

Poetry.

THE GOOD OLD PLOUGH.

Let them sing who may of the battle fray,
And the deeds that have long since passed;
Let them chant in the praise of the far whose days
Aro spent on the ocean vast.
I would render to these all the worship you please,
I would honor them even as now;
But I'd give far more of my heart's full store
To the cause of the good old plough.

Let them land the notes that in music float
Through the bright and glittering hall,
Where the amorous twirl of the hair's bright curl
Round the shoulders of beauty fall;
But dear to me is the song from the tree,
And the rich and blossoming bough;
Oh, these are sweeter which the rustic greets,
As he follows the good old plough!

Full many there be that we daily see,
With a selfish and hollow pride,
Who the ploughman's lot, in his humble cot,
With a scornful look deride;
But I'd rather take a hearty shake
From his hand, than to wealth I'd bow,
For the honest clasp of his hand's rough grasp
Has stood by the good old plough.

All honor be, then, to these good old men,
When at last they are bowed with toil;
Their battle is o'er, they battle no more,
For they've conquered the stubborn soil;
And the chaplet each wears in his silver hairs,
And ne'er shall the victor's brow
With a laurel crown to the grave go down,
Like the sons of the good old plough.

Select Tale.

THE SHIPWRIGHT,
OR, DEMETRIUS, THE DIVER.

There are no by-gones that have greater need to be by-gones than those of wickedness, violence, and cruelty. The blood and dust that besmear some pages of history might glue the leaves together for ever. Yet from time to time, necessities will occur that leave us no choice but to open the old graves; to turn to the old dark register; to unlock the old dark, grim skeleton closet; to turn the retrospective glass towards the bad bold days that are gone.

We are at present the allies—and worthily so—of the Turks. A brave people, patient, high minded, slow to anger, terrible, yet magnanimous in their wrath. Yet, while we acknowledge and respect all the good qualities possessed by this valiant nation, it is impossible to forget that the Turk has not always been the complacent Pacha in a European frock-coat, and a sealing wax cap with a tassel, who writes sensible, straightforward state papers, reviews European troops, does not object to a quiet glass of champagne, and regales English newspaper correspondents with coffee and pipes. Nor is he always the sententious, phlegmatic Osmanli, who, shawled and turbaned, sits cross-legged upon the divan of meditation, smoking the pipe of reflectiveness: who counts his beads, says his prayers five times a day, and enjoys his kel; and who, as to wars and rumours of wars, fire, famine, pestilence, and slaughter, says but—"Allah Akbar"—God is great.

There are men in London whom we may meet and converse in our daily walks, who can remember the horrible massacre of Scio in the year of salvation eighteen hundred and twenty two. We had just begun, through the edifying cobweb-spinning of diplomacy, the passionate poetry of Lord Byron, and the crude (because badly informed) intelligence of the English press, to understand that there was something between the Greeks and the Turks in the Morea, the Peloponnesus, and the Archipelago, and that the former were not, on the whole, quite rightly used. We were just going to see about forming an opinion on these and other matters when the news of the massacre of Scio burst upon us like a thunder clap. Gloomily and succinctly the frightful news was told us, how the terrible Kara Ali—or the Black—Pacha had appeared with a fleet and an army in the harbour of Scio, then one of the fairest, peacefullest, most prosperous, and most densely populated islands in the Greco-Archipelago; and that all—peaceful rayahs, gold and purple harvest, university, commerce, wealth—had in three days disappeared.—The story of the massacre of Scio has never been fully told in England; and only in so far as it affects my story am I called upon to advert to it here. Besides no tongue could tell, no pen could describe in household language, a title of the atrocities perpetrated in the defenceless island by order of the Black Pacha. Suffice it to say that for three days Scio was drenched in blood; that the dwellings of the European consuls were no asylum; that the swords of the infuriated Osmanli murdered alike the white-headed patriarch, the priest of the

family, the nursing mother, the bride of yesterday, the bride of that to-morrow which was never to come to her, the tender suckling, and the child that was unborn. Upwards of eighteen thousand persons were massacred in cold blood; and the blackened ruins of Scio became a habitation for bats and dragons, howling dogs, and wheeling birds of prey.

Some few miserable souls escaped the vengeance of Karali Pacha. There is a Greek ecclesiastic now in London, who was hidden by his mother in a cave during the massacre, and brought away unhurt. When the fury of the invaders began, thro' lassitude, to cool, they selected such boys and girls as they could find alive, and sent them to be sold in the slave market at Constantinople. Then, when they had left the wretched island to itself, half-famished wretches began to crawl out of holes and ditches, where they had hidden themselves. They saw the charred and smouldering remains of what had once been Scio; but they abode not by them. In an agony of fear lest the murderers should return, they made the best of their way across the seas to other islands—to inaccessible launts on the main land. Those who had the means took refuge on the French and Italian shores of the Mediterranean.

There is a sultry city, which, if you were minded to go to it overland, you could have reached in those days by the diligence, as you can reach it in these by a commodious railway from Paris; but to attain which by sea you must cross the stormy Bay of Biscay, and pass the rocky Straits of Gibraltar, and coast along the tideless sea in sight of the shores of Africa. To this great mart of southern commerce, with its deep blue sky, its slack-baked houses, its orange trees, black-eyed, brown-shining children, and crowded port, where floats the strangest medley of ships, and on the quays of which walk the most astonishing variety of costumes that ever you saw;—to the city of Marseilles in France, came many of these refugee Greeks, some from Scio, some from the Morea, some from Candia, many from the Fanal or Fanar at Constantinople—which has also had its massacre, some from the interior of Anatolia and Roumelia. There were Greek gentlemen and their families who could never sufficiently congratulate themselves on having saved their heads and their piastres; there were merchants quite stripped and bankrupt, who, nevertheless, in the true Grecian manner began afresh, trading and making money with admirable assiduity and perseverance. And above all, there were poor rayahs, who had been caijees, coffee-house waiters, portefaix, at home—who had lost their little all, and had nothing but their manual labour to depend upon, and who were glad to carry burdens and run messages, and help to load and unload the ships at the port of Marseilles.

Among these, was Demetri Omeros. None knew much about him, save that he was a Scioite, and had escaped after the massacre; that he was quite alone and very poor. He was fortunate enough to possess a somewhat rare accomplishment, which made his earnings, although precarious, considerably more remunerating than those of his fellow-countrymen occupying the station to which he appeared to belong—Demetri Omeros was a most expert swimmer and diver. Had he lived in our days he would have been a professor to a certainty; the walls would have been covered with posting-bills and wood cuts portraying his achievements; and he would have had a convenient exhibition-room, and a suitable sliding-scale of prices for his entertainment.

In eighteen twenty three he contented himself with the exhibition of his talents in the open port of Marseilles, and was satisfied with the stray francs, half-francs, copper soue, and liards, flung to him when he emerged from the water, all soaked and dripping like a Newfoundland dog. He thus managed to lead a sufficiently easy, idle, lounging life: splashing, swimming, & diving for sheer amusement; at other times basking in the genial sun with such profound indolence that had you not known him to be a Scioite you would have thought him a genuine lazzarone of the Quai Santa Lucia. Demetri was some thirty years old, tall, magnificently proportioned, with a bronzed countenance, wavy black hair, and sparkling black eyes. His attire was exceedingly simple, being ordinarily limited to a shirt, red and white striped trousers secured round the waist by a sash, and a small Greek tar-bouch on his head, ornamented with a tarnished gold tassel. Shoes and stockings he despised as effeminate luxuries. He was perfectly contented with his modest fare of grapes, lemons, brown bread, garlic, and sour wine. House rent cost him nothing, as one of the Greek merchants settled at Marseilles, allowed him to sleep in his Ware-house, like a species of watch dog.

In the year eighteen hundred and twenty four, it occurred to the Turkish government considerably to strengthen their navy. There was an arsenal and a dockyard at Constantinople then, as there is now; but the Ottomans did not know much about ship-building, and in the absence of any material guarantee for the safety of their heads, European artisans were rather chary of enlisting in the service of the Padijah. So, as the shipwrights wouldn't go to Sultan Mahmoud, Sultan Mahmoud condescended to go the shipwrights; that is to say, he sent an Effendi attached to the department of Marine, to Marseilles, with full powers to have constructed four frigates by the ship-builders of that port. As the French government had not begun to interest itself one way or the other in the Eastern question, and as the ship-builders of Marseilles did not care one copper centime whether the Turks beat the Greeks, or the Greeks the Turks; and more than all this, as the Effendi had carte-blanche on the money department, and paid for each frigate in advance, they set about building the four frigates with a hearty good will, and by the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty five, two of them were ready for launching.

It was observed by the French workmen that Demetrius the diver appeared to take very great interest in the process of ship-building. Day after day he would come into the slip where the frigates were being constructed, and, sitting upon a pile of planks, would remain there for hours. Other Greeks would come occasionally, and launch forth into fierce invectives against the Turks, and against the French too, for lending their hands to the construction of ships which were to be employed by infidels against Christians. In these tirades Demetrius the diver seldom, if ever, joined. He was a man of few words, and he sat upon the planks, and looked at the workmen, their tools, and their work. Nobody took much notice of him, except to throw him a few soue or occasionally, or to say what a lazy, skulking fellow he was.

At length the day arrived which was fixed for the launch of the first frigate, the Sultani Bahri. Half Marseilles was there. The sub-prefect was there—not officially, but officiously, (whatever that subtle distinction may be.) Crowds of beautiful ladies, as beautifully dressed, were in the tribunes round the sides of the slip; the Sultani Bahri was dressed out with flags, and aboard her were the great Effendi himself, with his secretary, his interpreter, his pipe-bearer, and the amatur, or ship-builder.

The sight of a ship-launch is to the full as exciting as any race. The heart beats time to the clinking of the hammers that were knocking the last impediments away, and when the mighty mass begins to move, the spectator is in a tremor of doubt and hope, and fear. When the ship rights herself and indeed winks the waters live a thing of life, the excitement is tremendous; he must shout, he must congratulate himself, his next neighbor, everybody, upon the successful completion of the work.

Now, every thing had been looked to, thought of, preparing for the triumphant launch of the Sultani Bahri. The only obstacles between her and the waters were certain pieces of wood technically called in England (I know not what their french name may be) doghouses, and these were being knocked away by the master shipwright. This operation, I may remark, was formerly, considered so dangerous that in the royal dockyards it was undertaken by convicts, who obtained their liberty if they accomplished the task without accident. Just as the first stroke of the hammer became audible, Demetrius the Diver who had hitherto been concealed among the crowd, plunged into the water, and swam right across the track that the frigate would probably take on its release from the slip. A cry of horror burst from the crowd as he swam directly for the ship's stern; for the vessel had begun to move, and every one expected the rash diver to be crushed or drowned. But when he was within a few feet of the frigate, he threw himself upon his back and floated away with the tide. The Sultani Bahri slid down her ways to a considerable extent, but she walked it by no means like a thing of life, for her stern began to settle down, and, if the truth must be told, the new frigate of his Imperial Highness the Sultan—stuck in the mud.

They tried to screw her off, to weigh her off, to float her off, but in vain. When a ship sticks in launching, there is frequently no resource but to pull her to pieces where she sticks, and this seemed to be the most probable fate in store for the Sultani Bahri. The Effendi was in a fury. The ship-builder was devaluted; but the Frenchman only ascribed his misadventure to the clumsiness of his shipwright, whereas the Moslem, superstitious like the majority of his co-religionists, vowed that the failure was solely owing to the evil eye of the Gizeur diver, Demetrius Omeros. Had the Effendi been in his own land, a very short and summary process would have preserved all future ship-launches from the troublesome presence of Demetrius Omeros and his evil eye; but at Marseilles, in the department of the Bouches du Rhone, the decapita-

tion, bowstringing, or drowning, even of a rayah, was not to be thought of. So the Effendi was obliged to be satisfied with giving the strictest orders for Demetri's exclusion from the ship-builder's yard in future. After a delay of some months, the second frigate (the first was rotting in the mud,) was ready for launching.

Anxiety was depicted on the Effendi's face as he broke a bottle of sherbet over the bow of the frigate and named her Achmedie. Immediately after a cry burst from the crowd of "Demetri! Demetri, the diver!" and, rushing along the platform which ran round the vessel, the Effendi could scarce the accursed diver holding up his arms as before, and doubtless blighting the onward progress of the Achmedie with his evil eye.

Evil or not, a precisely similar disaster overtook the second frigate, and the launch was a lamentable failure. The ship-builder was in despair. The Effendi went home to his hotel cursing, and was about to administer the bastinado to his whole household, as a relief to his feelings, when his interpreter, a shrewd Greek, one Yanni, ventured to pour the balm of advice into the ear of indignation.

"Effendi," he said, "this rayah that dives is doubtless a cunning man, a magician; and by his spells and incantations has arrested the ships of my lord the Padijah—whom Allah preserve—in their progress! But he is a rayah, and a Greek, and a regue of course. Let my lord the Effendi bribe him, and he will remove his spells."

"You are all dogs and sons of dogs," answered the Effendi, graciously, "but out of your mouth, devoted to the slipper, O Yanni, comes much wisdom. Send for this issue of a mangy pig, this diver with the evil eye."

Demetrius was sent for, and in due time made his appearance, not so much as salaaming to the Effendi, or even removing his hat. The envoy of the Sultan was sorely tempted to begin the interview by addressing himself through the medium of a bamboo, to the soles of the diver's feet; but fear of the sub-prefect and his gendarmes, and, indeed, of the magical powers of the diver himself, prevented him.

"Dog and slave," he said politely, "dog, that would eat garbage out of the shop of a Jew butcher, wherefore hast thou bewitched the ships of our lord and Caliph, the Sultan Mahmoud?"

"I am not come here to swallow dirt," answered the diver, coolly, "and if your words are for dogs, open the window and throw them out. If you want anything with a man who, in Frangistan, is as good as an Effendi, state your wishes."

"The ships, slave, the ships!"

"The first two stuck in the mud," said the Greek; "and the third, with the blessing of heaven and St. George of Cappadocia, will no more float than a cannon-ball."

"You lie, dog, you lie!" said the Effendi.

"Tis you who lie, Effendi," answered Demetrius the diver; "and, moreover, if you give me the lie again—by St. Luke, I will break your unbelieving jaw."

As the Effendi happened to be alone with Demetrius, (for he had dismissed his interpreter,) and as there was somewhat exceedingly menacing in the stalwart form and clenched teeth of the Greek, his interlocutor judged it to be expedient to lower his tone.

"Can you remove the spells that you have laid on the ships?" he asked.

"Those that are launched, are now past praying for."

"Will the next float?"

"If I choose."

"And the next?"

"If I choose."

"Name your own reward, then," said the Effendi, immensely relieved. "How many piastres do you require? Will ten thousand do?"

"I want much more than that," answered Demetrius the diver, with a grim smile.

"More! What rogues you Greeks are! How much more?"

"I want," answered the diver, "my wife Katinika back from Stamboul. She was torn away from Scio, and is in the harem of the capitan-pacha. I want my three children, my boy Andon, my boy Yorghii, and my girl Eudocia. When I have all these here at Marseilles (Marseilles,) and twenty thousand piastres to boot, your frigates shall be launched in safety."

"All well and good!" said the Effendi, "I will write to Stamboul to-night, and you shall have all your brood, and the piastres as well, within two months. But what security have I that you will perform your part of the contract. The word of a Greek is not worth a para."

"You shall have a bond for double the amount, which you will hand over to me, from two merchants of Marseilles. You cannot give me all I should like," continued the diver, with a vengeful