

'Do not speak to your friend till I bid you, or—' he stopped short, and touched his pistols.

Birnie grew a shade more pale, but replied with his usual sneer—

'Suspicious!—well, so much the better!' and seating himself carelessly at the table, lighted his pipe.

'And now, Monsieur Giraumont,' said Gawtre, as he took the head of the table, 'come to my right hand. A half holiday in your honour. Clear these infernal instruments, and more wine, mes amis!'

The party arranged themselves at the table. Among the desperate there is almost invariably a tendency to mirth. A solitary ruffian is moody, but a gang of ruffians are jolly. The coiners talked and laughed loud. Mr. Birnie, from his dogged silence, seemed apart from the rest, 'through in the centre. For in a noisy circle, a silent tongue builds a wall round its owner. But that respectable personage kept his furtive watch upon Giraumont and Gawtre, who appeared talking together, very amicably, towards the bottom of the table. The younger novice of that night, equally silent, was not less watchful than Birnie. An uneasy, undefinable foreboding had come over him since the entrance of Monsieur Giraumont; this had been increased by the manner of Mr. Gawtre. His faculty of observation, which was very acute, had detected something in the chief's blandness to their guest—something dangerous in the glittering eye that Gawtre ever, as he spoke to Giraumont, bent on that person's lips as he listened to his reply. For, whenever William Gawtre suspected a man, he watched not his eyes but his lips.

Waked from his scornful reverie, a strange spell fascinated Morton's attention to the chief and the guest, and he bent forward, with parted mouth and straining ear, to catch their conversation.

'It seems to me a little strange,' said Mr. Gawtre, raising his voice so as to be heard by the party, 'that a coiner so dextrous as Monsieur Giraumont, should not be known to any of us except our friend Birnie.'

'Not at all,' replied Giraumont, 'I worked only with Bouchard and two others since sent to the galleys. We were but a small fraternity—every thing has its commencement.'

'C'est juste: buvez donc, cher ami.' The wine circulated: Gawtre began again.

'You have had a bad accident, seemingly, Monsieur Giraumont—how did you loose your eye?'

'In a scuffle with the gens d'armes the night Bouchard was taken and I escaped: such misfortunes are on the cards.'

'C'est juste: buvez donc, Monsieur Giraumont!'

Again there was a pause, and again, Gawtre's deep voice was heard.

'You were a wig, I think, Monsieur Giraumont? to judge by your eyelashes your own hair has been a handsomer colour.'

'We seek disguise not beauty, my host! and the police have sharp eyes.'

'C'est juste, buvez donc—vienez Renard.—when did we two meet last?'

'Never, that I know of!'

'Ce n'est pas vrai! buvez donc, Monsieur Giraumont!'

At the sound of that name the company started in dismay and confusion, and the police officer, forgetting himself for the moment, sprung from his seat, and put his hand into his blouse.

'Ho, there!—treason!' cried Gawtre, in a voice of thunder; and he caught the unhappy man by the throat.

It was the work of a moment. Morton, where he sat, beheld a struggle—he heard a death-cry. He saw the huge form of the master-coiner raising above all the rest, as luttresses gleamed and eyes sparkled round. He saw the quivering and powerless frame of the unhappy guest raised aloft in those mighty arms, and presently it was hurled along the table—bottles crashing—the board shaking beneath its weight—and lay before the very eyes of Morton, a distorted and lifeless mass. At the same instant, Gawtre sprang upon the table, his black frown singling out from the group the ashen, cadaverous face of the shrinking traitor. Birnie had darted from the table,—he was half way towards the sliding door—his face, turned over his shoulder, met the eyes of the chief.

'Devil!' shouted Gawtre, in his terrible voice, which the echoes of the vault gave back from side to side—'did I not give thee up my soul that thou mightest compass my death? Hark ye! thus die my slavery and all our secrets! The explosion of his pistol half swallowed up the last word, and with a single groan the traitor fell on the floor, pierced through the brain,—then there was a dead and grim hush, as the smoke rolled slowly along the roof of the dreary vault.

HAPPY MARRIAGES.

'Oh, conceive the happiness to know one person dearer to you than your own

self—some one breast into which you can pour every thought, every grief, every joy. One person, who if all the rest of the world were to calumniate or forsake, would never wrong you by a harsh thought or an unjust word,—who would cling the closer to you in sickness, in poverty, in care,—who would sacrifice all things to you, and for whom you would sacrifice all—from whom, except by death, night nor day, can you ever be divided whose smile is ever at your hearth—who has no tears while you are well and happy, and your love the same.

THE LONDON 'SEASON.'

'It was at that period of the year when, to those who look on the surface of society, London wears its most radiant smile; when shops are radiant, and trade most brisk; when down the thoroughfares roll and glitter the countless streams of indolent and voluptuous life; when the upper class spend, and the middle class make; when the ball room is the market of beauty, and the club house the school for Scandal; when the bells yawn for their prey; and opera singers and fiddlers—creatures hatched from gold, as the dung flies from the dung—swarm, and buzz, and fatten, round the hide of the gen'le public. In the cant phrase, it was 'the London season.' And happy, take it altogether, happy above the rest of the year, even for the hapless, is that period of ferment and fever. It is not the season for duns, and the debtor glides about with a less envious eye, and the weather is warm, and the vagrant sleeps unfrozen, under the starlit portico; and the beggar thrives, and the thief rejoices—for the rankness of the civilisation, has superfluities clutched by all. And out of the general corruption things sordid and things miserable creep forth to bask in the common sunshine—things that perish when the first autumn winds whistle along the melancholy city. It is the gay time for the heir and the beauty, and the statesman and the lawyer, and the mother with her young daughters, and the artist with his fresh pictures, and the poet with his new book. It is the gay time, too, for the starved journeyman, and the ragged outcast that with long stride and patient eyes follow, for pence, the equestrian, who bids him go and be d—d in vain. It is a gay time for the painted harlot in a crimson pelisse; and a gay time for the old hag that loiters about the thresholds of the gin shop, to buy back, in a draught, the dreams of departed youth. It is gay, in fine, as the fulness of a vast city is ever gay—for vice as for innocence, for poverty as for wealth. And the wheels of every single destiny wheel on the merrier, no matter whether they are bound to Heaven or to hell.'

A PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF LIFE.

'If, reader, you have ever looked through a solar microscope at the monsters in a drop of water, perhaps you have wondered to yourself how things so terrible have been hitherto unknown to you—you have felt a loathing to the limpid element you hitherto deemed so pure—you have half fancied that you would cease to be a water drinker; yet the next day you have forgotten the grim life that started before you, with its countless shapes, in that teeming globule; and if so tempted by your thirst, you have not shrunk from the lying crystal, although myriads of the horrible unseen, devouring each other, in the liquid you so tranquilly imbibe; so is it with that ancestral and master element called life. Lapped in your sleek comforts, and lolling on the sofa of your patent conscience—when perhaps for the first time, through the glass of science upon one ghastly globule in the waters that heave around, that fill up with their succulence, the pores of the earth, that moisten every atom subject to your eyes, or handled by your touch—you are startled and dismayed, you say mentally, 'Can such things be? I never dreamed of this before! I thought what was invisible to me was non-existent in itself—I will remember this dread experiment. The next day the experiment is forgotten. The chemist may rarify the globule—can science make pure the world?'

From Poems by the late Lady Flora Hastings. WRITTEN FOR LORD HASTINGS' CHILDREN.

Get up, little sister, the morning is bright,
And the birds are all singing to welcome the light;

The buds are all opening—the dew's on the flower;
If you shake but a branch, see there falls quite a shower.

By the side of their mothers, look, under the trees,

How the young fawns are skipping about as they please;
And by all those rings on the water, I know
The fishes are merrily swimming below.

The bee, I dare say, has been long on the wing,
To get honey from every flower of the spring;
For the bee never idles, but labours all day,
And thinks, wise little insect, work better than play.

The lark's singing gayly; it loves the bright sun,
And rejoices that now the gay spring is begun;
For the spring is so cheerful, I think 'twould
be wrong
If we did not feel happy to hear the lark's song

Get up, for when all things are merry and glad,
Good children should never be lazy and sad;
For God gives us daylight, dear sister, that we
May rejoice like the lark, and may work like
the bee.

STREET OF THE TOMBS AT POMPEII.

[In an annotation prefixed to the following stanzas, Lady Flora says, 'I was much struck with a basso-relievo on one of the sarcophagi in that part, as containing the most beautiful allegory imaginable. A vessel has finished her voyage,—the passenger seated in the stern relinquishes the helm,—the attendant genii are busied in going aloft to furl the sail, as a bird at the masthead expands her wings to fly away. The following lines were written in consequence of seeing this monument.']

My course is o'er—the day is gone,
My bark has reach'd the destined shore;
Her sails are furl'd—her voyage done,
She braves the stormy surge no more.

Bright was the morn, when to the breeze
I spread her snowy-bosom'd sail;
As, speeding o'er the azure seas,
She flew before the fav'ring gale.

In those young hours of early spring,
No atom dimm'd the eye of day,
Save the small bird, whose dusky wing
A moment cross'd the golden ray.

I will not tell how time has blighted
The promise of those sunny years;
I will not tell that hope but lighted
Her beacon, to be quench'd by tears.

I will not tell that pain and sorrow,
And anguish, round my heart have prest;
Enough—'tis done! The rising morrow
Shall find me and my bark at rest.

The summer's gale, the wintry blast,
Are now alike—and shade and sun;
My sails are furl'd, my toils are past,
The haven's gain'd—my course is run!

THE BRITISH REVIEWS.

The British and Foreign Review; or, European Quarterly Journal.

PERSONAL SKETCH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

The true character of the Emperor Nicholas as a ruler, may be shown by placing it in juxtaposition with that of Alexander, his immediate predecessor. Alexander was ambitious of being beloved by his subjects; Nicholas scorns their love, and is determined to be feared. Though his figure is finer and more commanding than that of Alexander, he is less pleasing; his aspect is stern, and no smile graces his lips. Alexander was mild and affable; severity looks out from beneath the brow of Nicholas; but though insolent and harsh, he has an air of distrustful timidity. The traits of his character resemble those of his ferocious brother Constantine, with this material difference; that as the fury of the latter was vented upon individuals, that of Nicholas is directed against classes of men, races, and whole nations. It is reduced to a system, and therefore the more frightful and pernicious. Ferocious as was Constantine, he not unfrequently repented of the evil he had committed, and would even make reparation when it was in his power, to those whom he had wronged. Not so with Nicholas; however he may err, he never repents. Cruel by nature, it is a remarkable fact, that during his reign no sentence of a court-martial, on being presented for his signature, has ever been known to be cancelled or even mitigated by him, and most frequently aggravates the penalties. The religious creeds and liberties of the various nations subject to the sceptre of Alexander were respected by him; Nicholas evinces utter disregard of them, violating alike charters and privileges, oppressing alike religions and sects. Alexander appears to have had some affection for the Poles, or at least seemed anxious to gain theirs by flattering them with the hope of preserving their nationality. The very names of 'Poland and Poles' are abhorrent to the ear of Nicholas; he cannot endure them, and would rejoice that the whole population of Poland had but one neck, that with his own hand he might cut it off with a blow. This hatred it is that urges him to endeavour, with the concentrated force of his despotism, to erase that nation from the memory of man, and to wage, as he is doing at this moment, a barbarous war of extermination against its language, history and religion. Alexander was fond of science and the arts, encouraged learned men, and bestowed upon them rank, honours and rewards; Nicholas affects to do the same, but in reality he looks upon them with aversion and distrust; for he suspects them, in common with all enlightened and upright men, of a crime unpardonable in his eyes, namely, liberalism (*volnodumstvo*). The most infamous characters, robbers, highwaymen, felons of every description, may hope to obtain his pardon for their crimes, but let every liberal man beware how he comes within reach, if he would avoid being doomed to perish on the

Caucasus. Alexander established colleges and schools for the encouragement of learning and the arts; he restored a Polish university at Vilna, and founded another at Warsaw. Nicholas has abolished both, together with most of the schools existing in Poland; and in those that remain, he has introduced the most compulsive system of corrupted education. There was no difficulty of getting access to Alexander; the humblest peasant could approach him with a petition; and he was distinguished for his courtesy to men and his gallantry to women. Nicholas is as inaccessible as he is inexorable to his unfortunate subjects, and brutal both to men and women. His courtesy to the empress seems intended only for outward show, as he is known to be both imperious and harsh in private; and if the example of licentiousness which he sets be followed, his court runs great risk of becoming as profligate as that of Catherine II. All the men who were held most in esteem by Alexander are disliked by him, and some among them have become the objects of his most cruel persecution. It must be acknowledged to the credit of Alexander, that he did much towards civilizing Russia by introducing into it European industry and improvements; but Nicholas barbarizes by prohibiting his subjects from travelling; and thus cutting off in a great measure their intercourse with other nations, hopes to facilitate his meditated conquest of the adjacent countries, and his project of trampling under foot Europe and her civilization. Alexander, at least during the first years of his reign, was liberal; but in this respect also, Nicholas has shown himself the reverse of his brother, for he hates liberty alike in his own empire and in others. Countries enjoying a popular form of government and liberal institutions, are abhorred by him as his natural enemies. The sound of the drum and the peal of cannon are the music in which he most delights,—he can conceive no higher standard of excellence than Napoleon, and no sublimer plans than his,—it is in fact to this *idée fixe* that Prince Leuchtenburg is indebted for obtaining the hand of his daughter. He is susceptible of no gentle affections, no generous emotions, no magnanimity. Even in his youth, when it was his custom to drill his soldiers in his apartments, he was always provided with a whip, and would flog them mercilessly for the least inaccuracy,—and if on meeting one of his guard in the streets, the man did not salute him in a manner that pleased his fancy, or happened to have a button of his uniform unfastened, he would put him under arrest for several weeks, or degrade him to one of the regiments of the line. Now that he is emperor, those who incur his displeasure are marched off to Caucasus. Cruel and inexorable himself, he dislikes men of a different disposition,—to witness concord and friendship is offensive to him, and he is much better satisfied when dissensions arise at his court or amongst foreign nations, which latter he is ever ready to foment by his secret agents, 'Divide et impera' being his motto. The commander of a regiment, who does not behave ill to his officers, and encourage these in their turn to ill-treat their subalterns, is despised as unfit for service, and soon dismissed. Even his own son, the presumptive heir of the crown, has, on account of his little disposition to cruelty, received from him the appellation of 'old grandmother,' and his tutor has been rebuked for giving him that turn. All established customs and judicial forms must give way when one of his fancies intervenes: his will is a decree, and brooks no delay in its execution. From his military predilections, the Czar will devote hours to drilling a company of raw recruits, which could be equally performed by any corporal; but he will give himself no trouble respecting the civil government of the state, and still less for the administration of justice. He does not, indeed, object to sign decrees for the augmentation of impost; but if any of the oppressed serfs present to him a petition complaining of injustice, both the petitioner and the writer of the petition are sentenced to Siberia the one as a rebel, the other as an abettor of rebellion! Overcharged as this picture of the Emperor Nicholas may seem, we have rather understated than exaggerated the facts in the present policy of Russia, and the events actually taking place in that empire.

From the British and Foreign Review.

EUROPEAN POLICY.

From the signature of the quadruple treaty in July to the cancelling of Napier's Convention by Sir R. Stopford, almost every day has given rise to some fresh occurrence, or brought to light some new fact, which might be of importance in forming a judgment respecting the whole course and bearing of the subject. The mere settlement of the relations between Egypt and Turkey, however important in itself that question might be, sinks into nothing in comparison with the awful consequences which may flow from the temporary estrangement of France and England. Different as are the forms of their institutions and the characters of their people, they are the two 'exemplar states' of constitutional freedom. To them the multitudes throughout Europe looked as the assured champions of law and progressive improvement; and resting in security and hope upon their union, which formed the best guarantee that the constitutional principle should not be trampled under foot, millions of German, Slavonians, and Hungarians, were contented patiently to bide their time, and await the slow progress of national development. We deplore the insane outbursts of