# VARIOUS

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## ETHIOPIA[1]

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

[1] *The Highlands of Ethiopa.* by Major W. CORNWALLIS HARRIS, H.E. I.C. Engineers. 3 vols.

regard; and mankind, in every quarter, is approaching, with greater or less speed, to that combined interest and mutual intercourse, which are the first steps to the true possession of the globe.

But, we say it with the gratification of Englishmen, proud of their country's fame, and still prouder of its principles—that the lead in this noblest of all human victories, has been clearly taken by England. It is she who pre-eminently stimulates the voyage, and plants the colony, and establishes the commerce, and civilizes the people. And all this has been done in a manner so little due to popular caprice or national ambition, to the mere will of a sovereign, or the popular thirst of possession, that it invests the whole process with a sense of unequaled security. Resembling the work of nature in the simplicity of its growth, it will probably also resemble the work of nature in the permanence of its existence. It is not an exotic, fixed in an unsuitable soil by capricions planting; but a seed self-sown, nurtured by the common air and dews, assimilated to the climate, and strikig its roots deep in the ground which it has thus, by its own instincts, chosen. The necessities of British commerce, the urgency of English protection, and the overflow of British population, have been the great acting causes of our national efforts; and as those are causes which regulate themselves, their results are as regular and unshaken, as they are natural and extensive. But England has also had a higher motive. She has unquestionably mingled a spirit of benevolence largely with her general exertions. She has

laboured to communicate freedom, law, a feeling of property, and a consciousness of the moral debt due by man to the Great Disposer of all, wherever she has had the power in her hands. No people have ever been the worse for her, and all have been the better, in proportion to their following her example. Wherever she goes, oppression decays, the safety of person and property begins to be felt, the sword is sheathed, the pen and the ploughshare commence alike to reclaim the mental and the physical soil, and civilization comes, like the dawn, however slowly advancing, to prepare the heart of the barbarian for the burst of light, in the rising of Christianity upon his eyes.

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

It is remarkable that Africa, one of the largest and most fertile portions of the globe, remains one of the least known. Furnishing

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

The population naturally divides itself into two portions, connected with the character of its surface—the countries to the north and the south of the mountains of Kong and the Jebel-al-Komr. To the north of this line of demarcation, are the kingdoms of the foreign conquerors, who have driven the original natives to the mountains, or have subjected them as slaves. This is the Mahometan land. To the south of this line dwells the Negro, in a region a large portion of which is too fiery for European life. This is Central Africa; distinguished from all the earth by the unspeakable mixture of squalidness and magnificence,

simplicity of life yet fury of passion, savage ignorance of its religious notions yet fearful worship of evil powers, its homage to magic, and desperate belief in spells, incantations and the *fetish*. The configuration of the country, so far as it can be conjectured, assists this primeval barbarism. Divided by natural barriers of hill, chasm, or river, into isolated states, they act under a general impulse of hostility and disunion. If they make peace, it is only for purposes of plunder; and, if they plunder, it is only to make slaves. The very fertility of the soil, at once rendering them indolent and luxurious, excites their passions, and the land is a scene alike of profligacy and profusion. To the south of this vast region lies a third—the land of the Caffre, occupying the eastern coast, and, with the Betjouana and the Hottentot, forming the population of the most promising portion of the continent. But here another and more enterprising race have fixed themselves; and the great English colony of the Cape, with its dependent settlements, has begun the first real conquest of African barbarism. Whether Aden may not act on the opposite coasts of the Red Sea, and Abyssinia become once more a Christian land; or whether even some impulse may not divinely come from Africa itself, are questions belonging to the future. But there can scarcely be a doubt, that the existence of a great English viceroyalty in the most prominent position of South Africa, the advantages of its government, the intelligence of its people, their advancement in the arts essential to comfort, and the interest of their protection, their industry, and their example,

must, year by year, operate in awaking even the negro to a feeling of his own powers, of the enjoyment of his natural faculties, and of that rivalry which stimulates the skill of man to reach perfection.

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

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

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

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

The triumph of Columbus, in his discovery of the New World in 1493, raised the emulation of the Portuguese, then regarded as the first navigators in the world; yet it was not until four years after, that their expedition was sent, to equalize the stupendous

[2] Reunell, p. 682.

accession to the Spanish domains, by the possession of the East. In July 1497, Gama sailed, reached Calicut May 2, 1498, and returned to Portugal, covered with well-earned renown, after a voyage of upwards of two years.

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

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

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

The persons comprising the mission were Major W.C. Harris,

Bombay Engineers, Captain Douglas Graham, Bombay army, principal assistant, with others, naturalists, draftsmen, &c., and an escort of two sergeants and fifteen rank and file, volunteers from H.M. 6th foot and the Bombay Artillery.

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

the mast-head, and then she rushes to her anchorage, leaving in her wake a long phosphoric train.

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

The coast of Arabia has no claims to the picturesque: all its charms, like those of the oyster, lie within the roughest of

possible shells. Its first aspect resembles heaps of the cinders of a glass-house—a building whose heat seems to be fully realized by the temperature of this fearful place. England has a resident there, Captain Haynes,named as political agent. That any human being, who could exist in any other place, would remain in Aden, is one of the wonders of human nature. An officer, of course, must go wherever he is sent; but such is the innate love for a post, that if this gallant and intelligent person were roasted to death, as might happen in one of the coolest days of the Ethiopian summer, there would be a thousand applications before a month was over, to the Foreign Office, for the honour of being carbonaded on the rocks of Aden.

The promontory has all the marks of volcanic eruption, and is actually recorded, by an Arab historian of the tenth century, to have been thrown up about that period. "Its sound, like the rumbling of thunder, might then be heard many miles, and from its entrails vomited forth redhot stones, with a flood of liquid fire." The crater of the extinguished volcano is still visible, though shattered and powdered down by the tread under which Alps and Appennines themselves crumble away—that of Time. The only point on which we are sceptical is the late origin of the promontory. Nothing beyond a sandhill or a heap of ashes has been produced on the face of nature since the memory of man. That a rock, or rather a mountain chain, with a peak 1800 feet high, should have been produced at any time time within the last four thousand years, altogether tasks our credulity. The powers

of nature are now otherwise employed than in rough-hewing the surface of the globe. She has been long since, like the sculptor, employed in polishing and finishing—the features were hewn out long ago. Her master-hand has ever since been employed in smoothing them.

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

Yet the Arab imagination has created its wonders even in this repulsive scene; and the generation of monkeys which tenant the higher portion of the rocks, are declared by Arab tradition to be the remnant of the once powerful tribe of Ad, changed into apes by the displeasure of Heaven, when "the King of the World," Sheddad, renowned in eastern story, presumptuously dared to form a garden which should rival Paradise. The prophet Hud remonstrated; but his remonstrances went for nothing, and the indignant monarch and his courtiers suddenly found their visages simious, their tongues chattering, and their lower portions furnished with tails—a species of transformation, which, so far as regards visage and tongue, is supposed to be not unfrequent among courtiers to this day. But this showy tradition goes

further still. The Bostan al Irem (Garden of Paradise) is believed still to exist in the deserts of Aden; though geographers differ on its position. It still retains its domes and bowers—both of indescribable beauty; its crystal fountains, and its walks strewed with pearls for sand. It is true, that no living man can absolutely aver that he has seen this place of wonders; but that is a mere result of our very wicked age. This has not been always the case; for Abdallah Ibn Aboo Kelaba passed a night in its palace in the reign of Moowiych, the prince of the Faithful. Lucky the man who shall next find it, but unlucky the world when he does; for then the day of the general conflagration will be at hand. In the mean time, it remains, like the top of Mount Meru, covered with clouds, or, like the inside of a Chinese puzzle, a work of unrivaled art, conceivable but intangible by man.

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

But England, which changes every thing, is changing all this. Within the next generation, the railway will run down the romances of Nutrib; a cotton manufactory will send up its smokes to blot out the celestial blue by day, and shoot forth its sullen illumination by night, over the anointed soil; the

minstrel will turn policeman, and the sheik be a justice of peace; political economy will have its itinerant lecturers, enlightening the Bedouins on the principles of rent and taxes; the city will have a lord mayor and corporation of the deepest black; the volcano will be planted with villas; turnpikes will measure out the sands; a hotel will flourish on the summit of Jebel Shemshan; and Aden will differ from Liverpool in nothing but being two thousand miles further from the smoke and multitudes of London.

The Arab is still the prominent person among the native population of this territory. Major Harris describes him well. The bronzed and sunburnt visage, surrounded by long matted locks of raven hair; the slender but wiry and active frame, and the energetic gait and manner, proclaimed the untamable descendant of Ishmael. He nimbly mounts the crupper of his now unladen dromedary, and at a trot moves down the bazar. A checked kerchief round his brows, and a kilt of dark blue calico round his frame, comprise his slender costume. His arms have been deposited outside the Turkish wall; and as he looks back, his meagre, ferocious aspect, flanked by that tangled web of hair, stamps him the roving tenant of the desert. It is curious to find in this remote country a custom similar to that of the fiery cross, which in old times summoned the Celtic tribes to arms. On the alarm of invasion, a branch, torn by the priest from the *nebek*, (a tree bearing a fruit like the Siberian crab,) is lighted in the fire, the flame is then quenched in the blood of a newly slaughtered ram. It is then sent forth with a messenger

to the nearest clan. Thus, great numbers are assembled with remarkable promptitude. In the invasion under Ibrahim Pasha, sixteen thousand of these wild warriors were assembled from one tribe. They crept into the Egyptian camp by night, and, using only their daggers, made such formidable slaughter, that the Pasha was glad to escape by a precipitate retreat.

The Jews form an important part of the population, as artizans and manufacturers. Feeling the natural veneration for the Chosen People in all their misfortunes, and convinced that the time will come when those misfortunes will be obliterated, it is highly gratifying to find, that even in this place of their ancient sufferings, they are beginning to feel the benefit of British protection. Hitherto, through their indefatigable industry, having acquired opulence in Arabia as elsewhere, they were afraid either to display or to enjoy it; but now, under the protection of the British flag, they not merely enjoy their wealth, but they publicly practise the rights of their religion. Stone slabs with Hebrew inscriptions mark the place of their dead. They have schools for the education of their children; and their men and women, arrayed in their holiday apparel, sit fearlessly in the synagogue, and listen to the reading of the law and the prophets, as of old. It is a great source of gratification to the philanthropist to find, that wherever England extends her power, industry, commerce, and peace are the natural result. Aden, barren as the soil is, is evidently approaching to a prosperity which it never possessed even in its most flourishing days. Emigrants from Yemen and

from both shores of the Red Sea, are daily crowding within the walls, through the security which they offer against native oppression. In the short space of three years, the population has risen to twenty thousand souls. Substantial dwellings are rising up in every quarter, and at all the adjacent ports hundreds of native merchants are only waiting the erection of permanent fortifications, in token of our intending to remain, to flock under the guns with their families and wealth. The opinion of this intelligent writer is, that Aden, as a free port, whilst she pours wealth into a now impoverished land, must erelong become the queen of the adjacent seas, and rank amongst the most useful dependencies of the British crown.

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

enquired to whom they belonged. 'To Ali,' was the reply. 'And whose knees are these?' said I, after walking half across the deck. 'Ali's.' 'And this head in the scuppers, pray whose is it?' 'Ali's; what do you want with it?' 'Ali again!' I exclaimed; 'then I must even look for stowage elsewhere.'"

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

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

After a short stay and presentation to the Sultan of Tajura, a slave-port, with a miserable old man for its master, the mission once more set forth for Shoa; yet even here we glean a specimen of Arab speech. "Trees attain not to their growth in a single

day," said an Arab, when remonstrating with the sultan on his inordinate love of lucre. "Take the tree as your text, and learn that property is to be gathered only by slow degrees." "True," said the old miser; "but, sheik, you must have lost sight of the fact, that my leaves are already withered, and that, if I would be rich, I have not a moment to lose."

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

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

The first glimpse of this phenomenon, "though curious,

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

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

alleviated by the fiery breath of the north-westerly wind, which blew without interruption during the day. The air was inflamed, the sky sparkled, and columns of burning sand, which at quick intervals towered high into the atmosphere, became so illumined as to appear like tall pillars of fire. Crowds of horses, mules, and camels, tormented to madness by the poisonous gad-fly, flocked to share the only bush; and, disputing with their heels the slender shelter it afforded, compelled several of the party to seek refuge in caves formed below by fallen masses of volcanic rock, heated to the temperature of a potter's kiln, and fairly baking up the marrow in the bones." The heat in this place, with the thermometer under the shade of cloaks and umbrellas, was at 126°. It is only surprising how any of the party survived. Certainly if Abyssinia is to be approached only by this road, the prospect of an intercourse with it from the east, appears among the most improbable things of this world.

One of the advantages of continental travel has been long since said to be, its teaching us how many comfortable things we enjoy at home; and it appears that no Englishman can comprehend the value of that despised fluid, fresh water, until he has left the precincts of his own fortunate land: but it is in Africa, and peculiarly on this Abyssinian high-road, that the value of a draught of spring water is to be especially estimated. "Since leaving the shores of India," says Major Harris, "the party had gradually been in training towards a disregard of dirty water. On board a ship of any description, the fluid is

seldom very clear or very plentiful. At Cape Aden, there was little perceptible difference between the sea water and the land water. At Tajura, the beverage obtainable was far from being improved in quality by the taint of the new skins in which it was transferred from the only well; and now, in the very heart of the scorching Tehama, where a copious draught of pure water seemed absolutely indispensable every five minutes, the mixture was the very acme of abomination. Fresh hides stript from the he-goat, besmeared inside as well as out with old tallow and strong bark tan, filled from an impure well at Sagallo, tossed and tumbled during two days and nights under a distilling heat," formed a drink which we should conclude to be little short of poison. However, the human throat learns to accommodate itself to every thing in time, and the time came when even this abomination was longed for.

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

The path itself was formidable, winding along the crest of the ridge over sheets of broken lava, with scarcely more than

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

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

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

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

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

as usual followed by a heavy fall of rain, which, owing to the unaccommodating arrangement of striking the tents at sunset, thoroughly drenched the whole party.

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

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

Forcing their way, with some difficulty, through this jungle, they obtained their first near view of the river, a "deep volume of turbid water," covered with drift wood, and rolling, at the rate

of three miles an hour, between clayey walls twenty-five feet in height. The breadth fell short of sixty yards, but the flood was not yet at its maximum. Willows, drooping over the stream, were festooned with recent drift, hanging many feet above the level of the banks; and it was evident that the waters had lately been out, to the overflowing of the country for many miles. The river, now upwards of 2200 feet above the level of the ocean forms, in this quarter, the nominal boundary of the kingdom of Shoa.

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

Africa, in all its provinces, is the scene of the boldest field sports in the world—India and its tigers, perhaps, excepted. But Africa excels even India in the variety and multitude of its mighty savages—lions, elephants, panthers, and hippopotami; the sands,

the forests, the jungles, the rivers, the marshes, every thing and place abounds with brute life, on the largest, the boldest, and the fiercest scale. Africa, with the human race on the lowest grade, has the brute on the highest, and its true name is the great kingdom of savage nature.

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

The soil now became swampy, yet only the more filled with animal existence. LE ADO, (the White Water,) a lake which they skirted, of two miles' diameter, was the haunt of countless wild-fowl, geese, mallards, teal, herons, flamingoes. A party of Bedouin women deposed to having seen another "party" of elephants taking a bath in the spot half an hour before, and

the prints of their huge feet in the moist sands corroborated the testimony. Hideously withered women followed the march of the mission, carrying curds, and covered over with marsh-flies. Above, vast flights of locusts, which had stripped the coast, were pouring in towards Abyssinia. "They quite darkened the air" where the caravan halted; and above them again were a host of adjutant birds, sometimes bursting down through the mass, and then stooping to the ground, and stalking along to devour the killed and wounded. This is the land, too, of the hurricane. Nature is queen or tyrant here; the thunder tears the sensorium; the lightning burns out the eyes; the rain is a cataract; the hall is a continued volley of ice; the clouds stoop to earth, and bury the daylight like a shroud; the rivers become torrents; the dry plain becomes first a swamp, and then a sea. Tents and tarpaulins are useless to keep out the deluge from above, or are beaten down by its weight on the heads of the unfortunates who trust to them for shelter, until at length the caravan, stripped of all covering, has no resource but to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, and, shivering and shelterless, wait until the hurricane has howled itself away.

At length they reached the city of Furri, loaded, for the thirty-fifth time, with the baggage of the British embassy. The caravan, escorted by a detachment of three hundred matchlock men, with flutes playing, and muskets echoing, and the heads of the warriors decorated with white plumes, on the 16th July entered the frontier town of the kingdom of Efat. Clusters of conical-

roofed houses, covering the sides of twin hills, here presented the first permanent habitations that had greeted the eye since leaving the sea-coast—rude and ungainly, but right welcome signs of transition from depopulated waste to the abodes of man. The African seems a robber by nature, and the sight of the bales and boxes excited the national propensity in a most violent degree. Even the royal ministers and courtiers seem to have felt a passion for looking into those prohibited treasures, which evidently tempted their virtue in a most perilous degree. Meanwhile a special messenger arrived, bearing reiterated compliments from the Negoos, (king,) with a horse and a mule from the royal stud, attired in the peculiar trappings which belong to majesty. Those animals awoke all the loyal curiosity of the people. At the sight women and girls, enveloped in blood-red shifts, who had thronged to stare at the strangers, burst into a scream of acclamation. A group of hooded widows thrust their fingers into their ears and joined in the clamour. The escort and camel-drivers placed no bounds to their hilarity. A fat ox, that had been promised, was turned loose among the spectators, pursued by fifty savages with their gleaming *creeses*, and hamstrung by a dexterous blow, which threw it bellowing to the earth in the height of its mad career, and tribes of lean curs commenced an indiscriminate engagement over the garbage.

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

long for running away.

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

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

All this is so like England, and so unlike Africa, that we should suspect the major's memory to have been as active at least as his observation. But the work contains so much internal evidence

of accuracy, independently of the confidence attached to the character of the intelligent writer himself, that we must believe the heart of Ethiopa to possess secnes that would be worthy of the heart of our own fresh and flower-bearing island. The scene which follows is quite Arcadian.

> "The wild rose, the fern, the lantana, and the honeysuckle, smiled round a succession of highly cultivated terraces, and on every eminence, stood a cluster of conically thatched houses, environed by green hedges, and partially embowered amid dark trees As the troop passed on, the peasant abandoned his occupation to gaze at the novel procession; while merry groups of hooded women, decked in scarlet and crimson left their avocations in the hut to welcome the king's guests with a shrill *ziroleet*, which ran from every hand. Birds warbled among the groves. At various turns of the road the prospect was rugged, wild, and beautiful. The first Christian village was soon revealed on the summit of a height. Three principal ranges of hills were next crossed in succession. Lastly, the view opened upon the wooded site of Ankober occupying a central position in a horseshoe crescent of mountains, still high above which enclose a magnificent amphitheatre of ten miles in diameter. This is clothed throughout with a splendid vigorous, and varied vegetation."

The embassy now halted, waiting for permission to enter the capital, and taking up their quarters in a town three thousand feet above Furri, on the frontier. The escort of the troop fired a salute

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

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

After remaining some time in the market-place, the governor of the town appeared, and conducted the mission to the house of an old Moslem woman, where they were to lodge for the night. The names of the three daughters, Major Harris observes, were worthy of the days of Prince Cherry and Fair Star. They were

Eve, Sweet Limes, and Sunbeam. The ladies vacated the house with great good-humour; but it was low, intolerably filthy, and without bedding or food. The unfortunate mission had thus to spend a night, probably unequaled by their sufferings in the open field. Though so near the equator, they felt the cold severely; rain set in with great violence, pouring through the roof, and entering into the threshold. A fire was indispensable, yet they were nearly suffocated with smoke; they were devoured with insects, and in this torment and fever tossed till dawn. At the arrival of morning they received the disappointing message, that the king could not yet visit his capital, but that they might either seek him among the mountains, or wait for him where they were.

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

The rainy season was now setting in, and the situation of the embassy became more comfortless from day to day. Notes were

written, and answers received from the monarch, but the royal interview was still postponed, partly by the artifice of the knavish governors, who kept a longing eye on the presents, and partly by the barbarian etiquette of showing the natives the scorn with which their king was entitled to treat all the nations of the world.

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

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

They now ascended through a country of romantic beauty, to Machalwan, the place appointed for the interview. The Abyssinian in charge of the embassy, was now sent forward to obtain permission to fire a salute of twenty-one guns on the arrival of the troop at the royal residence. This request seemed to have alarmed his majesty in no slight degree. The

most romantic reports of the ordnance had gone before them. It was currently believed that their discharge was sufficient to set fire to the ground, to shiver rocks, and to dismantle mountain fastnesses. Men were said to have arrived, with "copper legs," who served those tremendous engines; and in alarm for the safety of his palace, capital, and treasures, the suspicious monarch still peremptorily insisted on withholding the desired license, until he should have seen the battery "with his own eyes." It rained incessantly during the night which preceded the day of presentation, and until the morning broke; when a great volume of white mist rose from the deep valleys, and drifted like a scene-curtain across the summit of the giant Mamrat. The whole troop now began to ascend the mountain; and, as they approached within sight of the stockaded palace, the escort commenced to fire their matchlocks. The view here is described as very lovely, and giving some conception of European variety of vegetation, with tropical luxuriance. Farm-houses, rich fields, foaming cascades, and bright green meadows covered with flowers, met the eye on every side; and above all towered the great Abyssinian range, some thousand feet perpendicularly overhead, with its summits crested with clouds. The crowd of spectators was immense, and were repelled only by strokes of the bamboo. At length a large tent was pitched for the reception of the embassy, the floor was strewed with heath, myrtles, and other aromatic shrubs; and the weather having cleared up, "the mission, radiant with plumes and gold embroidery, moved on."

As they reached the precincts of the palace, the artillery fired a salute, which equally awed and astonished the multitude, the discharge being followed by universal shouts in the native tongue of—"Wonderful English! Well done, well done!"

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

The monarch was not unworthy of figuring in this pomp. Forty summers, of which eight-and-twenty had been passed on the throne, had slightly furrowed his forehead, and grizzled a full bushy head of hair, arranged in elaborate curls. But, though wanting the left eye, "the expression of his manly features,

open, pleasing, and commanding, did not belie the character for impartial justice which he had obtained far and wide; even the robber tribes of the low country calling him a fine balance of gold."

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

But a more serious and a more striking display was still to follow. The artillery were to exhibit their powers; and the crowd

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

> "Forty years have rolled away since Asfa Woosen, on whose memory be peace! grandsire to our beloved monarch, saw in a dream that the red men were bringing into his kingdom, curious and beautiful commodities from countries beyond the great sea. The astrologers, on being commanded to give an interpretation thereof, predicted with one accord, that foreigners from the land of Egypt would come into Abysinia during his majesty's most illustrious reign; and that yet more and wealthier would follow in that of his son, and of his son's son, who should sit next upon the throne. Praise be unto God, that the dream and its interpretation have now been fulfilled! Our eyes,

though they be old, have never beheld wonders until this day; and during the reign over Shoa of seven successive kings, no such miracles as these have been wrought in Ethiopia!!"

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

This warrior, advancing with his line, galloped up in front, and made a speech in the manner of old heroic times, vaunting his past prowess and his present loyalty, his troopers accompanying the more succcessful parts of his speech by striking the lance upon the targe. At the close, he threw his spears upon the ground, unsheathed his two-edged falchion, gave a howl, which was

answered by a roar from his horsemen, and a discharge of fire-arms; and the whole made a dash, and charged across the parade.

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

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

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

The march was peculiar, and even pompous, in its kind. It was extraordinary to see it preceded by a copy of the Holy Scriptures, under a canopy of scarlet cloth, and borne on a mule;

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

When night fell, rockets were fired by the royal command, "to

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

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

The march, and the foray into the country of one of the

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

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

On the return of this destroying expedition, which seems to have turned a very fine country into a desert, the king made a kind of triumphal entry into his capital. His costume was splendidly savage. A lion's skin over his shoulders,

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

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

The chief object of the embassy was still to be accomplished —the formation of something that approached to a treaty of

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

The monarch, elated with his knowledge, now determined to

build a bridge, which in three days was completed; and, as was predicted by the quiet English spectators, in three hours fell down on the very first fresh produced by the annual rains.

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

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

The hereditary provinces at this day subject to the King of Shoa, are comprised in a rectangular domain of 150 by 90 miles; an area traversed by five systems of mountains, of which the culminating point divides the basin of the Nile from that of the Hawash. The Christian population of Shoa and Efat are estimated

at a million; and the Moslem and Pagan population at a million and a half. The royal revenues are said to amount to 80,000 or 90,000 German crowns, arising chiefly from import duties in slaves, merchandise, and salt. As the annual expenses of the state do not exceed 10,000 dollars; it is presumed that the king, during his thirty years' reign, has amassed much treasure, which is regularly deposited under ground.

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

The practical religion of the Abyssinian Christian is of the very lowest degree of formality. Fasts, penances, and excommunications, form the chief discipline; but the penitent can always provide a substitute for the two former, and the latter is always to be averted by money. Spiritual offences, however, are rare; for murder and sacrilege alone give umbrage to the easy conscience of the natives of Shoa. Abstinence and largesses of money are equivalent to wiping away every sin. Their creed advises the invocation of saints, confession to the priest, and faith in charms and amulets. Prayers for the dead,

and absolution, are indispensable; and, as a more summary mode of relieving the burdens of the flesh, it is pronounced, that all sins are forgiven from the moment that the kiss of the pilgrim is imprinted on the stones of Jerusalem, and that even kissing the hand of a priest purifies the body from all sin. A creed of this order, which makes spiritual safety dependent, not upon personal purification of mind and divine mercy, but upon forms which are unconnected with either, and which even can be executed by a substitute, of course excludes the necessity for morals of any kind. All is corruption—"Born amid falsehood and deceit, cradled in bloodshed, and nursed in the arms of idleness and debauchery, the national character almost defies the missionary."

There are some strange remnants of Judaism still lingering amongst the tribes of these highland regions. The Galla have a tradition, that their whole nation will one day be called on to march, *en masse*, and reconquer Palestine for the return of the Jews. The king of Shoa regards himself as a direct descendant of the house of Solomon, calls himself king of Israel, and the national standard bears the motto, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed." They believe the 45th Psalm to be a prophecy of Queen Magueda's visit to Jerusalem; whither she was attended by a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre. The Jewish prohibitions against the flesh of unclean animals, are observed by the Abyssinians. The sinew which shrank, and the eating of which was prohibited to the Israelite, is also prohibited in Shoa. The Jewish Sabbath is strictly observed. The Abyssinians

are said, by Ludolf, to be the greatest fasters in the world. The Wednesdays and Fridays are fasts; the forty days before Easter are rigidly observed as a fast; and from the Thursday preceding Easter till the Sunday, no morsel of meat is to enter the lips, and the prohibition against drink is equally rigorous. St Michael and the Virgin Mary are venerated in the highest degree; St Michael as the leader of the hosts of heaven, and the latter as the chief of all saints, and queen of heaven and earth, and both as the great intercessors of mankind.

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

and night. The anniversaries of the deaths of the six kings of Shoa are held with great ceremony in the capital; and once every twelvemonth, before a splendid feast, their souls are absolved from all sin.

Major Harris expresses himself ardently and eloquently on the hopes of commerce which might be maintained by Great Britain with this little-known but productive part of the world. It is notorious that gold and gold dust, ivory, ostrich feathers, peltries, spices, wax, and precious gums, form a part of the lading of every slave caravan; notwithstanding that the tediousness of the transport, and the penuriousness of the Indian and Arab merchant, offer but a small compensation for their labour. No quarter of the globe abounds to a greater extent in vegetable and mineral productions than tropical Africa; and in the populous, fertile, and salubrious portions lying immediately north of the equator, the very highest capabilities are presented for the employment of British capital. Coal has already been found; cotton, of a quality unrivaled in the whole world, is every where a weed, and might be cultivated to any extent. The coffee which is sold in Arabia as the produce of Mocha, is chiefly of wild African growth; and that species of the tea plant which is used by the lower orders of the Chinese, flourishes so widely, and with so little care, that the climate would doubtless be found well adapted for the higher-flavoured and more delicate species. If, at a very moderate calculation, a sum falling very little short of a hundred thousand pounds sterling, can be annually invested

in European goods, to supply the wants of some of the poorer tribes adjacent to Abyssinia, what important results might not be anticipated from well-directed efforts, adopting the natural neans of communication in Africa?

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

The English had new wonders for him; they shaped planks out of trees in a fashion new to the Abyssinians, who waste a tree on every plank. "You English are indeed a strange people," said the

king, as he saw the first plank formed in this economical style. "I do not understand your stories of the roads dug under rivers, nor of the carriages that gallop without horses; but you are a strong people, and employ wonderful inventions."

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

Another of those fearful displays of barbarian plunder and havoc took place at the end of September. Twenty thousand warriors, headed by the king, made an inroad on the Galla. Those unfortunate people were so little prepared, that they seem to have been slaughtered without resistance. Between four and

five thousand were butchered, and forty-three thousand head of cattle were driven off. A thousand captives, chiefly women and children, were marched in triumph to the capital; but they were soon liberated, apparently on the remonstrance of the British mission.

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

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

hurried away."

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

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

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

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

The reader will probably remember an almost similar act of confidence of Alexander the Great in his physician. An opportunity was now taken of urging him to an act of humanity, however strongly opposed to the habits of the country, and to the interests of the man. It was represented to him that his uncles and brothers had been immured in a dungeon during the thirty years of his reign, and that no act could be more honourable to himself, or acceptable to Heaven, than the extinction of this barbarous custom.

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

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

> "'My children, you will write all that you have seen to your country, and will say to the British Queen, that,

though far behind the nations of the White Men, from whom Ethiopia first received her religion, there yet remains a spark of Christian love in the breast of the King of Shoa.'"

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

and, if not reform, at least enlighten, the clouded Christianity of the people.

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

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

manufactures, but a source of light. British example would teach obedience and loyalty to the laws, subordination on the part of the people, and mercy on that of the sovereign.

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

She is not less active on the eastern shore. At Massawah, on the coast of Abyssinia, she is fast monopolizing the trade in gold and spices. She has purchased Edh, and is endeavouring to purchase Brava. Her attention to *Northern* Abyssinia is matter of notoriety, and we must regard this system, not so much with regard to

advantages which such possessions might give to ourselves, as to their prejudice to us in falling into rival hands. The possession of Algeria should direct the eye of Europe to the ulterior objects of France; the first change of masters in Egypt, must be looked to with national anxiety; and the transmission of the great routes of Africa into her hands, must be guarded against with a vigilance worthy of the interests of England and Europe.

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

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

which alone can be regarded as worth the attention of the statesman.

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

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

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

# A WORD OR TWO OF THE OPERA-TIVE CLASSES

## BY LORGNON

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

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

"Le premier roi fut un soldat heureux."

Where human statute is beginning to prize the general weal, the legist is of high account, and the priest paramount. Higher civilization engenders the influence of the man of letters, the artist, the dramatist, the wit, the poet, and the orator. Or when, with a wisdom surpassing the philosophy of the schools, we tumble down to prose, and assume the leathern apron of the

utilitarian—the civil engineer, or operative chemist, starts up into a colossus. Sir Humphrey Davy, and Sir Isambert Brunel, are the true knights of modern chivalry; and Sir Walter—our Sir Walter—never showed himself more shrewd than in his exclamation to Moore—"Ah, Tam!—it's lucky, man, we cam' sae soon!" Great as was his influence, equaling that of the other two great Sir Walters, Manny and Raleigh, in their several epochs of valour and enterprise, it is likely enough, that, if born a century later, the MSS. of the Scotch novels would have been chiefly valuable to light the furnace of some factory!

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

Many intermediary callings have disappeared. The domestic chaplain of a lordly household is now nearly as superfluous as its archers or falconers; and the court calendars of former reigns record a variety of places and perquisites, which, did they still exist, would be unpalatable to modern courtiers, though compelled to earn their daily cakes, however dirty. Just as the last golden pippin of the house of Crenie was preserved in wax for the edification of posterity, a watchman has been deposited, with his staff and lantern, in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, or the Museum of the Zoological, or United Service Club, or some other of your grand national collections, as a specimen of the

extinct Dogberry or Charley of the eighteenth century; and in process of time, as much and more also will probably be done to a parish beadle, a theatrical manager, a lord chamberlain—and other public functionaries whom it might not be altogether safe to enumerate.

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

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

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

This adroitness was the result of competition. In that day there were degrees of hangmen, and promotion might be accomplished. Not only had the king his executioner, and the Lorraines theirs—the court and the city—the abbot of St Germain des Près—the abbot of this, and the abbot of that—but various communities and Signories, having right of life and death over their vassals, kept an executioner for purposes of domestic torture, as they kept a seneschal to carve their meats; or as people now keep a *chef* or a *maître d'hôtel*. In those excellent olden times of Europe, hangmen, doubtless, carried about written characters from lord to lord, certifying their experience with rope and axe

—branding-iron and thong. So long as the Inquisition afforded constant work for able hands, a good hangman out of place must have been a treasure! Had there been register-offices or newspaper advertisements, there probably would have appeared —

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

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

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

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

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

With what pomp of phraseology are the triumphs and movements of these *danseuses* announced, by the self-same journal which despatches, with a stroke of the pen, the submission of a province or revolution of a kingdom! One poor halfpenny-worth, or half a line, suffices for the death of a

sultana; while fiery columns precede the departure and arrival of the steamer honoured by conveying across the Atlantic some ethereal being, whose light fantastic toe is to give the law to the United States. Her appearance in the Ecclesiastic States, on the other hand, is announced in Roman capitals; and her triumphal entry into St Petersburg received with regiments of notes of admiration!!!

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

Nor is it alone the levities of Europe which have encompassed with a gaseous atmosphere of enthusiasm these idols of the day. We appeal to our sober, plodding, painstaking brother Jonathan. We move for returns of the sums he has expended on his beloved Fanny, and for notes of the honours conferred upon her, not only on the boards of his theatres and in the publicity of his causeways, but amid the august nationalities of his senate! "Fanny Elssler in Congress" has become as historical as the name of Washington! As if for the purpose of proving that extremes meet, the democrats of the New World were demonstrating the wildest infatuation in favour of one dancer, while the great autocrat of the Old was exhibiting a similar fervour in honour of another. La

Gitana became all but presidentess of the Transatlantic republic; La Bayadère depolarized the tyrant of the Poles! But, above all, the Empress of Russia—albeit, the lightest of sovereigns and coldest of women—was carried so far by her enthusiasm as to fasten a bracelet of gems on the fair arm of Taglioni; while the Queen-Dowager of England conferred a similar honour on the Neapolitan dancer Cerito!

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

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

of instinct; and the unimpregnable grace of a Taglioni becomes omnipotent and catholic as that of

> "The statue that enchants the world!"

Who can doubt that the names of these sorceresses of our time will reach posterity, as those of the Aspasias and Lauras of antiquity have reached our own—as having held philosophers by the beard, and trampled on the necks of the conquerors of mankind—as being those for whom Solon legislated, and to whom Pericles succumbed?

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

Why, therefore—O Public! why, we beseech thee, seeing that the influence of the operative class is fairly understood, and undeniably established among us—why not at once elevate

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

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

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

its *coulon*.

How amusing are the descriptions of these *entrées de ballet*, circumstantially bequeathed us by the memoirs of the regency of Anne of Austria! The cardinal himself took part in them; but the chief performers were the young King, his brother Gaston d'Orleans, and the maids of honour, figuring as Apollo and the Muses, or Hamadryads adoring some sylvan divinity. Who has not sympathized in the joy of Madame de Sevigné, at seeing her fair daughter exhibit among the *coryphées*! Who has not felt interested in the *jetées* and *pas de bourrées* of the *ancien régime*, when accomplished at court by Condés, Contis, Montpensiers, Montmorencys, Rohans, Guises! The Marquis de Dangeau first recommended himself to the favour of the royal master whose courts he was destined to journalize for posterity, by the skill of his *pas de basques*; and long before the all but conjugal influence of the lovely La Vallière commenced over the heart of the *grand monarque*, his early love, and more especially his passion for the beautiful niece of the Cardinal, may be traced to the rehearsals and *rondes de jambes* of Maitz and Fontainbleau.

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

took wing with the loves and graces; ballets and victories being effaced on the same page from the annals of his reign.

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

Some of these groups, by Mignard, Boucher, and their imitators, are charming studies as *tableaux de genre*. But in nothing, by the way, are they more remarkable than in their *decency*. The nudities of the present times appear to have been undreamed of in the philosophy of Versailles. That simple-hearted, though strong-minded American writer, Miss Sedgwick, who has published an account of her consternation as she sat with Mrs Jameson in the stalls of our Italian opera, might have witnessed the royal performance unabashed. On being told, as she gazed upon the intrepid self-exposure of Taglioni, "*qu'il fallait être sage pour danser comme ça*," Miss S. observes, that it requires to be more or less than woman, and proposes

to divide the human species into men, women, and OPERA-DANCERS, little suspecting that half her readers translate such a classification into "men, women, and ANGELS;" or that they would see herself and her sister moralist go down in the *President* without a pang, provided Elssler and Taglioni were saved from the deep!

Natural enough! we repeat it—natural enough! To create a good dancer, requires the rarest combination of physical and mental endowments. Graceful as the forms transmitted to us by the pottery of Etruria and the frescoes of Herculaneum, she must unite with the strength of an athlete, the genius of a first-rate actress. That even moderate dancing demands immoderate abilities, is attested by the exhibition of human ungainliness disfiguring all the court balls of Europe. There may be seen the representatives of the highest nobility, tutored by the highest education, shuffling over the polished floor with stiffened arms and bewildered legs—often out of time—always out of place—as if acting under the influence of a galvanic battery. Not one in ten of them rises even to mediocrity as a dancer. A few degrees lower in the social scale, and it would be not one in twenty. Amid the shoving, shouldering, shuffling mob of dancers in an ordinary ball-room, the absence of all grace amounts even to the ludicrous. Forty years long have people been dancing the quadrilles now in vogue, which consist of six favourite country-dances, fashionable in Paris at the close of the last century, and then singly known by the names they still retain—"La

Poule, L'Eté, Le Pantalon, Le Trenis," &c. &c. To avoid the monotony of dancing each in succession, for hours at a time, down a file of forty couple, it was arranged that every eight couple should form a square, and perform the favourite dances, in succession, with the same partner—a considerable relief to the monotony of the ball-room. Yet, after all this experience, if poor Monsieur le Trenis (after whom one of the figures was named, and who, during the consulate, died dancing-mad in a public lunatic asylum) could rise, sane, from the dead, it would be enough to drive him mad again to see how little had been acquired, in the way of practice, since his decease. The processes and varieties of the ball-room are just where he left then on his exit!

Previous to the introduction of quadrilles and country dances or *contredanses*, the inaptitude of nine-tenths of mankind for dancing was still more eminently demonstrated in the murders of the minuet. For (as Morall, the dancing-master of Marie Antoinette, used passionately to exclaim)—*que de choses dans un minuet*! What worlds of modest dignity—of alternate amenity and scorn! The minuet has all the tender coquetry of the bolero, divested of its licentious fervour. With the minuet and the hoop, indeed, disappeared that powerful circumvallation of female virtue, rendering superfluous the annual publication of a dozen codes of ethics, addressed to the "wives of England" and their daughters. All was comprehended in the *pas grave*. That noble and right Aulic dance was expressly invented in deference to

the precariousness of powdered heads; and its calm sobrieties, once banished from the ball-room, revolutionary *boulangères* succeeded—and chaos was come again! The stately *pavon* had possession of the English court, with ruffs and farthingales, in the reign of Elizabeth. With the Stuarts came the wild courante or corante—

> "Hair loosely flowing, robes as free"—

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

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

of breathless attention denied to Shakspeare.

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

Of late years, the union of Italian blood and a French education has been found indispensable to create a *danseuse*—"Sangue Napolitano in scuola Parigiana;"—and Vesuvius is the Olympus of all our recent divinities. Formerly, a Spanish origin was the most successful. The first dancer who possessed herself of European notoriety was La Camargo, whose portraits, at the close of a century, are still popular in France, where she has been made the heroine of several recent dramas. To her reign, succeeded that of the Gruinards and Duthés—in honour of whose bright eyes, a variety of noblemen saw the inside both of Fort St Evêque and St Pelagie; the opera being at that time a fertile source of *lettres de cachet*. To obtain

admittance to the private theatricals of the former dancer, in her magnificent hotel in the Chaussée d'Antin, the ladies of fashion and of the court had recourse to the meanest artifices; while the latter has obtained historical renown, by having excited the jealousy, or rather envy, of Marie Antoinette. Mademoiselle Duthé appeared at the fêtes of Longchamps, in the Bois de Boulogne, in a gorgeous chariot drawn by six milk-white steeds, with red morocco harness, richly ornamented with cut steel; and thus accomplished the object of incurring the resentment of the court, from the prodigality of one of whose married princes these splendours were supposed to emanate—splendours exceeding those of the Rhodopes of old.

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

"Fiery French and furious Hun"

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

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

buying repentance too dear!"

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

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

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

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

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

# THE PIRATES OF SEGNA

## A TALE OF VENICE AND THE ADRIATIC. IN TWO PARTS. PART I

## CHAPTER I.—THE STUDIO

It was on a bright afternoon in spring, and very near the close of the sixteenth century, that a handsome youth, of slender form and patrician aspect, was seated and drawing before an easel in the studio of the aged cavaliere Giovanni Contarini—the last able and distinguished painter of the long-declining school of Titian. The studio was a spacious and lofty saloon, commanding a cheerful view over the grand canal. Full curtains of crimson damask partially shrouded the lofty windows, intercepting the superabundant light, and diffusing tints resembling the ruddy, soft, and melancholy hues of autumnal foliage; while these hues were further deepened by a richly carved ceiling of ebony, which, not reflecting but absorbing light, allayed the sunny radiance beneath, and imparted a sombre yet brilliant effect to the pictured walls, and glossy draperies, of the spacious apartment. Above

the rich and lofty mantelpiece hung one of the last portraits of himself painted by the venerable Titian, and on the dark pannels around were suspended portraits of great men and lovely women by the gifted hands of Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Paris Bordone, and Tintoretto. Regardless, however, of all around him, and almost breathless with eagerness and impatience, the student pursued his object, and with rapid and vigorous strokes had half completed his sketch—totally unconcious the while that some one had opened the folding-doors, crossed the saloon, and now stood behind his chair.

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

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.