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Содержание

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ON PUNISHMENT

How to punish crime, and in so doing reform the criminal; how to uphold the man as a terror to evil-doers, and yet at the same time be implanting in him the seeds of a future more happy and prosperous life—this is perhaps the most difficult problem of legislation. We are far from despairing of some approximation to a solution, which is the utmost that can be looked for; but we are also convinced that even this approximation will not be presented to us by those who seem willing to blind themselves to the difficulties they have to contend with. Without, therefore, assuming the air of opposition to the schemes of philanthropic legislators, we would correct, so far as lies in our power, some of those misconceptions and oversights which energetic reformers are liable to fall into, whilst zealously bent on viewing punishment in its reformatory aspect.

We have selected for our comments the pamphlets of

Captain Maconochie, not only because they illustrate the hasty and illogical reasonings, the utter forgetfulness of elementary principles, into which such reformers are apt to lapse; but also for the still better reason, that they contain a suggestion of real value; a contribution towards an efficient prison-discipline, which merits examination and an extensive trial. We have added to these pamphlets a brief work of Zschokke's, the venerable historian of Switzerland, on death-punishment, in order that we might extend our observations over this topic also. It is evident that the question of capital punishment, and the various questions relating to prison discipline, embrace all that is either very interesting or very important in the prevailing discussions on penal legislation. Transportation forms no essentially distinct class of punishment, as the transported convict differs from others in this only, that he has to endure his sentence of personal restraint and compulsory labour in a foreign climate.

Reformatory punishment! Alas, there is an incurable contradiction in the very terms! Punishment is pain, is deprivation, despondency, affliction. But, would you reform, you must apply kindness, and a measure of prosperity, and a greater measure still of hope. There is no genial influence in castigation. It may deter from the recommission of the identical offence it visits, but no conversion, no renewal of the heart, waits on its hostile presence; the disposition will remain the same, with the addition of those angry sentiments which pain endured is sure to generate. No philosopher or divine of these days would invent a

purgatory for the purifying of corrupted souls. No—he would say—your purgatory may be a place of preparation if you will, but *not* for heaven. You may make devils there—nothing better; he must be already twice a saint whom the smoke of your torments would not blacken to a demon.

We may rest assured of this, that the actual infliction of the punishment must always be an evil, as well to mind as body—as well to society at large as to the culprit. If the threat alone could be constantly efficacious—if the headlong obstinacy, the passion, and the obtuseness of men would not oblige, from time to time, the execution of the penalty, for the very purpose of sustaining the efficacy of the threat—all would be well, and penal laws might be in full harmony with the best educational institutions, and the highest interests of humanity. But the moment the law from a threat becomes an act, and the sentence goes forth, and the torture begins, a new but unavoidable train of evils encounters us. There is war implanted in the very bosom of society—hatred, and the giving and the sufferance of pain. And here, we presume, is to be found the reason of the proverbially severe laws of Draco, which, being instituted by a man of virtue and humanity, were yet said to have been written in blood: he desired that the threat should be effective, and that thus the evils of punishment, as well as of crime, should be avoided.

Whatever is to be effected towards the genuine reformation of the culprit, must be the result, not of the punishment itself, but of some added ingredient, not of the essence of the punishment;

as when hopes are held out of reward, or part remission of the penalty, on the practice of industry and a continuance of good behaviour.

And yet—some one may here object—we correct a child, we punish it, and we reform. The very word correction has the double meaning of penalty and amendment. If the plan succeeds so well with the infant, that he who spares the rod is supposed to spoil the child, why should it utterly fail with the adult? But mark the difference. You punish a child, and a short while after you receive the little penitent back into your love; nay, you caress it into penitence; and the reconcilement is so sweet, that the infant culprit never, perhaps, has his affections so keenly awakened as in these tearful moments of sorrow and forgiveness. The heart is softer than ever, and the sense of shame at having offended is kept sensitively alive. But if you withdrew your love—if, after punishment inflicted, you still kept an averted countenance—if no reconcilement were sought and fostered, there would be no reformation in your chastisement. Between society and the adult culprit, this is exactly the case. Here the hostile parent strikes, but makes no after overture of kindness. The blow, and the bitterness of the blow, are left unhealed. Nothing is done to take away the sting of anger, to keep the heart tender to reproof, to prevent the growing callousness to shame, and the rising rebellion of the spirit. And here reveals itself, in all its force, another notorious difficulty with which the reformer of penal codes has to contend.

In drawing the picture of the helpless condition of the

convicted and punished criminal, how often and how justly does he allude to the circumstance, that the reputation of the man is so damaged that honest people are loath to employ him—that his return to an untainted life is almost impossible—and that out of self-defence he is compelled to resort again to the same criminal enterprises for which he has already suffered. Struck with this view, the reformer would institute a penitentiary of so effective a description, that the having passed through it would be even a testimonial of good character. But who sees not that the infamy is of the very essence of the punishment? A good character is the appropriate reward of the good citizen; if the criminal does not pay the forfeit of his character—if only a certain amount of temporary inconvenience is to be sustained, the terror of punishment is at an end. Here, on the arena of public life, between society and the culprit, are they not manifestly incompatible—the tenderness that would reclaim, and the vigour that must chastise?

There is no question here, we must observe, of that delicate sense of shame which is the best preservative against every departure from rectitude. This has been worn out, and almost ceased to operate on the majority of persons who expose themselves to the penal laws of their country. It is the value of character as a commercial commodity, as a requisite for well-being, that alone has weight with them. Benevolent projectors of reform, more benevolent than logical, are fond of comparing a prison to an hospital; they contend that the inmates of either place

are sent there to be cured, and that they should not be restored to society until they are restored, the one to health of body, the other to health of mind. Would they carry out the analogy to its fair completeness, and maintain that the patient from either hospital should be remitted to society with a character equally free from stain? Is the man to be received by the community with the same compassionate welcome who has gone into prison to be cured of a propensity to theft, as one who has entered an hospital to be relieved of a disease?

An hospital is a word of no inviting sound—and physic, no doubt, is sufficiently nauseous to be not inaptly compared to flogging, or any other punitive discipline: but nauseous drugs are not the only means of cure; good nursing, vigilant attendance, sometimes generous diet, have a large share in the curative process. And in the hospital of the mind, the lenitive and fostering measures have a still larger share in the work of a moral restoration. Were this principle of cure, of perfect restoration, to be adopted as the first principle of penal legislation, it would come to this, that a poor man would have no better way of recommending himself to the fatherly care of the state than by the commission of a crime, and that none, in the lower classes of society, would be so well trained and disciplined for advancing their fortunes in the world, as those who commenced their career by violating the laws of their country.

Imprisonment, with its various accompaniments and modifications, is the great reformatory punishment. Indeed, with

the exception of death—confined almost entirely to the case of murder—it is the only punishment bestowed on serious offences. Imprisonment of some kind, either at home or in the colonies, is the penal safeguard of society; and we must be cautious that we do not so far diminish its terrors, that it should cease to hold out any threat to a needy malefactor. But before we allude to the discipline of the prison, we must take a glance at this great exception of death, which it is the object of many of our zealous reformers entirely to erase from the penal code.

That this extreme punishment should be reserved for the extreme crime of murder, seems generally admitted; and the practice, if not the letter, of our law has conformed to this opinion. It would be useless, therefore, to argue on the propriety of inflicting this penalty on other and less enormous offences. The question is narrowed to this—shall death continue to be the punishment of the murderer?

Those who contend for the entire abolition of this punishment, are in the habit of enlarging much on the inadequate effect produced upon the multitude who witness the spectacle of an execution. This is their favourite and most frequent theme. They seem to overlook the much more powerful effect produced on the imagination of that far greater multitude who never behold, or are likely to behold, an execution. It is curious to observe how pertinaciously a certain class of reasoners will dwell on the picture which a crowd presents at a public execution;—much like a crowd, we may be sure, at any other public spectacle. Whatever

the object which gathers together a mob of the lowest class, they will soon begin to relieve the tedium of expectation by coarse jests, drunkenness, and brawling. Yet these descriptive logicians are never weary of painting to us the grotesque and disgusting scenes which the mass of spectators exhibit on these occasions, as if this were quite decisive of the question. That ragged children, who have never thought of death at all, play their usual pranks at the foot of the gallows—that pickpockets ply their trade in this as in every other gaping crowd—what has all this to do with the impression produced on the mind of every man and woman throughout the kingdom, by the knowledge that if he, through sudden passion, or the instigations of cupidity, take the life of a fellow-creature, he shall be—not a spectator at such an exhibition —but that solitary crawling wretch who, after having spent his days and nights in agony and fear, is thrust forward, bound and pinioned, to be hanged up there like a dog before the scoffing or yelling multitude?

We willingly concede that a public execution is not an edifying spectacle. The coarse minds who can endure, and who court it, are the last to whom such a spectacle should be presented. And, although the punishment might lose some portion of its terrors, we should prefer that the execution should take place in a more private manner; in the court-yard, for instance, of the prison, and before a selected number of witnesses, partly consisting of official persons, as the sheriffs and magistrates, and partly of a certain number of persons who might be taken from the

several jury lists—the option being given to them either to accept or decline this melancholy office. This would be a sufficient publicity to ensure an impartial administration of the laws. The only doubt that remains is, whether it would be sufficient to prevent the spread of false rumours, and absurd suspicions, amongst the people. It is a prevailing tendency with the mob, whenever any one at all above their own condition is executed, to believe that he has been favoured and allowed to escape. Even in the face of the most public execution, such rumours are circulated. We understand that Mr Tawell is confidently reported to be living at this moment in America. Such suspicions, however ridiculous and absurd, must be cautiously guarded against.

After all, the mode of execution is but of secondary importance; arrange it how you will, it is a lamentable business. Like all other punishments, and still more than all other punishments, the actual infliction of it is an evil to society. When the law passes from the threat to the execution, it is a social disaster. The main point is, that we present to the imagination of every man a great threat—that of almost immediate extermination—if he lift his hand against his neighbour's life.

That which renders the punishment of death peculiarly appropriate, in our estimation, in the crime of murder, is not by any means its retaliative character; the sentiment, that "blood must have blood," is one which we have no desire to foster; and if some less grievous penalty would have the same effect in deterring from the crime, we should, of course, willingly adopt

it. Our ground of approval is this, that it presents to the mind an antagonist idea most fit to encounter the temptation to the crime. As this temptation must generally be great, and often sudden, that antagonist idea should be something capable of seizing upon the apprehension at once—of exercising at once all its restraining efficacy. Imprisonment for length of years—the mind must calculate and sum up the long list of pains and penalties included in this threat, before its full import is perceived. But death! And then the after-death! For what makes the punishment of death so singularly applicable to the case of murder is this, that it awakens whatever may exist of religious terror in the mind of him who contemplates the crime. On the one hand, he is about to commit a deed on which there are not two opinions; it is not a crime made such by the laws; it is not even a robbery, for which he may frame excuses out of his destitution, and the harsh distinctions of society; it is murder, which heaven and earth, rich and poor, equally denounce. On the other hand, his guilt will bring him almost immediately before the tribunal of God, as well as the judgment-seat of man. No long interval weakens the impression, no long space holds out the vague prospect of repentance and amendment, and compensatory acts of goodness; but if he will lift the knife, if he will mingle the poison, there is the earthly executioner at hand to transfer him to the still more dreadful sentence of the after-world! The same opinion which condemns the crime of murder here on earth, as the most atrocious that can be committed, follows him to that other tribunal; and all that

his imagination has been accustomed to depict of the horrors of internal and eternal punishment, rushes at once upon him.

When the temptation comes in the shape of sudden anger and impetuous passion, there is a threat as sudden to encounter it. When the crime is revolved in the secret and guilty recesses of the mind—as when some individual stands between the tempted man and the possession of a fortune, or some other great object of desire—there is religious terror as stealthy, as secret, as unconquerable, as the strongest desire that takes possession of the human heart, to assist always at his deliberations.

M. Zschokke's little treatise, to which we have alluded, contains the usual, together with some unusual, arguments against the punishment of death, and contributes also a novel substitute for it. He begins, in true German manner, by explaining (*inter alia*) the difference between reason and understanding; the exact distinction between man and the rest of the animal creation; and some other metaphysical generalities, which, fortunately, are not concerned with the business in hand. For, as no two writers agree in their explanations, and as none succeeds in perfectly satisfying either his reader or himself, it would be impossible, if such preliminaries were first to be adjusted, ever to arrive at the discussion itself. The work is written in letters, addressed to a young prince; and, at the thirteenth letter—there are but sixteen in the whole—he approaches his main question—"Nun denn es sei zur sache!" "Now then to the matter." And first he protests that death is no

punishment at all. The venerable historian absolutely flies to such aphorisms as were the delight of Seneca, to prove that death is no evil, and can consequently be no punishment; although there are some who, under the dominion of mere instinct, may deem it such. "The death," he writes, "of the criminal is no punishment; but for him, as for every other mortal, only the end of earthly troubles, cares, and sufferings. In vain," he continues, "does the multitude of suicides show us daily that death is no evil, and therefore no punishment; for the men who thus abridge their days manifestly prefer death to the endurance of the evils of life."

It has been said, that "he who can look at death starts at no shadows." And certainly, reason on the matter how you will, and prove life to be as worthless as you please, if a man can defy death, and solicit it, there is no other punishment that can be effective. It would be all but impossible to prevent a criminal, if so resolved, from laying violent hands upon himself; and altogether impossible to prevent him from contemplating suicide as his last resort in case of detection, and so nullifying the threat of any other punishment. There is no hold whatever on the man in whom the love of life, or the fear of death, is really extinct. But we are far from thinking that Seneca and the Stoics have yet made so deep an impression on mankind that there is a very general indifference to death, especially to a death inflicted by others—the ignominious sentence of the law.

Again, this author objects, as some others have done, to the punishment of death, because it is incapable of an adjustment

to the degrees of guilt. What punishment is? Or how can any tribunal determine on degrees of moral guilt? It is not a criminal, it is a crime, that the law punishes. To determine between two thieves, which had the better motive, which had the least *of thief in him*, is not the function of a judge, nor could he perform it, if imposed upon him. It has been remarked by those who have had wide opportunities of judging—and the annals of criminal jurisprudence support the observation—that murderers, taken as a class, are not, as men, the worst order of criminals. Some sudden impulse, or some one obstinate desire, got the better of their reason; or it might happen, that the motive for committing a great crime was not of so dark a dye as that which often induces to one of less turpitude. And yet neither our author, nor any one else, would hesitate to accord to the crime of murder the very severest penalty that stands upon the code.

But M. Zschokke's main argument against the reasonableness and justice of death-punishment is this, that every man has an original imprescriptible right, prior to, and in the face of all society—*to be a man*—"mensch zu sein"—"to develope himself as man." Society may limit the exercise of this right, but not annul it; may mutilate the man as it thinks fit, but must leave so much of him behind as may bear the name of man. What is to be said of such metaphysical vagaries as these? If this pass for reasoning, the unlawfulness of imprisonment may be proved in the same manner; one has but to assert that man has an *a priori* indefeasible right to the use of the limbs which nature has given to him. But

no man has any *right* whatever, but under the implied condition of performing corresponding *duties*. This individual, whom the law will not any longer allow to develope his humanity, should, if he had wished to develope himself further, have allowed the like liberty to others.

But that which most remarkably distinguishes M. Zschokke's little performance is the substitute for the punishment of death which it suggests. We believe it was here that M. Sue derived an idea which occupies so conspicuous a place in his *Mysteries of Paris*. That substitute is *blindness*. "The blinded man," writes our author, "is an eternal prisoner, without need of prison walls. He must envy other culprits their chains—their darkest dungeons; for in the darkest dungeons hope may penetrate, and *they* may one day see the light again. He must envy the dead, on whom the executioner has done his utmost; for to him life itself has become one endless punishment. He is bound without fetters—bound more securely than if he were locked to the oar or welded to the rock. Every step, every movement, tells him of his weakness and of his guilt. The living world around him—he has lost it all; he retains only its sources of pain, and the unfading memory of his own crime. Scoffed at by the unfeeling, pitied by some, by all shunned—contempt and commiseration and scorn are the smarting scourges to which he stands defenceless for the residue of his days."

A frightful punishment truly! But we are far from approving of it as a substitute for death. In the first place, it is equally

irrevocable; and it is one, and perhaps the most cogent argument against death-punishment, that it admits of no recall in case of error, no remission or compensation in the event of sentence having been passed upon an innocent man. Our author, indeed, seems to think otherwise; for he reckons it amongst the advantages of this mode of punishment, that it does admit of compensation if it has been unjustly inflicted. To us it seems very doubtful whether any pleasures addressed to the remaining senses of hearing, of touch, or of taste, can be said to compensate for the loss of sight. Neither does blindness, any more than death, admit of degree or apportionment. In this respect, *burning* or the use of fire as a punishment, which has been suggested, though not absolutely advised, by Bentham, would have a decisive preference. "Fire," writes that voluminous jurist and legislator, "may be employed as an instrument of punishment without occasioning death. This punishment is variable in its nature, through all the degrees of severity of which there can be any need. It would be necessary carefully to determine, on the test of the law, the part of the body which ought to be exposed to the action of fire; the intensity of the fire; the time during which it ought to be applied; and the paraphernalia to be employed to increase the terror of the punishment. In order to render the description more striking, a print might be annexed, in which the operation should be represented."—(*Works*, vol. i. p. 407.)

What is still more to the point, the punishment of blinding is quite as repugnant to those sentiments of humanity which are

said to be outraged by the depriving a fellow creature of his life. As we have before intimated, the spectacle of pain inflicted is at all times an evil in itself. Even the presence of those gloomy buildings, devoted to all the wretched purposes of incarceration, is, we should say, a public calamity. The more men see of misery, the more callous do they become to it; the less effort do they make to relieve; the more ready are they to inflict it. Punishments should be multiplied as little as possible. Very slight offences had better be left to the correction of public opinion, and very grave offences should be severely visited, as well to spare punishment as to prevent crime. We at once admit that it is an evil—the spectacle of putting a man to death. But this of putting out his eyes is, in act, scarce less revolting, and the spectacle is perpetuated. The public execution lasts his lifetime. There is something, too, from which we recoil in associating what has hitherto been the most pitiful affliction of humanity with the idea of punishment of crime. A blind man walks amongst us the universally commiserated—and good need he has of our commiseration; it would be a sore addition to his calamity to make his condition one of suspected turpitude, and expose him to the hazard of being classed with murderers.

With respect to that greater *severity* of the punishment, on which our author eloquently enlarges, the only severity which a legislature ought to seek is that which is available in the shape of *threat*; and no threat can be more effective than that of taking from a man his life, since he can always, in his own imagination,

commute any other punishment into that. If it be true, on the one hand, that death is a mere privation, and not to be compared, in real severity, to very many of the positive afflictions of life; and if, on the other, it is still the greatest threat which society can hold out—these two facts together would go far to prove that it is the very best punishment which could be devised.

Dismissing this exception of the punishment of death for the crime of murder, *imprisonment* at home or abroad, accompanied with hard labour, or periods of solitary confinement, is the sole threat of any moment which the law holds out against offenders; and it becomes, therefore, of infinite importance to establish an effective prison discipline. We look upon this simplification of our penal operations as an advantage; and we are by no means disposed to favour those inventive gentlemen who would devise new punishments, or revive old ones, for the purpose, it would seem, of having a variety of inflictions corresponding to the variety of offences. A well-regulated prison, where the severity of the taskwork, the nature of the diet, the duration and the strictness of the confinement, all admit of apportionment to the offence, seems to include all that is desirable in this matter of punishment. Here, if any where, can plans of reformation be combined with penal inflictions. Such plans ought, by all means, to be encouraged; but they are not—whatever Captain Maconochie, and other zealous reformers, say to the contrary—the first and peculiar object for which a prison is designed.

Captain Maconochie was for some time superintendent of

Norfolk Island. A rough experience. But prison discipline must be much the same in its elements, in whatever part of the world it is carried on. We are not about to enter into the variety of questions connected with transportation, or the management of penal colonies. Wherever imprisonment or compulsory labour are to be undergone, the same class of difficulties and dilemmas must arise; and we shall deal only with Captain Maconochie's remarks, as they apply generally to all convicts, whether transported or not.

It is quite curious to observe the unconscious pranks that men of sound understandings, but not philosophically disciplined, may be led into, when, from some favourite point of view, they suddenly rush into generalities, and proclaim as reasoning what is the dictate of a momentary sentiment. Captain Maconochie, desirous of enlisting our sympathies in favour of his convicts, assimilates their condition to that of the black slaves, whom the philanthropic efforts of Wilberforce, and others, succeeded in emancipating. The parallel is—to say the best—very surprising and unexpected. Convicts in the colonies stand in the same predicament, with regard to society, as their fellow-culprits at home; and the gallant Captain would hardly preach a crusade for the liberation of all the prisoners in England—for all who are undergoing the discipline of our houses of correction. To be compelled to labour for another man's advantage, and at another man's will, because one is "guilty of a darker skin," and to be compelled to the like taskwork because one has

committed burglary, are two very different things. Full of this happy comparison, however, Captain Maconochie proceeds —"They (the blacks) were thus, in the main, merry, virtuous, and contented beings; they did not advance—this their condition as slaves forbade—but neither did they recede; and whatever the influence of their condition on their own character, it ended nearly with themselves; they were subjects, not agents, and no one was made materially worse through their means. In every one of these respects, convicts are differently, and far more unfavourably, circumstanced. True, they have sinned, which is often alleged as a reason for dealing with them more harshly; *but who has not sinned? Who will venture to say, or would be right if he did say, that, similarly born, educated, and tempted*, as most of them have been, he would have stood where they have fallen? They are our brothers in a much nearer sense than were the negroes." Now, if language such as this means any thing, the convict is a most maltreated person, and should not have been punished at all. It is really the duty of sober sensible men to put their veto on such oratory as this; there is too much of the same kind abroad. We must all of us be ready to acknowledge, that if we had been "born, educated, and tempted," as many of these felons, we too might have been felons. Does it follow that we ought not to have received the punishment of felons? Is this sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, which makes the crime in imagination our own, to bribe us into an utterly ruinous indulgence towards it? Crime is not punished on earth—

as divines teach us it will be punished in heaven—on a principle of retributive justice, and according to our moral deserts. To prove that this is not the principle of judicial punishment, we have only to call to mind that, whereas, in a moral point of view, the force of temptation diminishes the guilt, men, in framing their laws, invariably increase the punishment in proportion to the temptation. The facility to commit a crime, is one great element in the temptation to commit it; and this facility has been always considered (as in the case of forgery) to call for a counterbalance in the severity of the penalty.

In matters of penal legislation, there are two currents of thought, which must be always kept distinct. The one relates to the natural and little cultivated feelings of mankind, which demand retaliation for injuries committed—a vindictive or retributive justice. Here is found the rude motive power by and on which legislation has to work; sometimes shaping these feelings to its purposes, sometimes shaping its purposes to them. The other current of ideas is purely legislative, purely prospective, having for its sole end the well-being of society, and looking on punishment; not as retributive, or vindictive, or as morally due, but as a sad necessity for the preservation of order.

In reference to the latter and only legislative mode of thinking, how extremely illogical does it appear this attempt to ward off the penal blow from a guilty party, or to excite our commiseration for him on the ground that we all share the same passions and frailties of that guilty party! Why, if such passions and frailties

were not general, there would be little need of punishment. It is because they are general, that the legislature is compelled to be so watchful and energetic. If to take the object of desire from our neighbour were a rare propensity, an extraordinary phenomenon, we might let the prison sink into happy ruin, and a most cheerful desolation.

We have seen how the German, in his metaphysical manner, disposed of the right of society to put one of its members to death; the Captain, though no metaphysician, proves, in a manner quite as bold and singular, that the state has really no right to inflict any punishment that is not of a reformatory character. It is true he admits of punishment—could a man of his experience do otherwise? But he admits it only as a part of his *curative process*. It is to induce "submission and penitence." He can so far blind himself by his love of theory, or rather his tenacity to one point of view, that he seems to suppose, that *reform of the criminal being the direct object*, he would commence his treatment by penal inflictions. "As already observed, a fever must be reduced before its ravages are sought to be repaired; a wound must be probed and cleansed before it can be healed up." And this surgical instance seems to have satisfied his mind, that the exacerbations consequent on punishment are an indispensable preparation for a moral restoration. As to the old-fashioned notion that punishment has for its legitimate and primary object to deter others from offending, he denounces this, if pursued as an independent aim, as a flagrant injustice; he regards such

criminals who are punished for this end only, as sacrifices cruelly offered up for the benefit of the public.

> "In the infancy of society," reasons Captain Maconochie, "and under every form of pure despotism, the individual is nothing, and the commonwealth, or its chief, every thing. But just as intelligence and true knowledge of state policy extend, does this state of things become reversed; and in England already, the maxim is become almost universal, that private rights are never to be invaded without compensation. In two departments only is there still a systematic deviation from this rule in practice. Impressment, in which the compensation made, though it has increased much of late years, must still be considered inadequate—for otherwise the act itself would be unnecessary; and the punishment of offenders with a view to *example* only, in which they have no concern, and to which their individual interests are yet unhesitatingly sacrificed. In both cases the same plea of state necessity is offered in justification; but it will not do. As society advances, and individuals become more sensible of their own worth, their claims to regard above such abstractions become more and more evident."—(*General Views*, &c., p. 11.)

We would modestly suggest that before this curious analogy can be made complete, government ought to press for hanging as well as the sea service. If the sheriff and his bailiffs sallied forth, and seized upon some hapless wight, thrust the king's money into his hand, and thus enlisted him into the hanging corps for the

benefit of the community, the resemblance would be perfect. But no one, not even the high-sheriff himself, has the least desire to obtain a single recruit for this forlorn service; the members of which force themselves in a most unwelcome manner upon the state. Still less, if possible, does the government desire to be at the expense of erecting large buildings, and maintaining numerous garrisons of all species of felons. "Banishment of offenders, with a view to example only, *in which they have no concern*, and to which their individual interests are yet unhesitatingly sacrificed!" Indeed, but they have! He who is punished for theft has still his life to be preserved, and may one day have his property also to be protected by the same law under which he is suffering. One can imagine the strange effect it would produce upon the ignoble army of martyrs which throng our jails, to be told that they were sacrifices to society—victims whom the community was offering up, most unjustifiably, on the altar of its own interests! At first, the idea would be a little dim and mysterious; but, after a short time, the flattering nature of the doctrine would doubtless be sufficient to insure its reception. They would, thereupon, call in the jailer, and the chief spokesman of the party would thus address him:—"We perceive, O jailer! that society is consulting its own interests in our punishment, and not, as it is bound to do, our especial benefit and advantage. As we have learned that stripes and bondage are to be inflicted on no man but for his own good, and as we are all agreed, after considerable experience, that we derive no benefit whatever from them, and you, O jailer!

must be satisfied that, as medical treatment, they are worse than inefficacious, we demand, in the name of justice and human reason, our immediate dismissal."

To those who value no information but such as assumes the shape of detail of facts, or can be reduced to figures, and exhibited in the shape of statistical tables, we shall perhaps appear to be wasting time in examining the mere errors of *reasoning* on this important subject of penal discipline. We think otherwise. We apprehend there is nothing more necessary than to keep active and zealous men steady to first principles in subjects of great general interest. We are not guilty of underrating the value of statistical tables; albeit we have seen figures arrayed against figures, as if there were two arithmetics, as if there were two churches in the doctrines of addition and multiplication; but the truth must be kept in view, that to read statistical tables aright, something more is required than a knowledge of the rules of arithmetic. A few sound principles, based on a knowledge of human nature, and the elementary bonds of human society, may often preserve us from false deductions, which seem to be the sure product of the array of figures that are presented to us.

We intimated that Captain Maconochie's pamphlet contained what appeared to us a valuable contribution towards a good prison discipline. That contribution is simply—the commutation of *time* of imprisonment for quantity of *labour* to be performed. The amount of work done by the prisoner could be estimated by certain *marks* awarded or reckoned to him, and the duration

of imprisonment measured by the number of those marks to be earned, instead of a certain fixed number of months or years. This is a very simple idea, and is all the better for its simplicity. The punishment would be probably rendered more effective as a threat, and the moral effect of the punishment, when inflicted, would be much improved. A compulsion to labour (which becomes, in fact, a compulsion of moral motive, as well as of sheer external control) may lead to a permanent habit of industry. There would be all the difference between the listless and disgustful labour of enforced time-work, and a labour in part prompted by the hope of expediting the term of release. An idle vagabond might thus be disciplined and trained into an industrious workman.

We have no doubt that this principle has already been partially applied in the management of our prisons, and perhaps in more instances than we at all suspect; but that it has not yet been extensively applied, or received the trial which it appears to merit, is certain—because such an experiment must have been preceded by a very notorious and signal alteration in our laws.

We should be doing an egregious injustice to Captain Maconochie if we were to judge of him only by the instances we have given of his powers of general reasoning. The perusal of his pamphlets has left in our mind a strong impression of the manly character and practical ability of their writer. If his abstract reasonings are sometimes perverse, we are convinced that his practical good sense is such, that in the management

of any enterprise, he would in reality so order his proceedings, that, whatever his pen might do, his conduct would contradict no sound principle of expediency. If it were the object to reclaim a set of felons or vagabonds, and fit them—say for the naval and military service—we are persuaded that the task could not be confided to better hands than those of the gallant Captain. During his residence at Norfolk island, he seems to have obtained the esteem of even the worst of the sad crew he had to discipline; and this, it is evident, without sacrificing a jot of the duties of his station. He is plainly not the man to make any boast of such a matter, or to feel too highly flattered by it. "Instances of individual attachment to myself," he says, at the conclusion of his pamphlet *On the Management of Transported Convicts*, "I could multiply without number; but these, for obvious reasons, I forbear to quote; and in truth they as often pained me as pleased me, by being too deferential. It is a great and very common mistake, in managing prisoners, to be too much gratified by mere obedience and servility: duplicity is much encouraged by this; and, of two opposite errors, it is better rather to overlook a little occasional insubordination. I cannot refuse, however, to cite two traits, whose character cannot be mistaken. I had a large garden within a few hundred yards of the ticket-of-leave village at Cascade, where from 300 to 400 men lived, four to six in a hut, never locked up, nor under other guard through the night than that of a police sentry, one of their own number. The garden was by the road-side, very imperfectly fenced with

open paling, and fully stocked with choice fruit and vegetables, bananas, pine-apples, grapes, melons, and others, which *to men on a salt ration* must have offered a great temptation; these were constantly under view, yet I scarcely ever lost any. And by a letter, received a few weeks ago, I learn that five men, having picked up an old black silk handkerchief that had belonged to me, have had their prayer books bound with it." [1]

The Captain's theoretical error is, that he too much confounds the necessity of penal laws with the duty of public education. The duty of the state to educate its subjects is undeniable; but, when criminals are brought before it, this is not the duty which is then most prominent. This is a duty which ought to have been performed before—it is a duty which ought not to be forgotten then; but there is another function which comes into operation, which is typified by the judge, not by the schoolmaster.

We observe that Captain Maconochie confirms, from his own experience, the opinion already expressed by many others upon the policy of solitary confinement. For a short period the effect

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[1] Amongst the anecdotes which are told in this concluding portion of the pamphlet, we were struck with the following, which affords a striking instance of that tendency to *run a-muck* from time to time by which some men are unhappily afflicted:—"One of them, at length, showed strong indications of approaching insanity. He became moody, and twice attempted to destroy himself. I thought that possibly change of occupation and diet might benefit him; and I brought him to my own garden in consequence, and sought to feed him up. But he rather got worse. I remonstrated with him; and his answer was a striking one—'When I used to be in this way before, I could get into trouble, (commit an offence, and incur a severe punishment,) and that took it out of me; but now that I try to behave myself, I think that I am going mad altogether.'"

is good; but, if prolonged, it leads either to stupid indifference or moroseness of temper, if it does not conduct even to insanity. It is, manifestly, an expedient to be cautiously used. We should, before any appeal to experience, and judging only from the nature of the human mind, have confidently predicted this result. And, indeed, has not the effect of solitary confinement been long ago understood and powerfully described? In that delightful tale of the Arabian Nights, where the poor fisherman draws up a jar from the bottom of the sea, and, on opening it, gives escape to a confined spirit or genie, this monster of ingratitude immediately draws a huge sabre, with the intention of decapitating his deliverer. Some parley ensues; and the genie explains that he is only about to fulfil a vow that he had made while incarcerated in the jar—that, during the first thousand years of his imprisonment —and, to an immortal genie, a thousand years may reckon as about two calendar months with us—he promised to his deliverer all imaginable blessings; but, during the second thousand years, he vowed that he would *kill* the man who should release him! Could there possibly be a better illustration of the effect of solitary confinement?

But on the peculiar modifications of prison discipline, it is not our purpose here to enlarge. This must be reserved to some future occasion. We must content ourselves with observing, that we have little confidence in novelties, and little wish to prompt the invention of our legislators in this direction. We are as little disposed to advocate the silent as the solitary system.

Such a demeanour as any reflective man would naturally expect to find in a place of public correction, is all that we should require to be preserved. All boisterous mirth, all obstreperous laughter, all loud talking, would, by every efficient governor of such an institution, be systematically repressed. The labours of such an establishment should be conducted with stern military order. Every inmate should feel himself under an irresistible domination, and that obedience and submission are the only parts he has to enact. How easily the strongest minds may be led astray when scope is given to invention in this matter of penal discipline, may be seen in the example of Jeremy Bentham himself. This celebrated man, whose cogitative faculty was assuredly of the most vigorous description, but who had a mode of developing it the most insufferably and needlessly prolix, would have filled our prisons with inextinguishable laughter by the introduction of certain "tragic masks," indicative of various crimes or passions, in which the several offenders were to be occasionally paraded—a quaint device, which would have given a carnival to our jails.

Our main purpose, in these somewhat fragmentary observations, was to protest against the reasoning which would divest punishment of its proper and distinctive character, which, spreading about weak and effeminate scruples, would paralyse the arm which bears the sword of justice. One writer would impugn the right of society to put its arch-criminals to death; another controverts its right to inflict any penalty whatever,

which has not for its direct object the reformation of the criminal. So, then, the offender who will not live with his fellow-men on the only terms on which human fellowship can be maintained, is to stand out and bandy logic with the community—with mankind—and insist upon his individual imprescriptible rights. These *à priori* gentry would find it very difficult to draw any advantage from their imprescriptible rights, except in a state of tolerable civil government. Civil government is, at all events, the condition on which depends the enjoyment of all individual rights; without which they are but shadows and abstractions, if even intelligible abstractions. Let us have no more, therefore, of an opposition between the rights of individuals and the stern, imperative, expediencies of society. There can be no such opposition. Is it not as if some particular wave of the sea should assert a law of motion of its own, and think it injustice to submit to the great tidal movements of the ocean?

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General Views, &c. &c. By the Same.

PÚSHKIN, THE RUSSIAN POET

No. III

Specimens of his Lyrics

Translated from the Original Russian, by Thomas B. Shaw, B.A. of Cambridge, Adjunct Professor of English Literature in the Imperial Alexander Lyceum, Translator of "the Heretic," &c. &c

We trust our readers will not blame us for the slightness of construction and unimportant subjects of many of the minor pieces which we have admitted into our present selection from Púshkin's lyrical productions. It was our object to give the English reader, as far as possible, a fair and just notion of the poet's peculiar turn of thought and style of expression; and to do this completely, it appeared to us indispensable to avoid confining our choice—however natural it might have seemed, and however great the temptation to do so—to the more ambitious and elaborate efforts of his genius. The true

principles of criticism have long ago established the doctrine, that the composition of a beautiful song, or even of a perfect epigram, deserves to be considered as difficult a task, and as rare an achievement, as the production of an ode or of an elegy; and though it may be objected that, for the purposes of *translation*, the song is generally much more ungrateful than the more imposing production, yet we could not consider ourselves as fulfilling our promise, (of holding up to our countrymen a faithful mirror of Púshkin's poetry,) had we omitted to attempt versions of the slighter and more delicate productsof his poesy. It is true that, in passing through the deteriorating process of translation into another language, the lighter works suffer most, and are more likely to lose that exquisite delicacy of expression, and that transparent colouring of thought, which is the more peculiar merit of the song or the fugitive poem—these tender blossoms run much more risk of losing, in short, their finer and more evanescent aroma, than the more gorgeous flowers of the tropical regions of poetical imagining; but at the same time it must be remarked, that the danger in such experiments is not on the side of the *author*, but wholly on that of the *translator*. That we have determined—rashly, perhaps—to encounter this danger, must be our apology for having introduced into our collection many of the shorter and slighter pieces which will be found in these pages, and, among them, the specimen which we are now about to present.

Alas for Her! Why Is She Shining?"

Alas for her! why is she shining
In soft and momentary bloom?
Yet all the while in secret pining
'Mid youth's gay pride and first perfume …
She fades! To her it is not given
Long o'er life's paths in joy to roam,
Or long to make an earthly heaven
In the calm precincts of her home;
Our daily converse to enlighten
With playful sense, with charming wile,
The sufferer's woe-worn brow to brighten
With the reflection of her smile.
Now that black thoughts around me darken,
I veil my grief with steady will,
To her sweet voice I haste to hearken,—
To hearken: and to gaze my fill.
I gaze, I hearken yet, and never
Shall voice or form from me depart;
Nought but our parting hour can ever
Wake fear or anguish in my heart.

In the following spirited little piece Púshkin has commemorated an incident which occurred in the reign of Peter the Great, and which is probably sufficiently familiar

to the readers of Russian history, to render unnecessary a more than passing allusion to the circumstance. Among the thousand traits of grandeur recorded of the Hero-Tsar, there are few more affecting and sublime than that commemorated in the anecdote of his indulgence to Ménstchikoff, who had betrayed his master's confidence, and committed various acts of peculation and oppression. Peter pardoned his unfaithful but repentant minister, and celebrated this act of generous clemency by a magnificent banquet, at which he exhibited to his admiral every testimony of renewed confidence and affection. This banquet is the subject of the following lines, in which all the allusions are probably familiar to our readers, not excepting the mention made of the imposing ceremony spoken of in the third stanza; that is to say, the grand review of the infant Russian fleet, at which the Emperor assisted in person, and in the rank of Vice-Admiral. The whole squadron—recently created by the genius and wisdom of the Prince, and freshly covered with naval glory, till then unknown in Russia—was anchored in the Neva, and along its line slowly passed, under a general salute of cannon, and accompanied by the acclamations of the crews of the men-of-war, the old pleasure-boat, the "baubling shallop," which had first suggested to Peter's mind the idea and the possibility of giving Russia a navy. This small vessel, still most religiously preserved in the fortress, and affectionately called by the Russians the "Grandfather" of their navy, had been constructed for the amusement of the Tsar Alexéi, by

Brandt, a Dutch shipbuilder, who had visited Moscow during the reign of that prince—the father of the great regenerator of Russia. The vessel, a small sloop rigged in the Dutch manner, had remained neglected on the lake of Peresláv-Zalévskii (in the province of Vladímir) till it was remarked by Peter, who, from seeing it, not only conceived the idea of creating a navy, but made it the means of acquiring for himself the first rudiments of practical seamanship. As *a ship* in the Russian language is a *masculine* substantive, the familiar title given to this immortal little vessel is "grandfather," or "grandsire," a word of which we have thought it necessary to transpose the gender, in obedience to that poetical and striking idiom in our tongue, by which a ship always rigorously appertains to the gentler and lovelier sex. In our version, therefore, the "grandsire" becomes—we trust without any loss of dignity or interest—the "grandame" of the Russian navy:—

The Feast Of Peter The First

O'er the Neva gaily dancing,
Flag and pennant flutter fair;
From the boats, in line advancing,
Oars-men's chorus fills the air.
Loud and joyous guests assembling,
Throng the palace of the Tsar;
And to cannon-crash is trembling

All the Neva from afar.

Wherefore feasts our Tsar of Wonders?
Why is Petersburg so gay?
Why those shouts and cannon-thunders,
And the fleet in war array?
Is new glory dawning o'er ye,
Russia's Eagle, Russia's Sword?
Has the stern Swede fled before ye?
Has the foe for peace implored?

Is it Brandt's slight boat, appearing
On the shore that *was* the Swede's?
Through our young fleet proudly steering
Like a *grandame* she proceeds.
They, her giant-brood, seem kneeling
'Fore their grandame—black and grim;
And to Science' name are pealing
Cannon-crash and choral hymn.

Is't Poltáva, red and glorious,
That he feasts—the Lord of War?
When his Empire's life, victorious,
Saved from Charles the Russian Tsar?
Greet they Catharine's saint, those thunders?
Hath she given a Prince to life?
Of our Giant-Tsar of Wonders,
She, the raven-tresséd wife?

No! a Subject's crime remitting,
To the guilty, guilt he sinks;
By a Subject's side he's sitting,
From a Subject's cup he drinks:
And his brow he kisses, smiling,
Gay of heart, and bright of eye;
And he feasts a Reconciling
Like some mighty Victory.

Hence those shouts of joy and wonder;
Hence is Petersburg so gay;
Hence the songs and cannon-thunder,
And the fleet in war array;
Hence the guests in joy assembling;
Hence the full cup of the Tsar;
Hence, with cannon-crash, is trembling
All the Neva from afar.

The following lines (which are not without a kind of fantastic prettiness of their own) do not seen to need any remark or explanation, unless it be the circumstance of the poet's qualifying the sky of St Petersburg with the epithet of *pale-green*. It may be observed that this peculiar tint (exactly enough expressed by the adjective) has struck almost all the strangers who have visited the northern capital, and has been repeatedly noticed by travellers; as, for instance, Kohl, Custine, &c. &c. Our readers will find the singular colour of the St Petersburg atmosphere (particularly observable in the winter, or at night) very well described in Sir

George Lefevre's amusing "Notes of a Travelling Physician." This greenish tint is as peculiar to the banks of the Neva, as is the reddish-black to the neighbourhood of Birmingham or the Potteries; or the yellowish-brown (in November—"let rude ears be absent!") to the environs of the Thames:—

"Town of Starving, Town of Splendour!"

Town of starving, town of splendour,
Dulness, pride, and slavery;
Skyey vault of pale-green tender,
Cold, and granite, and *ennui*!
With a pang, I say adieu t'ye
With a pang, though slight—for there
Trips the foot of *one* young beauty,
Waves *one* tress of golden hair.

In the short and rapid sketch of Púshkin's life and writings which will be found prefixed to this selection, we made particular mention of the strong impression produced upon the Russian public by the appearance of the noble lines addressed to the *Sea*. We beg to subjoin a translation of this short but vigorous poem, which has become classical in the author's country; an honour it certainly deserves, not only from the simple grace and energy of the language, but from the weight, dignity, and verity of the thoughts. The lines were written by the poet on his quitting the

shores of the Caspian, where he had so long dwelt in solitude, gathering inspiration from the sublime Nature by which he was surrounded; and the poem cannot but be considered as a worthy outpouring of the feelings which a long communion with that Nature was so capable of communicating to a mind like that of Púshkin. Of the two great men whose recent death was naturally recalled to the poet's recollection by the view of the ocean, the name of one—Napoleon—is specifically mentioned; that of the other is—Byron. Seldom, in the prosecution of his difficult but not ungrateful task, has the translator felt the imperfection of his art, or the arduous nature of its object, more keenly than when attempting to give something like an adequate version of the eleventh and twelfth stanzas of this majestic composition. In order to give some idea of the fidelity of his imitation, we will subjoin the literal English of these eight lines:—

He vanish'd, wept by liberty,
Leaving to the world his crown.
Roar, swell with storm-weather;
He was, O sea, thy bard!
Thine image was stamp'd upon him,
He was created in thy spirit;
Like thee, mighty, deep, and gloomy,
Like thee, untameable!

To the Sea

Farewell, free sky, and thou, O Ocean!
For the last time, before my sight
Roll thy blue waves in ceaseless motion,
And shine with a triumphant light!

Like friend's farewell in parting hour,
And mournful as his whisper'd word,
Thy solemn roar—that voice of power—
Now for the last time I have heard.

Bound of my spirit's aspiration!
How often on thy shore, O Sea!
I've roved in gloomy meditation,
Tired with my mighty ministry!

Thine echoes—oh, how I have loved them!
Dread sounds—the voices of the Deep!
Thy waves—or rock'd in sunset sleep,
Or when the tempest-blast had moved them!

The fisher's peaceful sail may glide—
If such thy will—in safety gleaming,
Mid thy dark surges rolling wide;
But thou awak'st in sportful seeming—

And navies perish in thy tide!

How oft was mock'd my wild endeavour
To leave the dull unmoving strand,
To hail thee, Sea; to leave thee never,
And o'er thy foam to guide for ever
My course, with free poetic hand.

Thou calledst … but a chain was round me;
In vain my soul its fetters tore;
A mighty passion-spell had bound me,
And I remain'd upon thy shore.

Wherever o'er thy billows lonely
I might direct my careless prow,
Amid thy waste *one* object only
Would strike with awe my spirit now;

One rock … the sepulchre of glory …
There sleep the echoes that are gone,
The echoes of a mighty story;
There pined and died Napoleon.

There pined he, lone and broken-hearted.
And after, like a storm-blast, then
Another Mighty One departed,
Another Ruler among Men.

He vanish'd from among us—leaving

His laurels, Freedom, unto thee!
Roar, Ocean; swell-with tempest-grieving;
He was thy chosen bard, O sea!

Thine echoes in his voice resounded
Thy gloom upon his brow was shed,
Like thee, his soul was deep, unbounded,
Like thee 'twas mighty, dark, and dread.

The earth is empty now, * *
* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

Farewell, then, Sea! Before me gleaming
Oft wilt thou float in sunny pride,
And often shall I hear in dreaming
Thy resonance, at evening-tide.

And I shall bear, to inland meadows
To the still woods, and silent caves,
Thy rocks, thy cliffs, thy lights, thy shadows,
And all the language of the waves.

The following lines we think elegantly and prettily expressed.

Echo

To roar of beast in wild-wood still,
To thunder-roll, to bugle-trill,
To maiden singing on the hill,
To every sound
Thy voice, responsive, straight doth fill
The air around.

Thou hearkenest when the storm-blasts blow,
To thunder peal, to billow's flow,
And shepherd's call from hamlet low,
Replying straight;
But *thee* nought answers … Even so,
Poet, thy fate!

There are few things more curious than to observe how universally the same legends are to be found in the popular traditions of very distant ages and nations, under circumstances which render it extremely difficult for the most acute investigator to trace how, when, and where they were communicated, or even to give any plausible account of the origin of the legend itself. So difficult indeed is this task, that we are almost driven to account for so singular a phenomenon, by attributing to the human mind an exceedingly small endowment of originality; and

by supposing that, however the details of these ancient traditions may have been modified and adapted to suit the peculiar nature, the scenery of each particular country, or the manners, customs, and character of its inhabitants—the fundamental idea, and the leading incident, remaining the same under the most dissimilar conditions of time and place, must have a common and a single origin. This doctrine, if carried to its legitimate consequences, would lead us to consider the number of the original legends common to all times and many races, as singularly limited; and that a very short list indeed might be made to embrace the *root-stories*—the *uhrsagen*, as a German might call them. And really when we reflect that many of the most threadbare jests which figure in the recondite tomes of Mr Joseph Miller are to be found, crystallized in attic salt, in the pages of Hierocles, and represented as forming part of the "Hundred merye Talis and Jeastis" which delectated the citizens of ancient Greece; when we reflect, we repeat, that the same buffooneries, still retailed by after-dinner cits in the Sunday shades of Clapham or Camden-Town, may have raised the easy laugh of the merry Greek beneath the portico and in the Agora; it makes us entertain a very humble idea respecting the amount of creative power given to man, even for the production of so small a matter as a pleasantry, not to speak of pleasantries so very small as some of these mysterious and time-honoured jokes. If we remember, still further, that the pedigree of these trifling insects of the brain, these children of the quip, does not stop even in

the venerable pages of Hierocles—that Greek "Joe"—but loses itself, like a Welsh genealogy in the darkest gloom of antiquity, we ought not to be surprised that ancient legends, being often shattered fragments and dim shadowings-forth of mystic and hierophantic philosophy, should be found, with many of their principal features unaltered, in the popular traditions of different ages and countries.

The tale embodied in the "Lay of Olég the Wise," is identical in all its essentials with the legend still extant upon the tomb of an ancient Kentish family, in the church of (we believe) Minster, in the Isle of Sheppey. The inimitable Ingoldsby has made the adventure the subject of one of his charming "Legends," and has shown how the Knight came by his death in consequence of wounding his foot in the act of contemptuously kicking the fatal horse's skull, thus accomplishing the prophecy many years after the death of the faithful steed. The reader will perceive, that in the Russian form of the legend the hero dies by the bite of a serpent, and not by the less imposing consequences of mortification in the toe; but the identity of the leading idea in the two versions of the old tale, is too striking not to be remarked. It is only necessary to observe that Olég is still one of the popular heroes of Russian legendary lore, and that the feast, to which allusion is made at the end of the poem, is the funeral banquet customary among the ancient Slavons at the burial of their heroes; and resembling the funeral games of the heroic age in Greece. The Slavonians, however, had the habit, on such

occasions, of sacrificing a horse over the tumulus or barrow of the departed brave. The *Perún* mentioned in the stanzas was the War-God of this ancient people.

The Lay of the Wise Olég

Wise Olég to the war he hath bouned him again,
The Khozárs have awaken'd his ire;
For rapine and raid, hamlet, city, and plain
Are devoted to falchion and fire.
In mail of Byzance, girt with many a good spear,
The Prince pricks along on his faithful destrere.

From the darksome fir-forest, to meet that array,
Forth paces a gray-haired magician:
To none but Perún did that sorcerer pray,
Fulfilling the prophet's dread mission:
His life he had wasted in penance and pain:—
And beside that enchanter Olég drew his rein.

"Now rede me, enchanter, beloved of Perún,
The good and the ill that's before me;
Shall I soon give my neighbour-foes triumph, and soon
Shall the earth of the grave be piled o'er me?
Unfold all the truth; fear me not; and for meed,
Choose among them—I give thee my best battle-steed."

"O, enchanters they care not for prince or for peer,
And gifts are but needlessly given;
The wise tongue ne'er stumbleth for falsehood or fear,
'Tis the friend of the councils of Heaven!
The years of the future are clouded and dark,
Yet on thy fair forehead thy fate I can mark:

"Remember now firmly the words of my tongue;
For the chief finds a rapture in glory:
On the gate of Byzantium thy buckler is hung,
Thy name shall be deathless in story;
Wild waves and broad kingdoms thy sceptre obey,
And the foe sees with envy so boundless a sway:

"And the blue sea, uplifting its treacherous wave,
In its wrath—in the hurricane-hour—
And the knife of the coward, the sword of the brave,
To slay thee shall never have power:
Within thy strong harness no wound shalt thou know,
For a guardian unseen shall defend thee below.

"Thy steed fears not labour, nor danger, nor pain,
His lord's lightest accent he heareth,
Now still, though the arrows fall round him like rain,
Now o'er the red field he careereth;
He fears not the winter, he fears not to bleed—
Yet thy death-wound shall come from thy good battle-steed!"

Olég smiled a moment, but yet on his brow,

And lip, thought and sorrow were blended:
In silence he bent on his saddle, and slow
The Prince from his courser descended;
And as though from a friend he were parting with pain,
He strokes his broad neck and his dark flowing mane.

"Farewell then, my comrade, fleet, faithful, and bold!
We must part—such is Destiny's power:
Now rest thee—I swear, in thy stirrup of gold
No foot shall e'er rest, from this hour.
Farewell! we've been comrades for many a long year—
My squires, now I pray ye, come take my destrere.

"The softest of carpets his horse-cloth shall be:
And lead him away to the meadow;
On the choicest of corn he shall feed daintilie,
He shall drink of the well in the shadow."
Then straightway departed the squires with the steed,
And to valiant Olég a fresh courser they lead.

Olég and his comrades are feasting, I trow;
The mead-cups are merrily clashing:
Their locks are as white as the dawn-lighted snow
On the peak of the mountain-top flashing:
They talk of old times, of the days of their pride,
And the fights where together they struck side by side.

"But where," quoth Olég, "is my good battle-horse?
My mettlesome charger—how fares he?

Is he playful as ever, as fleet in the course;
His age and his freedom how bears he?"
They answer and say: on the hill by the stream
He has long slept the slumber that knows not a dream.

Olég then grew thoughtful, and bent down his brow:
"O man, what can magic avail thee!
A false lying dotard, Enchanter, art thou:
Our rage and contempt should assail thee.
My horse might have borne me till now, but for thee
Then the bones of his charger Olég went to see.

Olég he rode forth with his spearmen beside;
At his bridle Prince Igor he hurried:
And they see on a hillock by Dniépr's swift tide
Where the steed's noble bones lie unburied:
They are wash'd by the rain, the dust o'er them is cast,
And above them the feather-grass waves in the blast.

Then the Prince set his foot on the courser's white skull;
Saying: "Sleep, my old friend, in thy glory!
Thy lord hath outlived thee, his days are nigh full:
At his funeral feast, red and gory,
'Tis not thou 'neath the axe that shall redden the sod,
That my dust may be pleasured to quaff thy brave blood.

"And am I to find my destruction in *this*?
My death in a skeleton seeking?"
From the skull of the courser a snake, with a hiss,

Crept forth, as the hero was speaking:
Round his legs, like a ribbon, it twined its black ring;
And the Prince shriek'd aloud as he felt the keen sting.

The mead-cups are foaming, they circle around;
At Olég's mighty Death-Feast they're ringing;
Prince Igor and Olga they sit on the mound;
The war-men the death-song are singing:
And they talk of old times, of the days of their pride,
And the fights where together they struck side by side.

We know not whether our readers will be attracted or repelled by the somewhat exaggerated tone of thought, and the strangeness and novelty of the metre, in the following little piece. The gloom of the despondency expressed in the lines is certainly Byronian—and haply "something more." It is to be hoped, however, that they may find favour in the eyes of the English reader—always so "novitatis avidus,"—if only on the score of the singularity of the versification:—

Remembrance

When for the sons of men is stilled the day's turmoil,
And on the dumb streets of the city
With half-transparent shade sinks Night, the friend of Toil—
And Sleep—calm as the tear of Pity;

Oh, then, how drag they on, how silent, and how slow,
The lonely vigil-hours tormenting;
How sear they then my soul, those serpent fangs of woe,
Fangs of heart-serpents unrelenting!
Then burn my dreams: in care my soul is drown'd and dead,
Black, heavy thoughts come thronging o'er me;
Remembrance then unfolds, with finger slow and dread,
Her long and doomful scroll before me.
Then reading those dark lines, with shame, remorse, and fear,
I curse and tremble as I trace them,
Though bitter be my cry, though bitter be my tear,
Those lines—I never shall efface them:

There is another little composition in the same key.

"I have outlived the hopes that charm'd me."

I have outlived the hopes that charm'd me,
The dreams that once my heart could bless!
'Gainst coming agonies I've arm'd me,
Fruits of the spirit's loneliness.

My rosy wreath is rent and faded
By cruel Fate's sirocco-breath!
Lonely I live, and sad, and jaded,
And wait, and wait—to welcome death!

Thus, in the chilly tempest shivering,
When Winter sings his song of grief,
Lone on the bough, and feebly quivering,
Trembles the last belated leaf.

The following is a somewhat new version of the famous "E pur si muove" of Galileo.

Motion

"There is," once said the bearded sage, "no motion!"
The other straight 'gan move before his eyes:
The contrary no stronglier could he prove.
All praised the answerer's ingenious notion.
Now, Sirs; this story doth to me recall
A new example of the fact surprising:
We see each day the sun before us rising,
Yet right *was* Galileo, after all!

In the spirited lines addressed to "The Slanderers of Russia," Púshkin has recorded a sufficiently conclusive reply to the hackneyed calumnies against his country, repeated with such a nauseating uniformity, and through so long a period of time, in wretched verse, or more wretched prose, in the leading articles of obscure provincial newspapers, and on the scaffolding of obscure provincial hustings. Whatever may be the merits or

demerits, in a moral point of view, of the part played by Russia in the events alluded to by the poet, events which form the stock subject of the scribblings and spoutings we speak of, these tiresome tirades do not come with a very good grace from either England or France. There is a very excellent and venerable proverb which expresses the imprudence of the practice of throwing stones, when indulged in by the inhabitant of an abode composed of a vitreous substance, not to mention a still more greybearded and not less wise saw, specifying, in terms rather forcible than dignified, the impolicy of the pot alluding in an opprobrious manner to the blackness which characterizes the sitting part of its fellow-utensil, the kettle; and the "wisdom of ages" might, in the present instance, be very reasonably adduced to moderate the excessive moral susceptibilities of the aforesaid writers and declaimers, and to restrain the feeble flood of words —the dirty torrent of shallow declamation, so incessantly poured forth against Russia on the subject of Poland. "Judge not, that ye be not judged!" is an excellent precept for the guidance of nations as well as of individuals; and, we think, a Russian, wearied by the tiresome repetition of the same accusations against his native country, can hardly be blamed for asking, in language even more energetic than that here employed by Púshkin, whether England or France have hands so clean, or a conscience so clear, as to justify them in their incessant and insolent attempt to sit in judgment upon their European sister. We certainly think that the recollection of the Affghan war,

the bombardment of Copenhagen, of the splendid exploits of Whig policy and Whig non-intervention in Spain, might make England a little more modest, and a little less inclined to declaim against the wickedness of other nations—and as to France, her whole history, from the Republic to the present day, is nothing but a succession of lessons which might teach *la grande nation* to abstain from exhibiting herself in the character of a moral instructress to the world.

To the Slanderers of Russia

Why rave ye, babblers, so—ye lords of popular wonder?
Why such anathemas 'gainst Russia do ye thunder?
What moves your idle rage? Is't Poland's fallen pride?
'Tis but Slavonic kin among themselves contending,
An ancient household strife, oft judged but still unending,
A question which, be sure, *ye* never can decide.
For ages past have still contended
These races, though so near allied:
And oft 'neath Victory's storm has bended
Now Poland's, and now Russia's side.
Which shall stand fast in such commotion,
The haughty Liákh, or faithful Russ?
And shall Slavonic streams meet in a Russian ocean—
Or *that* dry up? This is the point for us.

Peace, peace! your eyes are all unable
To read our history's bloody table;
Strange in your sight and dark must be
Our springs of household enmity!
To you the Kreml and Praga's tower
Are voiceless all—you mark the fate
And daring of the battle-hour—
And understand us not, but hate …

What stirs ye? Is it that this nation
On Moscow's flaming wall, blood-slaked and ruin-quench'd,
Spurn'd back the insolent dictation
Of Him before whose nod ye blench'd?
Is it that into dust we shatter'd
The Dagon that weigh'd down all earth so wearily?
And our best blood so freely scatter'd
To buy for Europe peace and liberty?

Ye're bold of tongue—but hark, would ye in *deed* but try it
Or is the hero, now reclined in laurell'd quiet,
Too weak to fix once more Izmáil's red bayonet?
Or hath the Russian Tsar ever in vain commanded?
Or must we meet all Europe banded?
Have we forgot to conquer yet?
Or rather, shall they not, from Perm to Tauris' fountains,
From the hot Colchian steppes to Finland's icy mountains,
From the grey Kreml's half-shatter'd wall,
To far Kathay, in dotage buried—
A steelly rampart close and serried,

Rise—Russia's warriors—one and all?
Then send your numbers without number,
Your madden'd sons, your goaded slaves,
In Russia's plains there's room to slumber,
And well they'll know their brethen's graves!

We are not sure whether we are right in yielding to the temptation of transcribing in these sheets so many of the smaller lyrics and fugitive pieces of our author; and whether that very charm of *form* and *expression* which attract so strongly our admiration to the originals, should not have rather tended to deter us from so difficult an attempt as that of transposing them into another language. The chief grace and value of such productions certainly consists less in the quantity or weight of the gold employed in their composition, than in the beauty and delicacy of the image stamped or graven upon the metal; and the critic may object against us, if our critic be in a severe mood (quod Dii avertant boni!) the rashness of the numismatist, who should hope, in recasting the exquisite medals of antique art, to retain—or even imperfectly imitate—the touches of the Ionic or the Corinthian chisel.

True as is the above reasoning with respect to the slighter productions of poetry in all languages, it is peculiarly true when applied to the smaller offspring of Púshkin's muse; and were we not sufficiently convinced of the danger and the arduousness of our attempt, by our own experience and by analogy, we should have found abundant reason for diffidence in the often repeated

counsels of Russians, who all unite in asserting that there is something so peculiarly delicate and inimitable in the diction and versification of these little pieces, as to be almost beyond the reach of a foreigner's *appreciation*, and, consequently, that any attempt at *imitation* must, *à fortiori*, of necessity be a failure. Notwithstanding all this, and despite many sinister presages, we have obstinately persevered in our determination to clothe in an English dress those pieces, great and small—gems or flowers, productions perfumed by grace of diction, or heavy with weight of thought—which struck us most forcibly among the poems of our author; and we hope that our boldness, if not our success, may be rewarded with the approbation of such of our countrymen as may be curious to know something of the tone and physiognomy of the Russian literature.

Presentiment

Clouds anew have gather'd o'er me,
Sad and grim, and dark and still;
Black and menacing before me
Glooms the Destiny of Ill …

In contempt with fate contending,
Shall I bring, to meet her flood,
The enduring and unbending
Spirit of my youthful blood?

Worn with life-storm, cold and dreary,
Calmly I await the blast,
Saved from wreck, yet wet and weary,
I may find a port at last.

See, it comes—the hour thou fearest!
Hour escapeless! We must part!
Haply now I press thee, dearest,
For the last time, to my heart.

Angel mild and unrepining,
Gently breathe a fond farewell—
Thy soft eyes, through tear-drops shining,
Raised or lower'd—shall be my spell:

And thy memory abiding,
To my spirit shall restore
The hope, the pride, the strong confiding
Of my youthful days once more.

Perhaps our readers would like to see a *Russian Sonnet*. To many the name of such a thing will seem a union of two contradictory terms; but, nevertheless, here is a sonnet, and not a bad one either.

The Madonna

With mighty pictures by the Great of Old
Ne'er did I long to deck my cell, intending
That visitors should gape and peer, commending
In Connoisseurship's jargon quaint and cold.

One picture only would I aye behold
On these still walls, 'mid these my toils unending;
One, and but one: From mists of cloudy gold
The Virgin Mother, o'er her Babe-God bending—

Her eyes with grandeur, *His* with reason bright—
Should calm look down, in glory and in light,
While Sion's palm beside should point to heaven.
And God hath granted this fond prayer of mine:
Thou, my Madonna, thou to me wert given,
Divinest form of beauty most divine!

The last production which we shall present in our present bundle of samples, selected from Púshkin's lyrics, is the irregular ode entitled *André Chénier*. This composition is founded upon one of the most well-known and tragic episodes of the first French Revolution: the execution of the young and gifted poet whose name forms the title of the lines. The story of Chénier's imprisonment and untimely death, as well as the various allusions

to the beautiful verses addressed by him to his fellow-prisoner, La Jeune Captive, to his calm bearing on the scaffold, and to the memorable exclamation which was made in the last accents ever uttered by his lips; all these things are, doubtless, sufficiently familiar to our readers; or, if not, a single reference, either to any of the thousand books describing that most bloody and yet powerfully attractive period of French history—nay, the simple turning to the article *Chénier*, in any biographical dictionary, will be amply sufficient to recall to the memory the principal facts of the sad story which Púshkin has made the subject of his noble elegy. It will be therefore unnecessary for us to detail the life and death of the hero of the poem, and we shall only throw together, in these short preliminary remarks, the few quotations and notes appended by the Russian poet to his work. These will not be found of any very formidable extent; and as the poem itself is not of a considerable length, we trust that the various passages, which these quotations are adduced to illustrate, will be sufficiently perceptible, without our submitting to the necessity of appending them in the form of marginal annotations or foot-notes, a necessity which would force us to load the text with those unsightly appendages to books in general, and to poetry in particular—the asterisks and daggers of marginal reference.

The supposed soliloquy of the martyred poet, which forms the principal portion of Púshkin's elegiac ode, is little else than an amplification, or pathetic and dignified paraphrase, of the exquisite composition actually written by Chénier on the eve

of his execution; a composition become classical in the French literature:—

> "Comme un dernier rayon, comme un dernier zephyr
> Anime le soir d'un beau jour,
> Au pied de l'échafaud j'essaie encore ma lyre."

Of the few persons to whom allusion is made in the verses, *Abel*, *Fanny*, and the *Captive Maid*, all that it is necessary to know is, that the first was one of his friends, the companion of his early happiness, and the fellow-labourer of his early studies—"Abel, doux confidant de mes jeunes mystères;" the second, one of his mistresses; and the third, a young lady, Mlle. de Coigny, who was for some time his fellow-prisoner, and the person to whom the poet addressed the touching verses which we have mentioned above. Mlle. de Coigny was the "Jeune Captive."

In justification of the very emphatic tone in which Púshkin has recorded the noble generosity and self-sacrifice which conducted Chénier to the revolutionary scaffold, it will be sufficient to quote the words of De la Touche, and to refer the reader to Chénier's Iambics, which drew down upon his head, and with good cause, the hatred and suspicion of Robespierre and his subordinate demons:—"Chénier avait mérité la haine des factieux. Il avait célébré Charlotte Corday, flétri Collot d'Herbois, attaqué Robespierre. On sait que le Roi avait demandé à l'Assemblée par une lettre pleine de calme et de dignité, le droit d'appeler au peuple du jugement qui le condamnait. Cette lettre,

signée dans la nuit du 17 au 18 Janvier, est d'André Chénier."—H. De la Touche.

The unfortunate poet was executed on the 8th of Thermidor; *i.e.* the day before the fall of Robespierre. The fatal tumbril which bore Chénier to the guillotine, conveyed also to the same scaffold the poet Roucher, his friend:—"Ils parlèrent de la poesie à leurs derniers moments; pour eux, après l'amitiè, c'était la plus belle chose de la terre. Racine fût l'objet de leur entretien et de leur derrière admiration. Ils voulurent réciter ses vers; ils choisirent la prémière scène d'Andromaque."—H. de la Touche.

At the place of execution, Chénier struck his forehead with his hand, and exclaimed—"Pourtant j'avais quelque chose là!"

André Chénier

"Ainsi, triste et captif, ma lyre toutefois S'éveillait."

While earth, with wonderment and fear,
O'er Byron's urn is sadly bending,
And unto Europe's dirge its ear
By Dante's side his shade is lending,

Another shade my voice doth crave,
Who erst, unsung, unwept, unfriended,

In the grim Terror-days descended
From the red scaffold, to the grave.

Love, Peace, the Woodlands, did inspire
That Poet's dreams, sublime and free;
And to that Bard a stranger's lyre
Shall ring—shall ring to him and thee.

The lifted axe—what! cannot slaughter tire?—
For a new victim calls again.
The bard is ready; hark, his pensive lyre
Awakes its last, its parting strain.

At dawn he dies—a mob-feast hot and gory;
But that young Poet's latest breath
What doth it sing? Freedom it sings and glory,
'Twas faithful even unto death.

" * * * * *
* * * * * *
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* * "I shall not see ye, days of bliss and freedom:
The scaffold calls. My last hours wearily
Drag on. At dawn I die. The headsman's hand defiling,
By the long hair will lift my head on high
Above the crowd unmoved and smiling.
Farewell! My homeless dust, O friends! shall ne'er repose

In that dear spot where erst we pass'd 'neath sunny bowers
In science and in feasts our careless days, and chose
Beforehand for our urns a place among the flowers.
And if, my friends, in after years
With sadness my remembrance moves ye,
O, grant my dying prayer!—the prayer of one who loves ye:
Weep, loved ones, weep my lot, with still and silent tears;
Beware, or by those drops suspicion ye may waken;
In this bad age, ye know, e'en tears for crimes are taken:
Brother for brother now, alas! must weep no more.

And yet another prayer: you've listen'd o'er and o'er
Unto my idle rhymes, my spirit's careless breathings,
Mournful and gay by turns, traditions and bequeathings
Of all my vanish'd youth. And hopes, and joy, and pain,
And tears, and love, my friends, those burning leaves contain,
Yea, they contain my life. From Abel and from Fanny
Gather them all; for they are gifts of Muses many.
Keep them. The stern cold world, and fashion's gilded hall,
Shall never hear of them. Alas! my head must fall
Untimely: my unripe and crude imagination
To glory hath bequeath'd no grand and high creation;
I shall die *all*. But ye, who love my parting soul,
Keep for yourselves, O friends! my true though simple scroll;
And when the storm is past, in a fond crowd assemble
Sometimes to read my lines—to read, to weep, and tremble,
And weep, and read again, and say—Yes, this is he;
These are his words. And I, from death's cold fetter free,
Will rise unseen and sit among ye in the bower;

And drink your tears, as drinks the desert-sand the shower—
In sweet oblivion.... Then shall, haply, be repaid
All my love-woes, and thou, haply, my *Captive Maid*,
Will list my love-song then, pale, mournful, but relenting...."
But for a while the Bard ceased here his sad lamenting,
Ceased for a moment's space, and his pale head he bow'd.
The spring-days of his youth, loves, woes, a busy crowd,
Flitted before him. Girls with languid eyes and tender,
And feasts, and songs, and eyes of dark and burning splendour,
All, all revived; and far to the dim past he flew,
Dream-wing'd. But soon stream'd forth his murmur-song anew:—

"Why luredst thou me astray, thou Genius evil-fated?
For love, for quiet arts, and peace, I was created;
Why did I leave the shade, and life's untroubled way,
And liberty, and friends, and peace, more dear than they!
Fate lull'd my golden youth, and cast a glamour round me,
And joy, with careless hand, and happiness, had crown'd me,
And the Muse shared my hours of leisure, pure and free.
In those so joyous nights, lighted with friendly glee,
How rang that dear abode with rhyme and merry laughter—
Waking the household gods—how rang each shouting rafter!
Then, weary of the feast, I from the wine-cup turn'd,
For a new sudden fire within my bosom burn'd,
And to my lady's bower I flew upon the morrow,
And found her half in wrath and half in girlish sorrow,
And with fond threats, and tears bedimming her soft eyes,

She cursed my age, still drown'd in ceaseless revelries,
She drove me from her, wept, forgave, and pouting chided:
How sweetly then my time like some bright river glided!
Ah, why from this calm life, in youth's most golden prime,
Plunged I in this abyss, this seething hell of crime,
Of passions fierce and fell, black ignorance, and madness,
Malice, and lust of gold! O visionary Gladness!
Where hast thou lured me, where? And was it then for me,
A worshipper of love, of peace, and poesy,
To brawl with sworders vile, wretches who stab for hire!
Was it for me to tame the restive courser's fire
To shake the rein, or wield the mercenary blade!
And yet, what shall I leave?—A trace that soon shall fade,
Of blind and senseless zeal; of courage—idle merit!—
Be dumb, my voice, be dumb! And thou, thou lying spirit,

Thou word, thou empty sound....Oh no!
Be still, ye murmurings of weakness!
And thou, O Bard! with rapture glow:
Thou hast not bent, with slavish meekness,
Before our age's shame thy brow;
The splendours of the wicked spurning,
Thou wav'dst a torch, terrific burning,
Whose lurid lustre fiercely fell
On that foul nest of vulture-rulers;
Loud rang thy lash and reach'd them well.

Around them hiss'd thy winged verse;

Thou did'st invoke upon them the avenger;
Thou sang'st to Marat's worshippers
The dagger and the Virgin-Nemesis!
When that old holy man strove from the axe to tear
With a chain-laden hand his master's crowned head,
Thou gav'st thy hand unto the noble pair;
Before ye, struck with horror, fell
That Areopagus of hell.
Be proud, O Bard! and thou, fiend-wolf of blood and guile,
Sport with my head awhile;
'Tis in thy clutch. But hark! and know, thou Godless one,
My shout shall follow thee, my triumph-laugh of joy!
Aye, drink our blood, live to destroy:
Thou'rt but a pigmy still; thy race shall soon be run.
An hour will come, an hour thou can'st not flee—
Thou shalt fall, Tyrant! Indignation
Will Wake at last. The sobs and mournings of a nation
Will waken weary destiny.
But now I go.... 'Tis time.... But thou shalt follow me!
I wait thy coming."

Thus rang the Bard's dying lay,
And all was still around. The dim lamp's quiet ray
'Gan pale before the gleam of morning,
Into that dungeon stream'd the dawn-light of the day,
Upon the grate he bends a glance unshrinking....
A noise. They come, they call. There is no hope! 'Tis they!
Locks, bolts, and bars, and chains, are clinking.
They call.... Stay, stay; one day, but one day more,

And he shall live in liberty
A mighty citizen, when all is o'er,
Amid a nation great and free.
The silent train moves on. There stands the headsman grim;
But the Bard's path of death, the ray of friendship lighteth,
Murmuring Glory's name, he mounts—His brow he smiteth
—
Weep, Muse, for him!

MARSTON; OR, THE MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN

PART XVIII

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

Shakspeare.

On returning to London I found the world in the "transition state." The spirit of the people was changed; the nature of the war was changed; the principle of the great parties in the legislature was changed. A new era of the contest had arrived; and, in the midst of the general perplexity as to the nature of the approaching events, every one exhibited a conviction, that when they came their magnitude would turn all the struggles of the past into child's play.

I, too, had my share in the change. I had now passed my public novitiate, and had obtained my experience of statesmanship on

a scale, if too small for history, yet sufficiently large to teach me the working of the machinery. National conspiracy, the council-chamber, popular ebullition, and the tardy but powerful action of public justice, had been my tutors; and I was now felt, by the higher powers, to be not unfit for trust in a larger field. A seat in the English House of Commons soon enabled me to give satisfactory evidence that I had not altogether overlooked the character of the crisis; and, after some interviews with the premier, his approval of my conduct in Ireland was followed by the proposal of office, with a seat in the cabinet.

I had thus attained, in the vigour of life, a distinction for which hundreds, perhaps thousands, had laboured through life in vain. But mine was no couch of rosy prosperity. The period was threatening. The old days of official repose were past, never to return. The state of Europe was hourly assuming an aspect of the deepest peril. The war had hitherto been but the struggle of armies; it now threatened to be the struggle of nations. It had hitherto lived on the natural resources of public expenditure; it now began to prey upon the vitals of the kingdom. The ordinary finance of England was to be succeeded by demands pressing heavily on the existing generation, and laying a hereditary burden on all that were to follow. The nature of our antagonist deepened the difficulty. All the common casualties of nations were so far from breaking the enemy down, that they only gave him renewed power. Poverty swelled his ranks; confiscation swelled his coffers; bankruptcy gave him strength; faction invigorated

his government; and insubordination made him invincible. In the midst of this confusion, even a new terror arose. The democracy of France, after startling Europe, had seemed to be sinking into feebleness and apathy, when a new wonder appeared in the political hemisphere, too glaring and too ominous to suffer our eyes to turn from it for a moment. The Consulate assumed the rule of France. Combining the fiery vigour of republicanism with the perseverance of monarchy, it now carried the whole force of the country into foreign fields. Every foreign capital began to tremble. The whole European system shook before a power which smote it with the force of a cannon-ball against a crumbling bastion. The extraordinary man who now took the lead in France, had touched the string which vibrated in the heart of every native of the soil. He had found them weary of the crimes of the democracy; he told them that a career of universal supremacy was open before them. He had found them degraded by the consciousness of riot and regicide; he told them that they were the chevaliers of the new age, and destined to eclipse the chevaliers of all the ages past. His Italian campaigns, by their rapidity, their fine combinations, and their astonishing success, had created a new art of war. He had brought them romantic triumphs from the land of romance. Day by day the populace of the capital were summoned to see pageants of Italian standards, cannon, and prisoners. Every courier that galloped through the streets brought tidings of some new conquest; and every meeting of the Councils was employed in announcing the addition of

some classic province, the overthrow of some hostile diadem, or the arrival of some convoy of those most magnificent of all the spoils of war, the treasures of the Italian arts. France began to dream of the conquest of the world.

The contrast between her past calamities and her present splendour, powerfully heightened the illusion. France loves illusion; she has always rejoiced in glittering deceptions, even with the perfect knowledge that they were deceptions; and here stood the most dazzling of political charlatans, the great wonder-worker, raising phantoms of national glory even out of the charnel. The wrecks of faction, the remnants of the monarchy, and the corpses lying headless in the shadow of the guillotine, gave all semblance to the conception—France *was* a charnel. Her people, by nature rushing into extremes, wild and fierce, yet gallant and generous, had become at length conscious of the national fall in the eyes of Europe. They had been scandalized by the rudeness, the baseness, and the brutishness, of rabble supremacy. They gazed upon their own crimsoned hands and tarnished weapons with intolerable disgust; and it was in this moment of depression that they saw a sudden beam of military renown shot across the national darkness. After so long defeat that it had extinguished all but the memory of her old triumphs, France was a conqueror; after a century of helpless exhaustion, she had risen into almost supernatural vigour; after a hundred years, scarcely marked by a single victory, her capital rang with the daily sound of successful battles against the veterans of

Frederick and Maria Theresa; after lingering for generations in the obscurity so bitter to the popular heart, France had been suddenly thrown into the broadest lustre of European sovereignty. The world *was* changed; and the limits of that change offered only a more resistless lure to the popular passion, for their being still indistinct to the keenest eye of man.

But our chief struggle was at home, and the reaction of our foreign disasters came with terrible weight upon a cabinet already tottering. We saw its fate. Days and nights of the most anxious consultation, could not relieve us from the hourly increasing evidence, that the Continent was on the verge of ruin. The voice of Opposition, reinforced by the roar of the multitude, could no longer be shut out by the curtains of the council-chamber. Fox, always formidable, was never more confident and more popular, than when he made the House ring with prophecies of national downfall. His attacks were now incessant. He flung his hand-grenades night after night into our camp, and constantly with still greater damage. We still fought, but it was the fight of despair. Pitt was imperturbable; but there was not one among his colleagues who did not feel the hopelessness of calling for public reliance, when, in every successive debate, we heard the leader of Opposition contemptuously asking, what answer we had to the Gazette crowded with bankruptcy? to the resolutions of great bodies of the people denouncing the war? or to the deadly evidence of its effects in the bulletin which he held in his hand, announcing some new defeat of our allies; some new treaty

of submission; some new barter of provinces for the precarious existence of foreign thrones?

In all my recollections of public life, this was the period of the deepest perplexity. The name of the great minister has been humiliated by those who judge of the past only by the present. But then all was new. The general eye of statesmanship had been deceived by the formal grandeur of the continential sovereignties. They had lain untouched, like the bodies of their kings, with all their armour on, and with every feature unchanged; and such they might have remained for ages to come, had not a new force broken open their gilded and sculptured shrines, torn off their cerements, and exposed them to the light and air. Then a touch extinguished them; the armour dropped into dust; the royal robes dissolved; the royal features disappeared; and the whole illusion left nothing but its moral behind.

It can be no dishonour to the memory of the first of statesmen, to acknowledge that he had not the gift of prophecy. Europe had never before seen a war of the people. The burning passions, rude vigour, and remorseless daring of the multitude, were phenomena of which man knows no more than he knows of the materials of destruction which lie hid in the central caverns of the globe, and which some new era may be suffered to develope, for the new havoc of posterity. Even to this hour, I think that the true source of revolutionary triumph has been mistaken. It was not in the furious energy of its factions, nor in the wild revenge of the people, nor even in the dazzling view of national conquest.

These were but gusts of the popular tempest, currents of the great popular tide. But the mighty mover of all was the sudden change from the disgusts and depressions of serfdom, into a sense that all the world of possession lay before the bold heart and the ruthless hand. Every form of wealth and enjoyment was offered to the man who had begun life in the condition of one chained to the ground, and who could never have hoped to change his toil but for the grave. But the barrier was now cast down, and all were free to rush in. The treasury of national honours was suddenly flung open, and all might share the spoil. This was the true secret of the astonishing power of the Revolution. The man who was nothing to-day, might be everything to-morrow. The conscript might be a captain, a colonel, a general, before the Austrian or Prussian soldier could be a corporal. Who can wonder at the march of France, or the flight of her enemies?

Although every night now produced a debate, and the demand on the activity and vigilance of ministers was incessant and exhausting, the real debates in both Houses were few in comparison with those of later times. In those pitched battles of the great parties, their whole strength was mustered from every quarter; the question was long announced; and its decision was regarded as giving the most complete measure of the strength of the Cabinet and Opposition. One of these nights came, unfortunately for ministers, on the very day in which the bulletin arrived, announcing the signature of the first Austrian armistice. The passage of the Tyrol had stripped Austria of its mountain

barrier. Terror had done the rest; and the armistice was signed within three marches of Vienna! The courier who had been sent to the Austrian ambassador, and had been permitted to pass through France, reported the whole nation to be in a frenzy of triumph. He had every where seen civic processions, military displays, and illuminations in the cities. The exultation of the people had risen to the utmost height of national enthusiasm; and Europe was pronounced, by every Frenchman, from the Directory to the postilion, to be at their feet.

This intelligence was all but fatal. If a shower of cannon-balls had been poured in upon the ministerial benches, it could scarcely have produced a more sweeping effect. It was clear that the sagacity of the "independent members"—only another name for the most flexible portion of the House—was fully awake to the contingency; the "waiters upon Providence," as they were called, with no very reverent allusion, were evidently on the point of deciding for themselves; and the "King's friends"—a party unknown to the constitution, but perfectly knowing, and known by, the treasury—began to move away by small sections; and, crowded as the clubs were during the day, I never saw the minister rise with so few of his customary troops behind him. But the Opposition bench was crowded to repletion; and their leader sat looking round with good-humoured astonishment, and sometimes with equally good-humoured burlesque, on the sudden increase of his recruits. The motion was in answer to a royal message on continental subsidies. Nothing could have been

more difficult than the topic at that juncture. But I never listened to Pitt with more genuine admiration. Fox, in his declamatory bursts, was superior to every speaker whom I have ever heard. His appearance of feeling was irresistible. It seemed that, if one could have stripped his heart, it could scarcely have shown its pulsations more vividly to the eye, than they transpired from his fluent and most eloquent tongue. But if Fox was the most powerful of declaimers, Pitt was the mightiest master of the language of national council. He, too, could be occasionally glowing and imaginative. He could even launch the lighter weapons of sarcasm with singular dexterity; but his true rank was as the ruler of Empire, and his true talent was never developed but when he spoke for the interests of Empire.

On this night he was more earnest and more impressive than ever; the true description would have been, more *imperial*. He spoke, less like a debater, than like one who held the sceptre in his hand; and one who also felt that he was transmitting his wisdom as a parting legacy to a great people.

A portion of that speech, which ought never to be forgotten by the leaders of public affairs in England, was singularly full and powerful. Referring to the calumniated Revolution of 1688 —"We now stand," said he, "almost in the same position with respect to France and Europe, in which the government of William III. stood a century ago. We have only to substitute the democracy of France for the monarchy; and Europe enfeebled by the shocks of war, as it is now, for Europe untouched

and intrepid, awake to the ambition of the French king, and determined to meet him sword in hand. But the King of England was even then the guiding mind of Europe. I now demand, what was the redeeming policy of that pre-eminent sovereign? It was, never to despair of the triumph of principle; never to doubt of the ultimate fortunes of good in a contest with evil; and never to hesitate in calling upon a great and free people for the defence of that constitution which had made them great and free."

Those high-toned sentiments were received with loud cheers. Even Opposition felt the natural force of the appeal, and the cheering was universal; party was forgotten for the time, and the name of England, and the revived glory of those illustrious days, bowed the whole House at the will of the great orator. In the midst of their enthusiasm, he took from the table a volume of the records, and read the final address of William to his Parliament; the bequest of a dying king to the people whom he had rescued from slavery. This royal speech had evidently formed his manual of government, and, certainly, a nobler declaration never came from the throne.

> "My Lords and Gentlemen—I promise myself that you are met together with that just sense of the common danger of Europe, and that resentment of the late proceedings of the French king, which have been so fully and universally expressed in the loyal and seasonable addresses of my people." In allusion to the French plan of universal monarchy in the reign of Louis XIV., the speech pronounced that the alliance of Spain was the

commencement of a system for subjugating Europe. "It is fit," said the King, "that I should tell you that the eyes of all Europe are upon this Parliament—all matters are at a stand until your resolutions are known; and therefore no time ought to be lost.

"You have yet an opportunity, by God's blessing, to secure to yourselves and your posterity the quiet enjoyment of your religion and liberties, if you are not *wanting to yourselves*, but will exert the utmost vigour of the English nation. But I tell you plainly, that if you do not lay hold of this occasion, you have no reason to hope for another." One of the measures proposed was, for the maintenance of the public good faith. "I cannot but press upon you," said the King, "to take care of the public credit, which cannot be preserved but by keeping sacred the maxim, that *they shall never be losers* who trust to parliamentary security.

"Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hopes of your enemies by your unanimity. I have shown, and will always show, how desirous I am to be the common father of all my people: do you, in like manner, lay aside parties and divisions; let there be no other distinction heard of amongst us, but of those who are for the Protestant religion and the present establishment; and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French government.

"I shall only add this; that if you do, in good earnest, desire to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by the present opportunity."

Daylight shone on the windows of St Stephen's before the

debate closed. The minister had retired immediately after his exhausting speech, and left his friends to sustain the combat. It was long and fierce; but Opposition was again baffled, and the division gave us a lingering majority. It was now too late, or too early, to go to rest; and I had returned to my official apartments, to look over some returns required for the next council, when, my friend the secretary tapped at my door. His countenance looked care-worn; and for a few moments after he had sat down, he remained in total silence, with his forehead resting on his hands. This was so unlike the cheerful spirit of former times—times in which he had seemed to defy, or almost to enjoy, the struggles of public life—that I began to express alarm for his health. But he interrupted me by a look of the deepest distress, and the words "Pitt is dying." No words could be fuller of ill omen, and my anxiety was equal to his own. "My meaning," said he, "is not, that he must die to-day, or to-morrow, nor in six months, nor perhaps in a year, but that the statesman is dead. He must speak no more, act no more, and even think no more, or he must go to his grave. This night has finished the long supremacy of the noblest mind that ever ruled the councils of this country. William Pitt may live, but the minister has finished his days."

"Yet," I remarked, "I never heard him more animated or more impressive than on this night. He absolutely broke down all resistance. His mind seemed richer than ever, and his combination of facts and reasoning appeared to me unequalled by even his greatest previous efforts. I should have almost

pronounced him to be inspired by the increased difficulties of the time."

"True—yet I conveyed him from the House, fainting;—I have sate, along with his physician, at his bedside ever since, applying restoratives to him, with scarcely a hope of recovery. It is plain that another night of such effort would be too much for his frame; and the question on which I have now come to summon an immediate meeting of our friends, turns on the means of calming public opinion until he shall be able to appear in his place once more. His career is unquestionably at an end, but his name is powerful still; and though another trial of his powers in Parliament would cost him his life, still, as the head of the cabinet, he might effect, for a while, all the principal purposes of an administration."

I doubted the possibility of encountering the present strength of Opposition, reinforced, as it was, by calamity abroad, and asked, "Whether any expedient was contemplated, to restore the public fortunes on the Continent?"

"Every point of that kind has been long since considered," was the answer. "Our alliances have all failed; and we are now reproached, not simply with the folly of paying for inefficient help, but with the cruelty of dragging the states of Europe into a contest, where to be crushed was inevitable."

I still urged an enquiry into the strength of states which had never been sharers in the war. "If the minor German powers have been absorbed; if Prussia has abandoned the cause; if Austria

has fought in vain—is the *world* included in Germany?" I threw the map of Europe on the table. "See what a narrow circle comprehends the whole space to which we have hitherto limited the defence of society against the enemy of all social order. Our cause is broader than Austria and Prussia; it is broader than Europe; it is the cause of civilization itself; and why not summon all civilization to its defence? Russia alone has an army of half a million, yet she has never fired a shot." Still, I found it difficult to convince my fellow minister.

"Russia—jealous, ambitious, and Asiatic; Russia, with the Eastern world for her natural field—what object can she have in relieving the broken powers of the Continent? Must she not rather rejoice in the defeats and convulsions which leave them at her mercy?" I still continued to urge him.

"Rely upon it; it is in the North that we must look for the reinforcement. If the councils of Catharine were crafty, the councils of her successor may be sincere. Catharine thought only of the seizure of Turkey; Paul may think only of the profits of commerce. Yet, is it altogether justifiable to suppose that monarchs may not feel the same sympathies, the same principles of honour—nay, the same abhorrence of a sanguinary republicanism—which a private individual might feel in any other instance of oppression?"

"Still, Marston, I am at a loss to know by what influence a British government could urge a Russian despotism into a contest, a thousand miles from its frontier; in which it can gain no

accession of territory, and but little accession of military fame; and all this, while it is itself perfectly secure from all aggression."

"All true; but remember the striking commencement of Voltaire's Memoir of Peter—'Who could have pretended to say, in the year 1700, that a magnificent and polished court would be formed at the extremity of the Gulf of Finland; that the inhabitants of Cazan and the banks of the Wolga would be ranked among disciplined warriors, and, after beating the Turk and the Swede, gain victories in Germany? That a desert of two thousand leagues in length, should, in the space of fifty years, extend its influence to all the European courts; and that, in 1759, the most zealous patron of literature in Europe should be a Russian sovereign? The man who had said this would have been regarded as the most chimerical mortal on earth.' But all this has been done, and the career is not closed. More will be done still. It may even be our most essential policy to bring Russia into full collision with France. She is now the only rival: and I shall scarcely regret the fall of the German sovereignties, if it clears the field, to bring face to face the two great powers which hold at their sword's point the fate of the Continent."

A month passed, of perpetual difficulty in the cabinet, of ill news from abroad, and of violent discontents among the people. A deficient harvest had come, to increase the national murmurs; a season of peculiar inclemency had added its share to the public vexations; and I fully experienced the insufficiency of office, and of the showy honours of courts, to constitute happiness. But

a new scene was reserved for me. Casual as my conversation with the secretary of state had been, it was not forgotten: it had been related to the minister; and it had so far coincided with the conceptions of a mind, which seemed to comprehend every chance of human things, that I was shortly sent for, to enter into the necessary explanations. The result was, the offer of a mission to St Petersburg. The proposal was so unexpected, that I required time for my answer. I must abandon high employment at home for a temporary distinction abroad; my knowledge of Russia was slight; the character of the Czar was eccentric; and the success of an embassy, dependent on the most capricious of mankind, was so uncertain, that the result might strip me of whatever credit I already possessed.

But, there was one authority, to which I always appealed. I placed the proposal in the hands of Clotilde; and she settled all my doubts at once, by declaring, "that it was the appointment which, if she had been suffered to choose, she would have selected, in preference to all others, for its honour and its services." I had no power to resist such pleadings—seconded as they were by the rosiest smiles, and the most beaming eyes. But Clotilde was still the woman, and I only valued her the more for it. —Her sincerity had not a thought to hide; and she acknowledged her delight at the prospect of once more treading on the soil of the Continent; at gazing even on the borders of her native land, excluded as she might be from its entrance; at the enjoyment of seeing continental life in the brilliant animation of its greatest

court; and at mingling with the scene in a rank which entitled her to its first distinctions.

"But, Clotilde, how will you reconcile your tastes to the wild habits of Russia, and even to the solemn formalities of a northern court?"

"They both present themselves to me," was her answer, "with the charm at once of novelty and recollection. From my nursery days, the names of Peter, Catharine, and their marvellous city, rang in the ears of all Paris. Romance had taken refuge at the pole; Voltaire, Buffon, D'Alembert—all the wit, and all the philosophy of France—satirized the French court under the disguise of Russian panegyric; and St Petersburg was to us the modern Babylon—a something compounded of the wildness of a Scythian desert, and the lustre of a Turkish tale."

The ministerial note had been headed "most secret and confidential," and as such I had regarded it. But I soon saw the difficulty of keeping "a state secret." I had scarcely sent in my acceptance of the appointment, when I found a letter on my table from my old Israelite friend, Mordecai, congratulating me on "my decision." It was in his usual abrupt style:—

> "I was aware of the minister's offer to you within twelve hours after it was made. I should have written to you, urging its acceptance; but I preferred leaving your own judgment to settle the question. Still, I can give you some personal knowledge on the subject of Russia. I have been there for the last six months. My daughter—for what purpose I

have never been able to ascertain—took a sudden whim of hating Switzerland, and loving the snows and deserts of the North. But I have known the sex too long, ever to think of combating their wills by argument.—The only chance of success is to give way to them. Mariamne, sick of hills and valleys, and unable to breathe in the purest air of the globe, determined to try the exhalations from the marshes of the Neva. But, she is my child, after all—the only being for whom I live—and I was peculiarly grateful that she had not fixed on Siberia, or taken a resolution to live and die at Pekin. I do not regret my journey. It has thrown a new light on me. I must acknowledge to you, that I was astonished at Russia. I had known it in early life, and thought that I knew it well. But it is singularly changed. The spirit of the people—the country—the throne itself—have undergone the most remarkable of silent revolutions, and the most effective of all. Russia is now Russia no longer; she is Greece, Germany, France—and she will yet be England. Her politics and her faculties, alike, embrace the civilized world. She is Greece in her subtlety, Germany in her intelligence, and France in her ambition. St Petersburg is less the capital of her empire, though of all capitals the most magnificent, than an emblem of her mind. I often stood on the banks of the Neva, and, looking round me on their mass of palaces, involuntarily asked myself—Could all this have been the work of a single mind? Other capitals have been the work of necessity, of chance, of national defence, of the mere happiness of location. But this was founded in ambition alone—founded by the sovereign will of one who felt, that

in it he was erecting an empire of conquest; and that from this spot, in after ages, was to pour forth the force that was to absorb every other dominion of the world. Peter fixed on the site of his city to tell this to the world. I see in its framer, and in its site, the living words—'I fix my future capital in a wilderness—in a swamp—in a region of tempests—on the shores of an inhospitable sea—in a climate of nine months' winter—to show that I am able to conquer all the obstacles of nature. I might have fixed it on the shores of the Euxine—in the most fertile regions of Asia—in the superb plains of central Russia—or on the banks of the Danube; but I preferred fixing it in the extremity of the North, to show that the mind and power of Russia dreaded no impediments, of either man or nature.'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.