had fallen fighting at the door of the queen's chamber. Loaves, borne on pikes, and dipped in blood, formed others of their standards. Huge placards, with the words, 'Down with the tyrant! Down with the priests! Down with the nobles!' waved above the heads of the multitude. 'Make way for the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice,' was shouted, with every addition of obloquy and insolence; and in this agony we were forced to

drag on our weary steps till midnight. One abomination more was to signalize the inhuman spirit of the time. Within about a league of Paris, the royal equipages were ordered to halt; and for what inconceivable purpose? It was, that the bleeding heads of our unfortunate comrades might be dressed and powdered by the village barber—to render them fit to enter Paris. The heads were then brought to the carriage windows, for the approval of the royal prisoners; and the huge procession moved onward with all its old bellowings again.

"We entered the city by torchlight, amid the firing of cannon; the streets were all illuminated, and the mob and the multitude maddened with brandy. Yet the scene was unlike that of the night before. There was something in the extravagances of Versailles wholly different from the sullen and frowning aspect of Paris. The one had the look of a melodrame; the other the look of an execution. All was funereal. We marched with the king to the Place du Carrousel, and when the gates of the palace closed on him, I felt as if they were the gates of the tomb. Perhaps it would be best that they were; that a king of France should never suffer such another day; that he should never look on the face of man again. He had drained the cup of agony; he had tasted all the bitterness of death; human nature could not sustain such another day; and, loyal as I was, I wished that the descendant of so many kings should rather die by the hand of nature than by the hand of traitors and villains; or should rather mingle his ashes with the last flame of the Tuileries, than glut the thirst of rebellion with

his blood on the scaffold."

The story left us all melancholy for a while; bright eyes again overflowed, as well they might; and stately bosoms heaved with evident emotion. Yet, after all, the night was wound up with a capital cotillon, danced with as much grace, and as much gaiety too, as if it had been in the Salle d'Opera.

I rose early next morning, and felt the spirit-stirring power of the sea breeze. In those days, Brighton covered but the borders of the shore. It was scarcely more than a little line of fishermen's cottages, fenced against the surge by the remaining timbers of boats which had long seen their last adventure. Scattered at distances of at least a quarter of a mile from each other, lay some houses of a better description, a few deeply embosomed in trees, or rather in such thickets as could grow in the perpetual exposure to the rough winds and saline exhalations of the Channel. Of those, the one in which I had taken up my present residence was amongst the best; though its exterior was so unpresuming, that I was inclined to give Mordecai, or rather his gay heiress, credit for humility, or perhaps for the refinement of striking their visiters with the contrast between its simplicity of exterior and richness of decoration within.

It was a brisk, bright morning, and the waves were curling before a lively breeze, the sun was glowing above, and clusters of vessels, floating down the Channel, spread their sails like masses of summer cloud in the sunshine. It was my first sight of the ocean, and that first sight is always a new idea. Alexander the

Great, standing on the shores of the Persian Gulf, said, "That he then first felt what the world was." Often as I have seen the ocean since, the same conception has always forced itself on me.

In what a magnificent world do we live! What power, what depth, what expanse, lay before me! How singular, too, that while the grandeur of the land arises from bold irregularity and incessant change of aspect, from the endless variety of forest, vale, and mountain; the same effect should be produced on the ocean by an absence of all irregularity and all change! A simple, level horizon, perfectly unbroken, a line of almost complete uniformity, compose a grandeur that impresses and fills the soul as powerfully as the most cloud-piercing Alp, or the Andes clothed with thunder.

This was the ocean in calm; but how glorious, too, in tempest! The storm that sweeps the land is simply a destroyer or a renovator; it smites the surface, and is gone. But the ocean is the seat of its power, the scene of its majesty, the element in which it sports, lives, and rules—penetrating to its depths, rolling its surface in thunder on the shore—changing its whole motion, its aspect, its uses, and, grand as it is in its serenity, giving it another and a more awful grandeur in its convulsion. Then, how strangely, yet how admirably, does it fulfil its great human object! Its depth and extent seem to render it the very element of separation; all the armies of the earth might be swallowed up between the shores of the Channel. Yet it is this element which actually combines the remotest regions of the earth. Divisions and barriers are essential

to the protection of kingdoms from each other; yet what height of mountain range, or what depth of precipice could be so secure as the defence so simply and perpetually supplied by a surrounding sea? While this protecting element at the same time pours the wealth of the globe into the bosom of a nation.

Even all this is only the ocean as referred to man. How much more magnificent is it in itself! Thrice the magnitude of the land, the world of waters! its depth unfathomable, its mountains loftier than the loftiest of the land, its valleys more profound, the pinnacles of its hills islands! What immense shapes of animal and vegetable life may fill those boundless pastures and plains on which man shall never look! What herds, by thousands and millions, of those mighty creatures whose skeletons we discover, from time to time, in the wreck of the antediluvian globe! What secrets of form and power, of capacity and enjoyment, may exist under the cover of that mighty expanse of waves which fills the bed of the ocean, and spreads round the globe!

While those and similar ramblings were passing through my mind, as I sat gazing on the bright and beautiful expanse before me, I was aroused by a step on the shingle. I turned, and saw the gallant guardsman, who had so much interested our party on the night before. But he received my salutation with a gravity which instantly put an end to my good-humour; and I waited for the *dénouement*, at his pleasure. He produced a small billet from his pocket, which I opened, and which, on glancing my eye over it, appeared to me a complete rhapsody. I begged of him to read it,

and indulge me with an explanation. He read it, and smiled.

"It is, I own, not perfectly intelligible," said he; "but some allowance must be made for a man deeply injured, and inflamed by a sense of wrong."

I read the signature—Lafontaine, *Capitaine des Chasseurs legers*. I had never heard the name before. I begged to know "the nature of his business with me, as it was altogether beyond my conjecture."

"It is perfectly probable, sir," was the reply; "for I understand that you had never seen each other till last night, at the house of your friend. The case is simply this:—Lafontaine, who is one of the finest fellows breathing, has been for some time deeply smitten by the various charms of your host's very pretty daughter, and, so far as I comprehend, the lady has acknowledged his merits. But your arrival here has a good deal deranged the matter. He conceives your attentions to his fair one to be of so marked a nature, that it is impossible for him to overlook them."

I laughed, and answered,

"Sir, you may make your friend quite at his ease on the subject, for I have not known her existence till within these twenty-four hours."

"You danced with her half the evening—you sat beside her at supper. She listened to you with evident attention—of this last I myself was witness; and the report in the neighbourhood is, that you have come to this place by an express arrangement with her father," gravely retorted the guardsman.

All this exactness of requisition appeared to me to be going rather too far; and I exhibited my feeling on the subject, in the tone in which I replied, that I had stated every thing that was necessary for the satisfaction of a "man of sense, but that I had neither the faculty nor the inclination to indulge the captiousness of any man."

His colour mounted, and I seemed as if I was likely to have a couple of heroes on my hands. But he compressed his lip, evidently strangled a chivalric speech, and, after a pause to recover his calmness, said—

"Sir, I have not come here to decide punctilios on either side. I heartily wish that this affair had not occurred, or could be reconciled; my countrymen here, I know, stand on a delicate footing, and I am perfectly aware of the character that will be fastened on them by the occurrence of such rencontres. Can you suggest any means by which this difference may be settled at once?"

"None in the world, sir," was my answer. "I have told you the fact, that I have no pretension whatever to the lady—that I am wholly unacquainted even with the person of your friend—that the idea of intentional injury on my part, therefore, is ridiculous; and let me add, for the benefit of your friend, that to expect an apology for imaginary injuries, would be the most ridiculous part of the entire transaction."

"What, then, am I to do?" asked the gallant captain, evidently perplexed. "I really wish that the affair could be got over without

fracas. In fact, though the Jewess is pretty, Lafontaine's choice does not much gratify any of us."

"What you ought to do, sir, is sufficiently plain," said I. "Go to your friend; if he has brains enough remaining to comprehend the nature of the case, he will send you back with his apology. If he has not, I shall remain half an hour on the sands until he has made up his mind."

The captain made me a low bow, and slowly paced back to the lodging of his fiery compatriot.

When I was left alone, I, for the first time, felt the whole ill-luck of my situation. So long as I was heated by our little dialogue, I thought only of retorting the impertinent interference of a stranger with my motives or actions. But, now, the whole truth flashed on me with the force of a new faculty. I saw myself involved in a contest with a fool or a lunatic, in which either of our lives, or both, might be sacrificed—and for nothing. Hope, fortune, reputation, perhaps renown, all the prospects of life were opening before me, and I was about to shut the gate with my own hand. In these thoughts I was still too young for what is called personal peril to intervene. The graver precaution of more advanced years was entirely out of the question. I was a soldier, or about to be one; and I would have rejoiced, if the opportunity had been given to me, in heading a forlorn hope, or doing any other of those showy things which make a name. The war, too, was beginning—my future regiment was ordered for foreign service—every heart in England was beating with

hope or fear—every eye of Europe was fixed upon England and Englishmen; and, in the midst of all this high excitement, to fall in a pitiful private quarrel, struck me with a sudden sense of self-contempt and wilful absurdity, that made me almost loathe my being. I acknowledge that the higher thoughts, which place those rencontres in their most criminal point of view, had then but little influence with me. But to think that, within the next hour, or the next five minutes, I might be but like the sleepers in the rude resting-place of the fishermen; with my name unknown, and all the associations of life extinguished—

> "This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod"—

was an absolute pang. I could have died a martyr, and despised the flame, or rather rejoiced in it, as a security that I should not perish forgotten. But a fancied wrong, an obscure dispute, the whole future of an existence flung away for the jealous dreams of a mad Frenchman, or the Sport of a coquette, of whom I knew as little as of her fantastic lover, threw me into a fever of scorn for the solemn follies of mankind.

The captain returned. I had not stirred from the spot.

"I regret," said he, "that my friend is wholly intractable. He has convinced himself, if he can convince no one else, that he has wholly lost the good opinion of his fair one, and that you are the cause. Some communication which he had from

London, informed him of your frequent intercourse with her father. This rendered him suspicious, and the peculiar attention with which you were treated last night, produced a demand for an explanation; which, of course, heightened the quarrel. The inamorata, probably not displeased to have more suitors than one, whether in amusement or triumph, appears to have assisted his error, if such it be; and he returned home, stung to madness by what he terms her infidelity. He now demands your formal abandonment of the pursuit."

All my former feelings of offence recurred at the words, and I hotly asked—"Well, sir, to whom must I kneel—to the lady or the gentleman? Take my answer back—that I shall do neither. Where is your friend to be found?"

He pointed to a clump of frees within a few hundred yards, and I followed him. I there saw my antagonist; a tall, handsome young man, but with a countenance of such dejection that he might have sat for the picture of despair. It was clear that his case was one for which there was no tonic, but what the wits of the day called a course of steel. Beside him stood a greyhaired old figure, of a remarkably intelligent countenance, though stooped slightly with age. He was introduced to me as General Deschamps; and in a few well-expressed words, he mentioned that he attended, from respect to the British, to offer his services to me on an occasion "which he deeply regretted, but which circumstances unfortunately rendered necessary, and which all parties were doubtless anxious to conclude before it should produce any

irritation in the neighbourhood."

To the offer of choice of weapons, I returned an answer of perfect indifference. It had happened, that as my father had destined me for diplomacy, and had conceived the science to have but two essentials, French and fencing, I was tolerably expert in both. Swords were chosen. We were placed on the ground, and the conflict began. My antagonist was evidently a master of his art; but there is no weapon whose use depends so much upon the mind of the moment as the sword. He was evidently resolved to kill or be killed; and the desperation with which he rushed on me exposed him to my very inferior skill. At the third pass I ran him through the sword arm. He staggered back with the twinge; but at the instant when he was about to bound on me, and perhaps take his revenge, a scream stopped us all; a female, wrapped in cloak and veil, rushed forward, and threw herself into Lafontaine's arms in a passion of sobs. An attendant, who soon came up, explained the circumstance; and it finally turned out, that the fair Mariamne, whatever her coquetry might have intended at night, repented at morn; recollected some of the ominous expressions of her lover; and on hearing that he had been seen with a group entering the grove, and that I, too, was absent, had conjectured the truth at once, and flown, with her *femme de chambre,* to the rendezvous. She had come just in time.

The reconciliation was complete. I was now not only forgiven by the lover, but was the "very best friend he had in the world;

—a man of honour, a paragon, a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*." The wound of the gallant chasseur was bound up, like an ancient knight's, with his mistress's scarf. She upbraided me, with her glistening eyes, for having had the audacity to quarrel with her hero; and then, with the same eyes, thanked me for the opportunity of proving her faith to *cher et malheureux Charles*. Her little heart poured out its full abundance in her voluble tongue; and for a quarter of an hour, and it is a long life for happiness, we were the happiest half dozen in Christendom.

How Mordecai would admire all this, was yet to be told; but my casual mention of his name broke up the rapture at once. Mariamne suddenly became sensible of the irregularity of alternately fainting and smiling in the arms of a handsome young soldier; and in the presence, too, of so many spectators, all admirers of her black eyes and blooming sensibilities. She certainly looked to me much prettier than in her full-dress charms of the evening before, and I almost began to think that the prize was worth contending for; but the guardsman and the old general had felt the effects of the morning air, and were unsentimentally hungry. Mariamne and her attendant were escorted to the edge of the plantation by her restored knight; and I accepted the general's invitation to breakfast, instead of drowning myself in the next pond.

The general was lodged in the first floor of a fisherman's dwelling, which, in more polished parts of the land, would have been pronounced a hovel; but in Brighton, as it then was, bore the

name of a house. We entered it through an apartment filled with matters of the fisherman's trade,—nets, barrels, and grapnels; and in a corner a musket or two, which had evidently seen service, though probably *not* in his Majesty's pay. The walls were covered with engravings of British sea-fights and favourite admirals, from the days of Elizabeth; patriotic in the highest degree, and most intolerable specimens of the arts; the floor, too, had its covering, but it was of nearly a dozen children of all sizes, from the bluff companion of his father down to the crier in the cradle; yet all fine bold specimens of the brood of sea and fresh air, British bull-dogs, that were yet to pin down the game all round the world; or rather cubs of the British lion, whose roar was to be the future terror of the foreigner.

The general welcomed us to his little domicile with as much grace as if he had been ushering us into the throne-room of the Tuileries. I afterwards understood that he had been governor of the "Invalides;" and the change from the stately halls of that military palace must have severely taxed the philosophy of any man; yet it had no appearance of having even ruffled the temperament of the gallant veteran. He smiled, talked, and did the honours of his apartment with as much urbanity as if he had been surrounded by all the glittering furniture, and all the liveried attendance, of his governorship. I have always delighted in an old Frenchman, especially if he has served. Experience has made me a cosmopolite, and yet to this hour a young Frenchman is my instinctive aversion. He is born in coxcombry, cradled

in coxcombry, and educated in coxcombry. It is only after his coxcombry is rubbed off by the changes and chances of the world, that the really valuable material of the national character is to be seen. He always reminds me of the mother-of-pearl shell, rude and unpromising on the outside, but by friction exhibiting a fine interior. However it may be thought a paradox to pronounce the Frenchman unpolished, I hold to my assertion. If the whole of "jeune France" sprang on their feet and clapped their hands to the hilts of their swords, or more probably to their daggers, to avenge the desecration of the only shrine at which nine-tenths of them worship, I should still pronounce the Frenchman the most unpolished of Europeans. What is his look of conscious superiority to all that exist besides in this round world? The toss of his nostril, the glare of his eye, the contempt of his gathered lip? Give me the homeliest manners of the homeliest corner of Europe—nay, give me the honest rudeness of the American savage, in preference to this arrogant assumption of an empty superiority. Why, the very tone in which every Frenchman, from fifteen to five-and-forty, utters the words "la France," is enough to raise the laugh, or make the blood boil, of all mankind.

Nearly twenty years after this, I happened to be sitting one day with Gentz, the most memorable practical philosopher of his age and country. Germany was then in the most deplorable depression, overrun with French armies; and with Napoleon at Erfurth, in the pride of that "bad eminence" on which he stood in such Titanic grandeur, and from which he was so soon to be

flung with such Titanic ruin. Our conversation naturally turned on the melancholy state of things.

"I think," said the great politician, "that this supremacy must fall. I might not think so if any other nation were the masters of Europe; but France, though often a conqueror, has never been a possessor. The insolence of the individual Frenchman has been the grand obstacle to the solidity of her empire."

To my remark, that her central position, her vast population, the undaunted bravery of her troops, and the military propensities of her people, fitted her to be the disturber of Europe.

"Yes," was the sage's answer; "but to be no more than the disturber. Her power is the whirlwind; for purposes which man may never be able fully to define, suffered, or sent forth, to sweep the Continent; perhaps, like the tempest, to punish, nay, perhaps in the end to purify; but the tempest is scarcely more transitory, or more different from the dew that invisibly descends and silently refreshes the land."

"But Napoleon," said I, "with an army of a million recruited from thirty millions, opposed to the worn-down force and exhausted treasures of the Continent! What an iron wedge driven in among their dilapidated combinations! What a mountain of granite, with the cloud and the thunder for its crown, domineering over the plain!"

"True—perfectly true," he replied, throwing back the long locks from a broad forehead which reminded me of a bust of

Plato. "True. Man may be as little able to decide on the means by which the power of France will fall, as on the purposes for which that tremendous fabric of splendid iniquity first rose. But, look into that street."

It happened that a French regiment of cuirassiers, with the fine clangour of its drums and trumpets, was passing under the window at the moment.

"You see there," said he, "the kind of feeling which that really striking show produces; not a window is open but our own. The blinds of every window have been let down, not an eye looks at these troops. Yet the public of Vienna are extravagantly fond of display in all its shapes; and punchinello, or a dance of dogs, would bring a head to every pane of glass, from the roof to the ground. The French are individually shrunk from, hated, abhorred.

"Naturally enough, as conquerors," I observed; chiefly from a desire to hear more of the sentiments of the celebrated German.

"No—no!" said he, almost in a tone of vexation. "The Germans are as much alive to the merits of their enemies in the field, as any other nation in the world. They acknowledge the soldiership of the French. I even believe that the talents of their extraordinary emperor are more sincerely acknowledged in Vienna than in Paris. But it is the intolerable insolence of the national character, that makes its bravery, its gaiety, and even its genius detested. Trust me; this feeling will not be unfruitful. Out of the hut of the peasant will come the avengers, whom the

cabinet has never been able to find in the camp. Out of the swamp and the thicket will rise the tree that will at once overshadow the fallen fortunes of Germany, and bring down the lightning on her aggressors. In this hope alone I live."

I once more asked him, "From what quarter is the restoration to come?"

"I know not—I care not—I ask not," said he, starting from his chair, and traversing the room with huge strides. "The topic feels to me as if a sword was now griding its way through my frame. But France will never keep Austria, nor Prussia, nor the Rhenish Provinces, nor Holland, nor any spot on earth beyond the land inhabited by Frenchmen. It is true," said he, with a stern smile, "that she may keep her West India islands, if your ships will let her. The negroes are her natural subjects. They have backs accustomed to the lash, and black cheeks that will not redden at her insolence."

"Are the German sovereigns of your opinion?"

"To a man. It is but this morning that I was honoured with a reception by our good emperor. His conviction was complete. But you will not see Austria stir a single step, until war is the outcry, not of her court, but of her people. The trumpet that leads the march will be blown not from the parade of Vienna or Berlin, but from the village, the pasture, the forest, and the mountain. The army will be the peasant, the weaver, the trader, the student, the whole of the pacific multitude of life turned into the materials of war; the ten thousand rills that silently water the

plain of society suddenly united into one inundation; the eyes of every man looking only for the enemy; the feet of every man pursuing him; the hands of every man slaying him. The insolence of the Frenchman has contrived to convey a sting of the bitterness of conquest into every heart of our millions, and our millions will return it with resistless retribution."

"You have cheered and convinced me," said I, as I rose to take my leave. "It certainly is rather strange, that France, always mad with the love of seizure, has been able to acquire nothing during the last hundred years."

"You will find my theory true," said Gentz. "The individual insolence of her people has been the real impediment to the increase of her dominions. She is not the only ambitious power on the face of the earth. Russia has doubled her empire within those hundred years, yet she has kept possession of every league. Prussia has doubled her territory within the same time, yet she has added the new solidly to the old. I am not an advocate for the principle or the means by which those conquests have been accomplished; but they have been retained. Austria has been for the same time nearly mistress of Italy, and though the French arms have partially shaken her authority, it was never shaken by popular revolt. And why is all this contradistinction to the flighty conquest and ephemeral possession of France? The obvious reason is, that however the governments might be disliked, neither the Austrian soldier, nor the Prussian, nor even the Russian, made himself abhorred, employed his study in vexing

the feelings of the people, had a perpetual sneer on his visage, or exhibited in his habits a perpetual affectation of that coxcomb superiority to all other human beings, that pert supremacy, that grotesque and yet irritating caricature, which makes the *Moi, je suis Français*, a demand for universal adoration, the concentrated essence of absurdity, the poison-drop of scorn.

"When will this great consummation arrive?"

"When the tyranny can be endured no longer; when the people find that they must depend upon themselves for its redress; when a just Providence finds the vindication of its laws required by the necessities of man."

"From what quarter will the grand effort first come?"

"From the nation most aggrieved."

"What will be its result?"

To this moment I remember the sudden light which flashed into his cold grey eye, the gasping lip, and the elevation which even his stooped form assumed; as he answered with a tone and gesture which might have been imagined for one of the prophets of the Sistine Chapel—

"The result," said he, "will be the fall of the French empire, for it is a house built on the sand;—the extinction of Napoleon, for it is his creation, and the one cannot survive the other;—the liberation of Europe, for its united strength can be chained no longer;—perhaps the liberty of man, for the next step for nations which have crushed foreign dominion is to extinguish domestic despotism. Europe once free, what is to come? A new era, a

new shape of society, a new discovery of the mighty faculties of nations, of the wonders of mind, of matter, and of man; a vast shaking of the earth and its institutions; and out of this chaos, a new moral creation, *fiat lux et fugient tenebræ*."

The prediction has been partly realized. Much is yet to be fulfilled. But, like Gentz, I live in hope, and think that I see an approach to the consummation.

But the party to whom I was now introduced were of a different order from the generality of their country. Originally of the first education and first society of France, the strictness of the military service had produced on the the most valuable effect of years. The natural vividness of their temperament was smoothed down, their experience of English kindness had diminished their prejudices; and adversity—and no men bear the frowns of fortune better than their nation—gave them almost the manly calmness of the English gentleman. I found the old general all courtesy, and his friends all good-humour. My conduct in the affair of the morning was after their own hearts; I had, by common consent, earned their good graces; and they gave me on the spot half a dozen invitations to the regiments and chateaus of themselves and their friends, with as much hospitable sincerity as if they had only to recross the Channel to take possession of them again. Lafontaine was still moody, but he was in love; and, by this fact, unlike every body else, and unlike himself, from one half hour to another.

The conversation soon turned on a topic, on which the

emigrants every where were peculiarly anxious to be set right with English feeling, namely, their acquittance from the charge of having fled unnecessarily.

"Men of honour," observed the general, "understand each other in all countries. I therefore always think it due, to both Englishmen and Frenchmen, to explain, that we are not here in the light of fugitives; that we have not given up the cause of our country; and that we are on English ground in express obedience to the commands of our sovereign. I am at this moment, in this spot, on the king's duty, waiting, like my gallant friends here, merely the order to join the first expedition which can be formed for the release of our monarch, and the rescue of France from the horde of villains who have filled it with rebellion." All fully accorded with the sentiment. "The captivity of the king," said he, "is the result of errors which none could have anticipated ten days since. The plan decided on by the council of officers, of which I was one, was the formation of a camp on the frontier, to which his majesty and the princes should repair, summon the chief authorities of the kingdom, and there provide for the general safety with a deliberation which was impossible in Paris. I was sent off at midnight to take the command of the District of the Loire. I found myself there at the head of ten regiments, in the highest order, and, as I thought, of the highest loyalty. I addressed them and was received with shouts of *Vive le Roi*! I gave an addition of pay to the troops, and a banquet to the officers. A note was handed to me, as I took my seats at the head

of the table. It simply contained the words, 'You are betrayed.' I read it aloud in contempt, and was again answered by shouts of *Vive le Roi*! While we were in the midst of our conviviality, a volley was fired in at the windows, and the streets of Nantz were in uproar—the whole garrison had mutinied. The officers were still loyal: but what was to be done? We rushed out with drawn swords. On our first appearance in the porch of the hotel, a platoon posted in front, evidently for our massacre, levelled by word of command, and fired deliberately into the midst of us. Several were killed on the spot, and many wounded. Some rushed forward, and some retreated into the house. I was among those who forced their way through the crowd, and before I had struggled to the end of the long street, the cry of 'fire' made me look round—the hotel was in a blaze. The rabble had set it on flame. It was this, probably that saved me, by distracting their attention. I made my way to the chateau of the Count de Travancour, whose son had been on my staff at the Invalides. But the family were in Paris, and the only inhabitants were servants. I had received a musket-ball in my arm, and was faint with loss of blood. Still, I was determined to remain at my post, and not quit my district as long as any thing could be done. But I had scarcely thrown myself, in weariness and vexation, on a sofa, when a servant rushed into the room with the intelligence, that a band of men with torches were approaching the chateau. To defend it with a garrison of screaming women was hopeless; and while I stood considering what to do next, we heard the crash

of the gates. The whole circle instantly fell on their knees before me, and implored that I should save their lives and my own, by making my escape. A courageous Breton girl undertook to be my guide to the stables, and we set out under a shower of prayers for our safety. But, as we wound our way along the last corridor, I saw the crowd of soldiers and populace rushing up the staircase at the opposite side of the court, and calling out my name joined to a hundred atrocious epithets. My situation now obviously became difficult; for our advance would be met at the next minute by the assassins. The girl's presence of mind saved me; she flew back to the end of the gallery, threw open a small door which led to the roof; and I was in the open air, with the stars bright above me, and a prodigious extent of the country, including Nantz, beneath.

"Yet you may believe that the landscape was not among my principal contemplations at the moment, though my eyes involuntarily turned on the town; where, from the blazes springing up in various quarters, I concluded that a general pillage had begun. That pillage was the order of the day much nearer to me, I could fully conceive, from the opening and shutting of doors, and the general tumult immediately under the leads where I stood. "Situation, gentlemen," said the old general, smiling, "is something, but circumstances are necessary to make it valuable. There never was a finer night for an investigation of the stars, if I had been an astronomer; and I dare say that the spot which formed my position would have been capital for an observatory; but the torches which danced up and down through

the old and very dingy casements of the mansion, were a matter of much more curious remark to me than if I had discovered a new constellation.

"At length I was chased even out of this spot—my door had been found out. I have too much gallantry left to suppose that my Breton had betrayed me; though a dagger at her heart and a purse in her hand might be powerful arguments against saving the life of an old soldier who had reached his grand climacteric. At all events, as I saw torch after torch rising along the roofs, I moved into the darkness.

"I had here a new adventure. I saw a feeble light gleaming through the roof. An incautious step brought me upon a skylight, and I went through; my fall, however, being deadened by bursting my way through the canopy of a bed. I had fallen into the hospital of the chateau. A old Beguine was reading her breviary in an adjoining room. She rushed in with a scream. But those women are so much accustomed to casualties that I had no sooner acquainted her with the reasons of my flight, than she offered to assist my escape. She had been for some days in attendance on a sick servant. She led me down to the entrance of a subterranean communication between the mansion and the river, one of the old works which had probably been of serious service in the days when every chateau in the West was a fortress. The boat which had brought her from the convent was at the mouth of the subterranean; there, the Loire was open. If you ask, why I did not prefer throwing myself before the pursuers, and dying like a

soldier, my reason was, that I should have been numbered merely among those who had fallen obscurely in the various skirmishes of the country; and besides, that if I escaped, I should have one chance more of preserving the province.

"But, at the moment when I thought myself most secure, I was in reality in the greatest peril. The Loire had long since broken into the work, which had probably never seen a mason since the wars of the League. I had made no calculation for this, and I had descended but a few steps, when I found my feet in water. I went on, however, till it reached my sword-belt. I then thought it time to pause; but just then, I heard a shout at the top of the passage—on the other hand I felt that the tide was rushing in, and to stay where I was would be impossible. The perplexity of that quarter of an hour would satisfy me for my whole life. I pretend to no philosophy, and have never desired to die before my time. But it was absolutely not so much the dread of finishing my career, as of the manner in which it must be finished there, which made the desperate anxiety of a struggle which I would not undergo again for the throne of the Mogul. Still, even with the roar of the water on one side, and of the rabble on the other, I had some presentiment that I should yet live to hang some of my pursuers. At all events I determined not to give my body to be torn to pieces by savages, and my name to be branded as a runaway and a poltron."

A strong suffusion overspread the veteran's face as he pronounced the words; he was evidently overcome by the

possibility of the stigma.

"I have never spoken of this night before," said he, "and I allude to it even now, merely to tell this English gentleman and his friends how groundless would be the conception that the soldiers and nobles of an unfortunate country made their escape, before they had both suffered and done a good deal. My condition was probably not more trying than that of thousands less accustomed to meet difficulties than the officers of France: and I can assure him, that no country is more capable of a bold endurance of evils, or a chivalric attachment to a cause."

I gave my full belief to a proposition in which I had already full faith, and of which the brave and intelligent old man before me was so stately an example.

"But I must not detain you," said he, "any longer with an adventure which had not the common merit of a Boulevard spectacle; for it ended in neither the blowing up of a castle, nor, as you may perceive, the fall of the principal performer. As the tide rushed up through the works, I, of course receded, until at length I was caught sight of by the rabble. They poured down, and were now within a hundred yards of me, while I could not move. At that moment a strong light flashed along the cavern from the river, and I discovered for the first time that it too was not above a hundred yards from me. I had been a good swimmer in early life: I plunged in, soon reached the stream, and found that the light came from one of the boats that fish the Loire at night, and which had accidentally moored in front of my den. I got on

board; the fisherman carried me to the other side; I made my way across the country, reached one of my garrisons, found the troops, fortunately, indignant at the treatment which the king's colours had received; marched at the head of two thousand men by daybreak, and by noon was in the Grande Place of Nantz; proceeded to try a dozen of the ringleaders of the riot, who had not been merely rebels, but robbers and murderers; and amid the acclamations of the honest citizens, gave them over to the fate which villains in every country deserve, and which is the only remedy for rebellion in any. But my example was not followed; its style did not please the ministers whom our king had been compelled to choose by the voice of the Palais Royal; and as his majesty would not consent to bring me to the scaffold for doing my duty, he compromised the matter, by an order to travel for a year, and a passport for England."

"Toutes les belles dames sont, plus ou moins, coquettes," says that gayest of all old gentlemen, the Prince de Ligne, who loved every body, amused every body, and laughed at every body. It is not for me to dispute the authority of one who contrived to charm, at once, the imperial severity of Maria Theresa and the imperial pride of Catharine; to baffle the keen investigation of the keenest of mankind, the eccentric Kaunitz; and rival the profusion of the most magnifique and oriental of all prime ministers, Potemkin.

Mariamne was a "belle dame," and a remarkably pretty one. She was therefore intitled to all the privileges of prettiness; and, it

must be acknowledged, that she enjoyed them to a very animated extent. In the curious memoirs of French private life, from *Plessis Les Tours* down to St Evremond and Marmontel—and certainly—more amusing and dexterous dissections of human nature, at least as it is in France, never existed—our cooler countrymen often wonder at the strange attachments, subsisting for half a century between the old, who were nothing but simple fireside friends after all; and even between the old and the young. The story of Ninon and her Abbé—the unfortunate relationship, and the unfortunate catastrophe excepted—was the story of hundreds or thousands in every city of France fifty years ago. It arises from the vividness of the national mind, the quick susceptibility to being pleased, and the natural return which the heart makes in gratitude. If it sometimes led to error—it was the more to be regretted. But I do not touch on such views.

As the Jew's daughter had been rendered by her late adventure all but the affianced bride of Lafontaine, she immediately assumed all the rights of a bride, treated her slave as slaves are treated every where, received his friends at her villa with animation, and opened her heart to them all, from the old general downwards, even to me. I never had seen a creature so joyous, with all her soul so speaking on her lips, and all her happiness so sparkling in her eyes. She was the most restless, too, of human beings; but it was the restlessness of a glow of enjoyment, of a bird in the first sunshine, of a butterfly in the first glitter of its wings. She was now continually forming some party, some

ingenious surprise of pleasure, some little sportive excursion, some half theatric scene, to keep all our hearts and eyes as much alive as her own. Lafontaine obviously did not like all this; and some keen encounters of their wits took place, on the pleasure which, as he averred, "she took in all society but his own."

"If the charge be true," said she one day, "why am I in fault? It is so natural to try to be happy."

"But, to be happy without me, Mariamne."

"Ah, what an impossibility!" laughed the little foreigner.

"But, to receive the attentions even of the general, old enough to have married your grandmother."

"Well, does it not show his taste, even in your own opinion, to follow your example, and admire what you tell me *you* worship?"

"You are changed; you are a *girouette*, Mariamne."

"Well, nothing in the world is so melancholy as one who lets all the world pass by it, without a thought, a feeling, or a wish. One might as well be one of the pictures in the Louvre, pretty and charming, and gazed at by all the passers-by, without a glance for any of them, in return. I have no kind of envy for being a mummy, covered with cloth of gold, and standing in a niche of cedar, yet with all its sensations vanished some thousand years ago."

"Was this the language you held to me when first we met, Mariamne?"

"Was this the language *you* held to me, when first we met, Charles? But I shall lose my spirits if I talk to you. What a sweet

evening! What a delicious breeze! *Bon soir*!" And forth she went, tripping it among the beds of flowers like a sylph, followed by Lafontaine, moody and miserable, yet unable to resist the spell. Of those scenes I saw a hundred, regularly ending in the same conclusion; the lady always, as ladies ought, gaining the day, and the gentleman vexed, yet vanquished. But evil days were at hand; many a trial more severe than the pretty arguments of lovers awaited them; and Lafontaine was to prove himself a hero in more senses than one, before they met again.

It happened, that I was somewhat a favourite with Mariamne. Yet I was the only one of whom Lafontaine never exhibited a suspicion. His nature was chivalrous, the rencounter between us he regarded as in the strongest degree a pledge of brotherhood; and he allowed me to bask in the full sunshine of his fair one's smiles, without a thought of my intercepting one of their beams. In fact, he almost formally gave his wild bird into my charge. Accordingly, whenever he was called to London, which was not unfrequently the case, as the business of the emigrants with Government grew more serious, I was her chosen companion; and as she delighted in galloping over the hills and vales of Sussex, I was honoured by being her chief equerry; she repaying the service by acting as my cicerone.

"Come," said she one day, at the end of an excursion, or rather a race of some miles along the shore, which put our blood-horses in a foam, "have you ever seen Les Interieurs?"

"No."

"I saw you," she remarked, "admiring the Duchesse de Saint Alainville at our little ball the other night."

"It was impossible to refuse admiration. She is the noblest looking woman I ever saw."

"*One* of the noblest, sir, if you please. But, as I disdain the superb in every thing"——She fixed her bright eyes on me.

"The fascinating is certainly much superior." A slight blush touched her cheek, she bowed, and all was good-humour again.

"Well, then," said she, "since you *have* shown yourself rational at last, I shall present you to this superb beauty in her own palace. You shall see your idol in her morning costume, her French reality."

She touched the pane of a window with her whip, and a bowing domestic appeared. "Is her Grace at home?" was the question. "Her Grace receives to-day," was the answer. My companion looked surprised, but there was no retreating. We alighted from our horses to attend the "reception."

The cottage was simply a cottage, roofed with thatch; and furnished in the homeliest style of the peasants to whom it had belonged. We went up stairs. A few objects of higher taste were to be seen in the apartment to which we were now ushered—a pendule, a piano, and one or two portraits superbly framed, and with ducal coronets above them. But, to my great embarrassment, the room was full, and full of the first names of France. Yet the whole assemblage were female, and the glance which the Duchess cast from her fauteuil, as I followed my rather startled

guide into the room, showed me that I had committed some terrible solecism, in intruding on the party. On what mysteries had I ventured, and what was to be the punishment of my temerity in the very shrine of the Bona Dea? My pretty guide, on finding herself with all those dark eyes fixed on her, and all those stately features looking something between sorrow and surprise, faltered, and grew alternately red and pale. We were both on the point of retiring; when the Duchess, after a brief consultation with some of the surrounding matronage, made a sign to Mariamne to approach. Her hospitality to all the emigrant families had undoubtedly given her a claim on their attentions. The result was a most gracious smile from Madame la Presidente, and I took my seat in silence and submission.

"Is France a country of female beauty?" is a question which I have often heard, and which I have always answered by a recollection of this scene. I never saw so many handsome women together, before or since. All were not Venuses, it is true; but there was an expression, almost a mould of feature, universal, which struck the eye more than beauty. It was impossible to doubt that I was among a high *caste*; there was a general look of nobleness, a lofty yet feminine grace of countenance, a stately sweetness, which are involuntarily connected with high birth, high manners, and high history.

There were some whose fine regularity of feature might have served as the model for a Greek sculptor. Yet those were not the faces on which the eye rested with the long and deep delight that

"drinks in beauty." I saw some worthy or the sublime spell of Vandyke, more with the magnificence of style which Reynolds loved, and still more with the subdued dignity and touching elegance of which Lawrence was so charming a master.

On my return to French society in after years, I was absolutely astonished at the change which seemed to me to have taken place in the beauty of high life. I shall not hazard my reputation for gallantry, by tracing the contrast more closely. But evil times had singularly acted upon the physiognomy even of the nobles. The age of the *roturier* had been the climacteric of France. Generals from the ranks, countesses from the canaille, legislators from the dregs of the populace, and proprietors from the mingled stock of the parasite and the plunderer, naturally gave the countenance, formed by their habits, to the nation formed by their example.

Still there were, and are, examples of this original beauty to be found among the *élite* of the noble families; but they are rare, and to be looked on as one looks on a statue of Praxiteles found in the darkness and wrecks of Herculaneum. In the words of the old song, slightly changed—

> "I roam'd through France's sanguine sand,
> At beauty's altar to adore,
> But there the sword had spoil'd the land,
> And Beauty's daughters were no more."

ENGLISH MUSIC AND ENGLISH MUSICIANS

Musical taste, as we observed in a former article, has undergone fewer mutations in England, than in most other countries where the art has been cultivated and esteemed. In order, therefore, to acquire an accurate knowledge of the state of musical taste and science which now prevails among us, it will be necessary to take a brief retrospect; and as much of the music still popular was composed during the earliest period of the art in England, we shall rapidly trace its history from the times of those early masters, whose names are still held in remembrance and repute, down to the present century.

When England threw off the Papal yoke, music was little known beyond the services of the church. Though the secular music of this period was barbarous in the extreme, yet masses were universally sung, and music had long formed a necessary element in the due performance of the services of the Romish church. During the reign of Henry VIII. few alterations were made in public worship; and the service continued to be sung and carried on in the Latin language, as before. From Strype's account of the funeral of this monarch, it appears that all the old ceremonies were observed, and that the rupture with Rome had caused no alteration in the obsequies performed on such

occasions. In the reign of his successor, the church service was entirely changed, and the Protestant liturgy was first published for general use. Four years after this event, on the accession of Mary, the "old worship" was again restored. But when, at length, the reformed religion was firmly established by Elizabeth, and the ritual permanently changed, the music of the old masses, suited to the genius and structure of the Romish service, was no longer available for the simpler forms of worship by which it was replaced. During the holiest and most solemn portions of the ancient worship, the organ had for centuries been heard in the cathedrals, while the choruses of praise and adoration resounded through the aisles. Men's opinions may undergo a change, but the feelings and ideas created by early association, and fostered by habit, are far more lasting and enduring. The poet must have lamented the loss of the music, which, in the stern ascetic spirit of Puritanism prevailing at a later period of our history, he assisted to banish from our churches, as he sang—

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars, massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light,
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high, and anthem clear,

As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."

At the period of which we speak, the want of music in the services of the church seems to have been severely felt, though perhaps the simpler forms of the new ritual were comparatively but little adapted for musical display. Great exertions were made throughout the kingdom by the deans and chapters to restore the efficiency of the choirs; and Elizabeth, in the exercise of what then appeared an undoubted prerogative of the crown, issued her warrant for the impressment of singing men and boys for the castle of Windsor. The churches and cathedrals still, indeed, retained their organs; "the choirs and places where they sing" were still in being; all the *matériel* was at hand; but, with the exception of the production of John Marbeck, called "The Book of Common Prayer Noted," which was printed in 1550, there was as yet no music for the new services in the English language. Two years after the accession of Elizabeth, and one year after the bill for the uniformity of common prayer had passed the legislature, a choral work, "very necessarie for the church of Christ to be frequented and used," was published, among the authors of which the name of Tallis appeared. The musical necessities of the newly established church appear to have stimulated or developed talents which, under other circumstances, might perhaps have been less prominently brought forward: at all events, the demand

for this music would seem a principal reason why the early English masters should have devoted themselves so exclusively to sacred composition. Tallis and his pupil Byrd, both men of original genius, produced many compositions for the newly introduced ritual, which, by their intrinsic merit and comparative superiority, aided also by a constant demand for new music of the same character, gave a permanent direction to the exercise of musical talent; and the services of Tallis and Byrd became the classic objects of emulation and imitation, and sacred music became, in a peculiar manner, the national music of England. The compositions of these "fathers of our genuine and national sacred music," are still preserved, the latter of whom, Byrd, died in 1623, at the age of probably near eighty years.

The year 1588 forms an epoch in our musical history. An Italian merchant, who, by his mercantile connection with the Mediterranean, had opportunities of obtaining the newest and best compositions of his native country, had, for some years, been in the frequent habit of procuring the best singers of the day, to perform them, privately, at his house in London. This gentleman had at length the spirit and enterprise to publish a volume of Italian madrigals, entituled, "Musica Transalpina, Madrigales translated of four, five, and six parts, chosen out of divers excellent authors; with the first and second parts of La Virginella, made by Maister Byrd, upon two stanzas of Ariosto, and brought to speak English with the rest." These pieces seem to have given birth to that passion for

madrigals which was afterwards so prevalent, and thus became the models of contemporary musicians. The next composer of any note was Orlando Gibbons. He died at an early age, soon after the accession of Charles I., to whom he had been appointed organist. This master composed several madrigals, but, like his predecessors, he devoted himself principally to sacred composition. The secular productions of Tallis, Byrd, and Gibbons, together with those of contemporary composers of inferior note, are, for the most part, now forgotten; but the sacred music of these three masters still forms a part of every collection of church music. Canons and fugues were the favourite modes of that early period; vain substitutes for melody, rhythm, and correct accentuation, in which particulars music was then greatly deficient. The merits of the compositions of the Elizabethan age, vaunted by the lovers of antiquity as the golden age of English music, are thus summed up by Dr Burney: "It is, therefore, upon the church music, madrigals, and songs in parts, of our countrymen during the reign of Elizabeth, that we must rest their reputation; and these, in point of harmony and contrivance, the chief excellencies of such compositions, appear in nothing inferior to those of the best contemporary compositions of the Continent. Taste, rhythm, accent, and grace, must not be sought for in this kind of music; indeed, we might as well censure the ancient Greeks for not writing in English, as the composers of the sixteenth century for their deficiency in these particulars, which having then no existence, even in

idea, could not be wanted or expected; and it is necessarily the business of artists to cultivate or refine what is in the greatest esteem among the best judges of their own nation and times. And these, at this period, unanimously thought every species of musical composition below criticism except canons and fugues. Indeed, what is generally understood by taste in music, must ever be an abomination in the church; for, as it consists of new refinements or arrangements of notes, it would be construed into innovation, however meritorious, unless sanctioned by age. Thus the favourite points and passages in the madrigals of the sixteenth century, were in the seventeenth received as orthodox in the church; and those of the opera songs and cantatas of the seventeenth century, are used by the gravest and most pious ecclesiastical composers of the eighteenth." Of the skill of the performers, for whom this music, still listened to and admired, was written, he also observes, "that the art of singing, further than was necessary to keep a performer in tune, and time, must have been unknown;" and that "if £500 had been offered to any individual to perform a solo, fewer candidates would have entered the lists than if the like premium had been offered for flying from Salisbury steeple over Old Sarum without a balloon." For ourselves, we do not hesitate to acknowledge that, in our opinion, the services of these patriarchs of the English school surpass the great majority of similar productions by our later masters. They may, indeed, suffer when compared with the masses of the great continental masters; but they nevertheless

possess a certain degree of simple majesty, well suited to the primitive character of the ritual of that church which disdains the use of ornament, and on *principle* declines to avail herself of any appeal to the senses as an auxiliary to devotion. We have been the more particular in our notice of these early masters, because, long without any rivals, their church music even now stamps the public taste, and is still held in the highest esteem by many among whom their names alone suffice to hold the judgment captive.

It is needless to advert to Humphrey and other composers, some of whose productions are still in vogue; enough has been said to show with what reason the *absolute* correctness of English taste in sacred music, in which we suppose ourselves so peculiarly to excel, may be called in question.

We proceed to sketch the history of the other branches of the art in England, and commence at once with Henry Purcell, the greatest of our native masters, previously to whom music is said to have been manifestly on the decline during the seventeenth century. It has been often remarked of Purcell, that he had "devancé son siêcle." Many of his faults, defects, or crudities, may undoubtedly be attributed to the age which he adorned. The tide of public approbation has of late set strongly in his favour; and could the fulsome panegyrics, of which he has been the object, be implicitly received, Purcell would be considered as nothing less than a prodigy of genius. Several attempts at dramatic music had been made before Purcell's time. Matthew Lock had already set the songs of *Macbeth* and the *Tempest,*

and had also given to the world "The English Opera, or the vocal music in Psyche," in close imitation of Lulli, the long famed composer of Louis XIV. Purcell followed in the new track, taking for his models the productions of the first Italian composers. The fact, that Purcell was under obligations to the Italians, may startle many of his modern admirers; but with a candour worthy of himself, in the dedication of his *Dioclesian* to Charles Duke of Somerset, he says, that "music is yet but in its nonage, a forward child. 'Tis now learning Italian, which is its best master." And in the preface to his Sonatas, he tells us that he "faithfully endeavoured at a just imitation of the most famed Italian masters." An able critic has also remarked, that he thinks he can perceive the obligations which Purcell had to Carissimi in his recitative, and to Lulli both in recitative and melody; and also that it appears that he was fond of Stradella's *manner*, though he seems never to have pillaged his passages. Many of our readers are doubtless aware, that Purcell's opera of *King Arthur* has been lately revived at Drury-Lane, where it has had a considerable *run*. The public prints have been loud in its praise; and this work has been styled "the perfect model of the lyric drama of England." The intervention of spoken dialogue, by many in their innocence hitherto supposed to be a defect in the construction of a musical drama, is strangely metamorphosed into a beauty in *King Arthur*. In short, from some of these *critiques*, *King Arthur* would appear to be the only perfect drama or opera which the world has ever seen. To show the real value of these criticisms, we may mention

the fact, that in an elaborate article of a journal now before us, in which many of the pieces of this opera are enumerated and highly commended, the writer has curiously enough passed by in silence two airs, of which Dr Burney observes that they contain not a single passage which the best composers of his time, if it presented itself to their imagination, would reject; and on one of which he also remarks, that it is "one of the few airs that time has not the power to injure; it is of all ages and all countries." There is doubtless much in Purcell, which, though quaint and antiquated, the musician may nevertheless admire; but excellence of this kind is necessarily lost upon a general audience. Melody in his day was rude and unpolished; for there were no singers to execute, even if the composer had the ability to conceive. Thus Percell's melody, though often original and expressive, is nevertheless more often rude and ungraceful. In the words of a recent writer on this subject, "We are often surprised to find elegance and coarseness, symmetry and clumsiness, mixed in a way that would be unaccountable, did we not consider that, in all the arts, the taste is a faculty which is slowly formed, even in the most highly gifted minds." We suspect that the pageant saved *King Arthur*; the scenic illusions by which contending armies were brought upon an extended plain, together with the numerous transformations, continually commanded that applause which the music alone failed to elicit. With many, however, the mere *spectacle* was not all-sufficient; but Opinion was written down, and independently of the *prestige*

attached to the name of Purcell, the press would have effectually put down all exhibition of disapprobation. The theatre might be seen to become gradually deserted, and party after party, stunned by the noise and blinded by the glare, might be observed to glide noiselessly away as the performance proceeded, while an air of fatigued endurance, and disappointment, was plainly visible on the countenances of those that remained behind. This opera has been frequently revived; how much of the success which it has met with may be attributed to what Rousseau, when speaking of the operas of that period, terms "a false air of magnificence, fairyism, and enchantment, which, like flowers in a field before the harvest, betokens an *apparent* richness," may be matter of speculation; but it is recorded that even on its *first* introduction on the stage, it caused a heavy loss to the patentees, in consequence of which their affairs were thrown into Chancery, where they remained some twenty years. Even Purcell's fame is confined to our own shores, and we are not aware that his music was ever known upon the Continent.

Arne, who established his reputation as a lyric composer by the music of *Comus* in 1738, is the next composer whom we think it necessary to mention. To this master belongs the singular glory of having composed an English opera—a term by which, as will be seen hereafter, we mean a musical drama in which the whole of the plot is carried on without the intervention of spoken dialogue. *Artaxerxes*, the only work of the kind which we possess, was first produced in the year 1762. Though the

music is of a form now obsolete, this opera has seldom been long a stranger to our stage, having been from time to time revived for the debut of new and ambitious singers. One of these revivals has recently taken place; the piece, however, was performed for a few nights only, and perhaps popularity may be, at length, deserting *Artaxerxes*. This "standard work of the English school" appears to be of more than doubtful parentage. Arne is stated to have crowded the airs, those of Mandane in particular, with all the Italian divisions and difficulties of the day, and to have incorporated with his own property all the best passages of the Italian and English composers of his time. With the exception of *Comus* and *Artaxerxes*, none of his pieces or operas met with great success; and he seems to be principally remembered by those compositions which were the least original. "Rule Britannia," by the combined effect of the sentiment of the words and the spirit and vivacity of the music, now become a national song, does not possess the merit of originality. Long before it was *nationalized*—if one may use such a word—by Englishmen, it was observed that in an Italian song, which may be seen at page 25 of Walsh's collection, the idea—nay, almost all the passages—of this melody might be found. In the well-known song, "Where the bee sucks, there lurk I," passages occur taken almost note for note from a *cantabile* by Lampugnani. According to Dr Burney, Arne may also claim the glory of having, by his compositions and instructions, formed an era in the musical history of his country. The former relates that music, which

had previously stood still for near half a century, was greatly improved by Arne in his endeavours "to refine our melody and singing from the Italian;" and that English "taste and judgment, both in composition and performance, even at the playhouses, differed as much from those of twenty or thirty years ago, as the manners of a civilized people from those of savages." Dr Busby, on the other hand, remarks, that "it is a curious fact that the very father of a style, more natural and unaffected, more truly English, than that of any other master, should have been the first to deviate into foreign finery and finesse, and desert the native simplicity of his country." But it is by the compositions in which this degeneracy may be most particularly remarked, that Arne's name as a musician has been preserved. This fact has undoubtedly a double aspect. We may therefore, indeed, be permitted to ask,

"Who shall decide when *doctors* disagree?"

Either the public taste has erred, or the bastard Italian was superior to the genuine English. Either way there is something wrong, and it matters little whether we elevate the composer at the expense of the public, or whether we commend the national taste while we depreciate and decry the excellence of the music or the merit of the musician.

To Arne succeed several masters, many of whose compositions are still popular. Arnold, Boyce, Battishall, Shield, Horsley, Webbe, and Calcott, are the leading names of a numerous class who are chiefly remembered for their anthems

and glees, amongst which may be found the *chefs-d'œuvres* of a school of which we shall more particularly speak hereafter. The dramatic compositions of these masters are, for the most part, consigned to oblivion; nor has any permanent impression been made upon the public, by a native opera, for many years. While our national school has been thus barren, the Italian opera has been long cultivated and esteemed. The first opera, performed wholly in Italian, was given at the Haymarket theatre in 1710. Handel began to write for this theatre in 1712, and continued to produce operas for many years. The Italian opera appears to have been in the most flourishing state about the years 1735 and 1736. London then possessed two lyric theatres, each managed by foreign composers, carrying on a bitter rivalry, and each backed by all the vocal and instrumental talent that could be found in Europe. Porpora, by Rousseau styled the immortal, at the Haymarket, and Handel at Covent-Garden—the former boasting the celebrated Farinelli and Cuzzoni among his performers, the latter supported by Caustini and Gizziello. The public, however, appears to have been surfeited by such prodigality; for Dr Burney observes, "at this time"—about 1737—"the rage for operas seems to have been very much diminished in our country; the fact was, that public curiosity being satisfied as to new compositions and singers, the English returned to their homely food, the *Begger's Opera* and ballad farces on the same plan, with eagerness and comfort." In 1741, Handel, after producing thirty-nine Italian lyric dramas, and after struggling against adversity,

with a reduced establishment in a smaller theatre, was compelled by ruin to retire for ever from the direction of the Italian stage. The opera then passed into other hands, and was continued, with various success and few intermissions, down to the present time. It has been the means of introducing to our countrymen the works of an almost innumerable host of foreign composers. Bach, the first composer who observed the laws of contrast as a principle, Pergolisi, Gluck, Piccini, Paesiello, Cimarosa, Mozart, Rossini, and Bellini, are the principal names, among a long list of masters, of whom we might otherwise have remained in utter ignorance. Performers of every kind, singers of the highest excellence, have come among us; the powers and performances of Farinelli, Caffarelli, Pachierotti, Gabrielli, Mara, and others, are handed down by tradition, while all remember the great artists of still later times. These have been our preceptors in the art of song, and to them, and them alone, are we indebted for our knowledge of the singer's, powers; and but for their guidance and instruction, our native home-taught professors would have been centuries instead of years behind. It may, however, be some consolation to reflect, that we have not been alone in our pupilage; for Italy, herself the pupil of ancient Greece, has in her turn become the preceptress of the modern world in music, as well as the other branches of the fine arts, in all of which her supremacy has been universally acknowledged. Besides the native musicians whose names we have enumerated, many *ephemeræ* of the genus have fluttered their short hour, and

been forgotten. On turning over the popular music of the early years of the present century, or the music which may, perhaps, have formed the delight and amusement of the last generation, the musician will marvel that such productions should have been ever tolerated. Native skill has undoubtedly advanced since this period; and however worthless much of our present music may be considered, it is nevertheless superior to most of the like productions of our immediate predecessors. We have some living composers whose works are not without some merit; but they can scarcely be placed even in the second class. Their compositions, when compared with the works of the great continental masters, are tame, spiritless, and insipid; we find in them no flashes of real genius, no harmonies that thrill the nerves, no melodies that ravish the sense, as they steal upon the ear. Effort is discernible throughout this music, the best of which is formed confessedly upon Italian models; and nowhere is the universal law, of the inferiority of all imitation, more apparent.

These observations apply with especial force to the *dramatic* music, or compositions of the English school. The term opera, is incorrectly used in England. The proper meaning of the word is, a musical drama, consisting of recitative airs and concerted pieces; without the intervention of spoken dialogue, it should consist of music, and music alone, from the beginning to the end. With us it has been popularly applied to what has been well characterized as "a jargon of alternate speech and song," outraging probability in a far higher degree than

the opera properly so called, and singularly destructive of that illusion or deception in which the pleasure derived from dramatic representations principally consists. Music is in itself no mean vehicle of expression; but, when connected with speech or language, it gives a vast additional force and power to the expression of the particular passion or feeling which the words themselves contain. It appears, as one listens to an opera, as if the music were but a portion, or a necessary component part of the language of the beings who move before us on the scene. We learn to deem it part of their very nature and constitution; and it appears, that, through any other than the combined medium of speech and song, the passions, we see exhibited in such intensity, could not be adequately expressed. The breaking up of this illusion by the intervention of mere dialogue, is absolutely painful; there is a sudden sinking from the ideal to the real, which shocks the sense, and at once destroys the fabric of the imagination. Rousseau says of the lyric drama, that "the melodies must be separated by speech, but speech must be modified by music; the ideas should vary, but the *language* should remain the same. This language once adopted, if changed in the course of a piece, would be like speaking half in French and half in German. There is too great a dissimilarity between conversation and music, to pass at once from one to the other; it shocks both the ear and probability. Two characters in dialogue ought either to speak or sing; they cannot do alternately one and the other. Now, recitative is the means of union between

melody and speech by whose aid, that which is merely dialogue becomes recital or narrative in the drama, and may be rendered without disturbing the course of melody." Recitative is peculiarly adapted to the expression of strong and violent emotion. The language of the passions is short, vivid, broken, and impetuous; the most abrupt transitions and modulations which are observed in nature, may be noted down in recitative. Writing recitative is but committing to paper the accent and intonation, in short, the *reading* of the language to be delivered by the performer; and the composer may almost be considered as a master of elocution, writing down that reading of a passage which he thinks may best express the passion or the sentiment of the words. The effect of this reading or intonation is often aided and increased by the sound of instruments, sometimes, expressing the harmonies of the passages or transitions noted for the voice, at other times, perhaps, performing a graceful independent melody or harmony, in which case it is said to be "accompanied:" It may be easily conceived, how powerful an instrument of dramatic effect, this species of composition may become in the hands of a skillful composer. We have already given two examples of its power, one, of recitative in its simplest form, the other, of accompanied recitative.[1] It would seem scarcely credible that so powerful an agent of the lyric drama should be utterly neglected, among a people who undoubtedly *claim* to be considered a musical nation, and whose composers certainly esteem themselves among

[1] No. cccxxvii, p. 137.

those to whom musical fame might be justly awarded. But such is nevertheless the fact, and we are not aware of any modern composer of the English school who has fully availed himself of its powers and capabilities. It has been said of *Artaxerxes*, that the attempt then made to apply recitative to the English language is unsuccessful; but it may be asked, whether the long continued popularity of this work may not, in *some* degree at least, be owing to the absence of the incongruous mixture of speech and song. However this may be, it is at least a singular coincidence, that the single opera of our language, in which dialogue does not break and interrupt the unity and consistent action of the drama, should be the only musical work which has been distinguished by such constant and enduring marks of popular favour and approbation. Another species of dramatic music, the *cantabile* of the Italians, is equally neglected among us. The *cantabile* includes much of the most exquisite music of the Italian masters, and we know of nothing more touchingly beautiful, throughout the whole range of musical composition, than many of the *andante cantabili* of this school. This, also, has been rarely attempted by the English masters, and their puny efforts will bear no comparison with the rich, graceful, flowing measure of the true Italian.

All music is, in a greater or less degree, essentially dramatic. Its beauty often depends, entirely, upon the fidelity and truth with which nature is followed. Even instrumental music aims at dramatic effect, and fanciful incidents, and catastrophes are often suggested by the melodies and harmonies of a symphony,

or concerto. These creations of the imagination are in themselves a source of interest and delight, wholly different, in their nature, from the pleasure conferred by mere sounds. How beautiful are the scenes, about to follow, depicted in the overtures to *Der Freyschutz* and *Oberon*; what wild *diableries* are not suggested by those wonderful compositions! There are sounds of awful mystery, proceeding, as it were, now, from the dread rites of dark malignant beings of another world, now, from the mad frolics of mischievous and reckless imps; in the midst of which a stream of beauteous, gentle melody—like a minister of grace—breaks forth; now, gliding smoothly along, now, rushing on impetuously, or, broken and interrupted in its course, as though the powers of good and evil were striving for the mastery; and at length, as if the former were victorious in the strife, that melody again bursts forth, loud and expanded in the bold exulting tones of triumph, with which the imaginary scene is closed.

Similar observations might be made of many other pieces of instrumental music; but these effects depend upon the imagination of the hearer, there being no words to convey definite ideas to the mind. In vocal music, where the words express no passion or emotion, the voice becomes little more than a mere instrument of the composer or the performer. Now, the national music of our country is for the most part adapted to words of this description, and the anthem, the madrigal, and glee, are thus necessarily deficient in dramatic power and expression. The glee has been described as "*quelque chose bien*

triste," and few but the fanatics of the school who have listened to a succession of glees, will, we think, deny the accuracy of the description. The oratorio is often highly dramatic; but we have few, if any, oratorios of merit, of native production. Our operas we have already designated as plays, with songs scattered about at random. Thus, music of the highest class is rarely attempted in this country; and the neglect of the one great requisite of musical excellence, *may* have prevented our composers from assuming that rank, to which they might otherwise have shown themselves entitled.

There is, however, another class of composers whom we must not omit to notice: we mean the song-writers of the day, the authors of those ballads and vocal compositions, with knights and ladies fair, houris, sentimental peasants, or highborn beauties, as the case may be, lithographed upon the title-page. This class is entitled to notice, not because of the merit or ability they possess, but because these masters (!) really produce the popular music of the day, and because at present we literally possess no other new music. The first object of the publisher of a song is, or used to be, to have it sung in public by some popular performer. This is not done without fee and reward; but the value of the subject of the publisher's speculation, is greatly increased by the publicity gained by the introduction of the song at the theatre or the concert-room. When this event takes place, *claqeurs* are active, the friends of the singer support them, the playbills announce "a hit," and a sly newspaper puff aids the delusion; copies of the

ornamented title-page are distributed among the various music-sellers, to be exhibited in their windows, and the song is popular, and "sells." Modest merit is unknown among us now. Thus songs and ballads without number, which would otherwise remain in well-merited obscurity on the shelves of the publisher, are forced into notice and repute. The trade, no doubt, benefits by this system, the commercial end of these speculations may indeed be answered, but the public taste is lowered by each and every of these transactions.

We may here notice the extravagant price of music of every description in England. For a piece of four or five pages, the sum of 2s. is commonly demanded. Even where there has been an outlay in the purchase of the copyright, this sum can scarcely be considered reasonable; but when the same price is asked for music which has become common property, it is out of all reason. The expense of engraving four or five pages of music, the cost of the plates, together with the expense of paper and printing a hundred copies of a song of this description, does not amount to £5; therefore the sale of fifty copies will reimburse the publisher; while, if the whole hundred are disposed of, he is an actual gainer of cent per cent upon his original outlay, while the profit upon every copy subsequently struck off is necessarily enormous. On the Continent, music may be purchased for about one-third the sum which it would cost in England. In Paris, Pacini's "partitions," an excellent edition of the popular Italian operas, are sold for twelve francs each. The whole set may

be purchased at the rate of eleven francs the opera. While in London, the identical copies purchasable abroad by those not in the trade for about 8s. 6d. of our money, are sold at two guineas each. The profits of "the trade" on musical instruments, are also enormous. On the pianofortes of most of the London makers, a profit of *at least* thirty or thirty-five per cent is realized by the retailer; and on a grand piano, for which the customer pays 130 guineas, "the trade" pockets on the very lowest calculation upwards of £40.

English performers next claim our notice and attention. In this new field of observation we find little to commend; defective training is the great cause of our inferiority in the practical performance of music, in all its branches. This is especially manifest in the home-taught singers of the English school. The voice is never perfectly formed nor developed, and brought out in the correct and scientific manner possessed by the accomplished artists of other countries. Some of the most popular of our singers sing with the mouth nearly closed, with others the voice is forced and strained, proceeding not from the chest, but from the throat, the muscles of which are necessarily contracted in the effort. We have, no doubt, many difficulties to overcome in the structure of our language, in which the accent is thrown on the consonants rather than on the vowels. Unlike the Italian, which is thrown out, *ore rotundo*, directly from the chest, the English language is spoken from the throat, and, in general, also with the mouth nearly closed. The Italian singer finds no

difficulty in bringing out his voice; but the Englishman has first to conquer the habit of his life, and to overcome the obstacles his native tongue opposes to his acquirement of this new but necessary, mode of using the voice. The difficulty, of laying this only foundation of real sterling excellence in the vocal art, is very great, and much care and study is indispensable. Those who have occasion to use the voice loudly in the open air, insensibly acquire the power of thus eliciting the voice. The chest tones in which many of the "Cries of London" are often heard in the streets of the metropolis, are a familiar example of nature's teaching; another instance of which may probably still be found among the "*bargees*," of Cambridge, whose voices, in our younger days, we well remember to have often heard and admired, as they guided or urged forward their sluggish horses along the banks of the still more sluggish Cam, in tones proceeding *imo profundo* of the chest, and magnificent enough to have made the fortune of many a singer. These men, indeed, seemed to pride themselves upon their vocal powers; and many of them could execute a rapid shake, with accuracy and precision. The voice is nature's instrument, but, like the instruments fashioned by the hand of man, it will not yield its best tones to the unskilful. There are many instrumental performers whose chief excellence lies in their tone, and who could call forth tones, from even an ordinary instrument, far superior to those which an inferior performer would be able to produce from the best Straduarius or Amati. To the singer, tone is even of greater value than

to the instrumental performers; for the method of instruction which improves the qualities of the vocal organ, also imparts a power and certainty of expression and execution, which cannot be otherwise acquired. The finest singers are ever found to be those, who have best studied and developed the powers of the instrument which nature had bestowed upon them. This is the first grand requisite for the singer; without it, respectable mediocrity may occasionally be attained, but real excellence never can be gained. We know of no English-taught singer who possesses it. So little are the voice and its capabilities understood in this country, that instances might be mentioned where basses were mistaken for barytones, barytones for tenors, and contraltos for sopranos. However incredible this may appear, it is, nevertheless, strictly and literally true. The consequence of such strange blunders is what might be naturally expected; the voice, forced out of its natural compass, prematurely gives way, and at a period of life when the vocal organ, if properly trained and developed, should have arrived at maturity and perfection, the singer's powers are gone, and, in the prime of life, he is compelled to abandon his profession, and subsides into the mere singing-master, to *mis*instruct the rising generation, and to mar the prospects of others who succeed him, as his own hopes were blighted by the errors of his own instructors. To what other cause can be attributed the constant and mysterious disappearance of new singers? How many young vocalists appear from time to time; lauded at first to the skies, for a few seasons listened to

and admired, but whose reputation gradually decays, and who at length disappear from the stage and are forgotten. There are some who endure for years; but they fulfil no promise of their early youth. Under these circumstances, we could ill afford to lose an artist who seemed destined to achieve a lasting reputation. Our musical stage has but now sustained a heavy loss in one of the brightest ornaments it ever possessed; the charms of a happy home have withdrawn her from public life—but the genius of Miss Adelaide Kemble will not be soon forgotten. Another bright ornament of our stage, however, still remains. Possessing less physical energy and tragic power than her contemporary, Mrs Alfred Shaw is, nevertheless, the most pure, polished, and cultivated English singer we ever heard on the boards of our national theatre. The finish and refinement of her style, and the clear distinctness of her enunciation, make her the worthy model for the imitation of all who are desirous to excel. Were our future *debutanti* trained on the system which has thus developed the powers and capabilities of these eminent artists, less frequently would be observed the musical disappearances of which we have been speaking.

The English tenor is a nondescript animal; singing from some unknown region, his voice possesses no natural character, but its tones are forced, strained, and artificial. Our tenors and counter-tenors—a sort of musical hermaphrodite, almost peculiar to this country, and scarcely recognized by classical composers—delight in what is called the "pure," or, "the good old English"

style. This style, coldly correct, tame, dull, flat, and passionless, requires but little in the singer. The bass of this school is a saltatory creature; he is, for the most part, either striding through thirds, or jumping over fifths and octaves, much as he did a hundred years ago. During this period, the art of singing has made immense advances elsewhere; the execution of Farinelli, in 1734, thought so wonderful, would not suffice for even a third-rate singer now; and the powers of B. Ferri, described by Rousseau, are scarcely more than would be expected of every singer of the Queen's Theatre. Rossini's music, replete with difficulties of execution, has compelled even the unwieldy bass to overcome his reluctance to rapid motion, and he is now obliged to condescend to runs, arpeggios, and other similar feats of agility. In an opera buffa at a Neapolitan theatre, called *Il Fondo*, we once heard Tamburini execute the well-known song "Ma non fia sempre odiata" in his falsetto, with a taste and expression scarcely surpassed by Rubini's performance of the air. On another occasion, at the same theatre, the prima donna was taken suddenly ill in the midst of a terzetto, in which Tamburini had the bass, and, while supporting her on the stage, this accomplished musician actually took the soprano in his falsetto, and performed the part of the indisposed lady in a manner which drew down universal applause. The English school, "still tardy," and "limping after" the Italian, is yet far behind. It has, undoubtedly, made some advances, but it is still the child, *following* indeed, but,

"Haud passibus æquis."

With us, the pupil commonly begins where he should end; songs are placed before him almost as soon as he has mastered the elements of music. At a time, when his whole study and endeavour should be to form and cultivate the voice, and by long, patient, and persevering exercise, to develop and command its powers, and to acquire flexibility and certainty of execution, his efforts are expended in learning—as it is called—songs. This process may be carried on *ad infinitum*; but none of the objects of the pupil's study can be ever *sung*, in the real acceptation of the term, on this method of instruction. The well-known anecdote of the early youth of one of the greatest singers the world has ever known, who, after the drudgery of a daily practice of exercises alone for seven years, was bidden by his master to go his way, the first singer in Europe, is an example of the advantages of the opposite system. The compass of an ordinary tenor is about two octaves, from C below the line, to C in alt. Within this compass, the tenor makes use of two voices; the chest or natural voice—which ranges over the whole of the lower octave and the lower half of the higher octave—and the head-voice or falsetto, which is commonly used throughout the whole of the remainder of the upper octave, the higher notes of which can be reached only in the falsetto. In passing from one 'voice' to the other, especially while descending the scale, a break or crack may be observed in the untutored and uncultivated voice. When this defect has been overcome, and the student

has acquired the power of passing from one 'voice' to the other without this break, the voice is said to be joined. The soprano also has to contend with a similar difficulty. It often requires many months of constant and unremitting practice to overcome this natural defect of the vocal organ, and in some voices it is never entirely conquered. An acute ear might often detect the faulty joining of the voice, in both the Grisis, when executing a distant descending interval. This obstacle meets the student at the very threshold of his career; but we have met with many English taught amateurs, who were altogether ignorant even of what was meant by joining the voice. In fact, the art of singing, or of acquiring a mastery and control over the voice, of remedying its defects, and developing its latent powers, is comparatively unknown in England; our professors are for the most part entirely ignorant of the capabilities of the human voice, as an *instrument*, in the hands of the performer. Many of these observations apply to our instrumental performers. With few exceptions, defective training has, in this branch of the musical art, long prevented us from producing performers of equal celebrity with those who have visited us from the Continent. From them we have become acquainted with effects, which we should have deemed the instruments on which they played wholly incapable of producing. Our young professors now often follow these men to their own country, there to learn of them that proficiency which they would seek in vain to acquire at home.

In the midst of all this ignorance, with our one opera, our

anthems, madrigals, glees, and ballads, we nevertheless esteem ourselves a musical people, and every one is ready to exclaim with Bottom, "I have a reasonable good ear in musick!" Music certainly is the fashion now, and no one would dare to avow that he had no music in his soul. It may be thought, that none but a people passionately devoted to music, could produce a succession of patriots ready to sacrifice health and wealth, rather than their countrymen should fail to possess an Italian opera. Some one is ever found equal to the emergency; there is seldom any lack of competitors for the "forlorn hope" of the management of the Italian opera, and, undismayed by the ruin of his predecessors, the highest bidder rushes boldly on to the direction of the Queen's theatre. Forty thousand pounds of debt has been known to have been incurred in a single season; and it has been calculated that a sum little short of a million sterling, besides the produce of the subscriptions and admissions, has been sacrificed to the desire of an Italian opera. Every autumn is rich in musical festivals, as they are called, by which, though the temples of God are desecrated, and the church, in common with the theatre and the concert-room, becomes the scene of gaiety, frivolity, and amusement; and though the speculation is a charitable one, by which it is *hoped*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.