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Содержание

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THE LIFE OF A DIPLOMATIST. [1]

This is one of those curious memoirs which, from time to time, start forth from the family archives of public men, for the illustration of the past and the wisdom of the future. Nothing can be more important to either the man of office or the man of reflection. Avoiding all the theoretical portion of history, on which all men may be mistaken, they give us its facts, on which no one can be deceived; detailing the course of personal events, they supply us with the views of the most intelligent minds directly employed in the transactions, exhibit the portraits of those minds, and point out to those who are to follow, the effect of vigour, intrepidity, and knowledge, in overcoming the difficulties of nations.

The work on which we are about to make some remarks, is one of those productions which do especial honour to the English aristocracy. It is the diplomatic career of the founder of a peerage; compiled and published by the third in succession to the earldom. The noble editor, professing to have done but little in this office of reverence and duty, has done much—he has paid due honour to a manly, wise, and vigorous ancestor; and he has set a striking example to the young nobility of his time. The libraries of every noble family of England contain similar records of the highest value; and nothing could be at once more honourable to the memory of the gallant and renowned who have passed away, or more important to posterity, than to give those documents to the light, illustrated by the recollections of their noble descendants, and brought before the public with the natural advantages of authenticity and authority.

Lord Malmesbury's career continued through one of the most interesting portions of the last century; that which was the preparative for the great catastrophe of its close, the overthrow of the French monarchy. He was in the service of his country, as a diplomatist, from 1768 to 1797; and for many succeeding years was in connexion with all the leading political characters of a time singularly fertile in remarkable men. He was born at Salisbury in 1746, the descendant of an old English family, possessed of property in Wiltshire. His father was an eminent scholar, the author of *Hermes*, and other well known treatises on literary and philosophical subjects. But the scholar was also a man of active public life. Entering into parliament, he was appointed a lord of the treasury in 1763, and secretary and comptroller of the Queen's household some years after. A *bon-mot* of one of the Townsends is recorded, on his taking his seat.

"Who is the new member?" asked Townsend.

"A Mr Harris, who has written on grammar and harmony."

"Then what brings him here, where he will hear *neither*?"

The son of such a man had public life before him as his natural source of distinction; and Lord Malmesbury, late in life, (in 1800,) thus gracefully commemorated his gratitude. "To my father's precepts and example I owe every good quality I have. To his reputation and his character, I attribute my more than common success in life. It was those that introduced me with peculiar advantage into the world. It was as his son that I first obtained friends and patrons. I had nothing in myself; and I speak, at the distance of thirty-five years, not from affected modesty, but from a powerful recollection of what there was to entitle me to notice. Once, indeed, placed in a conspicuous and responsible

[1] *Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury.* Edited by his Grandson, the Third Earl. 2 vols.

situation, I was anxious to act becomingly in it. And even here I recur with pleasure to the same grateful source; for while my father lived, which was during the first twelve years of my public life, the strongest incentive I had to exert myself was in the satisfaction I knew he would derive from any credit I might acquire; and the many and distinguished honours which I have since received, have suffered a great diminution in my esteem, from his being no longer a witness to them."

He was sent to Winchester, where he remained till he was sixteen. From Winchester he was transferred to Oxford, where the discipline at that period was so relaxed, that his only surprise in after life was at the success of so many of his companions, among whom were Charles Fox, North, Bishop of Winchester, Lord Robert Spenser, Lord Auckland, and others, who had risen to rank of various kinds. He left Oxford in 1765, and passed thirty-five years on the Continent. His lordship here makes a striking observation on his own experience, which has been authenticated by every intelligent and honest mind under the same circumstances—remarking that his foreign residence was so far from making him undervalue England, that it raised it still higher in his estimation. He adds—"Here I will make an assertion, grounded on experience and conviction, and which may be applied as a never-failing test, that an Englishman who, after a long absence from England, returns to it with feelings and sentiments partial to other countries, and adverse to his own, has no *real* mind—is without the powers of discernment and plain easy comparison—and has no title to enjoy the superior moral and local advantages to which he is born, but of which he is insensible and unworthy."

As diplomacy was evidently the career marked out for him by his father, he was sent to study at Leyden, where he remained a year. In the commencement of the century, Holland was the central point of all European negotiations; and its schools became famous for languages and the study of international law. The society among the higher orders of the country was the most intelligent in Europe, consisting of ambassadors and scholars of the first character. After this year of vigorous study, and some brief stay at home, he returned to the Continent, and made an extensive tour of the north. In the autumn of this year he received his first diplomatic appointment, in the mission to Spain. His success in the Falkland Island negotiation recommended him to government, and he was appointed minister at Berlin—a very unusual distinction for a diplomatist only twenty-four years old. But a still more important distinction now awaited him. In 1777 he was sent as minister to the court of the Empress Catharine, where he found himself involved in all the craft of diplomacy with two of the most artful sovereigns that ever lived, Frederick and Catharine. But difficulties only place talents in a more conspicuous point of view, and he received from his government the highest reward then conferred upon a foreign minister, the Order of the Bath, in 1780. The climate of Russia was at length found too severe for his health, and he petitioned for his recall, which was granted, but with the honourable offer of his choice of a mission either to Spain or the Hague; the former was the higher in rank, but the latter the more important in activity. He unhesitatingly, and wisely, chose the embassy to the Hague. In 1784, the Foxite administration fell, and Pitt was in the ascendant. Harris had been at all times connected with Fox, and had constantly voted with him in the House; but so high was the public sense of his ability, and such was the impartiality of Pitt's sense of public duty, that he offered him the re-appointment to the Hague, which Harris, after consulting Fox and the Duke of Portland as his political leaders, accepted. His services were peculiarly required at this period, from the violent discussions which had arisen in Holland; and he either originated, or perfected, the treaty of alliance between England, Holland, and Prussia, which saved the Stadtholder for the time, and Holland probably from being made a French province. His conduct was regarded with so much approbation by the allies, that he received from the Prussian king leave to add the Prussian eagle to his arms, and from the Stadtholder, his motto, "*Je maintiendrai*." From England he received the more substantial rewards of the peerage, by the title of Baron Malmesbury, and the appointment of ambassador. But though he was a Whig, he was one on the old English principle, and not on the new. In 1793, when in the midst of revolutionary horrors, and after the murder of the unfortunate French king, Fox, in the spirit of infatuation, declared himself ready to acknowledge the French republic,

all the chief leaders of the Whigs retired from the Opposition bench. The Duke of Portland, Lord Loughborough, Sir Gilbert Elliott, Lord Spenser, and Lord Malmesbury, joined those distinguished persons; yet without any apparent loss of friendship with Fox, whose manners retained personal friends even when he had lost their political confidence. Frederick William, king of Prussia, a prince of singularly undecided character, though of loud professions, being at this time suspected of a leaning towards the revolutionists, Lord Malmesbury was immediately sent by Pitt to Berlin, for the purpose of holding him to his good faith. He succeeded, to the extent of making the king sign an additional treaty with England and Holland.

His next mission, if not one of more importance, was of still greater delicacy—it was to ask the hand of the Duke of Brunswick's daughter for the Prince of Wales. This was a marriage by compulsion, and the wrath of the prince fell upon the noble negotiator. He never forgave Lord Malmesbury, and he quickly alienated himself from the princess: the unfortunate result is fully known. In 1796, and 1797, Lord Malmesbury was engaged in the most important negotiation of his life. The French Directory, probably for the purpose of exciting dissensions between Austria and England, made a secret proposal of peace, which led to the mission of an ambassador. But while Napoleon was pursuing his conquests in Italy, France had no actual desire of pacification. The purpose was evidently to gain time; and Lord Malmesbury, on discovering the true nature of the transaction, demanded his passports, and returned to England. It cannot be imputed to Pitt, that he was ever negligent of those who had done the state service. Lord Malmesbury had already obtained the Order of the Bath, and a barony; he was now raised to an earldom, with a viscounty, by the title of Lord Fitzharris; and it was in Pitt's contemplation to send him once more to Paris, when his ministry was suddenly brought to a conclusion, and Mr Addington was appointed premier; by whom the peace, or rather the unlucky truce of Amiens, was made. His political life was now at an end. He had been for some time suffering under deafness, which increased so much, that he regarded it as incapacitating him from public employment; yet he still loved society, and, dividing his time between London and his seat near Henley, he passed a pleasant and cheerful time, mingling with the chief characters of the rising political generation. For the last ten years of his life, his thoughts seem to have been much directed to religious subjects; and he kept what he entitled a "self-controlling journal," in which he registered his thoughts. We have probably reason to regret that the scrupulous delicacy of his biographer has hitherto withheld it from the public. The few sentences transcribed from it, give a strong conception of the piety and clear-headedness of the noble author. They were written within a fortnight of his death. They describe him as "having completed his 74th year, and having thus lived longer than any of his ancestors for the last two centuries; that his existence had been without any great misfortune, and without any acute disease, and that he owed all praise and thanksgiving to the Supreme Being; that the next step would probably be his last; that he was now too much exhausted, both in mind and body, to be of service to his country, but was fortunate in leaving his children well and happy; and that he now waited the Divine will with becoming resignation."

He died without disease, and through mere exhaustion of nature, in his 75th year, in 1820, and was buried in Salisbury cathedral.

Lord Malmesbury's reputation ranked very high in the diplomatic circles of the Continent. He was a clear-headed, well-informed, and active minister—sagacious enough to see his way through difficulties which would have perplexed inferior men, and bold enough to act according to his own opinion, where feebler minds would have ruined all, by waiting for the tardy wisdom of others. Talleyrand, a first-rate judge on such subjects, said of him, in his epigrammatic style—"I think that Lord Malmesbury was the ablest minister whom you had in his time. It was hopeless to get before him; all that could be done was to follow him close. If one let him have the last word, he contrived always to have the best of the argument." He seems to have been a thorough Englishman in the highest sense of the word, and to have had the loftiest opinion of the power and principles of England; not from any fantastic prejudice, but from the experience of a long life, with the best opportunities of

forming an unprejudiced judgment. We have already mentioned his declared opinion after living long abroad, and as a great diplomatic functionary, living under the most advantageous circumstances of foreign society; that any Englishman who, after a residence abroad, prefers the Continent to his own country, is beyond all question a man of gross and contemptible mind, and incapable of taking a "common-sense view" of the subject. We have his constant testimony, that "as there is nothing equal to England on the face of the earth, so no exertion on the part of her people can be too great in defence of her freedom and honour." In conformity with this matured conviction, and reigning principle of his heart, he chose as the motto for his coronet—

"Ubique patriam reminisci."[2]

Mr Harris's first visit to the Continent was in 1767, when he set out on a tour to Holland, Prussia, and Poland, remaining for some time at Berlin, where he had the advantage of seeing the cleverest, though the most eccentric, of all sovereigns, Frederick the Great. A number of traits of character are given, of various degrees of force, but all expressive. The king's chief amusement was playing on the flute, on which he performed very well for an amateur, though, compared with the professional performers, he necessarily made rather an unkingly figure. Frederick, who was afraid of nothing else, was so much afraid of failure in his flute playing, that whenever he had a new piece of music, he shut himself up in his closet some hours beforehand, to practise it; and although no one was permitted to be present at those concerts except a very few select friends, he was always observed to be remarkably nervous at the commencement. He had a fine collection of flutes, all made by the same man, and for which he paid a hundred ducats a-piece. He had an attendant whose sole office was to keep those flutes in order. During the war, when his finances were reduced to so low an ebb that he paid bad coin to every one, he took care that his flute-maker should be paid in good coin, lest, for bad money, he should give him bad flutes. Royal architecture is not always fortunate. It is observed that Louis XIV. built his famous Versailles in a swampy hollow, when he had the noble terrace of St Germain before him. Frederick built his Sans-Souci in a marshy meadow, while he had a fine hill within sight. Unhappily *we* have but little to boast of in the location of our modern palaces. The site of Buckingham Palace seems to have been chosen with no other object than to discover which was the superior annoyance, the smoke of steam-engines or the vapours of a swamp; and this was chosen with one of the finest possible situations within half a mile of it, in the centre of Hyde Park. Her Majesty's palace at Brighton has been located with exactly the same curious perversion of taste; the hills to the north of that very handsome town offering one of the noblest situations that can be conceived—a fine land view, and an unobstructed sweep of the ocean: but the evil genius of building prevailed, and the palace is fixed in a gloomy bottom, from which it can be overlooked by every body, and from which nothing can be seen. Frederick, though sometimes superb in his expenses, was habitually penurious. He seems to have thought that war was the only thing on which it was worth his while to spend money. The salaries of his gentlemen and attendants were all on the narrowest scale. Lord Malmesbury observes that even the Prince of Dessau's marriage, at which he was present, exhibited this penury. All the apartments, except those immediately used for supper or cards, were lighted with a single candle. The supper had no dessert; the wines were bad; their quantity stinted. On his asking, after dancing, for some wine and water, he was answered—"the wine is all gone, but you may have some tea;" and this was a peculiarly distinguished party. He saw the king himself directing the servants in lighting up the ball-room, and telling them where to put the candles. Whilst this operation was performing, the queen, the royal family, and the company, were waiting literally in the dark; as the king did not begin this ceremony till supper was finished, and no one dared to give orders to have it done. Frederick, when a young man, was intended for the husband of a British

[2] "Every where to remember his country."

princess. This was a match of his mother's construction. But the old king, who hated George II., threatened to cut off his son's head for his presumption. The English king called the Prussian "my brother the sergeant;" the Prussian retaliated by calling the English king "my brother the dancing-master." This hostility amounted to a mixture of the profane and the ludicrous. When the old king was seized with his mortal illness, he asked whether "it was necessary to forgive all his enemies." On receiving the proper answer, he said to the Queen—"Dorothy, write to your brother that I forgive him all the evil that he has done me; but wait till I'm dead first." A good repartee of Sir Andrew Mitchell on the battle of Quebec, is mentioned. "Is it true," said the king to him, "that, after all, you have taken Quebec?" "Yes, sire," said Sir Andrew Mitchell the envoy, "by the help of Providence." "What!" said the king, "is Providence among your allies?" "Yes," said the envoy, "and the only one among then who demands *no subsidy*."

Sir Charles Williams wrote to one of the queen's marshals a letter introducing Lord Essex, ludicrously finishing with—"You may be sure that it is not he who had his head cut off in the time of Elizabeth." The marshal, not perfectly understanding this, but depending on his information, introduced him in this style to her majesty—"Madam, my Lord Essex; and I assure your majesty it is not he who was decapitated by Queen Elizabeth."

Frederick, sending a minister to Denmark who complained of the smallness of his salary, and said that he could keep neither an equipage nor a table; the king's remark to him was—"You are a prodigal; you ought to know that it is more healthy to go on foot than it is to go in a carriage; and that, so far as eating is concerned, another man's table is always the best."

At this period Poland was in a state of great confusion. The Empress of Russia had marched an army into it for the purpose, as she declared, of allowing the popular representatives to act freely, while the king regarded himself as little better than her prisoner. Repnin, the Russian ambassador, actually commanded every thing; and the principal nobility of Poland were compelled to be his agents. Of course, this state of things never could have occurred in any country where the tone of manners was high; and Poland, though the people were brave, and the nobility in general patriotic, unquestionably fell by its own vices. The portrait drawn of Prince Radzivil is the reverse of flattering, but it is characteristic:—

"Prince Radzivil, the marshal of the confederation, was one of the most powerful princes of Poland. His revenues were nearly equal to half a million sterling a-year, though they were at this period much diminished by Russian ravages. He had at one time an army of eight thousand man, with which he opposed the Imperial progress. He afterwards became the tool of the Russian policy, and was rewarded with the first palatinate of the kingdom. He gave a masquerade on the empress's birthday to near three thousand masks; and it was calculated that, besides the other wines, they drank a thousand bottles of champagne." The prodigality of a Polish feast exceeds all comprehension. This prince kept open house on such a scale, that his five-and-twenty cooks were scarcely able to supply his table. The great article of luxury in Poland was Hungary wine, which they had in great perfection, but which was very costly. Champagne was drunk as cider. The multitude of servants in a Polish establishment must have been ruinous. Prince Czartoriski's personal attendants and servants amounted to three hundred and seventy-five. Those in his country-house were still more numerous. His troops amounted to four thousand men. Prince Repnin, though of the Greek church, which abounds in forms and ceremonies, and in fasts exceeds all others, had so little regard for the forms of his religion, that he ordered a play to be acted on Ash Wednesday at Warsaw. Towards Christmas 1767, Lord Malmesbury, then Mr Harris, was at the house of a Polish nobleman in the hunting season. He observed to the king that he had never seen him in better spirits. "Ah!" was the royal answer, "it is very pleasant to delude one's self sometimes."

In 1768 Mr Harris began his diplomatic life as secretary of legation under Sir James Gray, then British minister at the court of Madrid.

He set out from Paris on the last day of the year, and after six-and-twenty days' journey, in which he loitered but two days on the road, accomplished the eleven hundred miles without accident.

Though accustomed to Popish countries, the Spanish ceremonials of the Holy Week seem to have surprised him. In the streets was kept a second carnival, with a peculiar costume. The court and the higher orders wore black velvet, with flame-coloured waistcoats and sleeves trimmed with gold; the citizens left their shops, and spent the day in the streets. The king on Holy Thursday visited seven churches, washed the feet of twelve paupers, and afterwards served them at dinner. From Friday till Saturday all was silence, and no coaches were permitted in the streets. On Saturday at noon the bells rang, the people shouted, the coaches moved again, and all was clamour. From a personal knowledge of the people, Mr Harris pronounced that their defects arose from their religion and from their priests; both of which, by keeping the lower orders in a state of mendicity and the higher in a state of ignorance, prevent the progress of the nation. Even at this period, their dislike of the French was contemptuous and strongly marked.

The life of a diplomatic man is not unlike the life of a naval officer. He has frequent opportunities of signalizing himself in a small way. The cabinet is the admiral, commanding a large force, and acting on a large scale. The diplomatist is the captain of the frigate, thrown out at a distance to make his observations, and enabled to exhibit his intrepidity and talent, through, from the smallness of his means, the results may be equally small. In 1769, Sir James Gray returning to England, left Mr Harris behind him as *chargé d'affaires*. In the next year Spain, always jealous of any foreign approach to her South American possessions, fitted out a fleet for the purpose of expelling the British colony from the Falkland Isles. Harris acted spiritedly on this occasion. He instantly made so strong a representation to the Spanish minister, the Marquis Grimaldi, that he threw him into evident alarm. The letter to the British ministry which Harris wrote on the subject, satisfied them of the advantage of making a vigorous remonstrance. The result to the country was, that the colony, which had been seized, was restored, and that the officer who seized it was disgraced by the Spanish government. To Harris the whole transaction was regarded as honourable, and entitling him to the favour of his government. The result was, his being appointed, in 1771, as minister at the court of the most subtle and busy monarch of Europe, Frederick the Second.

We now come to the partition of Poland, the most momentous transaction of modern times; excepting the French Revolution, if even that revolution was not its consequence. Mr Harris makes his first communication on this important subject in March 1772. If we read his whole letter, the brevity of his announcement is a model even to diplomacy. He thus states the event to Lord Suffolk, then secretary of state.

"Just as I am going to make up my packet, I am informed that a treaty of partition, disposing of several parts of Poland, was signed at Petersburg on the 15th of last month, and that as soon as the certificates can be exchanged between the courts of Vienna, Berlin, and Russia, a congress will be held at Warsaw." A few statements respecting the Prussian officers dispatched to the Polish frontier are given; and this seems to be the whole announcement of one of the most atrocious acts of perfidy and blood in the memory of Europe.

The French Revolution was begun on grounds independent of foreign disturbances. But no man can read the annals of the French war, without a conviction, that one of its providential purposes was the punishment of the three monarchies which had perpetrated this atrocity. Within a brief period from the first ruin of Polish independence, the French armies began those sweeping conquests which were destined especially to ravage Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The punishment seemed even to bear something like a proportion to the degree of guilt in each of the parties. The original proposer of the partition was Frederick, the strenuous participator was Catharine, and the unwilling, though consenting accomplice, was Joseph. Before that war was over, Napoleon reduced Prussia to the lowest condition of a conquered country, plundered her of millions of gold, held her fortresses by his garrisons, and treated her like a province. His invasion of Russia was next in havoc: the ravage

of the country, the repulse and slaughter of her brave and patriotic armies, and the destruction of her ancient capital, were *her* share of the punishment. Austria suffered, but her suffering was of a lighter order—defeat in the field, havoc of the people, and the double capture of her capital; yet those wounds were rapidly healed, and the close of the war saw Austria taking a higher rank in Europe. Those struggles and sufferings extended over nearly a quarter of a century of unexampled bloodshed. It is remarkable that a project so fully entitled to excite the vigilance of all courts, seems to have been almost wholly overlooked by the English ministry; Lord Suffolk, in his confidential answer to the ambassador, simply styling it a curious transaction; and even in the more advanced stage of the affair, when the attention of the cabinet was called to it by the memorials of the Polish king and people, all that could be obtained was a verbal answer, evidently declining any interference on the subject, and contenting itself with the avoidance of approbation. The result of this singular negligence distinctly points out the course which should be taken by England in her continental policy. Her natural office is that of mediator and protector. Entertaining no views of conquest for herself, it is her duty to repress them in all others. If, in 1772, she had instantly issued a strong remonstrance to the three governments, it would have acted as an appeal to the reason of Europe. A fleet sent to the Baltic in support of that remonstrance would have acted upon the fears of the aggressors, and Poland would have been saved. The blood of the thousands shed in the war of independence would have been spared—the great crime of the century would have been partially avoided—and its punishment, in the shape of the revolutionary war, might never have been inflicted. The diplomatic and formal portion of this fatal event was thus announced by the ambassador to the British cabinet:—"Berlin, 19th September 1772.—I received a message from Count Finckenstein yesterday morning, desiring to speak to me between twelve and one. On my waiting on him, he informed me that his Prussian majesty having come to an agreement with the courts of Vienna and Petersburg to renew certain ancient claims they had on parts of the kingdom of Poland, they had instructed their respective ministers at the court of Warsaw to signify their intentions to the king and republic, by presenting him with a declaration on this subject.

"That his Prussian majesty, desirous of seizing every opportunity of showing his friendship and attention to the king, had ordered him, Count Finckenstein, to take the earliest moment of acquainting me with this event, and at the same time to give me a copy of the declaration, which I here enclose—that his *chargé d'affaires* in London had likewise received orders to inform the king's ministers on this subject, and to communicate to them the declaration."

The reply of the English minister to this momentous announcement, exhibits, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary instances of ministerial negligence on record. On a subject which might have moved the very stones to mutiny, and which, in its consequences, involved the interests of all Europe, the only answer of the King of England was contained in the following note, written in French:—"The king is willing to suppose that the three courts have convinced themselves of the justice of their respective pretensions, although his majesty is not informed of the motives of their conduct." "You will observe," adds Lord Suffolk, "in the terns in which I express myself, that though this mode of expression was preferable to an absolute silence, the utmost caution has been used." The caution was indeed sufficiently circumspect, for it was wholly useless; and the consequence was perfect impunity to the perpetrators.

Frederick was the great infidel of his day. He had been so long involved in hostilities with Austria, the most superstitious court in Europe, that he adopted "free-thinking" as a part of his policy; and his eagerness for European fame connected him with Voltaire and the French infidels, whose wit and wickedness had made them the leaders of philosophical fashion. But there is a principle of belief in human nature which revenges itself on the infidel. There are no men more liable to groundless fears, than those who reject the object of legitimate awe. The man who will not believe in a deity, has often believed in witchcraft; and those who will not acknowledge a Providence, have often trembled before a conjurer. At this period, Frederick had grown peculiarly anxious and irascible—a temper for which

the ambassador accounts by a sudden impulse of superstition. He says—"Amongst several other incredible follies in so great a character, he has that of not entirely disbelieving judicial astrology; and I am told, from one whose authority is not despicable, that the fear of a prediction being this year fulfilled, which was pronounced by a Saxon fortune-teller whom his majesty was weak enough some time ago to consult, dwells on his mind, and augments the sourness of a disposition naturally crabbed. I should have paid no attention to these reports, which savour so much of the nursery, had I not myself observed him displeased at a mourning coat at his levee, and seen his countenance visibly alter on being informed of any man's dying a sudden death."

We then have a curious letter from Lord Grantham, the ambassador at Madrid, giving an account of an expedition to Algiers, which derives an interest from the present state of African affairs.

"You will learn that a very unsuccessful attempt has been made at Algiers, and that the Spanish troops have been repulsed with a loss and disablement of upwards of 5000 men. The fleet, consisting of 450 sail, and carrying about 40,000 men, sailed from Carthagena, and reached Algiers the 1st inst., (July 1775.) On the night of the 7th, the infantry, and two detachments of about 8000 men each, landed. The first detachment advanced too eagerly, could not be supported to any purpose, and, after thirteen hours' engagement, all that could regained the ships. But the loss of killed and wounded, first estimated at 3000, certainly exceeded five or six. The transports with the army are returned to Carthagena and Alicante. I leave you to judge how deep an impression this severe failure makes here. The Marquis de la Romana is killed—all the generals, except Buck, are wounded. Among the wounded are twenty-eight officers of the Spanish guards, and twelve out of seventeen engineers."

The court of Frederick would form a singular contrast to what is called the British Household, composed of the great officers of state. "You are not ignorant," says Harris, writing to William Eden, "that the great officers of the court are merely titular, and never allowed to have any authority annexed to their office. This is given to some menial servants, who are constantly about the king's person, and his treasurer was a Russian named Deiss, in whom his Majesty placed more confidence than he appears to have deserved; since for maladministration, or some equally notorious fault, his majesty a few days ago, dismissed him from his high post, and ordered him to be employed as a drummer in a marching regiment. Deiss affected to submit patiently to his sentence, and, on being arrested, begged leave of the officer only to go into his room, adjoining the king's writing-closet, to fetch his hat. This being granted, he immediately locked the door, took a pistol from his pocket, and shot himself through the head. The king heard and was alarmed by the report of a pistol so near him, and being told what had happened, he pitied Deiss, said that he was out of his senses, and ordered all that he died worth to be distributed equally among his children. Deiss had charged the pistol with small-shot and crooked nails, and put the muzzle of it into his mouth."

A striking anecdote is given of General Seidlitz, the officer who formed the Prussian cavalry. When only a lieutenant, he happened to be near the king on a bridge which crossed the Oder. The king asked him, "if both the avenues of the bridge were possessed by the enemy, what he would do to disengage himself." Seidlitz, without making an answer, immediately leaped his horse over the rails into the river, and notwithstanding its breadth and rapidity, swam safe ashore. The king, who took it for granted that he must be drowned, on seeing him come towards him, said in French, "*Major*, I beg of you not to run such hazards in future."

Despotic power has certainly great advantages, in its rapid administration of justice, and sometimes in its reaching offences which would altogether baffle trial by jury. Frederick was ridiculously fond of exhibiting his musical attainments; and among the other preparatives for the reception of the Russian grand-duke (afterwards the Emperor Paul) at Berlin, was a piece of music composed by the king. The husband of the first singer at the opera, the well-known Madame Mara, was imprudent enough to observe of this performance, that "the composer knew more about soldiers than music." The king ordered him to be instantly made over to the *corps-de-garde*, with orders to punish him, enough to make him more cautious of criticism in future. The soldiers accordingly, as

there happened to be no punishment in the military regulations for impertinent remarks on royal amateurs, took the affair into their own hands. They began by dressing him in a uniform, covering his face with a huge pair of whiskers, and loading him with the heaviest firelock which they could find, they then made him perform the manual exercise for two hours—accompanying the lesson with all the usual discipline of the cane—then ordered him to dance and sing, finishing their discipline by making the surgeon take from him a large quantity of blood, obviously to reduce the heat of temper which had given rise to such impertinence. After this lesson he was sent back to his wife. Severe as it may have appeared, Harris regarded it as earned by many previous impertinences of the same kind, but of which it may fairly be presumed this was the last.

At last the grand-duke arrived, and was received with the most unusual pomp and ceremony by the Prussian court. By some curious instance of choice, Sunday is selected on the Continent as the day for every thing in the shape of show. The Russian prince made his public entry into Berlin on Sunday, and was met by the trading companies in uniform, by escorts of cavalry, and the equipages of the king and royal family. In the evening, after a sumptuous dinner, there was a concert and ball.

The rest of the week was similarly occupied. The grand-duke had come to demand the Princess of Wirtemberg in marriage. When we recollect the fate of this unhappy monarch, murdered on the Russian throne, and contrast it with the brilliancy of his early reception in the world, and his actual powers when master of the diadem, a deeper lesson of the instability of human fortune has seldom been given to man.

A laughable anecdote of Russian and Prussian discipline is told. All the domestics belonging to the Imperial family of Russia have military rank; the grand-duke's coachman and the king's going one evening to drink together, a dispute arose about precedence. "What is your rank?" said the Prussian. "A lieutenant-colonel," said the other. "Ay, but I am a colonel," said the German, and walked first into the ale-house. This came to the king's ears. The *colonel* was sent for three days to prison, and received fifty blows of the cane.

The ambassador now obtained a new instance of the favour of his court. He was recalled from Prussia in 1776, and shortly after was appointed to the most important of our embassies at that period, the embassy to Russia.

The politics of England at this period bore an appearance of perplexity, which evidently alarmed her cabinet, and which as evidently excited the hopes of her enemies. At this period she had two enemies in Europe, hostile in every thing except to the extent of open war—France, always jealous and irreconcilable; and Prussia, which, from her dread of England's interference in her Polish usurpations, pretended to believe that England was conspiring with Austria against the safety of her dominions. The feebleness with which the American war was carried on, had deceived Europe into the belief that the power of England was really on the point of decay. Foreigners are never capable of appreciating the reality of English power. In the first place, because they prefer the romantic to the real; and in the next, because, living under despotisms, they have never seen, nor can comprehend, the effect of liberty upon national resources. Thus, when they see a nation unwilling to go to war —or, what is the next thing to reluctance, waging it tardily—they imagine that this tardiness has its origin in national weakness; and it is not until the palpable necessity of self-defence calls out the whole energy of the people, that the foreigner ever sees the genuine strength of England. The capture of two small armies in America, neither of them more numerous than the advanced guard of a continental army, had given the impression that the military strength of England was gone for ever. Thus the European courts thought themselves entitled to insult her; and thus so diminutive a power as Prussia, however guided by an able and politic prince, was suffered to despise her opinion. But the English ministry themselves of that day palpably shared the general delusion; and, to judge from their diplomatic correspondence, they seemed actually to rely for the safety of England on the aid of the foreign courts. They had yet to learn the lesson, taught them by the Revolutionary war, that England is degraded by dependence of any kind; that she is a match for the world in arms; that the cause of

Europe is dependent on *her*; and that the more boldly, directly, and resolutely she defies France, and its allies and slaves, the more secure she is of victory. In the pursuit of this false policy of conciliation and supplication, Harris was sent to Petersburg, to counteract Prussia with the empress, and to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Catharine. Count Panin was at that time prime minister—a man of the old ministerial school, who regarded diplomacy as the legitimate science of chicane, was a master of all the littleness of his art, and was wholly under the influence of the King of Prussia. The count was all consent, and yet contrived to keep the ambassador at arm's-length; while the empress, equally crafty, and equally determined not to commit herself, managed him with still greater subtlety.

In speaking of the Empress Catharine, it is impossible to avoid alluding to the scandals of her court. The death of her husband, suspicious as it was, had left her sole mistress of an empire, and of the power of public opinion, in a country where a sneer might send the offender to Siberia. The wretchedly relaxed religion of the Greek church, where a trivial penance atones for every thing, and ceremonial takes the place of morals, as it inevitably does wherever a religion is encumbered with unnecessary forms, could be no restraint on the conduct of a daring and imperious woman. By some of that easy casuistry which reconciles the powerful to vice, she had fully convinced herself that she ought, for the sake of her throne, never to submit to matrimonial ties again; and she adopted the notorious and guilty alternative of living with a succession of partners. The ambassador's letters frequently allude to this disgraceful topic, and always with the contempt and reprobation which were so amply its due. "The worst enemies"—such is his expression—"which the empress has, are flattery and her own passions. She never turns a deaf ear to the first, let it be ever so gross; and her inclination to gratify the latter appears to grow upon her with age."

The policy of Russia had two grand objects, both of them wholly inconsistent with the policy of England; and therefore rendering the ambassador's zeal wholly useless. The King of Prussia favoured both, and therefore commanded the highest influence with the empress. It was thus the impossible task of the unfortunate diplomatist, to convince a haughty and self-sufficient woman against her will. Of course, failure was the necessary consequence. But in the mean time, dining and dancing, feasting and frivolity, went on with Asiatic splendour. The birth of the grand-duke's son, "Constantine," (expressly so named with a view to Turkish objects,) gave occasion to fêtes which it tasked the whole power of Russian panegyric to describe. The empress gave one in the period of the Carnival, ultra-imperially magnificent. The dessert and supper were set out with jewels to the amount of upwards of two millions sterling! and at the tables of macao, the fashionable game, besides the stake in money, a diamond of fifty rubles' value was given by her majesty to each of those who got *nine*, the highest point of the game. One hundred and fifty diamonds were distributed in this manner.

But a new event occurred to stir the lazy politics of Europe—that act of infinite treachery on the part of the French government—the breach of treaty with England, and the alliance with America. The menaces of war which are held out at this moment by the Jacobin party, and its insolent eagerness to turn every trivial incident into a mortal quarrel, give a new and additional interest to this former act of desperate perfidy. But let it be remembered with what tremendous vengeance that perfidy was punished—that the American alliance was the precursor of the French republic; and that the long train of hideous calamities which broke down the French throne, banished the nobility, and decimated the population, dates its origin from the day when that fatal treaty was signed. A letter from Sir Gilbert Elliott (afterwards Lord Minto) to the ambassador, (March 20, 1778,) thus briefly communicates the intelligence:—"We had just passed the bills for repealing some of the obnoxious American acts, and for enabling the king to appoint his commissioners to treat with America with very large powers, when the report of the French treaty with the colonies became very prevalent, and obtained credit here. Government, however, had certainly obtained no authentic account of it which is singular enough; and Lord North positively disclaimed all knowledge of it. A loan of six millions was made on very hard terms for the public, much owing to the report of the French treaty; the three per cent consols being at 66½—monstrously low. The first payment was fixed for Tuesday last. On

the Friday before, the Marquis de Noailles delivered a paper to Lord Weymouth, communicating the 'treaty of commerce and alliance' with the colonies, and acknowledging their independency. The manner and style of the communication were inexpressibly insolent, and were no doubt meant as a studied affront and challenge. On Saturday, all the French in London were sent to the opera, plays, clubs, coffee-houses, and ale-houses, to publish the intelligence, which they did with their natural impertinence. On Tuesday, the two Houses received a message from the king, informing them of the communication from the French ambassador—that he had recalled his ambassador from Versailles; and assuring them that he would exert every means in his power to protect the honour and interest of his kingdom. In answer to which, the two Houses voted an address, promising to support him with our lives and fortunes. Opposition, like *good patriots*, in answer to this message, proposed to address the king to remove his ministers; and C. Fox assured us, 'he thought an invasion a *much better thing* than the continuance of the present administration.' When this proposal was negatived, they therefore refused their assent to our address. There is no declaration of war yet; but as it is quite certain, and as France will undoubtedly act immediately, I do not see what we gain by delaying it. I hope at least we shall begin taking their ships immediately. The militia is to be called out; credit is dreadfully low—stock was a few days ago at 60. The French are poorer than we—that's something."

Exaggeration is a propensity which seems common to ambassadors. We certainly have never seen an ambassadorial correspondence, in which the most groundless views did not make a large part of its communications. The British diplomatist in Russia was unquestionably a shrewd man, and yet his letters abound in predictions of Russian ruin. His descriptions run in this style:—"Great expenses, and nothing to show for them. The army in a state of decay; the navy incomplete and ill-equipped; the political system languid, and such as, if pursued, must ultimately reduce this immense mass of power to that state of Asiatic insignificancy from which it so lately emerged."

And this high-coloured and rash statement, it is to be remembered, was not a page in a popular novel or in a summer's "Tour," but was given as the deliberate opinion of a statesman conversant in continental politics, and addressed to the government of this country. He seems to have altogether overlooked the boundless territory and growing population of Russia, her forty millions of men—a number already exceeding that of any other kingdom in Europe—the inaccessible nature of her dominions, the implicit and Asiatic devotion of her subjects, the unrivaled vigour of her despotism, and the fact that she had but that moment secured an immense tract of Polish territory, and was stripping the Turks on the other side—that to the north she was touching on the Vistula, and to the south had nearly reached the Danube. The subsequent career of Russia is a still stronger refutation. Every war, instead of shaking her power, has only given it additional strength and stability. Like England, she has gone on with almost involuntary but rapid progress; and the period may arrive when there will be but two nations left in Europe—England the ruler of the seas, and Russia holding the kingdoms of the Continent in vassalage. It is true, that the ambassador adverts now and then to the inaccessible nature of the Russian territory, and the success of the national arms; but the former would be but a negative source of power, and the latter he uniformly attributed to good-luck. He ought to lave attributed them to the causes which would have produced the same effect in any age of the world—to the mastery of an immense population; to the daring of a head of empire possessed of remarkable ability, and filled with projects of unbounded supremacy; and to the growth of a new generation of soldiers and statesmen, encouraged to the highest exertion of their talents by the most munificent rewards—the policy of the empress making the evidence of courage and genius in the soldier the only requisite for promotion; and exhibiting the strongest personal interest of the sovereign in the elevation of those able servants of the crown. The consequence was, success in all the enterprises of Catharine, the rapid advance of the nation in European influence, the establishment of an insecure throne on the strongest footing of public security, the popularity of a despotism, the comparative civilization of a people half Asiatic, and who but half a century before had been barbarians, and the personal attachment of the nation to Catharine in a degree scarcely less than adoration. The chief cause of this

triumphant state of things, beyond all question, was the high spirit, the generosity, and the affability of the empress. The unhappy transactions of her private life are matters of painful record; and the letters of the ambassador are full of the reprobation which the memoirs of the time authenticate. But we have no gratification in dwelling on such topics. We infinitely prefer paying the tribute due to great talents splendidly exercised, to the public achievements of a powerful intellect, and to the superiority which this munificent promoter of the genius of all classes of her people exhibited to all the haughty, exclusive, and selfish sovereigns of her time.

The ambassador now found it necessary to look for support against the Prussian propensities of the minister; and he had recourse to Potemkin and the Orloffs, as the antagonists of Panin. Potemkin was one of the most extraordinary men whom the especial circumstances of the court and country raised into public distinction. He had been but a cornet of cavalry on the memorable night when Catharine, uncertain whether she was mounting a throne or a scaffold, put herself at the head of the guards, and deposed her husband. As she rode along, observing that she had not a military plume in her hat, she turned to ask for one; the cornet instantly plucked out his own, and presented it to her —as Raleigh threw his cloak on the ground for Elizabeth to walk over. These gallant acts are never lost upon a woman of the superior order of mind. The favour of the throne followed alike in both instances; and Potemkin soon became the guide of the Russian councils. It was the custom of the French memoir writers—a race who always aimed at pungency of narrative in preference to truth, and who, for their generation, performed the part of general libellers—to represent Potemkin as a savage, devoted to drinking, and whose influence was solely the result of his grossness. But the conferences which he held with this British ambassador, and the extracts of his opinions given in these letters, show him to have been a man of remarkable clearness of comprehension, dexterity of resource, and readiness of knowledge. It is obvious that nothing but the exertion of distinguished skill in the ways of courts, could have accomplished the objects which no other man of his time attained with such complete success. In a court of contention and favouritism, he retained supreme influence to the last; released from the labours of office, he possessed more than the power of a minister—and nominally a subject, he was scarcely less than emperor. Boundless wealth, the highest rank, and every honour which the empire could lavish on its first noble, were the prizes of Potemkin.

People at home are in the habit of looking upon the diplomatic body abroad as a collection of very subtle and sagacious personages—a collection of sages. A nearer view sometimes strips the idea down to humble dimensions. Sir James Harris (he had now obtained the Order of the Bath, which he seems to have deserved by his diligence) thus sketches the new ambassadorial body—a general change having just taken place. “The Imperial, Danish, French, Prussian, and Spanish ministers are all altered, and one from Naples is added to our corps.” The Neapolitan he describes as “utterly unfit for business;” Count Cobenzel, the Austrian ambassador, “as a man of excellent parts and great activity;” Goertz, the Prussian, “a very able and artful man.” So far as this point, the honour of the corps is sustained; but then come the ciphers. Monsieur Verac, the cunning French envoy, is “more amiable in company than formidable in cabinet.” The Swede and the Saxon ministers, “most perfectly insignificant and overpowered with debts.” The Dutch resident, Swartz, “a man neither of birth nor character, totally improper for the post he fills. The Swiss resident, having no other business than the lawsuits of his countrymen,” &c.

Of the culpable habits of the empress we shall say no more. The respect which this country feels for the character of Emperor Nicholas, and the total contrast which that character presents to the especial failings of his ancestor, justly prevent our wandering into those observations. But we have a curious instance of the skill and adroitness of this memorable woman, in an interview in which she was wholly left to herself, and yet succeeded perfectly in what is presumed to be the *chef-d’œuvre* of diplomacy—the art of disguising her intentions. The British ambassador, after a long period of comparative failure, had succeeded in obtaining an audience through Potemkin—who always pretended to be powerless, yet who could do every thing which he desired. The appointment to

meet the ambassador was made, and Potemkin prefaced his service by the following singular sketch of his sovereign. “Do not expect that it is in the power of any living being to prevent her from concluding her favourite plan of armed neutrality. Content yourself with destroying the effects—the resolution is immovable. As it was conceived by *mistake* and perfected by *vanity*, it is maintained by *pride* and *obstinacy*. You well know the hold of those passions on a *female mind*; and if you attempt to slacken, you will only tighten the knot.”

One of the imperial valets then came to lead the ambassador to the interview; which he gives in French, and which he commenced in a strain which we hope will never be imitated again by any cabinet of England.

“I have come to represent to your imperial majesty the *critical situation* in which our affairs are at present. You know our reliance on you. We venture to *flatter* ourselves that you will *avert the storm*, and reassure us as to our fears of having lost your friendship.” If the expressions were not in print, we should scarcely have thought it possible that such crouching language could have been used. The ambassador, of course, is but the mouthpiece of his government. The blame must fall, not on the intelligent servant, but on the feeble masters. Who can wonder if the daring and haughty spirit of Catharine scoffed at the remonstrances, and despised the interests of a country, whose cabinet adopted language so unfitting the dignity and real power of the mighty British empire? The expressions of this dialogue would have been humiliating to the smallest of the “square-league” sovereignties of the Continent. The answer of the empress was precisely what she might have addressed to the envoy of Poland or the Crimea. “Sir, you are aware of my sentiments relative to your nation; they are equally sincere and invariable. But I have found so little return on your part, that I feel I ought not to consider you any longer among my friends.”

To this haughty tone, what is the reply of the ambassador?

“It is in the hope that those sentiments were not *entirely effaced*, that I wished to address myself directly to your Majesty. But it was not *without fear* that I approached you. Appearances only too strongly prove the impressions which you have received from our enemies.” And so goes on the dialogue, like a scene in a play, see-sawing through six intolerable pages. How differently would Pitt’s cabinet have acted, and how differently did it act! When the Russian councils menaced the seizure of even a paltry Turkish fortress on the Black Sea, the great minister ordered a fleet to be ready as *his* negotiators; and though the factiousness of Opposition at the time prevented this manly demonstration of policy and justice, the evidence was given, in the reign of Paul, when a British fleet crushed the armed neutrality—that trick of French mountebanks imposing on the ambition of the north—and restored Russia to so full a sense of the power and the honour of England, that she sent her fleet into her safe keeping at the approach of Napoleon’s invasion, and has been her fast and honourable ally ever since. “Cromwell’s ambassador” is the true one for England at all times. A stout British squadron sent to the Baltic in 1780 would have wonderfully solved the difficulties of the British negotiation, have completely cleared the empress’s conscience, have enlightened Count Panin’s brains, and have convinced even the wily Potemkin himself that the art of political delusion was too dangerous a game to be tried against England.

But the true value of history is to instruct the future. We are now in nearly the same relative position to France in which we were sixty-four years ago relative to Russia. We are exhibiting the same dilatoriness which we exhibited then, and we shall be fortunate if we escape the same consequences. A strong fleet sent to the Mediterranean would do more to calm the elements of strife effectually, than all the remonstrances of all our negotiators. Or, if the French were foolish enough to provoke a battle, a repetition of the 1st of June or the 21st of October would be the tranquillizer of a restless people, who can never suffer Europe to rest in peace but when they themselves have been taught the miseries of war.

In justice to the cabinet of 1780, it must be acknowledged that the personal tone of the ambassador was criticised; and we thus find him making his diplomatic apology to Lord Stormont, then secretary for foreign affairs:—

"I have often been conscious of the remark your lordship makes, and have myself felt that I was not acting up to the character of an English minister, in bestowing such *fulsome incense* on the empress. But here, too, I was drawn from my system and principles by the conduct of my adversaries. They ever addressed her as a being of a superior nature; and as she goes near to think herself infallible, she expects to be approached with all the reverence due to a divinity." No excuse could be more unsatisfactory. If other men chose to bow down, there would have only been the more manliness, and the more effect too, in refusing to follow such an example.

In 1783, the ambassador obtained permission to return to England. His correspondence at the period immediately previous, is remarkably interesting; and it is striking to see that the successive secretaries for the foreign department, under all changes of administration, formed the same view of the substantial policy of England. When, in 1783, Fox assumed the foreign seals, he thus writes to Harris, in the course of a long letter on the foreign policy of the cabinet:—"You will readily believe me, that my system of foreign politics was too deeply rooted to make it likely that I should have changed it. Alliances with the northern powers *ever have been, and ever will be, the system of every enlightened Englishman*."

In the year following, Sir James Harris was appointed by Pitt to the Dutch embassy, to which he had been previously nominated by Fox, his friend and political leader. The appointment by the new cabinet was thus the strongest testimony to his talents. His letters from the Hague contain a very intelligent statement of the parties and principles which agitated Holland in 1787. The object was the establishment of a democracy and the extinction of the Stadtholderate, or at least its suppression as a hereditary dignity. The court of France was busy in this democratic intrigue; and its partial success unquestionably added new combustibles to the pile on which that unfortunate monarchy, in the hour of infatuation, was preparing to throw itself. The ambassador's language on this occasion is characteristic and memorable. In one of his despatches to the Marquis of Carmarthen, then secretary of state, he thus says:—

"The infamy and profligacy of the French make me long to change my profession, and to fight them with a sharper instrument than a pen. It must be with those (not our pens, but our swords) that we must carry the mediation through, if we mean it should be attended with any success. There are strong reports of a popular insurrection in France:"—"*Si* Dieu voulait les punir par où ils ont peché, comme j'admirerais la justice divine!" The remark was natural; it was almost prophetic; and it was on the eve of realization. In 1789, but two years after, the Revolution began.

These volumes contain a great deal of extremely curious material, especially important to every man who may in future be employed in the foreign service of our diplomacy. They supply a model of the manner in which those offices may be most effectively sustained. We have already expressed dissatisfaction at the submissive style used in addressing the Russian empress. But in other instances, the language of the ambassador seems to have been prompt and plain. It is remarkable that England has, at the present time, arrived at a condition of European affairs bearing no slight resemblance to that of the period between 1783 and 1789. It is true that there will be no second French Revolution; one catastrophe of that terrible extent is enough for the world. But there are strong symptoms of those hostilities which the Bourbons were endeavouring to kindle against this country, for at least a dozen years before the Revolution which crushed their monarchy.

Without any provocation on the part of England, any actual claim, or any desire whatever of war, this country finds itself suddenly made an object of perpetual insult on the part of all the active mind of France. The cry from every organ of public opinion seems to be, war with England, whether with or without cause. A violent clamour is raised for our national ruin; the resources of France are blazoned in all quarters; and the only contemplation popular in France is, how most suddenly

and effectually French armies may be poured on our shores, our fields ravaged, our maritime cities burned, and our people massacred! It must be hoped that this detestable spirit does not reach higher than the Jacobin papers, and the villains by whom that principal part of the French press is conducted. Yet we find but little contradiction to it in even the more serious and authentic portion of the national sentiments. In such circumstances, it is only right to be prepared. We find also the still more expressive evidence of this spirit of evil, in the general conduct of the agents of France in her colonies—a habit of sudden encroachment, a growing arrogance, and a full exhibition of that bitter and sneering petulance, which was supposed to have been scourged out of the French by their desperate defeats towards the close of the war. All this insolence may, by possibility, pass away; but it also may go on to further inflammation, and it may be necessary to scourge it again; and this discipline, if once begun, must be carried through more effectually than when the Allies last visited Paris. The respect felt for the French king and his prime minister, as the friends of peace, naturally restrains the language with which aggression deserves to be reprobated. But the French government, if it desires to retain that respect, must exhibit its sincerity in making some substantial effort to preserve peace. No man of sense in Europe can believe in the necessity of the seizure of Algiers, nor in the necessity of the war with Morocco. But every man can see the influence of both on the freedom of the Mediterranean. The seizure of the British consul at Otaheite shows a spirit which must be summarily extinguished, or the preservation of peace will be impossible. In the mean time, we hear from France nothing but a cry for steam-ships, and threats of invasion. We ask, what has England done? Nothing to offend or injure: there is not even an allegation of any thing of the kind. But if war must come, woe be to those by whom it is begun! The history of all the wars of England with France, is one of French defeat. We have beaten the French by land, we have beaten them by sea; and, with the blessing of Heaven on the righteous cause and our own stout hands, we shall always beat them. We have beaten them on the soil of the stranger—we have beaten them on their own. From the fourteenth century, when English soldiers were masters of the half of France, down to Waterloo, we have always beaten France; and if we beat her under Napoleon, there can be no fear of our not beating her under a race so palpably his inferiors. All England deprecates war as useless, unnatural, and criminal. But the crime is solely on the head of the aggressor. Woe to those who begin the next war! It may be final.

The late visit of the Emperor of Russia to this country, which so much perplexed the political circles of both France and England, now probably admits of elucidation. The emperor's visit has been followed by that of the ablest and most powerful diplomatist in his dominions, the Count Nesselrode, his foreign minister. For this visit, too, a speedy elucidation may be found. The visits of the King of Saxony, and the Princes of Prussia and Holland, also have their importance in this point of view; and the malignant insults of the French journals may have had a very influential share in contributing to the increased closeness of our connexion with the sovereignties of Germany and Russia. The maxim of Fox, that the northern alliances are the true policy of England, is as sound as ever. Still, we deprecate war—all rational men deprecate war; and we speak in a feeling which we fully believe to be universal in England, that nothing would be a higher source of rejoicing in Great Britain, than a *safe* peace with France, and harmony with all the nations of the world.

POEMS AND BALLADS OF GOETHE

No. II

Goethe's love for the Fine Arts amounted almost to a passion. In his earlier years, he performed the painter's customary pilgrimage through Italy, and not merely surveyed, but studied with intense anxiety, the works of the great modern masters. A poet, if he understands the theory of his own calling, may learn much from pictures; for the analogy between the sister arts is very strong. The secret of preserving richness without glare, fulness without pruriency, and strength without exaggeration, must be attained alike by poet and painter, before either of them can take their rank among the chosen children of immortality. It is a common but most erroneous idea, that an artist is more indebted for success to inspiration, than to severe study. Unquestionably he must possess some portion of the former—that is, he must have within him the power to imagine and to create; for if he has not that, the fundamental faculty is wanting. But how different are the crude shapeless fancies, how meagre and uncertain the outlines of the mental sketch, from the warm, vivid, and glowing perfection of the matured and finished work! It is in the strange and indescribable process of moulding the rude idea, of giving due proportion to each individual part, and combining the whole into symmetry, that the test of excellence lies. *There* inspiration will help but little; and labour, the common doom of man in the loftiest as well as the lowest walks of life, is requisite to consummate the triumph.

No man better understood, or more thoroughly acted upon the knowledge of this analogy, than Goethe. He wrought rigidly by the rule of the artist. Not one poem, however trifling might be the subject, did he suffer to escape from his hands, until it had received the final touches, and undergone the most thorough revision. So far did he carry this principle, that many of his lesser works seem absolutely mere transcripts or descriptions of pictures, where the sentiment is rather inferred than expressed; and in some, for example that which we are about to quote, he even brings before the reader what may be called the process of mental painting.

Cupid As a Landscape Painter

Once I sate upon a mountain,
Gazing on the mist before me;
Like a great grey sheet of canvass,
Shrouding all things in its cover,
Did it float 'twixt earth and heaven.

Then a child appear'd beside me;
Saying, "Friend, it is not seemly,
Thus to gaze in idle wonder,
With that noble breadth before thee.
Hast thou lost thine inspiration?
Hath the spirit of the painter
Died within thee utterly?"

But I turn'd and look'd upon him,
Speaking not, but thinking inly,
"Will he read a lesson now!"

“Folded hands,” pursued the infant,
“Never yet have won a triumph.
Look! I’ll paint for thee a picture
Such as none have seen before.”

And he pointed with his finger,
Which like any rose was ruddy,
And upon the breadth of vapour
With that finger ’gan to draw.

First a glorious sun he painted,
Dazzling when I look’d upon it;
And he made the inner border
Of the clouds around it golden,
With the light rays through the masses
Pouring down in streams of splendour.
Then the tender taper summits
Of the trees, all leaf and glitter,
Started from the sullen void;
And the slopes behind them rising,
Graceful-lined in undulation,
Glided backwards one by one.
Underneath, be sure, was water;
And the stream was drawn so truly
That it seem’d to break and shimmer,
That it seem’d as if cascading
From the lofty rolling wheel.

There were flowers beside the brooklet;
There were colours on the meadow—
Gold and azure, green and purple,
Emerald and bright carbuncle.
Clear and pure he work’d the ether
As with lapis-lazuli,
And the mountains in the distance
Stretching blue and far away—
All so well, that I, in rapture
At this second revelation,
Turn’d to gaze upon the painter
From the picture which he drew.

“Have I not,” he said, “convinced thee
That I know the painter’s secret?
Yet the greatest is to come.”
Then he drew with gentle finger,
Still more delicately pointed,
In the wood, about its margin,
Where the sun within the water

Glanced as from the clearest mirror,
Such a maiden's form!
Perfect shape in perfect raiment,
Fair young cheeks 'neath glossy ringlets,
And the cheeks were of the colour
Of the finger whence they came.

"Child," I cried, "what wond'rous master
In his school of art hath form'd thee,
That so deftly and so truly,
From the sketch unto the burnish,
Thou hast finish'd such a gem?"

As I spoke, a breeze arising
Stirr'd the tree-tops in the picture,
Ruffled every pool of water,
Waved the garments of the maiden;

And, what more than all amazed me,
Her small feet took motion also,
And she came towards the station
Where I sat beside the boy.

So, when every thing was moving,
Leaves and water, flowers and raiment,
And the footsteps of the darling—
Think you I remain'd as lifeless
As the rock on which I rested?
No, I trow—not I!

This is as perfect a landscape as one of Berghem's sunniest.

An artist is, to our mind, one of the happiest creatures in God's creation. Now that the race of wandering minstrels has passed away, your painter is the only free joyous denizen of the earth, who can give way to his natural impulses without fear of reproach, and who can indulge his enthusiasm for the bright and beautiful to the utmost. He has his troubles, no doubt; for he is ambitious, and too often he is poor; but it is something to pursue ambition along the natural path with unwarped energies, and ardent and sincere devotion. As to poverty, that is a fault that must daily mend, if he is only true to himself. In a few years, the foot-sore wanderer of the Alps, with little more worldly goods than the wallet and sketch-book he carries, will be the royal academician, the Rubens or the Reynolds of his day, with the most *recherché* studio in London, and more orders upon his list than he has either time or inclination to execute. Goethe has let us into the secret of the young German artist's life. Let us look upon him in the dawnings of his fame, before he is summoned to adorn the stately halls of Munich with frescoes from the Niebelungen Lied.

The Artist's Morning Song

My dwelling is the Muses' home—
What matters it how small?

And here, within my heart, is set
The holiest place of all.

When, waken'd by the early sun,
I rise from slumbers sound,
I see the ever-living forms
In radiance group'd around.

I pray, and songs of thanks and praise
Are more than half my prayer,
With simple notes of music, tuned
To some harmonious air.

I bow before the altar then,
And read, as well I may,
From noble Homer's master-work,
The lesson for the day.

He takes me to the furious fight,
Where lion warriors throng;
Where god-descended heroes whirl
In iron cars along.

And steeds go down before the cars;
And round the cumber'd wheel,
Both friend and foe are rolling now,
All blood from head to heel!

Then comes the champion of them all,
Pelides' friend is he,
And crashes through the dense array,
Though thousands ten they be!

And ever smites that fiery sword
Through helmet, shield, and mail;
Until he falls by craft divine,
Where might could not prevail.

Down from the glorious pile he rolls,
Which he himself had made,
And foemen trample on the limbs
From which they shrank afraid.

Then start I up, with arms in hand,
What arms the painter bears;
And soon along my kindling wall
The fight at Troy appears.

On! on again! The wrath is here

Of battle rolling red;
Shield strikes on shield, and sword on helm,
And dead men fall on dead!

I throng into the inner press,
Where loudest rings the din;
For there, around their hero's corpse,
Fight on his furious kin!

A rescue! rescue! bear him hence
Into the leaguer near;
Pour balsam in his glorious wounds,
And weep above his bier.

And when from that hot trance I pass,
Great Love, I feel thy charm;
There hangs my lady's picture near—
A picture yet so warm!

How fair she was, reclining there;
What languish in her look!
How thrill'd her glance through all my frame!
The very pencil shook.

Her eyes, her cheeks, her lovely lips,
Were all the world to me;
And in my breast a younger life
Rose wild and wantonly.

Oh! turn again, and bide thee here,
Nor fear such rude alarms;
How could I think of battles more
With thee within my arms!

But thou shalt lend thy perfect form
To all I fashion best;
I'll paint thee first, Madonna-wise,
The infant on thy breast.

I'll paint thee as a startled nymph,
Myself a following fawn;
And still pursue thy flying feet
Across the woodland lawn.

With helm on head, like Mars, I'll lie
By thee, the Queen of Love,
And draw a net around us twain,
And smile on heaven above.

And every god that comes shall pour
His blessings on thy head,
And envious eyes be far away
From that dear marriage-bed!

There is abundance of spirit here. For once, in describing the battle and fall of Patroclus, Goethe seems to have caught a spark of Homeric inspiration, and the lines ring out as clearly as the stroke of the hammer on the anvil. There is no rhyme in the original, which, we confess, appears to us a fault; more especially as the rhythm is that of the ordinary ballad. We have, therefore, ventured to supply it, with as little deviation otherwise as possible. It is for the reader to judge whether the effect is diminished.

Our next selection shall be "The God and the Bayaderé"—a poem which is little inferior in beauty to the Bride of Corinth, and which, from its structure, opposes to the translator quite as serious a difficulty. The subject is taken from the Hindoo mythology, and conveys a very touching moral of humanity and forbearance; somewhat daring, perhaps, from its novelty, and the peculiar customs and religious faith of an eastern land, yet, withal, most delicately handled.

The God and the Bayaderé.
An Indian Legend

I

Mahadeh, earth's lord, descending
To its mansions comes again,
That, like man with mortals blending,
He may feel their joy and pain;
Stoops to try life's varied changes,
And with human eyes to see,
Ere he praises or avenges,
What their fitful lot may be.
He has pass'd through the city, has look'd on them all;
He has watch'd o'er the great, nor forgotten the small,
And at evening went forth on his journey so free.

II

In the outskirts of the city,
Where the straggling huts are piled,
At a casement stood a pretty
Painted thing, almost a child.

"Greet thee, maiden!" "Thanks—art weary?
Wait, and quickly I'll appear!"
"What art thou?"—"A Bayaderé,

And the home of love is here."
She rises; the cymbals she strikes as she dances,
And whirling, and bending with grace, she advances,
And offers him flowers as she undulates near.

III

O'er the threshold gliding lightly
In she leads him to her room.
"Fear not, gentle stranger; brightly
Shall my lamp dispel the gloom.
Art thou weary? I'll relieve thee—
Bathe thy feet, and soothe their smart;
All thou askest I can give thee—
Rest, or song, or joy impart."
She labours to soothe him, she labours to please;
The Deity smiles; for with pleasure he sees
Through deep degradation a right-loving heart.

IV

And he asks for service menial,
And she only strives the more,
Nature's impulse now is genial
Where but art prevail'd before.
As the fruit succeeds the blossom,
Swells and ripens day by day,
So, where kindness fills the bosom,
Love is never far away.
But he, whose vast motive was deeper and higher,
Selected, more keenly and clearly to try her,
Love, follow'd by anguish, and death, and dismay.

V

And her rosy cheeks he presses,
And she feels love's torment sore,
And, thrill'd through by his caresses,
Weeps, that never wept before.
Droops beside him, not dissembling,
Or for passion or for gain,
But her limbs grow faint and trembling,

And no more their strength retain.
Meanwhile the still hours of the night stealing by,
Spread their shadowy woof o'er the face of the sky,
Bringing love and its festival joys in their train.

VI

Lately roused, her arms around him,
Waking up from broken rest,
Dead upon her breast she found him,
Dead—that dearly-cherish'd guest!
Shrieking loud, she flings her o'er him,
But he answers not her cry;
And unto the pile they bore him,
Stark of limb and cold of eye.
She hears the priests chanting—she hears the death-song,
And frantic she rises, and bursts through the throng.
"Who is she? what seeks she? why comes she so nigh?"

VII

But the bier she falleth over,
And her shrieks are loud and shrill—
"I *will* have my lord, my lover!
In the grave I seek him still.
Shall that godlike frame be wasted
By the fire's consuming blight?
Mine it was—yea mine! though tasted
Only one delicious night!"
But the priests, they chant ever—"We carry the old,
When their watching is over, their journeys are told;
We carry the young, when they pass from the light!

VIII

"Hear us, woman! Him we carry
Was not, could not be, thy spouse.
Art thou not a Bayaderé?
So hast thou no nuptial vows.
Only to death's silent hollow
With the body goes the shade;
Only wives their husbands follow:

Thus alone is duty paid.
Strike loud the wild turmoil of drum and of gong!
Receive him, ye gods, in your glorious throng—
Receive him in garments of burning array'd!"

IX

Harsh their words, and unavailing,
Swift she threaded through the quire,
And with arms outstretch'd, unquailing
Leap'd into the crackling fire.
But the deed alone sufficeth—
Robed in might and majesty,
From the pile the god ariseth
With the ransom'd one on high.
Divinity joys in a sinner repenting,
And the lost ones of earth, by immortals relenting,
Are borne upon pinions of fire to the sky!

Let us now take a poem of the Hartz mountains, containing no common allegory. Every man is more or less a Treasure-seeker—a hater of labour—until he has received the important truth, that labour alone can bring content and happiness. There is an affinity, strange as it may appear, between those whose lot in life is the most exalted, and the haggard hollow-eyed wretch who prowls incessantly around the crumbling ruins of the past, in the belief that there lies beneath their mysterious foundations a mighty treasure, over which some jealous demon keeps watch for evermore. But Goethe shall read the moral to us himself.

The Treasure-seeker

I

Many weary days I suffer'd,
Sick of heart and poor of purse;
Riches are the greatest blessing—
Poverty the deepest curse!

Till at last to dig a treasure
Forth I went into the wood—
"Fiend! my soul is thine for ever!"
And I sign'd the scroll with blood.

II

Then I drew the magic circles,
Kindled the mysterious fire,
Placed the herbs and bones in order,
Spoke the incantation dire.
And I sought the buried metal
With a spell of mickle might—
Sought it as my master taught me;
Black and stormy was the night.

III

And I saw a light appearing
In the distance, like a star;
When the midnight hour was tolling,
Came it waxing from afar:
Came it flashing, swift and sudden;
As if fiery wine it were,
Flowing from an open chalice,
Which a beauteous boy did bear.

IV

And he wore a lustrous chaplet,
And his eyes were full of thought,
As he stepp'd into the circle
With the radiance that he brought.
And he bade me taste the goblet;
And I thought—"It cannot be,
That this boy should be the bearer
Of the Demon's gifts to me!"

V

"Taste the draught of pure existence
Sparkling in this golden urn,
And no more with baneful magic
Shalt thou hitherward return.
Do not dig for treasures longer;

Let thy future spellwords be
Days of labour, nights of resting;
So shall peace return to thee!”

Pass we away now from the Hartz to Heidelberg, in the company of our glorious poet. We all know the magnificent ruins of the Neckar, the feudal turrets which look down upon one of the sweetest spots that ever filled the soul of a weary man with yearning for a long repose. Many a year has gone by since the helmet of the warder was seen glancing on these lofty battlements, since the tramp of the steed was heard in the court-yard, and the banner floated proudly from the topmost turret; but fancy has a power to call them back, and the shattered stone is restored in an instant by the touch of that sublimest architect:—

The Castle on the Mountain

There stands an ancient castle
On yonder mountain height,
Where, fenced with door and portal,
Once tarried steed and knight.

But gone are door and portal,
And all is hush’d and still;
O’er ruin’d wall and rafter
I clamber as I will.

A cellar with many a vintage
Once lay in yonder nook;
Where now are the cellarer’s flagons,
And where is his jovial look?

No more he sets the beakers
For the guests at the wassail feast;
Nor fills a flask from the oldest cask
For the duties of the priest.

No more he gives on the staircase
The stoup to the thirsty squires,
And a hurried thanks for the hurried gift
Receives, nor more requires.

For burn’d are roof and rafter,
And they hang begrimed and black;
And stair, and hall, and chapel,
Are turn’d to dust and wrack.

Yet, as with song and cittern,
One day when the sun was bright,
I saw my love ascending
With me the rocky height;

From the hush and desolation
Sweet fancies did unfold,
And it seem'd as we were living
In the merry days of old.

As if the stateliest chambers
For noble guests were spread,
And out from the prime of that glorious time
A youth a maiden led.

And, standing in the chapel,
The good old priest did say,
"Will ye wed with one another?"
And we smiled and we answer'd "Yea!"

We sung, and our hearts they bounded
To the thrilling lays we sung,
And every note was doubled
By the echo's catching tongue.

And when, as eve descended,
We left the silence still,
And the setting sun look'd upward
On that great castled hill;

Then far and wide, like lord and bride,
In the radiant light we shone—
It sank; and again the ruins
Stood desolate and lone!

We shall now select, from the songs that are scattered throughout the tale of Wilhelm Meister, one of the most genial and sweet. It is an in-door picture of evening, and of those odorous flowers of life which expand their petals only at the approach of Hesperus.

Philine's Song

Sing not thus in notes of sadness
Of the loneliness of night;
No! 'tis made for social gladness,
Converse sweet, and love's delight.

As to rugged man his wife is,
As his fairest half decreed,
So dear night the half of life is,
And the fairest half indeed.

Canst thou in the day have pleasure,

Which but breaks on rapture in,
Scares us from our dreams of leisure
With its glare and irksome din?

But when night is come, and glowing
Is the lamp's attemper'd ray,
And from lip to lip are flowing
Love and mirth, in sparkling play;

When the fiery boy, that wildly
Rushes in his wayward mood,
Calms to rest, disporting mildly,
By some trivial gift subdued;

When the nightingale is trilling
Songs of love to lovers' ears,
Which, to hearts with sorrow thrilling,
Seem but sighs and waken tears;

Then, with bosom lightly springing,
Dost thou listen to the bell,
That, with midnight's number ringing,
Speaks of rest and joy so well?

Then, dear heart, this comfort borrow
From the long day's lingering light—
Every day hath its own sorrow,
Gladness cometh with the night!

We are somewhat puzzled as to the title which we ought to prefix to our next specimen. Goethe rather maliciously calls it "Gegenwart," which may be equivalent to the word "Presentiality," if, indeed, such a word belongs to the English language. We, therefore, prefer dedicating it to our own ladye love; and we could not find for her any where a sweeter strain, unless we were to commit depredation upon the minor poems of Ben Jonson or of Shakspeare.

To my Mistress

All that's lovely speaks of thee!
When the glorious sun appeareth,
'Tis thy harbinger to me:
Only thus he cheereth.

In the garden where thou go'st,
There art thou the rose of roses,
First of lilies, fragrant most
Of the fragrant posies.

When thou movest in the dance,

All the stars with thee are moving,
And around thee gleam and glance,
Never tired of loving.

Night!—and would the night were here!
Yet the moon would lose her duty,
Though her sheen be soft and clear,
Softer is thy beauty!

Fair, and kind, and gentle one!
Do not moon, and stars, and flowers
Pay that homage to their sun
That we pay to ours?

Sun of mine, that art so dear—
Sun, that art above all sorrow!
Shine, I pray thee, on me here
Till the eternal morrow.

Another little poem makes us think of “poor Ophelia.” We suspect that Goethe had the music of her broken ballad floating in his mind, when he composed the following verses:—

The Wild Rose

A boy espied, in morning light,
A little rosebud blowing.
’Twas so delicate and bright,
That he came to feast his sight,
And wonder at its growing.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

I will gather thee—he cried—
Rosebud brightly blowing!
Then I’ll sting thee, it replied,
And you’ll quickly start aside
With the prickle glowing.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

But he pluck’d it from the plain,
The rosebud brightly blowing!
It turn’d and stung him, but in vain—
He regarded not the pain,
Homewards with it going.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

We are sure that the votaries of Wordsworth will thank us for the next translation, which embodies a most noble idea. See how the eye of the poet is scanning the silent march of the heavens, and mark with what solemn music he invests the stately thought!

A Night Thought

I do not envy you, ye joyless stars,
Though fair ye be, and glorious to the sight—
The seaman's hope amidst the 'whelming storm,
When help from God or man there cometh none.
No! for ye love not, nor have ever loved!
Through the broad fields of heaven, the eternal hours
Lead on your circling spheres unceasingly.
How vast a journey have ye travell'd o'er,
Since I, upon the bosom of my love,
Forgot all memory of night or you!

Let us follow up these glorious lines with a conception worthy of Æschylus—indeed an abstract of his master-subject. It were out of place here to dilate upon the mythical grandeur of Prometheus, and the heroic endurance of his character, as depicted by the ancient poet. To our mind and ear, the modern is scarcely inferior.

Prometheus

Curtain thy heavens, thou Jove, with clouds and mist,
And, like a boy that moweth thistles down,
Unloose thy spleen on oaks and mountain-tops;
Yet canst thou not deprive me of my earth,
Nor of my hut, the which thou didst not build,
Nor of my hearth, whose little cheerful flame
Thou enviest me!

I know not aught within the universe
More slight, more pitiful than you, ye Gods!
Who nurse your majesty with scant supplies
Of offerings wrung from fear, and mutter'd prayers,
And needs must starve, were't not that babes and beggars
Are hope-besotted fools!

When I was yet a child, and knew not whence
My being came, nor where to turn its powers,
Up to the sun I bent my wilder'd eye,
As though above, within its glorious orb,
There dwelt an ear to listen to my plaint,
A heart, like mine, to pity the oppress'd.

Who gave me succour

Against the Titans in their tyrannous might?
Who rescued me from death—from slavery?

Thou!—thou, my soul, burning with hallow'd fire,
Thou hast thyself alone achieved it all!
Yet didst thou, in thy young simplicity,
Glow with misguided thankfulness to him
That slumbers on in idlesse there above!

I reverence thee?
Wherefore? Hast thou ever
Lighten'd the sorrows of the heavy-laden?
Thou ever stretch'd thy hand to still the tears
Of the perplex'd in spirit?
Was it not
Almighty Time, and ever-during Fate—
My lords and thine—that shaped and fashion'd me
Into the man I am?

Belike it was thy dream,
That I should hate life—fly to wastes and wilds,
For that the buds of visionary thought
Did not all ripen into goodly flowers?

Here do I sit, and mould
Men after mine own image—
A race that may be like unto myself,
To suffer, weep; to enjoy, and to rejoice;
And, like myself, unheeding all of thee!

We shall close this Number with a ballad of a different cast, but, lest the transition should be too violent, we shall interpolate the space with a very beautiful lyric. We claim no merit for this translation, for, to say the truth, we could not have done it half so well. Perhaps the fair hand that penned it, will turn over the pages of Maga in distant Wales, and a happy blush over-spread her cheek when she sees, enshrined in these columns, the effort of her maiden Muse.

New Love, New Life

Heart—my heart! what means this feeling?
Say what weighs thee down so sore?
What new life is this revealing!
What thou wert, thou art no more.
All once dear to thee is vanish'd,
All that marr'd thy peace is banish'd,
Gone thy trouble and thine ease—
Ah! whence come such woes as these?

Does the bloom of youth bright-gleaming—

Does that form of purest light—
Do these eyes so sweetly beaming,
Chain thee with resistless might?
When the charm I'd wildly sever—
Man myself to fly for ever—
Ah! or yet the thought can stir,
Back my footsteps fly to her.

With such magic meshes laden,
All too closely round me cast,
Holds me that bewitching maiden,
An unwilling captive fast.

In her charméd sphere delaying,
Must I live, her will obeying—
Ah! how great the change in me!
Love—O love, do set me free!

One other mood of love, and we leave the apprentice of Cornelius Agrippa to bring up the rear. Goethe is said to have been somewhat fickle in his attachments—most poets are—but here is one instance where passion appears to have prevailed over absence.

Separation

I think of thee whene'er the sun is glowing
Upon the lake;
Of thee, when in the crystal fountain flowing
The moonbeams shake.

I see thee when the wanton wind is busy,
And dust-clouds rise;
In the deep night, when o'er the bridge so dizzy
The wanderer hies.

I hear thee when the waves, with hollow roaring,
Gush forth their fill;
Often along the heath I go exploring,
When all is still.

I am with thee! Though far thou art and darkling,
Yet art thou near.
The sun goes down, the stars will soon be sparkling—
Oh, wert thou here!

If we recollect right—for it is a long time since we studied the occult sciences—Wierius, in his erudite volume "De Prestigiis Demonum," recounts the story which is celebrated in the following ballad. Something like it is to be found in the biography of every magician; for the household staff of a wizard was not complete without a *famulus*, who usually proved to be a fellow

of considerable humour, but endowed with the meddling propensities of a monkey. Thus, Doctor Faustus of Wittenburg—not at all to be confounded with the illustrious printer—had a perfect jewel in the person of his attendant Wagner; and our English Friar Bacon was equally fortunate in Miles, his trusty squire. Each of these gentlemen, in their master's absence, attempted a little conjuring on their own account; but with no better success than the nameless attendant of Agrippa, whom Goethe has sought to immortalize. There is a great deal of grotesque humour in the manufacture, agility, and multiplication of the domestic Kobold.

The Magician's Apprentice

Huzzah, huzzah! His back is fairly
Turn'd about, the wizard old;
And I'll now his spirits rarely
To my will and pleasure mould!
His spells and orgies—ha'n't I
Mark'd them all aright?

And I'll do wonders, sha'n't I?
And deeds of mickle might.
Bubble, bubble;
Fast and faster!
Hear your master,
Hear his calling—
Water! flow in measures double,
To the bath in torrents falling!

Ho, thou batter'd broomstick! take ye
This old seedy coat, and wear it—
Ah, thou household drudge, I'll make ye
Do my bidding; ay, and fear it.
Stand on legs, old tramper!
Here's a head—I've stuck it—
Now be off—hey, scamper
With the water-bucket!
Bubble, bubble;
Fast and faster!
Hear your master,
Hear his calling—
Water! flow in measure double,
To the bath in torrents falling!

See, 'tis off—'tis at the river—
In the stream the bucket flashes;
Now 'tis back—and down, or ever
You can wink; the burden dashes.
Again, again, and quicker!
The floor is in a swim,
And every stoup and bicker

Is running o'er the brim.
Stop, now stop!
For you've granted
All I wanted
Well and neatly—
Gracious me! I'm like to drop—
I've forgot the word completely!

Oh, the word, so strong and baleful,
To make it what it was before!
There it skips with pail on pailful—
Would thou wert a broom once more!
Still new streams he scatters,
Round and ever round me—
Oh, a hundred waters
Rushing in have bound me!
No—no longer
Can I bear it.
No, I swear it!
Gifts and graces!
Woe is me, my fears grow stronger,
Look what grinnings, what grimaces!

Wilt thou, offspring of the devil,
Soak the house to please thy funning?
Even now, above the level
Of the door the water's running.
Broom accurst, that will not
Hear, although I roar!
Stick! be now, and fail not,
What thou wert before!
You will joke me?
I'll not bear it,
No, I swear it!
I will catch you;
And with axe, if you provoke me,
In a twinkling I'll dispatch you.

Back it comes—will nought prevent it?
If I only turn me to thee,
Soon, O Kobold! thou'lt repent it,
When the steel goes crashing through thee.
Bravely struck, and surely!
There it goes in twain;
Now I move securely,
And I breathe again!
Woe and wonder!
As it parted,
Up there started,

’Quipp’d aright,
Goblins twain that rush asunder.
Help, oh help, ye powers of might!

Deep and deeper grows the water
On the stairs and in the hall,
Rushing in with roar and clatter—
Lord and master, hear me call!
Ah, here comes the master—
Sore, sir, is my straight;
I raised this spirit faster
Far than I can lay’t.
“To your hole!
As you were, be
Broom! and there be
Still; for none
But the wizard can control,
And make you on his errands run!”

THE GREAT DROUGHT

In the spring and summer of 1844 rain began to fail, and the first things that perished for want of water died that year. But the moisture of the earth was still abundant, and the plants which took deep root found sustenance below; so that the forest trees showed an abundance of foliage, and the harvest in some kinds was plentiful. Towards the autumn rain returned again, and every thing appeared to be recovering its former order; but the dry winter, the dry spring, dry summer of the next year, told upon the face of creation. Many trees put forth small and scanty leaves, and many perished altogether; whole species were cut off; for instance, except where they were artificially preserved, one could not find a living ash or beech—few were kept alive by means of man; for water began to be hoarded for the necessaries of life. The wheat was watered, and, where such a thing was possible, the hay-fields also; but numbers of animals died, and numbers were killed this year—the first from thirst, and the last to reduce the consumers of the precious element. Still the rich commanded the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life; and the arts which required a consumption of water were carried on as yet, and continued in practice even longer than prudence warranted: so strong was the force of habit, and the pressure of the artificial necessities which they supplied. The railroads were as yet in activity, and when water failed along the line, it was brought from the sea by the rich companies concerned in the traffic; only the fares were raised, and the trains which ran for pleasure merely, were suspended. But, in the midst of business and interest, there was a deep gloom. Projects which affected the fortunes of nations were in suspense, because there was no rain. Cares for the succession of crowns, and the formation of constitutions, might all be futile, if there should be no rain: and it seemed as if there never would be any; for this was now the third year, and the earth had not received a shower. And now, ceasing to be supplied from their usual sources, the springs and rivers withered and shrank. Water became in many places not dear, but unattainable. The greatest people of the land left it, and used their wealth in chasing the retreating element from place to place on the earth. In some cases, among these luxurious spirits there were scenes of extravagant revelry still; they had no employment except to live, and they endeavoured to make the act of living as exciting as their old amusements had been. But accounts of foreign countries came more and more rarely to England; for when the fourth rainless year arrived, drought and famine had slain three-fourths of its inhabitants, and commerce and agriculture were alike suspended. When a vessel came as far up in the mouth of a river as the sinking waters permitted, it brought tidings of desolation from whatever port it had left. Stories began to spread of dry land in parts of the ocean where it had never been seen before; marks which had stood in the deep of the sea might now be walked round at all times of the tide, and thick crusts of salt were beginning to spread upon tracts of the great deep. These tidings from foreign lands came at long intervals, and at long intervals was a ship sent from any English haven. The few dwellers of the coast knew not if there were still any dwellers of the interior: for England was become like the desert; and there were no beasts to carry one across it, and no water to be hoarded in skins for the passage. Traffic of every kind ceased; industry was gone; the secrets of science, and the cultivated mind of the philosopher, were all bent to the production of water; and many a precious object was resolved back into its elements, and afforded a scanty supply to a few parched mouths. The lingering inhabitants had the produce of past years only to live upon, which nothing replenished as it diminished, and to renew which the baked earth was wholly incompetent.

In the heart of this desert, there was a family which had hitherto survived the destruction of life around them. It consisted of a father and mother, and two young children, Charles and Alice; the last of whom, the girl, was but a few months old when the Great Drought began. They had lived in Derbyshire, near the range of low hills called the Peak; and they and other inhabitants of that region had found water longer than many others, from the sides of the hills, and from excavations which they had made in the rocks. The strong hope and expectation of rain had kept them lingering on as

long as any supply lasted; and Paulett, who in the days when ranks existed, had been a great landlord, had used both his knowledge and his influence to supply the wants of the people, and to postpone their destruction. But those days were gone by; his possessions were so much dust: he wanted water, and nobody wanted any thing else. He was a mere man now, like those who are born naked and die naked, and had to struggle with the needs of nature, even as every one else. Meantime his education availed him; and the resources which it taught him prolonged the lives of his family and himself. But he was soon obliged to limit himself to this sole care; for the supply he obtained was scanty, and he knew how precarious it must be. He had explored the cavern of the Peak with great attention, and he bored the rock in various places, and used means suggested by his knowledge of natural causes, which had procured a slender flow of water into a basin which he had made. The fury of thirsty men for water was so great, that he was obliged to keep his secret with the utmost care; and towards the end of the fourth year, he removed his wife and children to the cavern itself, and blocked up the entrance, in such a manner that he could defend it against any chance survivor. There was no want of the luxuries of furniture in the cavern—all the splendours of the land were at the command of those who would take them; and Paulett brought there whatever had adorned his home when the earth was a fit dwelling-place for man. There was velvet and down to lie upon; there were carpets on which the little Alice could roll; there were warm dresses, and luxurious ornaments of the toilette; whatever could be used for comfort he had brought, and all other precious things he had left in his open house, locking himself and his family up with only water. At first there would come sometimes a miserable man or woman, tracing the presence of living creatures, and crying for water. Paulett or his wife supplied several, and when they had been refreshed, they revealed the secret to others; or, being strengthened themselves, felt the desperate desire of life revive, and attempted violence to get at the treasure. After this the inhabitants of the cavern fell back to mere self-preservation; and the father and mother were able to harden their hearts against others, by looking at the two creatures whom they had born into the world, and who depended upon them. But, indeed, life seemed to shrink rapidly to nothing over the face of the country. It was very rare to see a moving form of any kind—skeletons of beasts and men were in plenty, and their white bones lay on the arid soil; or even their withered shapes, dried by the air and the sun, were stretched out on the places where they had ceased to suffer: but life was most rare, and it became scarcely necessary to use any precaution against an invader of their store. The dreadful misery was, that this store diminished. The heart of the earth seemed drying, and was ceasing to be capable of yielding moisture, even to the utmost wrenching of science. There was so little one hot day, that Paulett and Ellen scarcely moistened their lips after their meal of baked corn, and warned their children that the draught they received was the only one that could be given them. Charles was now seven years old, and had learned to submit, but his longing eyes pleaded for more; little Alice was clamorous, and the mother felt tears overflow her eyes to think that there was no possibility of yielding to that childish peevishness, and that the absolute non-existence of water must punish her poor child's wilfulness. When Paulett had set his instruments to work, to renew if possible the supply, and when Ellen had removed the silver cups and dishes which had held their corn and water, he and she sat down at the mouth of the cavern, and the little ones got their playthings, and placed them on piece of rock not far off. The mouth of the cave is lofty, and there is a sort of terrace running along one side, at the foot of which lay the channel of the stream, that was now dry. The view is down the first reach of a narrow valley, which turns presently afterwards, and so shuts out the world beyond from sight; and the hill on each side rises high, and from its perpendicularity seems even higher than it is. The shade of the cavern was deep and cool, but the sky glowed with the heat and light of the sun, and there was not a cloud to hinder him from burning up the earth. The hill-sides, the channel where the brook had flowed, the stones of the cave, were all equally bare; there was no sound of voice, or bird, or insect—no cool drop from the ceiling of the cave—no moisture even in the coolness of the shadow. Ellen leaned her head on her husband, and Paulett pressed his arm round her—both of them were thinking of the basin empty of water.

"Ellen," said Paulett, "I think the time is come when the elements shall melt with fervent heat. It seems like the conflagration of the world; not indeed as we have always fancied it, with flames and visible fire, but not the less on that account the action of heat. It is perhaps the Last Day."

"I hope it is," said Ellen, "I hope it is; I wish those precious creatures may be among those that are alive and remain, and may be spared the torments of this thirsty death."

"You and I could bear it, if they were gone," said Paulett, glancing at them and withdrawing his eyes.

"Oh, yes!" said Ellen, pressing near to him, and taking his hand in both hers. They were silent, and they heard the children talking as they played.

"There is King Alexander," said Charles, setting up a pebble—"he is going to dinner. Put the dinner, Alice."

Alice set out several other pebbles before King Alexander.

"And he has got a great feast. There is plenty of water, more than he can drink; and he drinks, drinks, as much as he likes, and still there is plenty of water when he goes to bed."

"Poor children! I can't bear it," said Ellen.

"Oh, Ellen, it would have been better never to have given them birth!" said Paulett.

"No—not that," said Ellen, sitting down again; "though they must suffer, they are better to be; when this suffering has dissolved their bodies—on the other side of these mortal pains there is ease and happiness."

"True, true, dear Ellen," said Paulett; "it is only difficult to die."

He held her hand; and while he did so, his eye fastened on a diamond ring which she wore. She observed his fixed look.

"You gave me that when we little thought how it was we should part—when I was a bride—and there was all the pleasure and business of the world round us. It hardly seems as if we were the same creatures."

"No, we are not; for I am thinking, concerning that ring which you were never to part with, whether I could not convert the diamond into water."

"How, Paulett?"

"I can't explain it to you; but it has just crossed my mind that it is possible; and if so, there are still plenty of jewels in the world to keep us alive."

He drew off the ring as he spoke, and went into the interior of the cave, whither Ellen followed him. There was a fire, and some apparatus belonging to Paulett, which he had used in experiments upon the decreasing water of the basin. He knocked the stone out of its setting, and applied himself to decompose it over the fire. He put forth all his skill and all his power, and was successful; the diamond disappeared, and there remained a few drops of water. He looked at his wife and smiled; she raised her eyes to his, astonished and pleased, took the cup from his hand, and looked at the precious metamorphosis.

"I'll give it the children," she said, and was going away; but he stopped her. "No, Ellen, there is not enough to do any good; you and I will drink each other's health in it; and he put the cup first to her lips and then to his own. God bless you, my Ellen!" he said, "my wife—I pledge you again with that diamond. The first drop of water comes from the stone that plighted my faith to you, and may it bring you health and happiness yet."

"God bless you, my husband! If we could but die now!"

Chapter II

Paulett now exerted himself to collect all the diamonds that remained without owners in the neighbourhood. First he visited his own forsaken home, and took thence the jewels, which he had neglected in his retreat from it, but which were now as precious as water. He found no great store even after ransacking all the houses within reach, and determined to undertake a longer journey in search of more. The basin in the cavern continued to yield a scanty supply of water; and Paulett extracted a small quantity from his stones. He made what provision he could for his family before setting out; and for his own necessities took the smallest possible portion, in a silver vessel, which was most preciously secured, and concealed about his person. It was a strange parting between his wife and him, both of them feeling and saying, that alive they should probably not meet again: yet death was so near them constantly, and was so far better than life, that his presence had grown familiar; and it was only the mode in which he would come that made them anxious. Paulett perishing alone of thirst was the fearful image to Ellen, and Ellen and her children waiting for him in vain, and dying one after the other for want of his help, was the dread of Paulett. They stood in the cavern, and embraced each other silently, and blessed their children with the same prayer for the last time. The little ones received and returned his caress, and Paulett quitted the cavern and set out on his uncertain expedition.

The face of the country was so much changed that he had some difficulty in making his way. The vivid colours of the earth were all gone, and in place of them was the painful greyness of the dead trees, and the yellow of the parched soil. Nothing was overthrown in ruin, but all stood dead in its place. The shapes of men and animals only lay strewn upon the earth. The human beings were comparatively rare; they were the last survivors of the destroying drought whom there had been none to bury; but these at length had died by hundreds, and in places their bones were seen whiter than any other object; or if any where over the surface there hung a vapour, it came from some collection of dead bodies which had not yet been resolved into the elements. Those whom he found there were mostly in heaps—the beasts had died singly; near what had been water-courses he saw more than once signs of struggle, and the last battles of earth had been fought for possession of its waters. He traced out many a pathetic story among the dry bones and faded garments. Women's dresses were there; and fallen into a shapeless heap on what had been their bosom, were little forms, and the raiment of children. Where the dry air and the sun had preserved the face, he beheld the fallen estate of those who had been men in the uncovered shame of death; the wide open lips, the sunken eyes, over which the eyelid was undrawn, the swollen tongue, the frame writhed into an expression of anguish, revealed all the pain and shame of death. But here and there, the hand of some one who had been a survivor, was visible in the attempt to conceal all this. In one place there was a shallow grave, into which a body had been rolled, and lay on its side; and close by, on a heap of clothes, out of which bones appeared, there was a spade with which the unfinished work had been attempted. In another, a female body was covered from sun and moon by a man 's cloak; and a few paces off lay a man, whom nothing shielded. There was an infant's skeleton wrapped in a woman's shawl, under what had been a hawthorn hedge; the mother had either perished attempting to find water, or had laid her child down, and gone away, like Hagar in the desert, not to see it die. The poor innocent's skull was turned on its shoulder; its cheek must have rested there while the face remained. It was too young to have struggled much. Paulett thought of his little Alice; of her unconsciousness to the fate around her; of what would be her and Charles's and poor Ellen's fate, if he failed in his search, or perished by the way. He roused himself from looking on all these sorrowful objects, and went on his dreary way. The second day after he left the cavern, he came to a stately pile of building, which he determined to explore for the life-giving stones he was in search of. It stood upon its terraces, surrounded by its colonnades and garden-steps, in all its old pride and beauty. Its forests were withered indeed, its gardens burned, its fountains dry; but the palace glanced back the sunlight, and was as steadfast and perfect as in the days of the

living. Paulett drew near, and found, as he came close, signs of the last days of life in it. The doors were opened to the air; and a few marks of objects removed, remained in the outer rooms. There was scoring and dragging on the marble floor; and Paulett doubted for a moment what had left these marks, till he saw on one side of a gilded table, a barrel, lying there empty, from which the top, as it seemed, had been accidentally knocked, and the liquor had flowed out. The marble bore the stain of wine, and where it had flowed, the slabs were broken in two places, perhaps from the violence of the struggle of those who saw the liquid flow, to wet each one his own parched lips. Paulett thought the lord of the castle had probably deserted it before the worst crisis arrived, and had tried to remove what was most valuable in his possession. He went on through long galleries and magnificent rooms, all silent as death, statues, which represented man in his glory and his strength; books, which were the work of that high spirit, now extinguished under the pressure of bodily wants; luxurious superfluities, which were for better days of the world—all was valueless, all open; he might go where he would, till at length one door resisted his efforts, and seemed to have been barred with a certain care from within. Paulett's heart beat high. Was there some one still living like himself; another human creature struggling for existence in this great world, and guarding, as he had done in his cavern, his treasure of water? Should he have another companion to speak with; another, with whom, perhaps, to get over the evil days; to whom to communicate his secret of producing water from diamonds? For the first time since he left the cavern, he spoke aloud—he called—he called in the great silence of the earth, but nothing answered him. If any one were still alive, he might be afraid of another living creature —had not he himself left pistols loaded for his poor Ellen, to defend her life and her children, if any human being should come near her? He gently shook the door; then proceeded to more violence, and forced it open. It was the door of a great dining-room, on whose lofty ceiling, as he entered it, wreaths of smoke rolled, which the air had put in motion, and a heavy smell, as of burned charcoal, struck him as he entered. There were no living creatures—the inhabitants were all dead in the last posture of life. The table was covered with silver and gold vessels, and among them were dead flowers and fruits, dried by the close chamber. It should seem they had drunk deeply before they died here—perhaps they had collected the last liquids, and resolved to perish when they had once more feasted: for there was wine still in some of the vessels, nay, in one there was water; and the ghostly shapes were adorned and fantastically covered with jewels and velvet, and all sort of rare and exquisite ornaments. Some were still on chairs, some fallen forward on the table, some prostrate, as if they had lain down to sleep. There were fragments of shivered glass on the floor; there was a statue broken to pieces on the table, on the pedestal of which was written "Patience;" there were pieces of torn paper in the hands of one, which seemed a letter; all these faint shadowings of long stories, and of a scene of which there remained no witness, struck Paulett's eye. One had sunk down by the silver tripod in which the charcoal had burned, and the match that fired it was amongst his garments. One face was there, resting on a sofa, still perfect enough to show it had been a beautiful woman; and roses, artfully made close to nature, crowned the long hair which fell upon arms from which the flesh had withered. On the neck were diamonds, on the hands diamonds—diamonds had confined the ringlets —diamonds sparkled on the feet. Paulett shuddered as he took them away. The spirit, indeed, was gone; but here was the last act of the spirit before it plunged into an unknown region, it knew not where. Paulett asked himself where. "A little longer," said he, "and they must have died; could not they wait their time, and take patience with death? Must they die in drunkenness, in madness; worse than beasts?" Then his own thirsty eyes fixed on the table, where, in the light of the sun, the water sparkled, and gave rainbow rays. He forgot all beside, in the impulse which urged him to seize and drink—to drink the first draught—to satiate his throat with water. He drank and revived; and then blamed himself for yielding so passionately to the impulse which was now passed away; and as it passed, the horror of the scene around him acquired greater force, and he longed to be out of its influence. He made haste to collect all the jewels around him, and when he had done, found that his burden was as much as he could safely carry. He went hastily out of the room, as if any of these

figures could rise and follow him, and fastened the door again, where the crime had been wrought. He hastily crossed the marble halls and gilded rooms, and came out in the sunlight—the splendid, solemn sunlight that looked upon a burnt-up world!

Chapter III

Meantime, poor Ellen waited anxiously in the cavern, and as soon as the first possible moment for Paulett's return was passed, her fears grew strong. There was so much danger for him in the bare desert, with his scanty supply of water, that she might well listen to fear as soon as it had any reason to make itself heard; and with this dread, when she next drew water from her scanty supply, came the horrible torment of the anticipated death by thirst, which seemed descending upon her children and her. The day she had thought he would return rose and set, and so did another and another; and from fearing, she had begun to believe, indeed, that Paulett's earthly hours were passed. Yet hope would not be subdued entirely; and then she felt that perhaps by prolonging their lives another day only, she should save them to welcome him, and to profit by his hard-earned treasure. The store of water was sacredly precious. She dealt it out in the smallest portions to her children, and she herself scarcely wetted her lips; she hardened her heart to see her boy's pale face, her girl's feverish eye; she checked even the motherly tenderness of her habits, lest the softening of her heart should overcome her resolution; and so she laid them in their beds the third night of her dread, when indeed there was scarce another day's supply. She herself lay on hers, but deadly anxiety kept her from sleeping, and her ears ached with the silence which ought to have been broken by a step. And at last, oh joy! there was a foot—yes, a few moments made that certain, which from the first indeed she believed, but which was so faint that it wanted confirmation to her bodily sense. Up sprang Ellen, and darted to meet him. She held forward the candle into the air, and, lo! it was a woman. Ellen screamed aloud; the woman had seen her before and said nothing, only pressed forward. "Who are you?" cried Ellen; "are you alive?" "Yes, just alive; and see here," said the woman, uncovering the face of her young child—"my child is just alive too; give me water before it dies." "Then my children will perish," said Ellen. "No, no," said the woman; "how are you alive now unless you have plenty? All mine are gone but this one; my husband died yesterday; ours has been gone for days." "My husband is dead, too," said Ellen, "and I have only one draught left." "Then I will take it," said the mother, rushing forward. Ellen caught her and struggled with her; the poor child moaned in its mother's arms, and a pang shot through the heart of Ellen. "For God's sake, miserable woman," she said, "do not go near that basin! You are mad with want; you will leave none for my children. Stay here, and I will bring your child water. You and I can want, and yours and mine shall drink." But the desperate woman pressed on; her eyes fixed on the water, and dilated with intense desire; her lips wide open, dying almost for the draught. Ellen's soul was concentred in the fear, that the last hope of her boy and girl's life was about to be lost; she struggled with the woman with all her might; she screamed aloud; she lost her hold; she seized a pistol from the table, and close as she was to her adversary, fired it full at her. The mother fell, with a shriek. Ellen started forward and broke her fall, and laid hold on the child to free it from her dying grasp. "Give him me, give him me!" said the mother, struggling to lift herself up, and stretching her hands out for the boy. The trembling Ellen stooped to give him to her, but the child's head dropped on one side as she held him out; he made no effort to get into his mother's arms. Ellen wildly raised his face, and he was dead too. The shot had gone through his breast to his mother's, and a little blood began to steal from his lips. "He's dead!" said the mother, who was herself passing away. "Oh, my boy!" and then feebly, with her fast-failing strength, she raised him, after more than one effort, in her arms, and pressed her lips to his twice, with all the passion that death left in her. The wasted form of the child lay there, all pale and withered, the straight brown hair was parted on his thin forehead; the mother's uncovered breast, where his head rested, was white, and the hands delicate; the raiment was luxurious; that head had not been reared in the expectation of dying on a bed of rock. Ellen burst into floods of tears, and wrung her hands as she stood by, looking on what she had done. The woman lifted her eyes, and tried to form her lips into a smile; she no longer felt

any vehement passion, and the torment of thirst was now only one of the pangs of death. Her eyes wandered to the water, but when Ellen moved to fetch some, she stopped her.

"No; it was for him. He is at ease now. You did right. Don't grieve."

"Forgive me," said Ellen, kneeling down at her side.

"Oh yes! the poor precious babe suffers no more. I was mad; you said truly in that. I nursed him at my breast till his lips grew dry even there; we lived not far from your cavern, and I have seen you, and been glad you had water. We had some. *We?* Yes, is not my husband dead; and my boy is dead too! See, there is blood on his face; wipe it away; he will die else." Ellen's sobs caught her wandering attention. "I remember now, you killed him; oh, good angel, guardian angel! you have killed him, and there is only I to suffer. He is gone from this dear, dear body; I wish it did not look so like him still—and it looks in pain too—it looks thirsty."

Ellen hid her own face on the mother's shoulder for an instant.—Her children had awakened at the noise of the pistol, and they were out of bed and clinging around her; her sorrow roused theirs, and the sound of their lamentation reached the dying woman's ear.

"There are my children crying. Alas! I thought they had all been dead."

"They are mine," said Ellen. "Yours are at rest, yours *are* all dead."

"Thank God!" said the mother; and though the words were earnest, the voice was faint; all the effort of nature was in them, but they came feebly from her lips. After that, indistinct sounds and murmured names only were heard; her breath came in gasps, and at longer and longer intervals; till the faint shuddering of her limbs ceased by degrees, and after it had been insensible to the world for a while, the spirit quitted it for ever. Ellen's heart died within her; her senses were troubled, and she pressed herself in Paulett's arms without knowing when he came, or being surprised that he was there. "Oh, Paulett!" she said at last, "I have not done wrong, but it is so dreadful!" Paulett soon gathered from her all that had happened; and gazed with pity on what had once been a beautiful form, but rejoiced that it suffered no longer. Ellen, shuddering, arranged the dress, composed the limbs, and, with a thousand tears, placed the infant on that breast which had been so faithfully its mother to the last. And there they slept, mother and child—the day of trouble ended for both.

"My poor Ellen," said Paulett, "I wish it were thou and my children who were there at rest!" and Ellen pressed her Charles and her Alice to her heart, and would have been glad if they had indeed been dead.

Chapter IV

In that time of trouble and of unexampled events, the mind received impressions in a different manner from what it had ever done before. The stern gloom that hung over the future, the hazard upon which life was suspended, the close contact with universal death, and the desperate struggle by which it was staved off, gave to all things a new character; and the scene of the last chapter was but one of the series of deadly and dreadful excitements which were now the habit of every day. The solemn frame of mind which it induced in Ellen, was of a piece with the solemn nature of their existence; and she could talk of it with her husband at any time, and not disturb the natural bent which their conversation took. They searched the immediate neighbourhood for the habitation of the unhappy mother and her family; and the marks of her footsteps on the dust of the soil enabled them to trace her to Hope, a village in the plain, two miles, or rather more, from the Peak. She and her husband had used the church for their habitation, and it seemed had employed the same kind of precaution as Paulett to defend it and conceal that it was their dwelling. One entrance only was left, and the other apertures blocked up; but all care was useless now, for death had set them free from pain and fear. On a bed beside the altar lay the body of a man, over which as spread a cloak of fur and velvet, which in the lifetime of the world would have been most precious. His eyes were decently closed, the curtains of the bed drawn round him, and the pillow which supported his head was marked with the pressure of another head, and with moisture which could have been only the tears of his wife. The floor of the church was in confusion, like the dwelling of one too much distracted with trouble to attend to what did not relate to it; but there was corn which had served for food, and fuel heaped on the stone which had been a hearth—there was the drawing of a lovely woman and of a beautiful place: but these were cast into a corner, probably by the irritable hand of despair. On a table stood empty cups, which had long, perhaps, been dry—the glass of one had been shivered, and the fragments lay on the floor; there were also a few books, neglected and covered with dust. In the churchyard were the marks of three recent graves—one of them had a stone at its head, on which was carved with care the name of Alfred, and the soil was fenced and supported with sticks, so as to preserve its shape over the body —probably it was that of the first child whom the parents had committed to dust. Another was more hastily prepared, and no superfluous labour had been bestowed on it. This must be the last, when heart and health were both failing. Paulett and Ellen kneeled and prayed beside them, and rejoiced that the mother, too, was at rest after the long misery of this scene. They returned to their cave, and, under the shadow of the rock near the old course of the brook, laid both mother and child, covering their bodies with stones, and thinking more of the probable reunion, in some unknown scene, of the spirits of that family, than of the distance which separated their graves on this earth.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.